

S F D 14 - S F D 14 - S F D 14

Science Fiction Digest ??????????
Some Femmefans Do ??????????????
Streams Flow Downhill ?????????????
Someone For DUFF ??????????????
Stop Fingering Denise ?????????????
Strange Fungoid Disease ??????????
Sexy French Dildos ??????????????
Stop For Dinner ??????????????
Skel's Fairly Dense ??????????????
Jeeves For TAFF ??????????????
Correct!
Did Anyone Ever Tell You Skel.....
You Can't Spell Worth A Damn.....

Nope, this is not Clifford Simak's Best-selling porno novel 'All Flesh Is Ass', nor A. E. Van Vogt's masterpiece about illicit asprin smugglers, 'The Secret Prophylactics'. It is in fact SMALL FRIENDLY DOG 14. Still, we can't have everything can we? Shame really. I'm Skel. She's Cas. We are here. 'Here' is 25 Bowland Close; Offerton; Stockport; Cheshire; SK2 5NW. But that's my problem. What's your problem, Bartucci?

RICH BARTUCCI 2105 Independence Avenue; Kansas City; MO 64124.

I am currently in receipt of a peculiar greenish-hued aggregation of over-linked pages that passes itself off as INFERNO 12. Knowing your work as well as I do, I am inclined to accept this as the truth. On your 'Pages of Rant and pages of Rave', I am moved to make comment. I realize that if matters peculiar to Great Britain occasionally confuse me, peca-dillos endemic to the United States may well pass your own understanding; we are each the product of our respective cultures. In this country, there is an attitude towards firearms differing from that in Britain. In a newspaper advertisement, K-Mart (a largish department store chain) is advertising a special on a lovely little .22 caliber rifle for only 49 dollars, with 100 rounds of ammunition for only \$1.49. There are also shotguns of various guages and rifles from a .30-.30 express job. All in the open, and all to be bought for relatively little dinero.

In a country where firearms are so easy to obtain, law enforcement agencies are obliged to arm their personnel with guns and train them in their usage. Occasionally, a police officer will kill someone with his weapon, generally in the process of preventing that someone from killing another person. It is regrettable, but it is necessary.

I do not apologize for the fact that U.S. police officers occasionally kill suspects; my profession is saving lives, not taking them, and I cannot say that the sight of a dead man fills me with joy and righteous axaltation at the fact that "...the dirty bastard got what he deserved." I will admit, however, that a potential or actual threat to the lives of other people must be removed, and that, sometimes, removal means the death or wounding of the man who is effecting that threat.

I have two cousins, close friends, who are police officers. Each day, these two men climb into uniform, put on their guns and go out to perform humdrum duties -- they give out traffic tickets, they investigate prowlers, they fill out endless report sheets. Once in a while, they get shot at, and they shoot back. They are enforcing the laws of the land by restraining certain people from breaking those laws, and by apprehending those who have broken them. Sometimes, lawbreakers object to restraint and/or apprehension, and debate with the police in the language of lead; I trust that my cousins will reply in kind, and hope to God that they'll do so with effect, before they themselves are brought down. In Great Britain, where the lawbreakers do not argue with guns, the police do not, as a rule, have to be prepared to serve their rebuttal with leaden punctuation. The situation differs here, and we, in the U.S., have reached a tolerable accommodation with it. It is not pleasant, but it is workable, as witnessed by the fact that it seems to be working.

As you may have observed from a quick perusal of the international news scene, we Americans are in the process of deciding which particular group of crooks is going to rule us for the next four years. We have our choice between Jerry Ford, the man from Michigan with the xylocaine overdose, and Jimmy Carter, the smile with the vacuum behind it. The former promises status quo while the latter promises us something better. For once..this once in my life..I'm inclined to go for status quo (sad as it is), inasmuch as Mr. Carter neglects to tell us for whom, exactly, it will be better.

Geographic differences in the US make for considerable prejudices, most of them well-founded. Angelinos (from Southern California) are all just a wee bit nuts; New Yorkers are all anemic and fast-talking. New Englanders are laconic and shrewd; Midwesterners are mostly farmers, and, as H.L. Mencken put it, to hell with them.

Southerners, now...Ah, Southerners....The Deep South, the region that gave us George Wallace and Lester Maddox, Stuckey's Pecan Pralines and Southern Fried Chicken, tar and feathers and murdered Freedom Riders.

Somehow, I have no love for the Deep South. I've seen very little come out of it that wasn't fraught with a peculiar blend of blindness and bigotry. Here, in Missouri, my New Jersey-tuned sensitivities receive faint vibrations that cause a constant, gnawing ache in my superego; what must it be like in Mississippi or Alabama? What's it like to live in a place where long hair and a beard is a punishable offense? Where Klu Klux Klan chapters are as common as the Knights of Columbus are in New Jersey? Where the ghost of Adolf Hitler could walk into a redneck bar and chat jovially about how "...all them goddam Jewboys shoulda been sent back to Israel, 'n then shot."

No, I don't think I can trust anyone from the Deep South. I don't believe that I want the president of the US to be a human mull, someone nobody knows anything about. In these suspicious Sicilian bones of mine, there is a gnawing feeling that Carter is not all he seems, that there is something rotten behind that lovely good-old-boy facade he projects.

God help me, I'm going to vote for that damned fullback. I only wish that Harry Truman was alive; I could stand to see an honest son-of-a-bitch in the running again.

To get off matters mundane and back into the happy triviality of facts fannish, be not intimidated by the quality of my stationary, as it was merely a way to utilize a stack of freebies some drug company's detail man gave over to my fraternity. The sight of all those virginal diagnostic sheets just got to me -- especially when the price of typing paper went up.

The arachnoid is a member of the trio of membranous structures that surround and protect the brain and spinal chord; from outwards in, they are the dura mater, the arachnoid and the pia mater. Beneath the arachnoid is the subarachnoid space, famed in song and story for receiving from the foramen of Magendie the cerebrospinal fluid produced by the choroid plexuses in the first, second, third and fourth ventricles of the brain. A hemorrhage in the subarachnoid space might conceivably produce increased cerebrospinal fluid pressure or even grow large enough to impinge upon the cerebrum, cerebellum, or brain stem with telling effect.

Now if you're thoroughly confused, let me go on to offer some suggestions as to the cause -- no, scratch that; 'etiology' is so much more esoteric -- of Goodfan Barbour's addressological dysfunction. From the repeated pattern of small-case 'd's, I would surmise that Goodfan Barbour was once attacked by a man wielding a typewriter that lacked every key but that single critical letter. The trauma was deeply buried by some other horrible experience (possibly his first Harry Warner LoC) and has thus not come to light until now.

If the pattern of the repeated 'd's is accurately depicted in INFERNO, then perhaps something might be drawn from their configuration. Let me see... (I wish to hell I hadn't sold my psychiatry text to that sophomore last week). Ah, yes: 1-5-5-6-1-3-5-1-2-4-3-8-10-7-1-2-6-8-2-1-4-5. Perfectly clear. The man who hit Goodfan Barbour had a Social Security Number of 155-61-3512. His telephone number was (438)-107-1268, and he hit Goodfan Barbour 2,145 times. Elementary, if you just look at it in the light of present psychiatric theory.

Treatment in this case would involve chaining the patient into a position before a typer that has only capital letters.

The 'Butter-Side-Down' phenomenon has been noted with reference to bread only, it seems, when it could just as well be applied to any baked farinacious product, such as pizza. From past experience, I am moved to say that the propensity for a slice of pizza to land on the floor sauce-side-down is directly related to the value and quantity of topping material spread upon it. A mushroom pizza, for example, will splay itself across the floor more often than a plain (or even an extra cheese) slice. More frequently still, pepperoni and sausage slices will splatter, and the incidence of sauce-side-downs (or SSD's as we cognoscenti call them) among anchovy pizzas is appalling. To order a pizza "with everything" is to tempt the gods, and only the most foolish of Anglos will come into a pizzeria and thus display his ignorance. You can tell a true Sicilian not only by the fact that he cuts his pizza squarely, but by the way he actually nails each slice to the tabletop before endeavoring to consume his repast.

ELST WEINSTEIN APDO 6-869; Guadalajara 6; Jalisco; Mexico.

You might like to tell British game fans that I am working out a fannish game called "For This You Die!" The set will cost \$4.00 by surface mail and includes all the rules plus cards plus colour xerox sheets. It is in a booklet form for easier production. The game should be ready for distribution this winter, and can be obtained by either writing me here in Mexico or in Los Angeles.

I hope you have by this time gotten your copy of the FED. Please, feel free to write comments, suggestions, additions and corrections.

ONE GLARING OMISSION, ELST.....

.....is that no mention is made of 'Courtney's Boat' and even 'Rosebud' is dismissed somewhat perfunctorily. However, I can't stop to chat now because I have an IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT to make. STOP PRESS - Joseph M. Nicholas achieves lifelong ambition.....

JOSEPH NICHOLAS 2 Wilmot Way; Camberley; Surrey; GU15 1JA.

Many thanks for ~~MY/NO~~ fuck, I mean SFD 13. Herewith a LoC, as I strive ever onwards in the hope of one day breaking into print in your pages.

The snopake fell out of the stationery cupboard at work yesterday. Is this a double standard?

[illegible]

"Nope! Snopake always comes in that size bottle....."

[illegible]

When was Bob Shaw on the box? I musta missed it, the way I usually miss both things by not watching very much TV these days. (Liar, Nicholas). But then I did see the first episode in the new series of 'The Avengers' (I'm not going to call it

'The New Avengers' unless specifically pressed) last night, and it was all I'd expected it to be - vaguely plausible but..... tongue in cheek all the way. Nazis disguised as monks, Adolf Hitler in the fridge, Joanna Lumley elegantly kicking people under the chin.....preposterous, but great fun. The sixties are here again; maybe there'll be another spy bookm.

Actually there won't be of course. Chris and I were discussing it in the pub afterwards, and we came to the conclusion that it was really a revival in the face of the police shows that were currently dominating television, hoping to catch the wave that was carrying them along. The spy boom was really a sixties phenomenon, and could never be revived because it wouldn't make sense. In my opinion, the spy movies and TV series and paperbacks that proliferated in the years after James Bond achieved almost overnight success were nothing other than a fable of good versus evil, a sort of 'Lord Of The Rings' writ small. The sixties was an era of tremendous optimism, and that optimism was the thing that kept all those spies on the go. How often did the baddies get to win, if ever? The hero would struggle on through thick and thin and ever-imminent death and finally come out on top at the last moment, in a welter of death and blood and action designed solely to show that the good guys were too good to keep down and the hand of evil could always be overthrown if you tried hard enough. It was nothing more than a gigantic metaphor, self-perpetuating and self-sustaining, becoming ever more divorced from the mainstream of human action until it eventually faltered because of its own irrelevant incestuousness.. Apart from which, the heroes themselves ceased to be plausible; they all took their cue from Bond, the lone fighter against evil, the original personification of the idea that one man really could change the course of history, and ran out of steam when it became apparent, at the collapse of the revolution, that one man was no more than one man, a cog in a machine, discardable and discarded.

Heavy stuff, as we ploughed through a pint or two. Ultimately we stopped being intellectual and began to get nostalgic, summoning up names from the past to ward off the boredom of today. Remember Patrick McGookan in 'Danger Man' and 'The Prisoner'? Remember 6NiC/NAC in the Adam Diment books? Do you

remember when Quiller made his first appearance in the Adam Hall (aka Elleston Trevor) novels? Remember Honor Blackman in the first Avengers series? We don't remember that last one, so we had to content ourselves with Diana Rigg and Linda Thorsen.

21 NOVEMBER 1976 (SKEL)

Yeah, I remember much of that lot. 'The Prisoner' has of course just been repeated since you wrote that letter, an event toward which I looked forward with hopeful anticipation. I was very disappointed with this series when it was first screened. In fact, I thought it was a load of codswallop. However, since its demise there has been much discussion of it within fandom and I came to the conclusion that I had approached the series in the wrong frame of mind. I had had preconceptions and because the series had not matched my preconceived notions of its aims I had measured it against those preconceptions and judged it a failure. I had expected something on the same level of mental sophistication as 'Danger Man' which had immediately preceded it, and obviously it had been more ambitious than this. So I watched the first episode in the knowledge that I had grown in the interim and hoped for enlightenment. It had not quite finished when I woke up again but I gave up, woke Cas and we went up to bed. I had however been very tired. Not a fair appraisal.....and Cas always falls asleep anyway when watching TV in the evening. The following week I watched the second episode, being somewhat more awake. When I woke again, as before, it hadn't quite finished...but I had. Obviously I had not grown enough. Oh well, I suppose it's just 'Coprolites', or 'tough shits' as some might say.

However, I am always interested to get letters/articles on the subject of TV and TV programmes. The theme keeps cropping up here in SFD and people keep finding some personal response to it. In the past I have steadfastly killed the topic each time in the possibly mistaken view that others might not share my interest. This was especially harsh on US readers whose letters would arrive one issue later than those of UK LoC-smiths, by which time I would have decided that the subject had dragged on long enough. No more. Whilst I do not intend SFD to become merely a TV discussionzine I will henceforth favour

this topic by not cutting it off as ruthlessly has been my wont. Let's face it.....TV is the medium of our age in just about every way. The best of new novels has to go some to get read by over 1 million people, but even the worst of TV plays will exceed that audience. True, it is the blank passivity of the TV audience which makes this possible, and it is that same passivity that keeps TV entertainment down on the same level of overall crud.

If 90% of the audience will watch shit and are quite content to watch shit, then where is the incentive to produce a better quality of TV programme? Search me. Perhaps it is in the integrity of the writers/producers/artists, because there are exceptions where people go beyond achieving mediocrity at everyday levels of competence. There are examples of daring innovation. When this happens the 10% usually make enough noise and drag the passive 90% with them toward better viewing. Unfortunately it isn't an ongoing affair, rather it is like geographical end geological upheaval. As new peaks are thrust up here, something sinks somewhere else. 'Monty Python' is dead and 'Holmes and Yoyo' is here.....and they wonder why there is an air of defeat and despondency about this country these days?

TERRY JEEVES 230 Bannerdale Road; Sheffield; S11 9FE.

Re the falling of buttered toast.....I expanded this one ((it must have a great interest for fen) into a further test using buttered pennies.....and on into a psi send up. I have a copy somewhere...it was in a stateside zine. If you get desperate for an outside contrib, I could run you a photocopy??

I saw that bacover ad of yours somewhere else. Any idea what the little buggers might be? I was so tempted that I nearly sent 'em a dollar.....but decided that it was probably a rip off...enough dollars in the kitty and they would all vanish.

A STATEMENT OF POLICY BY THE BOARD OF SFD INC.

(Here at SFD Inc., nothing is done without Board approval,

as I'm sure Cas will reg. ily admit. After all, she's constantly complaining that everything goes by the board for SFD). I have absolutely no objection to running reprints providing that most of my readers are unlikely to have seen the original publication. Alas, most copies of SFD go to the States. However, if it was quite some time ago.....? I'd still like to see a copy, whether or not for publication, just as I'd like to see a copy of Walt's piece on the same subject. How many more of us I wonder? Someone should collect them all together in a theme volume, something along the lines of a Groff Conklin anthology, 'Great Science Fiction About Buttered Toast' or somesuch.

Regarding your other query, read on MacDuff.....

RICK SNEARY 2962 Santa Ana St.; South Gate; CA 90280; U.S.A.

Your back page ad is one of the more sadistic ones I've seen for the product, which is still being advertised in odd places.....along with extra equipment to make the 'things' do tricks or run races. I finally read somewhere that they are brine shrimp, which you can barely see.....but still, it is off-turning.

Yes, I understand the difference you meant between The Goons and Monty Python. One is a comic story, the other a series of blackouts. I lean toward the Goons, but think the other just as funny when well done...but it can more easily get out of hand and become merely crazy. I agree very much with your view that comedy shows should be first and foremostly funny, and that many or most US TV SitComs fall short (we watch hardly any of them, and none regularly). Comics are the same way. Mort Sahl got a great reputation as a satirical critic of the government. He was very funny, but started to take himself or the world seriously, and fell from favour. Sir G & S said it all in one song about advice to a private bufoon: "People don't mind what you do, as long as you are funny." I agree that Archie Bunker is a dishwater copy of Alf Garnett. I don't watch 'Barney Miller' but I don't agree with you when you say that a young cops reaction to killing someone is hardly a bundle of laffs. Death, murder, treason and violence have always been popular comic themes. You wouldn't expect a hos-

pital near the front in a dirty war would be a lot of laffs either, but there is M.A.S.H., and a play about two sets of mass murders and a house full of crazies and mis-placed dead bodies could be a horror story, but Arsenic and Old Lace has been killing 'em for years. I feel you are letting your personal views on police and killing affect your emotions, and it is a subject not related to the one under discussion. The difference between the police of Britain and the US would make an interesting discussion, but you shouldn't condemn the show for current American conditions. The truth is that probably most US police never kill anyone...as most of them are in small towns and don't see that much violent crime. TV cops are different. Look, US police carry guns and use guns because since early days American crooks have carried and used guns. I've noted British taking a 'holier-than-thou' attitude on this subject before, but seen little evidence that they were less prone to violence when the opportunity arose. After all, we hardly ever play soccer over here.

Yes, foreign travel is exotic. One reason I am so keen on British detective novels. I hold a great desire to visit an English pub though I never go to bars here (a waste of money you could spend drinking at friends). We can get English fish 'n chips now, but bangers and mushie peas are hard to find. Is it true that you don't really have English Muffins, that they are an american invention, like chop suey?

I gladly support an English con in '79, and hope you will back my next bid for a South Gate Worldcon. The first one in 1958 was ten years in the planning and I announced then that the next one would be in 2010. It seems time I started heating up the campaign.

A METAPHYSICAL DISCOURSE ON THE TRANSCENDENTALITY OF MUFFINNESS

From the Hegelian viewpoint, as muffins only exist when they are being eaten and as the time required to consume a muffin is such a vanishingly small fraction of the totality of existence, then statistically the existence of muffins can be said to have a nil significance and to approach zero. Muffins that approach zero have only themselves to blame, and pass a

efit of ample liquid refreshment of the alcoholic variety. A dry-made zine is a terror. My quota while doing KWALHIOQUA was one large drink per stencil, while cutting, and one large drink per page side while mimeographing. It worked well and made me more efficient than I ordinarily would have been. On the other hand, when Dave Locke was here, and we were composing SHAMBLES number 2 on stencil, the quota was greater per stencil, . . . something on the order of one large drink per line. SHAMBLES 2 may have been the most expensive mimeo-reproed zine ever produced. It was definately a front-runner for 'Most Enjoyable'.

[illegible]

"You know Ed, it's zine production techniques like this which somehow don't seem to get into encyclopedæic series of articles about fnz production. How about a special chapter Terry? At least now I know why you chose that title Ed, but back to your letter.....

[illegible]

How did I become an authority on the authenticity of a tea bag-full of phony pubic hair taped to the underside of someone's balls for two months? To the best of my recollection I've never said a word in fandom about my opinions for or against pubic hair. One can only assume you regard me as something of an expert on fetid odours. Was it something I wrote in a fanzine? If so, please understand that I much prefer a well-washed crotch to one that would exude a fetid odour, and at that any well-washed crotch I prefer definitely has no balls thereabouts.

The term 'it sucks' as used in the US at present is decidedly uncomplimentary. No doubt it is a result of its being a corruption of that faithful old epithet 'you dirty cocksucker'. Or maybe not. In any case, it always puzzled me whether calling someone a dirty cocksucker implied an unhygienic condition on the part of the cocksucker or the cocksuckee. I don't recall ever hearing anyone calling someone a 'dirty cocksuckee', so perhaps the answer, however nebulous, is obvious. The topic rather sucks, don't you think?

It is deer season now here in Redneck Okieland (the hill and forestlands of far eastern Oklahoma), and as usual the inflow of strange types has created some highly unusual situations for me here at this scout camp. For various reasons the public thinks boy scout property is open to the masses, and nothing could be further from the truth. Anyway, to date I have only been threatened once with a gun, but the general impression I get is that people in general can be classified as certified idiots. One hunter, hopelessly lost, drove into the camp four times in a two hour period asking for directions to the same place. The last time he accused me of leading him astray with false information. I commented on his heritage and general intelligence and he did not return. Another was so drunk he fell on his arse when he got out of his car. Some shithead along the main highway to town had accidentally discharged his rifle in the car, disabling it. Too bad it didn't hit him.

John D. MacDonald has written a multitude of first-rate books in addition to his Travis McGee series. Series can be surprisingly good reading. The Matt Helm series, contrary to what the odious movies would indicate, was reasonably well done when Donald Hamilton first began writing it. The first book was an excellent novel. Hamilton also wrote some fair western novels, if you like shitkickers.

14 DECEMBER 1976(SKEL)

I've not gotten around to his non-T McG stories yet, apart of course from 'Planet Of The Dreamers' and 'The Girl, The Gold Watch and Everything' which were long ago devoured for their SF content. I'm still not more than a dozen into Trav. The local library has gotten fed up of scouring the wilds of Cheshire for them and has even resorted to buying them new for me. BUT IT TAKES TOO LONG! In the meantime I've found the UK paperback publisher, but I'm having to ration myself. because I think I have only three more of those left. The prospect of having to get by without any Travis McGee books on the horizon is anathema to me. I like what Walt Willis calls "the wee thinky bits", like when he was going on about his new digital watch that was good up to 35 Gs.....whilst his body wasn't which would leave his body spread $\frac{1}{4}$ "thick over a tennis court with a watch-

shaped lump in the middle. I like it.

28 DECEMBER 1976 (SKEL)

This zine is not dead. Barely alive yes, but ~~not~~ quite dead. Not even late in fact. Those who think it is five months since they got the last quarterly SFD are however not off their chumps. The quarterly schedule has been rearranged to take advantage of Dokktor Von Meara's personal attendance at more UK conventions, thus cutting the postage bill even more. So, instead of 1/1/77, 1/4/77, 1/7/77 and 1/10/77 it will be 1/3/77, 1/6/77; 1/9/77 and 1/12/77. This is dead lucky really because had we still been on the original schedule this issue wouldn't have made it, it would have died. However, now it is SFD, a fnz...barely alive. Gentlemen, we can rebuild it. We have the technology. There is 56 pints of skel-lager festering about the house somewhere. There is over $\frac{1}{2}$ a bottle of 105 proof Glenfarclas in the kitchen, as well as almost $\frac{1}{2}$ a bottle of 12 year old Bells and even $\frac{1}{4}$ bottle of (*YECCHH*) sherry. Yes, we most definitely have the technology. We also only have eight more stencils and hardly any paper at all, but I'm sure we can get around that somehow. After all, the urge to publish is the most important single ingredient. Hang on whilst I pour myself another glass of 'The Urge To Publish', then we can get on with another letter.

JIM MEADOWS 31 Apple Court; Park Forest, Illinois 60466; USA.

Dull and pedantic, are we? This from a man who finds the National Lampoon to be funny? Oboy, Leroy Kettle's generalizations on humour are just that -- generalizations, and when he compares USA TV humour to UK TV humour he forgets that broadcasting is not built on the same framework as it is in your country, and that he sees a limited amount of our work, not always the best. Has Leroy access to NBC's Saturday Night, which does what the Lampoon does without wallowing in their excesses? What mix of the USA sitcoms has he seen? Has he watched some of the material on The Carol Burnett Show which contains some of the best sketch writing available on television? Has he even heard of the epic soap opera tragi-comedy Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman? I realize that a lot of American

should not be labeled 'comedy'. However, I don't think it wise to let a label limit the possibilities of a TV production, especially since the tangent American sitcoms has taken has proven to be rather fruitful at times.

So let me redefine what I was talking about. I was trying to say in my previous letter that the American sitcom (generalizing here) has evolved from the bland, rather frothy "warm human" family series. Producers of these shows, looking for a way out of the rut, were still tied to traditions set within the industry, and the pressure from networks and stations for "more of the same". Within the limits given, some producers tried to find formats that would allow for more imaginative scripting beyond the "daddy brings the boss home for dinner without telling mom" without breaking the formats they were given. By the late 60's, a trend started that mixed a larger amount of drama in with the comedy of the sitcoms than had been done previously. While the production houses of Norman Lear - Bud Yorkin and MTM Enterprises were most prolific and successful in this route, there have been other notable efforts.

When I say that elements of drama are mixed into the scripts, I do not mean that, with a screeching change of gears, the programme suddenly switched from light froth to dead serious tragedy. When I say 'mix', I mean 'mix', and the reason some shows do this successfully lies in their basic formats, one based on human relationships and believability. That is, in even the most frothy and superficial comedy (including blatant fantasy such as 'Bewitched' and such junk as 'My Mother The Car') nothing considered too far out will happen. A straight plot line will be adhered to, major characters will be more or less likeable, if sometimes eccentric, etc. It is this limitation of format which makes the shifts from comedy to drama, and the mixture of the two to be not only possible, but just about the only option left to script writers to save these sort of shows from death by inertia.

I am not talking about 'social significance' for its own sake. When such relevance hooks are used, they are used, whether well or poorly, as a situation for the main characters to interact in, something for them to react to. At points, it

becomes impossible for the characters to react to these situations with humour alone without destroying the consistency and credibility that the show has established. Hence the use of drama. With such an element, the show may indeed cease to be a comedy as you define it. This does not make it automatically bad television. Humour and drama have been mixed in other dramatic forms for centuries. Such a mix within a half-hour series is not implausible.

You compared 'All In The Family' with 'Till Death Do Us Part'. Don't! Lear and Yorkin were interested in a basic idea of 'Til Death...', the use of a bigot as the main character, but the intention was not to make 'Til Death Do Us Part' with an American accent. The show was also complicated by the temptation on the part of writers and producers to soften Archie Bunker as the series aged (the reasoning being, I suppose, that he may be a bastard, but he is still a human being). The series success though, does not rest on if Archie Bunker can be as bigotted as Alf Garnett.



If anyone thinks Jim tends to run off at the mouth I must point out that I am patching this 'dialog' together from three of his letters and it serves me right for not running so many of the letters I get when I get 'em. 'Dialog' is of course not strictly correct as Jim can't react to anything I say, having already said all his bits in advance.....but what else can I call his monologue and my half-a-dialogue? Jim hasn't finished yet, but it seemed about time I stuck my oar in again. Here goes then.....

I don't agree that all Lear and Yorkin were interested in was the basic idea of 'Bigot-as-'Hero'. If so, why did they transpose the wife, daughter and son-in-law into the series and use basically identical stereotypes for all these characters? No, I think they were making 'Til Death...' with an American accent. And why not? I suspect the softening came because too many members of the viewing audience were like him. 'Hell, he must be likeable, he's so like me.' Bigots are made not born, and the forces which would have created Alf/Archie were

at work on a generation of working class UK/US males.

You wondered just which US TV shows we got over here? Obviously I can't list them from memory. Instead I will go through this weekend's programmes to give you some idea. We have, in the past, had both 'Bewitched' and 'My Mother The Car', which latter was every bit as drekky as you said. I rather liked the basic ideas behind such shows as 'Bewitched' and 'The Beverly Hillbillies' (Though perhaps for the wrong reasons) but my main fault with these sitcoms is that individual episodes never live up to the genius behind the basic conception. US sitcoms seem to work this way. Within the basic format a particular sequence of events takes place. This sequence of events is supposed to be funny of itself (husband-brings-boss-home-to-dinner-without-telling-wife, to use your example) but is invariably too trite to laugh at. On this framework of events are hung half-a-dozen funny lines, like baubles on a christmas tree. Unfortunately, if the basic situation doesn't make you roll about the floor clutching your sides then six funny lines in thirty minutes does not make for great TV humour. Of US sitcoms, 'The Dick Van Dyke Show' overcame this by getting in a much higher percentage of funny lines. 'MASH' does something similar, as well as breaking out of the 'family' pattern. My only complaint against 'MASH' was that in the era of Vietnam it was set during the Korean War. This smacks to me of a lack of guts either on the part of the producers or the audience, quite probably the latter. Before I get accused of insularism let me also add that most UK comedy sitcoms fail for exactly the same reason. 'Happy Ever After', 'George and Mildred', 'Rising Damp', 'Man About The House', 'Cuckoo Waltz (whose saving grace for us is that it is set locally)', 'I Didn't Know You Cared', 'Doctor At Large', 'The Squirrels', 'Get Some In', 'Yus My Dear', 'Love Thy Neighbour (Daring because one of the two families involved was black, goshwow!)', 'The Fosters (Lookit, everyone a n [REDACTED]! Aren't we daring?)', 'My Brother's Keeper', 'Rosie' and 'Sykes'. Everyone a ~~winner~~ drekky nothing. Oh, some do have their good points, but good points do not a series make.

'The Last Of The Summer Wine', about three old age pensioners suffers only in that the OAPs are really only middle-aged versions of young men. Some good and valid social comment

is humourously made in this series, but not enough, alas, to carry a half hour programme each week. 'The Fall And Rise of Reginald Perrin' was brilliant, but seemed more about a man who cast aside conventional life than the billed 'bold new series about a business executive having a mental breakdown'.

What made series like 'Hancock's Half Hour', 'Steptoe And Son' and 'Til Death...' was that the humour was never contained in that ostensibly humorous sequence of events, but in the characters themselves. Similarly with 'Porridge' and 'Open All Hours' and 'Fawlty Towers'. However, on with TV guide.....

BBC 1 9.15 Mister Men; 9.30 Multi-Coloured Swap Shop (children's magazine programme); 12.13 Weather; 12.15 Grandstand (Sports magazine programme); 17.10 Tarzan (Cartoon); 17.35 News & Weather; 17.45 Regional sports news; 17.50 Jim'll Fix It (Kids magazine programme in which Jimmy Saville tries to make kids wishes come true); 18.30 Dr. Who (pt 2 of serial); 18.55 Film; 20.40 Mike Yarwood In Persons (impersonator); 21.10 Starsky & Hutch; 20.00 News & Weather; 20.10 Match Of The Day (Soccer); 21.20 Parkinson (talk show); 24.20 Weather.

BBC 2 15.00 Film; 16.25 Play Away (young children); 16.55 Dastardly & Muttley (cartoon); 17.05 Horizon (Science-Natural History); 17.55 A Taste Of Britain (cooking); 18.20 Mr. Magoo (cartoon); 18.30 Sight & Sound In Concert (music, also broadcast simultaneously over the radio in stereo so that you can listen to the concert over your hi-fi whilst watching it on TV); 19.30 News, Sport & Weather; 19.40 According To Hoyle (documentary about astronomer); 21.10 Film; 22.40 Network (documentary play about famous poisoner); 23.10 News & Weather; 23.15 Film.

GRANADA 9.15 Plain Sailing (sailing, what else); 9.40 Fun Food Factory (cooking); 10.05 The Lone Ranger (cartoon, British made but sold to US TV and then bought back....another fine mess you've got me into Stanley); 10.30 Journal (documentary); 10.45 Film; 12.30 World Of Sport (sports magazine programme); 17.05 News; 17.15 The Invaders; 18.15 New Faces (Talent Show); 19.15 Celebrity Squares (shit...based on a US show, I think); 20.00 Film; 22.45 News; 23.00 Aquarius (contemporary arts); 23.45 UFO.

That was Saturday 8/1/76. I have underlined the programmes bought direct from the USA. Now for Sunday 9/1/76.....

BBC 1 9.00 Nai Zindagi Naya Jeevan (magazine for Asian viewers); 9.30 Bagpuss (cartoon); 9.45 The Sunday Gang - exploring God's world (fuck knows.....I should get up this early on a Sunday morning?); 10.10 Peter Donaldson's Illustrated Economics (they gotta be kidding); 10.35 Zarabanda (learn Spanish...don't go away, it gets worse); 11.00 Worktalk (godknows but I bet it's heavy); 11.25 Trade Union Studies - what use is Economics to us?; 11.50 Sunday Worship - from the New United Reform Church, Reigate Park; 12.10 Your Move (Chess); 12.35 The 60 70 80 Show; 13.00 Farming, Weather for Farmers; 13.25 Other people's Children (Jimmy Saville talking to childminders); 13.38 ABC of Music- 'L' for Lieder; 13.50 News; 13.55 Film; 15.25 Bugs Bunny (cartoon); 15.35 Billy Smart's Children's Circus; 16.30 Anne Of Avonlea (Kids serial); 17.25 Holiday (holiday magazine programme); 17.55 News & Weather; 18.05 On The Move (adult literacy campaign); (18.00 -19.30 is irreverently known as the Godslot, and includes- an interview with the previous Archbishop of Canterbury and the congregation of St. Mary's Parish Church, Godmanchester, singing hymns - a different church each week folks, a sort of religious 'Down Your Way'.) 19.25 Wings (drama series about early aviators); 20.15 Film; 22.15 News & Weather; 22.24 That's Life (satirical magazine programme); 23.05 Film 77 (film magazine programme); 23.35 Reading The Signs -the problems involved in creating a visual language; 24.00 Weather.

BBC 2 11.40 Open University (TV university courses); 13.05 no programmes until 17.15 Rugby Special (sport); 18.15 Open To Question(religion); 18.50 News Review; 19.25 The World About Us (Natural History); 20.15 News & Weather; 8.20 The Lively Arts (music-a competition for conductors); 21.30 People To People (current affairs); 22.20 Film.

GRANADA 9.30 Link (for handicapped people); 10.00 Morning Worship (religion); 11.00 Early Musical Instruments (documentary); 11.25 Cartoon; 11.30 Castaway (adventure series); 12.00 Weekend World (magazine programme); 13.10 Star Maidens; 13.40 The Beachcomber (drama); 14.05 Soccer; 15.10 Space 1999; 16.05 South Riding (Drama a la Forsyte saga)(but not very); 17.05

Elephant Boy (adventure); 17.35 The Ghosts Of Motley Hall (comedy); 18.05 News; 18.15 A Box Of Islands (Archaeology); 18.55 Stars On Sunday (Religion); 19.25 Larry Grayson (comedy/variety); 20.25 Film; 21.45 News; 22.00 The Lover (Play); 23.00 George Hamilton IV (music); 23.30 To The Wild Country (Canadian wilderness).

I've underlined what I know or am pretty sure are American made programmes, with the exception of films which are mostly US but you never know what you get or when you get it. On any one day the films could be all british.

Having gone over a weekend in absolute detail I'll skim through the week listing some of the US shows we are getting in this particular season:- (BBC): M*A*S*H; Mr. Magoo; Starsky & Hutch; The Waltons; Deputy Dawg; Huckleberry Hound; The Great Grape Ape Show (I assume); Bugs Bunny; Goober and The Ghost Chasers (again I assume); Harry O; Gemini Man; Scooby Doo; Wacky Races; Kojak; It's The Wolf; Dastdly & Mutley; Wonderful World Of Disney; The Quest; Holmes & Yoyo; The Rockford Files.

(GRANADA): Charlie's Angels; Little House On The Prairie; Mystery Movie (McMillan & Wife/Columbo/Banacek/Madigan/Hawkins); Police Story; The Streets Of San Francisco; Wait til Your Father Gets Home; The Invaders; Homicide; The Munsters; Adams Family; Beverly Hillbillies; Mr. Ed (these last four a special series ~~featuring old favourites~~ squeezing extra mileage out of old shows); Sesame Street

British TV is of course on a totally different scale to that in the US. Herewith some information gleaned from yesterday's Daily Express (5/1/77) titled 'Your TV favourites of '76' "26 of last year's TV programmes were watched by more than 20 million viewers, and for the second year running 'The Morcambe & Wise Christmas Show' got the biggest audience of all 27.1 million (BBC). 20 of the 26 were shown on BBC1, 5 on ITV, and one (the FA Cup Final) was screened on both channels. Most popular TV entertainer of 1976 was Bruce Forsyth. His 'Generation Game' topped the 20,000,000 mark nine times. Feature films that made the grade were: The Italian Job; Goldfinger; From Russia With Love; and The Guns Of Navarrone (all Granada)

subject, so can I) while cop shows of the purely action/adventure variety are quite gory, 'Barney Miller' is a much more peaceful show. Its being taped in front of an audience, mostly on one set, makes the action rather limited, and while dramatic situations are sometimes treated, the show is still essentially a comedy, and sadistic cops and vicious criminals simply won't work well in the format. Drama in American sitcoms usually works with essentially likeable people.

The use of drama in American sitcoms is not unlike the episode of 'Z-Cars' (Is this a real title? - Yup) which you mentioned, in which "nothing happened". In both cases only a well established show could support this sort of thing. A similar example: One episode of M*A*S*H concerned an army hospital doctor who, due to a jeep accident between the front and his MASH unit, spent a feverish night with a Korean family. The script involved a mixture of plain comedy with some character introspection on the doctor's part. But since the Korean family was, after all, Korean and ignorant of English, and since the doctor knew only that language, the entire script consisted of a monologue from the doctor to a family that was partly bemused and partly concerned. It was good but, as you say, it wouldn't have sold any wheatypops. And it wouldn't have gotten aired if the series hadn't been running long enough to be well established.

It's understandable though that you don't seem able to make head or tail out of US sitcoms. Many Americans are likewise confused by British comedy. I feel sort of caught in the middle of this thing myself, since I'm able to enjoy both.

I really like Pauline's description of the Star Trek Blues and unless you say "No" real quick, will reprint it with credit in the next issue of my wretched trekzine. Your latter mention of ST vs SPACE 1999 was perceptive, noting the basic fault of both series: obviously 'human' aliens who speak English well. ST's saving grace (sometimes) was their excuses. For many episodes situations were developed that made the aliens knowledge of English credible. At times, an alien would be so alien that other forms of contact would be needed, such as telepathy. In one episode a 'universal translator' was introduced, a useful

device which would have solved a lot of problems, except that it was never used again. But I still can't agree that SPACE 1999 was better TV. Better special effects, yes, but as for scripting, directing and editing, it was often much inferior to ST, or to the majority of TV series being produced today.

Dennis' mention of a co-worker who brought a walrus's penal bone to the office caught my eye ~~because basically it's a specialty of mine, after all, it's of course~~ because I wasn't aware said organ had an actual bone in it. Perhaps walruses are built different from us humans (I'm quite sure they are in some ways) but I thought it was the basic rule of, er thumb, that said organ was boneless, attaining its rigidity only after being filled with extra blood. Unless of course Dennis was only using slang, in which case I must assume that the whole thing was rather messy to carry into the office.

The only problem with the pubic hair standard is that it also bars the very elderly fan from participating in fanzine activities, since the very old are often prone to losing their pubic hair. While it is true that some elderly fans are physically unable to be as fanactive as they were in their younger days, still many elderly fans ~~are retired and have nothing better to do than~~ are still quite capable of cranking out letters with the best of them, and the mere lack of the mark of a mammal should not deny them the enjoyment of fandom, or fandom the benefit of their ~~difficult~~ venerable wisdoms.

You should realise that the first space shuttle was rolled off the line to the tune of the Star Trek theme not simply because some bloke thought it would sound nice, but because the first space shuttle is being named the Enterprise, due to a lot of ST fans who wrote in requesting it be named so. NASA wanted to call it the Constitution, but Ford overruled them, not giving the ST fans as the official reason. As the name Enterprise has been used before for the naming of ships and subs in the USA, it's not exactly a travesty (suppose they had named it the Jupiter II?) but press accounts here made it pretty clear that the new name was ST related. The ST fad is pretty big here and Paramount is hoping it'll stay up long enough so that they can grind the movie out.

16 JANUARY 1977(SKEL)

Er, please can I have my fanzine back Jim??? Ta.

Actually, as the Enterprise was itself named after a famous US navy ship, then naming the space shuttle after it was in effect only naming it after the original source. If you think Space 1999 was bad, you should see 'Star Maidens'. Then again, nobody should see 'Star Maidens'. But more about walruses pricks in a letter from.....

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Denny Lien mentions his opinions of the walrus os penis; what most people don't realise is that Homo sapiens is one of the very few mammalian species to lack "penal bones". I'm sure the Walrus' extra bone is of the right size for them -- I would think male humans might be a bit miffed at missing out on this interesting extra bit of the skeleton (not to say it is functionally necessary, that's obviously not the case, but it would make dissecting male cadavers that much more interesting).

I don't think you realise how sexist the 'pubic hair exchange' Gil Gaier proposes and you elaborate on is. As you may have noticed, human females mature, on the average, 2-3 years earlier than males, which means at any particular age, between about 12 and 18, a female will likely be much further advanced in her pubic hair development than a male. Which means that the young female neo would be able to get many more fanzines than her male counterpart. Now I don't see anything particularly wrong with that, but there are some people who would get very upset about the reversed sexism of that system. I really don't think it will ever catch on.

While I agree with you that a fanzine reviewer can use different standards in their reviews than they use in the production of their own fanzine, can point out where other editors make mistakes, even when they are the same mistakes the reviewer has made (which only makes them easier to spot) I don't think you can completely separate the two persona, editor and reviewer. After all, the kind of fanzine you and I publish says a lot about

the kind of fanzine we enjoy, about our particular prejudices. And that's an important thing to know about a reviewer.

Why Garth Danielson continues to publish BOOWATT is not one of the most hotly debated items in fandom, but I have heard it discussed on occasion. However, anything that inspired something as brilliant as David Emerson's review in RUNE last year is not without some value. (On the other hand, I'm sure your words to Garth will be more likely to push him into making some changes in his fanzine than what David had to say about it -- which brings up the whole question of "What are fanzine reviews for?" Fortunately I don't have the space to go into that question at length.) On the other hand, I do have space to talk about what fanzines are for -- certainly there are as many different answers to that question as there are fan editors, and all of them are equally valid, but the one answer I cannot accept is "To make money". I figure anyone who starts publishing without realising they are going to 'lose' a good deal of money in the process is just deluding themselves. I can certainly understand Rob Jackson's desire to not lose quite so much money; certainly we appreciate getting back some of the money we put into STARLING in subscriptions and sales at conventions, but I usually tell myself that the main reason we sell STARLING at all is to give people who haven't figured out just what 'the usual' ways of getting a fanzine are all about a chance to see our fanzine. The moral of that is -- never spend more on your fanzine than you can afford to lose.

18 JANUARY 1977(SKEL)

I don't think you've quite grasped all the ramifications of the 'pubic standard' or else you wouldn't have used the term "reversed sexism". What other system would ensure that the majority of all young neos were female, thus correcting the sexual imbalance current within fandom and giving us dirty-old-fen a much better chance of getting some of all this spare tail that's going around. Gil done knowed what he was doon alright, yassuh! Mind you, I'm not sure we deserve more, not after seeing that issue of MAYFAIR Gerald brought with him last time, in which one of the featured nudies was a girl spotted at a trekky-con in Leeds. A true SF fan obviously, from all the gumph in the write

ups that always accompany such pictorial features (so I'm told, you understand) about Bradbury and Vonnegut but it was equally obvious from some of her remarks that she hadn't been to many cons before. "It's not often a total stranger comes up to you and tells you you've got a great body." Obviously a neo. Equally obviously never met Glicksohn or Tucker. Below contempt.....and the girl. Speaking of reasons for pubbing one's ish.....

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It's an odd feeling to find one's self discussed in the third person, but when I opened up SFD 13 that's exactly what I found: you and Bill Breiding involved in a discussion, of sorts, of fanzine reviewing in which KNIGHTS, and Bill's review of KNIGHTS 13, plays a rather large role. I agree with your assessment that the fanzine reviewer should divorce himself from whatever roles he may play as a fanzine editor. And I agree with that assessment for a special reason: I knew about Bill's review about six months before it ever saw print, and the review either wasn't as knock-down-kick-around-bloody-destructive as the picture he painted of it was, or before the review saw print Bill changed it, and toned it down. If he changed it, for whatever his reasons (to save my feelings, perhaps?), then, as a reviewer, he had copped out.

But that, actually, is not what I'm here to discuss. (Oh, you knew this was coming, huh?) Here you are commenting on issues 13 & 14 of my fanzine, which my records say I never sent you (though you may have seen them elsewhere) and, up to a point, making some very real and very obvious statements. But on issues you've never received?

If you're basing your judgements of KNIGHTS on issues 15 & 16, which I have sent you, then, I should think, your view of KNIGHTS should be different. But maybe not.

I think however that what I should say is this: My statement about wanting to win a Hugo was blown up out of all proportion. Very few people read that statement in context when it was printed in issue 13. The statement was this: "I want to win

a Hugo. Too many people stopped reading with that sentence. They all missed the sentence that immediately followed it. The one that reads: "But, more importantly than that, I want to produce the best fanzine I know how." I'll never understand why the only person who read that second sentence and realized what it was saying was Mike Glicksohn. The most obvious reason that few people understood what I was saying could be that I failed in my effort to communicate my reason for publishing.

and I've been explaining them, or trying to, in every issue of KNIGHTS since that time. Some people still don't understand.

I think perhaps that I've said more on this subject than I had planned to. Let me just wrap it up with this: I do not think KNIGHTS is worthy of a Hugo. ((agreed)) I do know that KNIGHTS is one hell of a lot better fanzine now than it was two years ago. ((agreed)) I would like, someday, to publish a fanzine that was the best of its type. I can't do that now; but I can publish the best fanzine I know how to produce. And I am.

Anyhow, on to more important things: sucking. I cannot verify this with any authorities, of course, but here is my version of how the term "it sucks" came to be a derogatory one.

Although I can't be sure, I would assume that male heterosexuals were the first to use "it sucks/he sucks/etc" as a derogatory term in reference to male homosexuals. The basic red-neck types, who are all caught up in the idea of masculinity, look down on queers (as they are so quaintly called). One of the ways in which one man can give sexual satisfaction to another man is by giving him a blow job. Obviously a red-neck super-macho jock would want nothing to do with another man, and would not want sexual satisfaction from another man. Therefore, if a man sucks, he must be a queer. Since our macho man isn't, and since he looks down on queers, he would associate the term "it sucks/he sucks/etc" with degradation. And from there the term and the usage has crept into the rest of society. Sound logical, and at least plausible? Maybe.

Well, the rest of SFD 13 was interesting and pleasant reading as well, as are most of them. However, there usually

isn't much I can add (and, as you notice, I usually don't add anything).

OKAY, OKAY, MEA FUCKING CULPA

Yeah, I have noticed that it's only when I shit on people that they get around to writing me. First Roberts, then Jackson and then you. Maybe the Charles Platt philosophy of being objectionable to elicit response (as revealed by Pete Weston in MAYA 12/13) has something going for it at that.

I did read your original remarks (copies courtesy of Terry Jeeves, back in the days he used to let me have his surplus zin zines for the cost of the postage....before the mercenary tard started putting them up for bids) but I was guilty of calling you a liar in the privacy of my own mind. I figured if the first thing you said was that you wanted to win a Hugo then that was the prime consideration and that the disclaimer was merely so that you could live with yourself. I figured that if your disclaimer really had been more important to you then it would have gone down first. This seemed to be born out by the copies of KNIGHTS I got from Terry....almost Hugo-worthy material with even the text reproduced by electrostencil, but badly. Even before your remarks, from the previous issue, I'd formed the opinion that you were pot-hunting. Then you went and admitted it. Is it any wonder I didn't pay much attention to the following sentence.

Just a week after typing up that piece last issue I got the copy of KNIGHTS in which you issued your disclaimer. Careful thought however lead me to the conclusion that it in no way changed what I'd typed. KNIGHTS could only be judged (by Bill

'JUMPING BEANS CRUELTY CASE'-Amsterdam: The Dutch RSPCA is to seek legal protection for the Mexican jumping bean. The secret of the bean is the little insect inside it which, when the bean is exposed to light and warmth, starts jumping about in an effort to roll the bean into the shade. The RSPCA is to take Holland's main Mexican bean importer to court "to bring a legal

Sunday Express - 16/1/77.

or anyone else) on what you appeared to have stated as your aims at the time of its judging, not what you later stated them to be. My mistake was in putting my own interpretation of your motives in front of your statement as to what your motives were. (aside: your references to "he sucks/it sucks/etc" took me back to elementary French lessons at school when we had to decline certain verbs: je suis/tu est/il est/nous sommes/ vous ettes/ ils est...I can see three points where I think I might have mis-remembered that ...etc. I have visions of standing up in class and declining the verb 'to suck'). Speaking, as I was, about interpreting someones motives.....I recently recieved....

...in which Chris Priest reviews Dave Kyle's 'A Pictorial History Of Science Fiction'. In this book Dave speaks of Brian Aldiss with something less than total reverence. I hold the impression, on the other hand, that Chris would sleep with Brian's turds under his pillow if he but could. Accordingly I am not surprised that Chris should react so violently against Dave's book.

..33..

stances. My own complaint is that it is very much a history of 'who' and 'when', the 'what' being an obligatory plot summary tagged on out of a sense of form. What about the important themes and the important novels and stories? The 'pictorials' should have brought these to the fore, thus providing a better history of the written SF rather than the SF artwork. However, that would have been my book, not Dave's.

My other chief complaint though was of the-book-as-she-was-written. He started writing it on the defensive. He, as everybody before him also did, felt the need to go back into pre-history in order to show that SF was not bastard twentieth century hybrid by technology out of pimply-faced adolescents. Accordingly we had to go back to "...bleeding Plato and Homer and Lucian, and go on to Cyrano de Bergerac and Bishop Godwin, and bleeding Mary Shelley....." Chapter after chapter dealing with a relatively small amount of SF. B*O*R*I*N*G. Of course they are historically important and ought to be, must be mentioned, but not at such interminable length. The history of SF is a history of what-was-written, and what-was-written was written mainly after the inception of the speciality magazines. This is where the bulk of the SF is and this is where the bulk of any 'history' book should be. Although the root cause underlying SF is not bounded, SF itself is basically a twentieth century phenomenon. But what do we find? Out of 170 pages Dave has already used up about 75 of them getting to 1930. This is all out of balance with the field itself. The history of SF is recent history, very recent history. Dave has forgotten that in history 'yesterday' is just as important as any particular day 50-100-150 years ago. He seems to have made the false assumption that May 1st 1881 is intrinsically more historic than May 1st 1968.

My only other point of contention with the book is again purely personal. Dave's choice of pictorials seems highly idiosyncratic. Freas has so many Hugos that his mantelpiece collapses under the weight every six weeks or so. In this book his illos appear only six times in minor capacities totalling less than 50 square inches. Finlay, in comparison, appears much better favoured with getting on for 400 square inches and the earlier artists, whose work is in most cases best described as fucking awful get vastly more still. This is what you get, I

presume, by dwelling at such length on 'primitive' SF - you have to use 'primitive' pictorials to illustrate it.

I don't think the book succeeds at all well in what it ostensibly sets out to do, but I found it well worthwhile for what it did for me - gave me a look at another viewpoint. It showed me Dave Kyle's view of the history of SF. The view of another generation of fan and yet above all, a personal view of someone who loves SF.

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Pauline's account of the cat and box raised a reminiscent smile here. You remember Jean-Paul? Well, at one time I had a shoebox which I left on the washing machine by the radiator. When I came back, he had tried to get into it.- Now Jean-Paul was not what you would call a fat cat but rather longish (he was a half-Siamese tabby). Anyway, he had squashed himself into the shoebox, whose sides were bulging like mud, with his tail hanging down the side, and was very cosily sleeping there with his paws stuck out. What a ludicrous sight! The stupid thing was that right next door to him was a large envelope box which he had already appropriated for himself to sleep in. He tended to sleep in the bigger box in the daytime and scrunch up at night in the shoebox (whose sides got bulgier and bulgier, but never burst), so I never had the heart to deprive him of either. Well, he had so little - a couple of feeding bowls, his own tin-opener, a few cello tape rings which he loved to chase, and which really upset me when I kept finding them hidden in various places after he died.

Dave Piper is correct; from my own observations I've noticed that Americans do tend to be bigger round the hips. This may be because they tend to drive everywhere (even the postboxes are often placed facing into the road so that you can post letters without even unbuckling your safety belt) and in fact, although a size 12 pair of shorts will fit me OK, the rear part is far too big. But generally Americans seem to be fatter than English people anyhow - maybe it's all that steak they eat!

Someone once said that I was rather like their idea of

Podkayne of Mars, and why not go to a fancy dress as her? Well, I'm not my idea of Poddy, but on the other hand - there are so few really distinctive female characters in SF and fantasy which are recognizable without explanation. I mean, poor old C'mell has been done to death, so to speak, and Robin from Stars My Destination, and so on. Of course there are characters from TV and films - I bet a load of runners and things turn up next year.

I always had a sneaking fondness for 'Man About The House', probably because of the incredible metamorphosis of Richard O'Sullivan, who played the man, from his nasty-man role in the 'Doctor' series....which I didn't like overmuch, probably because I remember the classic film of the book yonks back.

OUT OF STEP AGAIN SHEL?

We went to the pictures last week, we did. Saw Logan's Run we did. Fucking enjoyed it, we did. Odd this, as I have yet to see a half-way favourable review of this film in either the fan or mundane press. (Cas wasn't particularly impressed with 'Box' and both of us thought the 'ray' guns were silly - the ray guns in 'The Invaders' were much better - but these were minor quibbles). I am beginning to wonder if SF fans are simply expecting too much from an SF film. We are expecting them all to be downright perfect. They make loads of films each year. I don't think any of them are ever perfect but it doesn't stop some of them from being good films. In fact, I think SF comes out much better than average, although I am a poor authority on this subject having not seen most of the SF films of recent years. I somehow never caught 'Westworld' when it came round and I missed 'Planet Of The Apes' and 'The Illustrated Man'. I started to watch 'Fahrenheit 451' on TV but switched off, finding it just as boring as the novel, that is to say, slightly more boring than Bradbury's other novels. However, of the recently made SF films I have seen it seems to me that whenever the moviemakers spend a fair amount of money on an SF film and take it seriously the result is always a creditable SF film, even if that film does not always exactly mirror the book. I am thinking in particular of '2001', 'Soylent Green', 'A Clockwork Orange', 'The Omega Man' and yes, 'Logan's Run'. (I also missed Zardoz and The Man Who Fell To Earth). I don't think we do too badly at all.

Richard O'Sullivan has re-surfaced in 'Robin's Nest' with Tessa Wyatt and Tony Britton. This is funny, so far at least, and is a perfect blend of character and situation types of humour.

WEEPINGS AND WAILINGS AND GNASHING OF TYPEWRITER KEYS

We can't make FANCON 2. Hopefully though SFD 14 will, as Gerald Lawrence has offered to deliver some copies there if we can get it done in time. This means I only have a few more pages and lots of letters I'd hoped to use, so the letters will start getting much 'tighter' from here on in. This is a pity because some of these letters have sat around quite some time waiting to be noticed and I've already decided that some of them are beginning to show their age which means that any letters which don't get at least excerpted here are going into the bin. Please don't think they weren't appreciated but it is time for the two-yearly clearout as Cas is beginning to ask if we still have a sideboard in the ~~the~~ dining room. I also discovered, when I went with my £8.50 to buy the 2 reams of paper (foolscap) and box of stencils(50) needed to finish this issue...that stencils have gone up about 30% since last issue. Bloody Hell!!! From £3.50 to £4.70 a box. The paper had also gone up from £2.40 to £3.00 per ream. I walked out with my £8.50 still in my wallet. I went elsewhere and bought just enough stencils to finish this issue. I also bought a couple of reams of paper at £2.25 each. I think he's been doing me on the paper for years, although I admit it was actual Roneo paper he supplied which is dearer. Let's hope I can find some cheaper stencils somewhere too....

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Correction anent the quote: "The male method of birth control is called vasectomy", or something like that. A simpler method is reputed to have been offered by a sharp gentleman advertising in the newspapers. His advert read:-

INFALLIBLE, AND CHEAP METHOD OF BIRTH CONTROL. 100% safe. Send £1 for details.

People who wrote got back a small pillbox which, when opened by the gleeful recipients planning a hectic spring-bashing

session revealed a slip of paper with the comment "Don't". Still, it's easier than vasectomy.

FOR SALE - GOING CHEAP

Then again, who wants a mimeo that thinks it's a budgie? If you do contact me. It is an electric Roneo complete with cabinet and I think the asking price is either £30 or £35. The model is either a 750 or a 795. First come ~~biggest idiot~~ first served.

COMING NEXT ISSUE - ANOTHER DELAY

This issue is two months late because of going onto its new schedule. SED 15 will be a further month late, thus putting me back where I started from, but having missed one issue. To offset this I am going to publish a special 'semi-genzine' issue of TZTHNN. I have quite a bit of material for this on hand.... and will have even more if my accredited agent Dave Rowe remembers to organise me that FAANCON 2 report (How goes it Dave?). There will be a parody by Jan Jansen which was originally scheduled for JOY before that fnz folded (thanks Joan, and also ta for the production materials without which this issue wouldn't). I have also gotten pissed off with the total lack of progress on the 'Tales Of The Sea-Badger Mythos' and so have decided to steal the whole thing for just myself. This too will be in TZTHNN 2. You will recieve TZTHNN2 if you responded to TZTHNN numero uno, or if you specifically request it in your LoC on this issue. Otherwise.....HAH! I laugh at you.

Cas has run this issue off in its entirety.....and she is insufferably chuffed with her little self. Didn't she do well?

That bit overleaf about junking of all unprinted letters has gone by the board because I've just found another large envelope with some more recent LoCs. These are reprieved. Cas is right, I'm going to have to sort this mess of junk out..... real soon now.

No, you haven't lost the back cover. This is it. 3/2/77.

How's The Con Going, Mike?