Solstice IV

Contents

EDITOR'S NOTES:

These are really short notes! The most handed around issue is finished! I recently received it and worked on it for about 5 weeks. There are some last minute additions to this issue and I would like to thank all contributors for their works. Now that my finger tips need to be soaked, I shall hand over the work for printing. By the way, this is on diskette and there is no leak in the roof!

CREDITS: Editor: Kathryn Klein Press Gang: Tony Parker (and anyone else that helps, thank you in advance!)

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Lords of Creations

In our new age we seek the great transformations.
the lilliputian fractured crystal shrouded in reflecting
waves of
complex light.
we the TOWER built as lords of creations.

The Cosmic Flaw in expecting the exalted VILLIANELLE
with worldly unraveling strings of
chaos
that began
this flight.
In our new age we seek the great transformations.

The Universes and atoms collide in endless vibrations
primordial mud reacts into simple
yet elaborate
organic plight . . .
we the TOWER built as lords of creations.

The Warm sea lifts its veil of gastrations
and the serpentine sailors journey of only
one's
delight.
In our new age we seek the great transformations.

The Traditions of the descendents dais cra cked
under
Babel's collaborations.
bright seas clouded by humbling minds, politics, and trite.
we the TOWER built as lords of creations.

The Environment and heredity piercing with rigorous sight.
finally the arrival that reveals feign death
a renaissance of enlightened
Imaginations . . .
In our new age YOU created the self-important transformations.
We need NO tower built since we are The LORDS OF CREATIONS

- Richard Alan Klein

(This piece was placed in the final competition in a contest sponcered by Sparrowgrass Poetry Forum and is published in the Spring 1990 issue of Poetic Voices of America.)

A Reporter's Story

by Carol Porter

O.K. Where are they?

Things are thrown off tables, bookcases. A pile of paper on both the kitchen table and the table in the main room. Useless paper - for sale - condominium on Veta, buy now, price will go up soon. See the beauty of Veta's beaches. These flyers have a beautiful, bikini-clad girl on the cover - earth-type or otherwise (hands or tentacles, as long as she's beautiful). She didn't appeal to me. I'm a woman, you see.

Ah, found them - miniature tape recorder and small note pad. Let's go - interview at 10 a.m.

I find my car out in the lot after a long search through rows and rows of cars. Apartment living at its finest. After trying to put my key in two cars that were like mine, one actually opened, revealing a naked couple wrestling with each other on the front sear. I closed the door rather hurriedly.

At last I find the car and am on my way to my appointment with Lt. Silver of the Earth army who keeps watch on Veta, Mino, and Yashi forces on their various planets.

He has at last consented to see me after constant calls to his office. I am very nervous. I don't usually do this kind of story. Usually I do stories with cute kids and local events like the Earth-Vegan fair.

These are easy stories. I don't have to fight anyone, be afraid of law suits or of angry people who think I've misquoted them. I was sued by a Yashi ambassador to Earth for misquoting him, (supposedly) or so he thought, on his recent activities after coming to Earth. He said he came to Earth solely for a life of leisure with some Earth females. Well, what did he expect; I printed it.

Then I played back all the tapes of my interviews with him and they were all blank. When another reporter went to talk to his wife, he found the same phenomenon. All his tapes were erased. He told the court who threw the case out of court because the ambassador had a tape-erasing device in his apartment.

Since that incident, I have installed a device in my recorder that beeps if there are any such devices in the room. I've been doing this for two years and an still nervous about that sort of thing. As they say, fool me only once.

How did I get this story? Well, I asked for it. Nervously.

I was even more shocked when the editor said yes.

I asked him as a joke since the other reporters on the paper, THE EARTH NEWS, were doing the same serious stories and I wanted to get included in the action.

Foolish me.

I drove along the crowded highway at 100 kilos, my eyes looking for kids and stray cycles in the fourth lane. I didn't want to hit anyone. There was a story last week that

made me sick about a kid on a cycle that cut across the lane of traffic and there wasn't anything for the road crew to clean because they couldn't find anything.

A blue car swept across the lane of traffic, lights flashing to get off on Trafalfar Road. The person behind the wheel gave me a quick wave as he got off; I waved back. People are known to be grumpy first thing in the morning. They don't wave very often.

I nursed the cup of coffee that was beside me in the plastic attachable wheel tray. Coffee and donuts. Staples of modern culture for hundreds of years. How long have people been drinking coffee and eating donuts for breakfast? The same place had been in business and now had a monopoly - Dunkin Donuts.

I pulled into the lot of cars at the gate, took a number from a waiting compu-teller, got on the long walkway towards the building. A tour guide was exiting from the building as I neared the entrance, showing multi-raced and multi-planeted students.

"And now students, we'll go to the library."

The library. That's the first place I had gone to research my latest subject. The books there gave a brief background - honor in battle in protecting earth from invasion, graduated with the highest marks from inter-planetary college, the whole treatment.

And here I was, fledgling reporter going after the big story. I think I am going to be sick. I wish I were anywhere, except in his office.

The receptionist regarded me with what I hoped was sympathy. She smiled at me and said, "Name, please?"

Before I could tell her anything, the door behind her opened and a tall, blond-haired fellow with blue eyes came out, looking like he could easily charm any female so inclined.

Damn! Nobody said he was supposed to be good-looking. That made things worse.

I stepped forward, pushing hair back with one hand, clutching my pad in the other.

I put out my hand and shook his.

He smiled at me, ushering me into his office and closed the door.

I sat down in a chair beside the desk and he sat down on top of it, looking at me. He winked.

"Reporter from the EARTH NEWS," I told him. This was supposed to be relayed outside his office in front of the receptionist, make it sound official.

"You shouldn't do that," I said. "I could be anyone. I mean, I could be someone hired to kill you."

"How do you know I'm not going to kill you?" he asked.

"I don't think you would," I said doubtfully.

"Well, I'll prove you wrong!" he smiled at me, winking at my obvious discomfort and opened the top drawer of his desk to reveal a laser gun.

"I was just issued this and I'm dying to try it out and

what better subject than a reporter."

Here I sat, completely defenseless and scared witless. The whole situation was ridiculous. Wake up, dummy, this must be a dream.

I threw myself on the floor, praying the recorder wouldn't shatter, aimed my pad at his arm. The gun's beam scorched the pad and it fell to the floor beside me. Terrific. I didn't even have the good fortune to knock it from his hand. But at least he was rubbing his arm and wincing.

I wrapped my arm around the recorder and rolled to a position in front of his desk.

I cursed the government under my breath for not issuing reporters guns as well as the military.

I crouched alongside the desk, feeling the cold metal, taking part of the shock away from me.

I forced myself to take the last lung, knowing it would be useless. He would get me before I could take the weapon from him.

He shot the gun and I laid on the floor, clutching my chest, stupidly trying to stop the blood from flowing on the rug. I would stain the beautiful green rug, I thought. I looked at him, blinking.

"I'm tired of you reporters poking into my life," he stated vehemently.

The recorder, beside me, protected by the desk, emitted a muffled squeal.

A voice spoke, "I got all this down and you're going to be arrested for murder."

I saw him kneel beside the recorder, ready to fire. The recorder's play button activated and it sprayed him with what I knew was a lethal gas.

He dropped to the floor, coughing, breathing his last.

I smiled.

The recorder rewound to the beginning of the conversation.

The voice asked me, "Are you badly hurt?"

I groaned. "Yes. You know what to do."

I had programed it to do anything. The recorder activated its play button. The figure on the floor vanished and a new one was constructed in a standing position where it had been lying. Slowly from feet to head, the recorder worked. At first, the form wavered then it solidified.

I picked up the recorder and with a cheery wave to the fallen man left the room.

Later at the paper, I talked to Marty, my editor.

"Marty, that's the last story I do with the military."

"Oh, come on," he said, stricken. "It's a great story. It'll sell millions of papers."

"But, Marty ..."

After all, one of these days someone would be too quick and blow that tape recorder to pieces. Then where would I be?

"Next week, I want you to talk to ..."

"Never mind," I snapped. "It'd better not be another person in the military."

"No, it's not. Really. It is an interview with the head of the legislature."

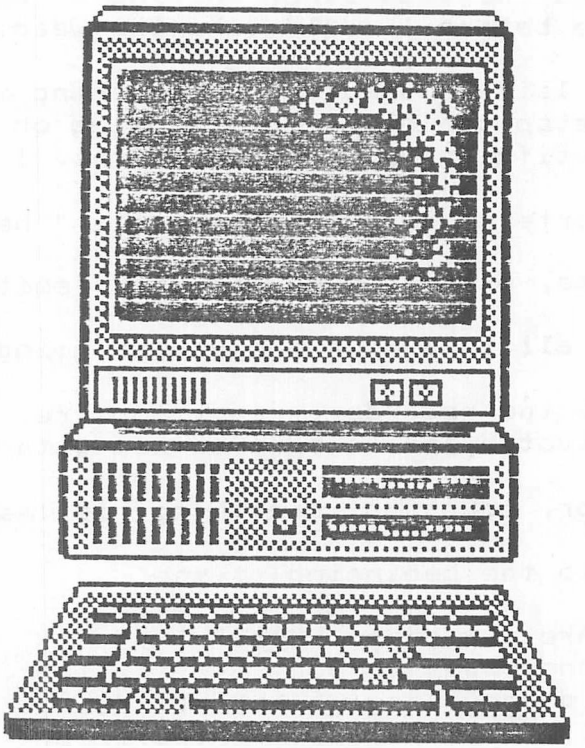
I moaned. "He'd better not pull anything on me."

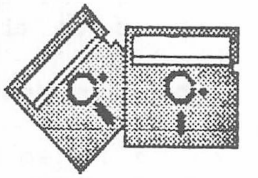
I prepared to leave.

"Oh, Lisa," he called.

I turned.

"Can I have the story typed by tomorrow?"





The Riddle of the Inca's

The polarized light from the moon glinted off the space ship that settled on top of Matchu Pechu, the stone city of the Inca's in the Andian Mountains of Peru. An Indian maiden along with her tribe gave homage to the godlike appearance of the captain who fell in love with the maiden. They honeymooned on a bed of shredded gold. Obtained from the mother lode identified by the captain.

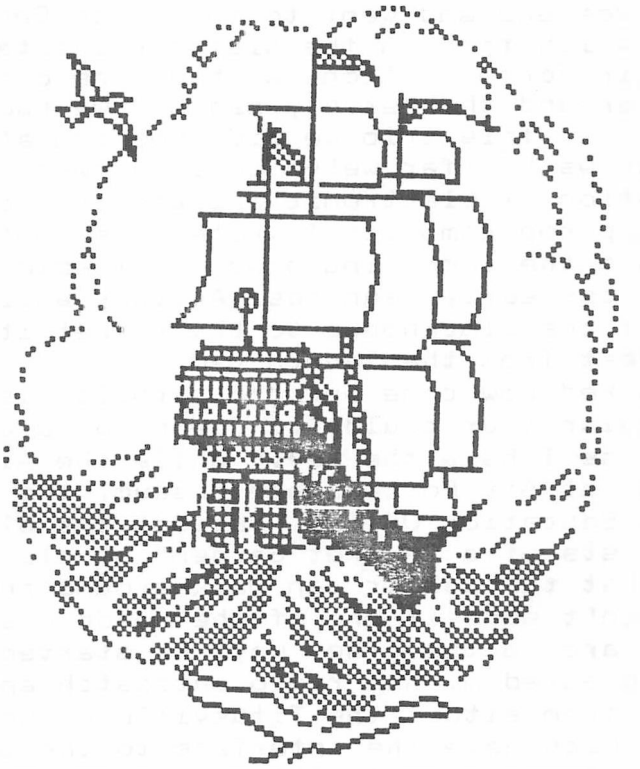
They were blessed with a daughter and grandson who affected along with the tribe the saucer shaped hats that are traditional ware of those Indians till this day.

And the museum in Lima has many artifacts of armour perhaps produced from the same mother lode.

Riddle: What was the source of energy?

Submitted by Maggie Suominen

Answer on page 34.



THE TRAVELLING FETE SPACE CENTER TOUR,

OR

"THE REASON I JOINED THE CONVENTION"

by Richard Cheshire

The "Educators" bus (that's what it says on the roll-sign) is loading up for the trip to the Kennedy Space Center. Joe Siclari is busy herding the fen (the plural form of "fan" in the Science Fiction community) onto the bus, as our guide, convention Guest of Honor Joe Green, a technical writer with NASA as well as a Science Fiction author, takes his position as tour guide of the main scheduled event of the "Travelling Fete" Science Fiction Convention.

The bus pulls out of the parking lot of the Merritt Island Holiday Inn and heads down Route 520 for Route A1A and in through Gate 1 at the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. First stop, the Mercury launch complex.

When I first moved to Titusville a year ago, I used my first free weekend and went to the Space Center. I took the Blue Tour, which took in the historical sites of the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. We had gone out to Complex 5/6 and walked around the Mercury pad but we had not gone into the blockhouse. This trip we did! Looking at the old equipment shows how far we've come in twenty years of miniaturization of electronic and computer equipment. Why the Model-100 lap-top computer I wrote these notes on war more powerful than the computing power available in the block house for those early launches. Another amazing thing was the closeness of the blockhouse to the rocket itself. It was only about 500 feet from the launch pad.

When asked how come our group could visit the blockhouse and the regular tour couldn't, Joe held up a small object and said, "Because I have the key." While the Air Force controls the exhibits at Air Force Space Museum, the building belongs to the NASA Education Office. Besides the blockhouse, the museum consists of a "Rocket Garden" of old missiles and equipment that the public can walk around and view.

Joe wasn't sure if one of the roads was open and we'd be miles going around the other way. He started looking for a phone. I suggested my ham radio autopatch and discovered I was too far from either the Titusville or Cocoa Beach repeaters, which have the interface to the telephone network. Fortunately, I was able to raise someone on the Space Port Radio Club repeater and he placed the call checking on the road. The report came back that all roads were open and we were well on our way again.

We passed the Cape Canaveral lighthouse, which is more than a hundred years old and still in active service. Like most anything at the space center that's more than 10 feet off the ground, it has sprouted radio antennas.

A stop at the Mercury Seven memorial was mostly to read

historic plaques and photograph the stainless steel structure with a "7" in a symbol for Mercury. I *know* that I can buy a better picture in the gift shop but I took one anyway. After all, you don't often get onto a secure military installation for such trivial pursuits as sightseeing.

Joe was able to get us ONTO pad 39A (NASA goes out of its way for educators, you know). The shuttle is currently sitting on pad 39B. We could stand there and look at the Rotating Service Structure, as Joe explained how payloads are lifted into storage areas on the Service Structure and after the orbiter is delivered to the pad by the crawler on the Mobile Launch Platform, the service structure is rotated around, the cargo bay doors are opened and the payloads are loaded. Major payloads, such as Spacelab and the Long Duratio Exposure Facility which takes up a major portion of the cargo bay, are loaded into the orbiter before the space ship is taken to the VAB (Vehicle Assembly Building) for stacking.

While driving back to the VAB and the Launch Control Center, we passed Pad B. In fact, in order to be entirely safe, our driver had to go v-e-r-y s-l-o-w-l-y past the pad to be sure there was no possibility of our having a traffic accident near the pad. Fortunately for the photographers on the bus, there actually *was* some traffic on the roads and we had to wait for it to pass so we wouldn't obstruct traffic. And so some good closeup shots of Discovery on the pad were available from the bus window. With the Rotating Service Structure covering the orbiter and protecting it (and of course, the fragile heat protecting tiles) from the elements there wasn't much to photograph, but the External Tank and Solid Rocket Boosters were still visible.

We didn't have enough tour escorts for our group to allow us to visit the VAB, but we did stop at the Launch Control Center. It was about 3:30 on a Friday afternoon and it looked like the weekend was about to begin; people were leaving in droves. You have to realize that many people start work out here at 7 or 7:30 AM.

After the VAB, we were allowed to crawl around and under the Crawler, but we could not leave the ground. That is, we could not climb the ladders onto the crawler. The caterpillar tread alone was nearly as tall as our tour bus!

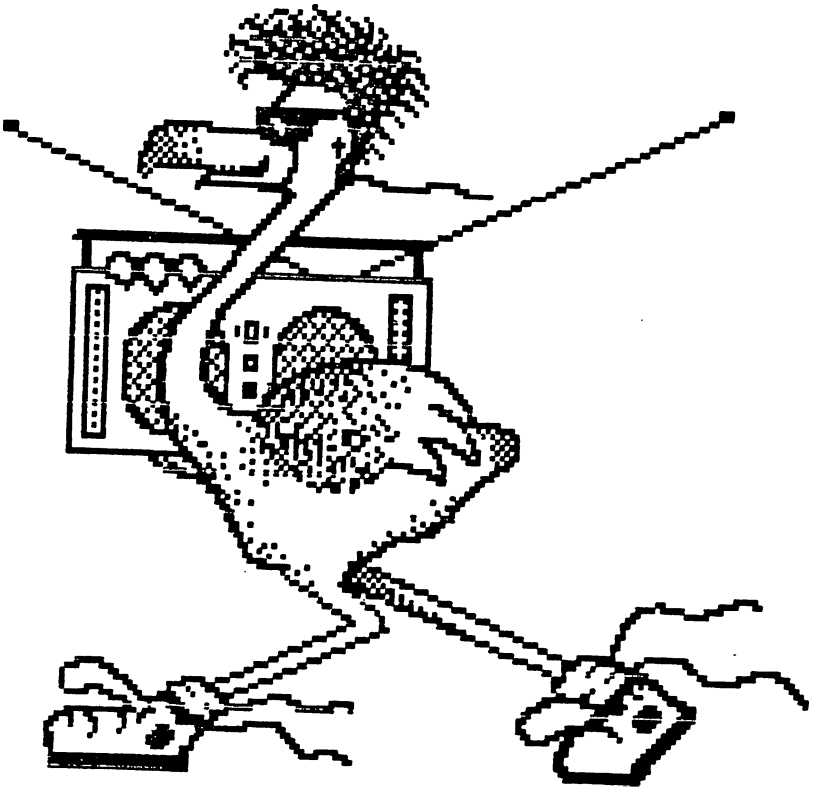
The bus then drove *under* the mobile launch structure. Of course, this is what the crawler does. It then picks up the launch structure and rolls it into the VAB. The spaceship is then "stacked" on the mobile launch structure. The entire launch structure and Space Transportation System is carried to the launch pad on the back of the crawler. The Mobile Launch Platform is then left at the launch pad until after its precious cargo leaves the pad under its own power, just under 7 million pounds of thrust at launch.

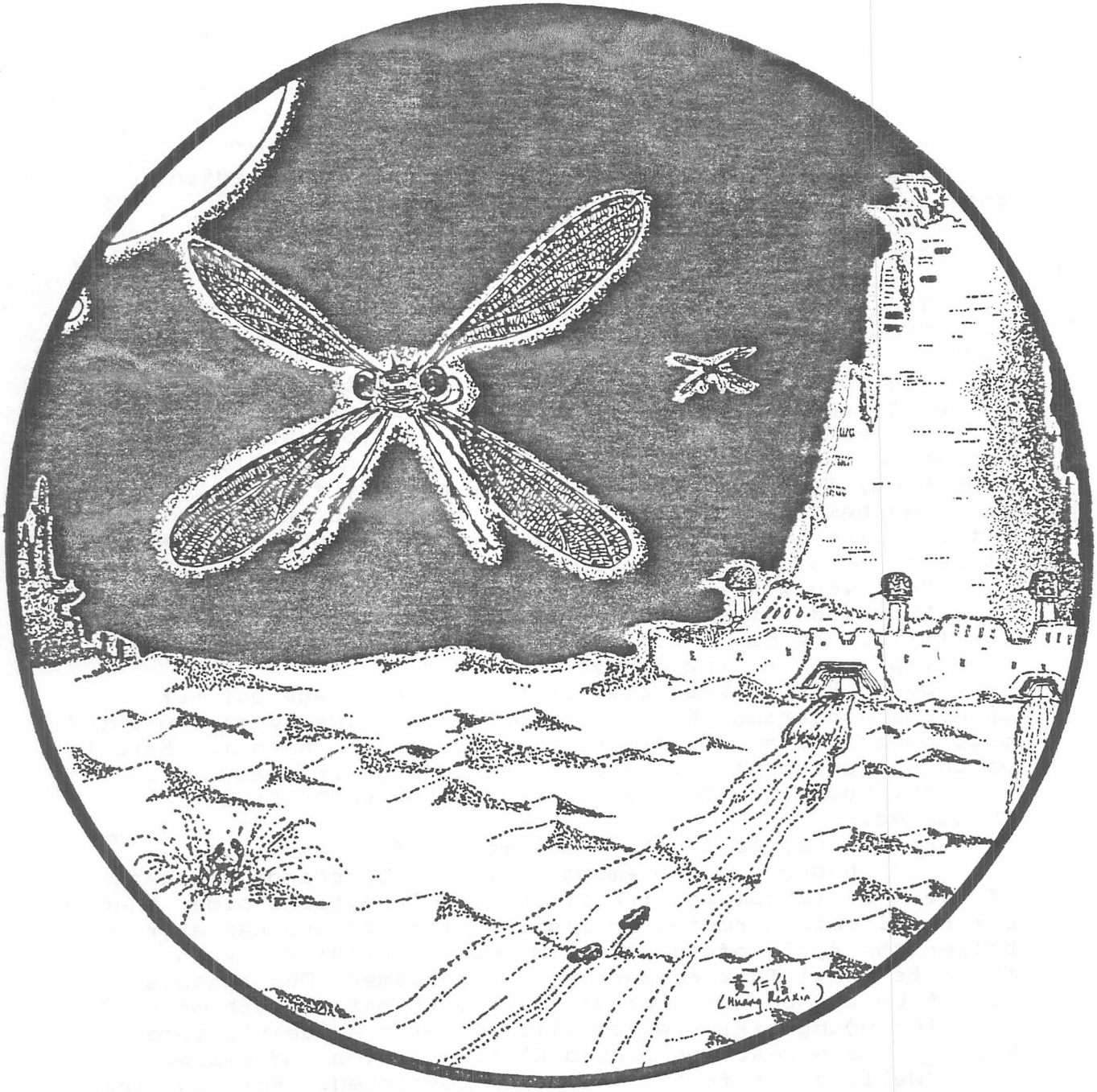
The bus then took us to the old Flight Crew Training Building. An actual Apollo Command and Service Module and a real Lunar Lander are on exhibit here and are part of the regular tour. The Apollo spacecraft was the backup for the Apollo/Soyuz mission and the Lunar Module was a backup for

Apollo 17. The tour then moved into the re-creation of the Apollo Firing Room. One of the regular tour groups came in behind us and we were ready to take in the next show with them.

In this room, the time is always 9:32 AM, the date is always July 16, 1969, and the countdown clock starts off at T Minus 3 minutes, 15 seconds and holding. The multi-media show lights up the display consoles and shows the status of the Saturn V before it launches. It shows the sequence of fuel pressurization in the final moments of the countdown, as the projectors switch in film from different parts of the launch pad and launch control Saturn V rocket, building up thrust since the engines were started at T-8 seconds, slowly begins to rise off the pad taking a full 11 seconds to clear the top of the launch tower. It's really worth the show.

After leaving the training facility, the 'ol bus headed back on NASA Blvd to Route 3, took a left, and headed back to the hotel. It was a combination of the Red Tour, and the Blue Tour (both available to the public, but combined is referred to "The Full-Bore Tour"), with a couple of "minor additions" that the public just couldn't get.




黄仁信
(Huang Renxin)

Metamorphosis

by Kathryn Klein

"Good day, Your Majesty."

The Queen turned abruptly as the cheerful greeting interrupted her concentration.

"Good morning, Ezra," she quietly replied.

"How is the King?" Ezra asked.

"Growing old, fat, and even lazier than ever."

The harsh remark bothered the hand maid.

"Your Majesty," she slowly began, "What troubles you so?"

The Queen stopped her slow walk down the hallway as she turned to address the young girl next to her.

"Sweet Ezra," the Queen whispered, "you cannot see what happens around here because of your station in life. Mornam, your King, is but a drone ... and even lazy for one of his kind. He has no function, anymore. I am glad our eldest is nothing like his father. The best worker we ever had. *Sigh* It is not easy being a Queen."

"Are you worried about the challenge?" Ezra shyly asked.

"Worried?" the Queen pondered. "No. It is all part of the title. One day I will loose and another will be queen. I do not plan on ruling forever, child."

Queen Elsban was still in her prime by age but her speech and carriage had suggested a much older woman. Granted most queens never made it to old age, it was hard for Ezra to watch her queen slowly deteriorate before her eyes.

"My Queen, could the roamers bother you?" Ezra whispered.

Elsban paused to think a moment before answering.

"Of change ... One among us who would change thousands of years of custom and tradition? ... Traditions older than our civilization rooted in instinct that no one has ever broken the cycle of survival? My sweet child! Put such thoughts away! This roamer is only a roamer. Our customs cannot be changed by a word! It is inherent in each of us!"

The young girl cowered slightly at the queen's tone. Seeing Ezra's reaction caused Elsban to stop and smile.

"Well, don't fret!" the queen continued. "For now, come with me. I have a crown to defend!"

Elsban removed the hood of her cloak she had been wearing and revealed the crown which rested on her head near her antennas. The smooth short black hairs, what few there were as was with these people, added a radiance to her presence. Her eyes, also black, each had many lenses and could see her world as if through a kaleidoscope. The king,

at one time, had called her his honeybee and claimed to have been stung by her beauty. She truly loved her consort but now as the two passed by his chamber to see their king on his thrown snoring with a jar of honey delicately balanced on his lap, she wondered if change like Ezra spoke of would be welcome, indeed.

AN INSECT'S COCOON

Dontone removed his helmet for a moment and slowly sat down as he stared at it.

"What a wonderful invention!" he thought to himself.

Only a short time ago it saved his life from the sharp debris that had almost struck his head. In the last week, Dontone felt the loss of enthusiasm when it came to survival. He was young still and had learned just how hard this "game" was. The sun sank slowly behind the distant mountains as the thin atmosphere provided a beautiful lining of clouds to reflect the orange rays. It's partner, a green star had already set some time earlier.

The night spider-flower began to blossom at his feet. Dontone quietly watched the plant change through its phases as it appeared on the end of the web-vine from a bud and opened its pedals through a series of color changes, stopping on a dark brownish red hue; its eight thin pedals resting on the web. This beautiful flower would bloom the whole night then wilts into a knot joining a new section of the vine. This unique metamorphosis was part of the order of life on Dontone's world. He thought how sad it is that such things were rarely appreciated. Dontone was a soldier and he was told there was no time to enjoy simple things. His mother accepted her duties without question. His father usually did only two things; eat and sleep. Neither parent had ever appreciated simplicity that he ever had seen.

Dontone came out of his thoughts and looked about his terrain. This was not a good time to be daydreaming. It now was night: the most dangerous time to be out in the wilderness alone. He could only hope one of the land rovers or perhaps some worker riding the giant insectians might see him. Dontone sighed. Too far away to see the fortress with their weapons gleaming in the starlight.

There was a sound coming from the other side of the dune Dontone was leaning against. He remained as still as possible till the noise subsided. With a sigh of relief, he climbed the dune and looked to see if all was clear. Satisfied, Dontone returned and sat down again.

That was lucky, he thought to himself. Those sand crabs

could eat a land rover as a snack!

Time had been drifting by slowly that evening. If this night made Dontone feel just as bored as his military career was ...

Why not? he pondered. Mother is in a position to do anything. I just hope she won't tell me I'm too rebellious.

He looked in the direction of his home as a sparkle of light caught his kaleidoscope eyes. As the form grew, so did a smile. This was an insectian ... it meant he was going home.

Touching the crystal at the top of his helmet, Dontone concentrated. The crystals on the front protective bar glowed slightly as his antennas vibrated. The flying creature headed toward him giving off a vibrating response.

It will be good to be at the hive again, he thought. Perhaps it is time to break the cycle of our spider-flower life. A time for metamorphosis.

REBIRTH?

The contest went well ... as always. The last four challengers lost for the same reason each time ... they thought their queen was predictable.

Elsban thought about what Ezra said earlier ... change. Suddenly the queen realized just how boring stagnation was. The battles they fought were with the same people for countless years for forgotten reasons with no end in sight or even interest to end the killing.

There has been no real advancement for centuries ... perhaps ... she thought. Dontone always hated the idea of fighting. He, at least, would be happy.

Elsban received word only moments earlier that he was found. He was always her favorite but she never told anyone. The only puzzling part of the message was about a spider-flower. Perhaps he will explain it to her when he returns.

Stopping by the royal chambers, Elsban looked inside. He was still in the same uncomfortable position as even the jar of honey remained ever so balanced. She couldn't help smiling at her king.

Well, she thought, even if drones had thousands of years to be lazy ... let's start to get this one to work!

With a mischievous smile, Elsban went into the chamber and shut the door.


黃仁信
6/88

To Dream of Things to Come

by Carol Gibson

"Nana, I'm not tired," protested the dark haired child.

"Now, Morgana, go to sleep. It's hours after your bedtime." The older woman, Lorna, gently pulled a pink nightgown over her charge's head. "Your parents are going to be angry enough with me as it is for keeping you up this late."

"But Nana, the party isn't over yet! I wanted to watch the bride and groom dance." Morgana jumped off the bed and began to dance around the small room.

Lorna smiled as she watched the child's graceful movements.

"Look at me, Nana. I can dance better than anyone." Morgana took one more graceful leap as she landed in the bed, laughing with delight.

"Yes, you dance very well, my sweet, but now it's time for bed." Lorna forced herself to be firm.

The nanny, who had been working with children for over 120 years without ever having had a problem keeping her charges within the set boundaries, had a difficult time saying no to this one. She was so very different, such a special child needing special treatment.

Morgana was a beautiful child, delicately boned and small for her age. The raven haired and violet eyed girl promised to become a more beautiful woman. Blessed with a sweet and sunny disposition, Morgana had never been known to throw a tantrum. Instead she only stood forlornly with her lower lip slightly quivering and tears slipping over the smooth curve of her cheek. It was a sight guaranteed to melt most adults including, at times, her parents.

Morgana's uniqueness did not lay only in her beauty or temperament. The only child of highly placed Guild bards, she had been started on mandolin, voice, and music lessons at the age of three. Now, at five, Morgana could perform from memory all the popular ballads and many others that students twice her age had yet to master.

All this, plus a quick intelligence, sense of humor and poise beyond her tender years contrived to make adults forget they were dealing with a small child, yet, perversely, also caused them to spoil her. The entire palace, up to and including the queen, were willingly wrapped around Morgana's dainty little finger.

"Nana." The clear, sweet tones that pulled Lorna from her musings were beguiling. "Nana, tell me a story. I'm really not tired and if I try to sleep now, I will only toss and turn and make a mess of my bed covers. Then you'll have to remake my bed for me which is a lot of work and I don't want to make you do unnecessary work."

Looking down into the earnest pleading eyes, Lorna gave an amused shake of her head. Reading the capitulation in her

beloved nurse's eyes, Morgana smiled and snuggled down into the covers expectantly.

The nanny turned to pick up a small, wrapped box from the bedside table.

"Do you know what this is, Morgana?"

"Yes," the girl said, pulling a face. "Spice cake. Ugh! They gave it to me at the wedding. I took it 'cause that's being nice but I don't like spice cake. You can have it, Nana."

Lorna smiled and shook her head.

"Don't you know what it means?"

"No, does it have a special meaning? Is this my story?" A note of suspicion crept into Morgana's voice. "Am I going to have to eat it?"

Lorna chuckled as she settled into the rocking chair next to the bed and picked up her knitting.

"No, sweetling, you don't have to eat it; not unless you change your mind. You might, you know, because it isn't *ordinary* cake." Her voice dropped to a low, confidential tone as she stressed the important word, a sparkle in her kind, brown eyes. "It's a piece of a very special, magical cake.

"Magic?" Morgana's eyes shone. She loved everything to do with magic, even though she had not a trace of magic ability of her own.

"Yes," answered Lorna, firmly. "Magic."

A very clever woman, Lorna firmly believed that necessity never had to be all bad nor all pleasure useless. Her charge needed to go to bed but was truly too excited to sleep. A bedtime story would be a good way to settle the child down for the night and teach her a bit of folk lore at the same time.

"You see, Morgana, there is a very old wedding tradition attached to that cake. The tradition is so old, that it precedes elven memory which makes it very old, indeed. The tradition varies from folk to folk and area to area but is universal so far as I know. I will tell you how we elves of Dunedin observe it."

She paused to pick up a stitch she had dropped and then continued.

"When a maid comes to marriage age and each year after, under the harvest moon, she takes a small, silver sickle, and reaps the grain and stores it in an earthenware pot she has made herself, 'til it comes to the harvest moon or just before her wedding, whichever comes first that year."

Lorna glanced at Morgana sideways and hid a smile. The child lay snuggled in her bed, listening with rapt attention. Satisfied, Lorna continued.

"On the night of the new moon before her wedding, the maid grinds and sifts the flour and again stores it in the earthenware pot. That same night, she draws a measure of water which she seals in another pot and takes both to be blessed by the priestess of the Harvest goddess, who is also the goddess of marriage and mothers.

"Then, on the day before the wedding, she prepares the

cake using a very special blend of spices, also gathered under a new moon and blessed by the goddess.

"On the day of the wedding, every girl and every woman who is not wed, be she maid or widow, is given a slice of the cake, boxed and wrapped in paper the color of growing wheat, tied with ribbon the color of harvested grain. Taken the box is put under the pillow and during that night, they dream of their husband-to-be.

"When they wake up the next morning, having dreamt of the man they will marry, they eat the piece of cake."

"I'll see the future?" Morgana's face lit up and she wiggled in a brief burst of excitement. "I'll do magic?"

"Yes, sweetling." Lorna nodded and smiled. "You'll do magic."

Suddenly, Morgana's face fell.

"But I don't have any magic. What if I don't remember?" Her voice fell to a whisper. "What if I don't dream at all?"

"Why, then, child, it merely means that something was done wrongly or that you did not truly believe. But Allyra was once my charge. She came to me last month to ask for the recipe. I believe she did things rightly."

"I believe." Morgana's voice was almost fierce, her slender body tensed with her conviction. Suddenly she jumped up and padded over to the table to pick up the little, wrapped box. Carefully she tucked it under her pillow then climbed back under her covers.

Lorna put her knitting away and came to straighten the bed covers. She kissed her charge's cheek, then blew out the candles. As Lorna went through the door, she was halted by Morgana's soft voice.

"Nana, what if I don't like the man?"

Lorna turned to the little girl with a reassuring smile.

"Why then, sweetling, you simply don't eat the cake. Now, go to sleep."

Morgana watched her nanny swing the door, leaving it open just a crack. Dutifully, she squeezed her eyes shut and held herself rigidly still, trying to will herself to sleep. Her nose began to itch.

Morgana opened her eyes, scratched her nose, and changed position. Again she closed her eyes and began to count sheep. This time it was her left knee which started to itch. With an exasperated sigh, the child scratched her knee and lay thinking.

It wasn't the thought of seeing her future husband that was so exciting. Morgana was only five and a husband was a nebulous thing, far in the future. But to do magic at last! She, Morgana, who had not a bit of magical ability was going to do magic this very night. For the first time in her short life, Morgana lay wishing for sleep to come but she merely tossed and turned as the hour grew later.

When Lorna came in to check on her charge, Morgana spoke in a low whisper.

"Nana, I can't fall asleep."

Lorna shook her head in sympathy.

"Never you mind, sweetling, it's my fault for telling you the story. I'll get you a banana and you can wash it down with a glass of warm milk."

"Do I have to, Nana? I hate warm milk."

"But you like bananas. Your parents will be coming to bed soon. Do you want them to find you still awake? No, I thought not. Now, lie back and relax and stop trying to fall asleep. I'll be right back."

When Lorna returned with the midnight snack, Morgana ate it obediently but without enthusiasm. Then, with another good night kiss, the child snuggled back down in the covers, closed her eyes and finally drifted off to sleep.

SEEDS OF THE FUTURE

Morgana woke to find herself standing on a cliff in the dawn's light, overlooking the sea. Her feet were wet with the morning dew, her skin, covered only by her thin pink nightgown, was chilled by the early morning air.

"I've been sleepwalking," murmured Morgana, pleased with herself. She had never done anything so exciting as this. "I must have walked all the way to the bay's edge." A thought occurred to her and turning, said to herself, "I wonder if I can see the palace from here."

Morgana stood, stunned. Having turned toward the rising sun, she saw, not the town or the harbor as she had expected, but rather the varied green of unbroken forest covering the slopes of the mountain on top of which she stood. In the distance was the glimmer of the sea; an unbroken ring surrounding the land, telling her that she was on an island.

Panicstricken, Morgana searched the sea for signs of other land or sails of ships. Sighting neither, the fear grew as the child searched the land frantically for some sign of habitation. There was nothing and the small girl collapsed on the ground, sobbing bitterly.

Finally, the tears would flow no longer and the fear was drained along with the tears. She was lost in the cool damp as shivers were caused by the dew-soaked nightgown. Even spice cake and warm milk would be welcome now, she thought as the beginnings of hunger and thirst were felt. That thought caused her to bolt to her feet with a cry.

"The spice cake! The magic didn't give me a dream; it brought me here!" She looked around perplexedly. "But where is here? And why?"

Once more she scanned the island and, this time, was rewarded with the sight of a thin trickle of smoke rising from close by along the southeast side of the cliff overlooking the sea. Morgana walked along the edge of the plateau. Discovering a narrow trail leading downward, she started along, watching the path in order to avoid stones which might cause her to slip and fall or bruise her tiny feet. At first, the little girl followed the winding path

eagerly, with a sense of adventure. Sometimes the path crossed a small plateau or dipped into a little vale, sometimes it was hardly more than a crumbly ledge hugging the mountainside.

After a few hours, however, the excitement wore off as Morgana's thirst and hunger grew. Tired and footsore and once again feeling the beginning stirs of fear, she stopped to rest on a part of the path that was more a broad ledge, winding along, to be lost from sight around a curve of sheer stone. She sat down with her back against a rock and studied her feet, which were bruised and scraped, dusty, swollen, and incredibly sore. She was hot, tired, hungry, and thirsty.

Morgana sat quietly, listening to the gentle murmur of the wind. Gradually, she realized that the sound was too steady to be the breeze that played with her hair. She frowned, trying to place that sound. Suddenly, she realized what the murmur meant and leaped to her feet, all else forgotten at the realization that there was running water close by.

Although Morgana was careful going around the bend, she quickly plunged down the slop of the vale she found beyond, to throw herself down in front of a little stream. She scooped up large mouthfuls with cupped hands and, having drunk her fill, sat up to dangle her feet in the water. She was not certain which felt better; a wet mouth or cool feet. Only after long minutes of bliss did Morgana bother to look around the vale. What she saw made her catch her breath and jump to her feet.

Across the little stream, just emerging from the trees sheltering the path, was a man. He was tall and slim, with long, sun-streaked blond hair brushing across his shoulders. As he came to the edge of the stream and stooped to drink, Morgana saw that his ears curved to a point, marking him as one of elven blood. But it was his eyes, when he looked up, that made Morgana catch her breath. They were the clear, dark blue of sapphires.

Morgana summoned a smile and spoke to him.

"Hello, I'm Morgana, from Porttown. When I went to sleep last night, I got magikked here. Where are we, please?"

The man stooped to drink again, ignoring the girl, which irked her. She lost her smile and spoke loudly.

"I said, 'hello!' Where are we? And who are you?"

The man simply stood, a small smile on his handsome face appeared as he turned slightly away from her to look back at the clearing's edge. Enraged, Morgana stomped her foot and ran into the river, shivering as the icy water splashed around her ankles.

"Why don't you answer me? Are you deaf as well as blind?"

Having crossed the little stream, Morgana planted herself directly in front of him, raising her voice in a scream.

"Hello! Are you being rude or just stupid?"

Still the man ignored her, watching the clearing's edge.

Morgana turned to see what held his interest and saw a boy of ten or so just entering the clearing. The youth had hair as blond as summer wheat falling down his back and eyes of green. But his ears had the elfin curve and his features bore a resemblance which marked him as a relation to the man in front of whom Morgana stood. In his hands he held an orb of shimmering glass or crystal which, in front of Morgana's delighted eyes, grew to three times its former size. The boy laughed and called out.

"Ryan, look. I can make it grow. See?"

"Yes, Alphin," the man said laughingly. "Almost big enough to fit a dragon."

The boy, Alphin, laughed and then glanced curiously at Morgana.

"Who's that, Ryan?"

Ryan gave the youth a startled look.

"Who's who, Alphin?"

"The girl." Alphin glanced at Morgana, then gave his brother a puzzled look, which was returned in full measure.

"Alphin, what are you talking about? What girl?"

"The one right in front of you." Alphin's voice held a tone of exaggerated patience.

"Me," Morgana added, tugging on his sleeve.

Ryan nearly leaped out of his shoes at the pull and looked down at his arm.

"How did you do that, Alphin? I didn't even know you were doing any magic other than the orbs."

"I didn't do it," the boy protested. He turned to Morgana. "Why can't he see you? Are you a ghost?"

A ghost! Morgana had not considered the possibility of being dead. She began to shiver with fright, her lip quivering and her eyes filling with tears.

"I want to go home!" she wailed.

Ryan frowned at the area where Morgana stood crying, concentrating until the sweat beaded his forehead. Meanwhile Alphin begged Morgana to stop crying as his eye reflected the distress in his voice. Slowly, Ryan extended uncertain hands toward Morgana. Sobbing, she threw herself into his arms, only to pass right through him as the scene dissolved into a beam of bright sunlight shining into her eyes.

AFTERMATH

Slowly, Morgana sat up in her bed. She examined her nightgown, her hands, and her feet thoroughly. All were as clean as they had been when she went to sleep.

"It was all a dream," she whispered, wonderingly. But what a dream; full of magic and adventure and elves!

She clasped her arms around her body, savoring the memory of the dream. As she remembered, Morgana dived under her pillow to retrieve the little, gaily wrapped box. With impatient, but careful fingers, she undid the wrappings and

began to eat the cake.

Nana bustled in, to stop dead on the threshold. Bemusedly, she looked at her nursling solemnly eating the piece of despised spice cake without so much as a grimace.

"Well then, sweetling, did you have pleasant dreams last night?"

Morgana's smile was dazzling.

"Oh, yes, Nana! It was scary at first but it was wonderful. He was so handsome."

The nanny smiled back.

"I'm glad he was, sweetling. Come now, it's time to get dressed for breakfast. You're eating with Queen Galadrel this morning, you know."

"Yes, Nana, in a minute. I must finish my cake. I wouldn't want the dream to not come true.

The nursemaid fussed around the room, laying out Morgana's clothes and hair ribbons. The child continued to finish the last crumbs of the cake, savoring the warm glow of feeling left from the dream; the feeling that, as she passed through the man named Ryan, their souls had touched and been sealed together with a promise for the future.

HAVING THE MOST FUN
or
HOW TO ENJOY A SF CON

by Margaret Gemignani

Some folks spend a great deal of time and effort to go to a science fiction convention but they repeatedly to away bored or dissatisfied. They can not understand why others come to conventions and seem to know so many people or attend many parties and have the most fun. Well, this need not happen again! Plan ahead and have the most fun at the con. Make them believe you are a big name fan even if they don't know your name.

First of all, make up traveling plans. Whether the con is local or out of town, make sure you have everything you need and can carry. Airlines and hotels are not a problem for getting your belongings in or out of but if you plan on traveling by car, train, or bus it is best if you plan on carrying everything. A bag with fruit, drinks, reading and writing materials, and maps are great items to pack. Know where you are going, how to get there, and what the travel time is since rushing for a plane flight due to poor timing can kill a lovely con.

When you get there, volunteer to assist in one of you favorite spots (such as the art room, costume contest, etc.). Contacting the right folks to let them know you want to help is the right start for making friends. Listen carefully to instructions and follow them through. Do your best and your enthusiasm will win still more friends.

Check the program book and decide what events you want to see so you can be sure to arrange to be there on time for a good seat. Making a list ahead of time as to what you want to buy at the dealer's room and art show. It may help prevent extra drawer stuffers and lint gatherers than you need. When shopping at a convention, the quality and usefulness of the item(s) are more important than the amount you buy. Keep to a budget. It is possible you may miss another convention because you over spent at this one. Unless the item is indispensable, take a little time for window shopping. It is fun and you can get a great chance to talk to the dealers and other shoppers.

Party time! Plan ahead for this, too. Be careful of how much you eat and drink as well as be sure to get some rest. Have a list of local restaurants to meet friends at or find out about sight-seeing with them. Do not forget the filk singing! Everybody can sing, even if it is off pitch so here's your chance to join along with all the other fans.

If you meet someone who shares the same interests as you, get their address and keep in touch (who knows, you may run in to each other at another convention). The main keys to having a great time is planning, common sense, and courage to go out and meet others to share the fun of the con.

Eyes of Time

by Richard Alan Klein

The eyes of time are meek
eventually it reaches it's final peak
through many an age
all time is like a cage
just opening and closing as if ruling
what is most crueling

Time the ultimate ruler
such an arrogant fooler
through it's unspoken eyes
everything it controls merely flies
without a moment's rest
it watches upon its unsuspected guest

The great time machine will stop
gradually propelling us to our final drop
we ought not waste this only precious knowledge
for the donations that we have to pledge
parades of future generations will own
increasing thus learned wisdom to forage the faith unknown

The sands of time washes away
its ocean of flesh drys leaving the soul that day
BUT hope must arise above all
for a door will open beyond the wall
and once passed the great threshold
lays the eternal life of gold

Now the eyes of time will no longer control thee
because we will grow glorious wings to fly, free!
death to this time and its ordered conventions
for far beyond our universe lies many new dimensions
worlds within worlds to transcend ...
and life does continue ...
for it never truly reaches an end ...

DISK CRASH

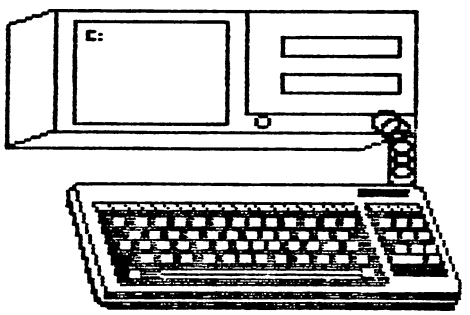
CHORUS:
Calm down, it's just your hard disk dying,
Calm down, it's only aughts and ones!
Calm down, it's just your data frying.
Let's hope that all those backups that we did will get it done.

The day before you downloaded a bunch from CompuServe,
But did you think to back it up? Oh, no! Don't be absurd!
We couldn't even read it, though you spent a lot of time,
'Cause all those un-arc programs that we have aren't worth a dime.

CHORUS:
Calm down, it's just your hard disk dying,
Calm down, it's only aughts and ones!
Calm down, it's just your data frying.
Let's hope that all those backups that we did will get it done!

We thought it was a wire or two that somehow had come loose,
Or maybe just a software glitch that finally cooked our goose.
But after fifty dollars to initialize our disk,
We found that we had made it --- onto their "sucker" list!

CHORUS:
Calm down, it's just your hard disk dying.
Calm down, it's only aughts and ones!
Calm down, it's just your data frying.
Let's hope that all those backups that we did will get it done.
Oh, yeh...



Lyrics: Francine Mullen
Music: Cathy Marr

Pure Unconsciousness

BY
RICHARD ALAN KLEIN

Doctor Freud, don't you know better! It isn't polite to bite your eraser in front of a client. Did I not tell you just last week about all those strange and horrible monsters waiting inside your inferno, churning stomach. No, forget about the unconscious; I still think it is just a nervous habit you picked up listening to all my frivolous drools of dreams from our previous innocuous consultations.

True last session may have been good advice; nevertheless, after the big football game I was thoroughly "distorted" by the gracious television directors who cannibalized my marvelous muffins. Yes, even at this very moment I miss them. Is this what you call the Oedipus complex or am I becoming more and more a delirious science fiction fan?

No, wait! Your scientific dogma is probably too mundane to answer such a inquiry at this time wouldn't you like to cogitate on my latest dream instead... I see, your debating its worth. I can tell ... Doctor, your biting your eraser, again!

Last night I had a most puzzling dream, some of which I recalled previously since I was a child. It started with my younger brother and I sitting in our comfortable apartment overlooking the "Big Apple". No, not the green one that you're so fond of eating, naturally its the concrete metropolis so named New York City. Heavens! I never understood what was so new about it... Oh, I know I must try to focus my martian antennae on the subject; nevertheless, it is difficult to recognize my problems without listening to all my thoughts. Isn't that right, doctor? Let us explore the issue presented even if my sensors indicate my erratic speech pattern is due to...

Zoom... I really ought not to put the verb before the subject it's just that my brother and I were quite bored with hearing empty threats on the news broadcast. So here, in the beginning of the dream, we were skidding out the door and gliding downstairs to the basement. We almost passed a strange red door as we arrived that suddenly materialized out of nowhere. On the door was a sign that read "Danger, Keep Out." We were delighted at seeing the mysterious sign, being curious was better than reading about hedge hogs in ALICE AND WONDERLAND or writing a novel based on the dreadful events of the present world. In fact a word on the plastic doorknocker caught my eye immediately. It was not esoterically pleasing: the engraved word was "Chaos." At this point, my brother tried to pick the lock as though opening "pandora's box." The

lock was complex; however, with a few twists of a ninety-nine cent "crafters" screwdriver we somehow managed to open it. A miracle! Inside this tiny room was one rather unusual item -a lever.

My brother went over towards it and to my amazement announced "I loathe this pathetic and paranoid world don't you, Adam?"

I strangely affirmed his belief and upon doing so initiated my brother's daring response which for him was to teasingly begin to lower the lever. However, I did try to plead "Wait, we can still make this world a better place to live." The conflict in my voice was unanswered, at least as I perceived it, for in that very second he mischievously smiled and pulled the lever all the way down. On impulse I ran down the emergency stairs quickly leaving my brother to his own sin.

As I ran outside the building I could see already gathering thongs panicking in the street. A rabbi with a very deep voice proclaimed the obvious, a nuclear warhead was just armed. His voice frightened me so much that I did not even realize that I was about to steal a ghost white jeep in front of me. I hesitated as I started the ignition yet I was so terrified that I just left the crowd in the dust. As I looked back were the Bronx was suppose to be a blinding light in the form of a cloud dominated and seemed to expand its rein ever closer to me. Suddenly, my jeep was throttled into the Hudson River. Forcing myself to swim beyond the miles of never-ending garbage that was so gross I thought it may have been fun yet if only I stopped my brother this would not of happened. I kept wondering if there was any escape from my feeling of guilt or frivolously would I be rescued by some distant god-like aliens who would imprison me though out eternity.

Well, guess what! I was rescued by an old fisherman on the New Jersey coast and when I got out of the boat all I could see was New York City covered with fifty-cent light bulbs. Naturally, I was horrified yet I resumed my hurried march into the palisades. Stars now appeared in the heavens yet it was light.

The dream was unclear at this point as though a new episode was trying to intrude. For the next thing I knew I was sitting near a porcelain statue of a tree and overhead was a horrible helicopter with its pilot shouting to me, "You can never escape your fate." I stood up and ignored it at every ledge until it followed no more.

After days of suffering I rested on a cliff and discovered a cave. In this cave was an underground apartment which contained two families. Upon their reluctant acceptance of me I was given the quest to seek lead for protection against radiation for the community. With a specialized radiation suit provided by a quack scientist from the small community I was ready to search in the nuclear winter, but where would I find lead quick enough for their survival? If I went back empty would they be able to live, perhaps the last

of humanity? Will I see the dreaded helicopter? My search for lead continued...

On the bridge of the Interscholastic Comic Buster the crew was positioned normally. The legendary double-headed ensign Lulu turned his two faces to face Captain Herassio sitting at his command chair and Dr. Schilzenslouzer (not the medical officer) smoking an inexpensive pipe at the helm station. It was an enormous starship yet Lulu's grim expressions were quite noticeable to his captain.

"Your non-verbal signals seem off-task Mr. Lulu. Do you wish to communicate with me?"

"Osmosis!"

"Come, again? Are you implying telepathetic two way link-up?" extrapolated the captain.

"Negative, the term refers to the diffusion of fluid through a semipermeable membrane.

"Yes, I see Mr. Lulu." Herassio twirls his hair with his index finger. "Do you have any other momentous revelations you wish to impart on us Mr. Lulu?"

"Oh, yes it is vital to our survival?"

Captain Herassio stood up looking at Mr. Lulu with his serious grey eyes. "What is it?"

"We must find lead for a human named, Adam."

Captain Herassio laughed as he pinched both Mr. Lulu's noses. Dr. Schilzenslouzer puffed smoke from his pipe and set his coordinates panel for Earth.

"Well, the water there is a wonderful grey-blue, it beats Argos." elegantly muffled Mr. Lulu.

"Sure, Mr. Lulu if you recall it was your suggestion to go to Argos because you thought the water was pink and naturally because of our subliminal innate misbehavior we were banned. I suggest you've been overdosing on the Kaopectate too long this time. Could it be another alien has taken over you again?"

Lulu did not answer closing his eyes perhaps in shame, Captain Herassio knew better and was about to relief Lulu from his station when suddenly Lulu fell to the ground. The Captain remarked sarcastically, "Mr. Lulu lets not cause a situation here, admit it your no angel!"

There was no response from Mr. Lulu so Captain Herassio put out his arms to pick him up, but Mr. Lulu slowly faded out of sight and out of mind. The Captain deduced that Mr. Lulu was transported somewhere; nevertheless, he remained calm knowing very well that his most unusual officer will turn up as he almost always does in another man's back yard.

Six days have passed and the Buster was being busted by their archenemies the five eyed, no horns, flying, lavender Austrellian Dealers with their faulty (towers) dealerships. When suddenly a thought occurred to Captain Herassio.

"I need another recruit Commander Schilizenslouser"

"<u>Who</u> shall we get this time Captain?" as Schilizenslouser searched desperately at the busted Buster

compu-computer.

"No, not him, how about a female for a change?"

"I will look Captain: however, if she does not make the standard...

"That's my concern, mister!"

A young woman with wavy red hair is given a file of important documents. By her side amongst the shadow, an old grey haired man materializes from the transport device.

"Come, Are you ready?" said the old man.

"Well I am not sure where are you taking me?"

"That is not for you to question young lady. My orders are quite clear on this matter."

"Then why do I feel uneasy despite your disciplined manner? We are not going into the void I presume?"

"Good, aggressive and intelligent now lets see if you can use these characteristics. Come my car is waiting time to take a long ride into the countryside."

"Outside the dome!"

The sky was clear as the old man was driving his car "Old Nine-Iron" across towards a river. His conversation seemed a bit confused for constantly he asked the women for advise on speed and distance. As they reached the river suddenly a giant gargoyle-type creature appeared in the distance. The woman was scared and confused as she turned towards the old man, but he was not there and the strange car was now out of control. She was terrified as she gripped the steering wheel and maneuvered just out of range of the silly mythological beast. The car nevertheless went straight into the river just in time for it to see a huge Samuri warrior wearing Superman's leotards emerge from the rocks. The warrior was swift as he pierced the gargoyle profound underarm though the opposite side with his toothpick. As the creature began to fall, the Samurai laughed and turned to face a helicopter (also seen in an earlier dimension declaring, "You can never escape your fate.") swoop down and rescue the young woman (or did it?). Despite her panic she took hold of the shinny porcelain (again?!) ladder.

Her red hair tossed about as she unconsciously took hold of the porcelain sink. Captain Herassio held onto her romantically as she slowly began to awake.

"Welcome aboard the Comic Buster Private Sew-in-Sew, did you bring the tea?"

" I ... I do not understand. Where am ..."; she does not finish her sentence since Captain Herassio rubs her buttocks.

"You have a friendly smile; fortunately, everything seems in disorder. Come with me."

The woman struggles to free herself from the neanderthal claws of the Captain, "No! I demand to know if I am in Chaos?"

Captain Herassio whispers in her ear, "Of course, aren't we all?" Snapping his fingers they instantly arrive on the

command deck, "impressive, right?"

Private Sew-in-Sew was stunned.

"I see my charm stuns you even better than the standard issued pornograhic phaser, wow I am so exited."

"Excuse me, Sir.", Dr. Schilizenslouser interrupts.

"Doctor, I am busy interviewing do you mind?"

The Doctor puffs at his cigar, "I bet you are, Captain. Don't forget our mission."

"To explore brave new worlds, seek out order, and to laugh in it's face... Yes, I understand do you? You know sometimes Doctor you take your work too seriously." "Affirmative, Herassio.", the Doctor smirks. The Captain sighs, "Pulling the rank ego manipulation again. Well, what's wrong are the tests completed?"

"Yes, I'm afraid that private Sew-in-Sew just passed."

"Great, does this mean we can look for another recruit?"

"Your the Captain. Remember someday!," The Doctor chews his cigar.

"Yes, probably in our third season... Well, then if I have to make the order unfortunately, we must think of another crew member who could really destroy our enemies. Sorry, Sew-in-Sew."

Sew-in-Sew looked sternly at the Captain," You mean your archenemy Commodore Cold Cloth the dealer with the one thousand smiling demon?"

"You may be in shock Sew-in-Sew, but your absolutely correct. This will be a suicide mission; fortunately, the new recruit and yourself can do all the real work."

Doctor Schilizenslouser winked at the brooding private then depressed several lighted switches on his compu-computer console. The Captain followed over to him to routinely receive a pink slip of a list sliding out from the printer. "This one looks fine. I want this one."

On that tiny little list was actually one name.

I was on the highest mountain range when it happened. I noticed that I changed narration! this was literally a crime until I helped blow-up the world, but I can take these things quite personally now since I am all alone as well. Unfortunately, as time passed I was unable to ascertain enough lead to protect a long lost community. It is unknown to me how I even survived, yet I am here and I sense that help was on the way. Many years seemed to pass at once when while making snow "angels" a shimmering mass of silver (No! Lead, I need lead, fool) appeared before my eyes (actually my eyes were here first). Upon the sight of a man, I did the typical response. I cried, "Who are you?"

"Mr. Lulu. Guess what Adam? I have the information you were asking for."

"The Information?"

"Oh, one head always lies, I meant I have a gift for you. Will you except it?"

I was very fascinated by the offer. "Could it be true that

you have found lead for me my two-faced friend?"

"Yes, the helicopter will be coming soon. Here..."

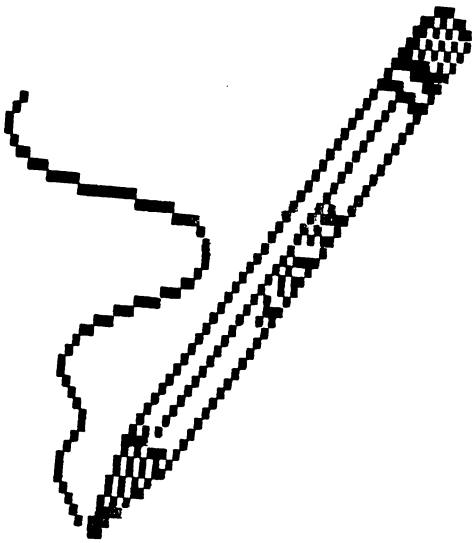
Eagerly, I awaited Lulu as he slyly produced something from his pocket.

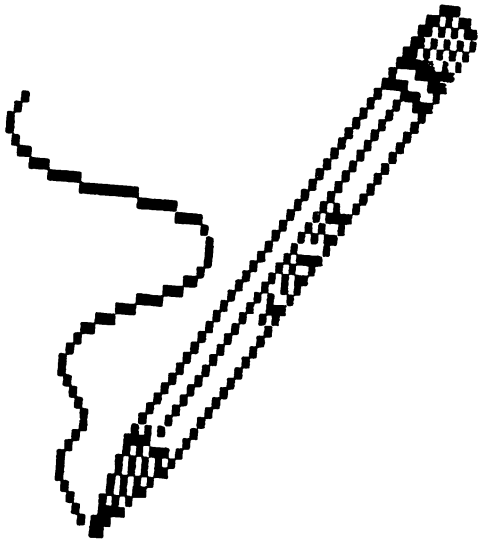
"Here!", he said again. "Here it is..."

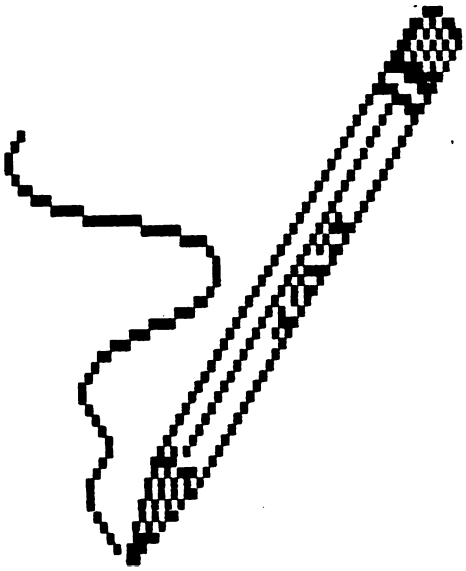
"What is it?", I replied with great enthusiasm.

He handed it to me with accomplishment, proclaiming with a deep voice, "A NUMBER TWO PENCIL!"

So what else could I do, but to simply say thank you, then walk away in dismay. Unfortunately, as I stared up, up into the psychedelic sky, the clouds approached and the Earth fell covered by an eerie florescent light. I realized I was no longer in the mountains or on a starship. Yet, I realized my worst fear of all - for that can be seen now is the stars... Chewing your eraser!

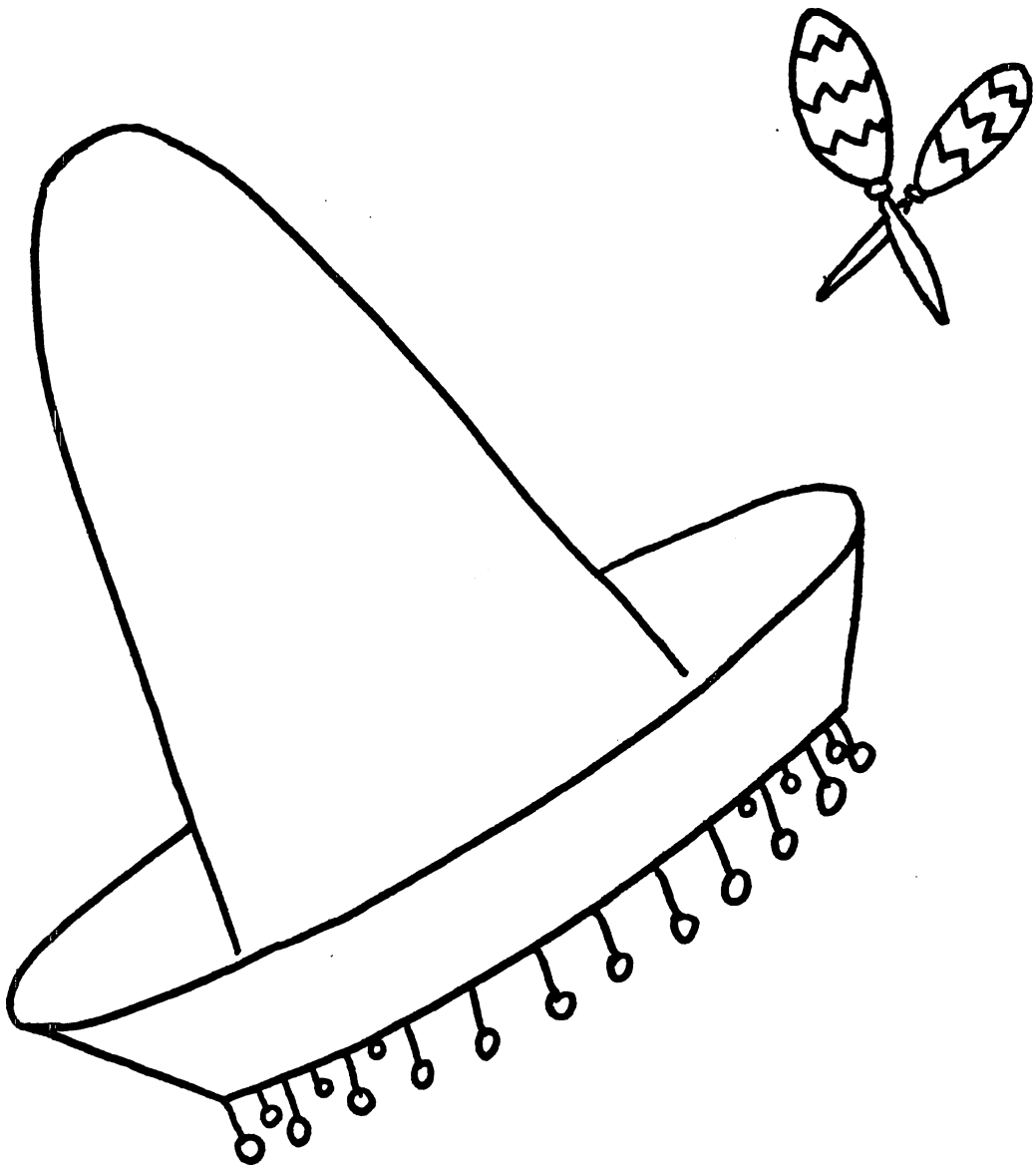






Answer: The Captain harnessed the Space Wind!

Maggie's costume at Tropicon 8 won
First Prize for Beauty, at the
Ft. Lauderdale, Hilton, 12/2/89.



Willis

Discovers

America

(Part 2)

{"Willis Discovers America" is the improbable fannish-fiction saga Walt Willis wrote in the summer of 1952 while Shelby Vick was raising the Fund which was to bring Walt to the Chicon later that year. It is reprinted from Willis' 1955 edition of the serial and presented with the footnotes which Walt added at that time in an effort to preserve "like a fly in amber (or ointment) fandom as it was in 1952." rb}

Humming softly to himself, Moskowttz speeds his truck in the direction of Newark. The traffic draws into the kerb and air raid wardens rush to their posts. Through the deserted streets the truck rushes on until it reaches Moskowitz's house, where the three fans leap out and start loading the famous collection onto the truck. Hour after hour they toil, carrying out armfuls of books and magazines and hurrying back for more. The wheels of the truck gradually sink into the concrete of the road, but still the work goes on. At last the entire collection is loaded, and the truck moves off slowly in the direction of the Chateau d'IF, leaving deep ruts in the road.

It is dusk when they arrive at the Chateau, and they are able to drive the truck right up to the building. They park it on the narrow spit of land between the Chateau and the sea, and gaze anxiously at the enormous walls.

"What a lot of windows," says Moskowitz worriedly. "How are we going to find out which cell Willis and Vick are in?"

They all get out of the truck and walk up and down the shore, turning over the problem in their minds. Suddenly there is a twanging noise and Taurasi falls headlong in the mud. The others help him to his feet and start wiping him down, but he brushes their hands aside impatiently.

"Something just struck me!" he exclaims.

"No," says Sykora. "You fell."

"I know," says Taurasi impatiently, "that's the point. I tripped over a chord. Haven't you noticed this whole beach is covered with musical instruments?"

"It must be the remains of that band that was playing on the quay until it was drowned by the cheering crowd," muses Moskowitz. "But so what? They're all washed up now."

It's given me an idea," says Taurasi, "We'll serenade Willis and Vick like Blondin and Richard Coeur de Lion."

"Who's Blondin?" asks Moskowitz.

"Don't you ever read the funnies?" says Sykora in contempt. "Blondin Bumstead of course. Say, whaddya think of Lil Abner----" 1

"Never mind that," says Sykora. "Moskowitz, you sing and Sykora and I will accompany you." He picks up a trumpet and hands it to Sykora, taking a saxophone for himself.

Moskowitz takes out a copy of the Dianetics Handbook and clears his throat. He begins to sing.

"We three
Intend to free
You from the penitentiary,
Taurasi,
Sykora
And me.
I need hardly mention how at our Convention
We kept the Michelists at bay; 2
And now we are prayin' that we'll find a way in
To----"

He breaks off abruptly as two arms are seen waving frantically from one of the windows. With an encouraging gesture the triumvirate run back to the truck and begin to unload it.

Watching them anxiously from the cell window, Willis turns to Vick.

"What do you think they're doing?"

"It looks big enough to be SaM's entire collection," says ShelVy. "OH! They must be going to pile it up against the wall for us to climb down. Yes, look, they're laying a fantasy foundation of big ones first. Early FantasyBooks, old Amazing Quarterlies, 1943 Astoudings-----"

"WHAT?" shouts Willis. He throws himself against the bars, wrenching at them vainly. Eventually he calms down and watches quietly as the three below erect an enormous mountain of books and magazines against the prison wall.

"Well, that's the last of them," says Moskowitz finally, "a file of recent Fantasy Books and the Dell edition of "Universe'. 3 I'm afraid it isn't enough. I wish they'd had 'Common Sense'." He broods grimly. The others steal a look at him and turn their eyes away hastily from his harrowed countenance. Moskowitz stands still for a long moment and then grits his teeth and walks slowly back to the truck. He emerges with a white face and a roll of black velvet. Unrolling the latter he produces a book, at which the others gaze with reverent awe. Still holding the book he begins to climb up the mountain of sf. Sykora and Taurasi uncover their heads and stand in silent tribute.

Up above ShelVy turns to Willis. "He is making the supreme sacrifice," he says in hushed tones.

Even Willis is impressed. "Not.....not THE OUTSIDER AND OTHERS?" he gasps. 4

"Yes," says ShelVy sombrely.

As Moskowitz continues his perilous ascent other fans begin to arrive in ones and twos and watch in perilous silence. There is a gasp of relief as he nears the top of the pile and places THE OUTSIDER AND OTHERS on the summit. Then, very carefully, he climbs the remaining few feet and stands on the sacred volume. He is now only a short distance below the cell window.

Balancing himself precariously on the narrow peak he reaches into his pocket and produces a small saw.

"Here," he says, "Saw through the bars with this. It's a hacksaw I borrowed from Ray Cummings." He stand on tiptoe and reaches it up.

Willis and Vick both stretch out their hands but try as they will they cannot quite reach the saw.

"Another hundredih of an inch would have done it," says ShelVy, falling back in despair. "Ricky Slavin has a lot to answer for." 5

Overcome with disappointment and emotion at the recollection of his lost dust jacket Moskowitz has to rest for a moment before making his descent. He is just pulling himself together when there is a frantic cry from below and a wildeyed figure dashes towards the pile, muttering inchoherently to himself and drawing a fountain pen from his pocket. It is Clark Ashton Smith.

"For Ghod's sake stop him, Mike," shouts Alan Pesetsky. "He's caught sight of one of his published poems with uncorrected typos!" 6 But Michael de Angelis is unable to bring himself to restrain his hero. 7 "No human power could stop him anyway," says Ken Beale in horror. "That was a Keasler zine he saw. Run for your lives!" 8

But it is too late. Smith has already reached the pile of books and magazines. With maniacal strength he grabs a duplicated fanzine near the bottom of the mountain and pulls savagely. For a long moment the vast edifice shakes and quivers: then, with an earsplitting crash, it falls to the ground, burying Taurasi, Sykora, Gibson, Pesetsky, de Angelis, Beale, Clancy, Smith, Gluck, Quinn, Krueger, Crane, Wesson, Serxner, Friedman, Hoskins and Kirs.

"Well," says Willis callously, "That's the first time all New York fandom has been in Moskowitz's good books."

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1. Lil Abner had just caused a comics sensation by getting married to Daisy Mae. 2. A reference to the famous 'Exclusion Act' in which Moskowitz, Sykora & Taurasi prevented the Michelists (Wollheim etc.) from entering the 1939 Convention. See The Immortal Storm. Incidentally I realise that the 'Triumvirate' no longer exists but at the time my knowledge of the history of New York fandom stopped where 'The Immortal Storm' did. 3. The Dell reprint of Heinlein's "Universe" was probably the thinnest pocketbook ever published. There was some wonderment that they hadn't included the sequal, "Common Sense". 4. Moskowitz' copy of Lovecraft's "The Outsider & Others" was the pride of his collection and on a famous occasion, described in the Insurgent 'Spacewarp' by Joe Kennedy... 5. New York fanne Ricky Slavin, during a quarrel with Moskowitz, tore the precious dust jacket. 6. Smith was said to have the habit of correcting by hand any typos he found in his published works. 7. Michael de Angelis published quantities of Smith's poems. 8. Keasler's fanzines were of course notorious for their typos. (Cf. 'Kerles' in The Enchanted Duplicator'.)

Chapter 7, Confusion #11.

"Well," says Willis callously, "That's the first time all New York fandom has been in Moskowitz's good books."

"You just said that," points out ShelVy.

"I know," says Willis, "I heard me. But that was in another magazine. These people mightn't understand your next remark unless I repeated that one."

"Well, you should split your instalments better," says ShelVy crossly.

"Joe Palooka does it that way," says Willis mildly. 1

"Always trying to end with a punch line," grumbles ShelVy.

"I'm sorry," soothes Willis, "I was only trying to do my judy."

"No order! No method!" ShelVy mutters.

"Look who's talking," says Willis indignantly, "Losing precious letters from Robert Bloch and sending Schultheis masses of blank pages? For ghoodness sake get on with it. Here we are halfway down the page already and we still haven't mentioned the April 1943 ASF."

"Oh well, if you want to make an issue out of it..." says ShelVy. "Where were we?

Ah yes: that was only half of New York fandom down there. But here's the rest of it now." He points to a distant cyclist on the road below, pedalling furiously in their direction and looking back guiltily over his shoulder.

"Looks like Keasler mailing the next Opus." says Willis. "Who is it?" 3

"Bob Silverberg, of course," says ShelVy. 4

Silverberg jumps off his bicycle beside the pile of books and starts digging. There is another slight landslide and the movement revives Moskowitz, who has been lying dazed at the top. He waves weakly at Silverberg and starts to make his way down.

"Avalanche?" asks Silverberg.

"No thanks," says Moskowitz, "I just had one."

The two have been working busily for some minutes when a fast car drives up and Gerry de la Ree jumps out, shouting and pointing excitedly upwards. There is a drone of aeroplane engines overhead and parachuted figures can be seen dimly against the darkening sky. As they land they are seen to be Darrell C. Richardson, Walter Coslet, Roy Squires, Clyde Beck, Russ Hodgkins, Lloyd Eaton, Don Day, Phil Rasch and Russell Leadabrand. 5 As soon as they have disentangled themslves from their parachutes they raise their heads and sniff keenly. Then with unerring instinct they rush toward Mt. Moskowitz.

"Amazing how they got wind of our plight so soon," says Willis. He goes on brokenly, "It's...it's grand to see all these true fans rallying round like...like---"

"Like vultures," says ShelVy bitterly. "Look at them!"

To his horror Willis realizes that they are not clearing away the pile of books at all, but are merely burrowing into it and comparing each item with their little black notebooks. Every now and then they come upon an item on their Want Lists and with eager grunts stuff it into their capacious pockets. There is an occasional vicious scuffle as two collectors seize upon the same item, and all the time Moskowitz is dashing around desperately trying to reclaim his treasures.

"What a shocking exhibition of greed," says Willis, aghast. "And at a time like this!" He puts his head out of the window. "What about us?" he shouts. "HELP! FOR GHOD'S SAKE..."

"What do you want?" asks one of the collectors.

"Do you see an April '43 ASF?" begs Willis.

But the collector is no longer listening, having come across Moskowitz' copy of "The Outsider and Others." Unfortunately for him he cannot resist gloating over it for a moment before hiding it away, and with uncanny quickness three of his rivals notice it and pounce on him. They all lay greedy hands on the book and a grim tug-of-war ensues. Finally there is a horrible ripping sound and the book tears into four pieces. Moskowitz, fighting his way to the scene, cannot restrain his anguish and emits a blood-curdling wail. The others realize it must have been heard inside the Chateau and prepare to flee. But they are too late. The great iron gates open and armed guards cover the collectors. In a moment a large garbage truck drives up, and the wretched collectors are forced to shovel the books and magazines onto it. Some of them collapse from sheer frustration, but eventually the entire pile is loaded onto the truck and the half suffocated fans who were underneath are revived. They and the collectors are

all herded inside the Chateau and the truck drives off at breakneck speed. Just before it moves out of sight the driver is seen throwing away a false beard and a moustache. Borne upon the night air there comes a distant cry of triumph. "I'VE GOT THEM ALL. EVERY ONE!" 6

"That vile truckster," says Willis bitterly. "But he's given me a novel idea. Suppose we disguise ourselves as guards and just walk out! They often do it in books."

"Where would we get the disguise?" asks ShelVy.

"Well," says Willis, "You pretend to be ill. I'll call the guard and when he comes in with the doctor we'll overpower them and take their clothes and keys."

"All right," says ShelVy. He lies down on the bed and starts to groan. Willis shakes the cell door and shouts, "WARDER WARDER!"

The guard strolls along the corridor and looks in. "Will you have it in a bucket or a glass?"

"Everyone wants to get in on the act," says Willis coldly. "That pun was beyond the pail. Take a gander at my friend here -- he's sick unto death."

The guard peers into the cell. "He does look a bit thin," he admits. "Needs a shave too. But I'm not going to be taken in by any lying story."

"Take a proper gander," says Willis. "That's a broom you're looking at. There's ShelVy over there."

"Oh," says the guard, "I'd better call the doctor." He moves hastily off. 7

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1. The boxing comic strip Joe Palooka always starts off by repeating the last panel of the previous series. 2. Recent mishaps in Confusion. 3. Keasler had so much trouble mailing his fanzines at his local Post Office that he used to cycle out of town with them. He claimed it was "the only border-run fanzine." 4. Bob Silverberg was reported as having said he was half of New York fandom. 5. Well known collectors. 6. Slogan of New York book dealer Frank Schmidt. 7. Shelby is very thin.

Chapter 8, Oopsla #6.

Half an hour passes and the guard has still not returned.

"Looks as if he isn't coming back," says Willis. "We'd better try something else. Now, what would a vanVogt hero do? But of course, he'd construct a deadly weapon from the simple materials as his disposal."

"We've got a dry cell?" says ShelVy hopefully. 1

Willis ponders for a moment and then produces a screwdriver from his pocket. Deftly he removes the front of the wall switch and examines the wiring.

"Are you sure you know what you're doing?" asks ShelVy nervously. "Shouldn't you be wearing rubber gloves or something?"

"I didn't come here to be insulated," says Willis coldly. "Of course I know what I'm doing." He makes some delicate adjustments to the wiring with long sensitive fingers.

There is a blue flash and every light in the Greater New York area goes out. Willis

reels back wringing a long sensitive finger. "I must have done something wrong," he says regretfully. "If only I'd had that April 1943 ASF with the last part of "The Weapon Makers...." He is still wringing his finger when the door opens and the guard calls: "Did I hear someone ringing?"

"Yes," says Willis, "it was my finger. The skin is pealing. I hope you brought the doctor?"

"I couldn't find him", says the guard, "so I brought the nurse instead."

By the moonlight shining through the cell window ShelVy and Willis can discern a tall and pretty brunette standing at the door.

"Come in," says the guard, "The lights should be on any minute -- every available electrician is working on it."

"Many hands make light work," mutters Willis. 2

The nurse comes in, sniffing at the air. "What's the matter?" she asks, "Somebody dead?"

"Not yet," says the guard, glaring at Willis. "My patience may be exhausted, but yours is over there on the bed."

The nurse bends over ShelVy. "My Goodness," she says, "This man looks as if he's at death's door. But I'll pull him through." She reaches down the neck of her blouse and produces one after another a selection of small bottles. ShelVy watches with admiration. "That where you keep your medicines?" he asks.

"Yes," she says, "This is my medicine chest."

"Well," leers ShelVy, "If you ever get a cold on it, remember I'm Vick."

Meanwhile Willis has been circling round the guard, and now sticks his screwdriver in his back, shouting "HANDS UP!" Taken aback, the guard obeys. "Now drop your gun," says Willis, "or I've got something here that's just the thing for obstinate screws." 3 The guard drops the gun. Willis picks it up and puts his screwdriver back in his pocket with a sigh of relief. ShelVy changes clothes with the guard, then ties him up and dumps him on the bed.

"Now,"says ShelVy to the nurse.

"NO, no," she cries, blushing.

"Yes, yes," says ShelVy. "We are desperate fen, and we don't care what we do. We correspond with Max Keasler and everything. I tell you, we stop at nothing."

"Don't be shy," says Willis, "I'll cover you with my gun."

The nurse takes off her blouse and skirt. "You know," says Willis, "this is the most interesting thing I've seen in America yet. I think when I get out I'll go on a lecher tour of the United States."

"Careful," warns ShelVy. "Don't forget Russ Watkins has subbed to this issue." 4

"Oh da---er, bother...yes," says Willis. "All right," he tells the nurse, "That'll do. But it's lucky for you this instalment isn't being printed in Opus." 5

He struggles and puffs his way into the blouse and skirt while the nurse puts on his jacket and pants. Then they tie her up and put her on the other bed.

"Can't you forget about Watkins for once?" appeals the guard. 4

"I say," says Willis, "We can't have these people shouting for help. We'd better think up some way to keep them quiet."

"Well, there's always those old articles of yours," says ShelVy.

"You mean, for the gags in them?" grins Willis. "No, I was thinking more of something like chloroform."

"So was I," mutters ShelVy.

Willis is rummaging among the nurse's bottles. "Here we are," he says, "We've got both chloroform and nitrous oxide. I guess ether will do."

He uncorks the bottle and sets to work. "What a horrible smell," he says. "Reminds me of that bad spell of diphtheria I had." 6

"Well, that's that," he says finally. "Now all we have to do is walk quietly out."

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1. In vanVogt's "The Changeling" the hero made his escape from captivity by making a beat bomb out of a 1½ volt dry cell. 2. This pun was donated by Bob Shaw. 3. Criminal slang for prison warder. 4. Fandom's current controversy was Russ Watkins' "Clean Up Fandom Crusade". 5. The Keasler zine which succeeded 'Fanvariety' after the latter was pilloried in Amazing for alleged indecency. 6. Peter Graham's "Willis Death Hoax" announced that I had died from "diptheria" -- spelt that way.

Chapter 9, Fantasias, Special Issue.

"Now," says Willis, "All we have to do is walk quietly out."

He unlocks the cell door with the guard's keys and is opening it slowly and noiselessly when there is a sound of rushing feet in the corridor and several men in prison guard uniform burst into the cell. Before Vick and Willis can utter a word they are gagged and bound by six of the strangers while the rest carry out the unconscious guard and nurse. The leader pauses dramatically on the threshold. "If anyone asks you who rescued Willis and Vick," he says proudly, "tell them it was Harlan Ellison and the Cleveland Science Fantasy League. That'll show Ken Beale. 1 It's not every fan group would have thought of overpowering some of the guards and taking their uniforms."

He has barely finished his triumphant speech when he is knocked flat on his face by a rush of his followers back into the cell. They are engaged in a fierce hand to hand struggle with another group in guards' uniforms. After a grim battle the Cleveland fans are all either unconscious or bound and gagged and the newcovers have captured the guard and nurse and are bearing them triumphantly away. The leader pauses dramatically on the threshold "If anyone asks you who rescued Willis and Vick," he says, "Tell them it was Allen Newtown and the Baltimore Science Fiction Forum. That'll show Dave Hammond. 2 It's not every fan group would----" He breaks off at the sound of running feet in the corridor.

Two hours and six fan groups later the cell is piled high with bodies and fighting is still going on in the corridor. Willis and Vick have given up trying to get the gags out of their mouths and are communicating with each other, and relieving their feelings, by kicking the hot water pipes. "I thought the Michigan Fantasy League put on

the best show," taps out Willis reflectively. "So far," agrees ShelVy. "I never realized there were so many fan clubs. I wish there was a bit more co-ordination between them...."

He breaks off at the sound of a pleasant female voice in the corridor. "Unless my natural born shellpink-type earbones deceive me," it says, "I is heared fan-critters talking Morse! They is along here somewhere."

The door opens to reveal Lee Hoffman, Manly Banister, Henry Burwell, Dick Ryan, Gregg Calkins, Dave English and Dave Ish. 3 They are all clad in guards' uniforms, and Manly Banister carries a dowsing rod. 4 Lee Hoffman looks in alarm at the heaps of recumbent and unconscious fans. "Reminds me of Room 770," she says. "Manly," she goes on, "Us is gone to require your Walter-diviner again."

Manly grips his hazel twig and picks his way among the bodies. It dips down over Willis, still clad in the nurse's clothes. "Oh no!" cries Lee, "Don't tell me WAW is a girl! No one could be so deceitful!"

"The rod never lies," says Manly gravely. "Lets's take the gag out of her mouth and see what she has to say,"

As soon as the gag is removed Willis starts talking, but they have to remove ShelVy's gag before they understand the situation. "The way I see it," says ShelVy, "is that every fan club in the East has found its way into the Chateau in the darkness, over-powered some of the guards, and stolen their uniforms. The whole prison must be chonk full of fans in guards' uniforms trying to rescue us and fighting each other, while the real guards are all locked in the cells. Just listen to that noise below; it sounds like a convention. We'll have to go down and explain."

They untie the other fans in the cell and venture out into the corridor, where they make peace between the Philadelphia Science Fantasy Society and the Atlanta Science Fiction Organization. Then they make their way down to the entrance hall of the Chateau, from which most of the noise seems to be coming.

The place is a milling throng of fans, all shouting and fighting. The noise is so great that they cannot make themselves heard. "I wish we had Moskowitz here," says Ryan, "or at least a stick of dynamite. Anything to attract their attention."

As they are wondering what to do the main door of the Chateau opens and two mailmen stagger in with a huge box. They dump it just inside the door and stand mopping their foreheads.

"What's in it?" asks Burwell curiously.

"Don't know," gasps one of the men, "but it must weigh a blooming ton."

"Hmmm," says Burwell, "The postmark is Illinois, And here's a number, 280, scratched out and 702 written over it." 5

"Open it!" cries Hoffman.

They throw open the lid. At first the box seems to be full of straw, with an occasional brick here and there, but they have hardly removed the top laywer of straw when an alarm clock goes off somewhere inside. Suddenly Bob Tucker's head appears. He scrambles out, removing the straw from his hair and rubbing his head where he struck it on a brick. 6

"Ha!" he gloats, "I made it."

He peers at the figures standing around him in the dim light.

"Who are you?"

"Well," says ShelVy, pointing out Lee Hoffman in her guard's uniform and close-cropped hair, "This is Lee Hoffman."

"HAW!" sneers Tucker, "You can't tell me that. Here boy," he says contemptuously, "Sign your name." He gives her a copy of SFNL 7 and a pencil. Lee signs her name and hands it back. 8

"There," says Tucker, "I told you you couldn't fool---- My Ghod! It is her signature." He stares at it incredulously. "A double hoax!" As the full enormity of it strikes him he sits down weakly on the box.

"Ah well," he says after a few moments, "Who are the rest of you."

"Well," says ShelVy, indicating Willis, still in the nurse's clothes. "This is Walt Willis."

"OH NO!" cries Tucker. With a terrible expression on his face he silently hands Willis the SFNL and pencil. Willis signs his name and hands them back.

Tucker examines the signature. Then without a word he creeps back inside his box and pulls the lid down after him.

"Who was that?" asks Willis.

"That was Tucker, The Man Himself," says Hoffman.

"The name seems familiar," says Willis. "Not the Bob Tucker who had the story in "Probability Zero" in the April 1943----" 9

Suddenly they are all thrown to the ground by a terrific explosion.

"Atomic war?" asks English, scrambling to his feet.

"Worse then that," gasps Ish, who has dashed outside to have a look. "It's Ben Singer and some of the Michifans. They've let off a bomb outside the Chateau and blown half of it to FAPA." 10

"That's torn it," says Burwell, "We'll have the police down on us in a minute."

Sure enough the scream of police and fire brigade sirens can already be heard in the distance.

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1. A current critic of the Cleveland group. 2. A current critic of the Baltimore group. 3. Principal supporters of Shelby's "WAW With The Crew In 52" Fund. 4. At this time Manly Banister was keenly interested in water-divining. 5. Tucker's address had recently been changed from Box 280 to Box 702, Bloomington. 6. In Quandry #19 Tucker drew attention to the high cost of hotel rooms, suggested that fandom should build its own Convention Hotel, and urged every fan to send a brick to the Chicon Committee. In Quandry #20 Rich Elsberry denounced this as a vile pro plot to get free bricks, said that Tucker should make his own, and urged everyone to mail him a bale of straw. (A group of British fans designed this Convention Hotel. The plans were beautifully drawn out by Bob Shaw, presented by me to Tucker at the Chicon and subsequently published in FAPA. The front elevation appeared again recently in Arthur Thompson's

illo on pg 23 of Chuck Harris's "Through Darkest Ireland", illustrating an abandoned hotel we thought would be ideal for Conventions. A nice example of fannish time-binding.) 7. New name for Tucker's Bloomington Newsletter. 8. Until Lee Hoffman appeared at the Nolacon fandom thought she was a boy and Tucker refused to believe her identity until she signed her name for him. 9. After the famous "Michigan Bomb Plot" in which some local fans let off a small bomb in front of Arthur Rapp's house, blowing out the front room window and bringing in the police, Rapp discontinued Spacewarp as a subscription fanzine and retired into FAPA.

Chapter 10 -- The trial. Confusion, Special Pre-Chicon Issue.

The Case of the State versus Willis and others," calls the Clerk of the Court. He can scarcely be heard above the buzz of conversation from the public galleries.

"Tell the ushers I must have silence," says the Judge. The ushers rush about calling "Ush! Ush!" The crowd peer forward to watch as Willis is brought in, followed by the 300 fans who are being tried as his accomplices. The District Attorney stands up to read the indictment.

"Walter Alexandrew Willis," he says sternly, "You stand accused before this Court that on divers dates within the last seven days----"

"What do you mean, divers dates?" queries Willis. "Mermaids?"

The D.A. ignores him. "---you did feloniously and wilfully commit the following offences, to wit: illegal entry into the country, perjury, blaspheny, resisting arrest, malicious damage, mutiny, assault, attempted suicide----"

"Attempted suicide?" asks Willis puzzled.

"Making fun of Francis Towner Laney," explains the DA. He goes on: "attempting escape, incitement to riot, sabotage, indecent assault, theft, transvestism, AND..."

He takes a deep breath and concludes grimly, "criticising the National Fantasy Fan Federation!" 1

A shocked murmur goes round the Court. Three women faint and are carried out. Eva Firestone is expelled from the public gallery. 2

Order is eventually restored and the trial proceeds. One after another the various witnesses are called and the evidence against Willis piles up. Despite a brilliant speech by his lawyer the case is obviously going against him.

"Mr. Speer," 3 says the Judge, "Does your client wish to give evidence in his own defence?"

"Yes," says Willis.

An interpreter is summoned.

"He says 'Yes'" he reports.

"Thank you Mr. Clarke," 4 says the Judge. "The prisoner may take the stand."

Willis goes into the witness stand. The clerk hands him a book.

"Take the gholy ghible in your right hand and repeat after me," he says.

"After me. After me. After me. After----" says Willis.

"Not that," says the Clerk impatiently, "I meant the oath."

"Sorry," says Willis. "Carry on."

The Clerk reads the cath. "I had one grunch..."

"I had one grunch," says Willis.

"But the eggplant over there."

"But the eggplant over there," says Willis. 5

"So help me Ghu."

"So help me Roscoe," says Willis.

"Ghu," says the Clerk.

"Roscoe," says Willis.

"Hhu! Ghu!" says the Clerk crossly.

"Baby talk!" sneers Willis. "I refuse to swear by the name of the false ghod Ghu. Furthermore," he goes on recklessly, "I refuse to recognise the jurisdiction of this court or any other run on the ghuist principles. Roscoe is the only true Ghod."

"You realise the consequences of this?" asks the Judge gravely.

"Yes," says Willis proudly,"Ghu is a creature of Oscar the Malevolent Muskrat." 6

The jury retire and bring in a verdict of guilty on all the counts of the indictment.

"Walter Alexandrew Willis," says the Judge, "Have you any last request to make before I pass sentence of death?"

"I was hoping you'd ask me that," says Willis. "Could I have the April 43 ASF? I'd like to finish "The Weaponmakers' before I die."

"Hmmm," says the Judge, "What twicers have you got?"

"Which one do you want?" counters Willis.

"July '40?" asks the Judge hopefully.

"No," says Willis regretfully, "James White needs that one too."

"You'll just have to think of something else," says the Judge. "I could let you have a coplete file of OCTWA." 7

"Isn't there a law against cruel and unnatural punishments?" protest Willis indignantly.

"Never going to get rid of that," mutters the Judge crossly to himself. Aloud he goes on, "There's nothing else you want?"

"No," says Willis.

"In that case," says the Judge solemnly, "nothing remains for me but to pass sentence." He dons the black beanie. "Prisoner at the bar," he intones sternly, "you are hereby condemned to be taken from this Court to the place of excecution and there to undergo death by nausea through exposure to "Fantastic Science Fiction"8 And may Ghu have mercy on your soul."

Willis blenches, but remains silent until the guards begin to lead him away. Then he suddenly turns back to the Judge. "Would you," he begs, "ask the Prison Governor to make sure that my Honorary Swamp Critter Certificate is buried with me?" 9

There is a hushed silence.

"What did you say?" asks the Judge.

"My Honorary Swamp Critter Certificate," says Willis. He produces it from the lining of his jacket.

"You mean," says the Judge incredulously, "You is a genooine certificated honorary swamp critter?"

"Is," says Willis modestly. He hands the certificate up to the Judge, who examines it respectfully.

"Well, dagnab and rowrbazzle'" exclaims the Judge, "This is sho 'nuff a genooine natural-born Honorary Swamp Critter Certificate! Lookee."

He shows it to the jury. There is a murmur of awed admiration as the great names are recognized: Cherchez la Hoffman, Rinocerwurtz of the Macauleys, Heinrich de Burwell, Sarcophagous Macguthrie, J.F.(Bewitched) Streinz, Seminole Sam Thomas Esq., Alabaster Jacks, J. Wiley Cat Burge, Paul D. Cox (conoscor of fancy fried catfish), Jay Tadpole Liver, Bob Farnham and Roger (Rowrbazzle) Aycock. (Printed by Vernon McCain.) 10

The judge beams at Willis. "Whuffo you not tell this hyer court yo was a honorary swamp critter, suh?" he whispers. "Could have saved all those heavydents." He raises his voice. "Honorary Swamp Critter Willis," he declaims, "yo is hereby discharged without a stain on you character. This Court apollygises for you inconvenients."

"What about all these other fans?"asks Willis. "They is all for Pogo."

"They is all freed," says the Judge magnanimously. "And furthermone in reckonpence for the wrong this Court is done you I hereby donates you this little ol' Chateau d'IF for yo personal use for as long as you stay in these Uninety States of the US & A, and for any time you come again."

"Thank you," says Willis, as the applause dies down. "And I in turn give the use

of this building free of all charge to fandom for the holding of all future Conventions, conclaves and conferences, thus making them independent of the Tucker Hotel. Of course," he murmurs thoughtfully, "it looks as if they'll have to have me over here before they can use it....."

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1. Some of the leaders of N3F at this time were showing considerable sensitivity to criticism... 2. Including Eva Firestone. 3. Oldtime fan Jack Speer is now a lawyer. 4. Vin~~e~~ Clarke was quite confident no one in the States would be able to understand me. 5. This phrase comes from Roger Price's "In One Head And Out The Other", a book which was popular in fandom at the time. Price's character Clayton Slope"had a clever trick of saying any conceivable sentence so that it sounded like, 'I had one grunch but the eggplant over there'" Hence the title of Vin~~e~~ column in Hyphen ('Grunch'), the subtitle of my Chicon report in Quandry ('Over There With Grunch and Eggplant') and other fannish allusions. Incidentally on the ship I went to the States on, a Greek one, one of the prominent items on the lunch menus was... eggplants. 6. This is the evil deity in the Roscoe theology. 7. Out Of This World Adventures, the promag with the built-in comic section. It lasted two issues, for the information of students of Comic Sections. 8. Probably the most tasteless and obnoxious promag over published. (One issue this one lasted, thereby proving it is possible to lose money by underestimating the public's taste.) 9. This was a certificate Lee Hoffman sent me in December 1951, signed by all the Georgia fans who were like most fans of the time keen admirers of Pogo. It was published in Q17 with a speech of acceptance, and the original hangs on the wall at Oblique House. I used to put the letters HSC after my name, until Lee and I went to the Okefenokee Swamp in September 1952 and sent poctsarcds to all our friends (dipped in swamp water) and I signed them 'SC'.With 7th Fandom and MAD (the comic that is) Pogo lost his exclusive hold on fandom's affections. 10. Signatories and imprimatur of The Certificate.

THE END

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