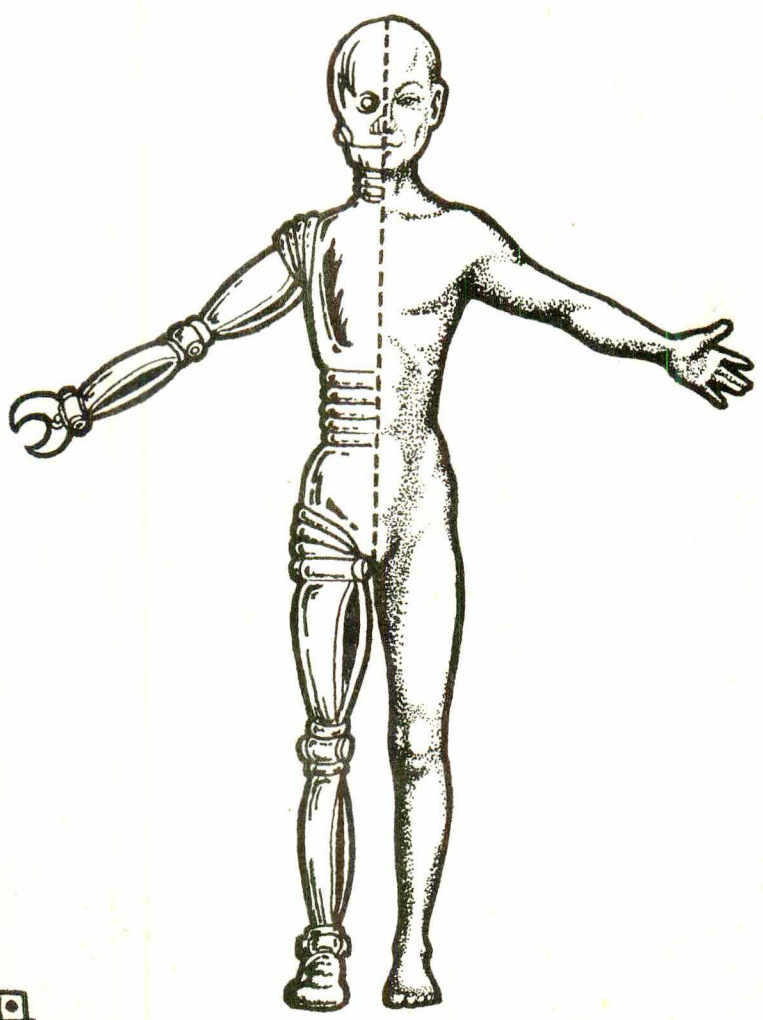


Simulacrum



JACKIE FRANKE

STIMULACRACY

Vol. 2
No. 1

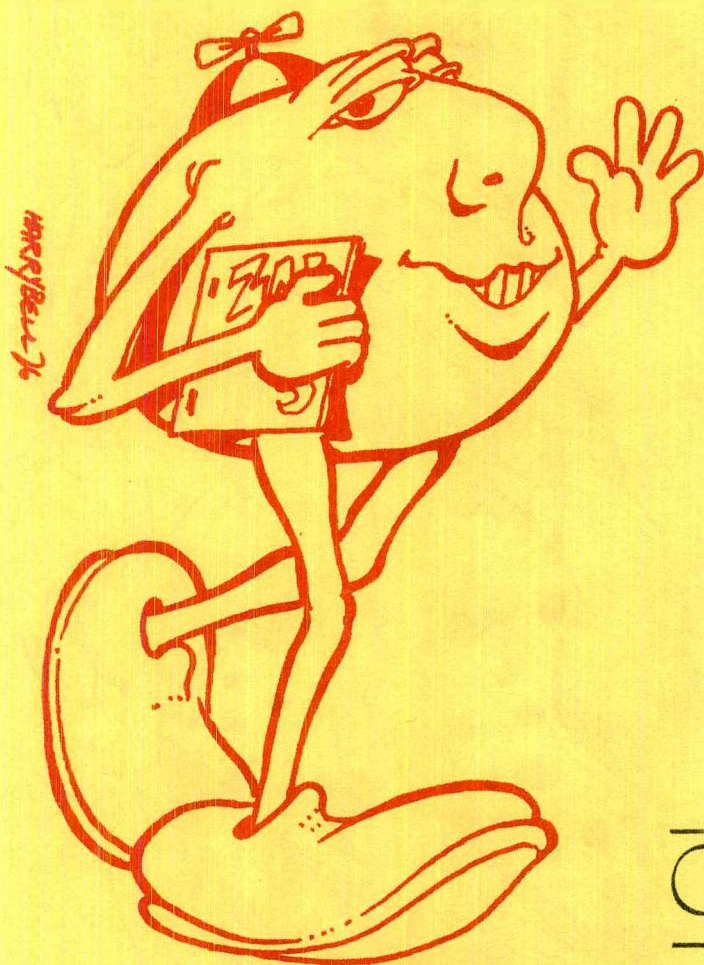
Whole
Number 7

Sept 77



Simulacrum

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11-27-75



EDITED AND PUBLISHED BY

VICTORIA VAYNE
PO Box 156 - Stn D
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M6P 3J8

Available for the Usual (substantial LoCs, selected trades, contributions of articles or artwork, and editor's whim); or by subscription for \$2.50 per copy North America, \$3.00 overseas. (No long-term subs, please.)

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Technical: Selectric II/
ElectroRex 3S-4 / Gestetner 466

Vaynity Press
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ARTWORK:

Cover: Jackie Causgrove

Bacover: Randy Mohr

Tim C. Marion - 1, 4, 68, 69 (logos); Barry Kent MacKay - 1, 5, 10, 11, 27, 29, 53, 56, 84; Harry Bell - 2, 82; James Shull - 2 (logo); Alexis Gilliland - 6, 23, 25, 44; Bill Rotsler - 7, 14, 19, 21, 59, 60, 64, 65, 79; Sheryl Birkhead - 9; Bruce Townley - 12, 39, 49, 50, 51; Mike Bracken - 13, 83; Grant Canfield - 15, 24; Alan Lankin - 18; Terry Jeeves - 20, 36; Stu Shiffman - 26, 66, 76; Bonnie Dalzell - 33; David "Shep" Kirkbride - 41, 68; Gail Barton - 43; Randy Mohr - 63; Derek Carter - 73; Robert J. Whitaker - 80, 85.

non-sequitur

In the summer of 1973 I accidentally heard about TORCON. I had been sent a flyer from one of the community colleges on summer courses, one of which was on science fiction and was billed as covering the field from Gernsback to the world conference in Toronto that year. My interest aroused, I procrastinated a suitable amount and visited Bakka to find out more. Yes, indeed, \$10 at the Royal York, I found out two weeks before the event; so I quickly arranged with the Cold Fish, my boss at the Syrup of Squills Factory, for the Friday off so that I could attend the entire convention.

Interestingly, though, my files contained a clipping from the GLOBE AND MAIL from a full year earlier about Mike and Susan Glicksohn that mentioned TORCON, and that I know I clipped at the time it appeared (how else would it be in my files?). I still have that clipping--Mike at the typer with Larson E. around his neck and Susan at the mimeo, and paintings I have seen in actuality many times on the wall in the background. 1972, that would have been, and I wonder now that I didn't try to obtain a copy of ENERGUMEN at the time. (Actually I am kicking myself over the fact that I didn't try to get a copy at the time.) Perhaps the fact that the article gave no address was the thing that prevented me from contacting the local fandom earlier.

I was the rankest of rank neos at TORCON. For years I had bought up every anthology in sight, keeping a file of the location of every short story in every book in my collection, and with pretensions of selling stories to the prozines, abominable efforts that are now painful to review. I had no idea what to expect at the con, I was astounded that there was the real Hal Clement, I was speechless at getting Asimov's autograph in my program book, and I fantasized about someday selling my own writing professionally. Egoboo for me in those days meant some hazy point in the future when some eager reader would come to me for my autograph. I attended all the programming, and went home in the evenings. I was 23 years old at the time, and I was right out of it.

But I did at one point do the bright thing of wandering into the "All Our Yesterdays" room. There I met Linda Bushyager and purchased the first fanzine I had ever seen in my life--GRANFALLOON 17, the issue with the editorial on commercialism in fandom, an issue which at that time meant nothing to me--and a copy of the NEOFAN'S GUIDE. Richard Delap was there and I was croggled by the fact that so many people in his acquaintance had actually sold stories. Linda suggested LOCUS to me for its market reports and arranged to have order forms for it in the "All Our Yesterdays" room the next day; I almost got to go to the banquet, and somehow I was introduced to Monty Python's AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT which absolutely delighted me.

In 1973 I was an odd, scared type of person, uncomfortable with stares and looks from strangers in the subways and leery of places crowded with strangers, not very likely to get out of the house and explore new possibilities. TORCON

was oddly comfortable, though. Despite the sensation of being a newcomer to something long ongoing, I felt a potential fitting-in there. TORCON, in fact, was the best weekend I'd spent in the two long and upsetting years since I had graduated.

There had to be some local people involved, I knew; someone had to have been putting on this convention. I went to the TORCON information desk and asked about local clubs, and was given a flyer about OSFiC, the Toronto group. (And I wonder now why I had never found their flyers at Bakka before--unless there had never been any.)

I attended the first OSFiC meeting after TORCON. The group was crammed into a small uncomfortable room with inadequate seating; a business meeting was mostly on the fact that the church had eased the club out of a larger room and some reimbursement was to be made on improvements the club had made to the smaller room. The club was in post-con doldrums; STARLOST was snickered at; I talked to one person only, Valerie Starr, about Harlan Ellison. And I laid down my four bucks. I didn't know at the time that TORCON had in a sense fafiated its own people; I wasn't aware then of Phil Paine and Jim Allan and Taral Wayne MacDonald's work towards revitalizing the club; I had nothing to compare anything to. No meeting notices came in the months that followed, I was out of town on meeting dates, one flyer that did arrive hinting at a Christmas party was never followed up--there had been a party but I had never heard about it concretely.

In January of 1974, a break came in the great wall of silence as I was preparing for the ordeal of three fillings--a pre-election newsletter from Jim Allan listing the membership and giving news about one member, Bob Wilson, having made a first professional sale. That brought on a bout of its own brand of insecurity about my lack of successes in a field I was interested in. But the club had come alive. I did not vote in the elections because I knew none of the people, but the ballot promised new vitality no matter who won.

The following month brought NOR from Phil Paine which in spite of a mix-up in dates gave a definite reference point for a meeting. I decided to go. I was quiet and remained in the background but Jim Allan spoke to me and encouraged me to go restaurant-hopping afterwards. He assured me that before long I'd be fighting with the rest of them; the meetings tended to be vocal. That meeting was--



although I didn't know who Phil Paine was at the time. There were just a number of guys who tended to run the meeting and lead off interesting conversations. I have impressions of Barry Kent MacKay at that meeting, and of somebody hairy who got on at the High Park subway station at the same time I had to get to the meeting, and of a woman who was probably Janet Small, all in that first restaurant jaunt. It was a vile restaurant, too, I remember, the following month I heard stories of troubled stomachs. After eating, some of the guys headed into a ravine, but it was too cold and slushy for me so I hung back.

At Bakka in the rack of the amateur magazines around that time, a new one appeared--SCICON 2. I didn't know then who Wayne MacDonald was, and since it seemed to consist of mostly amateur fiction I declined, despite the nice cover art. It didn't look as though it would be as much to my taste as the GRANFALLOON had been--what little in the line of fan lore I had been able to extract from that considering my still enormous neohood.

More NORs came, more meetings, the names took on substance. At about the third of those 1974 meetings I ventured an opinion for the first time--a meeting on the theme of women in science fiction. It was new at that time, and Jim, who was program director, thought it was a decent idea--"You do it!" That night I remained with the group for the evening's walking, still not knowing any of the people and most of the names, but enjoying myself immensely. The group saw AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT at a small revue theatre; I have a distinct impression-memory of being flanked either side in there by Phil and by Taral and his constantly toted briefcase of that time. I remember the briefcase, at any rate. I also have impressions of time spent in the McSchmuckald's nearby and a vile milkshake and real eucalyptus leaves. Later on the group went to Jim's place and talked and looked at the comic books there for a long time. Memories this far back are odd--I remember only impressions that became associated with people I later came to know well; odd fragmented bits.



Toronto fandom was on the rise. The "one-shot" policy of the club was announced around then; any member could produce a fanzine and have it partially financed by the club in return for distribution within the club membership. Phil planned to do the first one to set the tone.

Somehow I started seeing the people more often than just the monthly meetings. The mid-month Chips and Coffee gatherings, informal walks and explorations, were one way--again, Jim had encouraged me to go. I started associating more names with actual people--Phil, of course, and Janet, who brought a large pile of paperbacks illustrative of women in science fiction for me to study for the upcoming meeting. The idea for the Writers' Workshop came up and was set in motion. I occasionally had a TV night, opening the apartment to all comers when a suitable movie was on. More names entered my sphere of awareness--Bob Wilson, and Taral Wayne MacDonald who astonished me with a lot of detailed and advanced scientific speculation during one five-mile walk.

produced a nonsensical round robin which became "Stupefying Epics", the back of DISTAFF Ace Double style, with a cover by Taral showing a helpless man in the clutches of a female monster being rayed by a tough fully clad spacewoman. This was completed just before DISCON in a smaller printing session attended by Taral and Janet and myself, again on the Fifty Cent Monster.

By this time, my own fanzine publishing desires were fully whetted, and I had dibs in for the next club one-shot, a collection of material on religion in sf originally referred to as GODZINE. During a dull OSFiC meeting spent thrashing out ideas for FANFAIR III, my mind wandered in tangents and came up with "Vati-Con" as one of a series of off-beat con possibilities. At the restaurant outing afterwards, a tentative program for Vati-Con was drawn up with the help of some of the more fiendish minds; and VATI-CON III PROGRAM BOOK (SIMULACRUM whole number 1) was born.

DISCON happened, and practically everyone in the club went. I had a good time there, despite still knowing nobody in outside fandom; but unlike at TORCON, I was with people I knew, and by staying at the hotel was able to partake of evening happenings. Janet and I shared a room with two other women in the club but the guys for the same price had a big suite. I did not seek out the fanzine editors' workshop, neither did Janet, although that might have done me some good. The group was together much of the time, and there were adventures with non-dairy pizza, ambushes in the long corridor, encounters with the Kissing Lady, feeding of the retarded but bold pigeons of Washington, and endless searches for decent meals. A good vacation.

Back in Toronto, after DISCON, the habits of the group changed and new people arrived and old ones became busy. Bob Wilson returned from California and was welcomed back into the group. Strange culinary experiments were carried out with a ready supply of victims. Long walks continued. Strange all-night horror marathons and other cheap movies at the local dollar movie house took place often, and there were a lot of all-night parties.

NOR gave way to SYNAPSE when Taral took over the newsletter at about the time of DISCON. I got into the habit of helping out, with among other things my less than exact proofreading. I saw a lot of the Fifty Cent Monster but understanding didn't ooze into me with that much ease. Taral always set it up, I generally slipsheeted or deslipsheeted, and occasionally I would get to crank. At the least, though, I learned to be fussy about results. One Friday night, riddled with problems, printing started at about eleven in the evening was not completed until nine the next morning, thanks to a recalcitrant mood in the machine and fatigue-caused problems like upside-down pages. My presence did not hinder Taral and may have helped, at the least taking some shitwork off his back, and I learned some things. I enjoyed it all, though, starting an addiction that has been steadily growing.

Taral found me a Gestetner in the early fall of 1974. It was a 120, available for \$25, and he and Phil and I picked it up one rainy Saturday. Its only use while in my hands was for the 800-odd flyers for the Brethren of the Moon, crank religious hype we thrust into people's hands on Halloween night under a full moon in 1974, one of our better hoaxes. (Those who have been with SIMULACRUM from the beginning will have seen these stuck in the back of the VATI-CON III PROGRAM BOOKS.) This doctrine was one of the more tangible results of the Writers' Workshop which had started promisingly but had dwindled to just another social occasion by that time; and was one of the earlier things I remember Bob Webber participating in.

I ordered a Selectric, something I had long faunched after even before fandom, just to make writing easier. I'd had one at work some years before and remem-

The group managed to get a TV spot, with Mike Glicksohn and Peter Gill being interviewed, some of Taral's art shown, and the rest of us in the top bank of the studio audience. All-niters started happening, Saturday morning cartoon heckling sessions, long walks, and impromptu expeditions out to the country to see auroras.

This was the group that was to become Toronto's fanzine fandom. In 1974, though, most had no contact with outside fandom, and those who did, like Taral, sometimes brought fanzines they received to show to an occasionally puzzled audience. There was little fanzine activity--Taral and Phil's earlier efforts were not mentioned as a rule and only NOR that most of the group saw. XENIUM existed but none of us ever saw copies. Phil became ill and passed on his material to Taral for the first of the club one-shots, and what would become in some ways the herald of Toronto's fanzine renaissance.

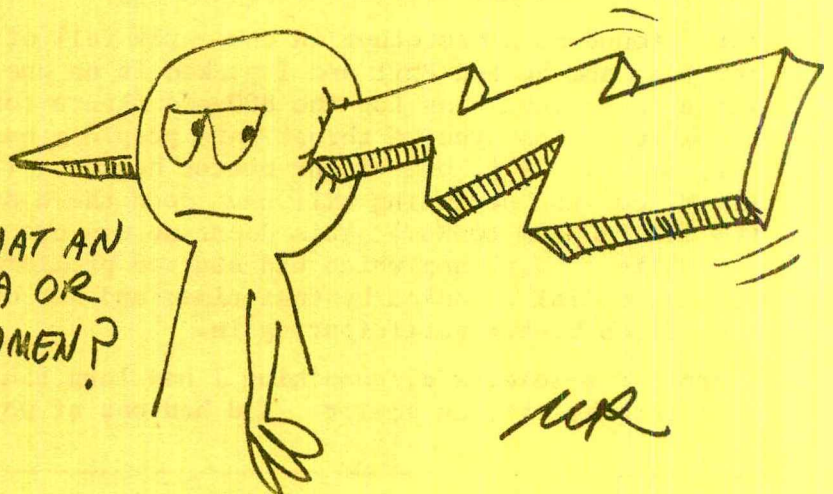
This was OSFIC...EVENTUALLY. Taral had fanzine experience with the two issues of SCICON (and by this time I had broken down and purchased a copy) and also had custody of the only fannish Gestetner in town apart from Glicksohn's, the notorious Fifty Cent Monster, actually a very fine and sturdy 66 capable of superb results that Bob Wilson had in fact obtained for fifty cents. Taral added some of his own material to Phil's and made a fresh start. On printing night he gathered together the usual group for a marathon production session at his apartment.

This was in June 1974. I had never seen a stencil before, much less an electrostencil, of which there were also samples on display. I had never seen a Gestetner before either and the black ink-covered monster was a very strange thing. Taral was still typing stencils at the eleventh hour and I was treated to a demonstration of corflu in action. Everybody got a turn at cranking the Gestetner, slipsheeting and deslipsheeting. We learned that rubber cement was not the best way to hold electros in place. Glicksohn who was there pronounced conditions primitive.

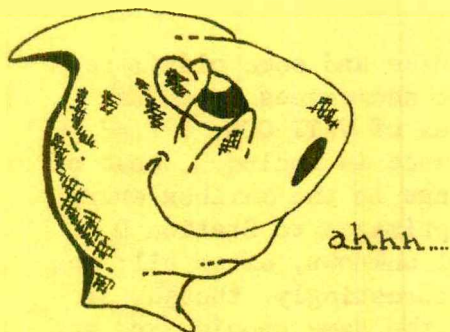
But the zine turned out very well. Fanzine enthusiasm was either kindled or rekindled amongst the group members, and many plans were laid. OSFIC...EVENTUALLY included my first published fan writing, a reprint from my old college newspaper, and my first public use of the pseudonym "Victoria Vayne" which in those days looked strange to me. Taral had plans already then for his own zine, to be called DELTA PSI, the first of the "new" zines to be planned, at any rate, if not actually published. And plans were made among others for the second of the club one-shots.

DISTAFF was conceived as a sort of joint project of the women in the club, and was edited by Janet Small. All along it had been planned that I would write up my notes on the women in sf meeting as a keynote article; and from various sources the zine was filled out. An all-night party

IS THAT AN
IDEA OR
AN OMEN?



MR



bered well how tired I used to get with the manual in all-day writing marathons. I went lavish, but not too lavish--a dual pitch model but not with the correcting key. Janet might have had something to do with helping me persuade myself to get one--she offered a loan if I needed it and she'd get to play with it too. I placed the order, and resigned myself to 12 weeks wait for delivery.

And in the fall of 1974 I suddenly found myself on the FANFAIR III committee, handling the banquet, with committee meetings to attend. The

most vivid thing I remember now of all those meetings apart from the fracas in mid 1975 was a walk Taral and I originated from one of them, in which we got lost and turned around to a degree that even now still amazes me. The conversation had been about bean gun wars, and the neighbourhood very convoluted and of great similarity from street to street at night, and I still don't know how it happened.

The Christmas issue of SYNAPSE was going to be special, in blue ink, and since the Gestetner 120 I had acquired had been used in blue ink, we would print it at my place. However, the damn thing would not accept 24 pound paper. Time was running out, the Fifty Cent Monster was in Don Mills and I was downtown, and only two other machines were anywhere close--Bakka's and Glicksohn's. We went to Glicksohn's; he lived only a block away from me.

Glicksohn's mimeo was a fully automated, gleaming, multi-featured magnificent Gestetner 366, and Enchanted. Not one sheet of paper was wasted that night and we had become used to heavy losses on the Fifty Cent Monster in those days. Taral mastered the operation in no time after a brief demonstration by Mike; and I deslipsheeted in a croggled haze. I had to have one, and immediately started forming plans as to how I could fit such an acquisition into my budget for the next year.

My own fanzine plans moved ahead in jerky steps. Mike said I could print my ish on his machine, which solved one set of problems. The typewriter hadn't arrived on time, which caused another. And by then I had derived enough enjoyment out of work on VATI-CON to know I'd want to do more, and had tentative plans laid for a genzine for the following spring, this time my own privately financed project. Several names I had been considering for this zine I had to discard because of previous or concurrent usage or just general idiocy; and I believe SIMULACRUM was a suggestion from Taral made in an almost throw-away manner during one of the test orbits in Siegfried the Flyin' Volksbug, my transportation of those days. It stuck; and SIMULACRUM it became.

Finally, the Selectric arrived and I started in on the stencils for VATI-CON. The zine went to forty pages with a Judith Merrill/Fred Pohl/Father Gibson dialogue and good stuff from Janet Small, Bob Webber, Jim Allan and Taral besides my own not-so-hot writing. It was not without troubles--some bad e-stencils, an inferior article accepted out of a sense of duty to the club, forgetting to allow for a stapling margin in the printing, layout misjudgements; but it was on the nice heavy blue paper so traditional for Canadian zines, and was printed on Glicksohn's machine with almost no hitches whatsoever, by Taral, with slipsheeting.

VATI-CON had a small distribution only, to names suggested by Taral and gleaned from LOCUS and KARASS lists. I was at that time still totally out of touch with fandom and then still not receiving any zines and seeing only some of

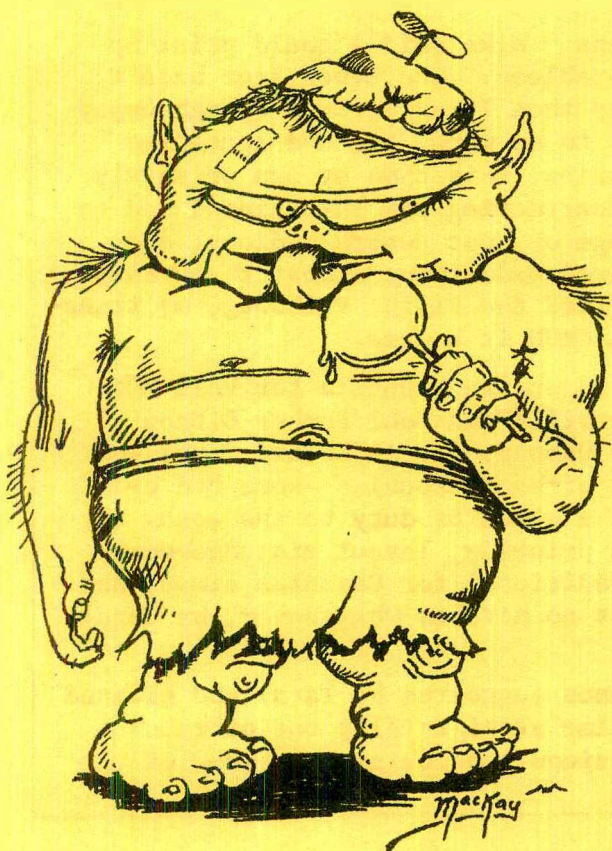
Taral's (pretty well the only fan in Toronto besides Mike and some oldtimers receiving any sizeable quantity of zines at all). The addressees were just names; today, checking my records to see who got copies of VATI-CON, I find that I have met very many of them, and, if correspondence is included, most of them. In those days of 1975's winter, one or two things in the mailbox every couple of days delighted me; and I made many more pilgrimages to Station D to check 156 than the situation warranted. I was a total unknown, after all; the response I did get was flattering and gratifying. Interestingly, though, at that time Taral and I sent spec copies to pretty well the same people, and yet managed to get a very different selection of zines in trade.

I attended my first regional, CONFUSION 13, along with other Toronto fans for whom it was also a first regional. I still didn't know anyone and made a pest of myself, but did meet Cy Chauvin and Larry Downes and Randy Bathurst.

Bakka bought an offset press and Taral brought tidings of the store's Gestetner being turned in for some ridiculously low price as part trade-in. I thought I would offer them a bit more, and with Taral negotiating the prices to the point of matching, I would up with a 360 in good working order for around \$300. (A decent price in Canada.) Taral would have liked to have gotten it for himself, and informed me thus, but at least he would still get to use it this way. Thus the new generation of Toronto fans acquired another mimeo, besides Taral's and the one that Jim Allan had obtained. And this one was electric, and a lot like Glicksohn's. Its fannish christening came the same weekend it was brought into my place (thanks to a lot of 100-pound weight lifting by Taral) with the pubbing of SYNAPSE 7, assisted by a sizeable group.

I was in the habit those days of occasional suppers with Janet Small and Bob Wilson at Plato's Symposium, a low-priced but decent restaurant near their place which was a fannish hangout (but now taken over by the Hare Krishna people as a vegetarian place). There, one night over supper, a fiendish idea was born. A parody of SYNAPSE was conceived of, written and illustrated, the cover electrostencilled by Janet at work, and the zine produced on the newly acquired 360 very clandestinely. RELAPSE reached Taral over in Don Mills just as he was suffering a relapse; he had had kidney stone problems (which he originally thought were back aches caused by carrying the Gestetner). At that point a third zine to publish fell into my hands, an interim club newsletter to cover the gap left by no SYNAPSE while Taral was in the hospital. So, to the rescue with Janet and Bob helping out.

Now, with the electric mimeo available and more material and a greater atmosphere of fannish inspiration, SYNAPSE became bigger and bigger. Taral became expert with that 360 even though I spent more time with it; for me it was always a cranky machine and for him it performed magnificently. I learned to slipsheet fast. Larger groups came to be needed every month, and production



of the newsletter became smooth and efficient and very waste-free.

SIMULACRUM 1 (whole number 2) went into production in May 1975. Improvements like pliofilm and typing plates, a typeball with better stencil cutting characteristics, more artwork (thanks partly to Barry Kent MacKay and to Taral for many "custom" pieces) and recognition of printing pitfalls like margination, all helped. Taral, Janet and Bob all appeared in its pages and my own highly variable pieces rounded it out.

That one was the infamous anti-mush issue, with the notorious Illo on Page 27. But hindsight brings this issue to memory painfully now, with the somewhat one-sided representation of my romantic problems and a subconscious sympathy ploy and a very neoish handling of the lettercolumn. But the repro, thanks to Taral's understanding of the machine, was good and that helped enormously.

Patrick Hayden arrived in Toronto (several times). He brought new enthusiasm, plans for a zine of his own, and word of apas for the first time to many of the group. DISTAFF 2 went into production, Janet's second issue and the last zine of the sort to be club-sponsored. This had a forum on THE FEMALE MAN and some fannish items and pieces by Susan Wood; and was completed, as Janet had been promising herself, in time for FANFAIR. SYNAPSE went down to smaller size issues after four superb large issues in the spring and summer, due to budget limitations.

And FANFAIR III happened, and all that went on as an aftermath. There were indications of coming trouble before the con, apart from hotel hassles and last-minute forgettings. There was also some power jockeying and friction developing within the committee, and disagreements on details. After the con all hell broke loose, with unfounded accusations and counteraccusations, character assassination, namecalling, resignations, and the embarrassment of a large profit. FANFAIR had been somewhat overpriced for a regional, and there had been some blunders, and the normal share of problems with the hotel putting a damper on the fans' activities; the profit didn't sit well.

OSFiC went into a period of constitutional reform after the debacle (which led to Taral and my resignations from the executive and the end of SYNAPSE as a club newsletter), which rendered the meetings very boring for the next half year, and the fanzine fans, the group known as the Derelicts, did their own thing, watching the club only just enough to ensure that the profit money was properly spent and that a reasonable constitution was adopted.

The fanzine scene in Toronto was on the upswing in 1975 as compared to the previous two years. Still, at the time of FANFAIR there were only SYNAPSE, SIMULACRUM, DISTAFF, the infrequent and still invisible XENIUM, and plans for DELTA PSI. Patrick, after the con, directly or indirectly sparked interest in, inspired, primed the pump for, and/or assisted to some extent in the publication of half a dozen new titles over the next year. His own THANGORODRIM! was a compact and frequent personalzine, response oriented and interesting and sometimes controversial; he also produced a number of interesting apazines. Phil Paine did one issue of CALCIUM LIGHT NIGHTS on

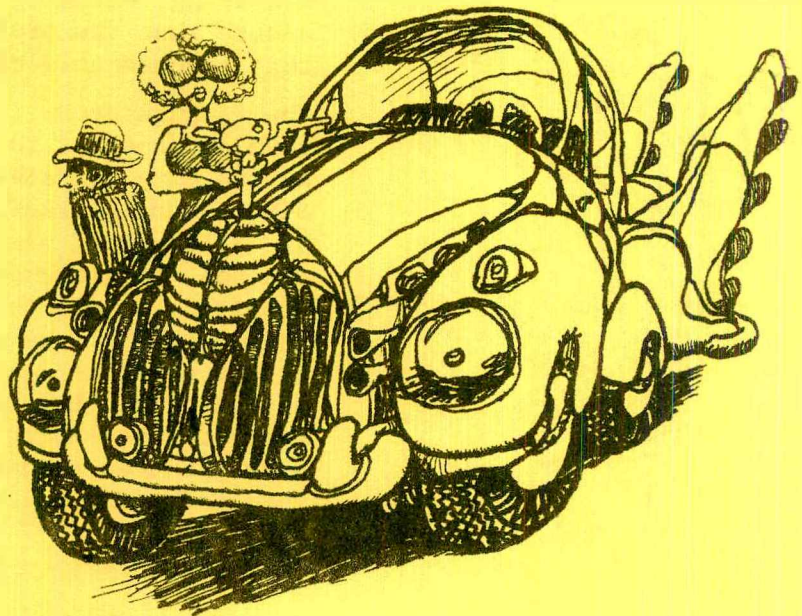


mimeo, and then went on to use ditto for the following issue, a beautiful job with multicolour artwork and fascinating mini-articles. Bob Webber started PANTEKHNICON with a ditto apazine he called "-1" and then on to mimeo, eventually using electrostencilled photographs, and running an interesting on-going discussion on "why yet another fanzine?"--a question Bob himself fielded quite adroitly. Bob Wilson published two issues of SOOTLI in that period, personalzines with sensawonder and a marvelous use of words, about books and kites and movies. Janet Small came out with BEHIND THE RABBIT, a pleasant two-page personalzine that insists on staying that way, but with a lot of substance packed into the space. Bill Brummer started STRANGE DYSTOPIAS off with ditto, as had Bob Webber, but switched to mimeo with his second issue, a personalzine (and the most recent issue today is a genzine). Bill also acquired the second electric Gestetner available to the newer generation of fan publishers. And finally, close before Big MAC, Jennifer Bankier produced ORCA, a large eclectic personal/discussion/genzine with in-depth book studies, reviews, personal anecdotes, and fannish writing. Also in that period, Jennifer added yet another fannish Gestetner to the collection owned by Toronto publishing fans.

After FANFAIR, starting slowly and with growing momentum, I caught the con bug with a vengeance. In the fall, I treated myself to a place trip to Chicago and WINDYCON II, a con that may not have been that great intrinsically but which I most thoroughly enjoyed, and which was the first con I attended at which people knew who I was. Dismissing ANONYCON as a less-than-perfect weekend spent mostly not at the con but rather looking at the Falls and exploring Wax Museum Country on the Canadian side with the Derelicts and a handful of new friends and with the dubious special attraction of super expensive hotel rooms; the other enjoyable con of the fall was OCTOCON, small, invitational, pleasant, and with a lot of bowling. (In fact it was not long afterwards that Taral and Bob Webber came up with "bowling" as a useful word to describe things that fans do which are not exactly fannish.)

During that fall I published SIMULACRUM 2 (whole number 3), the most trouble-plagued of all my issues. The Gestetner was on the fritz, refusing to pump ink evenly or consistently even though everything else worked. The ever helpful Canadian Post Office was on strike, an errand run for matters concerning printing caused an automobile accident, the printer didn't do quite enough covers for all the copies, and printing help was not that easy to find. But it got into the mail at last after a trip to Niagara Falls before noon and the Saturday closing time of American post offices. Via a Buffalo mail drop, Toronto fandom contrived not to be overly isolated for the duration of the strike.

As the year drew to a close, I traded in the no longer quite so trusty Siegfried the Flyin' Volksbug on a much more mundane new gold Dart Swinger that came to be called Terry Car. This opened up new vistas in con-going, and the first



one, CONFUSION 12 in early 1976, was an adventure in hazardous conditions. The return trip required a night's sojourn in London Ontario before the road was once more safe enough for the completion of the drive to Toronto. Other cons followed: MARCON, BALCON, AUTOCLAVE, and what was and is still the best con I've ever been to, MIDWESTCON 76; all at roughly monthly intervals.

In early 1976, having added an electrostenciller to the Vaynity Press arsenal, I produced SIMULACRUM 2A (whole number 4). I knew at that point that if I ran as many letters as I wanted to in the next issue I'd have a 100-page monster on my hands, and I didn't feel up to that. Thus, the numbering system screw-up of the letterzines was born, the idea being that letter issues would have number-letter designations and the genzines pure numbers only. SIMULACRUM 2A was stencilled and printed (with the Gestetner once again working properly) but sat in a box for a couple of months.

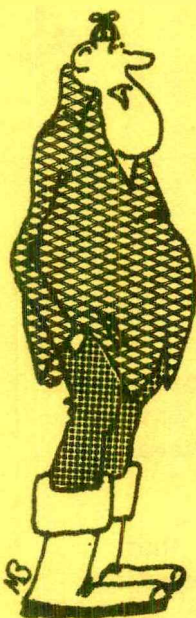
In March I lost my job, partly because of a reluctance to give up my writing and publishing for the mundane world of work. Because I wanted to keep the car, I sold off a lot of possessions and liquidated securities to pay off the loan fast. I moved to a cheaper apartment, Jim Allan's former place closer to downtown, which was also a bit larger than my old high-rise place and much more tolerant of typing and mimeographing at peculiar hours.

Long walks and offbeat expeditions continued, interest in apas was on the upswing although regular fanzine publishing was tapering off, and the first glimmers of the Women's Apa came into being, the result of a mention of an idea of Susan Wood's in the BCSFA newsletter which I passed along to Janet and Jennifer and a number of women I was writing to at the time.

Around May came word of the FAAn Award nominations for 1975 work, and I was floored to find out that SIMULACRUM 2 was on for best single issue and myself for best editor. I didn't think my work deserved it, particularly because it wasn't "mine" totally--I had had heavy support in 1975 from people such as Taral behind the scenes, about which voters wouldn't know. Others claimed also that it was undeserved. Still, it was ego-boo, particularly since the nominations were for work done in the very first year I was involved in fanzines. Ultimately, though, I was neither surprised nor disappointed at

the results of the final voting (in which I placed last, or perhaps next to last, in both single issue and editor categories).

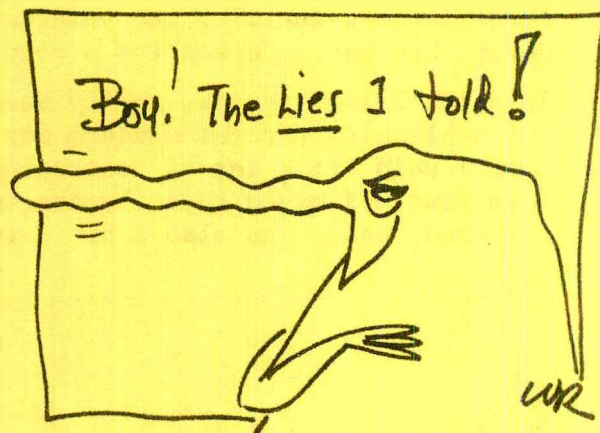
The summer of 76 featured a few fannish visits, trips to spend weekends with fans on the East Coast. There was a trip to Philadelphia with Taral to help Linda Bushyager collate GRANFALLOON 20, a sort of mini-con with about a dozen fans present and a very enjoyable weekend. A few weeks later, again with Taral, there was a trip to Boston, East Providence and New Haven to visit, respectively, Bonnie Dalzell, Don and Sheila D'Ammassa, and Al Sirois and Linda Johnson. In many ways, I find I enjoy these sort of weekends more than regular conventions.



VICTORIA?
VAYNE? NAH,
NEVER HAPPEN.

I had planned to try a diary format for SIMULACRUM 2B (whole number 5), working in the letters as they appeared, when it seemed that the next genzine issue was to be delayed. But with procrastination and temptations of diversions, things piled up so much that I abandoned the project (20 stencils typed, any offers?) and went back to the regular format. That issue was 30 pages long, all letters-on-letters, and the plan was to print it on twiltone for a change (and for avoidance of the necessity of slipsheeting).

Tragedy struck, though, during SYMPOSIUM, the invitational fannish con in Toronto that summer, with the Fonz Death of the Gestetner. I came home to find a Fonz sticker on the 360, Taral grinning fiendishly, and a number of other fans around. A couple of hours later the machine stopped. Fortunately the Gestetner company came through with a loaner, and SIMULACRUM 2B was saved.



SIMULACRUM 2B LOCs

/I never had any pretensions that SIMULACRUM 2B was one of the high points in the zine's life; it was an issue-in-a-hurry, put together so that I'd have something to hand out at MAC (just as this one might be at SUNCON). Nevertheless, there were some letters-on-letters-on-letters.../

TARAL WAYNE MACDONALD In SIM 2A I wrote a candid letter of comment, that correctly predicted it would get a strongly negative response from some fans. I should be pleased that my powers of precognition are so precocious, but somehow I feel quite the opposite. In some secret recess of my brain, perhaps betwixt corpus callosum and superior collicus, there exists a shard of the broken myth that fans are slans. To my surprise, this is true; only the future they represent is the future of 1984...only such slans could misconstrue me so.

If the shoe fits, wear it! Mike, Ben, Buck.

Mike: "Wayne" (sic) "is perhaps a little hard on you and that's probably a reflection of some jealousy on his part that you've achieved the fannish notoriety that he's been after for some time and done it in a fraction of the time. Wayne's negative reaction to the acclaim some people have received by the degree of intimacy they have chosen to put into their writing is merely his own personal opinion and it may even stem from his own lack of such personal intimacy in his own life." And I take the liberty to quote from another fanzine the readers probably haven't read (NIT WIT by Michael Harper), "I get the impression that a lot of Wayne's convictions for which he fights so hear-

tily are developed after the fact, in the peace and quiet of his own room where he needn't defend them or proclaim them until after the script has been learned. I'm suspect of such 'convictions'." I'm getting to the point where I don't think Glicksohn's snide jokes are just "fannish humour" any more, and these quotes are the reason why. I am tired of character assassination, and, Mike, I would be grateful if you either substantiate these statements or retract them. In print, please.

As for the discussion I began about my art and your judgement of it, I would not at all mind continuing it, perhaps in XENIUM.

Ben: "Typical male schtick, pushing his pedagogical superiority by revealing secrets. Bah." Is it automatically sexist to contradict another person if you are male and the other person is female? Or are you so chauvinistically protecting the weaker sex against the stronger? Who's sexist then? But, of course, you may only have meant to console Victoria against what you may have felt to be a disturbing comment. At the cost of alienating me? Why? Do think a little harder next time you wish to be well-meaning.

Buck: "There is already an adequate phrase to describe MacDonald's passions for argument: it's called 'compulsive nonconformity'." And what explains your passion for argument? If we are assigning automatic behaviour to people today, Buck, may I have the honour of suggesting that you are, perhaps, a compulsive cynic? There is no First Cause or button pusher in me that makes me "nonconformist", I assure you. I am a nonconformist only because I am me, and nobody else.

Each of you has acted against the tone of my previous letter. It sounded unpleasant, therefore it was the author of the letter at fault. Not one of you tried to consult the facts--facts which Victoria herself confirms as true. Your words reduce to commiserative noise, not true communication.

The three of you look pretty silly, standing around in shoes you weren't meant to wear. Cast them off, and forget our differences!

Gællt!æhæilin, Taral

/Taral's candid letter in SIM 2A refers back to the editorials in 1 and 2, which in the cold light of reason today strike me as overreaction and only half of the truth. What Taral pointed out in that letter was something that I at that time, because I was on drugs, was unable to see: a sympathy ploy out of all proportion to the gravity of the situation, and a ploy perhaps unconsciously designed to garner myself a lot of empathy from fandom. From the success of SIMULACRUM since then, the ploy seems to have worked--and this is something I'm not very happy about today--I would have preferred to earn my place honestly. Taral spotted phoniness, and nowadays I am in accord with this. There was much more to the business than what was in SIMULACRUM 1, I have to take more of the blame than I let on then; and fortunately for SIMULACRUM readers, I am confining further discussion of my various problems to the Women's Apa. These days I am waging campaigns of my own against



phoniness; and it seems to me that what Taral was doing was along the lines of warning me that I was using a phony schtick and suggesting that eventually I would realize it and feel unhappy about it in retrospect. He was right./

BUCK COULSON But what is an intelligent female doing with a Fonzie sticker in the first place? No wonder your Gestetner expired--it was ashamed to be associated with you.

There's a reason for the conditioning process of society; anarchy doesn't work, and neither do codes of laws. Social conditioning does, to an extent. The problem is that a majority of the population refuses to reasonably consider its actions. As long as their actions don't infringe on other people (as long as they are totally isolated, that is) it doesn't make any difference. But with increasing population density comes an increasing need to get along with one's neighbours. Which requires social conditioning. (Laws are of very little use --as witness any period in history when laws clashed with social conditioning. Over the long haul, laws may help to create a change in the conditioning; it's probably the major benefit we get from them.) As for stereotypes imposed on each of us--they're imposed only on those who are unwilling to think for themselves, and for that purpose they're probably necessary. (The hardship does not fall on the individualists, who have no trouble with conditioning, or with the sheep, who actively want and need conditioning, but on the ones on the borderline. So? Along with free lunches, there ain't no such thing as utopias, either.)

/The idea of everybody being free to do what they want (within limitations of others' rights and liberties) is attractive, but the great majority of people are not terribly bright, imaginative or able to anticipate consequences of their actions; so that it is a great temptation to try to make them do the "intelligent" thing. Unfortunately, when this happens, the power to "make them" is often in the wrong hands, and what they are "made" to do can be equally or even more stupid than what they'd do in their natural course. And everybody who thinks has his own plan for saving the world.

Social conditioning is like laws in that it "makes people do things", except more by threats of disapproval from peers than by the more classical threats of law enforcement. Laws may change some social conditioning but a lot of change in that direction arises from really stupid sources. Society's "conventions" are in many cases ludicrous: Sunday blue laws, nudity taboos, the multitudinous rules of etiquette, fashion and dress conventions, behaviour of males to females both "chivalrous" and sexist.

Non-thinking types may fall into stereotypes naturally because that's the way they'd be naturally, or they find it easier to go along and conform to a set pattern than to carve out their own identity. I wouldn't say stereotypes are "necessary" as much as that they just naturally happen.

What do you mean, "individualists...have no trouble with conditioning"? They could resist it well, I'd think, but also suffer the trouble of jeers and heckles and stares and remarks from the "group mind" about their idiosyncracies whenever they don't go along with what is "accepted" by the masses. (I get this sort of shit all the time, about things even as minor as the fact that I have a very rapid natural walking pace.)

May I quote from a remark on the back of the envelope your letter came in? A Bicentennial sticker quoting Daniel Webster, "God grants liberty only to those who love it, and are always ready to guard and defend it." followed by your own "and provides the rest with social conditioning."/

(COULSON, cont.) Norris says "we must learn to exclude from our definition of 'friend' those people who are slight or passing and superficial acquaintances." Again, how many fans haven't already learned this? Most of the people

I know--admittedly a rather crusty lot--have quite rigid distinctions between "friends" and "friendly acquaintances".

As for "love" and "friendship" being synonymous; nonsense. (In the first place, Norris has been complaining about insufficient graduations of meaning in the words we use--after which he tries to eliminate the graduation between "friend" and "lover". In the second place, "love" does imply physical attraction, as well as a very close friendship. If it's been degraded to a synonym for "sex"--and it has, in many places--it's because of mealy-mouthed individuals who insist on euphemisms for any terms they deem objectionable. "Love" in place of "sex", "prostitute" in place of "whore", "mortician" in place of "undertaker", "funeral director" in place of "mortician", etc. There's not much to be done about that except use the term properly as long as we can be understood.)

Yes, Mike, I'm happy to receive the approval of my friends. Whether or not they are peers is immaterial. Actually, I don't think I know any peers; as far as I know, all the English fans are commoners. (Any other meaning of "peer" comes from "peer group" and is more of that social conditioning so necessary for the unthinking.) Fandom is a peerless society.

Lindsay has an interesting concept for sport hunting. However, most animals today aren't killed by sportsmen; they're killed by businessmen, housing contractors, auto owners, etc. Would he be willing to extend his idea to, say, the housing industry--for every acre of wilderness destroyed, one family gets dissolved by its house? (And if not, then he's guilty of condemning a practice only if the practitioner enjoys it.) Auto drivers do kill each other off with enough regularity to make changes unnecessary. Maybe we should drop an A-bomb on a Russian city in response to its whaling activities, or sink the next British cruiser that invades Icelandic fishing waters.

Come to think of it, he's got a great idea there. I'll go along with it.

DON FITCH It sure would be nice if all issues of SIMULACRUM were available by subscription. Almost every one of the (50 or so) fanzines which I've been filing away this evening has a page or five of scribbled notes for a loc stuck away inside it--but of course they weren't typed out and mailed; there's hardly ever been time for that during the past few years. *Sigh* What your policy (and that of many other faneds) of requiring locs does is simple enough--it either divorces many of us from a large and significant part of the fanzine world, or it causes us to dash off a page or so of words put together helter-skelter in an attempt to communicate half-developed thoughts. (Or maybe quarter-developed; half-developed is what comes out when I Really Work at writing.) Fortunately, you say you'll accept the enclosed \$\$ for the next issue (no longer subs? Oh, well, the post office can probably use a few more 13¢ses.)

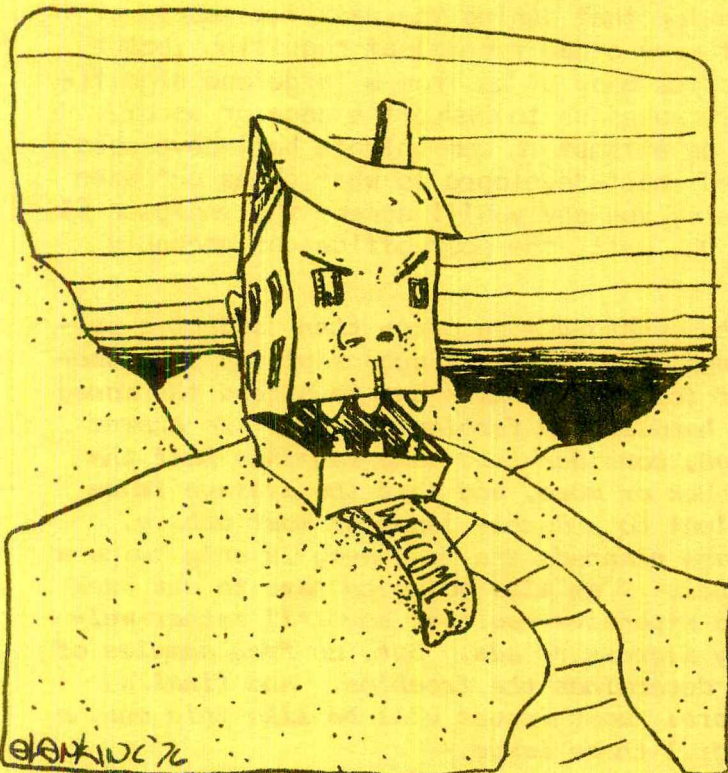
/The SIMULACRUM availability policy has changed more often than (select a suitable metaphor). At the moment, though, I will accept subscriptions on a one-at-the-time basis (not out of fear of folding the zine but to spread the money out more usefully) at \$2.50 plus 25¢ handling on foreign cheques. To answer critics who say this price is too high, consider that many fanzines half the size of SIMULACRUM already charge a buck or more, and that the average issue of SIMULACRUM at 80+ pages is equivalent to a double issue of most others. Because of some special projects I have planned, the frequency is only twice a year--less than most smaller-size zines. I am also going to have to cut back the mailing list--this is getting too expensive--so that now I'll rather welcome subbers without actually placing aggressive ads. But, no free samples or even reduced-rate ones; my whim only determines the freebies. And finally, the genzine/letterzine split is no more: most issues will be like this one, a combination; with the occasional special theme issue./

(FITCH, cont.) Women who wear a lot of fussy makeup and pay Great Attention to their clothes (and men who are similarly Style Conscious) generally turn me off. These are superficialities, often indulged in at the expense of things which I consider more Important. (oops! misleading statement there: such displays of Vanity turn me off; I frequently end up liking the people anyhow, when/if I get to know them--but perhaps that does not happen with the more Extreme ones.) Similarly, the whole Dress Up in Fancy Clothes & Pretend You're Someone Else syndrome, now so common in fandom at the costume shows and among the SCAers, leaves me uncomprehending and cold. They seem to enjoy it, and it does no apparent harm to anyone, so I guess it's ok, but...I usually go somewhere else when it's happening, as I do when people are snogging heavily.

At the same time, I wouldn't want to Put Down people who wear their hair long, like Eric Mayer, or dress modishly like Harrison Rose or Paula Anthony--it's an easy and comfortable part of them, and probably better than being excessively drab and klutzy like so many fans. Maybe the Secret is that only I, of all the people in fandom, have the precisely Correct balance of all these things. Or Maybe Not.

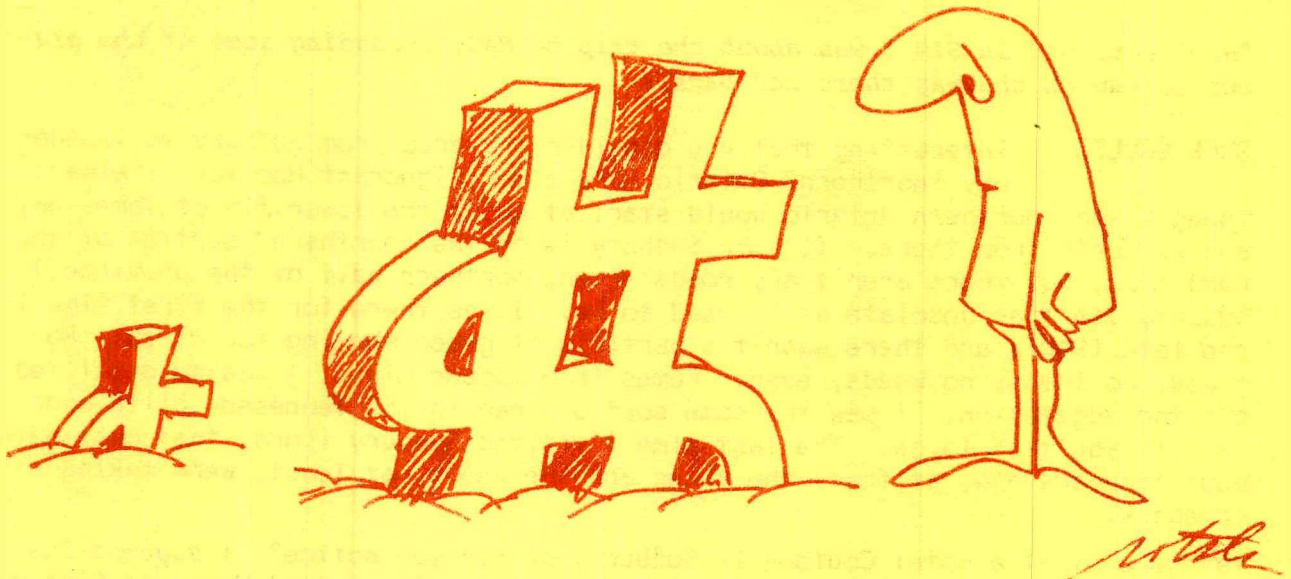
LAURINE WHITE Mae Strelkov prefers beehives to anthills. I'd never seen a beehive until visiting Kansas City. The Osage Honey Farm is several miles to the east, in Sibley, Missouri. A hive surrounded by clear plastic walls is located in the visitors' center. Two narrow rubber tubes go through the wall behind the hive and outside, for the bees to enter. One tube was connected to the plastic box like this */curving upwards from the box so that the point of exit to outside was higher up than the point of entrance from the box/*. The bees climbing up to leave were overwhelmed by the vaster number coming down into the hive. For each step an outgoing bee climbed, it slid down three steps, pushed back by all the returning bees. Since the number of bees exiting had to equal the number entering, most of the outgoing bees must have left through the other tube, which was level. There might be an appropriate comparison with something in the real world, but I can't think of anything right now.

/How's this: you can break out of your situation and seek new ways and a new life, by an easy route or a more difficult one, and most will take the easy route. However, if it doesn't work out, you can get back, cop out, return to the way you were. It's even easier to come back than you left, even if you took the easy way away. And in coming back and copping out the easy way, you hinder and harrass and in some cases prevent the break out of others trying to change their situation. Or maybe it's much simpler than that: most people are bloody lazy and the lazy ones can hinder those few that have energy and ambition. Anybody out there with some examples from real life?/



NON SEQUITUR INTERLUDE

One problem apart from all the personal and interpersonal ones that faced me after MAC (about which I really don't want to talk further) was the fact that the Gestetner 360 was most thoroughly dead. Now, back at BALCON earlier in 1976, there had been a 466 on display, and over this I had wiggled out as much as I had over the Ssscotch Press in the Old Days. I was only sporadically employed at the time, though, and no amount of scheming made this new passion feasible. However, steady work came a few months later, and my dreams took on more substance. By the time the 360 died, I had made up my mind to order a new machine, and this unpleasant turn of events gave me an excuse. So, there it was, finally, delivered a few days after my return from MAC, my own 466 complete with accessories and two colour change kits.



In the meantime, the Women's Apa had taken on substance. In the summer, when it developed that Susan Wood did not have the time to handle it herself, Janet Small and I offered to handle it from Toronto; with Janet ultimately having full charge when I found myself busy with other projects. Dates and guidelines for the first mailing were distributed at MAC, and in October 1976 the first mailing went out.

I worked on SIMULACRUM 3 (whole number 6) pretty steadily through September and October, interrupting work only to go to PgHLANGE, a very enjoyable relaxation, with visits of Darroll and Rosemary Pardoe and of Eric Lindsay, with WINDYCON III which I did not enjoy and OCTOCON 77 which I did. SIMULACRUM 3 was in the mail in November, and it was in some ways technically the least trouble-plagued of all the issues. The new Gestetner 466 provided much better printing than the old one, and besides, with it it was possible for me to handle the printing-and-slipsheeting operation entirely by myself. (In fact the entire production, typing-to-collating, I did entirely by myself.)

SIMULACRUM 3 LOCs

/One comment I got repeatedly on SIMULACRUM 3 was that the contents did not live up to the appearance. I quite agree--it's probably the best-looking and best-printed of the lot, but after everything was done, I found there were things I should have edited more tightly or perhaps omitted entirely. While the issue does not embarrass me into mortification, I'm not happy with it.

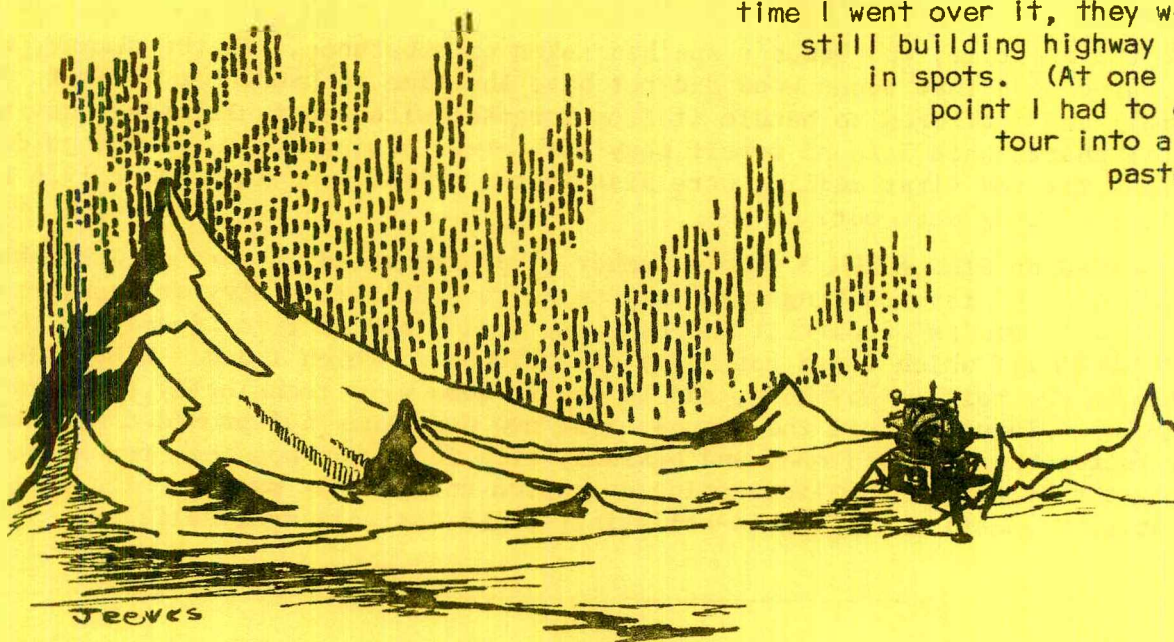
And although I had less technical trouble with this issue than previous ones, there were still some problems. Ink spill-over on some copies on the black line on the ToC page; first ever colour change and failing to compensate for the different consistency of red ink; unfamiliarity with the new machine leading to things like not using the tilter control on the screen to straighten out the copy on the pages. However...

TRAVELLING

"Non Sequitur" in SIM 3 was about the trip to MAC, including some of the places we saw on the way there and back./

BUCK COULSON Interesting that you consider the area from Sudbury to Thunder Bay "northern" Ontario. As a mere ignorant Hoosier, I always thought that northern Ontario would start at about the lower tip of James Bay and go north from there. (I know Sudbury is on the "northern" section of the road maps, but there aren't any roads in the northern half of the province.) Sudbury isn't as desolate as it used to be. I was there for the first time in the late 1940's and there wasn't a particle of green showing for miles. No grass, no tress; no weeds, even. Fumes from copper mines, I was told, killed all the vegetation. I saw the same sort of area in the Tennessee hills once, but it wasn't as large. The last time I visited Sudbury (Lord, that must have been 15 years ago, at that) the trees and the weeds, at least, were making a comeback.

Is there still a Hotel Coulson in Sudbury, or did you notice? I suppose the area from Sault Ste. Marie to Sudbury is getting built up now; the first time I went over it, they were still building highway 17 in spots. (At one point I had to detour into a pasture,



through a barnlot, and out the farmer's driveway back to the highway.) But I was impressed by the area then; struck me as a lovely place to live if there had been any work available. (Somewhere in the country near Blind River, which was big enough even then to have a moderate-sized business district. Probably has a shopping mall by now.) I like to feel isolated.

/According to Phil Paine, "north" begins at a specific street in the city of North Bay./

BRETT COX I'm glad you enjoyed Hannibal--when I was seven my family accompanied my father on an extended business trip to Columbia, MO and while we were there we trucked over to Hannibal and took in all the Twain memorabilia, which I enjoyed immensely even though I was (obviously) nowhere nearly as knowledgeable concerning/interested in Mark Twain as I am now. We went in the cave too, and while your adjective "neat" aptly describes my reaction to the experience, the main thing I remember about it was that it was cold in there! Since it was the middle of summer and everyone on the tour was tightly clad, the guides passed out denim jackets at the door to keep everyone from freezing to death. Did they cut the lights off at any time while you were in the cave? You've never really been in the dark until you've been inside an unlit cave.

/We did get a taste of absolute darkness while we were there. I remember thinking about blindness and trying to appreciate the feeling of being blind, but there was still a tiny bit of light--my radium watch dial./

GETTING ALONG

/Lastish's "Non Sequitur" went on to discuss my relationship with Toronto fandom in the light of the unsuccessful trip./

CAROLYN DOYLE Victoria, in your editorial, you seem to be very concerned with other people's impressions and opinions of you--even those of people who don't sound like they count for much. I knew the feeling. My littlest sister (7), after being drug around the Talbot Street Art Fair for all of 45 minutes, started griping and complaining, then faced me hotly and said, "Well, I hope you're happy, Carolyn!" This upset me, to the point where I spent about 15 minutes trying to defend my position (as I believe you are doing a little), and saying that it was mother, not I, who had been wanting to go (true). Even as I was expounding upon this, I realized it wasn't worth it, that their opinions of me were just going to be lowered, and that it didn't matter what they thought, because I knew I was in the right--but, I couldn't seem to stop. It feels bad to be unjustly accused, doesn't it? In me, it triggers a too-strong defense mechanism. I suppose I'm still kind of insecure--now that I really believe I am a good person, of worth, I feel I must try to keep my character unblemished, around everyone.

/This is familiar, the feeling that something has to be said, the helplessness at stopping, because of feelings that the last thing said still doesn't get the point across or all the matters at hand said, of feelings that by ending "now" you are leaving a bad final impression and yet blundering on and on in an effort to correct this. I still have problems with this./



JACKIE CAUSGROVE Why belong to any "group" at all? Can't you be your own woman without the support of a clique? I've had difficulty in relating to groups of people all my life, which is one reason I was/am so enchanted with fandom. You don't have to swallow the group as a whole to relate with it, fandom's too individualistic for that. In Chicago, for instance, there are several groups, the Old Time Fans, the Dorsai group, the SCA group, the College group, the collectors, the partyers--all overlapping to some degree, all a part of Fandom. I have most of my friends in one or two groups, yet don't consider myself part of either. I get along well with at least a few individuals of the other groups, dislike a few others, but in the main, ignore those who don't interest me just as they ignore me. There's no compulsion to like or be liked by everyone in fandom, and to attempt to do so leads only to frustration.

/While the post-MAC hostility is gone now, I'm still not close to Toronto fandom. Not in the inner circle, so to say. To be sure there are other fan groups in Toronto besides the fanzine fans, but they and I don't find each other interesting. I don't really have much choice but to be a loner, and in any event it makes it easy to leave Toronto when the time comes to move. (In progress at the moment: if I can land a job offer in the U.S. I may have an okay chance of getting in, and would like to locate in the "Boswash" corridor somewhere.

Further to the matter of "getting along", Patrick Hayden wrote a letter in which he suggested that I should not feel so trodden-upon when challenged in an opinion, but should talk out the opinion; and also he pointed out that the Derelict "party line" is not so, pointing out Jennifer Eankier and Bob Webber as two members who are not alongside a hardline libertarian-anarchistic viewpoint. Points well taken; I would have liked to print the letter (and fear I may be distorting his points somewhat out of dim memory) but he took it for a revision and this has not reached me./

THE LAW

/"Non Sequitur" finally covered the matter of my opinions concerning authoritarianism--basically ignore the victimless crimes, punish harshly the "victim" crimes, and leave me alone. In details, though, my opinions have changed since that editorial was written; I'm no longer so complacent about arbitrary authoritarianism or about wrongs done to people, and I yell more although I won't guarantee the accuracy of my opinions./

BRETT COX I'm basically in agreement with people who desire a maximum of individual liberty and take a dim view of anything which restricts it, but I think a lot of these people have their priorities mixed up. The fact is that there are tons of minor infringements on one's personal freedom which, while they may be bothersome, can and should be tolerated and/or ignored for the simple reason that they aren't important enough to fight about. For example, if I walked into a bookstore wearing my father's WWII flight jacket--the one with eight dozen pockets, all of which are large enough to hold a small fortune in paperbacks--and on my way out was asked to empty said pockets in order to reassure the proprietor that I hadn't ripped off any of his merchandise, I would do so with little or no complaint because it wouldn't be that big a deal. If, on the other hand, I wanted to go see an X-rated movie and found my path blocked by a picket line of middle-aged housewives dedicated to the eradication of filth from the movie screens and the purification of our precious bodily fluids, I would cheerfully slam my way through the crowd while throwing the vilest of imprecations at the microcephalic dingbats who would dare to rob me of one of my most basic rights--namely, to see whatever I damn

well please. Extreme examples, true, but applicable to the point I'm trying to make--namely, that some things are worth fighting for and others aren't, and a great many things that drive so-called "libertarians" up the wall aren't.

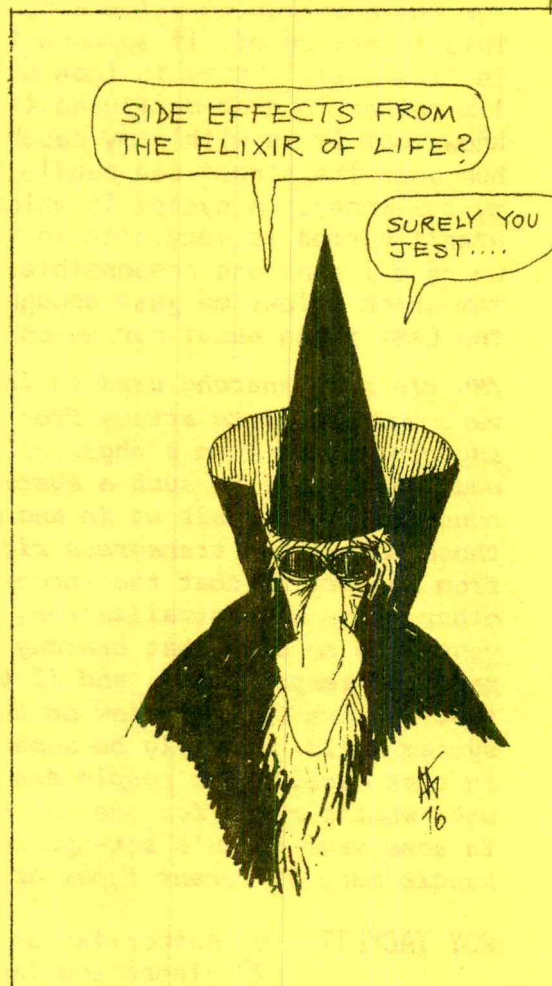
/A defense that might be used in the bookstore search example is that small erosions like this, if condoned, could lead to bigger wrongs. Yet, an honour system obviously doesn't work with people the way they are, and the innocent have to suffer for the guilty. It depends how you feel about the search of twenty-five customers leaving the store to detect the one who is stealing something. Which is more important, catching one thief or the liberties and rights of the other twenty-four? What about the rights of the store owner? Is there a better way of spotting a thief that does not involve innocent people? A successful rip-off artist causes prices to be raised for everybody, and everybody suffers. What about another tack, the one that if you have nothing to hide you have nothing to fear? There are always abuses. There are always people who like to push other people around. Ultimately in the real world, irrespective of what utopias you might like, it comes to a trade-off between your own liberties and rights and protection against bad people.

The Miss Grundies seem more clear-cut, at least the example you give. Victimless "crimes" should be your own business. There are too many people who think that just because they don't enjoy or like something, nobody else should have access to it at all./

D. GARY GRADY I cannot agree that a law that requires me to do something which I would do anyway is not my concern. For example, I have never used any recreational drug, even alcohol. But I strongly oppose laws which would put anyone in jail unjustly for doing something which is his or her own damned business. John Donne said "any man's death diminishes me". I'd extend that to anyone's loss of freedom.

/An example of a law that legislates something I would do anyway is Ontario's mandatory seatbelt law. On the other hand, those who don't wear seatbelts incur more injuries and demand more of the socialized medical insurance scheme here; I should have to pay for their stupidity? The only way out of this I can think of is optional seatbelt wearing but forfeiture of insurance coverage if belts are not worn. And that raises other objections. And a ludicrous sidepoint here is that the fine for not wearing a seatbelt (which endangers only yourself) is much higher than that for speeding (which endangers innocent people).

I would oppose a smoking ban too, although I don't smoke. Saccharin is banned because of a cancer risk; tobacco has a far greater cancer risk but is not banned (at least not yet, and not as long as the tobacco lobby is powerful, any more than a powerful sugar lobby as likely as not has a finger in sugar-substitute bans). I suspect money rather than concern for people's welfare is involved. Actually, though, neither tobacco nor saccharin should be banned.



People should be informed of the risks involved and left to make their own individual decisions. (But in this type of case, what about people who aren't too bright? In their case you don't inform so much as persuade; and that doesn't have them making their own decisions. Are you going to be callous and leave them to the probability of making a bad decision? Apply a survival of the fittest? It may come to another trade-off here.)/



MARC ORTLIEB It is every human being's fate to find his own particular road to hell. However, taking that to its logical conclusion does raise some awkward moral problems. At what age for instance can we allow a human to start paving his road? Who is to decide this in any case? If someone takes his right to inject himself with heroin, is it society's duty to look after him when he burns out? Don't get me wrong. I'm rather fond of marijuana (I almost tried to cop out then) myself but I know that it is within my capabilities to handle it. I don't know that the bum down the street can handle heroin and I'd rather not support his habit with my tax money. A system in which everyone does as they wish so long as others aren't harmed is very nice in theory but it has the underlying assumption that we're all sane and responsible. So finally I agree with you. I like any system which allows me just enough freedom to do what I want. I think this is the best thing about our so-called "Western democracies".

/My views on anarchy used to include the fear that in such a system I would be very vulnerable to attack from sickoes who would have no restraints on them anymore, since I am a physically weak person prone to panic under stress. I would feel that in such a system I would want a very secure fortress of a house to lock myself up in and a big gun. I prefer a forfeiture of rights of those people who transgress rights of others and some means of excluding them from society so that the innocent would be safe, be that "Coventry" or some other means of neutralization, if they form too great a danger. It was suggested to me once that anarchy would only work if people were all perfect (or sane and responsible), and if that were so any other system would work well too. My own further view on this was that if all people were "perfect" the system would naturally be some sort of anarchy. (If you can call it a "system" in that case.) But people are far from "perfect". And people are all different; what's right for one may not be for another; or their desires may differ. In some ways today's set-ups can be viewed as bad compromises designed to handle many different types of people equally badly. Or maybe not so equally./

ROY TACKETT On Authoritarianism and laws. 1] There are far too many laws.
2] There are far too many laws designed to protect us from our own folly.

I agree with you that law is necessary. If we are going to have any sort of society, that is. It would be fine if we didn't need them but what with people being what they are some sort of regulations are necessary. If those who are so concerned with abuses of the law would concern themselves more with seeing that laws are enforced properly they might have a chance of getting somewhere. I agree with you, for example, that we need laws to properly control the flow of traffic and insure vehicular safety. The problem with these laws, however, is that far too many municipalities use them primarily as a source of revenue and not to control traffic. It isn't really the laws themselves I get heated about but the way they are enforced.

Albuquerque has one of the highest crime rates in the U.S. Murder, assault, burglary, are of epidemic proportions. But the cops seem to spend most of

their time writing traffic tickets and hassling whores.

I do think that some sort of authoritarian government is almost inevitable. There are getting to be far too many people for government to control and maintain some semblance or order in any other way.

And I don't know if that will bother me much or not. Maybe not so long as my toes aren't stepped on too heavily.

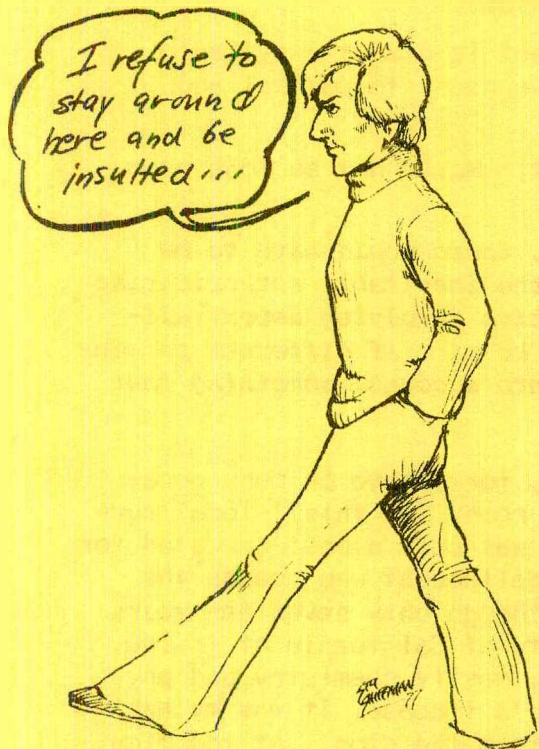
/In real life, because people are the way they are, there would have to be laws. That doesn't make it good, though. As for the inevitable authoritarian government, could there not possibly be an alternative involving decentralization? Bigness is worshipped too much. It would be nice if different personality types, desires, beliefs, needs, were taken into account; something that a one-system-for-all just doesn't do./

ALAN BOSTICK I must confess that I am a Criminal, for I have on many occasions willfully broken the (are you ready for this?) local curfew for people under eighteen, and, what's more, I was once almost arrested for it. Before you get the idea that I am a juvenile delinquent who spends the nights lurking in dark alleys, let me explain. Although only seventeen years old, I am a college student, going to the University of California at Irvine. Last winter, I had several classes in the evenings, mostly chemistry and physics lab periods. Since I do not yet have a driver's license, it was my habit to take the bus as far as I could, then walk home from the stop. At the time, I was not aware of the curfew law, so I did not give much thought to my getting home at around 10:30 or 11 PM. Then one night as I was walking home, I was stopped by the police.

"How old are you, son?" I was asked, and when I told them (there were two of them), they immediately responded with "Now, you know you're out after curfew, don't you?" I told them that I had never heard of the curfew law before, and assured them that I wasn't out on the street for any illicit purpose, but was a student returning home from an evening class. Either they didn't believe me, or would not admit that they did, for they kept me for several minutes questioning me, despite the fact that I had a current student ID and was carrying with me test and notebooks. After a time, one of them finally said, "Your story's too crazy to be a lie, so we'll let you go this time," while staring at me with an expression that seemed to say, we know that you're lying and that you're up to no good, but if we arrested you and it turned out that you are telling the truth we'd get into trouble. So, they let me go, and I got home. After that, I continued to do as I had been doing, since it was too late in the quarter to change classes to an arrangement that didn't have me out at night.

I think you can see my situation. To obey the law, I would have to set part of my studies aside, possibly to fail the classes. If I continued to go to classes as if nothing was wrong, I would be violating the law. It was my decision





to continue as I had been doing, since there was a much higher probability that I would fail certain classes if I obeyed the law than there was the chance that I would be caught if I didn't. I had more to gain and less to lose by breaking it.

My point is this: The curfew law was a ridiculous law in my case. There is no reason to keep me off the streets; I do not go around making trouble at night. A law that makes illegal acts that harm absolutely nobody should not be on the books. Hell, walking home from school doesn't even belong in the same class as such "victimless crimes" as prostitution.

And, if it is necessary for the police to make spot-checks to make sure that no crime is being committed, why is it necessary that they have to be rude and suspicious towards people who are not breaking any laws?

/Toronto fandom is frequently stopped and questioned during late night walks, and I have been along during some of these. One time Taral matched the description of someone who had just held up a milk store, and

was asked to open his briefcase. Fortunately the cops did not find the toy gun he had on him at the time. In general there's usually a fifteen minute delay while particulars are radioed in and records checked; there's usually bafflement at the fact that 1) we're out at such a peculiar hour, 2) we all live so far apart in the city, 3) we aren't necessarily headed homewards, and 4) if I'm along, that I'm not "with" anybody. There is not always necessarily rudeness and nastiness, though, although they do seem to depend on their position for an aura of power over innocent hikers.

Curfews are ridiculous, though. I'm not aware that Toronto has one, and even with the hassles we have had with cops at odd hours, we've never actually been ordered off the streets and home./

DAVE LOCKE I find the opinions of some fans, regarding the police, to be quite amusing. Though it is an unpopular position for me to be in to have respect for the police (as a whole, acknowledging that nothing is perfect), I do so while at the same time hoping that the state of the art of law enforcement improves and continues to improve. Many fans, however, tend to be rather paranoid when thinking about anyone with even the slightest amount of authority. Their attitudes display an amazing lack of insight into the roots and causes of what's going on around them. If one doesn't like some of the laws under which they are being asked to live, pissing on the police isn't going to accomplish anything.

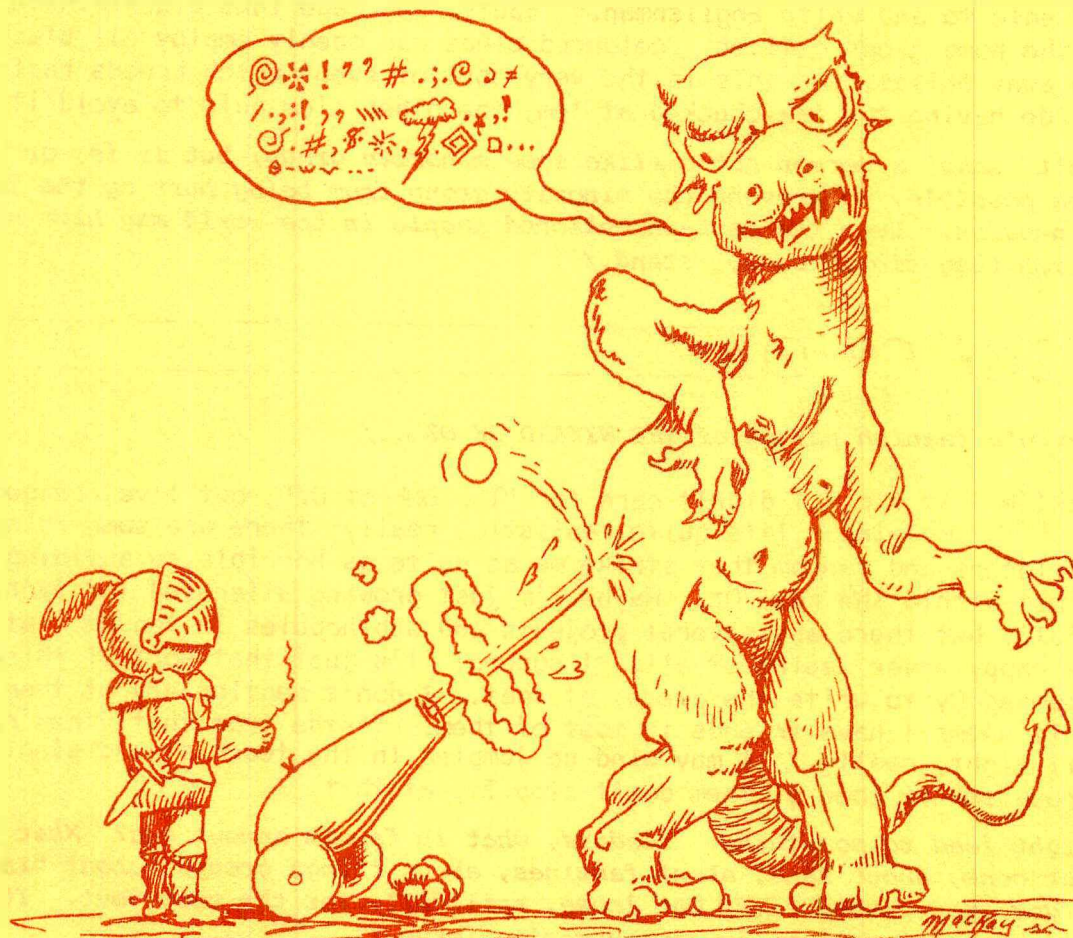
In the olden days, they used to shoot the bearer of bad tidings. Today that sounds stupid, but some people still do it, figuratively, and they don't even know that that's what they're doing. They can't view the police in a proper perspective.

Most policemen get into that line of work because they are motivated to try and hold society together in some small way, because they are not averse to a little action, and because they enjoy serendipity. The police department also attracts sadists and bellicose individuals, but given the nature of the work

that can't be avoided; all you can do is to try and screen them a little better, and that particular art isn't too well developed as yet. But the police are the bearers of bad tidings and good tidings, and haven't a damn thing to do with the laws under which they operate and are expected to enforce. Tossing blanket condemnations at the police is the action of shallow and misdirected minds. The police work with what they've got, and are not the people to waste your energy on if you want to Get Things Changed.

/There are cops and there are cops. In my experience I haven't had contact with any really nasty ones; at worst just brusque and pushy. And I've also had dealings with cops who seemed okay. One time a speeding ticket for 42 mph in a 30 mile zone was downgraded to 40 mph, so that although I would get the fine, I would not lose points (if you lose too many points you lose your license). I've been spot-checked while driving, once just a random check and another time during the Christmas blitz (where lights are tested and cars checked for safety) and neither time was really a hassle, nor did either occasion last more than a few minutes. But then, I always make sure I have my license, registration and insurance with me. Again, these sort of things are exercise of authority over the weak citizen, but could have been handled in a much ruder and cruder fashion. There was another time a cop helped me find an open garage after an evening auto accident; and yet another time when one helped me out after I ran out of gas in the middle of nowhere.

I'm innocent, Toronto fandom is innocent, of any crime that cops might have reason to hassle us about. But it's another case of the honour system not working. They shouldn't hassle us, but some other guy out at that hour may have just held up a milk store. Is it worth it for us to have a little trouble when walking so that a thief might be nabbed in another instance?



I'm not so sure that police haven't anything to do with the making of the laws they enforce. It does not seem unlikely to me that they're sometimes consulted on proposed new regulations or revisions to old ones. I have no idea what sort of lobbying groups hang around legislative buildings, but the police could very well be right in there./

TERRY JEEVES Was interested in your attitude that one could object to a minority within one's own mind, provided they didn't actively or openly exhibit this tendency. I put it badly, but I appreciate the attitude. Don't get me wrong, I am not "anti" any racial group or colour, but I DO feel that there are times when a person may be allowed to feel that way. I have in mind our fairly recently passed race relations law. Under it, a man selling his house may not refuse to sell it to another on grounds of race, colour, or creed. On the surface, this seems fair enough...until you look at it another way. Under British law, a shop dealer can (or could, assuming the new law negates that) refuse to sell an item to any would-be buyer...for any reason he chose. An article in his window is up on offer, it is then up to the customer to come in and make his offer...which is normally the price on the tag. Legally, until the shopkeeper agrees to sell for that price, he is free to show the would-be customer the door...without giving his reasons.

It would seem the race relations act may challenge that. I feel that if any vendor decides he doesn't like the would-be buyer, it is HIS business...whatever the reason. To say that he must sell because the offer came from a left-handed Chinese Jew is an infringement of his privacy. Taken to extremes, one man over here went to jail rather than remove an advert offering his house for sale, but not to "coloureds". Now I think he was mainly wrong in flaunting his prejudices (though it would have saved a prospective buyer time and embarrassment)...but I wonder if he would have been jugged had he worded the sign "Not for sale to any white Englishman." Sadly, our race laws discriminate against the home grown citizen...coloured clubs can openly employ all blacks and turn away whites, and this is the very sort of event which breeds racism...one side having the law chucked at 'em, the other side able to avoid it.

/You can't "make" a person not dislike some minority group; but it is, or should be possible, to prevent the minority group from being hurt by the likes of such persons. Even the best-intentioned people in the world may have some group which they simply cannot stand./

THE BNF OF OZ

/Cy Chauvin's faanish parody of THE WIZARD OF OZ.../

MIKE O'BRIEN At first I didn't care for "The BNF of Oz", but I've changed my mind. It's quite realistic, really; there are some things about Worldcons and fandom that strike me as quite as horrible as anything Dorothy met within the real Oz. Maybe I'm just growing alienated (or fannishly provincial), but there are several projects and sub-hobbies in fandom that I'd be quite happy never seeing at all. I suspect it's just that sort of thing that provoked Cy to write the piece, at that. I don't mention any of them because it seems I have friends in most of them. "Aside from that, they're quite all right, really." I may wind up jumping in the teacheast and singing "Oh, Jerusalem" if some of them don't stop it, at that.

/This might lead to something: readers, what in fandom annoys you? What things at cons, about fans, about fanzines, about fringe groups, about "in" things, get you pissed off? Cut loose, spill all, let the venom out. It'll make a lively lettercolumn in some upcoming issue./

MARC ORTLIEB I gather the Trekkies were a real menace over there. Here they are kept in their true ecological balance by a small number of carnivores called Whoies. There aren't many of the latter, but they live in close symbiosis with a rather deadly species called Daleks which can fry a phaser faster than tribbles can multiply.

/And there could be plagues of Losties of two types (the second rarer than the first, perhaps) and of course, Spacies. Now that 1999: A SPACE TURKEY is cancelled are there going to be revivalists and Barbara Bain freaks (Corpsies)? And with STAR WARS a hit, there'll be a whole new thing going, perhaps Trekkies etc. switching allegiance. The STAR TREK con organizers will have a whole new market to exploit./

MARTY LEVINE "The BNF of Oz" is funny but sad. The sad part is when the BNF asks of Dorothy if there is any way she can prove if she is a Trufan. You see, being a neo and all around Concerned Person, I have to ask "In whose judgement?" I cringe at in-groups, at "holier than thou, you lowly neo scum" attitude than I've encountered in only 2 BNFs I've talked to (the others were so nice they restored my faith in humanity) but that's two too many. I remember being a sophomore in high school (I'm a senior now), how it felt to be left out and scorned because you happen to be younger. Don't get me wrong, 99% of the fans I've "met" through LoCs or personally, have been nicer than some of my "friends". It's just all the in-group stuff...well, if I should by chance ever get "in" my attitude may change, may turn around completely. Who knows?

/Think back, not to your first con, but to your first con at which you seemed to already know some of the names and at which you might have expected that some people should know you. I know of a case where a fan who was no longer a neo had a con spoiled for him because of snubs from other fans, perhaps mostly from preoccupation with yet others again. People should be reasonably willing to talk to and listen to a newcomer--nobody's asking anyone to bear with nerds but how can you tell whether a neo is an interesting person or not if you don't give him a chance to prove it? In-groups exist and there's nothing that can or should be done about that--at a con I tend to gravitate towards the same or similar groups myself every time--but any one given person is not always with his group and is generally approachable. Some newer fans have no trouble approaching older ones and introducing themselves, but there is still the problem of the timid or socially insecure one.

Now I'm not claiming to be holier than anyone else with respect to spending time talking to neofans; because generally at a con I'll be busy trying to track people down (I seem to always be looking for someone), or pretending to be an expert in the mimeo room, or talking to someone I haven't seen in a long time, or figuring out ways to do something about my starving stomach and dwindling chocolate supply. But I try, that is, if I can be caught at a time I'm not in a tearing hurry about something. It makes me angry, too, to see some of the snubs and pointed exclusions directed at people just because nobody in the group knows them or they are merely making an effort to join in something. I'm not innocent of snubbing myself, always, but I like to think I tend to direct this at people I've gotten to know sufficiently to know that they're



fuggheads, apple-polishers, or otherwise irremediable. (And shut up about LoCs and letters unwritten, people; it's not a snub, I'm just behind.)

There is also the matter of open and closed parties at cons. I couldn't begin to compare the "fun level" of the open con suite party to that of the closed parties; but I prefer and generally can be found in closed fanzine fans' parties, where there are likely to be a good number of people I want to see. But these parties in my experience have never been so closed that a new fan who knows a few of the people attending would be shut out.

And fanzines. The cost of many fanzines precludes them being traded for just anything that comes through the door; if not the cost then the size of the print run. Many zines are only available on the editor's whim. There have been editors who would not condescend to trade with others of lesser stature than themselves; but in most cases it's not snobbery but limited funds./

MARTYROLOGY

/Doug Barbour's long review of bp Nichol's THE MARTYROLOGY/

ANGUS TAYLOR I'd just like to say a few nasty and no doubt highly unjustified words about Doug Barbour's article on "A Poem from the Edge of Time to the Days that Pass". I guess Doug is a nice enough fellow, but I think he's living in a dreamworld in regard to the significance of modern poetry. There's the wonderful line, for example, where he remarks that "poets now (as always) fulfill such a profound function in our lives". That's nice. Tell that to a steelworker in Hamilton and he'll laugh in your face. Tell it to a salesgirl in Winnipeg and you may get a mumble about Rod McKuen. Poetry means virtually nothing to almost everyone--except a few idealists like Doug with their heads lost in the clouds. Idealism: the fallacy of believing the world arranges itself according to the thoughts of intellectuals. Those who are shaping Canada are the steelworkers and the salesgirls and the industrialists and the seedy politicians--not artsy-fartsy poets. The Russian poet Vladimir Mayakovsky wrote:

I want the pen
to equal the gun,
to be listed
with iron
in industry.
And the Politbureau's agenda
Item 1
to be Stalin's Report on
"The Output of Poetry"...

When Mayakovsky killed himself over an unhappy love affair in 1930, it is said that 150,000 people came to view his body. But if bp Nichol (sounds like a gas station give-away) kicks the bucket, or if all the poets in Canada kick the bucket tomorrow, who will care? And what difference will it make to anyone? Give me a good goal by Guy Lafleur any day.

/But...but...but...

The world would be poorer without poets. Now, I don't dig poetry all that much. But the world would be poorer without them, just as it would without painters, composers, writers, actors, minstrels, sculptors, comedians, playwrights, and even fanzine publishers. Add to that what might be called "creative" scientists. If it's the people you say it is who are shaping the world, we'll be in for an awfully dull world. Okay, so I don't understand poetry. I don't understand everything on that list, either. But I like to know it's around./

TELEVISION

/Jessica Amanda Salmonson's highly critical poem about the Boob Tube/

ALAN BOSTICK I think Jessica Salmonson is a bit too harsh on television in her poem. True, most of the people who spend much time watching TV are cabbageheads, and true, most of the programming is asinine drivel, but I don't think that TV is to blame. It is my opinion that the people who watch TV in large amounts are cabbageheads, but I think they watch because they are cabbageheaded, not the other way around.

*/Exactly. The last time I watched TV was when I tested a set belonging to my parents that had been repaired. *Dull* Any takers for a nice neglected black and white 1970 model Philips TV set with a 20 inch screen? Hardly ever used./*

JESSICA AMANDA SALMONSON Sherri recently got a television, so there is one in the house for the first time in five, six years. Fortunately, it stopped working right away and I don't have to hear it going (and be drawn by its evil magnetic glow).

/It's coming to get you./

MYTHS & FREUD

/Wayne Hooks' Freudian analysis of mythology/

JESSICA AMANDA SALMONSON Mythology's boxes and chests may indeed be interpretable as vaginas. But if so, then vaginas surely were believed to represent knowledge as much as life and death. Pandora's box, like Eve's forbidden fruit, show women giving forbidden knowledge to men; knowledge they thought would benefit humankind but which was corrupted by the new bearers into pestilence and war.

Mythology tells us that Goddesses gave us every ingredient of civilization except possibly fire. Art, language, agriculture, tools, everything. Goddesses predate gods by millenia. Jove, for instance, a relative newcomer to the pantheon scene, didn't gain his supposed dominance until about the time of the Trojan War. Imagine if you will all the classical myths without Jove/Jehova/Zeus portrayed at all, or portrayed as a minor deity. It changes a lot when you realize most of those stories existed before He did; some of the myths would seem almost impossible to retell without him--they've been that altered by over two thousand years of revision. These ancient goddesses were in all likelihood real women who became deified in legend. But patriarchal tampering with every aspect of history has repeatedly supplanted male supremacy wherever women ruled.

We should overcome our chauvinistic belief that the Ancients were illiterate. Today's English is simplistic next to Greek; and Greek is simple next to the language it was derived from, languages too complex for modern linguists. We currently believe civilization began in Sumeria, but that may mark the rebirth of civilization after an incredibly ancient prehistoric civilization. We needn't think physics, medicine and astronomy began in recorded time; the evidence Von Daniken and his ilk offer as proof of extraterrestrial visitation may in fact be proof of a pre-cataclysmic matriarch that exceeded modern times in the sciences and in governmental and explorative scope.

If knowledge is equated with vaginas (boxes, or fertility symbols like the apples of Eden), then it may well be because the knowledge forbidden men during that matriarchal time was their role in procreation. If we accept that matri-

archal societies did once exist on a wide scale, and that men were kept in awe of women by being kept ignorant of their biological contribution to the continuance of the races, we can see that Eve or Pandora or some super-ancient equivalent of a Druid Priestess must have allowed some Adam to realize his part in the miracle of childbirth. This knowledge would obviously be associated with phallic symbols (penises and vaginas); the vagina specifically symbolizing the source and the potential place to return such knowledge.

This may help you visualize the "return to the womb" symbolism as not a literal desire to be small and helpless and enclosed in darkness, but a desire for something so much simpler: civilization without strife. The tragedies of patriarchal oppression--concepts of property and ownership, rule by might rather than right, the inevitable wars of such "innovations" and the sinking of the status of women; in short, all the woes of modern/masculine history--likely began with this forbidden knowledge being let out of the box. Men, finally knowing they could produce an heir, conspired to protect/insure the blood kinship of their sons. So they kept their brood mares in chastity belts and valued virginity in their chattels above any humanistic trait.

What Wayne (and Jung, and Freud) consider the fears and fantasies of the psyche expressed in myth may be nothing of the sort. They may simply be actual historical events, exaggerated and distorted by Time's retelling. If there are racial memories, or if myths reflect fears-desires-fantasies, they need not represent a longed-for return to the womb or a desire to devour mothers from the breasts inward. These interpretations regard only the man's response to women and are male-oriented/female-ignoring explanations. The true meaning of the symbolism may be very different. It may indicate a universal hunger among men and women alike, for the contentment and peace of prehistoric matriarchal rule.

/I'm skeptical of any theories of really ancient civilizations that equalled or exceeded today's knowledge of science or technology. Because, unless that science and technology were radically different from what is known today, why aren't natural resources used up? A culture that advanced would have explored and probably exploited the whole world; yet in this century deposits of metals, precious stones, and fossil fuels, seemed to be intact save for that small amount used in history up to that point. Granted, though, that still doesn't rule out the possibility of there having been a culture advanced in theoretical sciences only, without associated destructive technology. But I am not very convinced at all.

Who is to say that the supposed ancient matriarchy was any better than today's society? Sex oppression may well have been reversed, and people being what they are, I would imagine all the other oppressions that afflict people today would have been present back then as well./

TERRY FLOYD I don't know about the Freudian aspects of mythology, but according to Edith Hamilton, Man, or at least the Titans who later spawned man, were the children of Mother Earth and Father Heaven, Gaea and Ouranos, respectively. And in succeeding Greek and Roman myths, women are almost always subordinate to men, re. Pandora, Persephone, etc. The only single-parent birth I can recall from Greek mythology is that of Pallas Athena, who sprang fully grown from the head of Zeus and, in effect, had no real mother. One might also remember the Titans Prometheus and Epimetheus, both males, who created man and the animals. Sexism such as this is rampant in most mythology, including Biblical mythology, as women were held in low esteem at the time; ornamental and nice to have around, of course, but of extremely minor importance in relation to Man. The high level of ancient Greek civilization is equalled only by their monumental chauvinism.

/I had the thought to look up in Bulfinch what sort of roles were given to

male gods as opposed to female gods; but found that the "good" ones went to both. The chauvinism seems to be elsewhere, as in the examples you pointed out./

K. ALLEN BJORKE Wayne Hooks' article has one very blatant error--not all children are boys. And as girls are known to have Oedipal conflicts too, the whole system "goes down in flames". Or drops dead.

STUART GILSON Wayne Hooks' essay was certainly insightful, though I was left wondering just what exactly do his observations force us to conclude? Speculation for its own sake can be a valuable exercise; unless it leads to tangible conclusions, however, then it serves little purpose other than to answer questions with more questions. It does provide further evidence in support of the Freudian claim that sex constitutes the basic motivation of everything we think or do, but since I regard Freud's ideas with certain mis-



givings, I had to take everything with a grain of salt, interesting though it was to read. I prefer to interpret human behaviour in terms of Jungian dogma, which, if I recall correctly, recognizes a broader range of influences: the id, ego, and superego. Sex is still a fundamental drive in man, but his actions are also subject to a number of other influences, among which are included social conscience, innate behaviour, and the will to live. Wayne's observations are perfectly correct from a Freudian standpoint; what I must wonder is if our myths and legends cannot also be interpreted in terms of parts of the human psyche other than sex alone. I can only raise the question; I haven't a knowledge of psychology sufficient to suggest any answers.

DON D'AMMASSA I have my own reservations about Freud's theories. Much of his descriptive and clinical work is excellent, but he tended to overgeneralize from specifics. Among other things, he was convinced that the sexual preoccupations of his own culture were universal through space and time, and I don't believe that to be valid.

GEORGE FLYNN I wouldn't say I'm exactly "knowledgeable" about myths, but I am also dubious about the sort of Freudian analysis that Wayne Hooks presents. For one thing, my vague impression is that study of non-Western cultures has shown that many of the "primal" myths aren't nearly as universal as Freud thought. Be that as it may, I also think there's a great temptation to read too much into the data: surely a significant component of the myths as we receive them are elements that simply made a good story, rather than being symbolic of anything; this is certainly true when one gets to conscious literary creators like Sophocles. (I suppose the Freudian would respond that the primal drives are what impel us to think something "makes a good story", but further pursuit of this would run deeper than I care to go.) On a minor point, I'm puzzled by the contention that swords and knives are phallic because they resemble the sun's rays, when the direct relationship is so much simpler.

JACKIE CAUSGROVE While I also disbelieve Freudian psychology, I also find it fascinating to read. Mainly because I enjoy watching how a person can twist and bend things to fit certain theories. Why can't the early myths be taken at face value, as explanations of How Things Began, by fairly primitive people? They are quite charming as they are (as well as awesome, horrifying, silly, and other things), why "explain" them at all? *Oh, well* to each hisser own...

PAULA SMITH The myths on the man-woman difference are well documented, but I wonder how many can be interpreted as views of human problems. Perhaps after our First Contact we'll be able to make such interpretations, or else form the myths themselves. People seem to learn what a thing is by what it is not. Back to the myths, somebody recently interpreted traditional fairy tales as sexual initiation for the kiddies. Little Red Riding Hood (and her Gramma) molested by a "wolf"; Sleeping Beauty does not age over the 100 years because, being a virgin, she has not grown up. As soon as the prince "kisses" her, they have to get married. The points are, one, the tales are an unconscious expression of socially approved sexualism, and two, they initiate the children into a knowledge, however unconscious, of sex.

/Few agree on Freudian theories in general; and everything can be interpreted in terms of sex.

In the meantime, the letter column is going to take a break in mid-topic for a related article by John Alderson.../

John J Alderson

Perhaps there once was a Garden...

In 1880 the Kelly gang stuck up the Glenrowan Inn with the plans of wrecking a special police train to be sent to deal with them, and wiping out a goodly portion of Victoria's police force in a withering cross-fire. The plan misfired due to the non-co-operation of some of the locals and the consumption of bad whiskey. Ned Kelly had been out trying to have a rail removed from the railway track and had got wounded for his pains. As he lay unconscious the most famous seige in Australian history got under way, and continued despite some twenty-five to thirty non-combatants also in the pub, and despite the fact that the police did not get an answering shot for several hours before they fired the building.

Frank Clune is worth quoting here...

"Ned Kelly, after lying encased in his armour on the frosty ground in a welter of his own blood for three and a half hours, came fully to his senses at seven o'clock, and decided to return to the battle.

"Desperately wounded as he was, weakened by loss of blood, and his limbs frozen, he, by an almost superhuman effort, managed to stand erect and to walk, encumbered by a hundredweight of iron, not away from the fight, in the direction of possible safety for himself, but back to the hotel to rescue his mates.

"It was at that moment and by that decision, that Ned Kelly's name was fixed in Australian lore as the proverbial symbol of reckless courage.

"As game as Ned Kelly..."

Ned Kelly is now part of our mythology. *Mateship*, that quality we Australians prize so highly did not begin or end with Ned Kelly, but he fitted in, as Jung would put it, an archetypal hero. The factual basis of the Kellys is one soundly grounded in history. Ned Kelly happened; he was no fiction invented to explain a myth, he was the reality that fitted the myth.

Now to take another example from a differing culture, and one which we haven't always seen fit to hold up as an example.

About 1890 there was fought a great battle between the Kalkadoon tribe and the Queensland Government troops. The battle finished when it did because all the Kalkadoon men were dead, excepting Waddie Mundowie who was passed over as dead. When he crawled off the battlefield with three bullets in him, one of which had broken his leg, it was too late to set the leg so he tied a piece of wood from his ankle to his thigh, and he wore this for the rest of his life. He was about 60 years old at the time. He was left the sole man with responsibility for the women and children. As there were no hunters they were starving, and were being shot whenever the whites saw them. So he led them away, some forty women and ten children, from the River of Death that runs south-west from Cloncurry in Queensland to the Widgeegoara River in the south-west of the

state, a journey to take eleven months. More months whilst they travelled to Cooper's Creek. When he met a band of blacks who wanted wives he gave them four, one for each "skin". When he met a war-party he sent the women out to meet them armed with sticks and as the Aborigines do not fight women (socially very backward types) the women always won and the men had to stay until they had fed all the women. Once, when they were in particularly desperate straits they met a white man who gave them a fat bullock. Finally the day came when Waddie Mundowie had only four women left and giving these to a tribe he lived with the tribe until he died. Waddie Mundowie became a Dreamtime hero, a man, who despite superhuman difficulties had cared for the women and children of his tribe and his word is now the Law (the Aborigines have a special conception of this); and on initiation the young men of the tribes are taken along the track that Waddie Mundowie and his women followed. He has become a myth, and perhaps in a thousand years there will be quite a lot of frills added to the

story, but this myth is history and Waddie Mundowie is an archetypal hero, the embodiment of what the Aborigines conceive as their law.

Now take another example, one of older vintage but whose historicity is still beyond doubt. Santa Claus is derived from St. Nicholas who secretly endowed the three daughters of a poor citizen to save them from prostitution. Again an archetypal situation for had not God the Father given his Son to the world. From such a simple beginning we have all the absurd trappings now associated with Santa Claus, but this does not alter in any way the historical origin of the Santa Claus myth, merely demonstrates how a myth can get corrupted. Such accumulations as the reindeer dragging his sledge and his factory at the North Pole where he spends the rest of the year making toys are another important aspect of myth, the story to explain a certain event, how Santa Claus comes to have so many toys for example. This aspect of a myth being the explanation of a ritual (or something otherwise not understood) is the secondary myth, and not the primary explanation of myth as some modern scholars think.

Myth is therefore an aspect of history; the primary myth is



history, the secondary myth an explanation of history.

Well, where does this fit into Freudian theories, or where does Freudian theory fit into myth? They don't. I was fortunate, I suppose, that my first introduction to mythology was through such brilliant mythologists as Müller and Frazer, whilst at the same time studying the physical sciences and logic. Mythology, like all sciences, must follow the rules of logic, and must be able to be checked against other data. When at length I came across Freudian interpretations of mythology, I was, to say the least, astounded. The reasoning defied the rules of logic just as they violated "scientific method". The interpretations were weird and held at the expense of ignoring salient facts. And finally, to define everything in terms of aspects of sex, which after all is a perfectly natural function, struck me as being ludicrous. However, I went a little deeper into psychology, particularly Freudian, and was appalled that this arrant nonsense passed as science. Do you know the Freudian interpretation of the name "Oedipus" (it means "swollen" or "club-footed"); it means "erection"! Imagine that, eh, Oedipus had an erection! Was he the first man to have an erection, or is he the only man to have had an erection that he should have his name from it. Freudian psychology abounds in this rot. I know only one word in any language that adequately describes Freudian psychology, that's *bullshit*. Freudian psychology is nothing but *bullshit*.



It is of course quite well-known that in science, when an instrument is to be used, that that instrument has to be checked for accuracy, and repeatedly checked. A psychoanalyst has himself to be psychoanalyzed so that he knows what he means when he interprets his data, and the value of that data is entirely dependent on this because it is by necessity funnelled through the analyst. Freud refused to be psychoanalyzed. His own psychoanalysis is useless as a result. Fundamentally his work is best understood when it is realized that he was a renegade Jew, a pervert with an indecent crush on his mother and with a massive guilt complex as a result. Having forsaken the religion and the society of his people he sublimated this into a hatred of his father and with sublime conceit regarded himself as the norm for humanity, and saddled mankind with the Oedipus complex. His life and his works are one gigantic piece of self-justification. Freud is a fraud, not even a pseudo-scientist, a mere charlatan like Mesmer.

The fact is that in Freudian terms, if a myth is shown to be historical, then the psychological explanation falls to pieces, despite all the double talk. So Velikovsky (a psychologist, but certainly not a Freudian psychologist) when he wanted to tackle Freud did so by an extensive research on the historicity of myth, citing by way of evidence thereon many other lines of research from what must be regarded as the *hard* sciences, archaeology, astronomy, geology, etc. as well as historical records themselves.

In a way Jungian psychology was up in the air. Velikovsky shoved a foundation firmly, if somewhat roughly, under it. Jung, Freud, and Velikovsky, all believe in racial memories. Freud, for example, held that the idea of the Primal Father came from a time 350,000 years ago (far enough ago as one of his disciples observed for there to be no mythological record to contradict it). Now let me suggest that most of the subconscious traumas and worries that afflict mankind are ancestral memories of past horrors, not some poppycock about a child having suckled its mother, so wants to devour her. The fact that in the animal kingdom where the young are also suckled, so few mothers are devoured, is one of those blind spots that Freudian double-talk has not been able to cover.

Take the male fear of castration, caused by the child seeing his father's penis disappear into his mother (Freudian explanation). This piece of stupidity should, one would think, be dependent upon the child having to see his parents have coitus...but how many do? I venture to suggest that very few do, and in any case it does not explain the female desire to castrate.

There was once a pathological society called the Amazons, a race of warrior women who refused to allow any male to remain in their tribe. They killed all males they came across the exposed all male children. When they came in heat and wanted sex they went hunting...men, and having caught one they raped him, plying him with drugs to keep him potent as long as possible. When this failed, he was castrated, flayed and torn to pieces and eaten. Some time during the latter part of the operation even the hardiest males fainted, for the whole operation was designed to cause the male the utmost suffering. Then the hairiest bitch of the lot rolled herself in his skin and slept in it to show she was *in* the man and not the man in *her*. The Freudian explanation of the last part of the ceremony is that it is a "return to the womb"! Such a society was of course not self-sustaining as a woman's heat-period and her ovulation occur about a fortnight apart. Nor were the Amazons alone in early Women's Liberation, the Maenads and the Bacchantes had similar practices, whilst the Divine King was always castrated. Here is a more likely explanation of a man's fear of castration, coupled of course with the ever-present desire of women to castrate men.

This latter is due to a woman's inferiority complex. She observes herself merely to have a hole whilst men are provided with a set of genitals and her sex-education consists of her mother saying, "Men are filthy beasts; they do terrible things to you." So they have the desire to cut "off" a man's genitals and make him equal. "Off" is the word women use for castration whilst the man usually says "out", realizing that a man's sex is a fundamental part of himself. It is not therefore surprising that the cover of *THE FEMALE EUNUCH* should have depicted a woman's sex as though it were a single piece swimsuit, skin-deep. This nonsense that sex is only skin-deep is quite popular today, it appears in textbooks--if you swallow the other sort of hormones you can change your sex. But archaeologists have been determining the sex of skeletons by the bones for ages. But a man has good reason to fear castration. From his birth there is a continual process of psychological castration. Boys are wrapped in cold blue blankets, put in cold blue clothing instead of nice warm

pink. It was an absolute fetish a few years back, every mother wanted her child circumcized, a direct attack on a child's sex, one that furthermore suggested that he wasn't quite right and had to be altered. Boys are not allowed to play boisterously with their sisters, must allow their sisters to have their toys but are not permitted to have their sisters' toys. The process is continued at school. A boy is not allowed to express himself by dancing (oh, he is allowed to dance, but only as a partner for girls), he is laughed at if he sings, not allowed personal ornaments, and until very recently was dressed in grey or black. The process is continued all his life. A man's fear of castration is not only a racial memory but a present psychological fear whilst a woman's urge to castrate is born of her inferiority complex and neither has anything to do with seeing the father's penis disappear into the mother...

Most peoples during their history go through stages of social development. Not all of course get as far as others and not all take quite the same course. The more universal myths tell of battles between the sexes. The stealing of fire, or rather the secret of making fire, is nearly universal. (Not mentioned in the Bible, incidentally.) Relates to the time when women who had the fire debarred men from it. Australian Aboriginal myths are most implicit on the subject. Men also stole from women the right to perform religious ceremonies (this is in *Genesis*), and also to eat tabooed food.

Perhaps there was a garden...No, mythology is too exact a science for "perhapses". There was a garden called Eden, one of thousands of gardens, in hundreds of which the same battle took place, not always with the same result. Not always have men been brought in to do the work, but usually they have. Not always has a matrilinearage turned to a matriarchy but generally. The *Genesis* story is memorable... there is man's first declaration of rights, "...a man shall leave his mother and father" (declaration of paternity) "and cleave unto his wife" (declaration that a man is not the property of his parents) "and they twain shall be one flesh" (a man shall enter his wife's family). In Eden Adam ate the tabooed fruit, the fruit previously only eaten by the old matriarch herself. But it was not until the time

of Enosh that "men began to call upon the name of the Lord", when the ancestors of the Hebrews, the men that is, got the right to exercise religion. What has made the *Genesis* story so interesting is apart from being hundreds of years earlier than any other such story (that is in literary form), is that it was associated with a climatic change that came, in their eyes, as a punishment, and the gardening economy changed overnight to a farming, and then to a pastoral economy. But there are scores of similar myths, historical recollections of similar happenings in similar circumstances, stories that differ in particular as they must because any society cannot be a stereotype of another. The garden in Eden may be taken as historical fact, but what you and most other people imagine the story means is almost certainly wrong.

Myth therefore does not have any basis in the subconscious, myth occupies the



real world of fact, not the shadowy world of fantasy. Freudian interpretation of myth is an "argument in a circle", assuming that myths are products of the subconscious and then interpreting them in psychological terms which is the same thing, something like Heinlein's story of the man who was his own father and his own mother.

In the past few decades historians have been pushing their studies back further and further into the mythological era. The greatest difficulty lies in the fact that most myths have been recorded by men who were essentially poets, and who recorded what they regarded as the essential truths. Their truths, like the truths of theologians and mathematicians which may all be wholly right, are different. When Robert Graves interpreted myths he did so as a poet. Sir James Frazer did so as an anthropologist. Velikovsky did so as a historian and St. Paul as a theologian. Thus St. Paul's interpretation of the Fall of Man is quite different from that of Graves, and mine (in sociological terms), different again, and we could all be right.

This is not to say that every interpretation is right, some are quite wrong. I cannot see how the Jehovah Witnesses' view can be right because they ignore facts. However, what is important is not so much that but their own internal logic which seems to me to be wanting. It's a matter of debate, as to just what they believe. For example, if they believe in an exactly literal interpretation then are we to assume that God, who made man in his own image, is shaped like a man, and as I do not think they believe this then their own internal logic is faulty. If however they merely interpret on theological grounds (as of course did Paul) then they are entitled to do so, and again it is a matter of logic. I use them merely as an example because it does not matter to me how anyone interprets a myth if their interpretation is honest, that is, logical. I don't believe for instance that the Freudians are honest or logical in their work on myths. Otherwise I don't care how much someone differs from myself, providing he doesn't start telling me that *I* am wrong because I am delighted to find that others have seen a truth I have not. I do not, incidentally, take it to heart if I am told I am wrong, I merely get a gleam of battle in my eye, wind some paper into the typewriter and begin the fray, and if I were an old tomcat I would purr as I did so.

Probably where myth differs mostly from ordinary history is in its wider universality. One may interpret a Greek myth with the explanation of an Australian Aboriginal one and point to an anthropological situation in Melanesia as confirmation that it is correct. On the other hand we can use mythology to disprove an historical statement. For example we know that the story of the Saxon invasion of England did not take place as told in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, because the characters are mythological (the two leaders are named "Mare" and "Stallion". It is in other words a secondary myth to explain the presence of the Saxons.

Myth, as I said earlier, is an aspect of history; the primary myth is history, the secondary myth is an explanation of history, and it is in no way whatever a product of man's subconscious mind.

/Back to the lettercol. First, though, I have my own nits to pick with the above articloc. 1) When you refer to mythology as a science, I hope you mean science in the sense of systemized knowledge; rather than even something like a social science like psychology. 2) Freudian thinking whatever its flaws must have its own rules of logic, so that Freudian interpretations of myths could still follow such a sort of logic. 3) Lacking a reference text and not remembering enough of a college psych course, I won't defend or attack Freud myself

or make guesses as to how well his work has dated; but you seem to be on a higher than usual hobby horse about him. 4) Velikovsky??? For me, that one book of garbage he wrote would make anything else from him immediately suspect. He may be a thorough researcher, but if his grasp of other fields equals his grasp of astronomy, physics, mechanics and biochemistry, I wouldn't touch him as a source with a ten foot pole. 5) No way racial memories; I always thought acquired characteristics couldn't be inherited. 6) I'll leave the matter of women's "inferiority complexes" and male castration fears to those readers better versed in feminist thought than myself. There are more nits but I'll leave this for the readers now: lots of comment hooks./

ERIC LINDSAY It seems to me that North Americans fall all over themselves to bow down before anything that has the word "myth" in the title. Perhaps they took to Jung because of that, and it may explain the popularity of things like "The Hero with 1000 Faces". Myth is junky, prescientific fiction, that attempts (usually naively) to explain aspects of human and natural behaviour. If it were not so simplistic it would probably not be popular. Freud, like other high priests of the psyche, was great on theories, and dead wrong on facts. This does not make his writings uninteresting, but it does make them less than useful if you want explanations, rather than pretentious background notes for a novel.

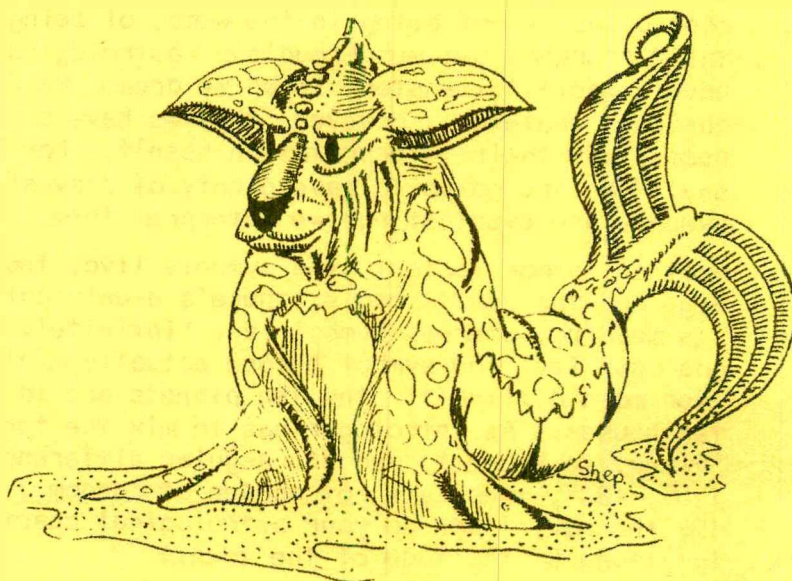
ERIC BATARD A myth is both a story made with symbols and a symbolical story. A story has strong beats and a plot. Each strong beat of a myth-ical story is a symbolical scene and the whole myth is a symbol (by the whole myth I mean the plot of the story).

Reading a myth can be done in two times: first, we must find out the really strong beats and the real plot of the myth, i.e. get rid of all the logical bits which make the story logical. As a rule, all the symbolical stuff is not logical. At least, it hasn't the same logic as ours. Secondly, we have to interpret the symbols.

I agree with Wayne when he writes "to read a myth is to look into a mirror and see yourself". I hope not to shock anybody by saying that if something concerns ourselves it's subjective. To read a myth (or to read symbols) is devilishly subjective.

As for myself, I'm particularly interested in astrological symbols. If you will, these symbols are more complex than those of the Freudian school.

In the Freudian school, there are two sources of symbols: Eros and Thanatos (i.e. love and death in literal translation). Astrology is better equipped: it has perceptible symbols (the planets), seasonal symbols (the signs of the Zodiac), and what the astrologers call "Houses" which are earthly (because of their meaning: the money we earn, the family, work, flirtations/games/children (all in the same "House"), marriage,



associations, friends, diseases, etc.) and daily (since the place of the Houses depends upon the birth time and place.) As you can see, a good astrologer needs more than the mere sign (the birth sign we all know). You can guess now what I think about the newspapers' horoscopes.

The astrological symbols can be classified in different ways. The opposition male/female (whereas good ol' Freud thought a woman was a miscarried man); of course this is not the opposition man/woman--the opposition male/female is similar (analogy is a key word, if not the key word, of all the symbolics) to day/night, sun/moon, active/passive, etc.--I'm not a sexist, therefore I don't mean the man does everything and the woman nothing; the male acts in a perceptible way, the female's main activity is to bear a child (most of the men didn't forgive her that)--remember male \neq men and female \neq women; we are all a mixture of male and female. (Try and imagine me explaining this in a language like French where there's no difference between the words male/man and female/woman)

Now we come to the trilogy: "Cardinal, Fixe, Mutable" (the French words, a translation would be risky, as long as I can't find a book on astrology in English).

Cardinal = Homo Sapiens (yes, indeed, Latin is a useful language!), pure principle

Fixe = homo Faber, realization, incarnation

Mutable = homo Ludens, movement

At last, the elements: Fire, Earth, Wind, Water (a little exercise: try to find some of the meanings of these symbols.)

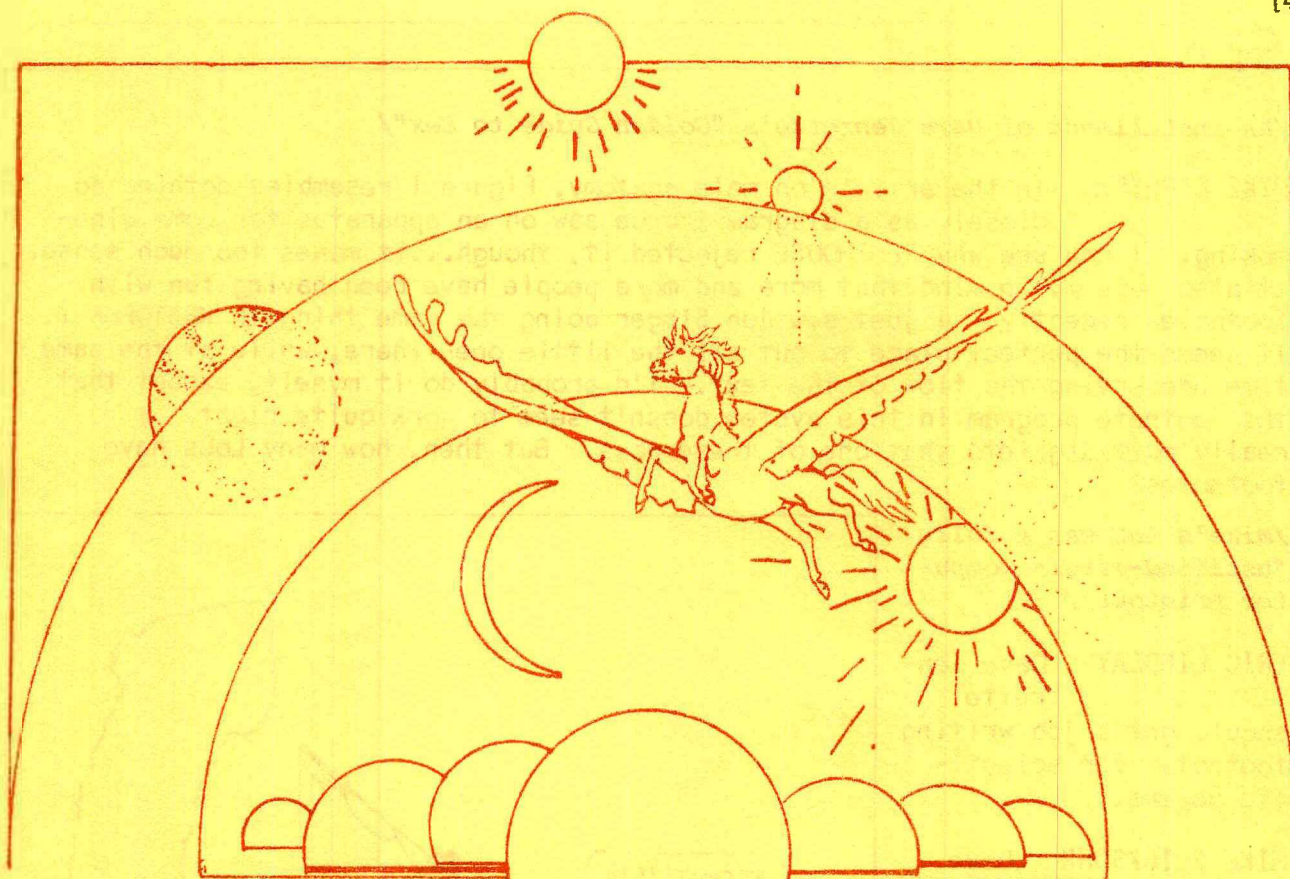
The seasonal symbols, the signs, are made as follows: the first is Male/Cardinal/Fire; the second Female/Fixe/Earth; the third Male/Mutable/Wind; the fourth Female/Cardinal/Water, etc.

If you have no headache and/or aren't sleeping, you have perhaps noticed that Cardinal = + or - first month of a season; Fixe, the second; Mutable, the third. Damn, if I wrote seasonal, there must be a good reason.

I think I've proved the astrological symbols are more complex than Freud's. But let's compare Freud's symbols and the astrological ones.

Freud's symbols are based upon analogy (like the other symbols) but above all on a visual resemblance (what's sharp is phallic). (An example of visual analogy in Astrology is Mars: the red planet: red = blood = war = male.) And Freud's symbols deal with the "things" which escape us as an experience: Life (In fact there are two meanings of "life": birth, and the period between birth and death); Death, Freedom. Birth, Life, Death, have something in common; pleasure--of being in the womb, of being q-u-i-e-t (death). Here we find the difference between Freud's and astrological symbols: astrological symbols have a social dimension. When we dream, we don't care if what we do is legal, obscene, whatever. However, the two have a common factor: their everlastingness. But their interpretation hasn't. For instance, a Roman astrologer could say, "you are going to have plenty of slaves". This is a bit out of date. The symbols are everlasting; we interpret them.

Another common factor: the symbols live, they are natural. Don't mix the math sign and the real symbols, there's a univocal relation between a math sign and its meaning; whereas symbols are "infinitely suggestive". The result is that one must feel the symbol before actually explaining it. (In astrology this is even more difficult: the ten planets are in ten signs at your birth, and in ten houses. As astrologer has to mix the ten symbols "Planet in sign", the ten "Planet in Houses", and the angular differences between the Planets (60°, 90°, 120°, 180°, these are not chosen at random, but it'd take too long to explain). (By the way, I can do your astrological chart: I need birth date, hour and longitude & latitude of the town.)



In Greek, *συμβολον* means a thing cut in two parts. One part is what is symbolizing, the other is what is symbolized. To read symbols is to join these two parts. It's the simplest, the most difficult puzzle...and the most thought-provoking and exciting, too.

By the way, astrology is no religion, but I do believe fandom is a religion; to my mind the best religion, informal. Religion comes from *religare* (Latin) = to join, to get together. The Catholic religion gets together people who have the same fright, d*e*a*t*h. Fandom gets together people who have the same tastes. Don't you think it's better to have fun together than to be afraid together?

/I'm afraid I can't help but see astrology as a pile of crap, although it can be an interesting diversion. The simple horoscopes in the papers might be monumental crap with even the small semblances of scientific basis removed; but even the highly complex "scientifically cast" horoscopes of the type you are into leave me extremely skeptical. However, I'm game. I was born on 18 December 1949 at 6:00 PM local time, in Venlo, Holland, 6° E, 51.5° N./

JESSICA AMANDA SALMONSON Dud's Odd-piddle complex is seen in small children who have an intense infatuation with their fathers and want to get rid of their mothers. Dud says the root of this complex comes when the child first envies the mother's vagina and the mother's relationship with the father. This is intensified if the child views the parents copulating (a sight which inevitably turns youngsters into sickies) and he feels he must destroy his mother's vagina before it gobbles up his father, whose penis has obviously already been eaten by the dreadful but envied cavity. The child wishes to have a vagina (or a larger one if the child is a little girl) and equal this relationship with the good father, but the cause is not so much incestuous as it is symbolic of the desire to return to the scrotum and be a safe, warm gamete once again.

/An installment of Dave Jenrette's "Golden Guide to Sex"/

MIKE O'BRIEN In the article on male anatomy, Figure 1 resembles nothing so closely as a diagram I once saw on an apparatus for home wine-making. I can see why PENTHOUSE rejected it, though...it makes too much sense. It also puts me in mind that more and more people have been having fun with footnotes recently. I just saw Jon Singer doing the same thing in KRATOPHANY. It seems the perfect place to put all the little one-liners, while at the same time preserving the flow of the text. I'd probably do it myself, except that the footnote program in this system doesn't seem to work quite right. I really must dig into that one of these days. But then, how many LoCs have footnotes?

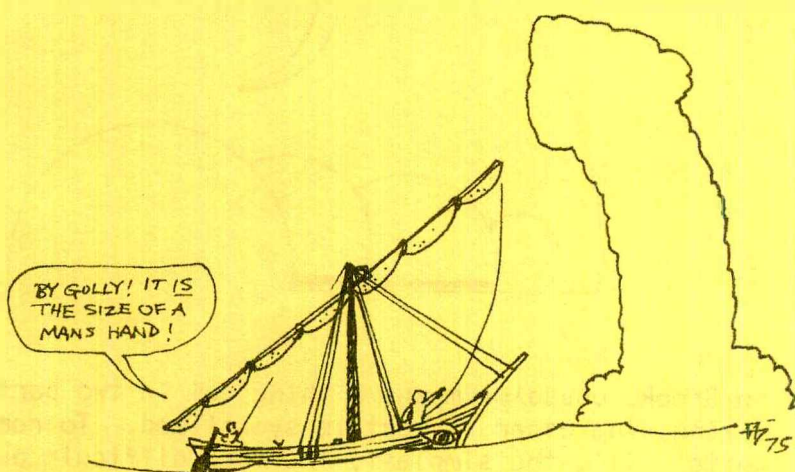
/Mike's LoC was a fully justified-margin computer printout./

ERIC LINDSAY Dave Jenrette should get a job writing footnotes for scientific papers.

MIKE GLICKSOHN Dave Jenrette's creative piece (no comment) is a highlight of the issue in terms of the inventiveness of the writing and thinking involved. Unfortunately, it is another contribution about which one can say little save to make similar excruciating puns on the topic (producing loud moans and groans known as "sperm wails") all of which will already have been made by Sam Long who happens to be in the same state as Dave (horny, irrepressible, Florida, confused, etc. etc, take your pick).

Which brings up the old question: What's the difference between a Dave Jenrette article and Dave Jenrette's wife? The answer, of course, is that a Dave Jenrette article pricks my interest.

K. ALLEN BJORKE Mardee is wrong, methinks. The average ejaculation is about 10 ml, or 10 cc, which is how that group got its name. I know this from reading ROLLING STONE instead of my bio books.



SEXISM

/A comment spurred by "Non Sequitur" but which seemed to fit in here.../

MARC ORTLIEB The minute one tries to be non-racist, one is, by concentrating on that, being more racist. If, when talking to someone of a different race one is consciously thinking "Now, what mustn't I say?" then there is naturally going to be an element of tension that would not have been there otherwise. The same can be said of sexism. I'm by nature a misogynist. I dislike and distrust women I haven't met. I try however to move with the

times and treat women as equals, but the more I try the further I slip behind. Take the case of the collective noun "Men" as used to describe the human race. Any attempt to replace this by the word "person" is going to come out stilted because by thinking about being non-sexist, you are being sexist. It's the old "Think of a horse but not of his tail" paradox all over again. (And notice I used the masculine pronoun. I'm a hopeless case.)

/I prefer the use of the inclusive "man" and the use of the male pronouns as meaning either sex myself, rather than the cumbersome "..person" or he/she and its variants, primarily because I accept this as "conventional" English usage and these forms are simpler and less cluttered than the proposed non-sexist forms. I do not mean a put-down by this (and I've already been through all this anyway in the Women's Apa)./

Diary of a bemused housewife

woman in a man's world · jodie offutt ·

The feminist movement hasn't particularly touched me except indirectly. I belong to the wrong generation to get too involved; the course of my life had already been set when the current liberation move gained momentum.

The women of my mother's generation were the first truly liberated in this country. They were in the group who first took traditionally male-oriented jobs during the second world war. The Rosie the Riveters who were the first females to wear pants and cut their hair short for practical reasons. They made it respectable to work outside the home, were the first women to drive cars and smoke cigarettes.

After the war conveniences were introduced that liberated women from the kitchen and other time-consuming household chores. Packaged products such as cake mixes and canned meat became available. Nylon came along and made many clothes quicker and easier to care for. Laundromats and frozen foods came into their own. Ready to wear clothing was more acceptable and varied.

Today my generation of women enjoys the freedom and conveniences--and their many improvements--that were introduced during our mothers' era. Yet we are free of the tremendous pressure that today's young women are subjecting themselves to. I have hopes that my daughters will enjoy the benefits of the current efforts without having to endure some of its trauma. I think they'll have more options open to them, and fewer demands made upon them.

I'm very glad that I am not a young woman just finishing high school now and faced with making decisions about my future. There is so much pressure to "Do Something", to "Make a Mark". When I graduated from high school, if a girl wanted to be a doctor, she had to buck the system. Today, if a young woman wants to marry, birth and raise children, she must buck the system. Even the traditional feminine occupations--nursing, teaching--are not as acceptable today as are careers that break new ground for women.

Many of the most vocal members of today's movement seem to have lost sight of the real and important issues of their cause (equal opportunity and pay for women) and are spending their energies on rhetoric and semantics. I find them abrasive, shallow and tiresome; my reaction to them is annoyance. I think these women are unsure of their roles, or perhaps they haven't yet defined them. In the meantime they are asking everybody to help them by insisting that we use certain words and phrases. Many people who are truly sympathetic to the problems of women in society find themselves intimidated and affronted by the stridence and combativeness of a certain segment of the feminists.

Part of the problem is due to the immaturity of these females. Another reason seems to be a confusion of terms. Some misguided mses feel it necessary to sacrifice manners to the movement. Ladylike behaviour, for some reason, is detrimental to the new role of women.

While opening doors into traditional male occupations, women have become competitive, competent and successful in many areas. They have observed their male counterparts in various work arenas, and learned from them. One facet of the behaviour of men that a lot of women have failed to observe and use is the social side of business. Perhaps they think it's unimportant; perhaps they've been so concerned with competing to notice.

Whatever the reasons, these women are not acting like gentlemen.

I was in New York last fall and accompanied my husband to a SFWA function that was a combination business/social event. Two incidents occurred then that caused me to wonder at the single-mindedness of some women in direct competition with men, women who ignore the simple rules of polite society--as I don't think a man would.

The first incident involved me directly; the second I observed. They both involved women who are probably outspoken members of the feminist movement.

My husband and I were having lunch in a hotel coffee shop when our table was approached by a female writer who was anxious to introduce a friend to the SFWA president. When I realized that I wasn't to be included in the introduction, I looked at Andy and let my jaw drop.

He noticed and said, "What about my date?"

"Oh," she said, "this is Andy's other half."

Whereupon I extended my hand and introduced myself by name to her companion, who was properly polite in his acknowledgement.

My reaction at being ignored during the introduction was amusement--and some bemusement--rather than any irritation at being left out. At the time I recalled a statement this woman had made the previous evening during a conversation. We had been discussing Great Britain and she had remarked to me that she wouldn't care to live in England because the country wasn't very sensitive to women's roles and needs.

For one who professed to be so aware of women, she certainly had given me short shrift. No man would have been so impolite.

That evening at a cocktail party I watched the following that involved four people: an editor (male), and editorial assistant (female), a writer (male), and his date (female).

The editorial assistant introduced herself and the writer to the editor, ignoring the writer's companion who was standing with the group. She took it upon herself to offer her hand and introduce herself to the editor who respon-

ded as any gentleman would.

The editor and the writer's lady engaged each other in conversation, much to the chagrin (it seemed to me) of the editorial assistant. I wondered if she thought the other woman wasn't worthy of his time since she wasn't really "in the business".

Both these occurrences indicate to me that many women have not learned the art of mixing business with pleasure, something that is second nature to most men. Men remain gentlemen, even when moving in business circles.

Surely women can maintain simple politeness, follow the rules of good manners --ladylike behaviour if you will--without compromising their gains in the world of business.

/Back to the lettercol, again. Some comments: when women are truly free to do their own thing, those who want to do the housewife/cook/children thing will be able to do so without feeling weird. Equal liberties, rights, opportunities, compensations for men and women; women who don't want this aren't being made to take it. The exact labels, words and phrases used have no bearing on this except where the words used affect the way people think of a thing --so that some feminists insist on "neutral" labels (i.e. chairperson) to show the position to be available to both and not a men-only domain. Possibly there are other reasons behind these as well; but I don't go for such words myself.

One problem is that currently feminism is "in", giving rise to a glut of fad-dists and hangers-on, which hinders the very real positive work being done by the sincere ones. "Strident" feminists can probably be found in either group; but the mere noise-makers who never do anything concrete can be done without. Perhaps, though, even raising the consciousness of a "trendie" is a good thing.

I have to voice disagreement with the "social side of business"; this being taken to include such ludicrous things as men blocking the entrance to an elevator until all the women are off, and exaggerated door-holding, and standing up when women enter a room. These sort of things are pretty stupid and totally unnecessary, as are any rules of etiquette other than those preventing the hurting, actual insulting, or nauseating of people. Treating people like human beings does not have to include silly rituals.

Also, some businessmen in practicing social rituals, are incredibly sexist; extending courtesies to women that they would never extend to men, to the point of condescension. Perhaps women in business see past the necessity of such empty ritual. But the article's examples may have some validity--sometimes women are more sexist than men./

APAS

/Janet Small's article on the trials and tribulations of OE'ing an apa/

MIKE O'BRIEN I now am able to sympathize with Janet Small. This past year I became an OE myself, of something that almost resembles an apa...though some might claim the analogy is a tad strained. It isn't, really. You see, I work with a computer operating system called UNIX. It is a very good system, and has developed a small, but enthusiastic and growing, User's Group, for trading hints, kinks...and software. Yo-yo, here, volunteered to run (single-handedly) the software distribution center, where people send in their clever programs, and I assemble mailings that go out on magnetic tape. Thank Ghod there's no equivalent to minac, or I'd be dying. As it is, my mailings

average about two million characters apiece. All of it is software, so not a character can be misplaced--no typos allowed. The mailing is sent to everyone who sends in a blank tape, not just those who contribute. If the mailing were to go out to over thirty or forty people, I'd collapse, but it's having the desired effect. Our own installation is drowning in software, we have the most advanced version of everything, and we have more computational power than many installations several times our size. Thanks to tape drives, a complete copy of the mailing can be made in five minutes or less. About the time systems cost less than \$60,000, I'll be picking one up myself. Yeah.

GAMES

/Mike Carlson's article on pinball and arcade games/

STUART GILSON I'm surprised that no enterprising fan has yet designed a fannish pinball machine. And if you think about it, the possibilities are endless: "Typo-shoot", a game of fun and thrills in which you try to hit moving typos with globs of corflu; "CONFusion", a game in which the object is to shoot metal balls at pictures of con-sites (Los Angeles scores zero); "Le Chapeau", where one controls a mechanical crane carrying an aussie hat, the object being to set the hat on a kewpie doll lookalike of Mike Glicksohn; "Gafla-fun", where, quite simply, you try to shoot moving pictures of BNF's; "Mimeo-guff", where points are awarded for the number of fanzines you can publish within a given time (offset genzines win you a free game). I imagine Michael would have little trouble emerging the victor with games like this.

/Ross Chamberlain did a fannish pinball machine for the cover of APA-Q 45./

MIKE O'BRIEN A computer game, called "panther", lives on the PLATO system at the University of Illinois at Urbana. This system is a computer-based instructional system, the largest ever constructed. It supports over 400 simultaneous graphic (picture-drawing) terminals. While it is of debatable educational value (as are all such systems), it is without doubt the finest system ever constructed for game-playing. Panther, in particular, is a winner, or was when I played it. The basic premise is that up to about ten or twelve, or as few as two, people enter the game, and choose a side (square or triangle). Then, they are in command of their own tank, and their job is to crawl around the mountains and destroy as many of the enemy tanks as they can before getting blown up themselves. You blow up a tank, you gain a point. You get blown up yourself, you lose a point and get reincarnated at your own home base. The trick is that you see, not an overall game board, like on the tankwar games in bars, but a simulated view out the turret of your own tank. You have to find the enemy by crawling around and nosing him out. And if he sees you first, you get blown away. For some reason I still don't fully understand, I really caught fire on this game. I got to the point where there was only one person who was better than I was on the whole system, and a very strange feeling it was for a perennial loser of games such as myself. I suppose the charm (if you can call it that) came from the incredible feeling of churning out to the enemy base, squatting down right in front of it with my back to a mountain, and blowing the enemy tanks to shards as fast as they reincarnated. I must have blown away fifteen tanks before I ran out of ammo, and at that I almost escaped before they drilled me. It did marvelous things for my rating. It was nice because it was a healthy thirst for blood. If you "kill" a fellow, it means only that he has to crawl all the way out from his base again.

Darrell Schweitzer

DISGUSTING TOYS FOR DISGUSTING TYKES

OR WHAT SANTA FORGOT THIS YEAR

BUBONIC PLAGUE, a board game. The object of this game is to get your pilgrim to sanctuary without contracting any of several loathsome diseases. Relive the Dark Ages and learn history the fun way as you roll the dice, move that many spaces, then pick a card from one of three decks. What do you get? It could be: "Contracted leprosy at inn. Lose two turns, and when others approach make sure to ring your bell and shout 'Unclean! Unclean!' Failure to do so will mean the loss of two more turns as you are stoned by angry mobs." But you might get out of that messy spot if you're lucky enough to draw: "Miraculous cure. Go to the river and bathe, wait one turn, and then pass GO and collect 200 pieces of silver." And just hope you don't pick: "Encounter with Red Death. Withdraw from game."

This wonderful and educational game accommodates as players up to a third the population of Europe in the mid-14th Century and costs only \$7.99. AND FOR EXTRA EXCITEMENT and only another \$3.99 you can have nine petri dishes containing actual strains of famous pestilences which the unlucky player must open and be exposed to as he comes upon them in the course of the game. A certified genuine relic of St. Enfruntenbak (the patron of revolving doors) is included in each kit for the cures.



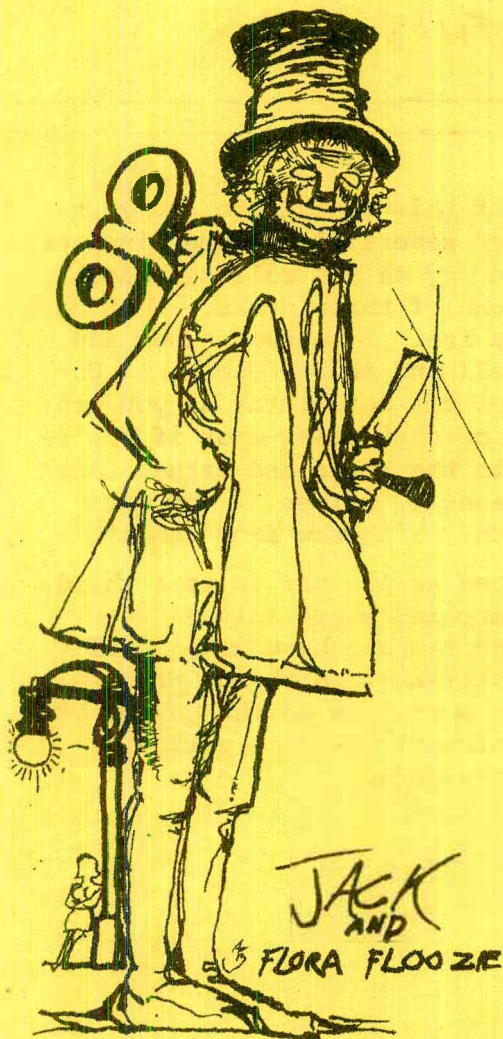
BUBONIC PLAGUE

THE JACK THE RIPPER ACTION FIGURE. This authentic eight-inch replica of the famous crazed killer is equipped with a keen straight-edge razor and a battery-powered movable arm. See how quickly he can slice G.I. Joe, the Lone Ranger, the S.W.A.T. Squad, and all your other toys

to rubber bands in no time.

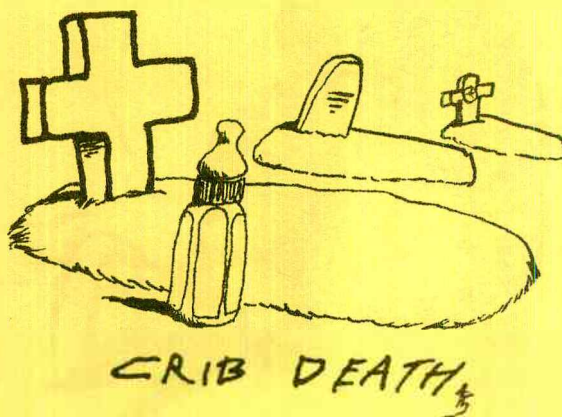
Only \$6.98. Excellent for curing boys of the silly and effeminate habit of playing with dolls.

Recommended by *Bereaved Parents Magazine* and the National Amputee Association.



FLORA FLOOZIE, the black sheep of Barbie's family. She borrows her sister's townhouse on weekends and messes around with Ken. Modelled with extreme realism! This is what happens when the Baby Tenderlove generation grows up. \$8.95. The Flora Floozie Abortion Kit extra.

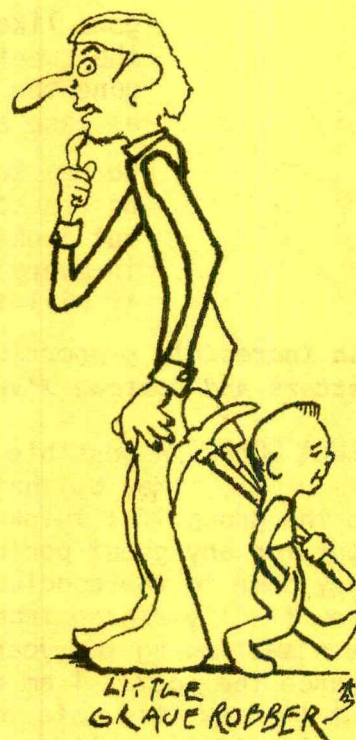
CRIB DEATH, a game for girls. The little baby doll rests peacefully in her cradle in the middle of the board as all the mommies go out shopping. The timer is set. Begin to draw cards from the deck. Wait two turns as your car breaks down. Wait another as you see a January White Sale you just can't resist. Then the timer goes off! Baby has a plastic bag over its head! If you can get home before the dollie turns blue, you're the winner! If not, your brother's Little Graverobber Kit might come in handy.



THE BABY LINDA DOLL: Based on the hit motion picture, *THE EXORCIST*, this dollie has a unique feature--turn her head around 180 degrees and she throws up! Mom, what a wonderful way to use that leftover pea soup! Only \$15.95. Crucifixes, bouncing beds, and other accessories extra.



Illos by Bruce Townley



THE LITTLE GRAVEROBBER KIT. This fun set includes toy shovels, crowbars, picks, etc. that really work! Kids! Now you can bury your friends and dig them up again! (Note: The condition of your friends on exhumation is not covered in our guarantee.) All parts inspected by the New York College of Mortuary Science.

All these and more are available wherever Tasteless Toys are sold!

/And you really can get toy guillotines that work (on a doll supplied). I've also heard of something called "Stretch Armstrong", a foot-high doll that is supposed to stretch to four times its original length, and which comes with a "stretch-o-gram" that shows the degree of pain supposedly being inflicted upon the doll. And so back to the lettercol.../

RELIGION

/Since VATI-CON III PROGRAM BOOK way the hell back in early 1975, and the subsequent "mush" issue of SIMULACRUM, this zine has "enjoyed" a reputation within fandom as being interested in sex and religion. This issue has already had its obligatory sex section; now comes the obligatory religion section./

GAIL WHITE

The Catholic Loses Her Faith

like the best leather purse
with the driver's license
and the credit cards
and the social security number
and the black-beaded rosary
with the silver crucifix

left on the bus in midtown
or snatched on a dark side street

gone like the queen of hearts in a pack of cards
the sweet face of the mother of many sorrows,
gone the infallible saints, the saving blood,
as gone as reviews of plays that closed last summer

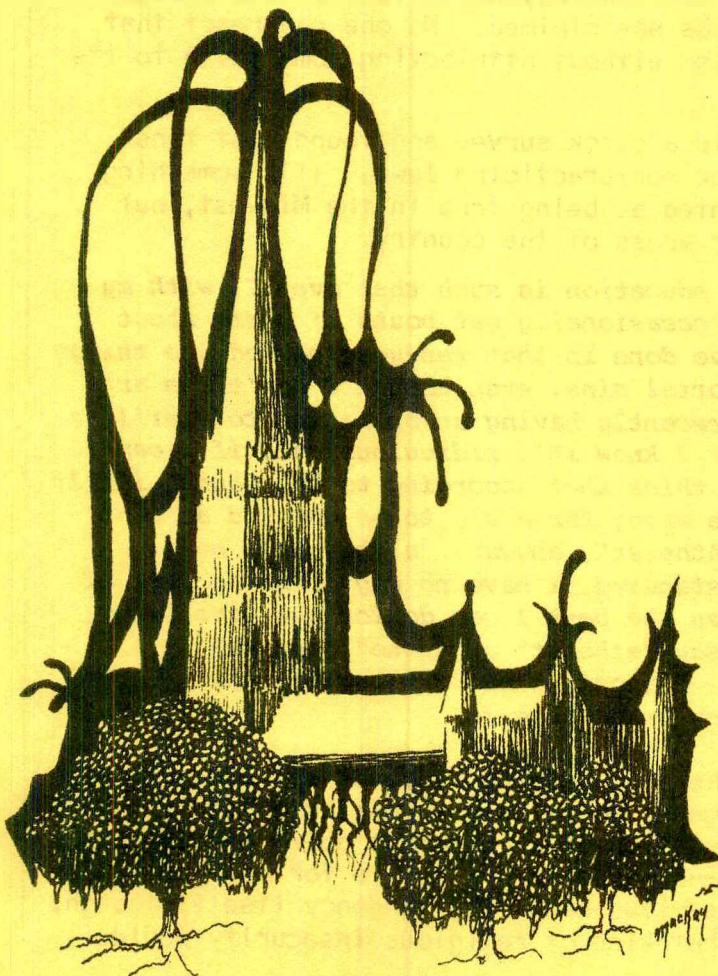
no use to place an ad in the paper for it,
no use to offer rewards for its return,
but looking vainly in every seat on the bus,
in every dusty corner, on the chance
it will turn up unexpectedly, safe and sound.

/An incredible proportion of fans are lapsed Catholics, it seems, judging from letters and hearsay I've come across./

PAULA GOLD A possible reason for the high number of ex-Catholics among fans may be that it only seems to be a lot of them. (I myself belong to the group.) I think that Catholics, particularly those that have been devout for any great period of time, may be more disillusioned than most when they come to the conclusion that their religion is a load of tripe. So, when they finally escape from the Church and realize what ridiculous drivel they've been swallowing for years, they tend to throw it all back at the Church every chance they get. I am not thoroughly familiar with other modern religions, but I think it's safe to say that when it comes to perpetrating tall tales, scaring little children, and having so many mystery-shrouded legends and rites, the Catholic Church has to be tops. You should have seen it when I was 9 years old and asked the nuns why didn't they ever tell us about the Inquisition. They sent me to the head priest; he wouldn't tell me either... The nuns were terrible to talk to---everytime we kids would come up with a reasonable question on theology the stock answer was, "well, children, that's one of The Great Mysteries of God. He's testing you to see if you really believe." (The Church is really big on blind faith.) Obviously if you believed all this crap you were a cinch to get into heaven. But you couldn't help wondering if every time you asked a question, was St. Peter marking it down in his big book.

(Another one of their priceless stories, St. Peter must be God's own version of the CIA.) Anyway, to quote Ed Conhor--Pfui!!

/I was brought up on the "Baltimore Catechism", way back in the fifties, when religious bigotry was the big thing and the idea was to scare hell out of--I mean into--kids to keep them in line. The Catechism contains 500 questions-and-answers, all of which had to be memorized letter-perfect: a remarkable waste of time if you ask me. Examples: "A supernatural mystery is a truth which we cannot fully understand but which we firmly believe because we have God's word for it." The doctrine of "original sin", a collective guilt idea. Lots of sins, mortal (the biggies) and venial (just feel sorry for a while and you're spared hellfire)--but for a sin to be mortal you have to consider it to be seriously wrong; lots of loopholes there because sometimes you can even justify murder to yourself. And, of course, "The one true Church established by Christ is the Catholic Church." and "Outside the Church there is no salvation."--something which taught to kids is pure evil: in the simplistic way of a kid just frightened by yet another tale of hellfire in catechism class, that would imply that his best friend across the street, who happened to be a Protestant, was consigned to hell. On top of that, there are glimmers of a socialist/communist standard in "Every one is obliged to perform the works of mercy, according to his own ability and the need of his neighbour." And in the treatment of the Ten Commandments, the biggie, the sixth, is very quickly glossed over. The Catechism is a strange book, written Q & A style almost in the manner of programmed learning texts, with a couple of repetitions of each point to hammer it all home, very inconsistent. And, in all fairness, very outmoded--copyright 1945./



BRENDAN DUBOIS About religion

--I confess that I do believe in a God, but I don't believe in organized religion. I have spent the last twelve years of my life going to Catholic schools, and while it did provide me with a decent education, the manner in which it did so is repulsive to me. The way the nuns force the students to look alike, act alike, and the way they crush creativeness goes to show what they wanted. They wanted the students to graduate as total uniform beings, so that they wouldn't raise any fuss as they grew older. They want an atmosphere of stifled conformity, and that's what my grade school was like. I am by nature a very fast reader, and I remember when I was always the first one done with my reading, the nun would get madder than hell; believing that I was fooling around and goofing off. Subsequently, I would always pretend that I was still reading even though I had been done

long before. In a few short months, I will be graduating from a religious high school, and I will be glad when I do. There are many petty tyrannies (length of hair, chewing gum, talking in corridors) in my school, I'll be glad when I'm gone from the mess.

/I would guess that some of the crap you have to put with at school is not the fault of the religious aspect of the school at all, but just the sort of thing that is symptomatic of any school. Your school sounds like a private school to me, and I'm already aware of the problems someone like Bill Brummer has at an "upper class" British model private school here in Toronto. And very few "average" type schools that I know of have any means at all for dealing with exceptionally intelligent, creative, or curious kids--they just put pressure on them to be "normal" (i.e. dull like everyone else); other kids as well as teachers; and it angers me to think of how many of these special kids are being turned off and away from their talents by this sort of shit, to never realize or derive satisfaction from their abilities. To hear Bill Brummer talk about it, I get the impression that the private school is even worse for special talents than the public high schools./

JACKIE CAUSGROVE I'll agree with Jessica Salmonson that yes, being raised in the Church does instill some taboos within you that even years of contrary thinking does not erase. In times of severe fright, for example, I have called on God to help, even though in calmer moments I doubt the existence of any Supreme Being. When someone does something utterly and outrightly blasphemous (not, I should add, something like the innocent misuse she put the rosary to when she wore it like a necklace) I inwardly cringe. Whether it's due to early conditioning or simple dislike of seeing something that is respected by others treated in a disrespectful way (for I get the same uneasy reaction when someone mistreats objects of other religions' artifacts too) I'm not sure, but it does bother me. The way her friend acted, though, I doubt whether her faith was as dead as she claimed. No one can react that strongly to the trappings of Catholicism without attributing some faith to its validity.

At AUTOCLAVE, Lynn and Mark Aronson did a quick survey and found most fans present were either lapsed Catholics or non-practicing Jews. It's something that's been pretty much taken for granted as being true in the Midwest, but I'm not sure how valid it is for other areas of the country.

/The early conditioning of a Catholic education is such that even I, with my ten-plus years of atheistic thinking, occasionally get bouts of worry about my "sins" (that is, various things I've done in that ten-year period are things that the Catholic Church regards as mortal sins, even though I don't see anything wrong about them--for example, recently having an operation to sterilize me) and the possibility of hell-fire. I know it's ridiculous; and if I can't reassure myself with that, I can also think that according to the Church itself you have to believe you're doing grave wrong for a sin to be counted as such --and I don't. I am not a labelled "Atheist", anyway: although my beliefs match up pretty well to an atheistic standard, I have no way of being sure of them, I merely accept what I believe as the best I can do for the time being. If asked my religion, I'll generally say "atheist" or "none", but that's a name taken on mostly for convenience. "Agnostic" may fit better, the idea that the existence of God is unknown or unknowable./

CLIFF BIGGERS I've been amazed at the overwhelming tendency of many people, both adults and teenagers, to falsely summarize and twist words around to alter a valid interpretation of a religious point into a slanderous maligning of their own beliefs--perhaps it's a desire for martyrdom, and I do say that facetiously. I am serious about the tendency itself, though, and it's drawn me to speculate upon what kind of religious insecurity would

make a person actively seek offensive remarks about his beliefs--and where such remarks are not present, create them from other statements. Even though it's very clichéd, I've always sided with a view of God (if such a thing exists) as a creator who, having created, is no more concerned with the development of his creation than we would be with the growth of a bacteria culture or the like. A regimented, preordained world would be a melancholy and depressing thing to me, destroying many of my motives in life, and I'm only thankful that I didn't have the sort of parents who would force such a view ~~down~~ upon their children.

/Religious insecurity is what I would call certain "crank" sects who have a habit of suing everybody who says anything (however slight) against them. And I instinctively distrust any "religion" that requires the outlay of large sums of money for your salvation./

BUCK COULSON Anyone as determined to be a member of a group as you seem to be shouldn't call organized religion a great evil. Lots of people need group religion as much as you seem to need group fandom; it's much the same thing, really. And a group has to be organized to some extent or it ceases to be a group. But it has nothing to do with being logical, and a refutation of Gary Grady's Perfect Being theorem is childishly simple. A Perfect Being must have existence in order to be perfect? Very well, then, there are no Perfect Beings; they are in the same category of imagination as H. G. Wells' Martians. If that theorem is considered sophisticated philosophy, I begin to see why I always considered philosophy a sort of high-flown garbage.

Fans are all either Catholics, Jews, or atheists. There hasn't been a true believing Protestant in fandom since Rev. Moorhead gaflated.

ALAN BOSTICK D. Gary Grady's proof of the existence of a Perfect Being doesn't hold very much water. By using an identical argument, one can prove the existence of anything at all. Example: We can define a Plergb to be an object which (a) exists, and (b) creates energy out of nothing. If it didn't exist, it would not be a Plergb. Therefore the Plergb must exist. Also, in the case of the Perfect Being, that proof is valid only if one accepts the premise that an object or being is imperfect if it doesn't exist, a statement that I see no reason to accept as true.

D. GARY GRADY Perhaps I should have made myself clearer in connection with the Ontological Argument. I do not for one minute accept it and I remain an agnostic. You are not, however, correct in saying that the argument could be used to support the existence of an ideal gas or absolute zero. Existence is not an essential attribute of either of those as it is (according to adherents of the Ontological Argument) of the Perfect Being. The matter is not one that I am really qualified to discuss, but it is dealt with by many philosophers and you should be able to find their analyses in any good theology text. Kant's refutation, which asserts that existence is not a property at all, in the sense that, say, colour or chemical makeup is, is probably the most widely accepted. Again, I'm not a philosopher and if you're interested I'd suggest you look into a text on the subject.

I enjoy gabbing with Jehovah's Witnesses because they are so easy to throw into a tizzle. I generally ask them about their salvation plans. As a rule, they believe that every JW is entitled to salvation. But they also interpret the Revelations to mean that only 144,000 will be saved. And there are something like 300,000 LIVING JWs. Neat arithmetic, that. It's also interesting to explain to them the origin of the name Jehovah. Now, the sect makes a big deal about how it's vitally important to use the right name for God. What they apparently don't know is that Hebrew is written without vowels except as superscripts. But since, under Jewish superstition, it is impermissible to utter

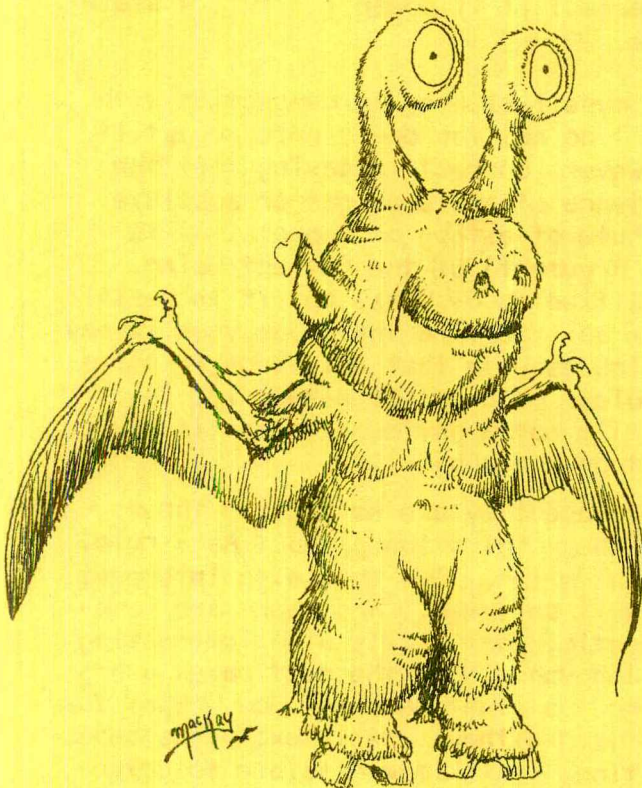
the name of the Lord, the vowel sounds from the Hebrew word for the Lord are normally substituted for the correct vowel accents in the Torah. When you read the consonants from Yahweh with the vowels from adonai, you get Jehovah. (There are a few consonant shifts there, but that's the origin of the word.) By the way, I'm surprised the women talked to Mark Sharpe at all; JW's normally prohibit women from "teaching" religion to adult men.

DAVID TAGGART A wrong conclusion that I could make--that things would be better if everybody had a religion. But it doesn't work this way. Some people get nasty about religion. Just today I got a newsletter from Rich Comely, the publisher of CAPTAIN CANUCK comics. Rich is a Mormon, and says, "without a doubt...this is Christ's true Church." Religion breeds fanatics, as does any strong belief. There's nothing wrong with fighting for your beliefs, whether you're a Protestant fighting the Spanish Armada, or a Jew fighting the Ugandans, but call off the fight in peacetime, please. Nobody loves a fanatic, especially religious ones. It might be interesting to ask Rich Comely to speculate on why it was that Joseph Smith lost those golden tablets with the book of Mormon printed on them...

STUART GILSON As far as the religious argument goes, when you really get right down to it, you've either got spiritual faith or you haven't, and you base your reasoning accordingly. There's no tangible "proof" to support either side, and be you atheist or christian, your arguments ultimately reduce to a question of faith, a subject for which there is no clear-cut answer. I'm an agnostic myself, and I think like I do because my position is by far the most easily defensible, albeit the most noncommittal. I consider both sides of the coin with equal impartiality, and I find it difficult to get emotionally involved whenever the matter arises (perhaps everyone would be well-advised to take such an attitude). What I do resent, however, are people who refuse to consider my position with the same open-mindedness I've accorded

them. All stubbornness accomplishes is to emphasize the same old tired conclusion that without faith, there is no God. And why should there be for everyone? Faith is either ingrained from childhood or natural; it cannot be instilled. Only through an independent, internal process yet to be studied or defined can a person acquire faith he wasn't "born" with. To try to teach it to someone is an exercise in futility, and there's an element of self-deception there that sounds contrary to what the Christians espouse. Many people claim to have faith, but it's my guess only a fraction genuinely have it. As for the rest? One has to wonder if their "belief" in a God isn't more accurately a wish to believe in a life after death; in this respect, Christianity offers comfort and reassurance clearly not to be found in the Atheist camp.

Although I can recognize faith when I see it easily enough, there are



times when faith assumes such an intense quality I'm shocked to the core. I know of someone in the neighbourhood, for instance, who believes in God so resolutely, she refuses to acknowledge evolution. If asked to account for the unequivocal evidence for evolution, she dismisses it by saying, "Well, apes just don't look like man so they can't be related. Thus, evolution is heresy." Frankly, hearing this is cause enough to doubt her intelligence, let alone her common sense. But I'm not going to argue. To do so would be to attack her faith, which is something I've no right to do because I've never shared in that faith enough to know much about it. If she's happy living as she presently is, then religion has worked to her advantage. All we must remember is that no two people regard God in precisely the same way, and religion is therefore something to be studied without recourse to generalities.

/Present someone with a convincing enough argument and it's probably quite possible to instill faith. What you yourself come to regard as true facts may seem otherwise to someone else and to him you're taking your belief on faith as blind as that you see in religious types. Much of what you learn throughout your life and come to regard as your own way of thinking is acquired faith. In my own case, I was, if not a devout Catholic as a child, at least scared shitless by the idea of hell--which is certainly a faith instilled in childhood; and this I've lost in favour of an equally great faith that hell is a myth anyway--an acquired faith of much more recent standing. Specifically, faith in God could probably be brought about in similar ways. But God is a bit of a sacred cow to many people and where it is all right to challenge faith in profane matters, it is a no-no to challenge ideas of God.

And evolution is the same sort of threat to security as the heliocentric model of the planets was way back in the time of Galileo. Barrages against evolution like those carried out in print and on the air in the early 70's by "Granite Head" Armstrong and the California fundamentalists aren't rare; and there's also something funny going on about "equal time" for the Biblical creation myth in biology classes in some states--a piece of asshole stupidity if ever I saw one. ("Spontaneous generation" would also be taught, for consistency. Which degrades science down to a matter of political ideology.)/

RICHARD BRANDT Attitudes of self-proclaimed religious people do get under my skin, though. I heard just last night on television an interview with two followers of a charismatic spiritual leader named Oric. Seems the police burst into an apartment in New York and found some of Oric's followers helping him "revive" a corpse which had been decomposing for two months. The night their friend died of cancer, this Oric drove over and picked up all his cohorts, telling them they were going to see "a miracle". The interviewer asked if they even had a moment of hesitation. One answered, "No." So seven people kept a continuous silent watch (in shifts) over the covered corpse, for two months, with every expectation that their leader would somehow effect this resurrection. When they finally were carted away, and it hit them that their friend wouldn't get up from his deathbed, they reacted in the typical fashion of the true believer--they saw it as a test of faith. "We finally realized," said one, "that the test was not, do I believe in God after Stephan revives--do I believe in God whether Stephan revives or not?" It's so handy to have a readymade explanation for every occasion when an event contradicts the existence of the particular God which you believe in. One of the two gentlemen even said he would do it again, if he thought it would bring his friend back. Eeesh. It's a little chilling how people will go through any kind of malarkey if it's connected with their Supreme Being, especially under the influence of a smooth-talking spiritual operator. That's what bugs me about religious attitudes, too.

There is a scene in Jeremiah Johnson where the leaders of a wagon train beg the mountain man to guide them through the snowbound Rockies, arguing that

there are forty or so Good Christians along. They then glide blithely through a sacred Indian burial ground, stirring up the spirits--and the Indians, who wipe out Jeremiah's family. That bugs me about religious attitudes, too--true believers really have it in for "false believers".

MARTIN MORSE WOOSTER Most of your correspondents disavow religion because of the obnoxious practices of some of the more nauseating evangelical sorts. Allow me to quote from James Blish's They Shall Have Stars:

"I've no religion of my own, but I think when the experts talk about 'faith' they mean something different from the shouting kind, the kind the Believers have. Shouting religions always strike me as essentially like pep-meetings among salesmen; their ceremonies and their manners are so aggressive because they don't really believe the code themselves. Real faith is so much a part of the world you live in that you seldom notice it, and it isn't always religious in the formal sense. Mathematics is based on faith, for instance, for those who know it."

Thus for the true believer (in small letters, not capitals), religion is inside and a part of one, not outside, continually shoved on others. Blish's insight can, of course, be extended to include the denatured religions as well as the true ones; I would, for instance, respect a feminist who knew her freedom and could practice it without continual self-justification more than I would the more common sort who has to prove her independence by demonstrations and continual overt prejudices against others. But I digress.

Religion is, to me, a way of living, not a way of dying. A religion can only gain new converts these days by proving to the would-be believers that its way of seeing things is preferable to the way of the non-theist, or the follower of process philosophies, or the worshipper of the ways of the East. Promising the flock that if one continues to tithe, that you will end up with "pie in the sky when you die, by and by" won't work any more; we have grown too sophisticated (or decadent) for that. If one can use the teachings of Christ to achieve inner peace and self-fulfilment, this is fine. If one can communicate those teachings to others, even better. If one decides to go for the dollars and become the reincarnation of Reverend Ike, then we can safely ignore him or her and search for another teacher.

/I've several encounters with cheerleader type preachers I could relate. Back when I was at school I attended a big Rex Humbug revival; very slickly done with a lot of enthusiasm, it was easy to get caught up in it until they handed around the collection plate and made a big spiel for money. I've also seen a faith healer named Fern Olsen who actually did perform alleged miracles, but this congregation was periodically whipped into ecstatic frenzy with chants of "ooooh, precious Jesus" and the like chaotically from the audience in a manner reminiscent of the Two Minutes Hate.

More recently, in Detroit, we happened upon something called "Get Down for Jesus" (digression: what means "get down"? I've heard it in connection with various unrelated things--disco, religion, and sexual perversions, to name only three. Silly choice of words.) on Belle Isle Park, where a southern-style (possibly Baptist) preacher was leading the congregation in singing. After one of those all-clap-your-hands-move-your-feet etc. type participation numbers, they did "I'd like to teach the world to sing...". "Everybody sing," the good reverend shouted, "It's the Real Thing!" At that point we left.

Actually, I'm rather curious and would someday like to attend a real "Brother Love's Travelling Salvation Show" type of revival. Provided I can be invisible or at least inconspicuous, and keep a firm grip on my money. I've been told that these exist as close by as Ohio, land of family restaurants with plastic menus complete with suggested prayers and with religious Archie comics./



Ch



JOHN ALDERSON I found that most of the letters on religion were at a superficial level in their knowledge of Christianity. Christian belief begins in Sunday School with various moral stories, suited supposedly for children's minds. As one grows up in the Church the understanding deepens, or it should and things take on higher meanings. For example take hell. In their effort, born out of love for their fellow man, medieval Christians in seeking to save the souls of others concentrated on the loss of

the unsaved, for the simple reason that there is no adequate language to describe blissful things. So, as most people suffer somewhat during their lives, the reverse of bliss was described. True, some people may have revelled in this, indeed I think Mae Strelkov revels in reviling their revelling. Indeed the standard of knowledge displayed could be likened to someone, not even knowing of Newton's Laws, criticising Einstein's Theory of Relativity. Most are at least that far apart.

Now take your own remark about who created God. In the Christian philosophy we have what is called "eternity", a something that science fiction writers should be interested in. It means an existence outside of, and beyond space and time, so that God is Lord of both Space and Time. Therefore, for God, time is part of his creation, just as space is, and he is beyond both. I also found your comments on the proof of God's existence, that is, if there can be imagined a perfect Being, then that Being could not be perfect unless he existed, interesting. The argument actually stems from Plato who maintained that all conceptions existed because there was a perfect form of that idea, this occurring with all conceptions, even ordinary nouns. That is, there could be no chair, unless there existed somewhere a perfect realization of a chair. As to the truth or otherwise of the logic, I hold my peace, but I do think it was worthy of comment; you may even want to study it further.

/On hell; because of the difficulty most people seem to have of "listening" to a long-range view, the fear of something dreadful probably is more effective than the promise of something good. Threats work better than promises--if it isn't certain that either will be carried out anyway, you gamble more safely for yourself by heeding the threat./

KEN NAHIGIAN (via Mae Strelkov) I am appalled by the number of people--personal friends of mine--who are enslaved by the form and ritual of religion and politics. I have good friends, friends whom I love, who tell me casually and without a moment of remorse that I will be doomed to burn in hell eternally if I continue to forsake that unique ray of truth that is so precious to their own. This kind of intellectual blindness frightens and depresses me. And so total is the faith of my friends that, in my worst moments, I begin to fear that they are right--that perhaps I am the blind one, that perhaps God in truth is a cosmic child who pulls wings off butterflies. But then, in those darkest moments, at the most unexpected times, I encounter someone like you, Mae, and I begin to feel that perhaps there is hope for light and love and reason after all.

(Later) On the subject of friends who appear to love me and yet who don't turn a hair when they tell me that I am bound for a fire & brimstone hell-- You mentioned that that sort of attitude leads you to suspect that their "love"

GREAT MOMENTS IN LETTER-HACKING

#2



Reading your own stuff.

AK

GREAT MOMENTS IN LETTER-HACKING

#3



Reading your own stuff and discovering how much has been edited.

UK

is not actually real. What frightens me about their attitude, however, is the knowledge that their "love", as far as it goes, is quite real indeed. If I knew or suspected that my friends did not love me, then I wouldn't be frightened or upset when they ... condemn me to damnation--I would just shrug it off as a manifestation of their hatred. What disturbs me, then, is not the suspicion that I am not loved, but the realization of the sheer strength of logic-tight compartments, of the capacity for "doublethink", that exists in the minds of my closest friends. If something occurred to harm me

physically or emotionally in this world--the world of everyday experience--my friends would show all the signs of true concern. But if we enter the religious world, the world of theological discourse--a world which my Christian friends insist is identical with this world--a very strange, very frightening thing takes place. A little switch goes click in their minds. Their attitude changes. They are suddenly unconcerned about the damnation of the damned. Certainly Hell exists; the fire that waits for me is real, it will hurt me in the same way as when I burn my finger, and for ever--but somehow, to them, it doesn't matter... Until we leave the subject of theology. Then the little switch clicks off, and my friends become as concerned about me as loving friends should--am I feeling well? how is my cold? am I getting enough sleep? etc. That is what disturbs me, Mae. Briefly put, it is not the idea that I am not loved, but the knowledge that love can be so horribly distorted.

You may guess that I have always been interested in the notion of eternal punishment, and the peculiar wall of doublethink that lets loving, clear-thinking people accept it so casually. The interest may be a little morbid, I admit. I have especially been interested in what happens when a fire&brimstone Christian is forced to see that he is operating on an intellectual double standard. Once or twice I've performed experiments to bring this about. It's not especially easy, but when I succeed I've found that the results are more disturbing than anything I've said so far. You see, given patience, even some of the most conservative Christians can be made to admit that the idea of infinite pain infinitely prolonged, in return for a finite amount of sin, is perhaps going too far. For a moment, he can be made to admit that; and then...nothing. The soft tidal return of his habitual outlook as he looks away from you reasserts itself. His feelings do not change; old opinions take root once more. Perhaps, for a moment, ancient fears and doubts were stirring in his heart--but then? No; it just won't do. It's nonsense. He knows that hell exists. Five minutes later, he will not remember your arguments. The next day, he will not remember having doubted. A year after, he will be that much smugger in his assurance that nobody has ever shaken his unwavering belief in the righteousness of God's law.

That's the sort of thing we're up against. Can you blame me for being discouraged?

JOSEPH NICHOLAS I have to disagree with Stu Gilson when he says that religion is not a crutch, because it manifestly is. It does provide an explanation for the universe--albeit a trite and arrogantly self-centered one--which, in today's overcomplex world (viz. Alvin Toffler) can (and does)

prove attractive to those who are too overwhelmed by the complexities to cope. (And please don't take this as an indication that I can cope; I'm not going to make such an egotistic claim for myself, or for anyone else. None of us can cope; we just do the best we can.) In my opinion, Durkheim was absolutely right when he claimed that religion, by providing a meaning to death, thus provides an averarching meaning to life--by holding out the promise of something to come after death, religion thus reduces life to no more than a journey towards this goal. And make no mistake--death is the ultimate terror that lies in wait for us all. We're all going to die in the end, whether we like it or not, and there's nothing we can do about it; but the prime purpose of religion in this instance is to alleviate some of the terror.

And what about Jesus, who was supposed to have died on the cross for our sins? Isn't this an opportunity for us, by accepting this and its attendant doctrine, to offload our own problems onto someone else. To offer them up for religion to accept them and absolve us from them, thus reducing our burden? The Catholic confessional serves much the same sort of purpose--the offloading of your troubles onto someone else--but with the added advantage that the offloading is both real and immediate. All this is no more than an admission that you yourself can't cope with them and need someone (or something) else to handle them for you.

It's only the Christian religion, I think, that has been--and still is--opposed to the spread of knowledge, even knowledge itself. We had an argument about this in the office last week; one of my colleagues teaches Sunday school in a branch of the Presbyterian Church (of Scotland--John Knox and John Calvin were its founders, back in the sixteenth century) in London, and she held to the view that knowledge was intrinsically evil; only church control of knowledge could ensure its use for good. ("Like the Spanish Inquisition?" was my immediate taunt--surely the most obvious example of the deliberate suppression of knowledge--only to be told that since this was a Catholic invention, it didn't apply in her case. Yes, really!) My counterview was that knowledge in itself was a passive commodity, purely neutral, and that it was man alone who decided whether it was used for good or evil (leaving aside for a moment the fact that the words "good" and "evil" are in themselves purely subjective definitions anyway). Her answer was that even if knowledge were neutral, then it was certainly the devil in man who put knowledge to evil uses, and this was therefore another reason why only the church could ensure its use for good. Not quite a closed, circular argument, but damn near...

(The church, it seems to me, is incapable of seeing things in anything other than its own terms; terms of absolutes. Yes/no, black/white, on/off, either/or; there are no shades of grey as far as the church is concerned, no middle ground, no thought of a compromise. And this, I feel, is its main failing. Society is constructed in terms of compromises, and the church doesn't fit in. Deliberately so; it wants to stand outside of, and above, society, subordinating it to its own will. And while it might have done so once, it cannot do so now; it has not attempted to change itself, to adapt, to evolve in any way, and as such it has not attempted to change itself, to adapt, to evolve in any way, and as such, it ought to be well along the road to extinction by now. It's a pity it isn't. I dunno how the hell it manages to keep going, but I just wish it didn't.)

This suppression of knowledge is something that the church has incorporated so insidiously into its body of myths that we don't even notice it any longer. Make of this what you will, but throughout the ancient world, the serpent, or snake, was identified as the bearer of knowledge, cropping up time and time again in umpteen different cults. (The Minoan goddesses of Crete wore them around their necks; Mercury, the messenger of the Olympians, had them entwined around his staff; to name but two of the many that I could cite.) Whether this

knowledge was imparted to its recipients by the eating of an apple, or by any other means, doesn't seem to have mattered; it was always the serpent who brought it in the first place. Moreover, dragons (those wonderful creatures of mythology) were often identified in place of the serpent; the two seem to have been interchangeable in some instances. Why this should be so, I don't know, and neither does archaeology, but it is so, nevertheless.

In killing the dragon, then, St. George was demonstrating the church's victory over, and vanquishment of, knowledge.

Makes you sick, doesn't it? That so much should have been devoted to the elevation of a religion designed to keep us all in fear and poverty; that, in the name of some supposed all-powerful deity, so many should have brought down and destroyed for their efforts. It makes me sick.

I don't believe in god, any god. I'm an atheist, and proud of it. And even if god does exist despite my belief, then I hate his fucking guts. Words alone can't do justice to the depth of hatred I feel for churches and religions in general...

/The fear of death, I think, arises out of fear of "not-being", a nothingness that cannot even be imagined. When you die, your mind shuts down, nothing sustains your consciousness any longer. You can't even ask what you experience because you are not experiencing anything. (You might also ask, what was before birth? Something else you can't know because it didn't exist.) The afterlife concept was postulated because many people couldn't come to grips with this "not-being"; if the idea of afterlife helps people to die comfortably in its belief, then it does some good--after all there is no mind left after death to be disappointed. Of course, it cannot be proven definitely that there is no afterlife; but from what is known about the brain even now, it seems highly unlikely. And the afterlife concept is a theory devised in a day when knowledge of the workings of the body was about nil.

Suppression of knowledge goes on from Renaissance Catholicism to California fundamentalists. Irrationality is also seen in the inconsistent stance of the present-day Catholic Church on birth control methods--if the desired end is okay when achieved by one means, why not by other means as well? And if the objection is that the other means aren't "natural", why don't they also take a stand against any other medicine and many surgical procedures? But there's a bit of the old sanctity-of-big-family and fun-is-sin involved too.

I've always been interested in alternate histories; and it might be interesting to guess at what sort of changes would have happened in the store of man's knowledge today had there never been religion, or at least not standard Christian religion. Anybody want to take a crack at it--article or long LoC? Or at least book recommendations?/

BOOK REVIEWS

/Reviews by Wayne Hooks/

D. GARY GRADY I don't think he was accurate in his remarks about French versus English. He claims that French has retained case endings while English has only the Saxon genitive. HUH?? Right on the English, but wrong on the French, which doesn't even decline nouns for possession. It's true that French pronouns are slightly more inflected than English ones, but that's a matter of different words more than "case endings". Nor do I think French has fewer tenses than English. If anything, it is possible to express more subtle time and mood differences in French (with its real live subjunctive). If you restrict your consideration to tenses which do not require an auxiliary verb, French is clearly far more inflected than English.

JERRY POURNELLE Regarding Wayne Hooks' review of COMBAT SF: really, if war were as simple a phenomenon as Hooks would like to believe, it would present no problems. All good men despise war; I am a good man; therefore--; unfortunately, the major premise is unsound. It is easy to show that many men whom nearly everyone would consider a "good man" has participated in war, whether they despised it or not; it is more difficult to show, but I think provable, that such men manage to compartmentalize their emotions. It's very hard to charge up the hill while reciting "I hate war! I hate what I'm doing! This is all evil!"

In fact, Hooks' review borders on the simple-minded. I can't say Dickson's choice of stories was perfect, but he did not claim that the anthology dealt only with war. The title was COMBAT SCIENCE FICTION, and combat, while implying armed struggle, certainly does not necessarily imply armies. Furthermore, I doubt that Hooks even read the anthology. His capsule review of Drake's "The Butcher's Bill" states that Drake "omits the depravity, the criminality of war" when I would have thought that was what the story was about. Great Heavens! Drake has been through the mill and knows what he's talking about; and while I do not fully agree with his views, I understand where they come from, and fearfully admit that they have a validity I wish were not so. The incident in "The Butcher's Bill" could so easily happen; and did, in Southeast Asia. Drake says that before you sow the dragon's teeth you must understand what crop you will reap; that is something that must be said again and again.

And perhaps it is true that one must never sow dragon's teeth; that the cost will always be higher than the costs of losing to one's enemies. I vigorously oppose that view, of course. I do not think the Carthaginians would agree, nor would the people of 13th Century Samarkand: "And three times the Horde rode across the plain where once stood a city of of 100,000 souls; and not a horse stumbled." Or 13th Century Baghdad: "At dawn Baghdad was a city of a million souls; by dusk not a dog barked." But it is at least a possible view.

Hooks, on the other hand, takes the old woman's view. He chants cant phrases: "War is a perversion." He offers nothing as alternative. Has he said there is no cause worth fighting for? He implies it, but does he really believe it? Does he refuse the protection of the police? Of the RCAF?

And, interestingly, his mania is triggered only by Dickson's book. He also reviews Busby's CAGE A MAN, snidely remarking that it can appeal only to those of indiscriminating taste (he, of course, discriminates); but he doesn't mention that Busby says, clearly, that the entire human race is involved when one man is unjustly treated. Read CAGE A MAN as a comment on the Pueblo incident, and you will find a view somewhat different





from Hooks' views as expressed in his diatribe on Dickson's book; but nary a sign is there that Hooks knows this.

He might also learn some science. There is gravity on the Moon, despite what he says in his silly review of the Bova-Lewis story. (Which wasn't even from an original idea; there was a story in *ASTOUNDING* many years ago in which bullets went into close circular orbit and ended up striking the man who fired them.

I really think you should find another lead book reviewer. His taste may be

discriminating (certainly he implies that this is so although it hardly shows in his writing) but great Heaven! Can he not find anything he likes? Inevitably the suspicion forms that Hooks writes only bad reviews because it is the only way he can make himself feel important. He reviews seven books, and what does he say? Dickson's book "lacks a message". Barjeval is "light reading... but only that". Busby "would appeal only to a reader of indiscriminating taste". Wilson Tucker gives his theme "a shallow and superficial treatment". Moorcock "suffers from clichés", his "dialogue is stilted and superficial" and full of "overblown phrases". Simak wrote "too hastily" and his book "may only be considered very light reading".

Great Heavens! John W. Campbell used to say he had read more bad science fiction than anyone in the world, but he HAD to; he personally went through the *ASTOUNDING* slush pile and rejected most of what he read. Surely Hooks is not required to read only books he does not care for? Given the time space in which the books he reviewed were published he must deliberately have chosen seven books he did not like; surely there were others published during this era. Perhaps he only finishes books he does not care for? When he begins a book, if he likes it, he does not read it, but searches for something he can review in a way to show how much better a writer he, Hooks, would be than the silly author--if only Hooks had time to write books instead of reviews.

*/Wayne Hooks sends reviews to other places than *SIMULACRUM*, and the reviews in *SIM 3* arrived in separate batches throughout 1975 and early 1976; thus although you can say he reviews a high proportion of books negatively, you can't say for sure he reviews them all unfavourably.*

*However, I don't plan to run any more short book reviews in *SIMULACRUM*. I've decided that I really don't find them that interesting, and that they're not the sort of thing that really fits into the type of zine I'm trying to turn *SIM* into. I am still interested in good, in-depth studies of a particular book or books or author--not book reports but detailed critiques or analyses./*

FANZINE REVIEWS

GARY FARBER wishes me to point out to readers of *SIMULACRUM* that he is a CO-EDITOR of *FANHISTORICA*, not merely an assistant or adviser as I implied in the review in the previous issue. Apparently I'm not the only zine reviewer who has made this error, so I hope this mention will set things right in general.

I could print the note Gary wrote, which consisted of thirteen inch-high words on two sides of paper, scribbled at PHILCON last January when the error was pointed out to me, in response to a request for some sort of reminder for me; but there's no point--it merely got the message across succinctly./

POSTSCRIPT

/SIMULACRUM 3 finished with a final editorial on my plans (pretentious) and my hopes (ambitious) for the zine, and its availability policy (weird)./

ROGER WADDINGTON Pity the poor LoCcer, who has to think up half a dozen different approaches for the same number of fanzines who've all chosen the same subject, and accordingly has to type six different letters and pay the top rate of postage on each, who has no guarantee that these words of wisdom, which should be engraved on tablets of stone, will ever see the lesser pleasure of print; and then consider the Fanzine Editor who can sweep away all letters, other fanzines, con promises, with a single issue of their fanzine, letter substitute, article printer and obligation all in one! And at cheap postage rates; and they're left with a product that they can actually hold in their hand; the LoC writer is like a man gazing vainly at a rainbow in the sky, who never knows whether he'll reach the end of it!

/A great many fanzine editors whom I know also write LoCs, so that in the case of the prolific LoCcer (which I'm not--quite apart from being more than half a year behind on fanzine reading and LoCcing; which is why letters to me sometimes go unanswered for so long) you have a person doing a helluva lot of work, if he also devotes time to fanediting. In any event, fanzine editing/publishing on the scale I do is more work than LoCs: I estimate that I spent roughly 100 hours on this issue in all aspects, which at my current pay scale of about \$5.00 per hour, works out to \$500. worth of time. A secretary hired for that amount would have time to do a hell of a lot more letters than there are zines to LoC, in this particular segment of a year./

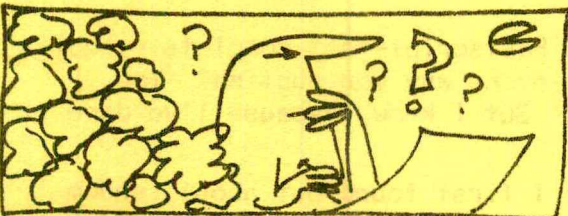
ALAN BOSTICK Your policy of making SIMULACRUM available for the Unusual is interesting, but it has its drawbacks. Suppose that someone takes you up on your offer and sends a Selectric ball, and then you decide to fold three issues later. How do you refund part of a Selectric ball? Would you return reams of twiltone to those who subscribed that way?

/That's the chance you have to take. I have no plans to fold SIMULACRUM at present, although the frequency is not going to be that great, and there could be a name-change if I find a new name that strikes me as being "perfect" in the right way. But, although it doesn't say so in the colophon, SIMULACRUM is still available for the same "Unusual". Donations of Selectric balls will be gratefully accepted whether you want zines or not; they don't even have to be new provided they're not worn, have no missing teeth, and all the characters

type properly. Write to me and find out what my current passion in typefaces is. However, if by chance it's free I won't be too picky./

GREAT MOMENTS IN LETTER-HACKING

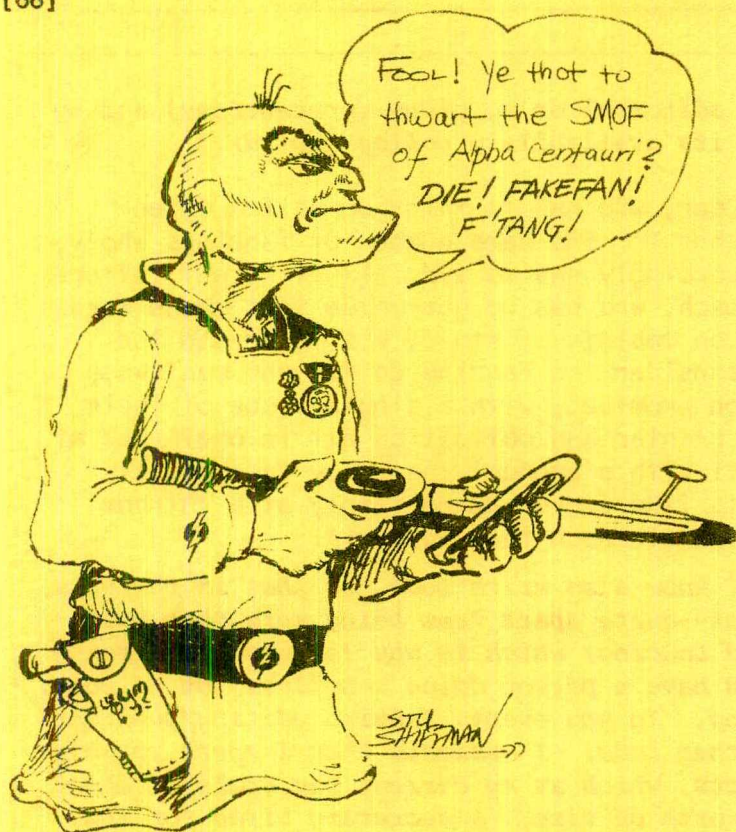
#1



Writing the casual, offhand, witty letter of comment.

UP

STUART GILSON Your comments concerning your reasons for publishing were most appreciated, since they make it possible for me to regard SIM with a little more understanding than would be the case otherwise; to know what motivates the editor is to know how successful a zine has been in meeting his or her objectives. While on the subject of motivation, however,



I wonder if at the heart of the matter lies what appears to be a widely-occurring need for peer approval and acceptance. While this by no means applies to all fans, it does nonetheless seem to be a widely recurring factor in most aspects of fan activity. Consider for a moment: virtually every form of fanac is in some way motivated by a desire to gain the approval of others. Fanzines are published at great expense to the editor, yet the only reward is response--response which translates into egoboo because it represents the attention and favour (for the most part, at any rate) of others. What all this suggests is that many fans must suffer from inferiority complexes of varying degrees; to them, fanac becomes a way of "disproving" their own inadequacies (or at least what they consider as such).

Consider the archetypal fan: someone who, as a child, knew few if any friends, and who preferred the company of his or her own fantasies to that of anyone else. Is this not a ripe breeding ground for self-doubt and feelings of inadequacy? Clearly the evidence of such behaviour is more pronounced in fandom than it is in the mundane world. Let me hasten to point out, however, that this is all speculation, and it may fail to consider other factors which influence behaviour in fans just as much.

/I plan to do a "faneditor symposium" next year, with specific questions to be sent out to perhaps fifty selected people and the results to be published in a future SIMULACRUM; and a question or several as to motives for fanac will be included. However, I wonder if anybody will own up to undercurrent motives such as those you mention? It may be true of more people than will admit it./

MIKE BRACKEN What is pretentious? Tell me, Victoria; what is pretentious?

You have, finally, come to understand some of the problems I have with KNIGHTS. I publish the best damned fanzine I can. So do you. And because we, and one or two other people, do, we get labelled "pretentious" and "award grubbing" and all sorts of other things that we never really thought about.

You sound like you're on the defense in the Postscript--not completely, but a little. Why should you have to explain to anyone why you publish? You shouldn't have to. There is not reason to. But I know, because I've done it myself a few times.

You want to know something, Victoria? When I first found out about fandom everyone was mourning the death of the big genzine. Since that time (less than 3 years ago) KNIGHTS has become a big genzine, SIM has become a big genzine, and so have a few others. What has happened? Now everyone is crying about all the big "pretentious" genzines glutting fandom. You can never win.

But the fight is worth it.

/But now I don't care whether people think SIMULACRUM is pretentious or not. I am doing it the way I want it, and I happen to like some of the graphic and layout tricks people label pretentious. There have been changes in the situation since the material in SIM 3 was written.

However, I haven't been criticized for pubbing a large zine, other than by people who say it takes too long to read. There are two other large zines right here in Toronto, anyway--Taral's DELTA PSI, at almost 60 pages, and Jennifer Bankier's forthcoming ORCA which will probably be about the size of this ish of SIMULACRUM./

JOSEPH NICHOLAS The sudden and vast resurgence in the numbers of UK fanzines has led to something approaching overkill, never mind spreading the available talent very thinly, with the inevitable result that a lot of the newer faneds aren't really faneds at all; they're just fancompilers, putting together any old rubbish that they can get their hands on in an effort to put some sort of issue together, in order to trade with all the other compilers who are busy trying to put their undistinguished efforts together as well.

/But where does the compiler stop and the editor begin? What, in fact, are the hallmarks of a good editor? It seems to me that the good editor does not stop at throwing together some stuff by others, adding a page of editorial natter, and calling that a fanzine. On the other hand, this is how I started myself. I would say myself, and other people think so too, that a strong editorial presence makes for a good zine--but how is this best achieved? Most editorial presence in zines seems to be a short editorial and some comments between the letters; in better examples there is a kind of ambience that reflects the person that the editor is through more subtle things like choice of articles and placement of illos, production values, originality; something above just the mere copying of everything else available. Again, I hope to include questions along this direction in the faned symposium next year; comments would be welcomed on this matter./

MISCELLANEOUS

/What the heading suggests; various odds and ends and two articles.../

CLIFF BIGGERS Yesterday's mail brought a strange item; my letter to you was returned, sans envelope, with a "found loose in the Post Office" stamp on it. Naturally I carried the letter, along with an empty envelope, to the post office and asked them to show me how a letter could be accidentally opened by machinery without bending or damaging the letter; they couldn't do so. I griped; I badgered; I accused; I went through at least eight different paranoid delusions of mail-reading and subversive espionage. I finally filled out a postal complaint form, demanding my 13¢ stamp back. At any rate, I'm re-mailing the letter to you today, and I challenge the damnable post office to accidentally open it.

/The Post Awful strikes again. (In Canada, that's literally true.) And mail takes longer and longer to get to where it's supposed to be going. (Which has the dubious advantage of giving you a wonderful excuse for late answers to "urgent" letters.) And it often arrives in damaged condition. (Which means if you mess up the envelope yourself you can use it anyway because "they" will only finish the job for you.) And so it goes.../

MICHAEL CARLSON

montreal, 7 april 1976 for Middie

it was my parents
calling long-distance
to tell me he was dead

hit by another car
walking New Haven avenue
to the stores where he hunted
in the garbage

hit four times
he always survived
this was the wrong time
too old to repair
thirteen year legs
slow-healing and arthritic

the next time I go back
I will not notice
life goes on

until I reach down
to pet him
& fail

to feel

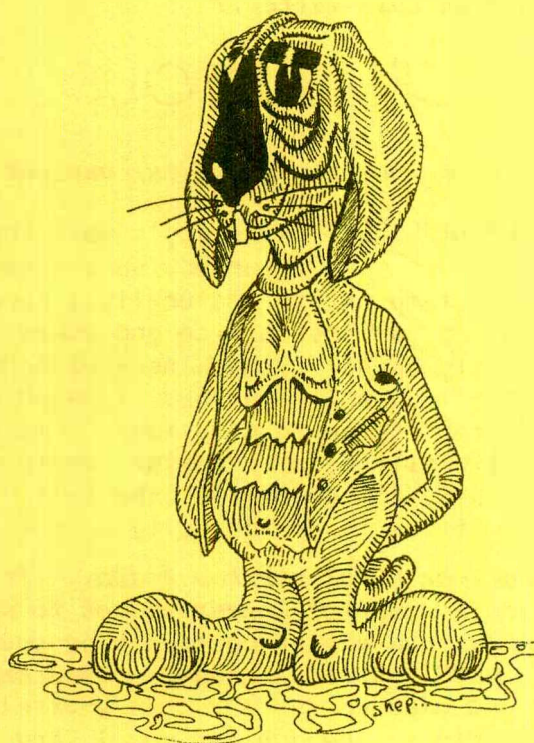
him underfoot

I will feel strange
for a moment

but human
life goes on

I will hide from the sense
that something is missing

& remembering him
forget it.



HIS LAST BOW (WOW)

I wrote my first article about my dog for Mike Gorra's late & lamented RANDOM. It was called "My Dog has Fleas" and Harry Warner said it was the first fannish article on dogs he could recall. I wrote a second, "Rabid Redux", but I seem to have lost track of it since Gorra gaffiated and sent it back to me. I have a nagging suspicion that I did send it to someone else, and that it will appear, but I'm not sure. At any rate I'm not about to rewrite it now...for a number of reasons, the most important being that Middie is dead.

I'm not broken up about it; this won't be a grief-stricken column, but it is something I'd like to share with you. Maybe it's because I was in Montreal, and didn't actually go through the pain myself--but then, I haven't lived at home since I was 17 for more than a few months at a time...when I left for university Middie was a robust, if battle-scarred, 5; when he died he was 13 and then some. So he lived a full dog-life, and he seemed to remember me, or my scent, up into his old age, when I visited at Christmas last.

For those of you who never had him described to you--he was a smallish black mutt, with a few white markings which gave him a bit of style. He had a friendly, almost sad-sack, kind of face, and a personality to match; virtually every time he was busted by the local dogcatchers he would trot right over when called; he growled at strangers and mailmen only when there was a member of the immediate family nearby to impress. The only time this changed was when a neighbourhood bitch was in heat--although on his return you have never seen such a tired but happy expression. He walked with an odd sidewise gait, the result of being hit or run over by cars at least three times. As his front legs moved forward his back legs would move in a centre to left arc, like a pendulum.

He wasn't trained to any degree, and as his senility increased and his energy faded, what training he had began to wear thin, but he was always aware of his place in the scheme of things--he expected a certain status and would walk away puzzled if it was not conferred upon him. He knew I was the only one who would feed him scraps from the table, knew my mother would not chase him under the chair if she wanted him down in the cellar. My sister thought he understood

Self-facing

everything she said; he let her think it.

He was hit by a car, on New Haven Avenue, where he'd been hit three times years before; he'd learned finally how to avoid the cars, though he always forgot, and would step in front of them. He wasn't killed, and a woman who lives near us, and runs a dog-obedience school, came out to help him, since there was no one else around, in the middle of a week day. He bit her, in the face, and she still managed to get him to a vet, who did what he could, but at 13 and with arthritis, it's useless to set broken bones; they killed him. The woman, amazingly, didn't sue my parents over the bite--it is a real sign of the times that no one could believe it; it seems everyone nowadays sues anyone for anything--though they paid her medical bills.

He was killed on his way to the stores on the other side of the street, to do his hunting in their garbage. He might have returned with a bag of grinder rolls, or a few bones, or part of a sandwich thrown away from someone's lunch. He'd always act very proud when he returned with those prizes, as proud as when he might corner a cat, too scared to go in and finish the job, and eventually just decide to declare himself the winner and stroll away. Like Sen. Aiken suggested the U.S. do in Vietnam. He was a practical animal, who knew he had nothing to prove.

I wish I could bring myself, and others, to feel that way more often.

John J Alderson

An old Mate of my Father's

It is a fact that hardly needs comment, that Oates and Deason found the Welcome Stranger nugget, the largest nugget of gold ever found. And Moliagul is world famous as a result (the fact that John Flynn the Flying Doctor was also born there does help). Moliagul also has an excellent Cherry Garden in the crater of the Mount where one may eat as much as he likes upon payment of a small fee; it is also very close to Havelock, and *someday* I am going to visit that Cherry Garden.

But to be more exact about the finding of the nugget: Richard Oates and John Deason were both Cornish and had spent their childhood together. They came to Australia and worked as *mates*, working on various diggens for years and then settling at Moliagul, as partners. Deason meanwhile took up land. After seven years Deason found the nugget one evening whilst excavating soil for a puddling, Oates meanwhile being elsewhere helping thresh a stack of hay. As Deason could not get the lump out of the ground on his own, he covered it up and told Oates, presumably when he had finished the threshing, and together they got it out and carried it to Oates' hut for the night. (Deason was married and had children.) The following night they sent the children to a neighbour and, taking the nugget to Deason's home, burnt and broke off the surrounding quartz which weighed

about as much as the gold itself. Oates used his share of the money to return to Cornwall and find a wife, Deason remained farming and mining in Moliagul.

One may notice the trust these two men had in each other and that despite Deason being alone when the nugget was found, the finding is always attributed (correctly) to Oates and Deason. They were *mates*, and mates shared everything except their wives, although it is indeed significant that after Deason's marriage they are called "partners" whereas before they were *mates*. Marriage usually broke up a mateship.

Being "mates" differed from being "partners"; the latter is still with us and is a recognized legal association, and is subject to legal interpretations, binding agreements, and all sorts of qualifications. But mates shared everything equally, so naturally enough marriage which cannot be shared equally, ended the mateship. Apart from that, one man now had an obligation to a third party. This is not to imply that married men could not be mates, but they usually were only mates when away working together. In such circumstances if the pair of them fell on hard times the unmarried one would give all he could to help his married mate, up to everything he had, *because he was his mate*, and that was a gift never to be repaid except by a like kindness. The married man on the other hand would accept that help from his mate, not because it was his due as a partner to share everything, but because the help came from *his mate*, and proud men could easily starve rather than accept a penny from one who was not their mate. With a married man this was difficult to be, vice versa. It was this ideal that Henry Lawson wrote about so splendidly, and the "old mate of my father's" was received with awe at the household, and deference at that household, decades after Eureka (where the two had been mates together, and about which they spoke in hushed tones so that no one else could hear).

William Lane in *THE WORKING MAN'S PARADISE* has a character who has denied in the witness box that he and another are mates, explain to the court what being mates is...

"Well, mister," says Bill, 'mates is them wot's got one purse. If I go to a shed with Jack an' we're mates an' I earn forty quid and Jack gets sick an' only earns ten or five, or mebbe nothin' at all, we puts the whole lot in one pus, or if it's t'other way about an' Jack earns forty it don't matter. There's one pus no matter how much each of us earns an' it b'longs just the same to both of us alike. If Jack's got the pus and I want half-a-crown, I says to Jack, says I, 'Jack, gimme the pus.' An' if Jack wants ten quid or twenty or the whole lot he just says to me, 'Bill,' says he, 'gimme the pus.' I don't ask what he's goin' to take, and I don't care. He can take it all if he wants it, 'cos it stands to reason, don't it, mister,' says Bill to the lawyer, 'that a man wouldn't be so dirt mean as to play a low-down trick on his mate. So you see, mister, him an' me warn't mates 'cos we had two pusses an' mates is them wot's got one pus.'"

There is a story of two mates, who after spending a couple of years together in the outback working up a big enough cheque to buy some working horses and so hoist themselves up the economic/social ladder a bit. But for some reason only one of them went to buy the horses whilst the other stayed behind. However the one that went to buy the horses had a drink problem as they say nowadays, and not having had a drink for two years thought he was cured and could stand having a small one. So he did. When eventually he staggered out of the pub he had spent the entire earnings of the two of them for the past two years. Sobered up he returned to his mate.

"I drank the money, Harry."

"Oh, well, we'll soon earn another cheque."

And they did set to, working for another two years and the matter was never again mentioned. They were mates and had one purse and if one of them wanted to drink the money it was his to do so.

I suspect that the bushmen knew of only one poor man, that was he who did not have a mate. (Incidentally, the Aborigines only know one poor man, he who does not have a wife.) In one of the bitterest ballads written, Henry Lawson says:

"He tramped away from the shanty there, when the days were long
and hot,
With never a soul to know or care if he died on the track or not."

In that ballad the swagman dies, finally, alone, so far from "the fringe of the law" he was not even buried. The tragedy of a man without a mate.

He also wrote of a mate,

"When times were tight
We starved in Australian scrubs;
We froze together in parks at night,
And laughed together in pubs."

and said of Jack Dunn of Nevertire...

"To help a mate in trouble Jack would go through flood and fire.
Great Scott! and don't you know the name of Dunn of Nevertire?
Big Dunn of Nevertire,
Long Jack from Nevertire;
He stuck to me through thick and thin,
Jack Dunn of Nevertire."

Of course there are still mates outback (there's almost everything *outback*) and the memory of the tradition carries on. One still doesn't bludge on his mates, or let his mates down, and to be mates with a man is still something far beyond friendship, something more akin to love. There is no doubt that there was considerable emotional attachment, more so than in normal friendship and which may partly explain why friendship readily survives a marriage but the mateship becomes a memory. However, the association was asexual. In a society that was virtually male, homosexuality was known;

"Land of sin, and land of sorrow,
Land of Sodom and Gomorrah,"

tells its own sad story. But mates were never homosexual. Indeed it was theoretically possible, at least according to a story by Will Dyson, set in the district between Havelock and Moliagul too, of a young married woman who felt dissatisfied with her life and determined to see more of the world. She cut off her hair and dressing herself in men's clothing, agreed to become mates with a man passing through. Her husband pursued her, and finding the hut where the two were living, he attacked the man, slicing his head open with an axe. The woman ran up and cried, "My God! What have you done! He didn't know I was a woman."

I believe that they could have been mates together even knowing they were of differing sex and the relationship remained asexual. It was too, apparent that a man and wife could actually be mates, perhaps a really true marriage. In the tragic ballad of "Delaney's Vendetta", Delaney, who was, or became a schizophrenic, murdered his wife, and then began pursuing through the great hot wastes of the Outback, the murderer...

"And off he set on the long long chase after the man whose hate
Had killed the woman who, right or wrong, was his mate--his
only mate."

Much of the terrible tragedy of the ballad arises from the fact that Delaney had killed, not only his wife, but also his mate, and to kill one's mate would be the greatest of all crimes, utterly unheard of, and enough to send anyone schizophrenic.

The stories of the sacrifices men have made for their mates are legion. Lawson made a list of them in "Bill" but two lines will suffice;

"And when, because of its million sins, this world is cracked
like a shell,
He will stand by a mate at the Judgement Seat and comfort him
down in hell."

That this is exactly what the Christian expects Christ to do for him was not lost, I think, on Lawson. He once wrote;

"With eyes that are narrowed to pierce
To the awful horizons of land,
Through the haze of hot days, and the fierce
White heat-waves that flow on the sand;
Through the Never Land westward and nor'ward,
Bronzed, bearded, and gaunt on the track,
Low-voiced and hard-knuckled, rides forward
The Christ of the Outer Out-back."



Nor should it come as any surprise that John Flynn during his missionary days amongst the scattered population of the Centre used to speak to the bushmen of Christ, as The Great Mate, "the friend that sticketh closer than a brother", and those men, gnarled of heart and hand, listened because Flynn spoke their language.

But the glorious vision of mateship is fading. Not the least due to the savage, relentless and determined attack on it by women. A few years ago it had, for the best part, degenerated to a gathering of men around the beer-keg but the *corps de spirit* of even that has been destroyed by the women joining in around the barrel. But with dogged tenacity the Wharf-Labourers Unions and the Australian Workers' Union, and a few others, have refused to have their "fellowship" broken by admitting women, rightly judging, I think, that the women will add nothing and destroy the little that remains of their mateship. We have left, virtually nothing purely masculine in a world where at least half is for females only, the rest mixed but dominated by females.

Many of our earlier socialists saw mateship as the ideal for society, and thought of socialism as mateship for all. It was a wonderful ideal, just as mateship itself was a wonderful ideal, an equal association of two people with no other formality than one saying, "Let's be mates," and the other agreeing, and thereafter an absolute trust between them, and more than that, an infinite trust between them, and only having "one purse". Some, very few, marriages may live up to that standard, where the man and wife are not only man and wife, but also "mates", with absolute trust, infinite understanding, and one purse. Not equality, but oneness.

/And back to the lettercol for one final item.../

K. ALLEN BJORKE It has just struck me as to how Victorian (in a historical sense) your name is. Do you usually get called "Victoria" or "Vicky" or "Vic"? Or do you have some other, more esoteric name?

/Time to straighten out a few points. The name is VICTORIA, and ONLY Victoria. Severe displeasure is invoked upon calling me "Vicky" once; and repeated offenses will incur my everlasting wrath and possible banishment from my mailing list. "Vic" I will occasionally tolerate in the spoken word but never in writing, and it doesn't go well with "Vayne" or my real last name anyway.

However, I do indeed have another "more esoteric" name, a string of Dutch polysyllables my parents saddled me with when I was barely conscious (and certainly in no strong position to raise hell about it); female names chosen hastily from paternal grandmother to replace the names they had all picked out for the son they had been hoping for. (Had I been born male, my names would have been Gary Peter; rather preferable and not obviously foreign.) For quite a few years now, "Victoria" has replaced the polysyllables, at present quite legally./

WAHF

We printed segments of LoCs from (alphabetically): John Alderson, Eric Batard, K. Allen Bjorke, Cliff Biggers, Alan Bostick, Mike Bracken, Richard Brandt, Jackie Causgrove, Buck Coulson, Brett Cox, Don D'Amassa, Carolyn Doyle, Brendan Dubois, Gary Farber, Don Fitch, Terry Floyd, George Flynn, Stuart Gilson, Mike Glicksohn, Paula Gold, D. Gary Grady, Terry Jeeves, Marty Levine, Dave Locke, Eric Lindsay, Taral Wayne MacDonald, Ken Nahigian, Joseph Nicholas, Mike O'Brien, Marc Ortlieb, Jerry Pournelle, Jessica Amanda Salmonson,

Paula Smith, Roy Tackett, David Taggart, Angus Taylor, Roger Waddington, Gail White, Laurine White, Martin Morse Wooster.

We also heard from the following people, with LoCs not printed for space reasons, DNQ and personal letters, and matters pertaining to other Vaynity Press zines: Harry Andruschak, Don Ayres, John Bangsund, Doug Barbour, Rich Bartucci, Harry Bell, Ruth Berman, Mike Blake, Lester Boutillier, Bill Bridget, Ned Brooks, Brian Earl Brown, Linda Bushyager, John Berry, Allyn Cadogan, Dave Cockfield, John Curlovich, Chester Cuthbert, Tony Cvetko, Bonnie Dalzell, Garth Danielson, Frank Denton, Gil Gaier, Barbara Geraud, Alexis Gilliland, Peter Gill, Bruce Gillespie, Mike Glycer, Lars Gunnar Ollsson, Patrick Hayden, Wayne Hooks, Denys Howard, Terry Hughes, Neicer Hudspeth, Dave Hulan, David Hull, Ben Indick, Rob Jackson, Ken Josenhans, Mark Keller, Leroy Kettle, Rebecca Lesses, Tim C. Marion, Eric Mayer, Mike & Pat Meara, Alica Madarasz, Randy Mohr, Steve McDonald, Jodie Offutt, Darroll & Rosemary Pardoe, Bernie Peek, Graham Poole, Randy Reichardt, Dave Romm, Bill Rotsler, Dave Rowe, Jeff Schalles, Darrell Schweitzer, Bob Shaw, Margaret Shepard, Al Sirois, Janet Small, Rick Sneary, Norbert Spehner, Milt Stevens, Mae Strelkov, Creath Thorne, Bruce Townley, Keith Walker, Paul Walker, Harry Warner Jr., Terry Whittier, Gene Wolfe, Susan Wood, Leah Zeldes.

We apologize for anyone missed; addresses of LoCcers printed here are omitted for space reasons and redundancy--most SIMULACRUM readers have address files; likewise the 400 zines I received in the past year are not listed; and we fear we do not alphabetize too good.

NON SEQUITUR AGAIN

Things were very bad for me in the closing months of 1976, but at the end of that year, I kicked a four-year Stelazine habit (or rather, prescription) that had been fuzzing up my brain to a large extent. A few weeks into January, I noticed the beginnings of changes in myself, and at the same time, the bad feelings between me and some of the Toronto fans of the previous fall essentially disappeared, or at least lessened in intensity to the point where I could ignore them. I treated myself to another expensive convention trip, by air to PHILCON, a very enjoyable weekend but with atrocious weather. Old LoCs of mine from the drugged days were surfacing to embarrass me, and SIMULACRUM 3 wasn't looking too good. It was around this time that the changes in direction and format for SIMULACRUM were decided upon, mutating through several revisions into the form this issue (SIMULACRUM 7 to rationalize the numbering system at last) has taken--and this may well change further in future issues. A project of dubious rationale that I had been contemplating was scrapped, and I briefly contemplated the possibility of a name-change for the zine; but decided to keep "Simulacrum" for the indefinite future unless something really striking and appropriate occurs to me. (This may be inertia more than anything else, something that has claimed other victims within my sloppy lifestyle.)

There were cons: BOSKONE (with two auto accidents on the return trip in shitty weather), BALITCON (in a large rented station wagon full of Toronto fans), DISCLAVE (great, spent at the Smithsonian and seeing STAR WARS twice), MIDWESTCON (a disappointment over last year's), and AUTOCLAVE (one of my most enjoyable cons ever); with my travels having acquired a distinct East Coast orientation as compared to last year's midwestern one. There was the Women's Apa and my realization of its value to me and subsequent production of 30-pagers for it.

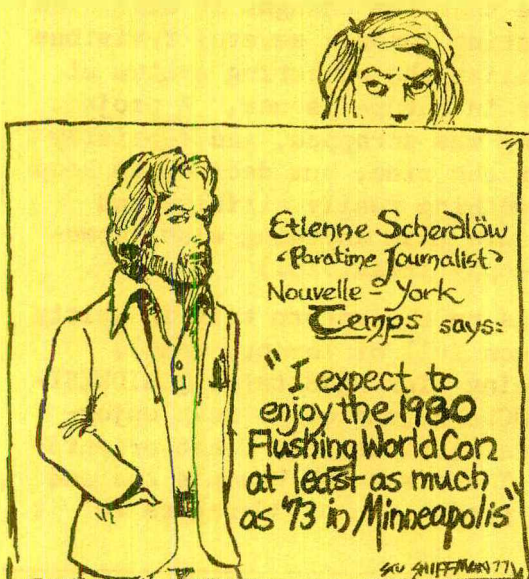
And everything--SIMULACRUM, the FANTHOLOGY 76, THE JOY OF DUPLICATING, letters to write and zines to LoC--all is way behind, victim to lethargic weekends when I was too preoccupied, too tired, or too uptight, to get anything done.

Fanzines in Toronto seemed to be in a bit of a slowdown compared to the previous winter, after ORCA 1 and SIMULACRUM 3. In February Bill Brummer published STRANGE DYSTOPIAS 3. Janet Small and Bob Wilson acquired a Gestetner of their own, which allowed Taral, finally, to secure title to the Fifty Cent Monster. And in March, after some four years of ideas and planning, Taral finally published DELTA PSI 1, an elaborate and beautifully produced 4-part zine in an unusual format. Shortly afterwards, Mike Caplan, a newcomer, produced a very promising first issue of JOURNEYS.

And the future? If things go the way I would like them to, this time next year SIMULACRUM will be coming to you possibly not far from New York City. In the meantime, my immediate fanac plans consist of publication of the FANTHOLOGY 76 as soon as possible, and after that, finally, SIMULACRUM 8, the ecology/doomsday/fannish dooms theme issue. I'm eyeing a Rex Rotary 2202 electrostenciller which can do continuous tones; unfortunately at twice the cost of my present machine. And I'm on the FAPA waitlist, with probably about five mailings to go before I'm in--that will get a revamped NON SEQUITUR as a personalzine with some distribution outside the apa as well.

And what about the future, fan-wise, of Toronto? Around early 1976 Toronto was well on the way to becoming a major fanzine centre, with ten active fanzine fans publishing (all, with the exception of Glicksohn, Derelicts or Derelict-associated). But a number of factors intervened: apa fever struck; Patrick Hayden and Phil Paine moved away, I want to, and more might follow; people were often broke, or busy. Much "fanac" in Toronto now does not involve fanzines or fanzine people.

Toronto will still have two major zines--DELTA PSI and ORCA--but both may have issues rather widely spaced, as much as a year or more apart, although large in size. The smaller scaled PANTEKHNION and STRANGE DYSTOPIAS could be more frequent, but then again, both editors will be risking occasional bouts of fapiation by school over the next few years. SOOTLI and BEHIND THE RABBIT could reappear if the editors aren't too busy with other projects; Janet notably so with the Women's Apa. JOURNEYS will likely be seen again but under a different title. And other people occasionally mention possibilities, although it is difficult to guess how many of these will see reality. Some of the fans in Toronto could publish on a much larger scale, and do splendidly at it, if they had the inclination; Bob Wilson and Janet to name two, but they choose not to. It is hard to predict what new fans, unknown to anyone at the moment, are waiting to make their debut, supplanting the group of which I was part in much the same way we succeeded Glicksohn.



TORONTO Fanzine Renaissance 1974 - '77

JAN 74

XENIUM
Glicksohn

NOR
Paine

JUL 74

OSFIC...EVENTUALLY
Taral

DISTAFF
Small

SYNAPSE
Taral

JAN 75

SIMULACRUM
Vayne

RELAPSE
Vayne

JUL 75

THANGORODRIMI
Hayden

CALCIUM LIGHT NIGHTS
Paine

JAN 76

SOOTLI
Wilson

BEHIND THE RABBIT
Small

PANTEKHIKON
Webber

JUL 76

ORCA
Bankier

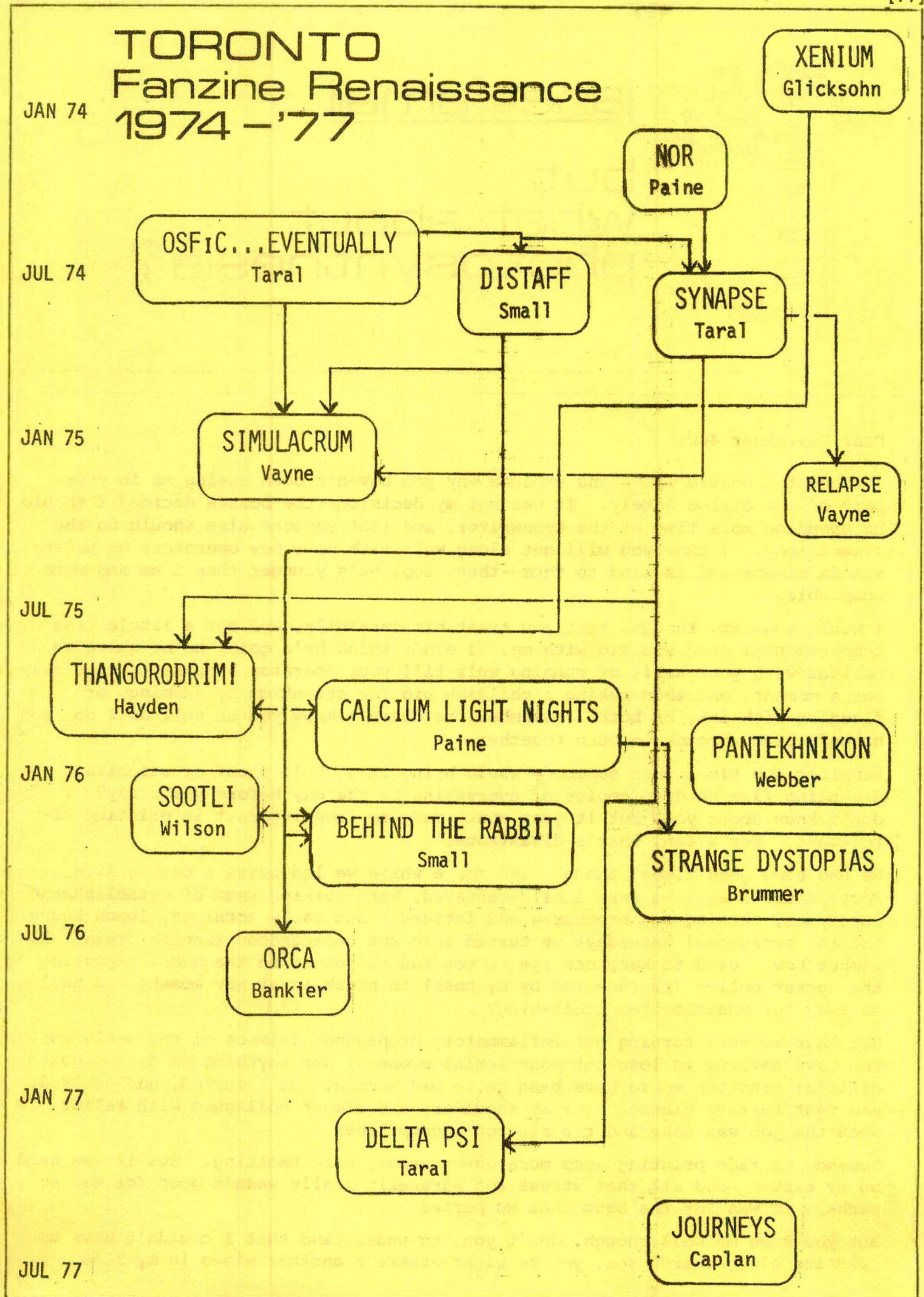
STRANGE DYSTOPIAS
Brunner

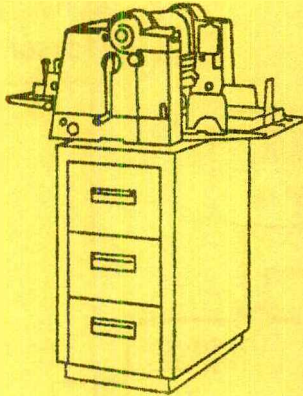
JAN 77

DELTA PSI
Taral

JUL 77

JOURNEYS
Caplan





janet small

but
what about
photosynthesis?

Dear Gestetner 460;

I thought I should write and explain why you haven't been seeing me in your part of the office lately. It was not my decision--the bosses decided I should be spending more time at the typewriter, and that someone else should do the mimeography. I know you will get along well with your new operator; he understands mimeos and is kind to them--then, too, he's younger than I am and more adaptable.

I would suggest, though, that you treat him carefully, and act a little less temperamental than you did with me. I don't think he's going to be quite so patient with your habit of running well till your operator happens to turn away for a moment, and then making a childish bid for attention by jamming, or flooding with ink, or both. Remember, he doesn't know you as well as I do; you haven't been through so much together.

Remember the times when somebody would bring in a whole sheaf of stencils, demanding five hundred copies of everything by the day before yesterday? I don't know about you, but it just about made me lose interest in printing altogether. For a fan, that's disastrous.

We had some good times, though, and for a while we led quite a double life. Forty hours a week we were a mild-mannered, hard-working team of establishment employees, turning out brochures and letters. But early mornings, lunch hours, and the occasional Saturdays we turned into the underground fannish press. Remember how I used to keep one eye on you and the other on the door, expecting the secret police (represented by my boss) to break in at any moment and haul me away for unauthorized publishing?

Not that we were turning out inflammatory propaganda (mimeos of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your serial numbers) but anything we did without official sanction would have been quite bad enough. So I lurked, and skulked, and cast furtive glances over my shoulder, and almost collapsed with relief when the job was done and the mission accomplished.

Somehow it made printing seem more adventurous, more exciting. But it was hard on my nerves, and all that stress and adrenalin really wasn't good for me, so perhaps it was for the best that we parted.

But you know me well enough, don't you, to understand that I couldn't give up printing altogether? Yes, you're right--there's another mimeo in my life.

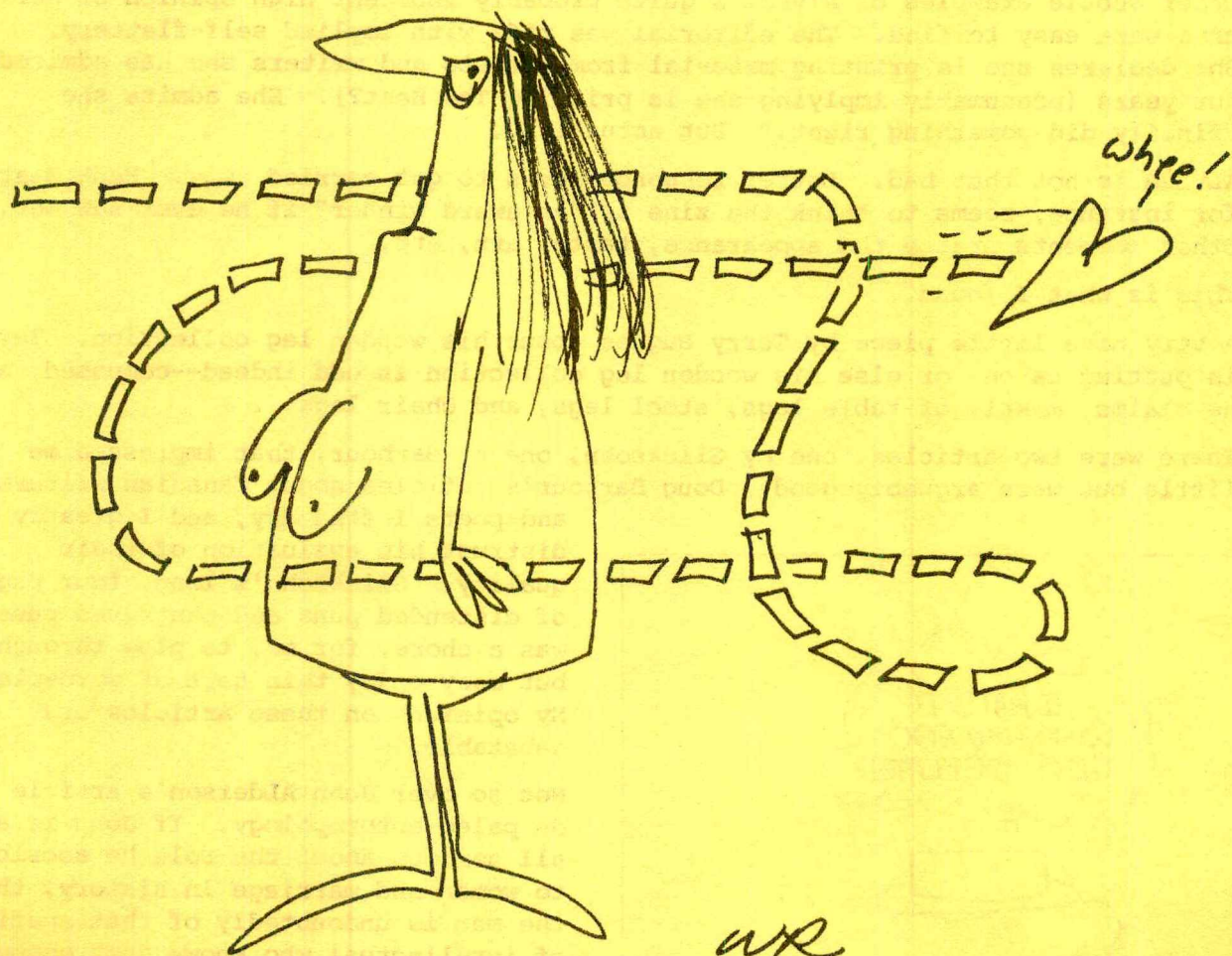
I have a Gestetner 105 living with me now--only a toy compared to you, but a sweet-tempered little thing. Now, when I have printing to do, I just walk into the next room--I don't have to pack up any supplies, or travel on the subway, or even bother to put on my shoes. It's far easier for me.

But I admit that it's much less exciting. Don't misunderstand me, I'm very fond of my 105, but our relationship just doesn't have the glamour of my illicit assignations with you. In fact, no other mimeo that I may meet in the future will mean quite the same to me as you did.

I don't think I'll be sneaking into the office early or coming downtown on Saturdays, though. I'm getting older, I guess, and I just can't work up the enthusiasm for going downtown when I have a mimeo at home. Then, too, I don't want your new operator to notice anything different about you when he sees you in the morning--it just wouldn't be fair or even safe.

So I guess this is it. I know you'll be happy together, and I'm sure I'll be happy with my new mimeo. I know it's for the best--but I just wanted to tell you that it's been a good relationship, even though it was a bit stormy, and I wish you luck.

Love, Janet



Index Expurgatorius

These fanzine reviews exist because of a fanzine named ALVEGA. The initiative was born one night when I was complaining about the scarcity of zine reviews these days (I remember all the way back to 1973 when you couldn't find a sheet of twiltone without a fanzine review column printed on it, somewhere. And at that, straight out of the wrappings...) At the mention of fanzine reviews, Victoria perked up from whatever she was doing and launched into a characteristic prosecution of her latest pet peeve; ALVEGA.

What she had to say about it would not be entirely fair to either party to print. In sum, however, we can safely say that Victoria was upset over the noticeable discrepancy between the response to, and the material evidence of, a certain fanzine published by the notorious Alyson Abramowitz...

In particular, this review column was born of the following quote in ALVEGA 4: "I've never had a deflating review of ALVEGA..." This column was, of course, to provide Alyson with this novelty.

Other subtle examples of Alyson's quite probably innocent high opinion of her zine were easy to find. The editorial was rife with implied self-flattery. She declares she is printing material from artists and writers she has admired for years (presumably implying she is printing The Best?). She admits she "finally did something right." But actually...

ALVEGA is not that bad. Letter response seems to get carried away. Hank Heath, for instance, seems to think the zine is "an award winner" if he ever saw one. Other comments praise the appearance, taste, art, etc.

This is what I found.

A very nice little piece by Terry Hughes about his wooden leg collection. Terry is putting us on, or else his wooden leg collection is odd indeed--composed, as he claims, mostly of table legs, stool legs, and chair legs...

There were two articles, one by Glicksohn, one by Barbour, that impressed me little but were arguably good. Doug Barbour's articles about Canadian writers and poets I find dry, and I greatly distrust his evaluation of their quality. Glicksohn's long, four pages of distended puns and contrived puns was a chore, for me, to plow through, but many enjoy this sort of word-play. My opinions on these articles are debatable.

Not so over John Alderson's article on paleo-anthropology. If John is at all serious about the role he ascribes to women and marriage in history, then the man is undoubtedly of that species of intellectual who knows just enough to cover up just how little he knows.



Taral Wayne MacDonald

But I am troubled by the possibility that John, like Terry Hughes, was also putting us on. If John's article is intended as a parody of crank anthropology, it is brilliant. That possibility, however, seems remote.

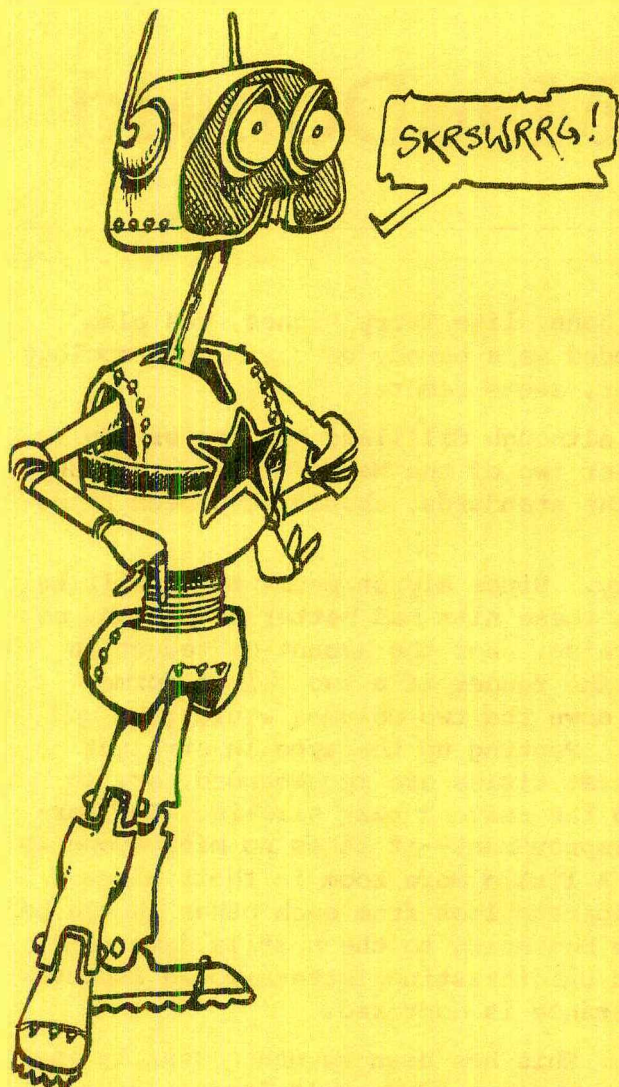
Artwork was nothing to get excited about, although Gilliland had one or two pieces of note, and I thought well of one or two of the MacKays also. Neither were there any illos that, by common fanzine standards, should have been rejected. Except maybe the front cover.

Trifles to nit-pick over there were aplenty. Since Alyson seems to be willing to accept egoboo over ALVEGA's appearance, these nits had better be picked, so that ALVEGA can begin to live up to its praise. For the amount of reduction the type suffers, it would be merciful to the reader if a two column format were followed. The extra, central margin down the two columns would take up some of the excessive margin there is now. Pasting up the type in straight lines would do wonders also. Larger lettraset titles are recommended, or, to get the same effect, strip the titles into the reduced text size-is. The format lines used so frequently could stand improvement--it takes no microscope to reveal the ragged edges and uneven ends. A little more room in their placement couldn't hurt either. A method to separate locs from each other should be employed...as it is the end of one and the beginning to the next is damn near invisible. Editing of excess verbiage and uninteresting letters would improve the worth of the lettercol, once the appearance is doctored.

I don't know how much ego Alyson has left. This has been an unnecessarily specific review. ALVEGA is a pretty average fanzine, and doesn't deserve to be specifically singled-out for demolition. However, most zines are aware of their mediocrity and are concerned only to be good for what they try to be. It would appear that Alyson has been, through the best of intentions, misdirected, and it is probably about time she make an objective appraisal of ALVEGA. If acted upon, this review can help future issues.

KNIGHTS 17/18 - Mike Bracken, E-3 Village Circle, Edwardsville, Ill. 62025.

Mike Bracken has been trying with KNIGHTS to publish a first rate sercon zine of the BEABOHEMA type of a few years ago. KNIGHTS has done well, well enough to deserve FAAn nomination, but not quite well enough. Partly the fault is appearance. KNIGHTS is consciously laid-out, and Mike tries to get good artwork. The cheap paper's showthrough negates almost all his efforts. Some form of opaque paper, heavier, coloured, or twiltone, would instantly turn KNIGHTS into a fine looking zine. More important to KNIGHTS' quality is the written material. To date, Thomas Monteleone's column has been consistently interesting, yet, as he admits, he does not take pains over it. It is first draft, unproofed, and little considered. It is not superior writing, however interesting it is. KNIGHTS' other columnist suffers similarly--competent writing, but not superior writing--but it is not consistently as interesting. In this issue C.L. Grant ambles rather than writes, and has little to say. In this issue also are Jerry Pournelle and John Robinson, both of whom were wretchedly vapid (can you dig MISSION IMPOSSIBLE as a symptom of our Cultural



Degeneration?). If that had been all there was to this issue of KNIGHTS, it would have compared poorly to earlier issues, but Richard Wilber's long, long thesis on Heinlein has to be contended with. Nearly all of the first half repeats the Panshins' book, HEINLEIN IN DIMENSION, but this is necessary groundwork for the remaining half. Once through with the groundwork, Wilber details the thematic similarities between STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND and Heinlein's earlier work, thereby discounting SiaSL as atypical. The scholarship is excellent, and his points are well made, but I had the feeling that Wilber just swept under the carpet points of dissimilarity that marked SiaSL as unusual. I might also complain that a 50 page article in a fanzine is overlong. The work may well have benefitted from tighter control by Wilber, which Bracken could have demanded. I wish Mike would demand more from his other writers too. The quality of the craft of the writing is the main barrier remaining between KNIGHTS and the best.

PLACEBO 5 - Moshe Feder, 142-34
Booth Memorial Ave., Flushing NY
11355

supple New York twiltone, good fannish writing, humour, intellectual curiosity, thoughtful commentary, *sigh*... It should be no surprise that PLACEBO seems an emissary from a more graceful era of fanac. PLACEBO was over 4 years in the making. This issue was intended for TORCON--not SUNCON! But let Moshe dwell on the delays in his editorial, as is his prerogative, and let me move on to the material. (Also all 4 years old.) Hank Davis' column exemplifies good craft in writing. Hank, then working for the IRS and maybe still, constructs his humour from situation and character instead of, as many fanwriters today, simply grinding out an unending string of bad puns and unoriginal witticisms or lavishing empty egoboo on totally unextraordinary people currently in fashion. While I don't think David Emerson's article on a Disney Film Festival he attended was as well done, it was nevertheless very enjoyable, and Stu Shiffman's fannish adaptation of the Gilgamesh Epic was fairly enjoyable also. Although the parallels might be a little obscure to fans unread in Sumerian/Akkadian literature... The letter column also was obscure. It was almost as ancient as the Epic of Gilgamesh, and I never saw the previous issue that the letters commented on. As this PLACEBO was the last zine that murdered Barry Smotroff worked on, it would have been a desecration to have updated it. The artwork in this issue includes some of artist Stu Shiffman's earliest published

The reappearance of PLACEBO is like a reminder of past glories. Warm,

stuff, Steve Stiles, Bill Kunkel, a superbly appropriate Coca-Cola-style logo for the ToC by Sheryl Birkhead, and a fabulous envelope (Feder's Believe It Or Not!) by Ross Chamberlain. PLACEBO is not the best fanzine I've read or seen --but I could do with a damn sight more like it!

WINDING NUMBERS 5 - Randy Reichardt, 58 Penrose Place, Winnipeg, Man. R2J 1S1

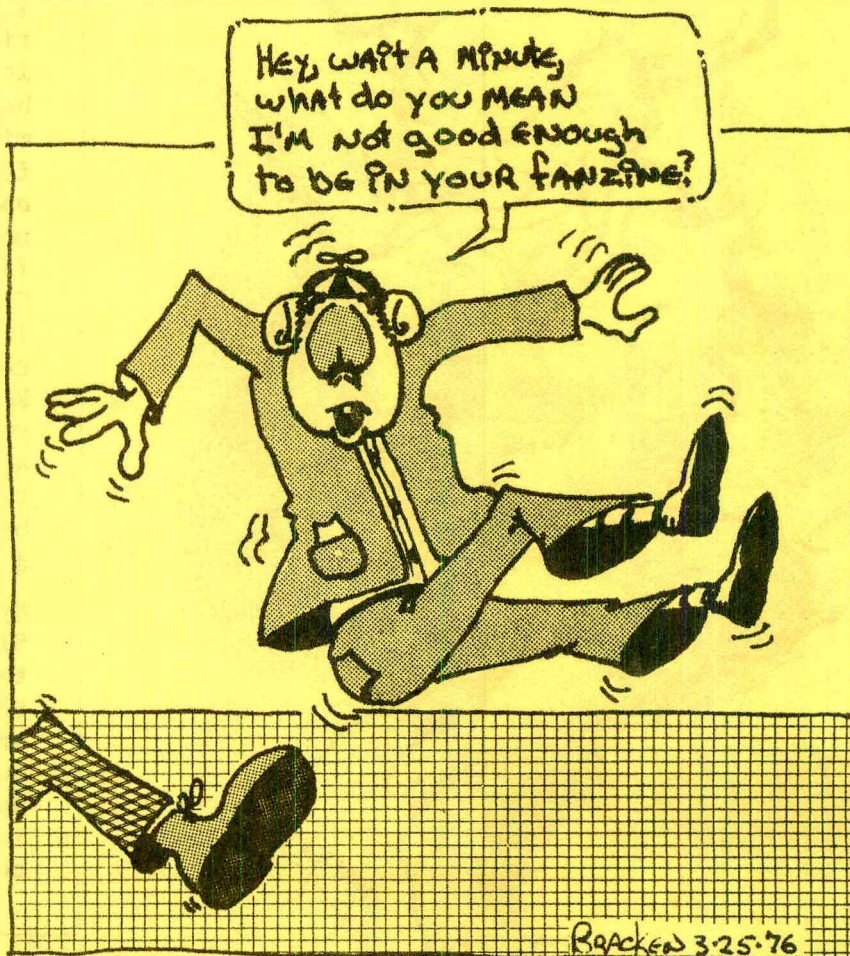
WINDING NUMBERS has been a good indicator or rising Decadent Winnipeg Fandom. The first issue introduced the emerging local fandom, and subsequent issues have traced their growing experience and numbers. Now, besides the pioneer WINDING NUMBERS there is also James Hall's JABBERWOCKY. Stu Gilson has risen in popularity till he has been nominated for a FAAn as best artist. And Garth Danielson has learned to write. Garth was the greatest surprise in this issue (next to its appearance, Randy). It may well be that Garth was a good writer all along, but disorganization and piss poor presentation in BOOWATT has hidden the fact. Whether fluke or packaging, Garth's short piece on bheer brands was good light ~~read~~ reading. Another surprise was supplied by Doug Barbour. I usually do not like his sercon writing, but his personal recollections of boyhood Winnipeg were surpassingly good. Aside from the previously mentioned there were a couple of good light sercon articles on A. E. van Vogt and Larry Niven by Jason Pascoe and Tony Dalmyn respectively. Vastly improved sercon compared to the dry academia in the first issues. The article by James Hall on fanwriter Ed Cagle was a little weak, as was Jodie Offutt's trifle about Avocado Pit Fandom, but gave no reason for complaint either. On the whole, I may have most enjoyed the Gilliland cartoons, several of which were among his brilliant best. (Now

why is this man so steadily ignored through the years?) Other artwork in the issue varied from artist to artist. Worthy of special mention is the clever cover by Stu Gilson, and the accompanying inside-cover explanatory test. WINDING NUMBERS' past enormous improvement promises well for the future. And a future for Winnipeg fandom seems as certain as any future can be.

PERSONAL NOTES -

*Richard Harter, 306
Thoreau St., Concord
MA 01742*

PERSONAL NOTES is another of a too rare species of zine. The well-written, and extrovertive. Not that good writing



about personal neurosis is all that common either, but I prefer most *things* to most *people* and appreciate the MYTHOLOGIES in fandom more than the DON-O-SAURS. Not that PERSONAL NOTES is quite either kind. Richard Harter seems to be the type who in being personal also takes note of his physical surroundings. (For that matter, so is Don Thompson, but less for their own sake, it seems.) I recommend it highly, and it is an easy mailing list to be included on. You have no excuse for missing issues.

TWEEK - Gary Farber, 1047 E. 10th St., Brooklyn, NY 11230; Patrick Hayden, and Anne Laurie Logan, both at "Annie Hall", 656 Abbott, E. Lansing MI 48823; Seth McEvoy, Box 268, E. Lansing MI 48823.

TWEEK is the recent incarnation of Seth McEvoy's multinomial publishing, this time with three co-editors. So far TWEEK has been as fannish and chatty as any fond reminiscence of FOCAL POINT and FANAC could lead you to wish for. Perhaps even *too* fannish since it is occasionally difficult to tell where fact leaves off and fannish fancy takes up. In many ways, as good as it is, KARASS could learn a bit from the Tweek Twits. KARASS is often too cut and dried with information (i.e. "Flahsh was mugged and stabbed in NY recently, but was not seriously injured." Period.) I wouldn't want to see it happen, but if KARASS were to fold, TWEEK would stand well to replace it. Especially if it were regular...



CONCERNING OLD ISSUES OF SIMULACRUM:

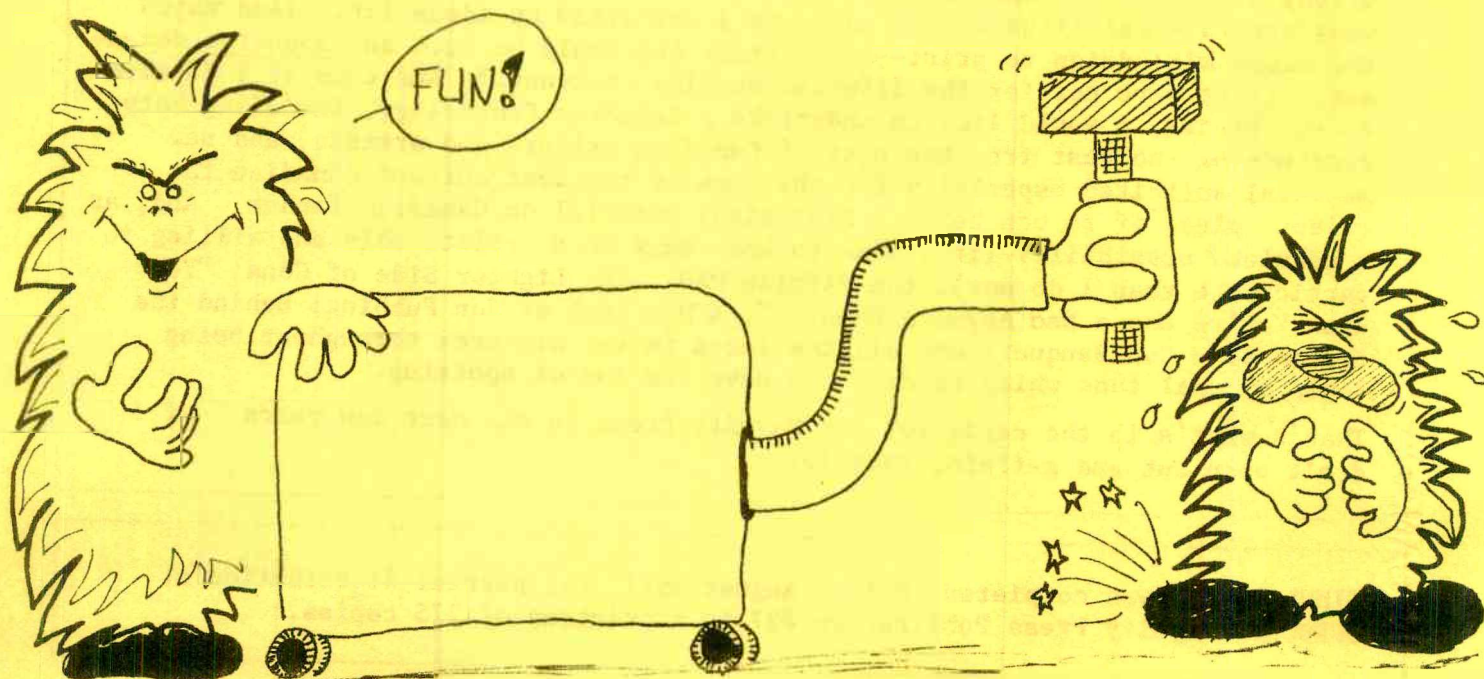
I keep a limited number (about five) of copies of back issues in "archives" files, so as to have complete sets or fill in missing issues for future friends who missed out on the early issues (because I did not know them yet then). This file is very low on copies of SIMULACRUM 2 (October 1975). If you're selling your fanzine collection or don't tend to keep fanzines yourself after you've read them, I would appreciate getting copies of this issue in good condition back, and will consider them a trade credit.

My files of the earlier issues SIMULACRUM 1 (June 1975) and the rather rare VATI-CON III PROGRAM BOOK (January 1975) are in a little better shape; but the same offer and plea apply to these issues as I like to have more than minimal copies on hand.

A NON-POLL

I don't mind polls myself, but realize that a lot of fans don't like them; so this is not a proper "questions 1 to 10" type poll at all, just a number of topics I'd be interested in hearing about from other fans, for future lettercols and possible articles. It's a comment-hook-provider, perhaps, and completely optional--say something about all, or only one. Or none.

1. What would you put into a time capsule to be opened at least 100 years from now; and what reasons do you have for your choices. Let's take a size limitation into account--at three levels: say a small one the size of a ream of paper, a medium one the size of a suitcase; and a large one a metre cube.
2. What currently impossible inventions would you like to see become reality; but also what do you imagine would be their effects on the world-at-large?
3. If you had the power of choice somehow of either halving or doubling the intelligence of every person in the world, which would it be? That may be a pretty obvious choice, but the point here is to debate pros and cons of both sides, taking the world as it is today as a starting point. Sidestep questions of right and wrong in this for a moment; and speculate on the practicality of this, given knowledge of human nature, which for the sake of this question is assumed not to change.
4. What "world" in a science fiction story would you like to be able to live in and be a part of, and why?
5. What are your predictions for fandom in the next five years? Be as general or as specific as you like; cover whatever aspects of fandom interest you.
6. (As mentioned earlier in the lettercol) What about fandom annoys or disgusts you or pisses you off? About anything: fanzines, fringe groups, cons, clubs, "in" things. Be as detailed and poisonous as you like (but quotable); let the venom, if so be it, drip. And spare me answers like "stupid poll questions like these".



NON SEQUITUR POSTSCRIPT

This is the herald of the "new" SIMULACRUM, changing direction, finding its stride at last. It isn't what I want it to be ultimately with this issue by a long shot, but I think it's pointed down the right road now. Some things haven't changed: you can still get issues for a Selectric ball, or a steak dinner at a con, or back copies of major zines of the past; there will still be special "theme" issues in addition to the regular ones like this one; I'm still paying attention to repro to the best of my abilities. But; besides the obvious differences in format and arrangement, my interests and priorities have changed, are changing, will continue to develop; and the articles I solicit in the future and the emphasis given to various topics will reflect that. This issue is far from perfect, and some readers might consider it a step backward from some of the previous six; but I think it's better, more "together", closer to my ultimate aims, than ever before.

And that's why, even though this issue is a "bridging issue", mostly letters and articles invoked by the previous two issues, it's given the designation "Vol. 2, No. 1".

SIMULACRUM will probably have two, perhaps three, issues per year as time, money and material materialize; generally 80-pagers done to the current or better production value standards, and many of them regular articles-and-letters issues like this one. In the forthcoming "doomsday" issue I hope to try more adventuresome layout, with a liberal use of multicolour printing and possibly photographs if I can get them and can acquire the new electrostenciller in time. Another theme issue in late 1978 or 79 will be on fanzines and fandom; with a faneditor symposium along the lines of the one in OUTWORLDS 24 but asking some rather different questions, some special surveys, plus possibly some historical and review type material.

Special one-shots are something I can afford only once a year, if that; they're more work than a SIMULACRUM issue. This year's is the FANTHOLOGY 76; next year is THE JOY OF DUPLICATING, in which I would like to produce the ultimate mimeography handbook (but the verdict will have to wait for the evidence) with as many experimental illustration pages as I can dream up ideas for. (And which the mimeo will deign to print--a Gestetner 466 could be such an expensive dependent, if it were not for the lifetime service contract.) And even if I do move to the States, I would like to undertake a Canadian Fanthology, including both reprints of the best from the past of Canadian writers and artists, and new material solicited especially for the book by the best current Canadian fan talent; plus, if it can be had, historical material on Canadian fandom. And, as a nebulous possibility (if I come to know many more artists able and willing to participate than I do now), the FANNISH MAD: The Lighter Side of Cons; "You Know You're Not a Neo Anymore When..."; A MAD Look at Fan Pubbing; Behind the Scenes at a Con Banquet; and all the faces in the pictures throughout being those of real fans which readers can have the fun of spotting.

That's what's in the cards for the Vaynity Press in the next few years. If I don't burn out and gafiate, that is.

SIMULACRUM 7 was completed in late August 1977, for partial distribution at SUNCON. Vaynity Press Publication #27 in a printrun of 275 copies.

