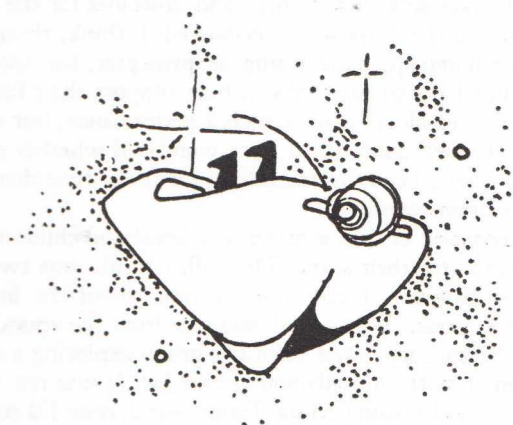


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# STEFFANTASY



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# THE FIRST PAGE

By W. MILDEW DANNER

## *All The World's A Stage*

**I** AM PRETTY SURE that my first experience of Theatre was at a puppet show given by two brothers who lived across Lloyd Street from our house. I was about seven and they were around ten or twelve.

The boys may have built the stage themselves, but I'm sure they must have had parental help with stage sets and scenery and costumes for the little players. For the actual performance the boys were unassisted, I think, though no doubt their mother was in the wings, perhaps acting as prompter, for those were the days when mothers didn't have to have jobs to help support their families.

A small boy is not an ideal judge of such a performance, but to me it seemed to be realistic and quite well done, and I have wondered whether one or both of the boys' parents might have been theatrical folk, for at the time there were three large legitimate theatres downtown.

The audience consisted of ten or fifteen neighborhood children who paid, I believe, three cents each for their seats. The bill, I think, was two one-act playlets adapted from 'Tom Sawyer'. I remember nothing about the first except that the scene was deep in a forest. The second one was from the episode about Tom and Becky when they became separated from the group exploring a system of caverns, and had an encounter with the villainous Injun Joe. It was not until three or four years later that I started reading Mark Twain—and, once I'd started, kept on until I'd read the whole set, and wished there were more—and I'm inclined to think that if Mark had seen that performance he'd have approved of it, and perhaps he would have demanded a royalty of five cents or so. I don't know whether the boys gave any further performances, and if they'd had any other productions I'd surely have seen them.

I wonder if there are any kids today who are as enterprising as those two were, along with many others of their time. It is, after all, so much easier to sit watching sex and violence on TV, or exercising a few fingers playing violent video games.

It was a few years after we had moved to Thomas Boulevard that my mother, who loved Opera, took me to a matinee, probably at Syria Mosque. I've no idea what opera it was and I enjoyed the overture, but when the curtain rose upon a gaudy stage and a bunch of overdressed and overweight people singing away in a foreign language I hated it. I had to sit through the rest of it, but I never attended an opera on my own initiative. . . . In 1930 'The Student Prince' was at the Nixon and Margaret was anxious to see it. She had become engaged to Frank and he was in Arizona, so I was elected to escort her, with strong objections on my part at having to endure another opera, even though a 'light' one. The only seats Dad was able to get were in a box which obscured part of the stage but did not in any way lessen the impact of the sounds from it, so that my efforts to snooze through the proceedings were useless. Margaret enjoyed it and I couldn't understand why.

In the twenties and thirties the three downtown theatres had plays the entire season, and during the summer the Pitt sometimes had 'roadshow' movies put on by the producer, who rented the theatre and sold reserved seats. It was thus that I saw 'Cavalcade', a very fine 1933 movie adaptation of Noel Coward's play.

I can recall only a few of those I saw, but certainly one of the best was 'You Can't Take It With You'—the only play I can remember that was brought back for another run the year after it was first seen in Pittsburgh, and I saw it both times. In 1938 an all-star film was made of it that was so extensively and badly rewritten that it was a great disappointment. As a sample of the original play, about a large and happy family of eccentrics: a daughter (or in-law) has a little business making candy which her husband delivers on his motorcycle. He has a hand press on the dinner table and prints little cards to put into the candy boxes with his name and address and little messages such as 'Dynamite the White House!' If you have any chance of seeing this one don't miss it; don't go out of your way to see the movie.

One of the best was the familiar 'The Front Page', which fared better (twice) in the movies. The 1931 version, with all the four-letter words deleted, is still a very entertaining film. The 1974 version, with color and the original salty dialogue restored, is not noticeably better.

The most unusual play I ever saw was 'The Four Poster', which had practically no action but the dialogue was some of the wittiest I ever heard. It was made into a fine movie and also, I think, into a stage musical.

For several summers the Pitt had a better-than-average stock company that gave good performances of recent plays that one could see for as little as 50¢. I think it was its production of the fantasy 'On Borrowed Time' that ran for six weeks instead of the usual one week. When the company disbanded a number of its members went to Hollywood, and for years I saw them in character parts on the screen.

There was a play about which I can remember only that a few minor characters were scattered among the audience, and that at a critical point two of the leads descended from the stage and had a mad chase up one aisle and back down the other aisle and up to the stage. It was a lot of fun; anyone know its name?

Another popular 'stock' company was at the Little Theatre of the CIT Drama School. There was some sort of subscription system with tickets good until about 8:20, when the doors were opened and there was a mad rush for the few seats left in the tiny oval auditorium where I never saw an empty seat as the curtain went up. The reason is the very high quality of the productions. I think it was 'Berkley Square' that had an extended run and drew N.Y. drama critics, who gave it very good reviews.

There was an earnest company of amateurs with a tiny stage in a tiny auditorium in an old North Side house. Betty knew some of the company and was much interested in Theatre so we saw what might have been its only production. I remember absolutely nothing about the play, but we were shown the tiny theatre's tiny green room, and I can say positively that it was green.

My last play is another whose name and author have escaped me. I have somewhere the printed program, but if my life depended upon my finding it right now, I'd be done for. It was presented by a group from Butler at George Shaw's Red Barn Theatre about 25 years ago, and was a recent Broadway success. I think it was the only play in a couple of seasons of musicals. The Red Barn has long since reverted to its former use as storage space, though I think the stage is still there.

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**NOW IS THE TIME FOR ALL GOOD PARTIES TO COME TO THE AID OF MAN.**



# THE MAIL BOX

## EGOBOO AND OTHER STUFF

From DORRIT JOHNSON

Sao Paulo, Brazil

16 May 1998

Our streets have so many holes that the only thing one can do is choose which hole to fall into. We already consider it a good day if one does not disappear, with his car, in a hole at night. If it rains, when water covers the streets, one does not dare to go out, not to mention all the assaults. We know practically no one who was not assaulted on the streets or in their homes at least once. The TV warns, 'Don't wear even costume jewelry outside!'

Something not soooo dramatic; first the joke: Manuel had a cat that he loved dearly. His old mother helped to care for it. He wanted to go back to visit Portugal but was afraid to leave the cat and his mother alone, in that order. His neighbor, Joaquim, promised to take good care of both, so Manuel went to Portugal. After a few days he got a telegram from Joaquim: 'Your cat died today.' Manuel, distraught, rushed home and upbraided Joaquim, 'How could you be so rough with my feelings? You should first prepare me with a message like 'Your cat went up on the roof', then 'your cat slipped and fell off the roof,' and only then 'your cat died' Contritely, Joaquim agreed that he had been too abrupt, so Manuel returned to Portugal. A few days later he received a telegram, 'Your mother weni up on the roof.'

My daughter, Yara, 50, wanted to tell us that a frien of ours had died, so she called my son's pager service and gave them the message. They refused to accept it, saying it was against their policy to send messages of a death. Her son, 20, suggested, 'Why don't you tell them to send, "Maria went up on the roof?"'

From WARREN DELANO

Idem

We hereby admonish you to take better care of yourself—after all, the receipt of a *Stefantasy* periodically is one of the few bright spots in the dark gray existence that seems to be the norm in this neck of the woods, but that's not the only reason. I detest our dwelling on the upsetting side of happenings, but they are at present so overwhelming that it's difficult to dismiss them. How much of the so-called news from Brazil permeates up to the news media in the Ewe Ess uv Ei we don't know—I suspect damned little except for semi-earthshaking events. We are constantly bombarded with news that in any other time or place would be unbelievable, or impossible. Some even long for the good old days when the military dictatorship held sway.

Boy, have we been affected! [by *El Nino*] Record floods here in southern Brazil, and record droughts (32 years) in the northeast. We see news headlines on TV of US floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, and snowstorms. Sometimes seems as if some in the TV management rub their hands with glee when they see the US in trouble. [So, it seems, do some of ours, even if they must invent the trouble themselves.]

From LEE HOFFMAN

Port Charlotte, Florida

13 June 1998

Wow! I'm glad you came through okay and the Pacemaker is satisfactory. One of my long-time close friends from NYC is living here in Port Charlotte now, and had to have a Pacemaker a few years ago. He, too, is getting along just fine.

I thoroughly enjoyed the latest *Stef*, especially your reminiscences.



I envy Al Fick those broadcasts about local industries. How things are made, or done, in factories or by craftsmen, is almost always interesting.

Like Laurence Hines I learned to type on an Underwood #5, and many times I've wished I had that old machine. It was a handsome hunk of machinery, built like a steam locomotive. Unfortunately I taught myself simply by banging away on it. Eventually I set out to learn to touch type, and got the hang of it but never got rid of some of the bad habits I'd acquired on the Underwood. I am now a pretty fast typist, but not a very accurate one. When I went job hunting in New York, the skills I had to sell were ones I'd learned in fandom—typing and letter writing—thanks to the old Underwood.

I agree with Dorothy Goodfellow that old people should write their memoirs. Fortunately, the local Adult Education program is encouraging them to do it, offering classes that help the hesitant ones to get started.

The corner in front of my previous house was a school bus stop, and my experience was similar to Vinç's. One can learn a lot more taboo language from school-kids than from TV and movies. Vinç asked if the Tele Tubbies have hit the U.S: The answer is yes. I have not watched it; I just saw the promo. That was enough for me. *[I saw the tail end of an episode, which was nore than enough. Odd thing is that it was followed by letters from kids of 11 or so who watch the program. That's when I turned it off. I should have read a few. If kids of that age like the TT, what is the world coming to?]*

I missed EaSiS in Stef, though I've been hearing plenty of it on TV, especially from station news readers. I did rather like, 'If caught early, an orthodontist can remedy this condition with braces.'

---

From BILL HAYWOOD

Alliance, Ohio

13 June 1998

I delightedly read through the letters in order (after the First Page) until I reached the Last Page, when I was startled to read of the problems you have had since November 5. You give us plenty of details about your falls, but no diagnosis of the reason. *[I mistakenly thought I'd mentioned the arthritic knees that cause the falls in a previous issue.]* Anyway, I'm glad that the pacemaker is working for you, and that you're back pegging type.

The Early Thirties *were* good times. When I started on my first full-time job (it was my last, too) there were no deductions from my pay for taxes, Social Security or dues for the union. The whole \$15 was mine, so I gave my mother \$5, put another \$5 in a savings account, and used the rest for my weekly subway fare, lunches, and clothing. A new wool suit cost me a week's pay. *[I got a good one for \$12, and some shirts for 89¢ each.]* Most of my hours were on night shifts, so I could take classes at Columbia in the daytime. When I moved into the Art Dept, I switched my educational efforts to the Franklin Square School of Art. Most of the things I learned happened on the job, and I retired 45½ years later as Assistant Art Manager of the Editorial Dept of the New York *News*. Newspaper work is different every day, and never boring.

Reading the letters is like geting more mail and not having to answer it. There are situations and opinions here that you won't find in the newspapers. Our local paper has a column of things telephoned in from readers, and it is usually fun to read, but your friends are more interesting! The editor doesn't make corrections, so it is replete with EaSiS material. When did they stop teaching spelling and grammar? *[About 60 years ago, I think.]*

---

From MAC TINKER

North Granby, Connecticut

14 June 1998

Life goes on here; still living in the house we built 34 years ago, which at the

time was located in a 'faraway' area. The developers have dug in and the little old road past the house is now heavy with traffic, especially at 'going-to-work' time and quitting time. Of course, we have been discovered by all the truck and heavy-equipment drivers, labor-helpers (in their swift cars) carpenters, bricklayers, ad in. finitum. Of course, now that the lovely wooded areas have been discovered, we have nice and some not so nice kids as well as robberies. Civilization brings its problems. With the unusually large development being generated one has to wonder what the year 3000 will show as regards the natural habitat. *[Easy, Mac. It will be slowly regenerating itself after the 50 billions of the damned human race have finally acomplished their own complete self-destruction ]*

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From HARRY WARNER, Jr: Hagerstown, Maryland June 14, 1998

Do you realize that those photographs which you helped produce during the Depression are now genuine collectibles and some of them must be selling for as much as you were paid for several weeks' work? Collectors have been bidding up prices for quality photographs that have some age on them, even those whose subjects aren't identified.

I'm among the fans with railroad background mentioned by Lloyd Penney. I worked for the Pennsylvania R.R. before descending to journalism. The job also involved work for the N&W because its tracks ended where the Pennsy's begrn on the run through the Shenandoah and Cumberland Valleys. I kept getting shifted between the freight office and the passenger station. Maybe I would have been a lifelong railroader if it hadn't been for the night when I was on duty at the passenger station where I had to answer the telephone, sell tickets, and help the baggage master (he was illiterate and couldn't read the tags), and I also was notified that I must unload a freight car packed with supplies for a work train that had been parked on a siding near the station. I couldn't budge the large wooden crates which were too heavy even to shove out of the doorway and crack open when they landed, the only way I could devise to do the job. I quit the next day.

---

From DOROTHY GOODFELLOW Silver Bay, New York June 15, 1998

'The Early Thirties' interested me, for 1932 was the year that Don and I were married (on July 2, my parents' wedding day) and set out on a three-week trip in my sister's Ford (with a rumble seat). On our wedding trip, we stopped a few days at friends of my parents on the Maine coast and heard F.D.R. campaigning for office. Don had just received an M.A. from Harvard and was to go on to achieve a Ph.D., taking a year off (and two summers in hot, humid Cambridge) on borrowed money, and a winter-spring semester while I taught in his place (*not* at his salary!) It was a long haul. But we managed to get to England once and again, thanks to the invitation of a remarkable French woman whom we met on our campus over-seeing Fr. graduate students. (She was with the French Embassy and had fought in the Resistance.) Don and I were asked to take her to lunch. She was interested in Romanesque architecture. So we went to northern Italy. Then we went over the Brenner Pass to Salzburg and attended the Festival. It was a real eye opener for us. We learned how the Germans treated the Norman French. Years later, when I had G.I.'s in my classes at C.M.U., I learned how grateful the French farmers in Normandy were to see the Allied British & Americans; they dug up bottles of wine and presented them to the soldiers. One showed me a map he had drawn with honey bees on it attracted by the gifts!

---

From DEAN A. GRENELL Mission Viejo, California Mon/15 June, 1998 or so  
Genghis Khan's personal bodyguard was an elite unit, handpicked from the fiercest warriors of the Mongol Horde. They were known as The Cream Of Tartars.

I found the final sentence of Bill Haywood's letter amusing. I'm aware that some readers take great delight in spotting typos or 'literals,' as the British refer to them. For that reason I take great pains to include a few in my published output.

Re: Laurence Hines' letter, I took typing in my sophomore year at high school and regard it as one of the most useful things I learned in school, despite having flunked the course. It was set up primarily to train secretaries and you had to turn in lessons with no wrong letters and no erasures. What I wouldn't've given for a computer about that time with its glorious ability to go back and expunge all the bad key hits.

---

From R. GRAEME CAMERON      Vancouver, British Columbia      16th June, 1998

I'm sorry to hear you required a pacemaker, but relieved it's working well. They tell me I will have to get one somewhere down the road, but in the meantime I take drugs to keep my heart under control. For the first time in more than a year I had to visit the emergency ward recently, a possible indication I am getting immune to the beneficial effects of my current drug, so I may soon have to try a different one. Or as my doctor put it, 'Let me know if your heart starts going crazy often. In the meantime, don't worry about it.' Uhh, well, sure doc.

Speaking of matters typographical, a proud student editor undertaking a course in graphic design once showed me an example of his work, a slick-paper zine of about 40 sheets. Held at arms' length, turning the pages was a visual delight, what with slanted columns of print superimposed over photographs or jagged pattern of odd shapes, or even over other columns of print running at a different angle. The use of brilliant colour was extravagant to say the least. Need I mention that the entire text was totally unreadable? I was crass enough to point this out.

'Oh, that doesn't matter,' said the proud student. 'People don't buy magazines for the text.'

Zounds! The famous Pohl/Kornbluth short story 'The Marching Morons' may have been prophetic after all!

To me the most important part of any publication is what the author has to say. It should be as readable as possible for the same reason we expect people talking to us to enunciate properly and not mumble or whisper. But I suppose if you have nothing worth saying appearance is all that matters. This applies to politics, so why not to life in general? A sorry concept.

---

From AL FICK      Cornwall, Pennsylvania      17 June 1998

The account of your early activities following college is interesting. I could write a two-page letter based on some of them but will limit myself to the Essex Terraplane. That leads to a question. Didn't Hudson take over and manufacture a Hudson Terraplane? *[In the late 20s Hudson brought out a small, boxy four called Essex to compete with the model T. It did well and in 1932 became the handsome little Essex Terraplane. As mentioned in #122, in 1934 it became simply Terraplane, and a lemon. Its faults were fixed and for the remaining years it was Hudson Terraplane.]*

I trust you will note from the enclosures that I'm back in letterpress for the umpteenth time, back to square one in fact with a Kelsey 5x8. I have a great advantage now with Quaker City Type Foundry an easy 45-minute ride from Cornwall. Still waiting to get the 7x11 Pearl from Rich Hopkins.

---

From VINCE CLARKE      Welling, England      19th June, '98

There comes a time when we have to admit that the marvellous network of our bodies is not keeping up with our brains. I'm a youth compared to you—76 this last April—but have been in hospital since March 10th. I have to slow down a

little, or as my old friend Ted Tubb, the pb author who is two or three years older than I told me, 'the doctor says I shouldn't be going upstairs two at a time.'

As you can plainly see, I'm in hospital, now sufficiently recovered from muscular collapse to fight through to a rehabilitation unit.

Ron Bennet says about the Chunnel fire, 'Vince, who practically lives in the tunnel's mouth. . . ' Long mouth, Ron, 50 miles or so, but I can confirm what you say (sorry, Bill Morse, 40 years since we met)—the heat did cause welding to take place. A white-hot excursion.

Enough to turn an old print man's heart. I saw a mention the other day of a computer having 7000 different fonts. No, I didn't believe it either. *[If it's true, you can bet about 6843 of them are useless garbage and the rest poor copies of handsome old metal types.]*

---

From LAURENCE HINES

Sedona, Arizona

June 19, 1998

When shaving one morning I blacked out and fell back against the counter and ended up on the floor. My problem turned out to be a blocked carotid artery on the right side. The doctors cleared the artery in the hospital and I've been okay since. I think it's about time to check the artery on the left side, though.

Your experience with the Essex Terraplane reminded me of mine with an earlier Essex. I joined the Navy in 1933, was home on leave a year later, and bought a used Essex for \$35 to get around in. It didn't have a fan belt, but seemed to run all right without one so I drove it that way. A few weeks later I sold it for \$35, and had cheap transportation in the meantime.

---

From ALDEN SCOTT CROW

Fair Oaks, California

June 22, 1998

Your 'Early Thirties' piece was superb. The bits on the Beidler-Viken made me glad my old Nikkormatic is so easy to use. A great story.

The letters were fun to read. Dorothy Goodfellow's advice 'do something' is indeed wise. Her observation about memoirs is true, although I have found some folks don't want to talk about the past. Bad memories, perhaps. I like Gunnar Kalback's comment about unwritten ideas being fleeting.

---

From RON LEITCH

Cleveland, Ohio

June 23, 1998

Am enclosing an article from a recent *Times*. I could hardly believe that there are LP junkies and that LPs are worth money to the right people. Why anybody would spend \$10 for a CD *[that's a remainder price; new CDs are about \$30 each]* is beyond me. I think the younger folk are wedded to CDs, at least until they are replaced by some new incompatible medium so everybody will have to dump those obsolete CDs

---

From FRED GAGE

Auburn, Maine

27 June 1998

It was a surprise to hear of your tumble, but nice to read that a Pacemaker has put you back at the cases! A few months ago I scored poorly on my first-ever stress test at the MedCtr, so the cardiologist found I had considerable blockage. He termed it 'borderline' and put me on two new prescriptions. He also enrolled me in a Cardiac Rehab exercise program at the MedCtr, where I visit three days a week. I feel fine, but realize I'm 73, not 23! *[Oh, to be 73 again.]*

I've been enjoying another great issue of 'It's a Small World', and concur with your comments about modern, computer graphics in magazines. I'm a long-time subscriber to *Esquire*, which has been on a typographic binge for two years. They try yellow ink on a black tint-block; run a king-sized initial letter the entire length of the page; insert a headline down through a page of type; etc. Can truly drive a reader bongo. *[Such nitwits should be made to go up to the blackboard and write 100*



times: 'The sole purpose of a printed page is to be read, and anything that interferes with ease of reading is bad.』

From BUCK COULSON

Hartford City, Indiana

6-25-98

You got your BS in 1932. I was 4 years old in 1932 and I'm regarded by an awful lot of today's fans as ancient.

The Canadian \$2 coin I have is roughly  $1\frac{1}{32}$ " diameter; a bit larger than our quarter. The \$1 coin is 1" diameter and 11-sided, though it looks circular at a glance. It's more or less the color of our pennies... I see a fair number of 50¢ pieces out here; have one now, in fact. (Ours, not Canadian.)

From FRED LIDDLE

Tampa, Florida

June 29, 1998

I enjoyed reading about the Essex Terraplane that belonged to your friend. My father's first car was a second-hand 1929 Essex and, as I remember, it had a couple of broken axles during the time he owned it. His next car was a 1937 Dodge, on which I learned to drive.

From ROBERT LICHTMAN

Glen Ellen, California

July 3, 1998

Reading of your being wheeled into the operating room soured a little like being stuck in an airplane waiting for its turn to use overcrowded runways, but I'm glad the implantation was a success. My best wishes to your kind neighbor, Bob, who apparently helps you out in a lot of ways.

Interesting tales of your life in the 30s up front. The adjustment your boss Dick made to the tie-rod on the Terraplane reminded me of problems I had with one of the vehicles I drove once when I lived on The Farm in Tennessee. This car had a three-speed column shift which would occasionally get hung up. I had to crawl under the car, grab some of the connections between the shift lever and the transmission, and give them a twist just so. Then I could shift gears until the problem occurred again.

I learned to type in my first year of high school on an old Royal, and as with Hines and you it was one of the most useful courses I had.

I sent you *Trap Door* No. 18 back in May and hope it reached you in good shape. [It did, thanks, with lots of good stuff in it.]

From RON BENNETT

Harrogate, England

11 July 1998

Ah, yes, the thirties. My father was hit by the photography bug and had a dark room in our cellar. I became *au fait* with all sorts of technical lingo such as 'Don't open the \*\*\*\* door until I tell you it's all right to come in!' I remember his taking a group picture of various members of the family and the print coming out with them wearing exaggeratedly patterned clothing, somewhat unlike what they had actually been wearing. No one could figure that one and I still can't.

Your line of Japanese characters and the query as to whether they mean anything reminds me of the old saw about the slick owner of a new restaurant who decided it would be smart to label the doors of the rest rooms in different languages. He had signs made reading GENTLEMEN, HOMMES, HERREN and so forth and then saw some Chinese characters on a poster so had them copied on to the door with the other tags. Everything went along smoothly until he had a group of Chinese customers who saw the sign and burst into uncontrollable laughter. It turned out the sign read CHINESE RELIEF.

Over here we lost our pound notes some few years ago but six banks in Scotland continue to issue their own notes, officially legal tender only in Scotland. Some stingy types allowed only 95% on them. And then stuck them in their bank accounts at full face value. The pound coins are of course issued and valid through

the UK. And guess what! Last month we got our TWO pound coins.

---

From BILL MORSE

Tweed, Ontario

12 July 98

Your comment on The Last Page was in a sense appropriate: some country residents in Quebec and S.E. Ontario were without electric power for as much as 4 weeks when power cable pylons buckled and collapsed under the weight of the frozen rain. *[An enclosed photo shows one of the collapsed pylons, looking like the skeleton of some strange dinosaur.]* All along the No. 7, west of Ottawa, there were trees snapped by the same stuff. We were lucky in Tweed: a few fender benders, and some brief power outs for which gentleness we were grateful.

I also liked Little's approach to car repairs: kick it (but be sure it's a technical kick). Did that quite a bit in my pre-war motorcycling days; but postwar the mfrs realized that after-sales service would be profit-making, and made the product less reachable.

One time when I was working at Computing Devices, following a meeting and an urgent request for tech reports, I had the pleasure of composing a memo:

Bill:

As agreed between you, me and Bill

Bill

(c.c. Bill)

---

From JIM KAPPLIN

Baltimore, Maryland

7-16-98

My wife and I just returned from Russia, an Elderhostel tour of Moscow and St. Petersburg. Offset printing there is so bad that any idiot can counterfeit theater tickets. This is done quite frequently. As a result, prestigious theaters like the Bolshoi print tickets that look like banknotes, absolutely beautiful and difficult to counterfeit. Tried to locate a type foundry in the two cities without success.

---

From RUTH LOWNDES

Middletown, Rhode Island

July 16, 1998

It is with regret that I inform you of Bob's death Tues. July 14, 1998. He died of renal cancer in no pain. The hospice volunteers and the staff at Village House saw to that.

---

From BILL HAYWOOD

Alliance, Ohio

19 July 1998

One of those close calls with an Ohio tornado was a torrential downpour that put down several inches of rain in a short time, along with high wind and lightning. Our house is on the top of a rise, but the drains couldn't carry off all the water, gravity notwithstanding. My rooms are in the basement, and the water was three inches deep on the carpet and on the wood paneled walls. We put a sump pump to work and a couple of wet/dry vacs, but the carpet and some of the panels had to go. No, it didn't get into the printshop, but my furniture, desk and typewriter are moved into that area, and I am sleeping in the living room upstairs until my quarters are restored. Nothing to compare to the damage I've seen around the state, but I feel as if I've gone back a few decades in time! If Y2K knocks out the computers, I won't have many adjustments to make. It won't hurt clerks to learn to calculate via mental addition and subtraction.

---

From JOHN HORN

Little Rock, Arkansas

7/26/98

It was a pleasure to find another *Stefantasy* in my mail box and I was having myself a good read until I got to the Last Page. Damn, what a shock! Was glad to hear those doctors didn't kill you. I guess I figured you were pretty well indestructible. So now you're a marvel of electronics, What next? Will you be operating a computer soon? *[NO. Their garbage isn't their fault, but they make it possible.]*

Things here are hectic as ever. I spend lots of time fooling around on tractors trying to keep the brush and grass from taking over. We put in a small garden this year with poor results. The carrots and radishes were a failure, the lettuce was bitter, and the blasted squirrels are eating all our tomatoes. It's a good thing there is a grocery store down the road.

Printing-wise I haven't been doing much. I do have a *Leadstacker* in the works but at the present rate of my press work, it may not be finished 'til the end of the year. I did manage to acquire five more presses recently, though most of them are very small. Biggest of the bunch is a Monumental Rotary No 1, 6x9 treadle jobber.

*[[John lent me some prints of the new house and the warehouse. Words fail me!]]*

From NED BROOKS

Lilburn, Georgia

July 29, 1998

I retired from NASA in April and moved my 10,000 books and 125 typewriters to Lilburn Georgia. The movers claimed the stuff weighed in at 50,000 lbs. It will be a while before I have it unpacked and sorted out!

Fascinating account of your days as a photographer. I think cars have improved a bit since then. I can generally keep one for ten years rather than two, and I never had one that shimmied at 60 or swerved when braking. *[[Nor did I.]]*

As I understand it, each of the Japanese type characters that Hayward sent you would represent a syllable rather than a concept as in the Chinese system.

George Scithers is still at the same address and still editing *Weird Tales*. *[[George—WHAT THE HELL? I thought you were dead]]*

From BEN INDICK

Teaneck, New Jersey

August 3, 1998

I am bored by fannish writing. Interminable accounts of cons, gabbing and other crap. . . . Your zines I have only glanced at; I know a lot of your correspondents, so I know there will be no fan garbage. Your letter is good, nothing about fans or SF, just the past, a pain in the butt *[[not always, Ben]]* at the time, but sort of warm now. No wonder, for gosh sakes, you liked my article—it's your world! Those old trolleys sounded like San Francisco's cable cars. *[[But they weren't much alike. Pgh had one series of cars capable of 70 mph. I've never seen a cable car.]]*

My latest zine is filled with book reviews (mostly non-fantasy; I am fed up with the genre) and theatre reviews—that's my stock in trade. Since you have been away from NYC too long *[[Huh? In 1923 I had a brief sight-seeing tour and in 1927 I twice drove through small parts of it. Period.]]*, that stuff may once again drive you to heaving Ben's Beat out again. It has more though. Lately I've been doing these memoirs like Tom uses.

From JEAN YOUNG

Decorah, Iowa

8/18/98

Always delightful to read about your early work experiences. Duquesne Slag Products Co. stuff very interesting. Also the piece on narrow-gauge railroads. There was one here locally from the Waukon Iron Mine down to Waukon Junction. I believe only the tracks from the mine itself up to the branch line was narrow-gauge. (That's the stretch where they originally carried out the ore in horse- or mule-drawn wagons.)

My ex-husband \*2 (Bob Rose) went to Carnegie Tech as a theater tech person, later as a directing (theater) major. He didn't graduate; they kicked him out after 4 yrs & he finished at Boston University in film 2 years later. He loved the place, and always held up the methods he'd been taught there as THE way things should be done.

In your 'early 30s' piece you mention the car that would not start in the morning. I've had my share of 'Park 'em on a hill' vehicles; some would do fine once

you got them going & some always had to be parked on a hill. Some just required a 'new' (different) starter or battery, some were just like that.

Hand-setting in Japanese or Chinese must be a nightmare. *[[I once saw a photo of a Chinese composing room: dozens of stands, all full of cases, and all one font!]]*

Lovely letter from Dorothy Goodfellow. . . . Loved also the letter from Kalback! in Sweden, yearning for a thought recorder.' I remember Andy and me complaining, even in the days of our youth, that that was what we needed. Who knows—they may come up with one—and then, what a danger of invasion of privacy!

Hard to believe that business Dorrit reports in the traffic law that has a 4-year sentence for accidentally running a person down and only 1 year for doing it on purpose. Good lord!—Dorrit told me some stories about her daughter and granddaughters. She's had a tough time.

The ice storms we had here last winter definitely reeked; they stank. They were A Bitch. They definitely wrought havoc (not the same thing as wrought iron, however.) But this winter I won't have to haul mail in the havoc! Hoo-ray!

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From LLOYD PENNEY                      Etobicoke, Ontario                      September 11, 1998

The Teletubbies have invaded with a vengeance, I don't like them, for they seem to teach children the so-called joys of regimented behaviour.

The two-dollar coin, or the tooni or twoonie, is a bi-metallic coin, as are coins in circulation in Italy and France, with a silvery rim and a bronzish centre.

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From FRED HAYWARD                      Orange, California                      25 Sept. '98

My Taiwan-built folding bicycle was stolen in England and I've replaced it with an English-built one of better quality and 5 lbs lighter, tho it cost 3x as much.

It's great when traveling by train to arrive with one's own transport—gives a feeling of wonderful independence.

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From HARTLAND B. SMITH                      Birmingham, Michigan                      October 1, 1998

You may remember that I sent you some rather poor-quality copied pix of the old Pittsburgh, Harmony, Butler & New Castle interurban line. That certainly looked like a well-maintained country railway. *[[Thanks; they were interesting, tho' I never saw that part of the line. It must have been costly to build, for in the short section between Pgh and Pine Creek there were 3 or 4 high trestles. Before its merger with the Butler Short Line it ran 'Limited' cars to Butler which made few stops and did 60 m.p.h. or so. At one time it had a 'Party Car' equipped with a 35m.m. projector and screen to show the latest silent features.]]*

Just before Labor Day I was near Flint taking pix of the Huckleberry Railroad. It was originally a standard-gauge Pere Marquette line. In 1976 Genessee County bought up about 6 miles of track and moved one rail over to make it 3-foot gauge. They have a stable of narrow-gauge Baldwins from Alaska and Colorado and some vintage wooden coaches with beautifully-finished interiors. I took sound movies of the line previously.

I enjoyed your tale of working with a portrait photographer. Now that I think of it, I believe that when I had my highschool graduation picture taken, the photographer used a bulb while his wife maneuvered the camera and changed the cut-film holders.

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CHUCK HIGGINS sent this clipping from 'Wierd News':

The U.S. Postal Service in Miami issued bulletins announcing a \$25,000 reward for the return of something stolen from a mail carrier, but refused to say what it was, referring to it only as a 'device'. Said a postal inspector, 'I can't tell you what it is. I can't tell you what it is used for.'



# THE LAST PAGE

"You can fool some of the people some of the time, and you can fool some of the people some of the time, *but you can't fool some of the people some of the time.*"

—AMBROSE J. WEEMS

## *P.S. to The First Page*



AFTER it was done I began recalling other plays of the past. One of the oldest was 'Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch'. Does anyone know if it was Mrs. W. who continually admonished one of her large brood with 'Feet, Lally Joy'?

A very fine play of the 30s (I think) was Karel Capek's 'R.U.R.' (Rossum's Universal Robots') It's a fantasy of the future when a race of humanoid robots has been developed and of the problems that arise when they begin to develop not only human characteristics, but human emotions as well

Controversial when staged in the 30s, 'The Shanghai Gesture' would probably seem pretty mild compared with the stuff seen these days on TV. It was rather episodic and concerned a Shanghai whorehouse and its Eurasian proprietor, who called herself 'Madam Goddam' because her patrons used that term so much. A movie version in 1941 was much watered down and uninteresting.

I wish I could remember the name of an excellent comedy another CIT undergrad and I saw at one of those Pitt matinees. All I recall is a bit in which a man comes in complaining about the cold outdoors. 'Yes,' says another character, 'if it gets any colder we'll have to bring in the brass monkeys.' It struck us as pretty funny, but a few of the women shoppers, who made up most of the audience, gave us puzzled glances

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## **P.S. to the Duquesne Slag Products Company**

LAST summer I saw a TV news item about the gigantic slag dump in a Pittsburgh suburb that was described in the item sent by Jim Walczak. It is, as I suspected, Nine Mile Run, with the piles vastly larger than when I last saw them 60 years ago. What the *Monitor* failed to mention is that all those millions of tons of slag (a rough guess is 150,000,000 tons) is crushed and screened, ready for a multitude of uses. It is necessary only to load it into railroad cars or trucks and haul it away. Though usually not quite so dense, in most cases it is a good substitute for natural limestone. It may be unsuitable for some purposes because its iron content might cause rusty streaks to develop in concrete made with it.

Though I'm not certain, I assume the Slag Co. (or its parent firm, Allegheny Asphalt & Paving Co.) is still in business and is marketing the stuff.

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IF YOU want to stop getting junk mail (except from firms you've dealt with) and those obnoxious telemarketing phone calls, address your complaints as follows:

Mail Preference Service  
Direct Marketing Assn, Inc.  
6 East 43d Street  
New York, N.Y. 10017

Telephone Preference Service  
Direct Marketing Assn, Inc.  
P.O. Box 9014  
Farmington, N.Y. 11735-9014

## ENGLISH AS SHE IS SPOKE

CHUCK HIGGINS sent these choice specimens from two Texas House Speakers. The first six are from Gib Lewis; others Wayne Clayton.

And now, will y'all stand and be recognized? (to a group of han dicapped people in wheelchairs)....I am filled with humidity.... This is unparalyzed in the state's history....I want to thank each and every one of you for having extinguished yourselves this session.... We'll run it up the flagpole and see who salutes that booger.... There's a lot of uncertainty that's not clear in my mind.... It's the sediment of the house that we adjourn.... Let's do this in one foul swoop.

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Those things which they would only dialog with a teacher.... He or she, no matter what their background.... will conduct this performance from a compact disc.... A lot of emotions occurred.... If it happened to you or I.... the stigmatism of a motorcycle gang.... both sides have went through.... fire throughout the fourth floor and it descended to the fifth floor.... Never before have the guard spoke out.... Some of the greatest hits of all time never available before in any form.... One of the things we look for is we look for..... We have warrants for his behalf.... where one of the original bath-houses were. ... For both he and Penny, this was .... You're violating everything you're not supposed to do.... It's still into the 70s.... He will be accused of contributing to a minor.... from the far side, more than two acres away.... his mother and father, 's divorce.... One more thing he is known for are his songs.

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