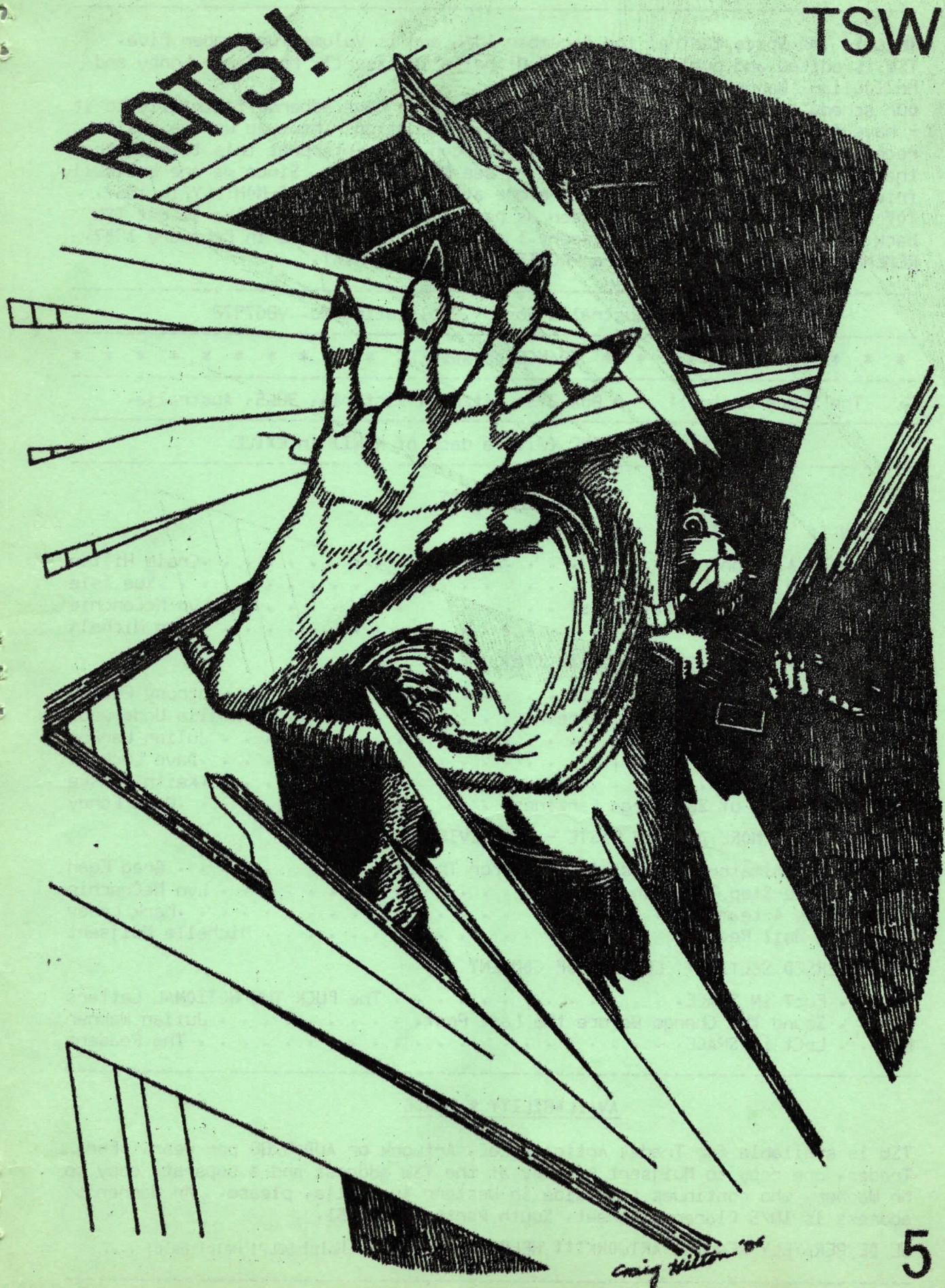


TSW





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## RAT ATTACK!!

## A GROSS ISSUE

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This is The Space Wastrel for December 1986 and is Volume Two Number Five. TSW is edited and published by {Ms} Michelle {Muijsert}, Mr {Mark} Loney and Mr {Julian} Warner.

Our schedule this year has been quarterly and we have adhered faithfully to it - have in fact been somewhat ahead of it on occasion - however we are still receiving complaints about FREQUENCY. We can only interpret this to mean that there are people out there who want to see MORE of TSW. Since we are basically friendly and obliging, we are therefore attempting to go BI-MONTHLY in 1987. {Of course this could also be seen as being motivated by a desire to get TSW back into a cheaper postal category.} Anyway, expect TSW 6 in February 1987. REMEMBER THOUGH, this is not a PROMISE, merely a THREAT.

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\* \* \* \* \* CHANGE OF ADDRESS \* \* \* \* \*

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The Space Wastrel: P O Box 273, Fitzroy, Victoria, 3065, Australia.

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Strictly a WA ZINE {with a dash of KIWI} in EXILE

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### AVAILABILITY & TRADE

TSW is available for Trade, Article, LoC, Artwork or AUD\$9.00 per year. For Trades, one copy to Muijsert & Loney at the TSW address and a separate copy to Mr Warner, who continues to reside in Western Australia, please. Mr Warner's address is 10/5 Clarence Street, South Perth, WA, 6151.

WE DESPERATELY REQUIRE ARTWORK!!! HELP! Help! Help! Help! HELP! Help! help! ....

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# in all innocence.....

-----Craig Hilton-----

Before you, the reader, condemn me by my testimony, I beg you consider my age. I was young and foolish, a hapless vagrant in that formative stage of life through which we must all chance our way, where fantasy is reality by due of the fact that we have barely looked over the Operating Manual for the world. Yes, my friends, I herewith confess my crime against nature, I lay bare the facts of that incident on one grim day in Adelaide - one tragic day - at the tender age of four years.

My memories of the unpretentious suburb Marden, cradle of my early years, are clear, at least within bounds of the territory I felt free to wander those days in simple exploration. I had many friends then, near and far. One friend who lived just a few houses down the street was a boy you will hear of shortly named Christopher.

It was one morning that I set off to pay a visit to Christopher, down the tree-lined footpath of Harris Street. The trees might have been cape lilacs, as I clearly remember once picking up one of their small, round, pale yellow berries and jamming it into the barrel of my cowboy gun, honestly expecting it to fire when I pulled the trigger. My disappointment when it didn't was immense, and that firm, stubborn berry remained lodged out of the reach of fumbling fingers as an object lesson in the basic laws of reality. When at a much later stage it suddenly did disappear I naturally assumed it was because I finally managed to wish hard enough.

Christopher's house, like all others in the street, stood behind a small gate in a white picket fence, and like all others in the street it was a prefabricated job, weatherboard on stilt-like slabs, guarding underneath it a frightening jungle of Lawn that was Never Mowed.

His mother had gone out for a while, and the unimportant members of his family were elsewhere, so Christopher was all alone when I found him. No problem. We made good to play away summer's shapeless hours. Very soon though, even by my judgements, we ran short of things to do and found ourselves idly stuffing the gravel driveway beside his porch.

Christopher had a sudden thought. His face lit up as he proudly informed me that he owned a pair of pet white mice. They could have existed for no better reason than this one moment, and I waited in anticipation as my friend went off to collect them. Presently he was back clutching a small box, the occupants of which promised to solve the flat boredom of the hours facing us.

I had never seen mice before. I had only the faintest notion of what they looked like, how they worked, what batteries they used, and as for Pets I was totally ignorant of their Conditions of Service. But fundamentally the question that began to grow in our minds as both Christopher and I sat staring down into the corner of the box at the small, furry, petrified creatures returning our stare with two sets of beady red eyes, was, essentially, "What do they do?"



Craig Hilton/In All Innocence.....

"I know," said Christopher. "Let's give them a bath."

It sounded reasonable.

Off he went again, returning shortly with a red plastic doll's bath belonging to his sister. We topped it up from the garden hose and set to work. The first unwilling mouse received our earnest attentions, splashing and bubbling away as we soaked it in the depths of our impressions of a good, clean, healthy ablution. We found that the more we held it down, the more excited it would become, until finally we lifted out the miserable, bedraggled creature to assess our handiwork.

It didn't look good.

Baths, we knew, were Good things, from which you emerge a happier, revitalised person. Mister Mouse, by contrast, was now distinctly miserable and lethargic, if not to say downright uninterested, and his soft white fur was sodden and quite disturbingly spiky. Something had not gone right.

We decided to try again.

Christopher's second pet mouse carried on much the same as the first. I began to feel a sneaking suspicion that this one, too, would end up offensively wet and still, which in fact it did. By this stage, if he had a third mouse we would have drowned it only with extreme reluctance and scepticism.

But there they both were - wet, spiky and listless - quite unmouselike, even by my standards. What to do? The answer was obvious to us both, and so we joined efforts in laying the mice on the ground, covering them with a plank and jumping up and down on it to squeeze the water out.

I peeled back the plank.

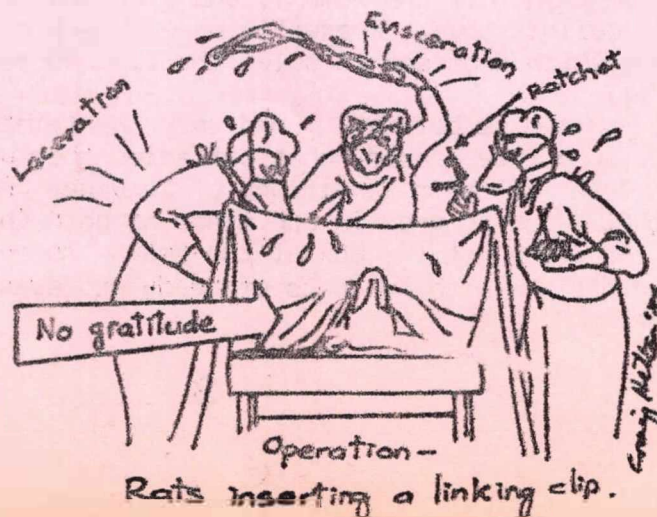
It looked worse.

Just then, Christopher's mother arrived home. I was beginning to get a very bad feeling about this.

I have sketchy memories of vaulting his front fence at speed and tearing back up Harris Street, fleeing the horrified screams of that most dreaded of creatures, an anguished mother. My recollection of events before and after this traumatic day are recedingly dim - Dr Freud might have supplied a pertinent comment here - in fact to my knowledge this all occurred when I was as young as I can possibly remember.

Can you forgive me?

«» «» «»





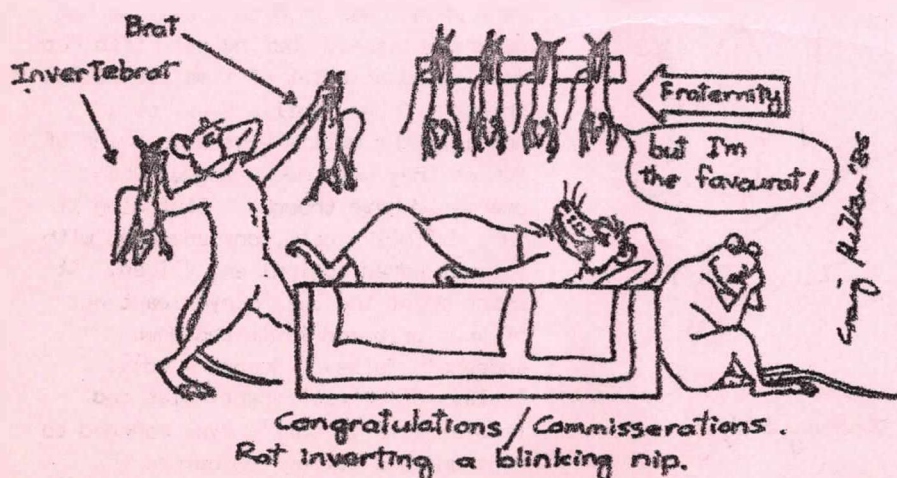
# RATS & RAT FANS

By SUE ISLE

I began to keep rats at the same time as I found fandom. Both experiences have changed my life. Not so much for the better as for the distinctly stranger.... There were experiences such as chatting for an hour or so at WorldCon with the only person to fight (and win) a court-case to keep rats in his flat. His name is John Packer, and whenever I hear it mentioned, rats are somewhere in the sentence.

Rats do not appreciate science fiction. I once brought mine to a WASFA meeting where films were to be shown, thinking they would sleep quietly in my jumper the way they did at home. I ended up losing them for several hours in Craig Hilton's car. Craig, I will mention, is a Rat Artist and author of immortal quotes such as, "Life's short enough anyway. Why prolong it?" spoken by a vicious looking rodent armed with a machine gun and ammo belt. I believe he's a doctor in his spare time. {Craig!}

Over five years I have kept eighteen rats. Not all were intentional. Ivan was replaced by Boris (who half killed the guinea pig and went back to the shop) who was replaced by Adolf and Rudolf, who were replaced by Keira (over whom I nearly was challenged by the SCA seneschall) who was replaced by Matt and Keth. Here it was supposed to end. Unfortunately the owner of the pet shop and I had made a slight error. This resulted in the pitter-patter of thirty-two little paws, and an increase in residents for the pet shop owner. Matt, however, was a randy little rodent, and I hadn't moved quite fast enough. Keth (renamed Kera) had more kids 28 days later. She was as upset about this as I was, perhaps more so, for only three of them survived their emergence. Come on - it's a rat's only means of birth control!



The moral of the story - don't keep a pair of rats. They're quite capable of populating a city-full of rats inside of a year.

Recently I wondered whether rats could not be put to some practical use. After all, there was a garden-full

of snails out there. A ball of leather thonging plus a very frazzled rat later told me why nobody had thought of this before. There's no money in the rat-harness business.

{{The harness is supposed to go on the rat, which is then released into the garden to catch snails. Theoretically anyway.}}



Rats are handy to use as an excuse for typos. They love electronic typewriters. They are not much good at learning how to type but they make wonderful mistakes. They will retrieve one's paper from the bin and hide it under the cupboard. They will also store food inside one's folded shirts for that hungry time just after midnight. Rats love sharing. If you are reading a book they will come and sit on it to find out what is so fascinating. Yes - that is tasty paper. If you have thick curly hair they will have fun running over your head and falling off the front, for hours at a time. Rats are great to read your stories to when no one else will listen.

The last thing I have to add is that they are great pets for a fan lifestyle. They can fit in a small space, so long as they're allowed out for exercise. They can live in flats {thanks to John Packer's efforts}. They are good to keep away unwanted visitors. {Be careful of your feet/clothes/hair, the rats are loose!} They are entertaining and good for depressed people. It's hard to stay depressed when there is somebody bouncing around having fun just being a rat.

My friend at the Vic Park Cuddly Pets Shop has a shopful of them.....



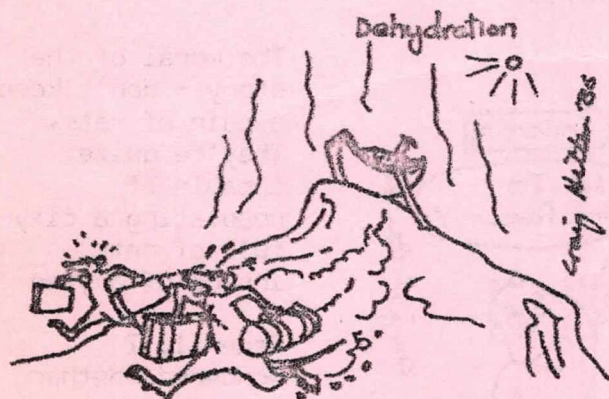
Rational and Literat

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## CATS, RATS AND GOING BATS!

Anecdotes of a Life with Animals by Lyn McConchie

\* \* \* \* \*



Ararat -  
Rats deserting a sinking ship

### Part One

Back when I was in High School we had science classes. During our Fifth Form year we spent a lot of time dissecting things - frogs, bull's eyes, etc. Actually the bull's eyes were a lot of fun as they were much tougher than one would have thought. Clutching it in a deathlike grip, one advanced with a razor edged scalpel and sliced. At which point the bull's eye leapt out of your grip and levitated down someone's jersey ((jumper - ed)). A class of 28 adolescent males and females with 14 bull's eyes managed to have quite a lot of fun before the teacher broke it up.

After that we went on to frogs which weren't fun, and guinea pigs which were. Not that they were meant to be - that part was accidental, although the teacher suspected sabotage. Our science teacher was a very attractive lady with flaming red hair and (thank Chu) a sense of humour. We arrived on the Tuesday and discovered that we were to be dissecting guinea pigs. A demonstration



## Lyn McConchie/Cats, Rats and Going Bats!-----

one was plonked on the tutor's bench and, scalpel in hand, she advanced. The guinea pig opened its eyes, took one look at her and the scalpel, and came to life at great speed. With a despairing squeal it raced down the bench and took refuge behind the bunsen burner, peering out with eyes like poached eggs at an hysterical class. Apparently the chloroforming hadn't been done properly. Since we all sued for clemency on its behalf, Miss Robinson reprieved it and it was instead kept as the live study specimen, subsequently surviving many years as a class pet.

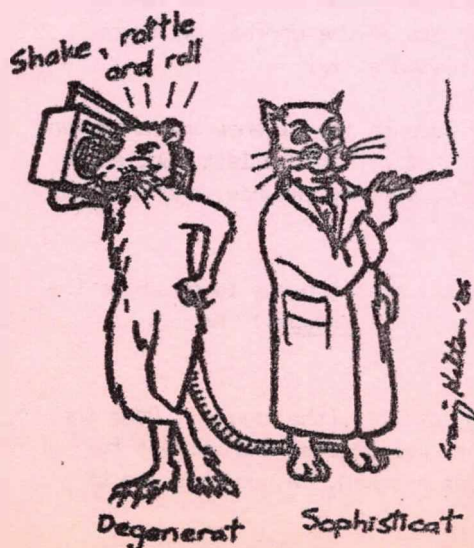
For those of you who are wondering where the Heck rats come in.... they come in right here! Throughout the year we had been taking care of six white rats in this class. They were tame and most of us handled them freely, letting them run up our arms and feeding them tidbits. Really, we should have known, but somehow it never occurred to any of us that they were intended for dissection. It came therefore, as a horrible shock to be informed that they would be the pièce de résistance in the final class at the end of the second term.

By this time we had been caring for them nearly six months and even those who weren't too crazy about a sleeve full of rats still liked them enough not to care for the idea of dissecting them. There was a quick conference and I was elected to sneak into the classroom after school and release the lot. I did, and for weeks the rats drove the caretaker and teachers mad by appearing in classrooms and corridors. Having got their freedom they intended to keep it, but they were still attached to the nice things people could offer, so they hung around. Eventually they vanished, but a friend who remained at the school another two years reported that piebald/skewbald rats were now being caught from time to time by the caretaker. Our rats had survived into the second and third generations, it seemed. This may or may not be true - what is, is that we inadvertently set up an urban myth in which the story of the freed rats is still told; and I was recently assured that parti-coloured rats are still to be seen in the school grounds sometimes.

It was several years before I met another member of the Rat Tribe. Oddly enough, this was again at school when I returned as an old girl to present a cheque on behalf of several of us to the school library.

I was strolling down the corridor with the Headmaster, commenting on the changes over the last six years, when a commotion rounded the corner. That is the only way I can describe what we saw, as half-a-dozen school children hurtled towards us in hot pursuit of a rapidly moving Rat. Passing us at a speed that was not so much running as low flying, the rat reached the end of the corridor and observed that he had run out of places to go. In a move typical of his genus, he promptly reversed and scurried back through the forest of legs. This produced panic. Boys trying to dodge the fast moving rodent tripped up others, girls swinging hockey sticks smashed each other on the ankles in a manner that, judging by the yelps of pain, was not appreciated by the recipients of the blows.

Leaving a cursing mob of entangled humans, the rat departed the vicinity. Leaving the Headmaster to sort out the problem, I, like the rat, scuttled around the corner and indulged in muffled bellows of laughter into my handkerchief. A definite round two to *Rattus Rattus*.



## Part Two

This was the last I was to see of rats for many years as they only came back into my life with the advent of cats. Even then, all I saw were bodies proudly produced by my feline associates for quite a while. Not that rats were the only bodies displayed.

At one time I was living right on the beach at Parameta in a small cottage. Tigger, my big tabby, was a keen hunter and retriever, and often brought odd things for me to admire - everything from someone's socks to seaweed, as well as prey.



## Lyn McConchie/Cats, Rats and Going Bats!-----

One night I had cleaned out the vacuum cleaner and dumped big rolls of fluff from it in the incinerator. Early the following morning I ambled sleepily into the kitchen for toast and milo, only to find one of the fluff rolls back on the doorstep. Cursing a cat who thought he was a retriever, I bent to pick it up. The 'fluff roll' leapt into the air and so did I. Tigger had been out hunting earlier and his retrieval was a mud skipper, which in the dim light I had entirely mistaken. Mind you, getting the life scared out of one is supposed to decoke the arteries - something to do with the adrenalin!

It wasn't until I moved to Waikanae that rats really came back into my life in quantity. Tigger, who had hunted rabbits previously, now hunted rats. They were available. The cottage I moved into here and bought had been empty for nearly a year. All around it were beach houses which were often inhabited only for a few weeks of the year. But when they were, the food dumped out in odd corners was fantastic - if you were a rat, that is.

We moved in and, having observed that the books were being unpacked and thus that we were staying, Tig headed outside to survey his new territory. (Ming posed gormlessly on the sideboard where she became so interested in what we were doing that she eventually craned too far and fell off.) I had just headed into the new library with an armload of books when Tig arrived back, complete with rat. This one was dead and I received it with all the proper pleasure and had him take it outside, after which they both vanished.

A couple of hours later he produced another. This was very obviously not the same rat. For all I know it may have been a relative, but it was half the size again of the first. Tig paced in, in his stately way, rather like a member of the Magi with gold and myrrh (only his presents weren't unfortunately quite so expensive), and laid his latest gift lovingly at my feet. The only thing I thought of at the time was, "Where the Hell is he finding all these damn rats?"

It was several weeks later that I discovered the habits of Homo Sapiens as regards to food scraps and all was explained. Tig continued to hunt and almost every day, and on some days two or even three times, I would be called upon to admire a new capture. I was starting to feel like the Pied Piper. (The rats must have been starting to feel persecuted! After a couple of weeks at 6 to 12 rats a week, Tigger's hunting must have been making real inroads on the local colony.)

After several months the hunting began to taper off. Not that Tig was getting bad at his technique, rather the rats seemed to be gaining some common sense at last, and were leaving the neighbourhood. One sunny evening towards Christmas I was sitting in the lounge making a toll call ((long distance call - ed)). STD hadn't arrived here yet and one had to use a toll operator. Due to the isolation of Waikanae from most other places, many of my calls were tolls and I had become friends with the girl who answered many of them. She invariably worked the evening shift and I usually rang people after six p.m. when the toll calls became cheaper.

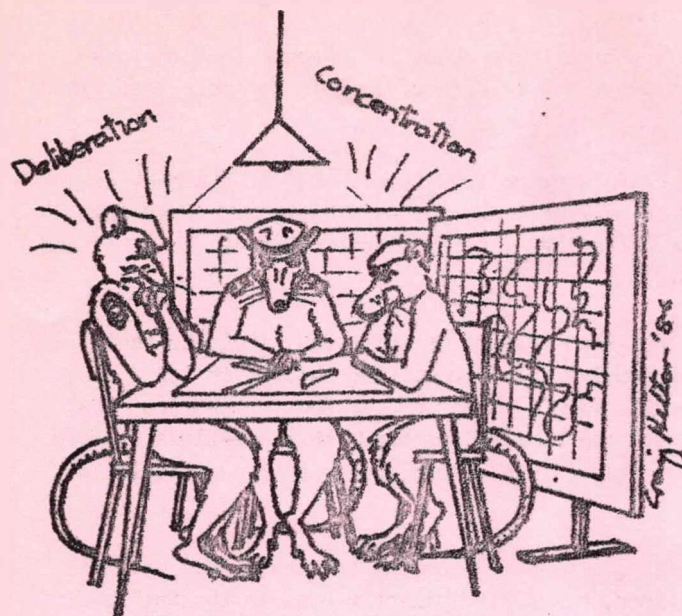
I had just been answered by my friend when Tig marched in, hopped into my lap and placed gently a young, half-grown, uninjured rat on my knee. And then, with the air of one who has done his duty against great odds, he removed himself to the sideboard and beamed at me.

Transfixed, the rat and I surveyed each other. For all of thirty seconds the silence was unbroken save for a small voice on the phone, then with a yelp of horror I shot off to the left, while the rat departed to the right. I wound up sitting on the carpet, having lost my balance, and the rat, who had never lost his, disappeared out the cat door.

Tigger, meanwhile, sat on the sideboard, rigid with indignation. All that trouble to catch me the perfect present, a magnificent specimen, undamaged too.... and I'd let it escape!! He was OFFENDED! Was he ever! It was hours before I was forgiven.

Well, the rat plague ended. Either they had all died (the stupid) or left (the smart). Over the years the odd one or two would turn up, discover that the territory was untaken and attempt to move in. Tigger would discover them and only the fastest would leave again. A good example of selective breeding.





Top Secret Strategy -  
Rats averting a thinking slip.

## Part Three

Unfortunately there's always one that doesn't learn. The 'one' was a female in rat, or whatever pregnant female rats are called. She, silly fool, spotted that my place had no resident rat and moved herself in. If she had contemplated the situation a bit longer it might have dawned that there could be a reason for this.

Despite Tigger's death the previous year, there was still a resident cat. Rasti, the siamese who had come to fill the gap in the family, was also a dedicated hunter. In fact he hunted the place for prey with all the enthusiasm of a missionary looking for souls to save. He found them, too, and any rodent that moved in tended to be carried out. (so to speak).

The female nested, produced her young and settled in to live happily ever after - something that in her case wasn't going to be very long. Shortly thereafter, I arrived home one Friday night absolutely bushed. Rasti hurtled out and vanished into the hedge, pausing only to say Hi before disappearing.

The female must have been incautious enough to leave the nest because barely 5 minutes later he trotted smugly back and laid a dead baby rat on the end of the bed. Unwisely I made a fuss of him (removing the corpse as I did so); he smirked, squirmed, and finally vanished into the night.

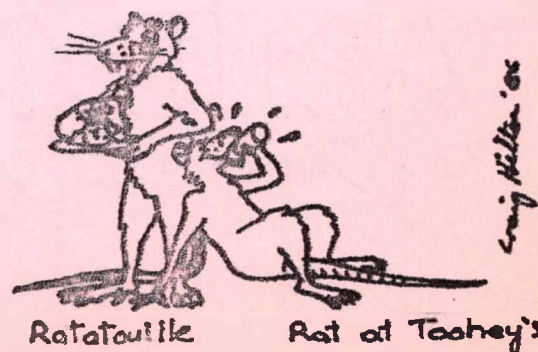
As I said, I was tired. A good night's sleep was what I fancied more than anything. Two hours later, full of dinner and coke, and having completed a book, I yelled to signal the cats and settled in. I was about to switch off the light when Rasti re-appeared. This time he carried the body of the female and, with a triumphant bellow, flung it practically into my lap.

One rat was reasonable but two was one too many and in a loud and defiant voice he was instructed to REMOVE THAT AT ONCE! With a wounded look he did so, I snuggled down, and drifted off to sleep, only to wake around 2 a.m. with a terrible thirst. Well, the coke was in the fridge, so I climbed out of bed and headed through the lounge towards it. About then I discovered that my command to "take that out of here" had been obeyed in the way that only a cat can. Convinced that when I'd thought it over for a while, I'd really want to admire his trophy properly, Rasti had taken the corpse only as far as the lounge. There, as a piece de resistance, he had disembowelled it on the lounge carpet and laid it out, together with its inner workings, in what he no doubt saw as an artistic manner.

As usual I hadn't bothered to turn on a light, so it was in pitch dark that I found myself stepping on a dead rat. Leaping aside with a curse that should have blown the roof off, I found I had landed with the other foot in the entrails, at which point my language became positively inspired.

A clean up interval followed and I finally returned to the bedroom to find small and furry under the feather eiderdown doing his best to look innocent.

Anybody want a cat?





## Part Four (Grand Finale)

Of course if you have animals, there is one really useful thing about it. People tend to lose the ability to confound or embarrass you, since whatever people can do, animals can do better along those lines.

Back when Tig was two, I lived in a bach ((small cottage or holiday home - ed)) at the back of an old house. To bathe, one boiled the copper, ladled boiling water into the bath, and added cold to preference. After an energetic evening at the coffee bar I got home one night at midnight, and feeling tired and grubby, decided to have a bath.

The copper was duly boiled and the bath filled. Deciding that no one else was likely to feel like a bath at that hour, I lit the kerosene lamp and fetched a book, then settled in for a real soak. All would have been well but for two factors I hadn't taken into account. The first was that Tig was up in the rafters of the (outside) bathroom hunting the birds that sometimes roosted there. The other was that the book I was part way through was a long and graphic non-fiction on the Boston Strangler.

I was engrossed in the book and failed to notice Tigger descend from the rafters. This was not reciprocal and, delighted that his human had returned, he drifted silently over to the bath and hopped up onto the flat corner behind me. Probably he spoke, but deep in my book, and believing myself alone, I failed to hear.

I had just got to the bit where the strangler talks one of his victims into letting him into her flat and, as she turns, takes her by the throat... when Tigger, getting miffed at being ignored, leaned forward and patted me on the shoulder with his paw.

Ever tried to explain to friends why you are standing stark naked in the middle of the backyard, screaming like a banshee at midnight? And to this day, I can't even remember opening the door!

No human is ever going to embarrass you the way a cat can!

\* \* \* \* \*

FLAW  
TIGGERS



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# GRAPE SHOT

ANOTHER INSTALLMENT OF TASTE? by IAN NICHOLS

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The rumours about me and Katherine Chopin are entirely untrue.

Apart from that, I have to munch on some crow feathers. Despite a reputation as one of fandom's premier ~~drinks~~ imbibers, I have not tasted every wine in Australia. When I made the assertion that Victorian sticky whites were not as good as their interstate cousins, I made it in good faith, and the knowledge that every sweet white wine from Victoria that I had tasted was redolent of sugar and lacking in any sort of varietal complexity. As fate would have it, I wrote that article about a month before it was published, and about five weeks before the regular meeting of my wine club.

My wine club holds regular blind tastings, and there is a prize for the person who can identify the most wines in terms of their age, area, grape and maker. I won, and the prize was a bottle of Brown Bros. Muscat of Orange. It is a Victorian sweet white, and I stand here before you, abashed and shamefaced, to tell you that it is a little humdinger. Beautifully complex, even showing a hint of resinous oak, it just glides down, like an oiled anaconda. It is at least the equal of the DeBortolis Semillon, and nearly as much to my taste as the Heggies. As with most sweet wines of quality, there isn't much of it around, although the Victorians may be somewhat luckier, and it's pricey, at about \$11.00 the half bottle. It is delicious, and I recommend that you rush out and buy a case of it before your local restaurateurs get wise and buy it all up. (However, I'll still stick to my guns about the Chateau d'Yquem.)

More booze and, undoubtedly, more accusations of deficiency in masculine parts, corrupting the youth of Australia, and a bump up the ladder of the AA hit list. Ah, well.

Champagne just doesn't come from Australia. Australia makes brilliant sparkling white wines, including the vastly underrated Barossa Pearl and Cold Duck, but we do not produce a champagne. There are many wines which, nowadays, advertise themselves as 'Methode Champenoise', or whatever variant spelling they choose, but these are not champagnes. (The champagne method, by the way, simply means that the wine was fermented in the bottle in which it is sold, degorged and topped up.) Champagne comes only from the Champagne district of France and anything else is just using the name.

So what? Does it make a difference? Yes, it does. There are a great number of things which go into the making of a quality wine; the age of the vines, the oak of the casks, and what it has been used for before; the time of the harvest; the rainfall during the growing season; etc. For some reason, known only to God and the vigneron, they tend to get it right most of the time in Champagne.

Australian sparkling whites tend, like Australian reds, to be big, full of character, flavourful wines, but wines which can be a bit short on subtlety and balance. Australian reds are rapidly overcoming this problem, and there have always been a few around which have been the equal of any wine produced by any country. But the sparkling whites have tended to be a touch too aggressive, or a touch too bland, or a touch too this or that. Champagne, on the other hand, displays an almost religious sense of balance, which is one of the reasons it's so easy to get drunk on it. The other reason is that it's usually higher in alcohol than still whites, and the bubbles have an effect, also: they tend to make the alcohol more effective.

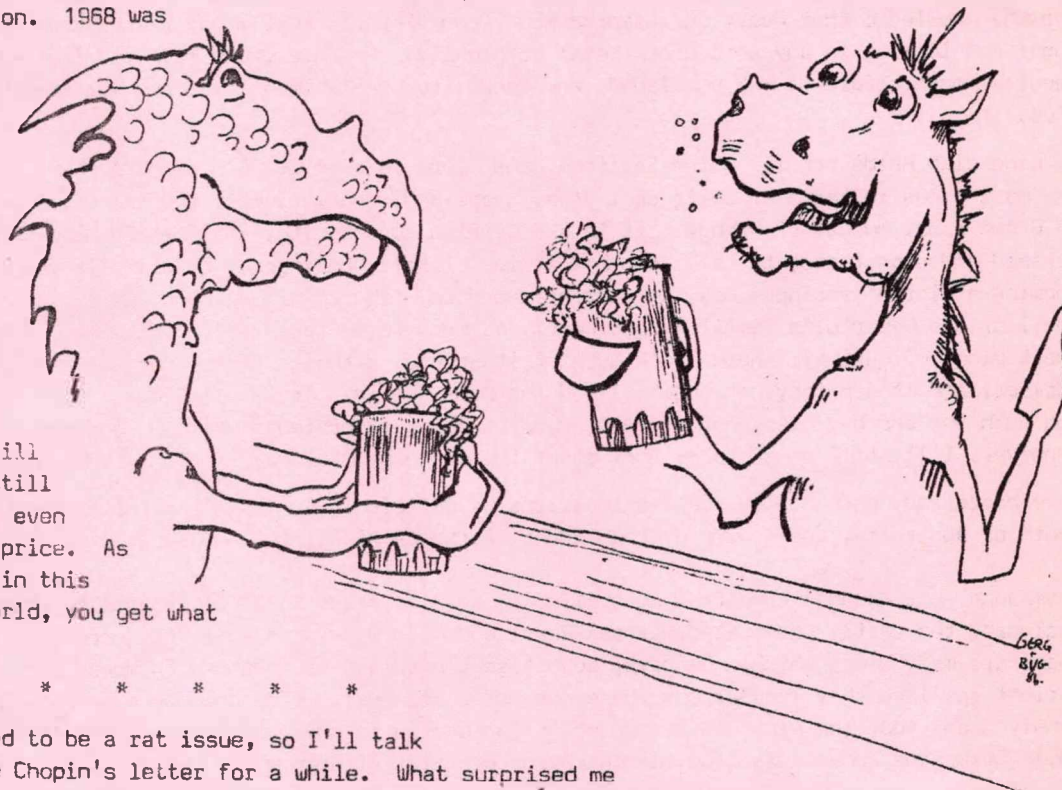
A really fine Champagne should be mature, full flavoured, dry and balanced. The 'bead' - the bubbles - should be fine. The 'mousse' - the feel of the bubbles in the mouth - should be clean and crisp, but not crackling, not like Alka-Seltzer. Brut is the driest champagne style, and sec the sweetest, with a range in between, and there's nothing wrong with a sec champagne. The aim of most of the big Champagne companies is for a total lack of variation in their non-vintage lines from year to year, and they blend the best wines from several years to achieve this. Vintage Champagnes are a different matter altogether, and will commonly show the effect of the growing season for that year, although even vintage Champagnes are a blend of grapes. Blanc de Blanc Champagnes are made from white grapes only, while others tend to have a lot of pinot in them. This has to be pressed very quickly to avoid any tinge of red from the skin coming into the wine.



I have favourites in Champagnes, as I do in most wines, but my taste is for a very dry wine, so it may not accord with yours. In terms of non-vintage wines, I like, and recommend, the Pommery and Greenough N.V., and, for a really dry wine, the Piper Heidsieck N.V. In terms of vintage wines, we start to get into a very expensive area, especially since the dollar swan-dived. Moët & Chandon is superb, and Veuve Clicquot Grande Dame is always worth the money. Up the scale a bit, and you're into Roederer Crystal or Taittinger, both of which are an experience you'll remember for a long time, unless you drink them all the time, in which case what're you bothering to read this for? In terms of years and their relative value, the companies try to keep each year as good as possible, but there are some outstanding years. 1975 has been the only 5 star year so far this century, and the wines from that year are brilliant, almost

without exception. 1968 was excellent, but is hard to get hold of now, and 1980 seems to have been a good year for wine all around the world.

Whatever, the bottom line is that French Champagne is still the best, and still worth drinking, even at its current price. As in most things in this capitalistic world, you get what you pay for.



\* \* \* \* \*

This is supposed to be a rat issue, so I'll talk about Katherine Chopin's letter for a while. What surprised me most about it was the sheer vehemence. I mean, I've been writing in fanzines for some time, now. The first fanzine I had anything to do with was "Pain and Agony in Strange Places", back in 1977. Through the years, I have written some things which even I thought rather gross and provocative, such as the article on "How to ram a broken bottle up a zebra's ass" in "Dingo Vomit" #1, a fanzine produced especially for the annual bad taste party of Perth fans. I have contributed some rather outlandish opinions on strange subjects in letters to various zines, and I have, at times, rubbed people up the wrong way. But this is the first time I have aroused such a response with so minor an effort. It leads me to think that Ms Chopin may have problems with her ability to be aroused.

I will not, however, indulge in the sophomoric effort of attempting to picture the writer of the letter. Meeting real writers, few of whom slotted into my conception of them, cured me of that. (I used to think that Bob Shaw was slim and intense.) No, Ms Chopin may be slim and blonde, fat and dark, or somewhere in the middle. I won't even speculate on the length of her dick. Unless she cares to send a photograph of herself to the editors of this publication, or identify herself in some other way to me at a convention sometime, I doubt that I'll ever be able to distinguish her from Lifebuoy Family size, especially as no-one seems to have heard of her, anywhere in Australia. Makes me wonder how she got hold of the zine.

But to get back to the letter, it seems that the only real objection that she has is to the style of the article I wrote about beer and Cognac. It was this which caused her to have to unburden her ire. I hate to be pedantic, unless I'm being paid for it, but you really can't unburden ire. You see, 'ire' is an abstract noun, but it's made the object of the sentence. The meaning becomes "I will take a load of something from off the back of the ire which is carrying it". It's a small point, I know, but if somebody's going to talk about my various inadequacies as a human



being, they might at least get the grammar right, f'chrissake. I think what she really meant to say was "...to unburden myself of some of my ire". It's a typical mistake in undergraduates who are thrilled by their own brilliance, although I don't hold myself up as a paragon in terms of my own grammatic usage. I was once a smartass undergrad., too, so I retain some small amount of pity for the breed. She could have, in fact, used any other cliché such as "vent my spleen" to get her idea across to the reader.

Let us not, however, be too harsh on someone who may be unfamiliar with prose as a form of written expression. Instead, there is something else in the letter which saddens me. I felt a quick, hot flush of pride at the instant arousal my writing caused in Ms Chopin, but as I bit my lip in modesty, I saw that Ms Chopin had betrayed me. It seems that one article was not sufficient to raise her to passion. She quotes from two, obviously having read them both. I find this disquieting. I find it inconsistent. Why does she not simply admit that she is not the woman she thought she was? Why does she not lay bare on paper the fact that it requires twice what she would like other people to believe to stir her? Is there some dark secret she is covering with a brave, if false, front? Does she find it difficult to talk to her mother about her problems? If she objects to the tone of the article as being one which treats the readers like schoolchildren, does this mean that she feels her own adult status threatened by this? Is she insecure? Does she watch ABC and wonder why there aren't any commercials? Why a duck?

Cosmically important questions are such fun.

(Oh, Christ! I've done it again. I talked like I was talking to kids. Oh, shit!)

Okay; let's try some straight from the shoulder, adult talk - things that really mature people talk about. Ms Chopin, Dave's a friend of mine, and a happily married, about to become a father one, at that. He is married to a friend of mine. They have a lifestyle which is, in some ways, unusual, but which suits them. Oversexed little twerps offering to squirt their musk in Dave's direction are probably things which their relationship can do without, even if the said twerps are only indulging their pre-adolescent fantasies because they've always wanted to fuck daddy. Ms Chopin, actions have consequences, and the consequences are not always what we expect them to be. Nobody hurts my friends. Nobody. Not even if they didn't mean to. Not even if they thought it was funny.

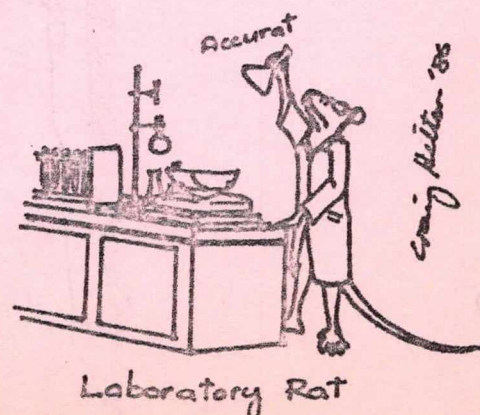
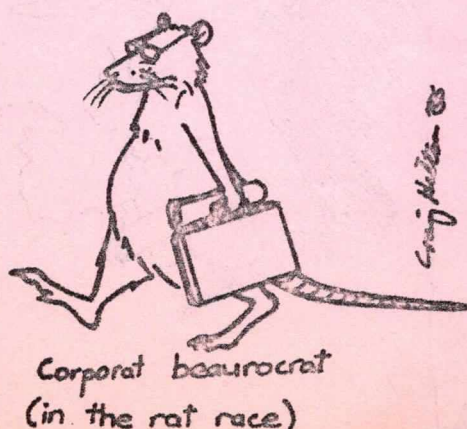
But, I'll be generous, and assume that Dave would display a sufficient lack of both taste and intelligence to take up your undoubtedly generous offer. (That is, I assume it's generous; if you do it all the time, with strangers and so on, please write and correct me.) I am, as I said, a friend of Dave's. If he decides to throw all caution to the winds, and indulge himself in what Robert Bolt described as "playing in the gutter", then I would lend him what aid and support he required.

I'd even chip in for the penicillin.

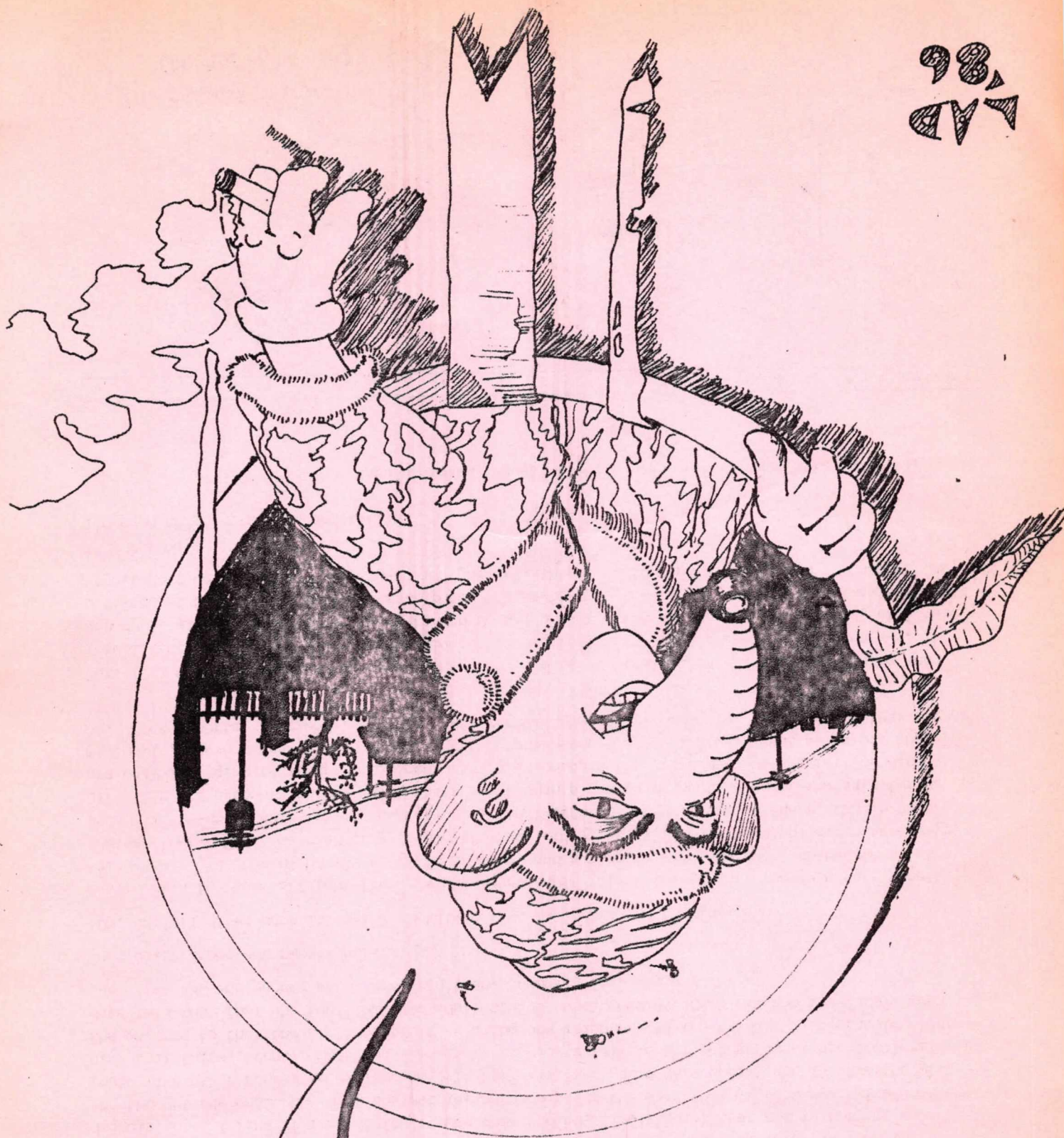
Love'n'Kisses (except to Ms Chopin, who can eat shit and die),

Ian.

\* \* \* \* \*





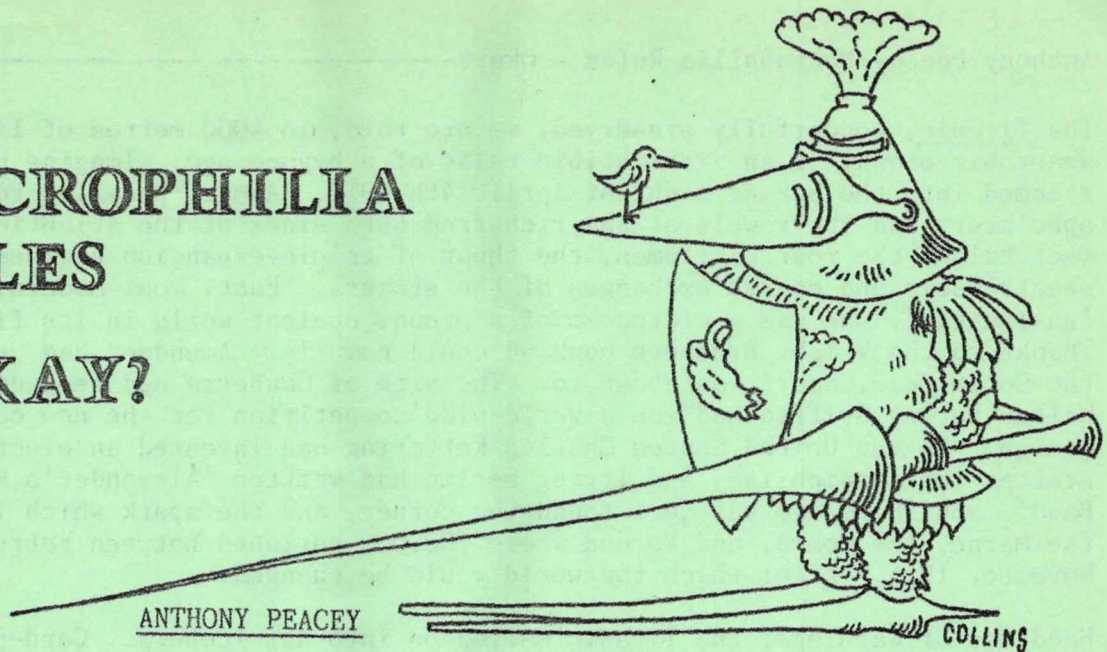


MERRY RATMESS  
AND A HAPPY RAT YEAR!  
FROM FEEGHOOT McRAT ≡ COUGH ≡  
ANYONE ≡ COUGH ≡ GOT A  
BEER OR A SMOKE?



# NECROPHILIA RULES

~OKAY?



When I was very young I embalmed a bee. I placed it in a sarcophagus and hid it forever from the light of day in a secret burial chamber. Embalming consisted of wrapping it in dandelion leaves; the sarcophagus was a glass jar; the 'King's Chamber' a tunnel in the earth the length of my arm. The following day I dug it up, and as the bee had neglected to die before I gave it last rites it flew away. At that time my brother and I were certain that Tutankhamen's was neither the last nor the most magnificent tomb to be found. We looked forward to a glittering future as famous Egyptologists, the fascination of things past left no other course open to us.

We were taken to visit Berkeley Castle where in 1327 Edward II had died an unspeakable death (about which we spoke a great deal) at the hands of his enemies. Local legend had it that a red hot poker was inserted into his anus through a cow's horn so that no marks should appear on his body. We peered into dungeons. Was it here it happened? Had these walls heard his screams? Where was the well he was subsequently thrown down? In the roughness of the stones beneath our hands the tremendous, horrible past lived for us.

The past has sprung to life around me on other occasions. Years later I was in Spain. We climbed the road and stood beneath walls of gray granite - the colossal palace-monastery of the Escorial. The melancholy Philip II reviewed the drawings of his architect and removed anything ornamental. At the centre of the complex there is a great domed church. Deep beneath the altar we penetrated to crypts magnificent with black marble where lie the sarcophagi of former Kings and Queens. I stood there among friends who became shadowy, and about me sailed galleons.

Objects from the past are powerful magic, whether it is a cathedral or a verdigrised coin. Nor do objects have to be vastly old. My brother remained in England where he is now an authority on seventeenth century clay tobacco pipes. Gloria and I have a small collection of bottles, in defiance of the inscription most of them bear, 'This bottle remains the property of...'. Though mostly of this century, they are shapes that are no longer made, that belong to the daily round of decades with quite a different flavour to our own. An ink pot is of particular interest. A beer bottle may be different, but we still pour beer from bottles. Ink pots, by and large, have yielded along with steel nibs to constellations of ballpoints and Japanese felt-tips.

And now they have found the Titanic. The point of this essay comes down to this: she will be raised.

Anthony Peacey/Necrophilia Rules - Okay?-----

The Titanic, wonderfully preserved, we are told, in 4000 metres of lightless, anaerobic ocean, is an irresistible relic of a bygone age. Imagine her as she steamed into the serene night of April 14th 1912. Above, panelled rooms, deep upholstery and the vowels of the rich from both sides of the Atlantic. Ninety feet below, the roar of flames, the thump of triple-expansion engines, the sweaty backs and coarse exchanges of the stokers. Fast, most modern, 'unsinkable', she was a microcosm of a proud, opulent world in its final bloom. Thanks to the Wright Brothers mankind could now fly. Amundsen had just reached the South Pole, Scott was about to. The site of Canberra had been decided, and Walter Burley Griffin had won a world-wide competition for the new capital's design. In the United States Charles Kettering had invented an electric self-starter for automobiles, and Irving Berlin had written 'Alexander's Ragtime Band'. But Sarajevo was just round the corner, and the spark which ignited the Marne, the Somme, and Verdun where 700,000 perished between February and November 1916. After which the world would be changed.

Heedless of warnings, the Titanic sailed on into her iceberg. Card-players went on deck to see what the bump was, then returned to the game. But not for long. Most of the women and children travelling first-class were saved. As the boats departed the men gallantly remained behind. The other classes had less choice. Passengers clinging distraught to the stern rail in the ship's last moments found themselves lifted to an unprecedented height. The deck became a mountainside. Then she plunged from sight. Twenty-six months later Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated.

We read that the Titanic will remain forever on the bottom of the Atlantic. I don't believe it. In a story which recently appeared in Strange Attractors I wrote 'There is only one law - what can be done will be done'. I should have added that if it can't be done someone won't rest until he finds a way.

The Titanic will stay down, say the spoilsports, because raising her would be too difficult, too dangerous, perhaps most of all too expensive. But when have such considerations stood in the way of a really grand challenge? Difficult? The Wright Brothers belonged to a long line of experimenters who knew that flight was difficult. Dangerous? Both Amundsen and Scott understood the dangers of the South Pole. Neither was deterred. Expensive? In building the Escorial and the Armada, using gold from the America's which did not represent work done, Philip II put Spain into a state of bankruptcy from which according to some she has still not recovered. Perhaps no king has the money any more, but there are millionaires who, lacking kingly lineage, have a great need to prove themselves.

Who is there, after all, who would not wish to see that table where they played cards, to gaze up along the great red funnels, to handle even the crockery? A saucer, we read, would be worth a small fortune. Quite so. If I had one I would not part with it for less. The touch of such an object would undo 73 years of frantic history, would transport one back to the afternoon of wealth and optimism with which our century began. One would be placed in direct psychic contact with the passengers of that legendary ship, and the fateful, excited hours of the night she died.

If the Titanic wished to remain at rest, she should have arranged never to have been found. She is too great a prize. She is the stuff of tragedy, of fantasy, of obsession, and like my bee, her darkness is now known by those unable not to violate it.

October 1985



# I WAS A teenage <sup>utter depravity</sup> MEDIA FREAK! <sup>gasp sob</sup>

I suppose it was Spock's ears that got me in the first place. Maybe Chekhov's accent too, but mostly those amazing ears! Of course I'd always thought that faraway planets and stars were frightfully romantic and I guess most of us have a soft spot for a uniform. As for spaceflight, who amongst us hasn't dreamed of being The One? The lucky one selected from millions to leave Earth behind and go a-starfaring. Oh joy! Oh happy, impossible dream! Anyway, all that by itself wasn't enough to account for the addiction that set in, the total square-eyed worship. Star Trek! Oh, what a revelation, what a buzz! At sweet fourteen, what a warm, damp fascination; at fourteen how easily one falls for pixie appurtenances, for brave, exotic men from alien places. {Fourteen, so fleeting, so gladly forgotten.}

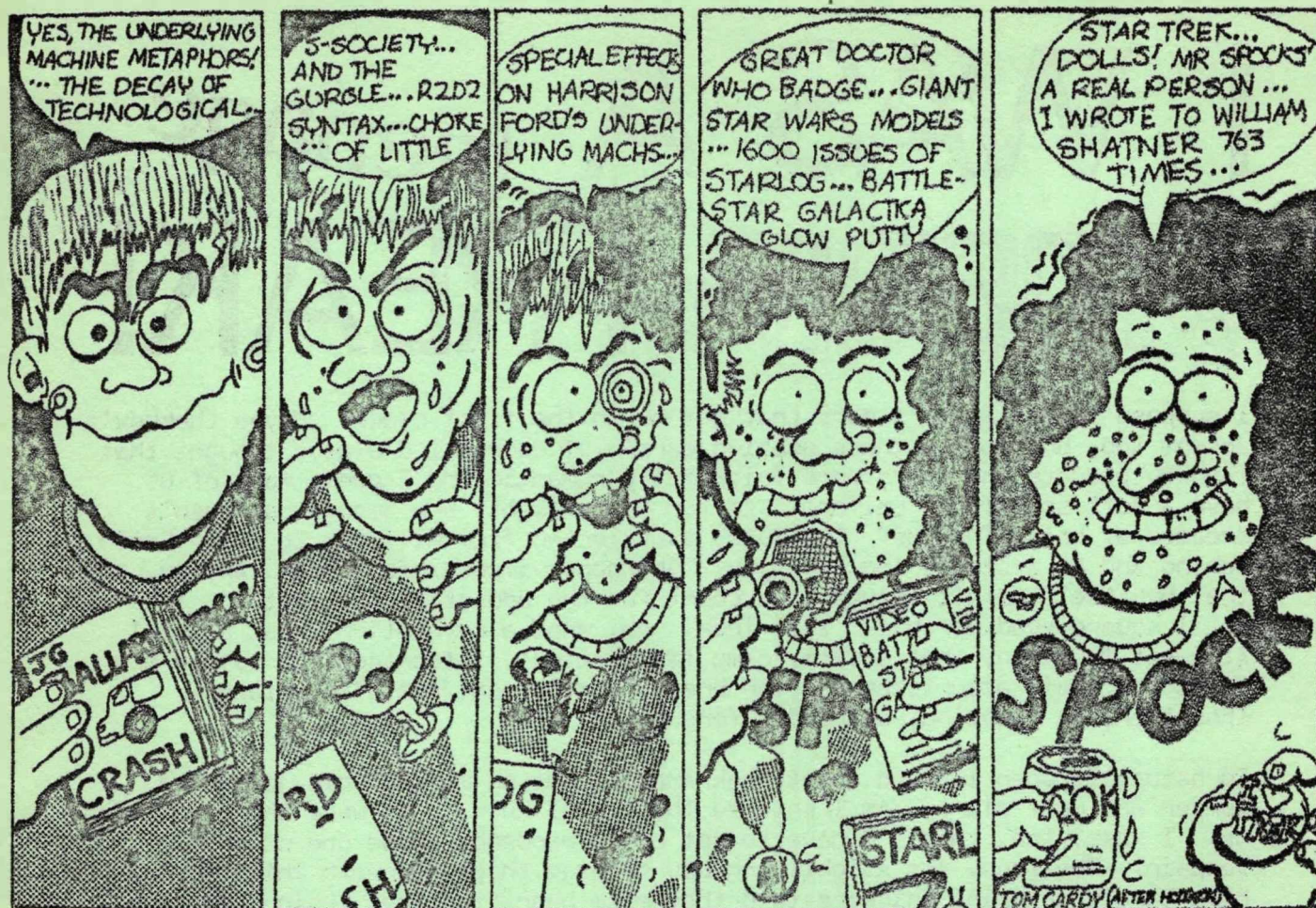
So naturally when I heard about TrekFandom I put on my good old jeans and jumper and went along. As I entered the room I knew these were the people for me. I knew, too, that I'd have to get a new wardrobe to be one of them. Despair! The legs, the slightly chubby teenage thighs beneath knit fabric hems barely covering knickers {did they also bear Starfleet insignia?}, the colours, the eyebrows, the EARS! And me in jeans.

Nonetheless they were sympathetic. In brief minutes I was in their midst, receiving promises of patterns, hints on where to get just the right slinky jersey knit, on who to send to for the cheapest insignia, on the best makeup and the least painful method of gluing on EARS. In their midst, sharing Enterprise blueprints {ooh!}, borrowing Star Trek novels, listening to accounts of blooper reels, learning about zines, conventions and how to make false EARS {aah!}. Oh it was just so nice to be one of the gang, so cosy, so very RIGHT.

That was just the beginning of course. Soon I was going to video evenings, watching tribbles, bloopers and shimmering instantaneous matter transmissions. {A little heart murmur each time the ears dematerialised.} Soon I was getting together with the gang on a Saturday afternoon to compare how the latest uniform in the making was coming along, to look at the latest stuff from the States, to swap Star Trek novels. Trek was claiming all my spare time, all my waking moments and it was just so much FUN. There were quizzes {how many episodes of Star Trek have been made?}, forays to the movies All Dressed Up With Somewhere To Go {see them, see us, see how they stare}, the pleasant evenings of collatio and chat {all together now, "He's DEAD, Jim."}.

And then at last, there was the Con. We were ready. Were we ever ready! We arrived at the hotel en masse, uniforms pulled down modestly in the street, faces shining, ears polished, suitcases with two changes {yes, both Starfleet uniforms} under our arms. We had our books and games and blue prints and tapes at the ready to show any poor soul who didn't know What It Was All About. We couldn't have been more ready. We checked in to the hotel, dashed up to





our rooms and dropped our **junk** stuff, met on the stairs, giggled a bit and then headed for Registration. And then it happened.

Various jeans- and jumper-clad personages milled about, looking rather drab and, well, **SCRUFFY** next to our spick-and-span uniformed brightness. They turned, they looked, we awaited with antici- pation their appro- bation, their envy at our lovely costumed togetherness. Then it came.

"Oh not more fucking **DREKKIES!**" exclaimed one in disgust.

"Bloody media fen," muttered a second and, "Another bunch of juvenile Spock clones," spat a third.

They shrugged, raised their eyes and turned away. Ignored us. On purpose. I was **SHATTERED**. Wasn't this what fandom was all about? Could there be something wrong with TV, with Star Trek, with... Spock? But what? It was all too perfect. Perhaps these were just a select few detractors, after all the Con had hardly begun. They were jealous. There would be lots of others, like us, people who liked to be part of a group and have a good time.

But all through the Con it was just the same. They booed when we put on our videos, they jeered at our best uniforms at the Masquerade. In the hucksters' room, they shoved aside our beautifully produced clubzines to make way for shoddy looking things they said were 'real fanzines'. They ignored us in the coffee room, wouldn't sit next to us in program items and wouldn't let us come into their parties. "Next year," they said, "or whenever you're not underage."



The others didn't seem very bothered. They explained something they hadn't before: that there was Media Fandom and Trufandom and never the twain shall meet. I was mystified. What was Trufandom and why was it tru? Apparently because they did individual fanzines and had individual feuds. As a beery individual said to me at a Hall Party (you can't shut people out of Hall Parties), "It's a matter of individuality - we don't need uniforms to be people, we do our own thing, we read, we use our imagination, make up our own scenarios, all different and original. Are you sure you're underage?"

The end of the Con rolled round and I may say I was considerably disillusioned. Why go to them when people were so nasty? I made a new starfleet uniform, threw myself back into the old, fun routine and forgot about it all. The months passed, I got a bit sick of giggling and I could recite the titles of all the episodes in order. Actually I wished they'd make another series so we could do something new. Another Con was due. I didn't know what to do - I certainly wasn't going to go through the same hassles as last time. Maybe I'd just stay at home.

On the day, though, I was bored. After some thought I put on my jeans and jumper and toddled off to the hotel. I had no great hopes for the evening. Then it happened.

"Femfan!" screamed someone as I walked up to Registration. Suddenly I was surrounded by scruffy but warm and distinctly male bodies.

"Hey, we're having a room party tonite..."

"We're having this panel about sex and science fiction..."

"Would you like a copy of my zine, little girl?"

"So how old are you anyway?"

"I'm a very patient guy, two years isn't so long."

And that's the way it went all Con. Parties, panels, parties, workshops, parties, dinners and parties. And the things they told me at those parties! All about Ghu, Carl Brandon, the Greater Re-Unificatory Church of the Globe Antichoke, Super Budgeriger, FanEding, Enchanted Duplicators, Room 770, the Futurians, etc., etc., etc. I went home exhausted, with my head reeling from it all, arms filled with fanzines. I went home and slept and thought and got unhungover and thought some more. And you know what? I saw The Light. Yes, I repented of my previous ways and became a Trufan.

Forget about Spock; it's Bangeron, Tucker, White, Glicksohn, Geis, Glycer, Shaw, Willis now. I pub my ish every three months or whenever I get round to it. I do it on my own trusty little Gestetner and I always use twiltone and type on stencils. That's fannish. At Cons I take my Corflu and do a oneshot, drink bhear and avoid the media fen, cos that's the fannish way to do things. I always LoC the zines with BNF's names in them and one day I hope I'm going to be a BNF myself. But it's an uphill battle! Trufandom isn't easy and that fact alone has made me a much more serious person. I spend my weekends in fanac and read zines on the loo and in the bus on the way to work. In my tea break I ponder which side of the latest feud I should come down on. Who's right and, more importantly, who's going to win. I read the backs of all the right books so I can vote with an informed opinion for the Hugos and of course I'm a member of every WorldCon, though I know it'll be a long time til I get to one. They're on the other side of the world after all. There are occasions I must admit when I wonder if it's all worth the effort, but then I remember it's all for Egoboo and you couldn't get much more fannish than Egoboo.

So anyway, to come to the point with all this. For those of you out there who are still involved in Media Fandom, I'd just like to say, you have a

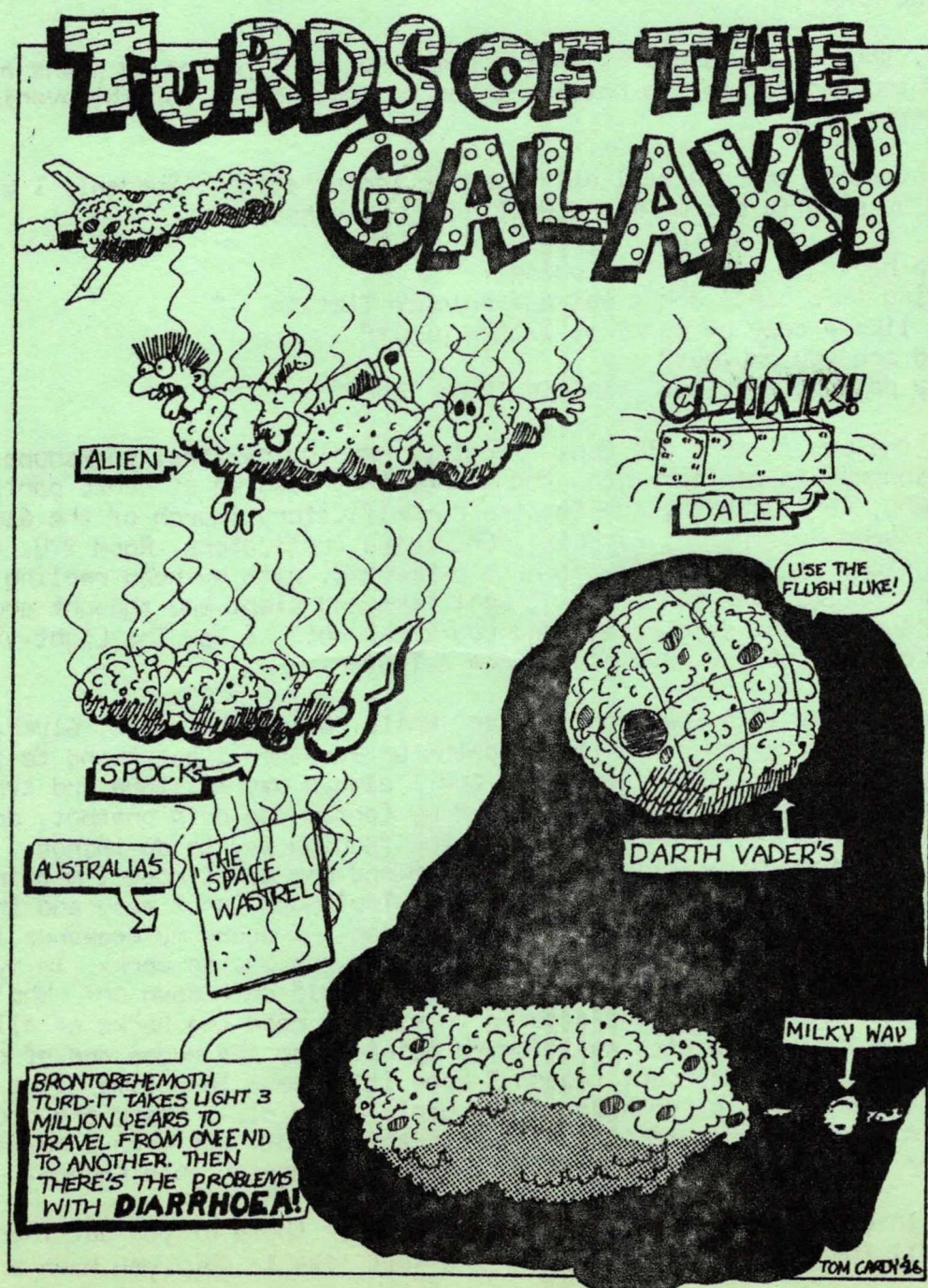


Problem. But DON'T DESPAIR - there is a cure! Trufandom. So throw off your uniforms, pointed ears and chains and join us in the land of real fandom. And to all you Trufen out there; well, you're just wonderful. But then I guess you already knew that.

\* \* \* \* \*

AMELIA'S DISCLAIMER: Actually I was never in my life a media fan - I've always been a trufan, at least for the five years that I've existed as a fake fan anyway. On the other hand, a number of my friends are or have been media fen or have at least been seen wearing Star Trek uniform. My apologies to all of them, to STANZA and to the close friend whose brief argument with another non-fannish friend over the number of episodes of Star Trek made brought this piece to mind. Really she's not a media fan - it's just a peripheral interest - in fact she's a very nice person. I mean... oh shit, given it all away there....

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# ANATORIAL

A MR. WARNER EDITORIAL

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First a belated Thank You should go to June Batt and Ian "Eddie-Baby" Edwards for their assistance in collating and stapling last ish. {And using the Heath Robinson-ish collator at June's place of work was quite an experience.} This is the first editorial to appear in the all-new intra-continental T.S.W. - Mark and Michelle having packed their kit, cat and caboodle and sashayed off to dirty old Melbourne. No longer are we "another wonderful Wazine" - as we once irksomely auto-appellated. \*Sigh\* Now we're t'othersiders to each other. However, you will still be seeing contribs from Lockett, Nichols, Hilton et Petit Moi.

Printing, collating and distribution will now be handled from the Melbourne end so please heed the colophon carefully.

This was to have been the Special Rat Issue, but I think a few of us have wandered off the theme a little. For my part, my only contribution is that I suggest readers should listen to the "rat" side of the album entitled "Barricade 3" by the French avant-garde group "Z.N.R.". {Available at any stockist of obscure continental L.P.s.}

In our last issue, Michelle described me as eccentric {O.K.} and a music person {true} but as for the anal fixation....hmmmm.

The one person that I could blame for any impression that Michelle may have gained regarding my alleged fascination with the functions of the bottom was a certain Mr. -----\*, who was better known as "Bert Durglar, the Phantom Turd Burglar and holder of the World Long-Distance Pooh-Jabbing Record", or alternatively just as, "Hello, I'd like you to meet my friend, the incontinent bi-sexual."

Anyway he has since de-camped and dug-in elsewhere, so he cannot defend himself against any of the awful calumnies that I could heap upon the already tottering pile of revolting records that he has achieved.

Well, actually he was a really nice guy, as I shall reveal in the forthcoming epic article entitled "Bert - The Squirty-Poohs Saga".

I hope that's put that misguided little idea to rest. After that bum rap, I'm sure Michelle can find more pleasant things to ride. After all... her sit-upon sure can cover a lot of ground.... "Ooooooh, you Bitch".... "I'm sorry, it just slipped out".... {dissolves into campy argument}. Well, as I reach the erm.... er.... "tail end" of my editorial, I hope nobody's been "browned-off" by its content - I wouldn't want them getting "shitty" as it's nothing to "moon" about.

Ahem, I'd better let "cutey-buns" and "cuddlebum" {Mark and Michelle to you} get on with the rest of the zine.

Too much of this and you might go potty.

\* \* \* \* \*

\*Name withheld for reasons of personal safety.

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# My ROOTS in FANDOM

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Yet more True Confessions. DAVE LUCKETT commences what promises to be a long story - the tale of his adventures in fandom. Let Part One commence herewith.

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To immediately disappoint those who were expecting from the title that this would be some sort of fannish Harris's Directory of Ladies {and Gents}, I would like to accounce at the outset that this is mainly about How I Got Involved. I lack both the inclination and {worse luck} the data to write the other.

To begin at the beginning, often a surprisingly fruitful way of going about things, there was once a house opposite a municipal tip where, in company with a band of admitted maniacs, I played wargames. The house wasn't much as houses go. It lacked important conveniences such as internal doors, and consisted only of five exceedingly dirty rooms and a verandah, but it had a certain air - at least when the wind was blowing off the tip. Here we played the primitive wargames of the day, usually WW II with plastic tanks, and argued endlessly about them.

You see, wargames are not like chess. Strategically they are usually simpler, but operationally they are played in a far less structured way. The terrain, forces available, and objectives vary with each game. No set of wargames rules, no matter how exhaustive, leaves no loopholes - and those loopholes are passionately argued by the players, often at the tops of their voices.

It's funny to think that I was sharpening my wits for the great fannish debates by cavilling over the shape of a hill, or the internal walls of a house, or whether a trooper who was busy shooting in one direction could be expected to be looking in another.

Into this cozy scene came a set of rules for medieval armies, called "Chainmail", and tacked onto the end of them were rules for individual combat. These were the forerunners of D & D, and they attracted a new element to the club. People started to come along to play the first role-playing fantasy games - people from whom I quite naturally held aloof. Why? Because they were crazy, of course. Wargamers are unhinged, naturally, it's required, but this was different. Worse, some of them were female. And sometimes they talked about science fiction and fantasy. Without shame. Right out in the open.

I'd been clandestinely reading the stuff for years, but I wasn't going to TELL anyone about it. But I got sucked into D & D, playing it with miniature figures, the same way I played wargames. As a result, I got invited to talk about it at the second SwanCon. {We're now up to 12, so you can see how long ago that was.} There, I met my future wife. I remember her first words to me - "That'll be two dollars, please."

It would be pleasant to record that I met a whole bunch of nice people there, and was duly hooked. But no. I came away with the impression that most of them were not fit to be walking around without restraints, and I stayed away from them for another two years.





But I had wargaming friends who joined the new group, and through them I was aware of the activities of WASFA, as it became after the wargames club ceased to function as a club. Sometimes we went to the same parties. I waved to some of the fans at these, fearfully, not certain whether waving or not waving was the more likely to provoke violence. I just didn't know, because they operated on different rules to me.

They were so sure of themselves, so goddam self-confident. They knew about - oh, literature, and society, and RELATIONSHIPS. After all, they were having them all over the place, at a rate of roughly one a week, some more often than that. And they didn't care about meaningful things, like the effective armour thickness of the turret-front of a Panther. Instead they tried to engage me in conversation from time to time on subjects like feminism and wholefood cookery. I knew about women already, they were the ones with the bumps in front; and I never could see the point in cooking only part of something, if you were going to cook it at all, so it was obvious that their interests weren't mine. It was all too deep for me.

Then, in 1979, I went to Britain with John McDouall. That event requires an article all on its own, but there, among other adventures, I went along while John went to ask Anne McCaffrey to be

GoH at SwanCon 5, the National Con that year. Knowing what fans were like, I expected a tense confrontation with a fraught and slightly neurotic writer, a fan squared and cubed. Instead, I had a wonderful evening with one of the nicest people on Earth. We took her to a pleasant restaurant, which charged us roughly double what we had calculated, and she ended up not only paying, but, since we had lost the last train, and no cab in London would go where we needed to go {never, never, never had it occurred to me that a taxi driver would refuse a fare}, she put us up for the night at The Writer's Club, no less. We walked there in a drizzling fog, bitter cold, and, having discovered that she knew opera, sang duets to the shrouded streets, and giggled at the mundanes.

She agreed to come to SwanCon 5. It wasn't until I went to bed that night that I discovered that I was looking forward to a Science Fiction Convention.

If I'm spared, and if Joseph Nicholas doesn't send in the frighteners, I'll discourse further on this subject, dragging in such matters as RatCon, the SciGoon shows, the SwanCon 6 one-to-one scale D & D and how I met Ian Nichols.

\* \* \* \* \*

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- \* you like the cover; or
- \* you're fond of that particular author; or
- \* the pictures give you a thrill.

Throw everything else away! Under no circumstances keep any book that you can neither remember or associate! Dump the garbage onto the floor. This is your skum. Think of it as skum. Treat it no better than skum. Bag it and give it to

- \* a friend that really likes that kind of stuff; or
- \* a stranger; or
- \* the club library; or
- \* the garbage can; or
- \* your mother.

Give it away! Fast! Under the Law of Infinite Perversity, your victim might even thank you!

This is the skum procedure. Repeat frequently. Skum studies show a success rate of 40% or more on the first skum; slightly less on successive skums. Skumming is a way of life, one of the best, and all credit is due to Dr. Jerry Alfbumperkins. Thank you Dr. Jerry!

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Originally published as Number 20, an unpaid political announcement by the SKUM FOR MUM committee. Edmonton. May 31st, 1981

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# The JOY Of



## LARGE FANZINES

An Editorial by Mr Loney

\* \* \* \* \*

Had anyone asked me about the processes involved in fanzine production before publication of the last issue of TSW, I would have given them a cheery and upbeat answer designed to encourage them to publish their own ish. My explanation would have outlined the several steps involved, included hints on how to save time and effort, and finished by describing the warm inner glow of satisfaction that results when you hand your box of fanzines over to the person on the other side of the post office counter. Now, wiser and more knowledgeable, I would qualify the enthusiasm of youth with the wisdom of experience - and admonish my questioner to beware of MONSTER FANZINES. And TSW4 was definitely a MONSTER FANZINE; two hundred and thirty copies, each forty four pages with a mailing weight of one hundred and fifty grams and a total production cost of \$360. Not that TSW4 was the first MONSTER FANZINE I had ever seen. Holier Than Thou with its hundred plus pages and (alleged to me at a room party) five hundred plus circulation, has been a regular in my mail for a few years now - and Warhoon 28 still occupies more of my bookshelf than the Macquarie Dictionary. But it was the first MONSTER FANZINE that I had helped produce and I am still drawing lessons from the experience.

The first question, I suppose, is what qualifies an otherwise ordinary example of fanac as a MONSTER FANZINE? A quick examination of the differences between TSW3 (definitely not MONSTER FANZINE) and TSW4 is sufficient, I believe, to deal with that. TSW3 ran to thirty four pages, had a print run of two hundred copies and fell comfortably into the 50-100gms mail category. TSW4 totalled forty four pages, had a print run of two hundred and thirty copies, and travelled in the far more expensive 100-250gms mail category. Set up a three dimensional space with axes of page count, copy count and issue weight, and there will be a solid region near their intersection that defines the limits of normal fanzines. Outside this enclosed volume is the domain of MONSTER FANZINES - a domain that includes Holier Than Thou, The Metaphysical Review, Warhoon 28 and, of course, The Space Wastrel Volume 2 Numbers 4 & 5. An examination of these titles quickly reveals an infallible test by which MONSTER FANZINES can be identified: Should a fanzine be large enough to require a non-standard envelope to be mailed, being too large to be folded and mailed with or without a wrapper, then that fanzine is a MONSTER FANZINE.

So what you hold in your hands now, TSW5, is a MONSTER FANZINE. After TSW4 we all swore no more. 44 pages had meant too many nights and weekends of typing for Michelle, a mammoth printing and collating task for Mr Warner and I, and then the final crushing blow of envelopes. Obtaining two hundred plus A4 envelopes without crippling expense was only the start - Australia Post Category B regulations and the layout of the previously used mailing wrappers meant a laborious cut and paste job on each envelope to get Category B mailing rates. Then there was manhandling three huge boxes of fmzs into the Post Office, a process that also significantly lightened the collective editorial wallet. No more, we resolved. But, obviously, all to no avail. As we



Mr Loney/The Joy of ~~Xed~~ Large Fanzines?-----

discovered in the weeks and months that followed TSW4, a MONSTER FANZINE, once gestated, has a life all its own. Articles, locs, artwork and other fanzines start appearing in your PO Box with what appears to be exponentially increasing frequency. People who you've Xed in an attempt to get the mailing list reduced insist on writing back and thus staying on. In the meantime there's all these new and interesting people who you've discovered in all those zines that have been turning up....

So TSW5, as I type this, is looking like being a seventy plus page zine going out to more than two hundred people. Still miniscule, I know, by the standards of Warhoon 28, or that regular resounding thump in the letter box that signals the arrival of another Holier Than Thou, but substantial enough to have its production scheduled and organised to such an extent as to make the early and carefree days of The Space Wastrel as nostalgic a memory as surfing away the summers of adolescence. And there, for me, is the nub of the problem with MONSTER FANZINES. The law of diminishing returns sets in, I am convinced, for both the readers and the editors. I can still remember unwrapping Warhoon 28 from the pages of The New York Times that had protected it from the depredations of the journey from New York to an isolated mining town half the world away - and deciding that a loc on the Professional Appointments pages was far more feasible a proposition than a loc on a fmz as moriolithic as Warhoon 28. Which is not to say that the collected works of Walt Willis are less interesting than a newspaper - the pages from The New York Times are long gone while Warhoon 28 occupies a treasured place on my bookshelves - but rather that the sheer size of some fanzines can be daunting. So I have a hankering to get back to a fanzine that is a comfortable 20 pages in length (or even less) and goes out to a mailing list that doesn't have to be constantly pruned in order to avoid bankruptcy.

But, as more than one person has said before, there's no going back and turning around is out of the question - so The Space Wastrel will continue in its present form. We enjoy reading all your locs and articles, we like looking at your artwork and we get a big thrill out of getting your fanzines. We hope you feel the same way about receiving The Space Wastrel. (By the way, if you do happen to know Joseph Nicholas' mate, the one that throws unopened fmzs into the bin, could you let us know? We'd like to send that copy to some-one else.) And we intend sending copies to everybody else much more frequently. With TSW5 we have cleared out the files and published everything (well, almost everything, we've still got some nice artwork stashed away). Combining that with an increase in frequency from quarterly to bimonthly will, we hope, reduce future issues of TSW to more manageable proportions. We are planning, however naively, to go back to mailing wrappers for TSW6 (do you know how much envelopes cost? Even in bulk it's a ridiculous 12 cents each!) and slipping back into the 50-100gms mailing category. Hopefully future TSWs will be around the size of TSW3, thirty to thirty five pages, and not so dauntingly large that you'd rather write a letter to The New York Times instead.

See you there.

\*\*\*\*\*

# KINGQON '89



# RE-ANIMATOR

:at last,  
a comedy for the  
squeamish

-----More Than a Film Review--by GREG EGAN

Horror films and splatter flicks over the last few years have been taking themselves far too seriously. What could be more depressing than scanning the cinema ads in search of fresh blood and terror, to find nothing but Friday the 13th, Part 27, Halloween LXII, and various cheap and nasty clones of these cheap and nasty sequels?

Two fairly recent films, Fright Night and A Nightmare On Elm Street, made some steps in the right direction. Although both adhered to the near-inevitable formula of taking a group of adolescent friends, exposing them to Something Horrible, and having them disbelieved by their dull-witted parents and other authorities, both managed to sneak in a somewhat self-mocking attitude amidst all the gore, violence, and excesses of special effects make-up. Elm Street even had a quite intelligent and imaginative premise, and Fright Night managed some pretty decent characterisation, considering.

But now there is Re-Animator, and this ain't self-mockery, this is genre-suicide! All the cliches, all the gore, all the grossness of a decade of blood-and-guts horror movies has been poured through a maze of condensers and glass tubing, treated with a labful of coloured and fuming liquids, pressed into a coffin-shaped mold and exposed to the magic of Van de Graaff sparks: and lo! The product is not only alive, but self-aware. Not only self-aware, but vitalised by the sickest, the wickedest sense of humour that the genre has ever seen.

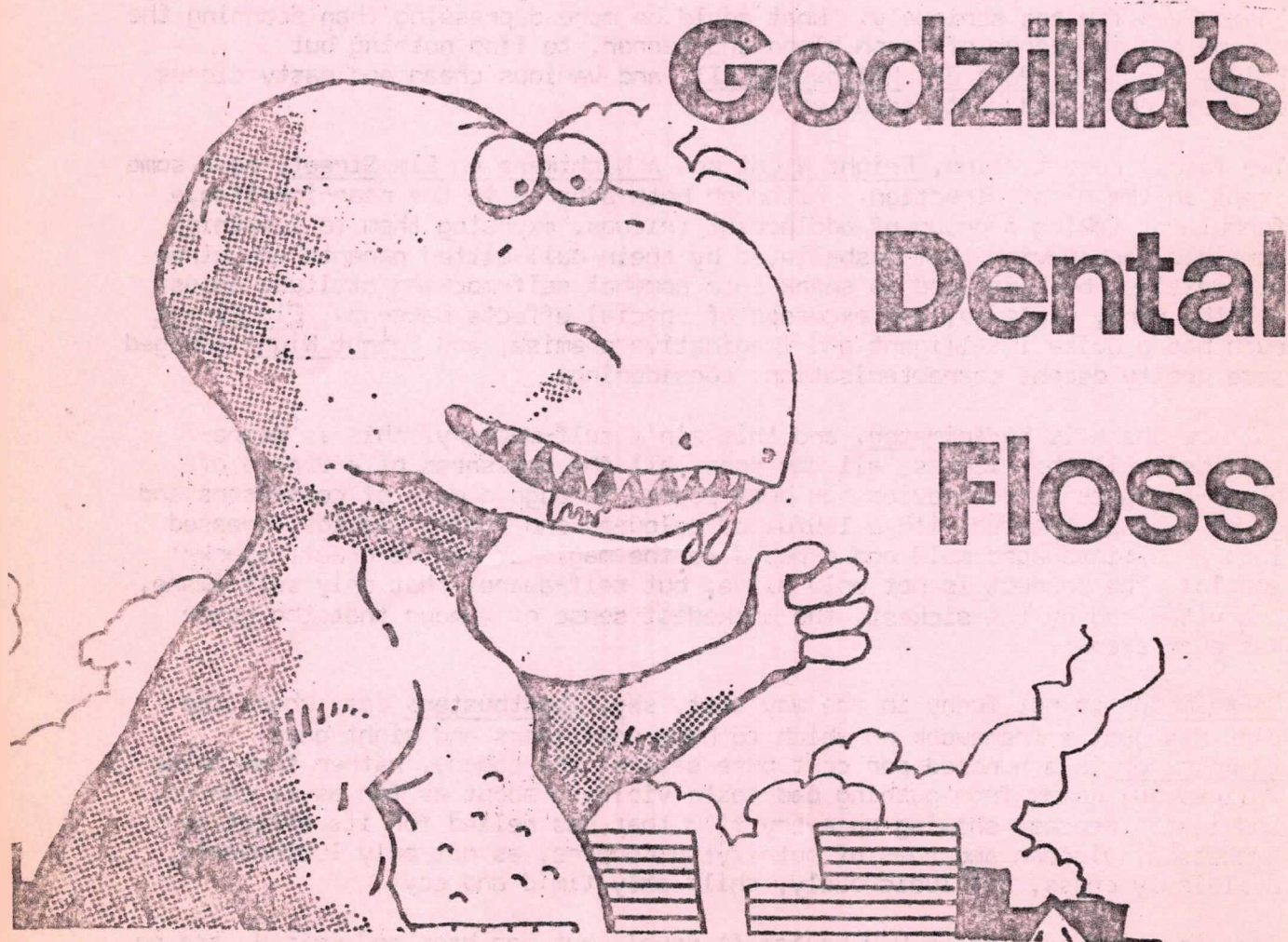
Re-Animator is not funny in the way that, say, Ghostbusters was, where the plot was just a framework on which to hang one-liners and sight gags.

Re-Animator is a hundred per cent pure satire: the comedy, rather than being spliced in, comes from pushing bad-taste violence about as far as it can go, and in the process showing up every film that has relied for its effect on buckets of viscera and rows of putrefying corpses, as not only ludicrously, childishy crass, but ludicrously, childishy timid and coy.

The story is based on an H P Lovecraft novel, but has been modernised, and no doubt bears little resemblance to the original. I haven't read the novel, and don't intend doing so: as a child I read a book of Lovecraft's short stories, and was so disturbed by one of them that the mere presence of the book in my room gave me the creeps. But if, like me, you find Lovecraft unbearably oppressive, don't be put off Re-Animator: none of his miasma of evil makes it to the screen.



"What happens when you mix the plot to "The Fly", Dunedin weather, the Challenger space shuttle, the Americas Cup, a drain system, The Muppets, Feminism, Yuppies, Romeo and Juliet, A Streetcar Named Desire, Unemployment, Death, Life, the KKK, and a large monster destroying Tokyo?"



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The opening scene is in a Zurich medical research institute. There's a disturbance in Dr Gruber's office, but the door is locked. As security staff arrive to investigate, blood-curdling cries of pain are heard, and when they break into the room they catch the young student Herbert West holding down the Herr Doktor, with a half-empty hypodermic in one hand.

Gruber, unrestrained now, leaps to his feet, holding his head and wailing, as blood spurts from his eyes. His face begins to swell, his eyes and veins expanding, until an explosive haemorrhage ends his agony, showering the onlookers with blood.

An hysterical colleague shrieks at West: "You killed him! You killed Dr Gruber!" West turns to her, contemptuous, defiant: "No! I did not! I gave him life!"

The rest of the story takes place in Arkham, Massachusetts, at the Misatonik Medical School, where handsome, conscientious Dan Caine and his beautiful fiancée Megan Halsey (the Dean's daughter, of course) are in their final year of study, where laser-drilling neurosurgeon Dr Karl Hill is in the Dean's good books for attracting a flood of research grants, and where Herbert West turns up to continue his education and his experiments. Dan, Megan, her father, and Hill are all drawn into the bizarre consequences of Herbert West's obsession: re-animation, the reversal of death, the restarting of the chemical processes that constitute life and consciousness.

West is put off by nothing: there are no moral issues, let alone considerations of simple good taste. Anything, anyone will do as an experimental subject. Despite this, he comes across quite sympathetically: conceited and driven as he is, his problem is one of a kind of naivety, rather than any actual malice. Dan collaborates with West, virtually out of sheer astonishment that the technique works at all, but is constantly worried that despite the noble aims -- expanding the horizons of medical science, and perhaps achieving for everyone the gift of immortality -- it will all lead to no good. This turns out to be something of an understatement.

It is West's excessive pragmatism, his willingness to try out his reagent on the closest and feshiest corpses that come to hand, that really appals the audience. After Dan's pet cat Rufus has been re-animated once and run amok, leaping around the basement and clawing the two men viciously until Dan smashes it with a baseball and tosses it against the wall, West insists on bringing it to life yet again, to convince Dan, who believes that it can't possibly have been dead before. "It's dead now, isn't it?" asks West, picking up the horribly mangled cat. "Just don't expect it to tango, it does have a broken spine."

If Re-Animator has any serious message, it's the worry that medical researchers are becoming just a little bit like Herbert West. Rats, rabbits, embryos, cancer patients: if there's a chance of an experiment, if there's knowledge to be gained, then don't be squeamish, charge ahead. By showing such blatant transgressions in West's case, we're reminded that transgressions have to be pretty blatant to even raise an eyebrow these days.

In a way, what Re-Animator does for horror films is similar. By showing just how much blood and entrails are needed before we're sure that we're actually meant to laugh, it reminds us that we've been spoon-fed gore masquerading as drama to such ridiculous levels that we should have been choking with laughter long ago.

\* \* \* \* \*



# Side-Step To Another World

---A CRITIQUE by LYN McCONCHIE---

Many years ago a man saw that the peoples of the Earth needed Fantasy. Now since he was a man of infinite imagination and wit, he set his hand to writing such things. And the children of many lands rejoiced, for as they read they were transported into the Lands of Narnia, and they cried for more books, and they were written.

And after The Writer there came others to be honoured in their turn, and after them, more; until the shelves of the World were filled with Fantasy and those who loved such books rejoiced exceedingly and peace was upon the Land, for the people read quietly in corners. And this time was known as the First Wave!

But then the skies darkened, for the Second Wave was upon the people, and many were the lamentations thereby for the Second Wave was of books accursed since they were books written not for Love but for Gold alone; and the people wept, but of them I have already written.

But a sore sorrow was yet to come for now rose up the Third Wave, and this also was to be a grief to the people. For the Third Wave was upon them from the Publishers, who were so greedy for the Gold brought by Fantasy that they would publish any book which might be called Fantasy, that they might share in the Wealth that such would bring.

\* \* \* \* \*

Such a book is THE SECRET COUNTRY by PAMELA DEAN {in Ace Fantasy}.

\* \* \* \* \*

Unhappily I am telling only the truth in all of this - or at least what I conceive to be the truth. The only reason I can think of for the publication of this book is that Ace are so short of Fantasy - and with such a demand for it - that they are willing to publish anything.

The book's "Secret Country" conforms to the usual formula: wizards, witches, unicorns, a magic ring, etc., etc., etc. However Dean has attempted to do something different with it. There are five children, and as children do sometimes, they have created a fantasy country, and as is often the way when writers are involved, they have wound up in their country. All routine so far.

However when they arrive in 'their' country things begin to go wrong; the place is subtly odd. People who were supposed to have one personality have become something else. Customs have changed and laws have altered, and the children are at a loss to understand the reasons for the changes.

Now, as it stands, this book sounds like a bright new slant on an old theme. But... Two things spoil it. One is the language. The children use ordinary speech to each other, but the flowing thees and thous of the Middle Ages to those in the Secret Country. Since they are in and out of both the Country and private, this becomes really tedious, as they sometimes change speech almost within a sentence. There is, in fact, too much verbiage, the characters seem to spend half their time explaining things over and over again to each other, while the amount of arguing that goes on left me bored before I was halfway through the book. {Both the favourable reviews quoted on the back of my copy,

by the way, are by personal friends of the author.}

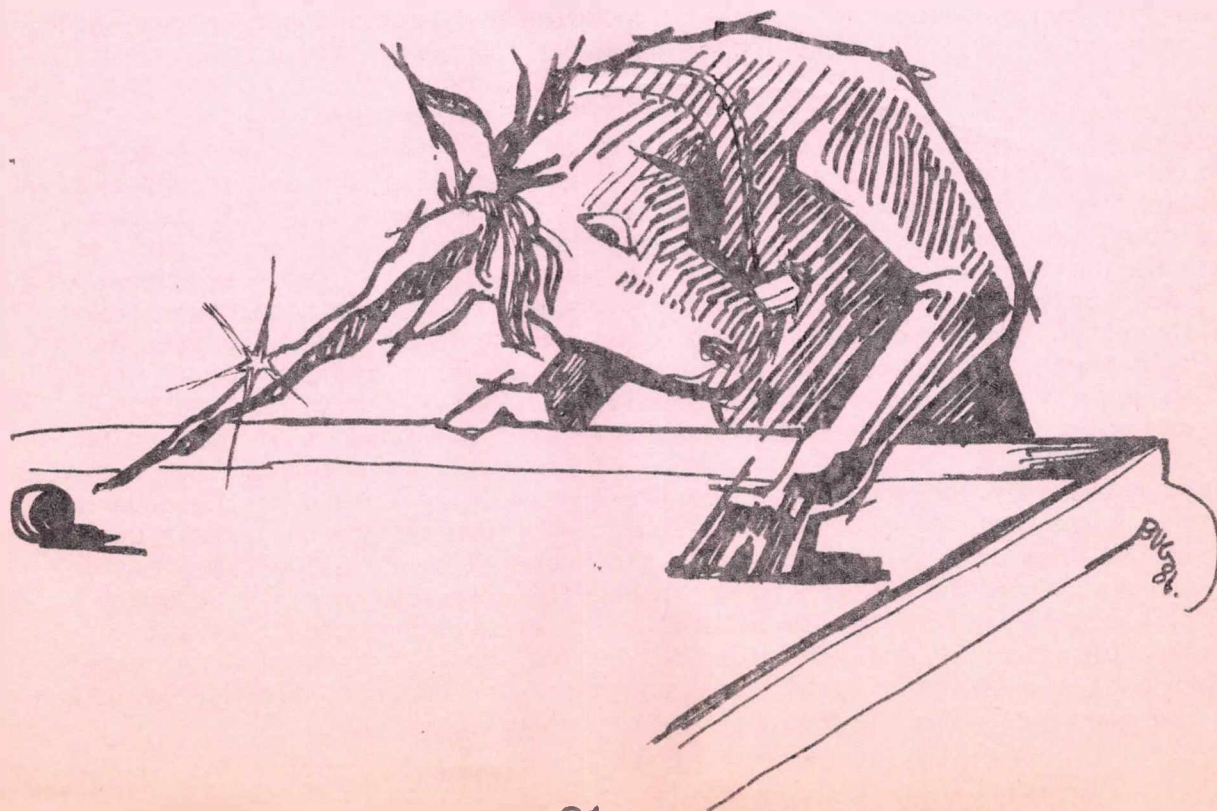
The second problem facing readers is, to put it bluntly, that the book just doesn't work. The idea is good but the writing is not, it fails to carry the reader. There are too many rough patches over which, just as one is getting into the flow of the story, one trips. The characters are wooden and very two-dimensional, the background is all too typical of this type of writing. Even the cover - pretty though it is - is too much a pastiche of the covers usual on this type of Fantasy.

This book can be summed up as irritating. There are many mediocre stories around in this area of writing but this one is really clumsy. The children strike one more as little brats than interesting people about whom one wishes to read. The supporting cast are all stock characters - the parents of the children exist only to make horrified noises at intervals as the children disappear and re-appear. The people in the Secret Country are only a backdrop against which the children can play their self-indulgent games. The unicorns are the only characters that feel right, and there is a portion of the book towards the end that deals with the Unicorn Hunt which is good. But an amusing and well written fifteen pages out of almost three hundred will not compensate for the rest.

It is this sort of poorly written book that encourages readers to decide to buy only the books of those authors they already know - something which gravely disadvantages other new writers. It is the job of publishing houses and their editors to choose new books carefully. In this case, Ace and the Fantasy Editor have fallen down on the job - I can only hope that they don't make mistakes like this too often.

Recommended activities in preference to reading this book... hedgehog sexing or shampooing the resident cat.

\* \* \* \* \*





# THE A-TEAM

-----Mark Loney watches the TeeVee-----

There was a period, not that long ago actually, when I made a point of watching THE A-TEAM every Wednesday night. As it was followed by MIAMI VICE for a while, I could settle down at 7.30 pm confident of an entertaining two hours of Peace, Justice and The American Way, 1980s style. Then the chase for ratings moved MIAMI VICE to Thursday evening and now, somehow, I don't remember to watch either of them as much as I used to. But when I do remember, it's usually on a Wednesday and I sit down to watch Hannibal Smith, Face, B.A. Baracus and Howling Mad Murdoch remove another social blemish from the landscape of contemporary America. As I enjoy watching the A-Team work variations on their tried and true formula, I feel it is necessary to defend them from the multitude of tv columnists in newspapers and magazines who see THE A-TEAM itself as a social blemish that should be removed from their lounge rooms.

They have a common complaint. It is a complaint that is by no means restricted to THE A-TEAM, a complaint that has, in fact, become a sonorous drone that forms the background to the tv columns of the press and the substance of much public comment on television programming. The complaint is, too much violence. Surveys of violent acts depicted per programme hour are often quoted, surveys that THE A-TEAM regularly top with two hundred and forty violent acts per hour (or something of that magnitude), and the opinion expressed that this is yet another sign/cause of the decline of the West, the breakdown of the family, increasing crime rates and falling literacy rates. I have read these comments with the mental equivalent of raised eyebrows. Have these people, I wonder, ever watched THE A-TEAM? There is, as far as I am concerned, serious cause for doubt. This is because anyone who watches THE A-TEAM, as opposed to staring blankly at the screen and clicking the counter every time a gun goes off, is well aware that, despite the numerous explosions, frequent fisticuffs and the expending of thousands of rounds of ammunition, no-one is ever killed, let alone seriously hurt or even in need of a few band-aids. There will be, no doubt, those who will recoil in disbelief at that statement. As proof of it, I can only suggest that they taste the pudding and, putting prejudices aside, sit down and watch THE A-TEAM for a few weeks, or even a few months.

If they do, they will discover that THE A-TEAM, rather than glorifying violence, satirizes and ridicules it. And if they look a little closer at what is said and done in the programme, the values that are upheld and the conflicts that are resolved, they may even realise that THE A-TEAM is about protecting the family, reducing the crime rate, cleaning up corruption and a whole host of related issues. Those who have difficulty with the concept of Mr T as a defender of society from evil, probably the same people who found the casualty figures mentioned above a bit on the light side, may become a little more comfortable with the idea after a closer examination of THE A-TEAM and its direct predecessor, MISSION IMPOSSIBLE. MISSION IMPOSSIBLE was a product of its time as much as THE A-TEAM is a product of ours. The MISSION IMPOSSIBLE team were protectors of America. Even though they operated at the fringes of the law, they were firmly placed as agents of the government, a government of unquestionable probity. The threats they dealt with originated from without the United States (generally, as Clive James has pointed out, from the Eastern European People's Republic and its Security Chief, Vargas), or from people within the US of questionable (that is, Eastern European) origin. The plans always relied on a technological gadget to get past the security system/open the safe/put your own alternative in here and the good guys, the MISSION IMPOSSIBLE team, always won.

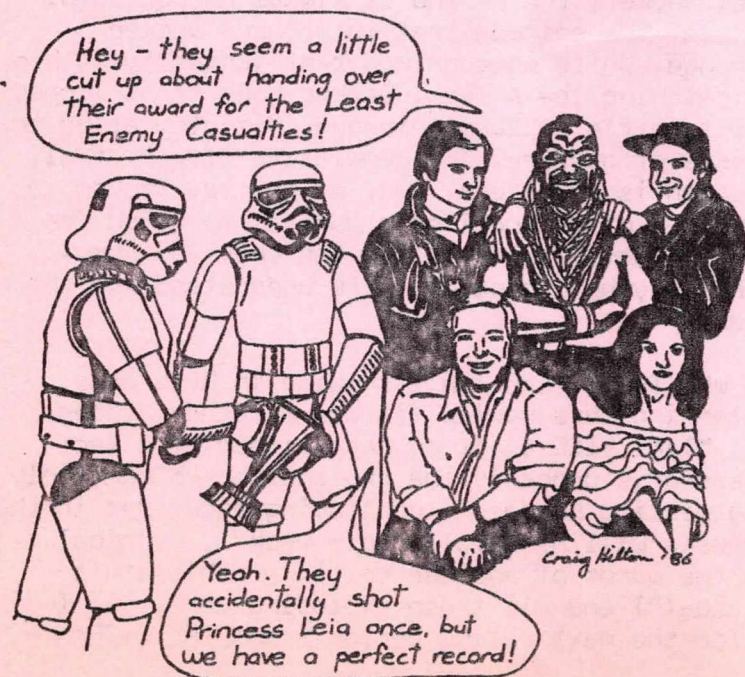
But Watergate and Vietnam signalled a watershed in the way US culture viewed its government and law enforcement agencies. No longer could the MISSION IMPOSSIBLE team operate beyond the limits of the law, secure in the knowledge that their actions were validated by government commission. Governments were no longer honest; administrators were corrupt and police forces ineffective. Enter Hannibal Smith and his men. Vietnam veterans all, they are on the run from the military police - "convicted of a crime they did not commit." Through a network of contacts in the LA underground (and the publicity of their own weekly tv show!) they meet and help a number of people in difficult situations.

Typically the scenario is that of a family running a small business being threatened and harassed by a group that will profit by destroying their livelihood. Variations on this theme include landlords attempting to scare away tenants in order to redevelop, a religious community that has renounced violence in conflict with intolerant rednecks who see violence as recreational sport... and so on. The A-Team, avoiding the MPs by motoring around LA in a customised black van driven by their customised black driver, B.A. Baracus, become involved. After a few preliminary tit for tats with the bad guys, the A-Team generally arrange a spectacular finale in which thousands of rounds of ammunition are fired off, several cars destroyed and the bad guys, their clothing rumpled but their physical integrity intact, sheepishly surrender.

What I find interesting is, reworkings of the formula aside, the way the programme defines the social groups it works with. THE A-TEAM is all about the preservation of the family as an independant economic unit in a world increasingly dominated by large organisations. This isn't unusual. North American fiction and political thought having a long history in this vein. What is different is the way THE A-TEAM defines the family group. The A-Team itself is explicitly defined as a family. The four members have different strengths, weaknesses, likes and dislikes. They are a family because they support each other through adversity and difficulties and provide the certain companionship and loyalty that is associated, in Western culture, with the nuclear family. The other families they help similarly fail to fit the white middle-class mould that characterises representations of the family in North American media. Single parents, abandoned children, disadvantaged minorities and others who don't fit into the stereotype suburban family abound. In a way

that little other television drama seems to, THE A-TEAM deals with a multi-cultural and socially diverse USA that, judging from afar, is closer to the reality of the situation than FAMILY TIES or THE COSBY SHOW.

It should also be noted that the A-TEAM in cleaning up the social landscape, manage to avoid the Rambo mode of conflict resolution. The climactic battle, for example, which results in the surrender of the baddies generally comes after the point at





which the game is up and we know that honesty, integrity and the family will prevail. And the reason the game is up is because the A-Team has, through careful planning, and team work, completely out-manoeuvred its opponents. The exploding cars, the multiple bursts of automatic gunfire and the fisticuffs are just a sideshow decoration hung over a plot that is moved along by cerebral activity rather than mindless carnage.

Hannibal Smith, for example, often disguises himself (now isn't that familiar?) to reconnoitre a situation. Face, the confidence man of the A-Team, generally puts on a white suit and talks his way into wherever necessary. Murdoch, the pilot, and B.A., the driver/mechanic, provide transport and back-up. Once the lay of the land has been established, Hannibal comes up with a plan (he wasn't a Colonel for nothing you know) and the A-Team proceed to bamboozle the bad guys, perform what is effectively a citizens arrest, and then deliver them into the hands of the proper authorities.

The proper authorities, it is similarly worth noting, always exist. The sheriff may have been murdered with an evil substitute taking his place, the prison system may have been subverted, the police force may be corrupt, but the A-Team always find some-one to deliver their prisoners to. (This is always done quickly to prevent the proper authorities from arresting the A-Team itself). The message is clear, corruption and wrongdoing may be widespread and prevalent but they are not universal; good, strong men CAN make a difference. (The A-Team, I fear, has never been able to cope with more than the walk-on-woman in essentially minor roles).

I said earlier that THE A-TEAM satirizes and ridicules violence rather than glorifying it. Examples of this abound, just watch the next episode of THE A-TEAM that screens in your neighbourhood. One episode that remains with me is the small wooden hut (in an amusement park of some sort?) containing four or five bad guys who insist on shooting back once the A-Team surround them and cut off their lines of escape. Several truck loads of ammunition later with the wooden hut looking remarkably like a giant sieve, the bad guys come out in a line with their hands on their heads. Through some miracle of the special effects department they don't look like walking sieves. You have to laugh.

You also have to laugh at Colonel Decker, the MP who is always unsuccessful in his attempts to catch the A-Team. The episode that introduced Decker showed him to us on the firing range. While some unimportant junior tells him he has been assigned the job of catching the A-Team, Decker goes tight-lipped from range to range, from pistol to rifle to submachinegun, disintegrating the targets with impossibly long bursts of gunfire. The cumulative effect of all this tight-lipped target destruction is hilarious. And, of course, Decker, a man who sees solutions as coming out of a barrel of a gun, is no match for the wily Hannibal Smith. Decker, in fact, stands in for the whole US Army. Obsessed with firepower and technology he can never quite understand why the A-Team continue to elude his grasp.

For my part, I can't understand why THE A-TEAM isn't showing in Melbourne, having moved from Perth since starting this review (it was a rather sudden decision to up stakes and move). MIAMI VICE isn't on here either. The fact that it's the Christmas silly season is probably the explanation. I certainly hope so. I will readily admit to missing Murdoch's continuing escapades in the mental health system (what psychosis will he display this week?), Hannibal Smith's ludicrous disguises (in the words of another critic - "this ain't self-mockery, this is genre-suicide!") and all those exploding cars. All I have to do, hopefully, is wait for the next rating period - and THE A-TEAM - to start.

## A MAIL REVUE

Michelle Muijsert



Last issue was my first attempt at fanzine reviewing and this time up there are, of course, some changes. These are in response to comments from some of our readers and I thought that, in order to encourage further dialogue, I would discuss some of my motivations and intentions in reviewing.

Firstly it is my belief that it is basic courtesy to acknowledge all zines received and also that such acknowledgements/reviews are a necessary form of interaction in fandom. Interaction through comment appears in the letter column but interaction

through trading, which is equally important to many faneds, is often ignored or devalued by cursory listing or spasmodic attention. Without other zines many of us wouldn't publish, just as we require others to write articles and letters for us to provide incentive to continue. Most faneds require feedback to continue publishing therefore all forms of feedback need to be seen to be recognised.

The capsule review system that I used last time doesn't seem to be satisfactory though. Some of our readers have asked for in-depth reviews and Perry Middlemiss, in particular, has called for more analytic reviewing in an article in TIGGER. Certainly this is more challenging than the capsule reviews I attempted last time. This time, therefore, I will be acknowledging the bulk of the zines with a listing only or capsule comment. Some of the zines, though, I will be trying to give meaningful and relevant commentary on. The success of this I am unsure of, however experience will no doubt improve my performance.

The zines I choose to review will probably be the unusual ones, the very good or abnormally poor, those that are seeking to do something different or evidently attempting to develop, and the one-shots. I would like to look at why I feel these zines succeed or don't and what lessons there are to be learnt from them. In other words, the reviews will be aimed at those who are interested in the fine art of fanediting. They are written from the point of view of someone who's relatively new at the game and they are by no means definitive. I would be the first to acknowledge that my taste in fanzines is probably not that of the average Australian faned, at least. I would define myself as fairly fannish, with a sense of humour bordering on the totally silly and an abnormal obsession with the appearance of the fanzines that we receive.

Finally we have received a complaint about my method of rating fanzines. Accordingly I will be using a different method this time, which is approximately as shown at right.

*make sure that you are getting the real thing.*

### RATING GUIDE

	<b>FULLY ERECT</b> Superior. A top production that delivers fullest satisfaction.
	<b>THREE-QUARTERS ERECT</b> Good. A well-made zine that's guaranteed to please.
	<b>HALF ERECT</b> So-so. This may get you off, but its appeal is limited.
	<b>ONE-QUARTER ERECT</b> Poor. Don't expect much, and you won't be disappointed.
	<b>TOTALLY LIMP</b> A waste of time and money. Avoid this one at all costs.

NASF WELLINGTON BRANCH NEWSLETTER. Monthly approx. Box 6655, Wellington, Aotearoa. Edited by Lyn McConchie and Linette Horne. With membership.

HYPERTENSION. Lana Brown, P O Box 4188, Wanganui, Aotearoa. 6 weekly. The usual or subs. Everything you might want to know about Star Trek, Media and



## A Mail Revue

Convention Fandom in Australasia and some things you might never have dreamed of. Jampacked with info.

SCIENCE FICTION. Dr V Ikin, Dept of English, Uni of WA, Nedlands, WA, 6009.  
Vol 8, Number 2. \$4 per ish or \$10 for 3 ishes. Sercon - looks immaculate.

THE MENTOR. R & S Clarke, 6 Bellevue Rd, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, AUST. Bi-monthly. 60 & 60A {reviews}. The usual or \$2 per ish. More beautiful production.

GEGENSCHEIN. 52, October 1986. Eric Lindsay, C/- 6 Hillcrest Ave, Faulconbridge, NSW, 2776, AUSTR. The usual. Eric's perzine - diary style.

TIGGER. Marc Ontlieb, P O Box 215, Forest Hill, Vic. 3131, AUST. The usual roughly. Has regularity but I'm not sure what it is {quite satisfactory, anyway}. Very consistent ganzine, though the current SCA debate really is enough to make one wish one was disabled!


'UKELELE 3. Daniel Farr, No. 403, 1750 Kalakaua Ave., Honolulu, Hawaii 96826, USA. Monthly {?} perzine. Daniel, I don't suppose you really need me to tell you this but you could do with a proofreader. Neos make great apprentices - perhaps it's time you started a Hawaiian SF club.


WAHFFULL 17. September 66. Jack R Herman, Box 272, Wentworth Bldg, Uni of Sydney, NSW, 2006, AUST. The usual and whenever. Genzine from one of Oz fandom's Jaded Elder Statespersons (by his own confession, no less!).

LINES OF OCCURENCE. Arthur D Hlavaty, 819 W. Markham Ave, Durham, NC 27701.  
 919-NUTS' LAB, USA. Frequently, the usual. Short but interesting perzine.

THYME. Roger Weddall & Peter Burns, P O Box 273, Fitzroy, Vic, 3065. \$10  
for 10 {approx}. What can I say? Pete's a friend and Roger's our housemate these  
days, so anything I say is bound to be seen as suffering from bias. ~~WHICH/NO/POSS/IT~~  
~~does//IT/does//offering//this//review//to//get//up//the//noses//of//those//who//don't//live//bias//~~

Maybe it does. But THYME is getting more and more frequent. And larger. You can't deny it. And it has certainly been running some pleasantly controversial stuff lately. Circumstantially it appears successful, n'est-ce-pas? But is this objective? Sigh.

FORBIDDEN WORLDS. Robert James Mapson, PO Box 7087, Cloisters Square, WA, 6000, Aust. The usual and the unusual {good don't you think?}. 13/14.  Robert and Mae Strelkov involve themselves in a lengthy discussion of linguistics (maybe). Not comprehensible - to anyone at POB 273, anyway - but sure as Hell impressive!

**MATTOID.** School of Humanities, Deakin Uni, Vic, 3217, AUST. \$10 for 3 issues. Number 24 with an 'introducing Damien Broderick' supplement. Slightly  informative but much more interesting. Some excerpts of Damien's writing, in particular from the upcoming TIME ZONES. Sure to be Very Good, if this piece is representative. (If these comments are incomprehensible to anyone out there, it may be that you don't know that Damien is one of Australia's very few professional SF(ish) writers - and rather good too, in this fem's opinion. Anyway, we forgive you for not knowing but do recommend remedying the situation.)

STICKY QUARTERS 14. Brian Earl Brown, 11675 Beaconsfield, Detroit, MI 48224, USA. Interesting genzine which is apt to look rather terrible. I say this in sympathy rather than anything else as I know Brian tries hard and is often the victim of circumstance in this regard, as when his typewriter was ripped off for instance.

THE MATALAN RAVE 10. November 1986. Michael Hailstone, PO Box 193, Woden,  
ACT, 2606. God, please don't let me get caught saying anything about this.

NEOLOGY 11. Aug/Sept 86. Box 4071, Edmonton, AB T6E 4S8, Canada. Ed. by Kathleen Moore. Trade or with club membership. More than adequate clubzine which splashes about an impressive amount of art. This one features the Enthusiastic New Committee, poor souls. They'll get theirs. {I remember being like that!}

HIGH TIDE. Netherlands in 1990 Bid Progress Report. Stichting WorldCon 1990, Postbus 95370 - 2509 CJ, Den Haag - Nederland. Join now before it gets too hot to handle!

SF TRUTH 3. Rod Kearins, 3 Vincent St, Canterbury, NSW, 2193, AUST. \$3 p.a. plus a donation to a fannish charity or the usual. It lives!

THE SWAMP GAS JOURNAL. Vol 3, 9/10, July 1986. Chris Rutowski, Box 1918, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3L 3R2, Canada. In memoriam: J Allen Hynek.

LIGHT IN THE BUSHEL. Richard Brandt, 4740 N. Mesa No. 111, El Paso, TX 79912, USA. Perzine, infrequent. This is definitely what I would describe as a crunchy little perzine. It's cleanly laid out, with clear type, a few well-placed illos and good reproduction on pale yellow paper. Crisp and attractive, in other words.



Richard is a very competent writer whose strength is his ability to take a low key approach in dealing with some rather emotive issues. He discusses his divorce, NASFiC at Austin, women, a change in job, a local convention Horror Story, and the bizarreness of Baen Books in a rational manner. Interesting stuff. My only complaint is that I would have liked to hear MORE, particularly about the AmigoCon Horror Story.

GENERIC FANZINE {TAU CETI PHOENIX}/APOCRYPHA. Larry Dunning, Box 111, Midland, Western Australia. This is a special edition of Tau Ceti Phoenix wherein Larry examines the



last couple of years in his (emotional) life. Larry lays it on the line, and has received a fair amount of verbal criticism in some quarters for doing this. I find it rather sad that local fandom has come to this stage. There was a time when fans could wear their hearts on their sleeves and other fans were concerned about the state of the organ, not shocked that it was showing. Are we all so mature and self-contained that we can put down someone else who is willing to admit that he is going through the growing pains we have presumably forgotten we ever felt? Have we all stopped growing? Sure, from a technical point of view this document is ragged in style and transparent in detail; which I am certain it is to Larry, too, now. Yes, it is motivated by revenge as much as a desire for cleansing and the final laying to rest of an unfortunate period in Larry's life. Okay, its primary interest as an intrigue is in the questions it leaves unanswered. But it is nonetheless the sort of basic congress that fandom used to be built on. If a few more of us bared our souls just a little every now and then, perhaps a certain spark of life might start to creep back into our zines.

INTREPID 1. Robyn Crewe and Pat Knox, 59 Beatty Ave, East Vic Park, WA, 6151.



The usual. Projected monthly. For the first time in yonks, we have a genuinely new Oz fanzine from two genuinely new (and virtually unknown) faneds. Neither Robyn nor Pat have been involved in fanzine fandom before this venture, having both moved in the last year to Perth from the East, where they were basically fringe-fen. Despite their recent conversion to trufandom, INTREPID is Not Bad At All. Something to do with the Wonderful WA effect I guess.

Robyn writes a bit about a brief dalliance with media in her early days in fandom with some affection and more than a little wryness. Sensawunda can be a little embarrassing to recall. Pat talks about his continuing fascination with the roll of the dice and their influence on his life to date. This background stuff is quite interestingly done and should prove a good springboard for future INTREPIDs. Other articles include a humorous piece on cats, first impressions of WA fandom and speculations on the effects of isolation on fannish communities. The first number is short but sweet and neat, though probably not very well circulated. Pat and Robyn have sent the zine out to their immediate friends, which probably won't include many fanzine fans. If you've been missed out and you'd like a copy, just drop a line to the address shown. It's well worth the cost of the postage stamp!

LARRIKIN. Irwin Hirsh {2/416 Dandenong Rd., Caulfield Nth, Vic, 3161, Aust.} &



Perry Middlemiss {GPO Box 2708X, Melbourne, Vic, 3001, Aust.}. Monthly plu-perzine, the usual. Okay, Perry, are you sure you want to know what I think?

Do you care? Seriously, I do have some comments on Larrikin which I hope may be seen in some way as constructive. It is my opinion that LARRIKIN is in a Raw State. So far it has been using what has been basically an 8 page perzine format and attempting to fit genzine type contents into it. In my opinion, 8 pages, even monthly, is not enough space to fit in the personality and thoughts of two editors plus words from a guest or two and some decently crunchy comments from the readers. I think you guys have to decide whether you want a perzine with two perz or a



genzine. (I'm sorry to categorise zines in this way and I appreciate that it isn't a highly accurate method but I think perhaps it's the easiest way to convey what I mean about TYPE of content.) If you want a perzine, I think you should get more perzonal, i.e. let us know a bit about your feelings, opinions, the nitty gritty stuff; not just the safe stuff like hobbies and cosy memories. You should let us, the readers, get a bit closer to you - and you should devote what space is left over from your personalities to interaction with your readers.

Alternatively if LARRIKIN is really a genzine in a jacket that's too small, you should take off the jacket and let it grow.

Personally, I favour the Real Perzine Approach, if for no other reason than that we already know Irwin as a genzine editor thru SIKANDER. One way or another, I think it's time for further development. And with that opinion, I believe I would find at least one of the editors of LARRIKIN in agreement.

HOLIER THAN THOU 24. Marty Cantor, 11565 Archwood St., Nth Hollywood, CA 91606-1705, USA. 2 or 3 times a year. The usual but plenty of it.



Oh dear, here we have a good example of how not to do a letter column. Marty, how could you? (Yes, I guess you are getting sick of that question by now.) Taking the readers' letters, cutting them to fit your arguments, and then inserting more editorial comment than correspondence is definitely not the way to win friends and influence. If you MUST; more SUBTLETY. In fact this whole issue of HTT could have done with more judicious editing. Some of the best stuff was towards the middle with the weakest articles near the front; a tactic which can lead to the best stuff not getting read at all.

So far all this sounds rather unkind, doesn't it? The other side of the coin is that I really do like the idea of an art feature and I think I enjoyed the collected works of Bob gratuitous-and-proud-of-it Lee. Also, some of the good stuff was very good indeed. I think the Law and Order Handbook in this issue was the best I have seen and I was delighted by Harry Warner's All My Yesterdays (which is just par for the course, y'know).

So why do I criticise? Marty is experimenting with the format at the mo and personally I think he has a little distance to go, though this HTT certainly looks pretty tidy. The thing is I suspect Marty won't give a damn for my opinion so I can afford to say what I think without danger of hurting his feelings. A thick skin can be a very useful thing if you're a faned and Marty is certainly an example to all us oversensitive types in that he will just keep on keeping on irrespective of brickbats and tinducks. So keep it up Marty; the right chemistry is waiting out there in the future for you somewhere.

\* \* \* \* \*

There were other zines I wanted to look at in greater depth and they were, in fact, some of the zines that I liked best. But I left them to last, with the result that I have run into a deadline and out of space. So for now I will confine myself to recommending a closer look at the three zines listed below. Next ish I expect to have more time and, hopefully, a better column as a result. Before I go, a rumour or two. An individual I shall refer to only as J.S. has threatened to resurrect his long decomposed zine, C., while a mutual drinking companion from parts North, a Mr T.R., is contemplating his maiden attempt at pubbing. The results could be... different. Anyway, I hope this little mention proves to be an incentive to both of them! Adieu, for now...

CRI DE LOON 8 & 8.5. T Kevin Atherton, 3021 N. Southport, Chicago, IL 60657, USA. These are both mini-comics, mini-zines, pursezines, call them what you will. Most amusing, original and loony anyway.

BLATANT 15. Avedon Carol, 9A Greenleaf Rd., East Ham, London E6 1DX, UK. Perzine, whim. Just the zine for any expatriate of anywhere who has ever been homesick. {Yes, I miss the food and the newspapers too!}

SQUINCH. Jerry Kaufman, 4326 Winslow Place N., Seattle, WA 98103, USA. One-shot bidzine for Seattle for Corflu '88. Wow, Corflu sure is getting big over there, ain't it? And more power to it. It may be a long way away, but it seems to be spreading fannish ripples even at this distance. {Much better for our figures than chocolate ripples and they taste almost as good!}

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