

Space Junk





From Rich Coad, of 251 Ashbury St. #4
San Francisco, CA. 94117, being
available for the usual reasons and
especially for old fannish fanzines
it's...It's...IT'S...IT'S.....

SPACE JUNK



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"I sound my barbaric
over **YAWP**
the rooftops of
the world."

YAWP?



Some of you, those of you who are particularly astute readers, will recollect a mention in the last issue of Space Junk about getting it out more frequently. You may then have chortled knowingly to yourself and muttered under your breath: "Fucked if he will. Fat chance." and myself, not being one to buck the ancient literary tradition tripping over your quivery vocal chords, stuck with you through thick and thin, fording every stream of thought likely to develop an idea, enfiling every idea likely to become an inspiration, bombing the holy fuck out of any inspiration with a chance of becoming an editorial. Yes, each and every delay here at Pudenda Heights was carefully arranged and exceptionally orchestrated to keep your mind at peace and Space Junk five's arrival long overdue. At long last, after fighting off oh-so-many infirm and pusillanimous impulses, the day arrived. Not a single person remained who could remember the names Space Junk, Rich Coad, Franco, Bill Gibson, The Fans, or Joe Nicholas. And I, here in my eyrie at Detumescent Depths, went to work. On Space Junk. Five.

Now, unlike three, seven, thirteen, twenty-three, forty-two, and six hundred and sixty-six, five has few pretensions. Tragic events never occur in fives, a fifth son is nothing special, hotels have fifth floors, the eschaton is not at all immanetized by five, the real, true meaning of the universe and everything is not five by a long shot, and three fives stamped under one's hair are about as terror inspiring as the thought of Mike Glicksohn with long hair and a beard. Five, it must be admitted, has absolutely no numerological significance. Let's face it, five is useless. It sucks. It smugly sits between angular 4 and curvaceous 6 like a squat, ugly, boring, inverted 2.

Yet far from being squat, ugly, and boring in this issue we... well, I...present a new columnist. Please note the stunning contoured lines of the typeface and the bold, incisive yet sexy, split sentences. Yes, this is Cheryl Cline's latest creation "Small In The

Saddle". Like her column, Cheryl, too, is far from being squat, ugly, and boring. Rather she has "sturdy German legs", "a good personality", and "a dry sense of humor".

As she tells in her first installment, Cheryl quite readily joined into the Space Junk oeuvre (Is that right? I really shouldn't extemporise in foreign languages.) and is, in fact, willing to produce very long, extremely witty, extensively rubber-stamped articles for anyone on request. She can do this because of her recent conversion from harried undergrad to bored housewife. Yes, here in Space Junk we publish all the gossip. Young Cheryl Cline has been stricken from the rolls of U.C. Berkeley for accumulating too many credits. And, rather than put her education to work as a bookstore clerk, she has chosen to list women's diaries whilst listening to decadent punk rock in her posh suburban apartment (with swimming pool!!) and living off the earnings of hubby Lynn Kuehl who spends his days turning large slabs of bacon into little, tiny, itsy-bitsy, teen-weenie bacon bits for bored housewives living in posh suburban apartments (with swimming pools!!) to sprinkle on their tossed green salads.

Lynn, himself, was once a fan, even co-published a fanzine, and had an article in the now-rare-collector's-item first issue of Space Junk. These days Lynn spends his time improving his Nick Lowe (to whom he bears a remarkable resemblance) posturings and practising his bass playing for The Steamrollers (formerly The Fans) who will flatten many of your favorite songs. Lynn is also vice-president of the Tall, Vicious, and Arrogant Fan Collective, as well as being one of the original members of Bay Area Punk Fandom (the Only California Fan Group That Matters). Lynn, unlike most of the other members, became involved in Punk Fandom for a principal: greed.

The basis for B.A.P.F. was formed at a Westercon in L.A. a few years back. Bill Breiding, Simon Agree, Lynn, Cheryl, and I all met one another there. Little monumental happened, except that Bill hit on the concept of Piss Fandom as the two of us stood in a swank bathroom simultaeneously swigging beer and pissing it out. Simon and I also discovered a mutual interest in what was then thought of as rather outre music: simple, straightforward, loud, head-banging, three-chord rock and roll. That set off a flurry of visiting, trips to record stores, and concert-attending. Bill, meanwhile, despite liking the Seeds, had been repelled by the Ramones' primitivism, and had retreated back to his slope-floored Bernal Heights flat. His later re-emergence was devastating. But we will come to that.

Lynn and Cheryl were to pull much the same sort of disappearing act, though this was more due to their isolation in far-away Martinez, birthplace of Philip Marlowe and the martini, than to any concious design. They did, however, make it over to my Oakland apartment, the one with the water-ruined electrical wiring, at least once. And, inevitably, they heard the Ramones. Instant adulation? Well, no. It was more revulsion but they stood it out like troopers. Then I said something that perked Lynn's ears up. "Lookit this," I said, holding up a copy of the Yardbirds' "For Your Love" lp. "Had to pay \$15 for it but it was worth it." "I've got that," said Lynn. "Cost 29¢ at the flea market." I could have killed him.

And this is where the greed, or astute business sense if you prefer, comes in. Lynn was convinced that that first Ramones album would soon be worth a small fortune. So he bought a copy. Then he bought still more "collectable" records, eventually developing a taste for the music's aesthetic values (Q: What aesthetic values are there in rock and roll? A. None.) as well as its potential for building a solid, diversified portfolio and a stake in pork futures. Somewhere along the line he turned from mere enthusiast to outright fanatic; ya wanna know who did the original of "Little Darlin'", "Stranded in the Jungle", or "Drinkin' Wine Spo-Dee O-Dee"? Ask Lynn, he knows. Now we play in a band together, he on bass, me on guitar, he pretty well, me improving steadily. So you'll hear no more knocks on greed as a motivating force from this corner.

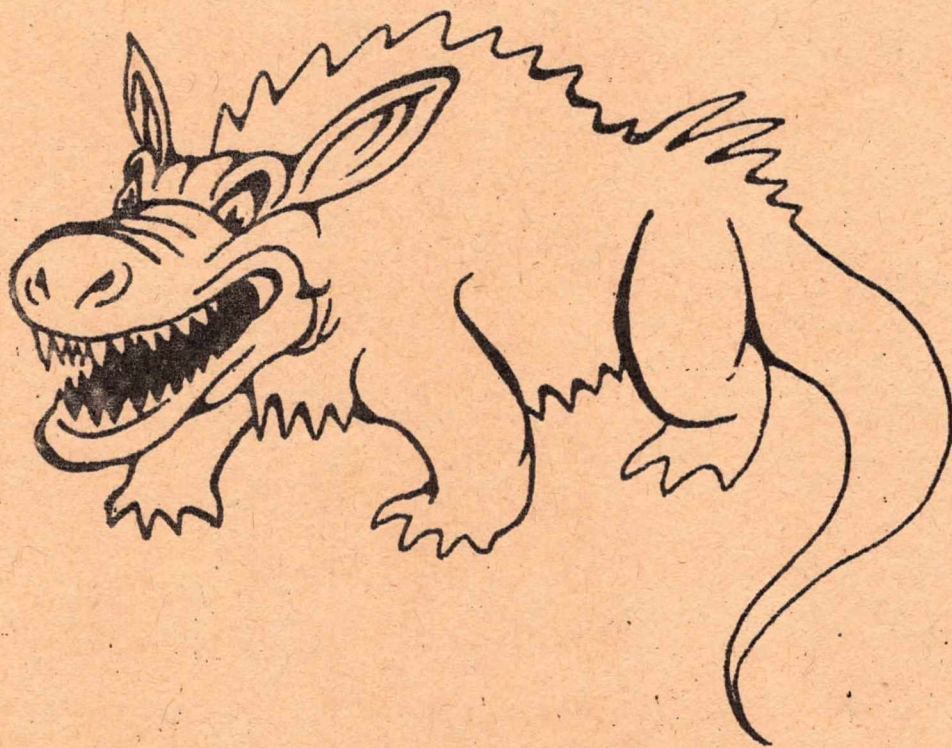
But that, as I say, was only the beginning of punk fandom. We were still far from being a coherent group. We needed a catalyst. Some one to provide the steady backbeat for the free-flying solos of the core. We got it. It came from Detroit. It was Gary Mattingly.

Gary probably seems the farthest thing from a unifying force that can be imagined; his method of communicating by a series of ineffable grunts, nods, winks, shrugs, and smirks hardly overwhelms at first meeting. Subsequent meetings, however, bring about an obstinate and unsettling curiosity: just what is this guy trying to say, anyway? A quick shrug of the shoulders, followed by a double tap of the left foot,

could mean anything from "I dunno." to

"Wittgenstein's theory that linguistic analysis of a language provides a good deal of insight to the cultural identity of the speaker; that language in fact influences culture as much as culture influences a language, interests me."

Inscrutable would be the word for Gary, but he likes to party too much. How can a person who does drunken impressions of Z.Z. Top be



styled inscrutable? It's almost a zen koan.

It was Gary's parties, at any rate, that turned Bay Area Punk Fandom from a loosely connected group of acquaintances into a tight bunch of buddies ready to shake fandom's hippie foundations, willing to call themselves The Only California Fan Group That Matters. Suddenly we were meeting regularly, trading witticisms and hot new records, going to Mabuhay to see the Nuns, the Mutants, the Dead Kennedys, leaping tall buildings in a single bound, downing tall drinks in a single gulp. Others began falling into the bad habits. Phil Paine showed up from Phoenix, spewing out bizarre facts amid a backdrop of loud noises and many beers. Bill Breiding and Patty Peters began to make appearances. Bill being Dreaming Charismatic Byronesque Bill, wandering around sleazy punk hang-outs with an expression of soulfulness and sullenness mixed together. Then, one day, Bill appeared with short, spiky hair. Cheryl immediately gave him a badge reading, "I'm cured! I'm not a hippie any more!". Over night he had turned from Dreaming, Charismatic, Byronesque Bill Breiding to Savage Bill Breiding, surly of expression, angry of word, true Steamroller material. Patty, too, shed her long locks, whilst proving herself true Techno-Punk material by knowing the

true meaning of "discrete" and "interface" and, also, faunching after a fast car to drive slowly in. This was B.A.P.F.'s Golden Age. We were a Force To Be Reckoned With.



Unfortunately, no-one else knew this. Something had to be done. "Let's publish a manifesto." I suggested to Cheryl. "With a few qualifications for prospective members. I think we should not allow anyone in who is more than twenty pounds overweight." Cheryl nixed that idea. "There are some nice people who are more overweight than that," she said. "How about not letting in anyone who splits their clothing seams?"

Savage Bill, however, soon agreed that we could use a publicist. "After all," he said, "we're a Force To Be Reckoned With. People must be told about it."

Which, of course, is the reason for the preceding.

Now you know Who we are, you know What we are, you know Where we are, you know Why we are, you just don't know When we are going to unleash this startling amount of talent with enough destructive force to turn all the soul-searching, inoffensive, fannish, hippy dinosaurs into quivering, mush-minded apa-detritus and FAPA has-beens. We will. Sooner or later.

And How.

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If you weren't to busy reading the hastily scrawled editorial above you may have noticed, in the Table of Contents, a section called "Up From The Deep". This too is a new addition to the SJ oeuvre. This particular column is dedicated to reprinting some of the best material from fanzines past. And, because of this, Space Junk is now especially available for copies of old fannish fanzines. Any complete runs of Rhodomagnetic Digest you may keep. If you happen to know of an article which you think I would enjoy, but can't bear the thought of parting with the fanzine, I'd really appreciate it if you could send a Xerox along with the author's name, zine's title, and editor's name, along with their addresses if possible. This will earn you my undying gratitude.

On vaguely the same subject: A lot has been written, in various places, about the "apprenticeship" of many sci-fi writers in fandom, all of which is well and good but missing, it seems to me, one essential point: Some of the writing in fanzines has been extremely good and is quite capable of holding up on its own merits.

That reflection set me to thinking. Why, I wondered, has there not been anything more than sporadic attempts to reprint great fannish writing? The only reason I could come up with was that every time such a project has been tried it's been in the hands of one person whose energy usually runs out fairly quickly. So, I thought further, why doesn't fandom form some type of consortium, with a rotating body of officials or elected officials as in the FaaN awards committee, who would then attempt to reprint editions of great old fanzines, or perhaps anthologies of great fannish writing, and then keep the things in print, selling them at various cons and through fanzines, with profits going to TAFF, DUFF and other worthwhile causes? I dunno, myself. So I thought I'd throw the suggestion out for debate and see if anyone else is interested in doing such a thing.

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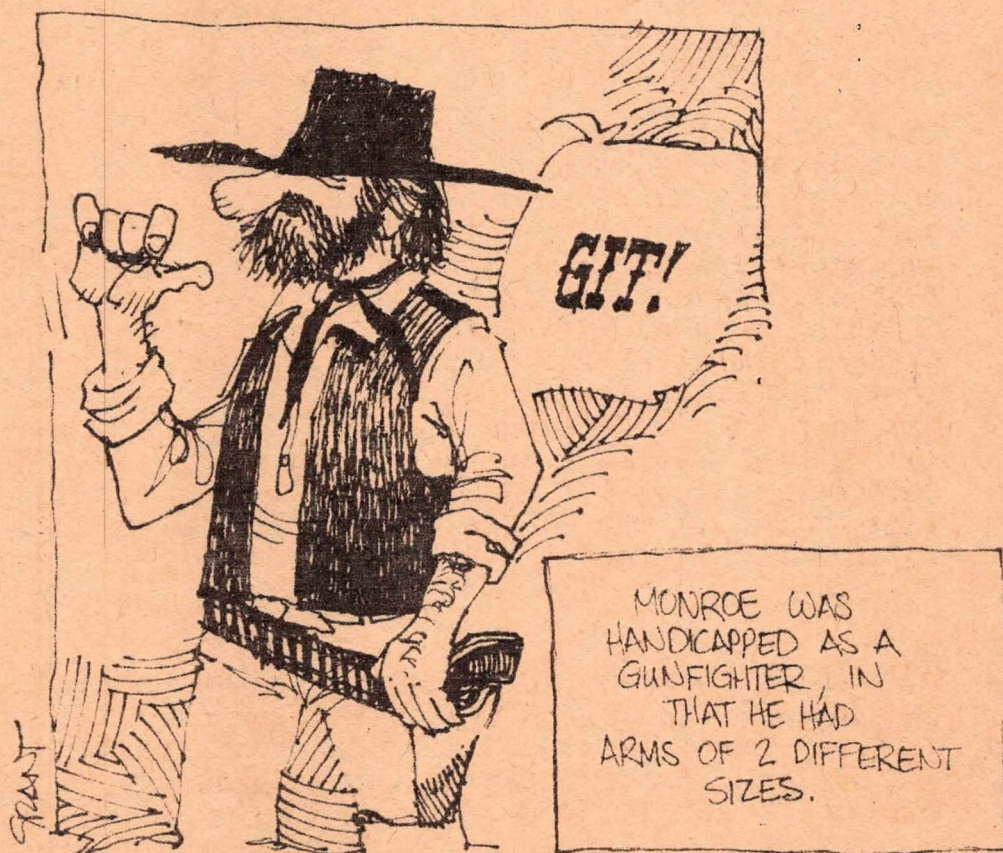
Fanzine reviews anyone? A few of you may recall some reviews by one Joseph Nicholas in the last issue of this publication. In his reviews Joseph lambasted American fanzines for being boring, bland and witless. British fandom, he maintained, was in far better shape. I heartily agreed.

Recently, in Ian Maule's Nabu, Joseph restated this view, using more than a few of the same adjectives and similes. I heartily disagree.

Let's face it, in the eighteen months or so since Seacon there have been scarcely any British fanzines worth mentioning: a couple of Twll-Ddu's, a Dot, a Drilckjis, and Rob Hansen's stunning comical-book Starfan. And that's about it. With only one exception Kev Smith and Dave Langford produced everything worth commenting on. This is healthy?

Meanwhile, in the other zines that have appaered from the old UK, everybody else writes at tedious, soul-searching length about "What is Wrong With Fandom". Abject mentions of the names Pickersgill and Kettle abound, almost as if these guys had done something in living memory. Then all hope for the future is thrown on the overburdened shoulders of John Collick and Steev Higgins, both of whom seem smart enough to avoid pandering to the frustrations of their elders and waltz their own merry way. It's all so pathetic, all this resting on past glories and worrying about the future without trying to do anything to help it along. It's all a lot like reading those tedious editorials in newspapers which go on and on wondering what has happened to the American Worker and why is his productivity slipping? Well, the American Worker is bored to death; can British fandom be far behind?

Here in America, however, the past year and a half have brought about quite a few good things. First there was Alan Bostick's Fast & Loose which set the pace for Dan Steffan's and Ted White's Pong. Telos, another Seattle creation, has proved that Seattle may just be the fannish mecca of the eighties, after all. Luke McGuff puts out Mollucca quite frequently; Candi Strecker's Sidney Suppeys Quarterly is an all too infrequent treat; and Cheryl Cline produced what, for my money, was the single best fanzine of the year in The Wretch Takes To Wrestling. And that's not all, Mota occasionally shows up, as does Raffles and Mainstream. And Groggy is appearing with varying delays. So, Yah Boo Brits. 'Ray Yanks. Til next time, have fun.



SMALL IN THE SADDLE



Cheryl Cline

Rich Coad is a very single-minded person. He can cogitate on a variety of three subjects: sex, rock & roll and publishing SPACE JUNK. But once you've gotten him going on one train of thought, it is very hard to get him off. Of the subject, I mean.

It was at a party. Rich had gotten nowhere on his first and favorite subject, expounded on the second until he was too exhausted to even think of the first, and had finally gotten to the third after a preliminary warm-up speech on the superiority of British fanzines over American fanzines. Suddenly he turned to me and said, "Will you write a column for SPACE JUNK?" Being a little deaf, I smiled and said vaguely, "Uh hun." "Oh good" he said, "I need it, uh, in two weeks." "What?" I asked. "Your column." "What column?" "The column you're writing for SPACE JUNK." "Oh. What?" "You're starting to sound like Gary Mattingly," he said. But he was beginning to tire of this subject, and, perhaps feeling a resurgence of interest for his original train of thought, he sauntered into the other room to dance.

That was not the end of it, however. Two or three times a week Rich would call, hardly waiting for me to say "Hello?" before demanding, "Have you written your column?" Being hounded by the Hounds of Hell is nothing compared to being hounded by the intrepid editor of SPACE JUNK. I tried everything to get out of it, to no avail. I had Lynn answer the telephone. "Hey," said Lynn. "Rich wants to know if you're writing your column." I left the apartment when the phone rang. I changed my name. I changed my sex. I moved to another town. I put code scramblers in my windows. I hired secret service men to wrestle innocent Avon Representatives to the ground. I shot down without mercy the drooling muttering dwarves that followed me into the subway. I sought refuge in a nunnery in Tijuana. I became Matthew Tepper and beat him at strip poker.

Nothing worked.

I wrote the goddamned column.

Now he wants installments for the next three issues.

In advance.

#

As everyone knows, there are really three Bay Area Fandoms. There is the Little Men, there is the old Pensfa group, and there is the sicko punk crowd. The three groups have sharply defined areas of interest: the Little Men won't speak to you unless you have three degrees in Aerospace Technology, the Pensfa group won't speak to you unless you've written a fantasy trilogy, and the punks won't speak to you unless you can tell them the name of John Lydon's old band. There is some overlap between these fandoms, but on the whole, they, um, don't have much to say to each other.

It has been said that the third group, the ones with the clipped hair (not the ones with the men's regulations haircuts) and the smooth faces (from shaving or due to the presence of progesterone) have little in the way of true extrapolative imagination, that they lack the facility of time-binding, that they cannot comprehend the importance of story-lines with beginnings, middles and ends. It has even been hinted that these people don't believe that science and science fiction is the way to the Salvation of Mankind.

This is not true. Why, they sometimes spend entire afternoons thinking up futuristic inventions that will someday be used to save the world from Aliens or the Russians, but for now have to be presented in fictional form.

For example, just the other Sunday, after stimulating their minds by playing songs like "Louie Louie", "Gloria", and "96 Tears" in an empty bacon-bits factory, Lynn Kuehl, Rich Coad, Gary Mattingly, and Patty Peters came up with the following wondrous inventions:

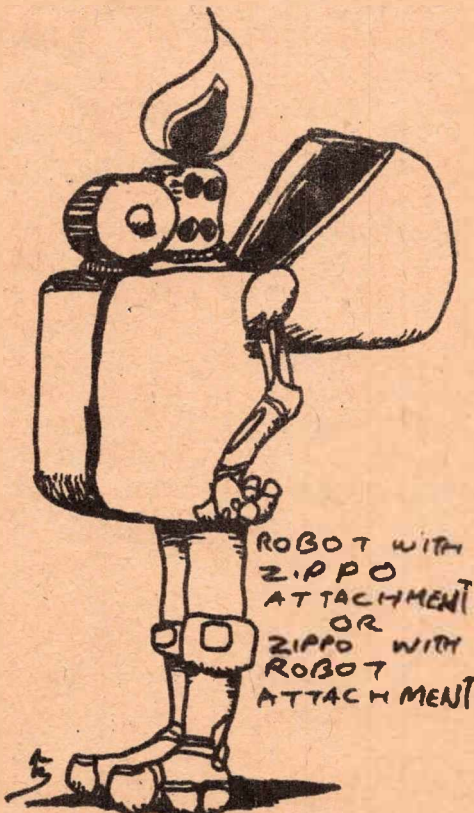
Lynn Kuehl: A guitar with a curved neck for people without elbow joints.

Rich Coad: The novel idea of training dogs to open cans with their teeth.

Gary Mattingly: A machine that puts grooves through songs you don't want to hear on record albums.

Patty Peters: Electric chopsticks.

It's really exciting. The four of them are collaborating on a novel in which an elbowless rock star from the future travels through time with the aid of a specially-designed time-travelling, curved-neck guitar. His mission is to foil a plot perpetrated by a Mad Chinese Scientist, which is to put grooves through the hit songs on popular albums, thereby killing off millions of American teenyboppers through frustration. He teams up with a jive



talking dog who helps him chew through top of a sealed metal capsule in order to discover the Mad Chinese Scientist's secret weakness: electric chopsticks interfere with his pacemaker. All the Elbowless Rock Star needs to do now is invite the Mad Chinese Scientist to dinner and trick him into using the electric chopsticks, and out goes the Mad Chinese Scientist, not with a bang, but with a murmur.

The novel will be published by DAW in the Spring of 1944.

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The group has its humorous moments, too. Take the Zucchini Episode. Rich swears he doesn't remember this incident, but take the word of Your Correspondent. It really happened. I was there.



It was at a party at Rich's apartment. As is usual at parties at Rich's apartment, Rich's bedroom was given over to dancing, and that's where Rich was spending most of his time, rockin' and reelin' and plying young mundane girls with Guinness and Gary Glitter. A small enclave of the less socially adept fans--Bill Breiding, Lynn Kuehl and I--had retreated into a corner of the living room to talk. As I recall, we were into a heavy discussion of the merits of red pants over brown cords and the muscle magazines of the '50's, when Rich dragged himself away from the dancing. He boogied over to us (actually, I think he was trying to Pogo, but after an hour and a half of energetic dancing he was having a hard time getting off the ground) and looked down his nose at us in a disgustingly superior fashion. "Sercon!" he spat out. Then he turned and walked away. We were very hurt, but we kept up our sophisticado facade and pretended not to notice him.

But later, Bill and Lynn had their chance to Get Even. The three of us were now gathered around the buffet, surveying the remains of the limp celery and spongy cauliflower left in artistic little piles.

Rich, bless his heart, was now having what appeared to be an earnest conversation with some very sercon-looking people. I casually took a swig of beer and stuck a strip of zucchini in Bill's pocket.

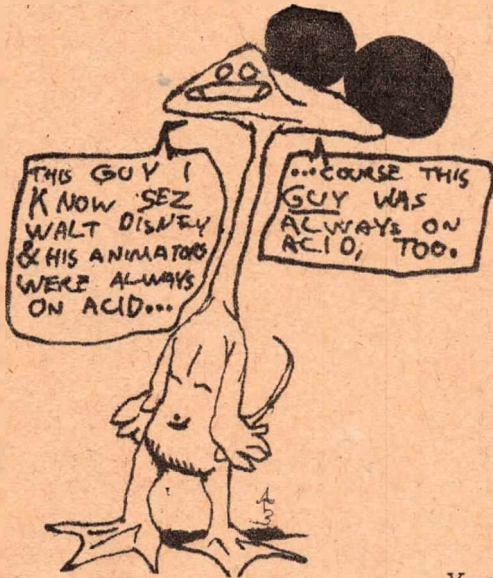
Flash. Inspiration. In seconds, zucchini bristled from Lynn and Bill like something alien in one of those sci-fi movies. Little green spears stuck out of their pockets, buttonholes, cuffs, collars, and from every visible orifice; over their ears, in their ears, out of the corners of their mouths, rolled up in their upper lips, sticking out of their nostrils. Bill, trufan that he is, even had zucchini rolled up in the brim of a propellor beanie that had appeared from nowhere in particular. Thus attired, they walked over to where Rich was gesticulating and making noises that sounded suspiciously like "sf", "John Varley", and "feminism". Bill sidled up close to Rich and said demurely, mouthing the words around a stick of zucchini, "Hi there. Do you know how much I'm getting for my new story in OMNI?"

Now wasn't that funny? A scream, huh? Now you know why so many San Francisco fans are moving to Seattle.

NEXT ISSUE: The strange inner life of a Bay Area first fan.

BURGERS FROM MARS part2

bruce townley



As to the rest, I am no more guilty of imitating "real life" than "real life" is responsible for plagiarizing me.

--Vladmir Nabokov

She turned and looked at me, straight in the eye, all in a moment. "I don't even know the first rule of First Aid," she said, in a perfectly distinct tone. Then she passed out.

#

Yeah, well, it was a funny feeling, let me tell ya. Sometimes (even most of the time) when look at my watch I think the same old thought: How can I BE SURE about the time? Not every single time but often enough to make it noticeable. The watch I'm watching now, the one on my wrist, that Timex even, the same one that John Cameron Swazey could have for his very own to test to destruction, even that watch. The way you have to check that its delicate inner workings haven't been damaged by some silly TV test is to observe the progress of the second hand on its circuit round the dial. If it's still moving at an apparently even pace then, as everybody knows, the damned thing must be working, as simple as pi. But...(this is the other thought that always occurs in the same situation) but what if the second hand has only just then started up?

You can see what I mean. Suppose, just suppose, that the thing, the watch has been dead for hours and hours. After all, even a stopped watch is exactly right twice a day. But just within the very moment I happen to glance at the watch's grinning face, in mid-tick as it were, the second hand, through some mechanoid miracle, something like a benign spontaneous combustion, has just coughed and nudged itself out of slumber, right before my eyes. Each tick of a normally functioning watch produces the tiniest of pauses -- how can I know, how can I be sure that I have just looked in on the middle of a tick and not some chronological zombie-hood just then ended, huh? So maybe the watch is working now, but is it working correctly -- was it working then? I wouldn't even think about asking some stranger the time; who knows what their watch has been through. It's best just not to think about it too much.

So get up and get yourself a beer from the fridge, Uh-oh, the light's

burned out; now it's like opening some kind of color co-ordinated coffin stood on its end. Why do they have those lights in there anyway? Don't you know where your own food is? Even so, an ice-box with no light in it will chill more than your food; it does a little frosty number on your spine too. It's that unexpected -- how many times has that door opened and that light been there... how many thousands more times than you can say? Last time it happened to me was also the first time I can remember it happening. That evacuated, glass-skinned, filamented thing musta lasted at least a dozen years. I felt like a stranger, even an intruder, in my own fridge. It was worth 94¢ just so I could be friends with my food again.

I once knew a guy with a face like a fridge with a burned out bulb. His name was Rubber Washer, or at least that's what we called him. Body-wise he was put together like Max Baer, or whatever the name of the guy was, who played Jethro on the Beverly Hillbillies. Kinda talked like him, too; at least they shared many of the same tones of voice. Maybe he even thought like him. See, Rubber was all for Capital Punishment, just as long as it was meted out to the proper people. Draft dodgers deserved the chair at the very least in Rubber's opinion. No never mention rapists so I guess they were okay.

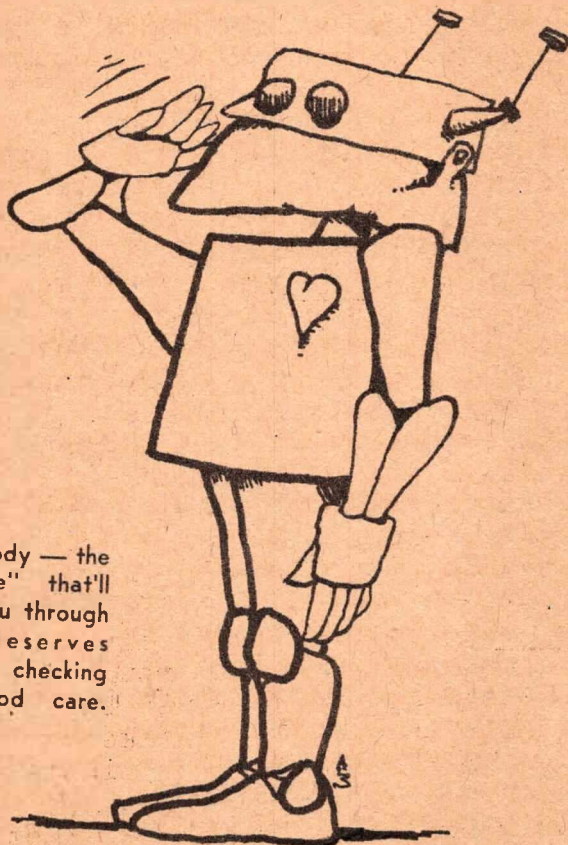
As it was, he could talk on the telephone for hours. This was quite literally true. Whenever an event exceeds its expected spell, slops over into the unaccountable, folks usually latch onto the most forceful term they first encounter to particularize their pique. They'll say: "oh, it took hours for the circumcision rites to get done with!" when they really don't mean any such thing. But Rubber could really really really entrap some hapless female into droning on with him on the dormitory hall pay-phone for, say, an average of three hours. No fooling.

So one fine evening there was a plot afoot. Seems that if we could find a way of attaching a tap we could get ourselves a keg of extremely cheap beer. See, the tap is a complicated bit of machinery and comprises about half of the rental cost of a beer keg. Through quickly glossed over means one of our number happened to own a beer keg tap. It was lacking one of the major items that attached it to the keg -- surprisingly like a rake who has been caught in the act by the cuckold might be minus his shoes after a strategic withdrawal. The major item that the tap lacked was a certain rubber washer. We searched high and low for something that would substitute (one fellow even notched out a circle from his belt which was, alas, just not thick enough). all the time squawking the litany: "rubberwasherrubberwasherrubberwasher". Just in the middle of these probings it happened that one of RW's bevy of telephonic beauties called him for a change. I answered the phone and found out who it was for. In the moment between my mind framing its request for my mouth to holler out RW's real name (which sounds a whole lot like Rubber Washer anyway) and the nervous receptacles that rim my mouth catching the same request, while in transit, something curious happened. This pedestrian electrochemical message merged with the previous mantra I'd been muttering and, sure enough, what I hollered was "PHONE CALL FOR RUBBER WASHER". Before any of the assembled company could get out a yuk over this chance verbal meeting Rubber himself came charging out of his room to answer the call, apparently none the wiser about his new label (or anything else, for that matter). The name stuck.

Then there was Stuart the Geek, who was great buddies with Rubber. They were a natural pair. They ~~met~~ together like Elmer and Gantry, like gangrene and amputation, like machine guns and imperialism. They complemented each other. Any and every chance the got. Who else would do it? See, RW and Stuart the Geek were personal friends with Our Saviour, on a first name basis you might say. RW apparently got religion after he'd pulled some dumb stunt in high school -- like stealing all of the wallets of the football team while they were out on the field practising. After they were done pummelling him, Rubber had a heart to heart chat with the school's waterlogged janitor (they were alone together; nobody else wanted to talk to the old fart, or the young one either) who was also close to Jesus. And so the janitor introduced them.

Stuart the Geek found Jesus, it appears, in much the same way most people find a disease like the flu. The crowd he was hanging around with at the time had been reborn without the benefit of a womb, so Stuart thought he'd try it too; or maybe it just passed to him because he hadn't been properly inoculated. Religion was a good thing for Stu the G. Since it says in the Bible "Be fruitful and multiply" that meant it was alright to look at stroke mags, too. He'd go striding down the street, in the one hand rested a well-thumbed copy of the Bible, and in the other a copy of HUSTLER, or something even more rank. After all, God's usually right, isn't He?

Your body — the
"machine" that'll
carry you through
life — deserves
thorough checking
and good care.



This guy also liked movies a lot and, since he was pretty articulate and I also like movies a lot, we would talk. And so it came to pass that for a while we were fairly close. StG looked a little like Christopher Reeve, the guy who played Superman in the movie, but only if Reeve, in his Clark Kent disguise, had actually been a waxen image and had been left out in the sun too long so that one side of his body became more lopsided than the other. Stuart had been slightly damaged in transit whilst being born. One side of his body was at least two inches shorter than the other. Took me a while before I found out his brain was the same way. Movies helped me to do it.

We happened to be in one of the same clubs when we wuz in collich. One of

the ways this club made money was by 'showing movies for a small admission to students who happened to show up for features like "Earth vs. The Flying Saucers", "THX-1138", and "Plan 9 From Outer Space". This club was, surprise, a sci-fi club. First time we showed movies it was a selection of short subjects borrowed from the library. StG got to pick em. He knew how to run the projector, so he was the obvious choice for choosing the movies, picking the pix. Nearly all of what he got was fine; several short films exploring the frontiers of film-making that were also a gas to watch. He also got one called "Blood of the Beast", which was all about slaughterhouses and cows getting poleaxed and disembowelling and neat stuff like that. Well, Stuart just couldn't imagine why folks wouldn't want to watch this important documentary film and where do you think your hamburgers come from anyway? We all had a pretty good idea of where hamburgers came from and didn't feel the need to have our noses rubbed in it in the name of Art. Since Stuart wasn't about to, the prez of the club stood up after the film and apologized for its inclusion. He didn't have to. The audience laughed in all the right places.

One time Stuart the Geek was telling me all about this convention that a friend of his was gonna put on. I asked him where it was going to be, at which hotel or motel in town?

"Oh, it isn't going to be in a hotel. He's going to hold it in his front yard." quoth the Geek.

"Oh. Well, who's the guest of honor?"

"Huh? What guest of honor? This is a convention!"

"Oh, I see." I said blindly. "Ahh, think there's gonna be any good room parties?"

"Room parties? What're they? Anyway, this is a convention!"

"Um, what movies are y'all gonna show?"
Hoping I had at last struck a nerve.

"Movies? Naaaaah, this is a convention!"

Now, I'm not much of a convention goer anyway, but this event he was describing was too minimalistic even for my tastes. Turns out the Geek's idea of a convention was spending all of Saturday afternoon standing around in some guy's frontyard buying comic books. He knew I was a fake when I balked at such fannish fun preferring, instead, to spend the selfsame afternoon playing a lot of pinball and drinking a lot of beer with a bunch of similarly inclined buddies in a local dive.

The last part of this trinity was the



Italian Scallion. Hey, don't think I'm a bigot or anything, it's just that I hate all foreigners, ha ha. But, really - the Scallion was one to give evn bigots pause, with his verbal fumbblings that, at times, reached earthquake proportions. One day I happened to be strolling by the same pay-phone where Rubber Washer got his name and there was the Scallion, apparently chatting away to some female friend of his. I could tell this simply because he was boasting even more than was usual. He was telling her how athletic he was; how fond he was of water sports. As I traipsed down the hallway I was able to hear him proclaim, with only the slightest hint of vanity, "...and I've done hours and hours of water scubing!". I wondered idly if it was a common practice to scuba-dive in fluids other than water.

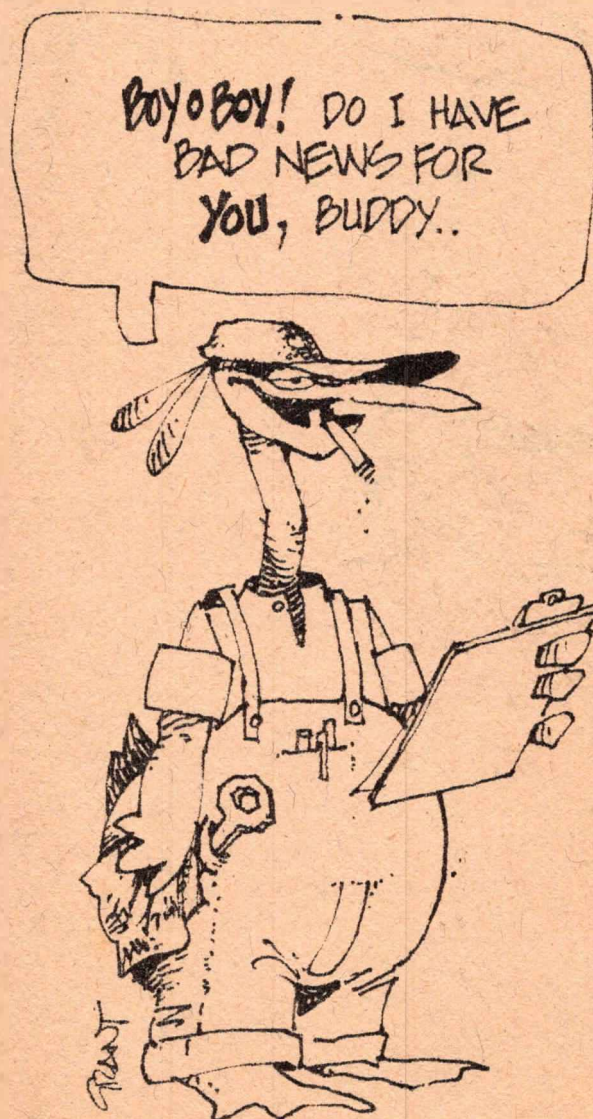
The scene then changes to one of our dumpy dorm meetings. A crucial is being decided by a tense roll-call vote. Suddenly it's the Italian Scallion's turn to cast his ballot in this closely fought governmental process. The person sitting next to the Scallion nudges him awake. How will he vote? God! The suspense is killing me! Finally, the Scallion muzzily puzzles out what is going on and votes! "Uh, I substain." Democracy in action.

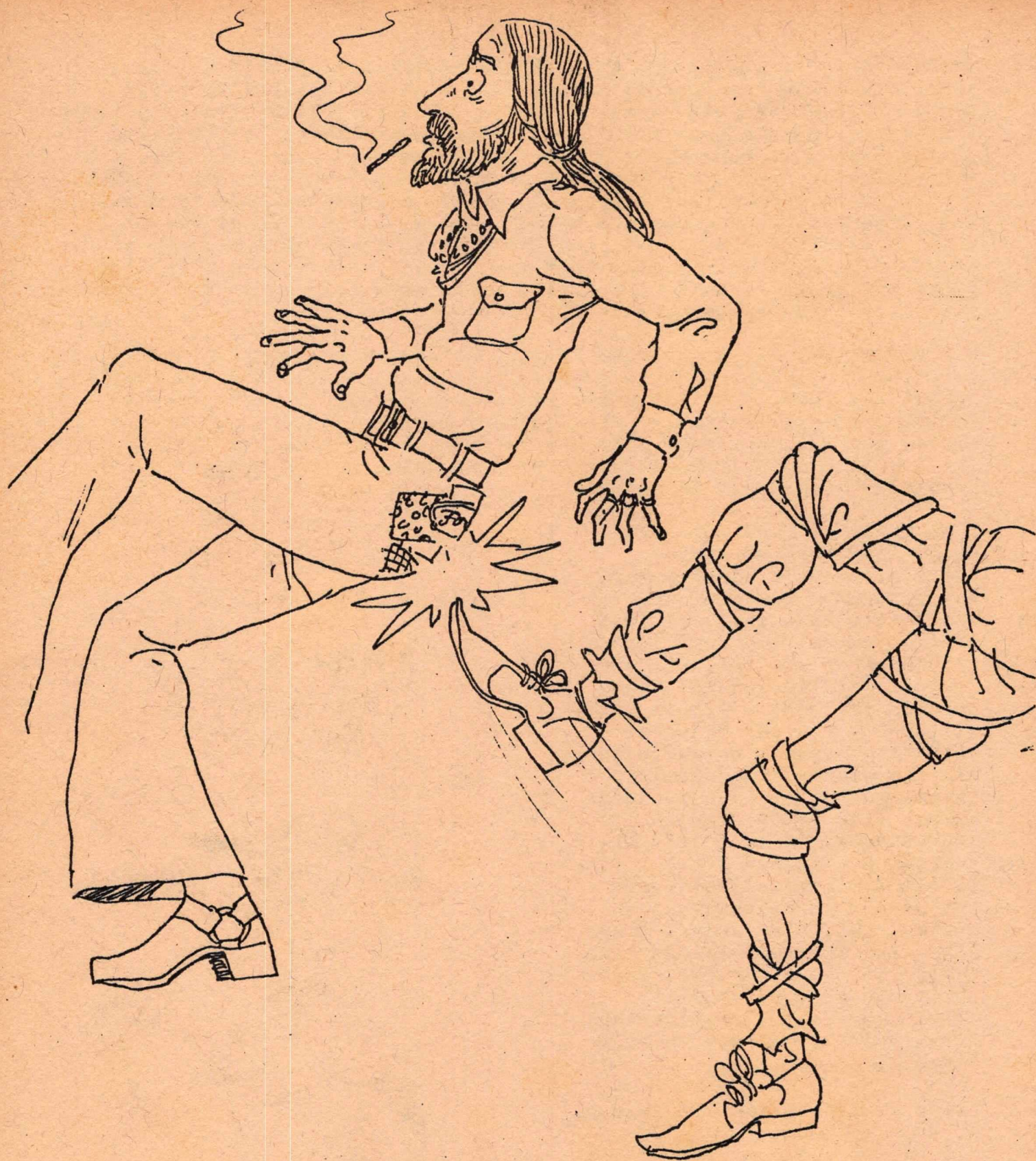
I never liked thes guys too much, they were so over-bearing, each in his own way. But I sure do remember em. Well, it's like this: in Australia you can buy real food like hamburgers. But, since it is an exotic locale, these burgers are just a little different. You can order em with "the works", which includes all the standard MacDonald's trimmings but it also includes things like fried eggs on your burger. Well, that's ok, something unlooked for but tasty all the same, like Stuart the Geek's know-how about movies. But, down-under, they also like to sneak things like beets into your burgers. These three stooges, personality-wise, had all the grating tang of an unexpected beet on your Big Mac.

Let's go places and eat things.

& & & &

Burgers From Mars part 1 was published in Bruce's personalzine PHIZ a while back. It is not at all like Burgers from Mars part 2. Burgers from Mars part 3 is forthcoming from Jovanovich, Harcourt an Brace having balked at the idea.







UP FROM THE DEEP:

RETURN ENGAGEMENT

Bill Temple

This time we were playing at home. The British Rocket Society began to trickle into our flat: the Robinsons, Mr. Williams, Mr. Arnold (with his coat pockets bulging - he wasn't going to be caught short of any thing this time), and several others.

Ego (an affectionate nickname for Arthur C. Clarke) was impatient for the Technical Director to arrive with a thing called a "proving stand" and went down to the street door to wait for him.

I took over the duty of host, and found places for the members to sit (which weren't always chairs), and handed round cigarettes, and tried to make everybody feel at home. I thought I was making a good job of considering their feelings, and that it was a poor show on Ego's part to have left them.

To set the ball rolling, I remarked to them at large: "I hear the Director's bringing the proving stand tonight."

Mr. Robinson said yes, it ought to be very interesting.

Everyone nodded solemnly, and silence set in again.

I tried once more. "I wonder how he's getting on with the coelostat?"

At the word "coelostat" everyone paled slightly. Some of them began to tremble reminiscently. "It's a b-b-bit chilly tonight," said Mr. Williams, in a shaking voice to Mr. Arnold.

Mr. Arnold nodded gloomily, and produced two hot water bottles from an inner pocket and gave one to Mr. Williams. "Unusual weather for this time of year," he said.

Everyone began talking about the weather now, carefully ignoring the subject of the coelostat and my faux pas.

What is it in these people, I wondered sadly, that makes me drop a brick on sight of them, as a sort of reflex action? I must try very hard not to do it again, to think before speaking -- or better, perhaps, cut out speaking altogether. Just nod and smile now and again, -- one could hardly go wrong at that, for everyone likes to be agreed with.

Ego stuck his head round the Den door. He said to me: "The Director's downstairs with the proving stand in a taxi. Come and help us get it up."

"We'll never get a taxi up these stairs," I said. "Oh, I see what you mean."

I followed him down to the street. The Director, in the taxi, handed out a strange machine to Ego. It was a very heavy iron thing on a base; there were lots of steel rollers in it, and there was a thing like a starting handle sticking out at one side.

Ego passed it to me. It was even heavier than it looked.

"Go on up with it," he said. I'd staggered halfway up the stairs with it before it dawned on me I was expected to carry it alone. When Ego spoke of "us" he must have honoured me with the royal plural. Neither he nor the Director were behind me to take over the relay.

Perhaps they were wrangling over the taxi fare. Perhaps the Director had to be carried up also. Perhaps to carry this up alone was the least of several possible evils. So I sweated up the remaining half.

I dumped the machine on the floor in the middle of the Den. The members inspected it curiously. I was gratified by their interest. There was a degree of reflected glory in being the first to show them the thing.

"It's very well made," said Mr. Robinson.

"It's one of the most well made proving stands I've ever seen," I said, quietly, making the most of my moment of significance.

And everyone immediately transferred their curious inspection to me. At first I thought it was respect for my authority on proving stands. I thought they were anxious for me to expand my remarks along the lines of "Proving Stands I Have Known." I'd almost thought of something that might have got by whe Ego blundered in with rather more than two armfuls of a large metallic contraption which looked like a combination of ironing-board and clothes-horse.

He indicated with his foot the machine I'd carried up and said: "Move that duplicator out of the way, Bill."

When I look back, I think I rode that particularly embarrassing moment rather well. I didn't turn a hair. It's irrelevant to mention that that was because I was completely paralysed by shock, even to the hair-roots, or that I was too surprised to register surprise. That was a reaction beyond my control. The redeeming part was the beautiful control I exercised over my return to life.

I said, "Certainly, old man," with the calmness of one who had known all along that it was a duplicator, but who had a dry kind of humor not immediately discernible to the slow-witted.

If I'd dropped a brick, at least I'd caught it on the first bounce, and made the action look deliberate and possibly clever.

The Director came in carrying a small cardboard box in one hand and complaining that no one had helped him up with it.

Ego's contraption was, of course, the genuine proving stand. He set

it up in the middle of the carpet. It had a metal cradle hanging from spiral springs in the centre, and there were iron weights swinging like pendulums on wires, and there were some peculiar dials, and four spreading legs for people to trip over. It was certainly a stand of some kind, but what it proved I just couldn't see. But everyone else was delighted with it, and kept patting it as though it were a dog.

The meeting began. Mr. Robinson, of the strong mind, was again the chairman.

There were three items on the agenda.

1. To test the new duplicator, only just purchased. For the Rocket Society had decided to issue to members a monthly duplicated magazine, keeping them informed of the Society's activities and researches. Ego had been appointed editor, and would also type, duplicate and issue the magazine.

2. To test the new, solid rocket fuel discovered by Mr. Arnold, who had brought along a specimen of it.

3. To test the proving stand.

Just for the novelty the Committee took the items in the announced order.

Ego produced a wax stencil, stuck it in his typewriter, and dashed off a few specimen words for the test. I noticed most of them were "I" or "my". It was the opening of his first editorial. I recall the first issue of that magazine: the editorial began on the front cover and finished halfway down the last page, and then there was a single paragraph (heavily sub-edited) from Mr. Arnold's article on his fuel, with "To be continued in our next issue" typed crookedly underneath it.

Ego fed the stencil into the duplicator, and turned the handle one revolution. The stencil was now somewhere in the works, but not visible. Ego gave the handle another twist. The stencil popped out of the place where it had gone in, whereas everyone seemed to be expecting it somewhere else.

"Very odd," said Mr. Williams.

"It must have a roller missing," said the Director, peering hard into the machine. Next moment he all but had a head missing, for Ego suddenly turned the handle again. Luckily Ego reversed in time to return the Director to us only slightly nipped. Nevertheless, the Director retired to the fringe of the crowd.

Ego said: "We'll see if we can get an impression from the stencil this time."

He re-fed the stencil, together with a sheet of duplicating paper.

Mr. Arnold said, diffidently: "Of course, I don't know much about these things, but I once knew a man who had a duplicator and he used to pour ink into it."

"Why?" said Ego. "Couldn't he get any oil?"

Someone suggested that as the idea was to produce inked impressions, the ink had to come from somewhere.

Ego said that was just a theory. However, he believed that Science should use every opportunity to give Theory a chance, and this might be an opportunity. He took my bottle of ink from my desk and poured ink into and over everything about the machine that looked as if it merited such treatment, and over a few things that obviously didn't, like my trousers.

Then he turned the handle, and stencil and paper were swallowed up. He turned the handle again, and the sheet of paper emerged from the back of the machine. Quite alone. Quite spotless.

The stencil seemed to have taken a wrong turning. Ego went on rotating the handle, faster and faster, until the brass rollers. But the stencil never came out. It couldn't be seen, and so far as I know, was never seen again.

"I told you we shouldn't have put ink into it," said Ego irritably. "It dissolved the stencil away."

I looked at the endless, intricate works and dark recesses of the machine and said: "Maybe it's got mice."

The Director edged forward a little, propounded a theory that Ego had unwittingly rotated the stencil into the Fourth Dimension, tried to prove it mathematically three different ways, got three different answers, claimed that he'd therefore discovered the Fifth Dimension and set down immediately to write to Einstein.

And so on to Item 2 of the agenda - the new Arnold rocket fuel. Mr. Arnold held up his specimen for all to see. It was a small cube, like a sugar-lump with the colour and consistency of congealed candle-grease.

Mr. Arnold said emphatically: "It's positively the most powerful propellant ever perpetrated, and perfect for our purpose," and I, in the line of fire, wiped my eye.

The Director snatched the reins from him and went on: "Of course, powerful as it is, our test cannot demonstrate its rate of thrust because, like gunpowder, it will not explode unless in a confined space. When we ignite it in a naked state---"

There was a loud cough from Mr. Robinson.

The Director paused, smiled feebly at Mrs. Robinson and resumed: "I mean, when it's ignited in its naked state, it merely burns with a big, white, pure flame."

His hands swept up, outlining the big, pure, white flame. The flame was too big. It displaced the large lampshade directly over the Director's head. The shade fell off and snuffed him.

Mr. Arnold seized his opportunity and the reins again.

"It is the most powerful--"

The Director popped the shade off, and said, seriously: "That's just

the trouble, -- it may be too powerful. If we use it in our rocket ship, we may not only get to the moon -- we may go through the moon."

"No," Mr. Arnold contradicted. "We'd only bounce."

This started a general discussion about the composition of the moon, and the discussion led naturally from green cheese to cheddar cheese, Cheddar ~~Gorge~~, stalactites, caves, mammoths, sabre-toothed tigers, ordinary-toothed tigers, India, tea, rubber, stocks and shares, and life in the City these days.

Mr. Arnold hadn't much staying power, and soon dropped out and sat down, moodily fingering his piece of powerful fuel.

An hour or so later, Mr. Robinson quelled an animated argument about whale blubber (does the whale know it's there, and can he help it?), ~~to~~ bring the meeting back to order, or at least what passed for order.

Mr. Arnold took heart once more, and said he'd like to test his fuel, to show everyone the big white pure flame that would prove his fuel was properly compounded.

So he put it on a plate on the floor, and everyone removed themselves to as safe a distance as the walls of the Den would permit. I stood near Mrs. Robinson, so that if anything exploded I could throw myself in front of her and protect her. Mrs. Robinson happened to be standing near the door. Not quite as near as I was, but then, I got there first.

Arnold crawled on his stomach toward the plate. Keeping low he reached out and applied a lighted match to the lump of fuel.

The match immediately went out.

So did the next. And the next.

Mr. Arnold pulled six cigarette lighters from his pockets, chose one, lit it, applied the flame. It went out. He worked his way through the other lighters. No use. As soon as a light touched that fuel it went out like a light. I thought Mr. Arnold's real inventive talents lay in the direction of chemical fire extinguishers.

In a sort of deliberate desperation, Mr. Arnold emptied the petrol from all the lighters, one by one, over the fuel.

Then he applied a match. The match hissed and went out.

"I've got an idea!" said the Director, suddenly, and everyone immediately became more apprehensive of him than of the fuel.

"It's quite obvious that the fuel will only ignite in its proper surroundings, and failing a rocket combustion chamber, that can only be a pressure tank," he said. "Moreover, with a pressure tank we can measure the power of the fuel."

"We haven't a pressure tank on the premises," said Ego, and everyone relaxed in relief.

"Ah, but you have," said the Director complacently, and everyone looked anxious again.

Ego looked at me, as if suspecting I'd smuggled one in. But I shook my head, meaning I hadn't and I didn't know what a pressure tank was, anyway.

"The oven of your gas cooker," said the Director, triumphantly. "D'you get the idea? We put one gramme of fuel in the oven. We light the oven, bake it slowly. The increasing temperature in the confined space will presently explode the fuel -- an explosion is, of course, merely rapid burning. But the oven will be strong enough to contain it if we use only one gramme. The expanding gases from the fuel will shoot into the burner jets and push the coal gas back along the pipes -- and back through the gas meter! We'll be waiting, ready, at the meter. And so we'll be able to measure the speed of the gases merely by reading the meter dials, --- the pointers will turn anti-clockwise of course, but we can allow for that."

"Clockwise," said Ego. "They turn anti-clockwise, so backwards is clockwise."

"No, the normal direction in this hemisphere is clockwise. Due to the rotation of the Earth about its axis, you know."

"I disagree," said Ego, flatly.

"It can be proven by observation," said the Director, calmly. "Sunspots on the upper hemisphere of the sun are vortices which spin in a clockwise direction. But on the lower hemisphere they spin in the opposite direction."

"I have observed them," said Ego, coldly. "You have given them in ~~an~~ inverse order. May I advise you to remember, when you next observe, that astronomical telescopes invariably present inverted images?"

"I'm quite aware of the fact," said the Director, still preserving his calm. "however, I can prove my statement without a telescope and I can even dispense with the Sun. I'll show you by direct demonstration, here, on your own ground."

I said, rather anxiously: "It isn't really our ground, Mr. Director. It belongs to the landlord."

But the Director had, it seemed, little interest in the landlord and less in me. Still addressing Ego, he said: "In the northern hemisphere of this planet, water running away down the wastepipe of a washbasin, or of a bath or similar container, always spins in a little whirlpool in a clockwise direction as it goes through the plughole. But in the southern hemisphere -- in Australia, for instance -- it spins in the opposite direction. Invariably. Now, if I may have the use of your kitchen sink...?"

"Certainly," said Ego. "And I should like the other members to be witnesses of the fact that the direction will be anti-clockwise."

So we all trooped into the kitchen.

At the sink, the Director carefully fitted the plug in its hole, ran some water into the sink, then dramatically yanked the plug out. The water simply shot straight down the hole.

The Director said, calmly: "I'm afraid that's my fault, gentlemen. This hole is altogether too big too give a vortex a chance to form. Let's try the bath."

We crammed into the bathroom. There wasn't much room. Mr. Arnold, to get a view at all, had to climb into the bath.

This time the water definitely spun in an anti-clockwise direction before it gurgled out of sight.

"There you are!" cried Ego, triumph all but coming out his ears.

"Just a minute," said the Director. "I should like to see that confirmed by the wash-basin."

He tried the wash-basin. The water went clockwise.

"You see?" said the Director.

Ego wasn't to be defeated as easily as that.

"This basin isn't symmetrically shaped," he claimed. "There's a bias in it that diverts the current. I'll try the sink on the first-floor landing."

Off they went, Mr. Arnold squelching in his shoes. I forget whether that sink was anti or not. But the game caught on. The members dispersed over all the building trying for themselves every plughole they could lay their hands on.

Sometime later I met Mr. Robinson. He said this really wouldn't do: they'd have to get back to the agenda. And he sent me out to look for them.

I rounded up most of them, but I had trouble in finding one pair -- they got into the bathroom of the maiden lady who lived upstairs. They'd told her, simply and truthfully enough, that they'd like to examine her bath, and she thought they were plumbers sent by the landlord, and let them in. I got them out without unpleasantness by telling her they had to go back for their agenda, and she thought it was some tool they'd left behind.

Mr. Arnold I couldn't locate anywhere. The fairies seemed to have got him.

Apart from him, the gathering was complete again. Its centre was now the gas-cooker. The Director put the gramme of fuel in the oven, and lit the gas. Then Ego and he stood on kitchen chairs, gazing eagerly at the dials on the gas-meter.

I thought, very suddenly, that I'd better go and have another look for Mr. Arnold. I found him in the first place I looked -- the saloon bar of "The Crimson Cow." He was warming his bare toes at the fire, and his socks and shoes were drying on the hearth. A pint of bitter stood at his elbow.

I said: "I don't blame you for taking these precautions. In fact, I'm more taking precautions too."

He said: "I really came here to carry on the research we were doing. I'm experimenting."

"How?" I asked.

"Finding out whether the beer runs down my gullet in a clockwise or anticlockwise direction. I'm on my sixth pint, and so far the score's even."

"I'll experiment with you," I said. And did. All I remember of the final result is that it was satisfactory.

When we returned to the flat, the worst was over -- or so I thought in my alcoholic optimism. The door of the oven hung open, from one hinge. One could see in the interior the tangled mass of molten iron that not so long ago had been the cooking grids and trays.

Ego and the Director were still arguing about the direction in which the pointers of the gas-meter dials had rotated before they parted from the meter.

The practical Mr. Robinson had already turned the gas off at the main. He was trying now to get Item 3 of the agenda going.

The proving stand had been overhauled and pronounced ready for action. Perhaps because I think more clearly when I am slightly alcoholic, I was able to gather the nature of this action. It was to measure the thrust power of rockets. These rockets were to be placed individually in the cradle hanging from the spiral springs, and ignited. The cradle held them so they couldn't escape: they could only press their noses against the front end of the cradle, pushing it against its tethering springs small distances which would be registered on the dials and translated into terms of thrust.

The Director opened his small cardboard box and took out a few Fifth-of-November rockets.

He said: "I must apologise for these merely commercial rockets which seem to be designed for the maximum inefficiency. Soon, of course, we shall be making our own rockets. But this isn't so much a test of rockets as of the proper functioning of the proving stand, and these productions, inferior though they be, should suffice for that purpose."

He selected one, put it in the cradle, and lit the blue paper. Everyone tried to retire to a safe distance, which verged on the impossible.

Suddenly the rocket came to life, discharged a stream of golden sparks in Mrs. Robinson's lap, looked very pretty for a moment, got tired of being just an exhibition, jumped out of its cradle in an adventurous mood, and came to investigate my face. I removed my face with perhaps a split second in hand. The rocket tried playfully to part my hair in a different place from where I'd parted it, and passed on to examine a picture on the wall, which, judging from the result, it hadn't liked.

"What a shame!" everyone exclaimed. I was touched by their spontaneous sympathy, and was just about to assure them that I still had a few hairs left, when it occurred to me that they meant it was a shame about the picture. But I was wrong. I misjudged them. They meant it was a shame the rocket had escaped from the cradle and spoilt the experiment.

They tied the next rocket to the cradle with a rope. They made a good job of it. The rope held. The cradle springs didn't. They broke. This time, rocket and cradle came at me together. I spun around desperately, and got off lightly with a burn across the front of my jacket.

"This is great fun," I laughed. "Pity I have to run along now and change my jacket."

Nobody answered. They were all too busy ripping open the divan to get some fresh spiral springs.

I went, still trembling, back to the "Crimson Cow."

Mr. Arnold was still there, only now he was lying right back in the chair, with his bare feet on the mantel-shelf. The table beside him was crowded with empties. His eyes were rather glazed.

I said: "Hello. Well, did you finally prove anything?"

He said, thickly: "Yes. We're in Australia."

"You mean the anti-clockwise direction predominated?"

"Dunno anything about that," he said. "But this bar's full of kangaroos."

Presently, I saw that he was right. We counted them.

Twenty-five, not including ourselves.

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NOTES: The foregoing originally appeared in Hyphen 10, a fanzine published by Walt Willis of whom you may have heard.

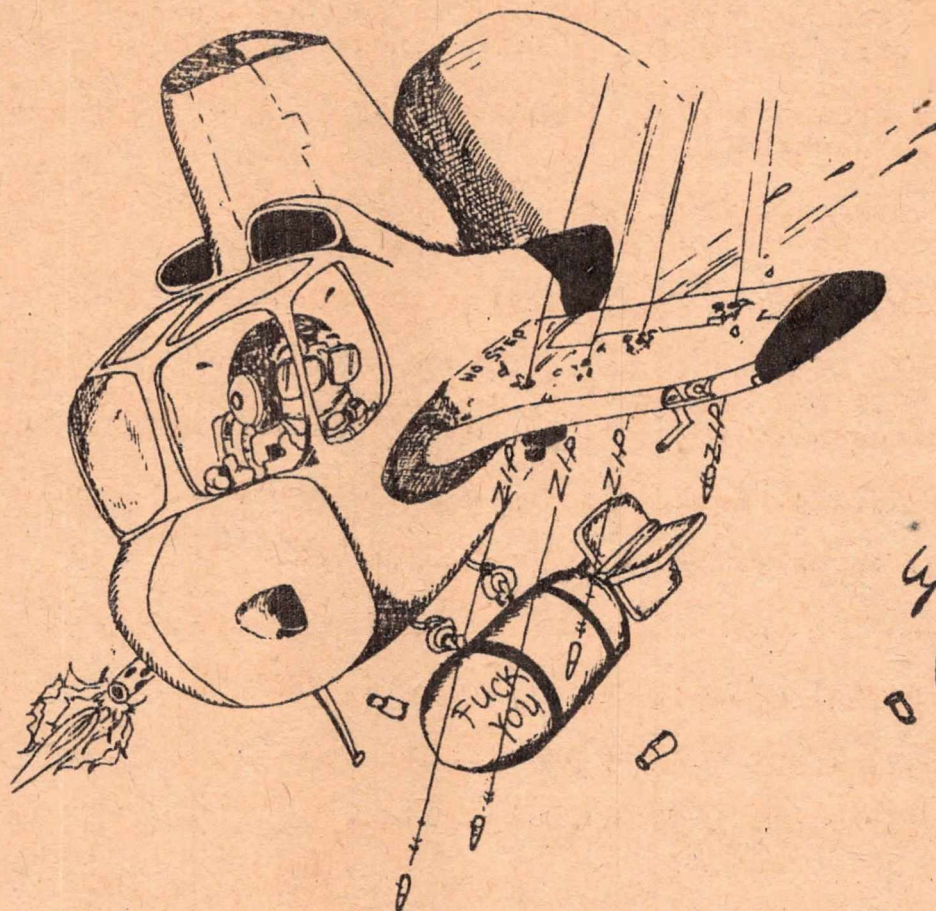
The appalling lack of illustrations in the foregoing is due to my vanity. I had originally thought I could reproduce the original Bob Shaw illoes. I was wrong. But why doesn't Bob Shaw draw any more?

The B.I.S. was the British Interplanetary Society an organization dedicated to placing Britons on the moon for queen, country, public schools and corporal punishment. It failed and was supplanted by the Austral League.

Australia is an invention of the Austral League. Everyone there is upside-down.



JUNK MAIL



4/7 78
[Signature]

Cheryl Cline
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Concord, CA. 94520

I know you were expecting another odd loc from me (What? I didn't say anything.) but I can't let Nicholas' column go by without comment. You say you want controversy? Boy, you're gonna get it. And it's going to be about feminism, so sit down, get a beer and a couple of aspirin. Ready?

Nicholas may be a witty, bold and honest writer, even if he does use fifteen words when he could use one, but he's a reactionary asshole. He spouts off almost every anti-feminist cliché I can think of; "humorless", "Castrating", "feminist party line", and has the nerve to accuse JANUS of lack of individuality.

I don't suppose he could unbend enough to see the humor in JANUS, or in feminism as a whole. He won't believe feminists have senses of humor; therefore, when he comes across feminist humor, it will not exist. You and I know how this works. Remember my joke about your joke about me being a "married type person"? When I "objected" to your phrase and threatened to do violence upon your body with a bottle of Guinness, another fan took me to task for being so sensitive about the language. I am a Feminist. Therefore, I cannot make a joke.

But he could at least get his facts straight. Surely he knows. (I mean, he supposedly read the zine) that JANUS is edited collectively by a science fiction club? And that many of the contributors live near each other and participate in the same events? Could this not account for the "editorial we?" In any other fanzine this would have been dismissed as mere pretention; but here, under the insidious influence of feminism, it crushes out individuality and threatens "castration and exile for the unfortunate deviant who has dared to resist submission to the will of the All."

Really, Joseph, you ought to work on your tendency to purple prose.

And why should JANUS campaign for abortion on demand? It is a fanzine about literature and feminism. Feminism is a broad field and there's no possible way any one person, or group of people, can devote their time to all of it. Besides, many feminists do not favor abortion. Have you asked the editors of JANUS if they do? Chances are they do favor abortion on demand, but have you asked them? There is, you see, no official feminist party line, so you have to ask each feminist individually, to find out how she feels. You know, like real people.

I hate articles like Joseph Nicholas's. It puts me all out of humor.

((Well, Cheryl, as what you have to say shows obvious intelligence and aggression I'll let myself be content merely protesting your attempt to turn me into a shadowy puppet dangling on the ends of your strings in that final paragraph. After all, it was Joe who wrote the article, ya know.))

Ted White
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Falls Church, VA.20046

Nicholas is entirely too correct. Fanzines for the most part bore me these days precisely because they're so bland in content. The "humor" in most American fanzines strikes me as witless or worse; the serious stuff is usually a doctrinaire transplant from the mundane world (feminism, et al) lacking in genuine relevance to fandom, and entirely too many fanzines contain endless but uninteresting reviews and rehashes of last month's or last year's books and movies.

I trace all this back to the late sixties.

By the early fifties we had thrown 90% of that Crazy Buck Rogers Stuff out of fanzines. The best fanzines were full of fannish inventions, such as Ken Bulmer's discovery of steam (pat. pend.), con-reports - like Willis's, which were intrinsically interesting whether or not you knew the participants - and latter-day Burbee and Laney. In the mid-fifties jazz and sportscars made their entry into the fannish consciousness. By the late fifties and early sixties fanzines were highly evolved and full of good, non-bland writing.

But then things started to break down. Star Trek. Lotsa new fans. "How come you call this a science fiction fanzine and there's nothing in it about science fiction?" Geis's revived PSYCHOTIC/SFR. Ray Fisher's ODD. Book reviews everywhere you looked. Richard Delap. The earlier book reviews were attempts to emulate Damon Knight and James

Blish and made a stab at insightful criticism. Then everyone got into the act. Segue into the seventies. Good fanzines were conspicuous by their absence from the scene. It was ten years between WARHOON 27 & 28.

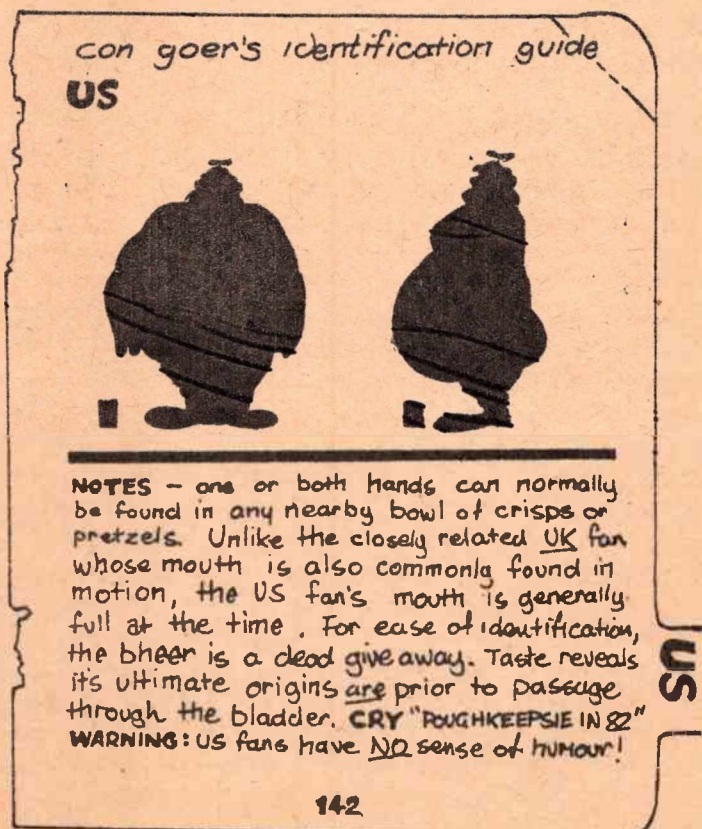
But I think this is starting to change again. I don't think a "large" circulation like 400 is solely responsible for current-day blandness; I printed as many copies of my mid-fifties STELLAR, and so did other fans of that era. No, I think it's because many contemporary fans just haven't realized that there are alternatives to blandness. Fans are a lot more "normal" now than they once were. "Normal" types don't stand outside their culture and view it askance; they accept its white-bread flavor enthusiastically. Their fanzines reflect this.

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The British style of fanzine reviewing is one I've always admired, but never had the guts or the opinions to try. As it is I've heard complaints that my sweet natured reviews

in FILE 770 and DNQ are too nasty, too pessimistic. Compared to Carol Kennedy's reviews in RUNE this is, of course, true. If Carol is capable of making judgements at all I've never actually caught her in the act. But, from the point of view of many American fans, I am a "heavy" who beats up on perfectly nice zines and glories in the violence. And at the same time to the British I've become a watchword, along with Brian Earl Brown, of the soft-hearted, bland, American approach to reviewing. A guy can't win.

However, I don't think my reviews should be dismissed so easily. If Joe will read my reviews of RUNE, STARLING and JANUS, for instance, he will see that I said in essence the very same things he said. My limitations as a reviewer are those Joe enumerated - my critical standards are left to be inferred by the reader, my pronouncements may seem arbitrary, and the contents of the zine are listed very much like a description of a wringer washing machine in a department store catalog - but they are the limitations of the medium. I write short reviews for a short zine. It would be hard to write ten page critical essays and detailed overviews of fanzine publishing in an 8 page DNQ. In a sense, the DNQ reviews



are the shopping guide Joe calls them. There is a place for this as long as the reviewer is a sensible one. And, as far as I can, I try to transcend the form by incorporating broader ideas into the review, such as how well the zine compares to its previous issues, what other zines it resembles, and whether or not the editor's strategy has worked.

At one time I had ambitions to writing longer reviews, such as the type Joe writes, but I've been writing the short ones for so long now that I'm not sure I could overcome the habit if I were given the opportunity. Nor have I ever thought about how I weave into a lengthy discussion of fanzine publishing reviewing specific zines like Joe does. Where would one start? With what idea? I have lots of ideas about fanzines, in fact too many of them, and once down on paper what do I write about next time?

It might even be said that the British style must give way to the American style on one point. Though the reader learns much about the history of FOULER, the epistemology of quality in the fannish context, and even the unspeakable crimes of certain standardized bad examples, one never does learn much about the zine being reviewed. After one learns that Ian Williams is an infuriatingly self-centered little twerp who can't spell and needs to learn to use a duper, and that he can only sit around the con-suite and chat up young neo femmefans, and that his job as a shoe salesman is perfect for one of his literary talents and imagination, and that his zine hasn't changed or developed one iota since issue one, one still doesn't know what the latest GOBLIN'S GROTTTO was about...

It occurs to me that there may be a very good reason for this lack of description. I'd imagine that in British fandom it is assumed that you already have a copy of the zine under review and have read it, and don't need it itemized. This is jolly good in Britain, where hard-core fanzine fandom can't be larger than, say, the fandom of a medium sized Midwestern American city, but it isn't so good over here. Moreover, American zines tend to have distinct contents, written by different authors, which deserve independent review.

Unless, of course, one observes the silly notion that Joe is close to stating, that the genzine format is inherently bad. There are, it is all too true, ~~genzines~~ that resemble nothing so much as a Dagwood sandwich of random fan-writing, illos, and locs, with no stamp of the ~~editor~~ or character of their own. As much as I like much about SCIENTIFRICTION (Glyer publishes my art) there is some justice to Joe's accusation that it falls apart thematically like a telephone book in a steam bath. Nevertheless, there has always been material in STFR to redeem even the most laissez-faire editing, which Joe has overlooked entirely.

I have to agree all too readily with his summary, that American fandom is every bit as bland and complacent as he feared it would be. Even our best - MOTA, KRATOPHANY, MAINSTREAM, BOONFARK, etc. - are somehow tame and overly mannered.

((Dare I say that the timidity of American fanzines is a by-product of the timidity of American reviewers? That the predilection to find

something to praise at any cost gives the editor a feeling of complacency that would otherwise be missing? No, obviously I daren't.))

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Let me explain that up until Very Recently I did not read fanzines. I had looked at a few and written off the entire genre as the wimpy, graphically impoverished, witless output of hideous fat fans with no interests in common with me; nerdlings who rattled on and on about dead writers, dead TV shows, their vegetable gardens and their vegetable friends, ad infinitum. My friend(?) Luke McGuff finally succeeded in changing my mind, first by slipping a copy of the WRETCH TAKES TO WRITING into my bathroom magazine rack (the one that says "Sorry Sold Out Of Fifty Copies Of The National Enquirer"), ---surprise, surprise, punk stuff and pink paper. Then he tried to hook me on harder stuff - a corroded, crumpled copy of SPACE JUNK. I began to smell a conspiracy - a fog-brained cult of California space punks, embroiled in a plot to subvert the mired and sinking fanzine-publishing world.

Oh boy. Can I join?

For me, the true highlight of the zine, the bit that inspired me to grab for the typewriter, was the Ellen Peck quote on the bottom of page fourteen. Most of your readers will doubtless read it, shrug, idly wonder where it came from, and move on - but I know where that perverse quote originated. And I am moved to speculate about your reading tastes, I must say. I mean, an ugly 16-year-old teenage girl in the throes of desperation - as I once was - can be forgiven for reading a book title How To Get A Teenage Boy and What To Do With Him When You've Got Him. But my dear Mr. Coad, what can your excuse be??? I am intensely, nay, morbidly, curious. Are you going to tell me that Cheryl Cline passed it on to you? And am I going to believe it?

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Bill Gibson's "My Life Under Fascism, or Franco Shot My Dog" is the talk of the town, so to speak (Well, I even read out a few paragraphs to some non-fan friends, and they laughed in all the right places, too). It's a fine piece of writing, and people found it anywhere from funny to downright frightening. Bill told me he'd left out all the unbelievable bits. Now that article would have been a killer. We're lucky Bill doesn't realize that these things he writes for fanzines could probably sell just like his fiction.

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Particularly outstanding was Gibson's piece in that it was entertaining (in a grim sort of way) and informative & propagandistic at the same time. It is nice to read a piece like this, one that truly reaches for an important goal. I should point out to WG though that while police have not been gunning down dogs in the United States, the police down in Tennessee knew about the KKK's plan to kill Communist Workers Party members but did nothing to prevent the six deaths and in Miami a black insurance salesman was beaten to death by police who were

subsequently found innocent by an all-white jury. It is still against the law here to be cruel to animals, so dog shooting is frowned upon.

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I was poignantly saddened by the thought that - as a middle-class white male living in North America - I have thus far been denied the pleasure of an in-person, full-frontal spread shot of the insides of a loaded gat. If I ever have said experience I'll be sure to write you an article entitled "Mike Hammer and the Smoking Hole - A Gynecological View."

I Also Heard From a whole lot of people who would probably have been published (especiall you, Jessica) were it not for my desire to keep this issue down to a reasonable length. Anyway, IAHF Brian Earl Brown; William Goodall; Jessica Amanda Salmonson; Bill Breiding; Jerry Baker; Lee Carson; Robert Whitaker; Mike Glycer; carl juarez; Alan Bostick; Geoff Rippington; Bob Lee; Janice Murray; Wayne Brenner; Bill Gibson;

Patrick Nielsen Hayden; Luke McGuff; Chuck Connor; Karen Trego; Jim Meadows III; Gary Mattingly; Mike Glicksohn; Arthur Hlavaty; Gary Deindorfer and Harry Warner Junior. Whew. And that's from only the first fifty or so copies to be sent out. Any more will appear after this colon: Gil Gaier; Andy Andruschak: "As for your zine, it seems a trifle bland to me..." ((Oh, my. I am cut to the quick.)); Bob Lee: "I enjoy drawing naked women..."; Frank Balazs; and Larry Carmody: "I have absolutely no arguments with Joe Nicholas' piece. (He said with as straight a face as he could maintain.)" ((And that, as of October 2nd (the day it hit 96 degrees in SF), is it. If any letters come in after this they'll be tabulated in the next issue, which will be something special. Guaranteed to be either one of the years finest achievements or one of its most dismal failures. You be the judge. For now, keep rockin' and remember the Shangri-las, the Bobby Fuller Four, the Shadows of Knight, Gene Vincent and Ian Dury or BE SQUARE!!!))



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