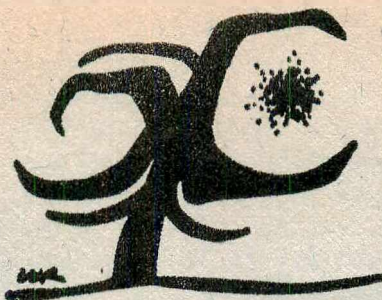


TIME
&
AGAIN

by —

Time and Again



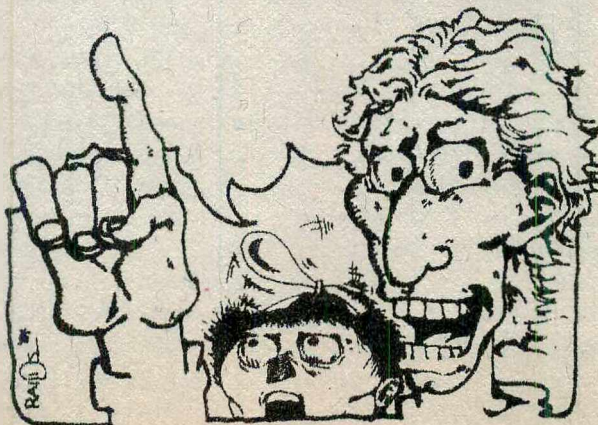
MAY 1985
Issue #1

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Interior Artwork

Jackie Causgrove .. 10 • 16 • 21 • 30 • 32 • 33 • 38 • 39
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TIME AND AGAIN #1, Vol. 1 No. 1, absolute first issue anywhere, comes to you from the hobby of Dave Locke. This is Second Coming Pub #131, and the background music of the moment is courtesy of The Moody Blues and Ballantine's Scotch. This ... publication ... is copyright 1985, and all rights revert to the contributors because, after all, they're the ones who did this stuff. This is an official, certified Wimpy Zone fanzine, and death & pillage to the wammongering Eastern elite and the Western hot-tub warriors! No, wait a minute, actually ...

DIABOLOGIC

... I'm a stranger here myself. It's been aeons since I've flown solo with a genzine and the last flight was on AWRY, which circled over the Los Angeles, California area until it crash-landed with the 10th issue in January, 1976. Earlier, starting back when the Sixties began, the terrain was more rugged as PHOENIX circled over the woods, lakes, and mountains of the Adirondack Park in upstate New York. And now here I am, deep in the middle of the Wimpy Zone, launching a third solo (ie: not coedited) genzine in the middle of my third decade in fandom.

You'd think by now that I'd know whether I wanted to do one of these damn things or not. Isn't the story always the same?: 1. announcement of new genzine expressed with great enthusiasm and overtones of Newness, 2. being typically fannish, the first issue is late, 3. genzine issuance progresses to the point where, a) you can do it in your sleep, or b) you're spending too much time trying to think of a different way of doing it, and 4. you reach the point where almost any other hobby takes on an aura of temptation. Many times I have come close to opting for sky-diving, bobbing for oxygen, or rewriting the bible in iambic pentameter -- anything -- just to get away from facing one more blank stencil.

Well, there won't be any more blank stencils, nor filled ones, either. This is because the new electronic typewriter is self-correcting provided I feed it a normal diet of paper products. If I feed it strange and unwholesome things such as wax-impregnated fibers, it suffers an immediate vitamin deficiency and fails to be useful in correcting my screwups. My first thought was that I would feed it paper, magically transfer what's on paper to an unwholesome sheet of plastic called an electrostencil, and for only about a dime more per page I would provide you with a finished product which was both grayer and grainier than what you would otherwise receive.

Isn't that great?

Ghod, I hate typing stencils...

My second thought was to go for cheap xerography, but after checking out the cost I may go back to my

first thought.

Policy. Policy has absolutely nothing to do with reality. "My policy is to have no policy", said Abraham Lincoln. Okay, I won't have one, either. Instead, I just have these beginning thoughts: I'm publishing for the fun of it, I'd like to have this kind of fun three or four times a year, and it's time once again to have a fanzine which more than about thirty people at a time can enjoy after kicking off their shoes and acquiring something tall and wet with ice cubes in it. Background music enhances it, too; this first issue was pressed with The Moody Blues, Hoyt Axton, Jimmy Buffett, Jean-Michel Jarre, Vangelis, Alan Parsons Project, and whatever the writers and artists used, but you'll have to make do with whatever suits you.

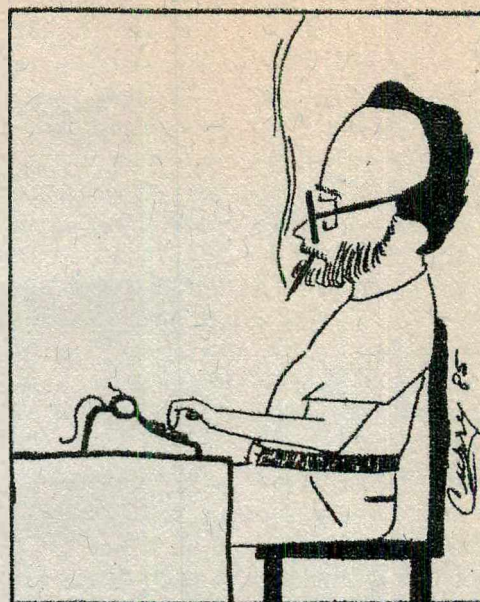
Well, that's enough on the joys of mechanics and the mechanics of policy, except to note that this fanzine supports D.U.E. -- Disseminate Unpublished Egoboo. What this means is that the contributors will see all comment which the letter writers make concerning their material, whether they want to or not. After 24 years of pubbing my ish I may not be able to do it right, but I can do it better. In the meantime, I'll keep thinking on how to do it right (current ponderings in that regard lead me to suspect that I should locate a job which pays enough that I can afford to Go Offset. Alternative thoughts include becoming a magician or regretting that I sold my handgun when I left Los Angeles. ["All right, nobody move. You, take this camera-ready copy and fill this bag with a couple hundred stapled copies of fine-quality litho. If you include any set-off or bleed-through, I'll pierce your ear with a hole big enough to thread an anchor chain. No false moves, and don't underink."])

Ghod, I hate running a mimeograph...

But I love producing a fanzine ... they are produced, aren't they? Isn't that the right word? They're more than written or edited, a bit less than orchestrated, and somewhat different than directed. The fan term is 'pubbing your ish', which sounds vaguely obscene, and as Dean Grennell will tell you: if there's anything I can't stand, it's vagueness. Because this is a hobby

EDITORIAL, BY

DAVE LOCKE



Okay, now, everyone's got their columns in. I know where all the artwork is going. All I need now is this editorial. I'm sitting here at the typewriter . . . fingers on the keys . . . staring at the blank page . . . ready to let'er rip. Yessiree Bob, any second now the golden prose is gonna well up and spill out onto the page . . . and a one, and a two . . . I can feel it coming . . . it's building . . . it's a real Mother.

Damn it, it was just a fart!

publication I idly considered the terms 'hobbing your pub' or 'hobpubbing', but we can all be thankful that I then ran out of Everyday Scotch and managed to sober up before seriously proposing it or even just accepting it as my own. 'Doing' is a good word. I love doing a fanzine.

Of course, since generating the wonderful and sublime idea of doing a genzine, and then announcing it, I joined the Excuse of the Month Club in an attempt to cope with the subject of why this first issue is not dated January. Lon Atkins called to ask if I was ready for the second installment of his column. Al Curry sat right here next to me, drinking my Irish, and referred to TIME AND AGAIN as a "great mythical fanzine". Jackie Causgrove, who lives with me and has been known to remain absolutely quiet when I fall behind on any of my household tasks except making coffee in the morning, has taken to pointing at me and saying "Fanzine: nag, nag, nag, nag, nag" and to laughing uproariously, especially when someone else mentions the subject in her presence. This is all very embarrassing. I especially dislike it when she escalates the laughter as a consequence of my trotting out the excuses. I've taken every applicable selection offered by the Excuse of the Month Club (I've been sick, I got a promotion, I've been working a lot of overtime, I have to segue to meet my apa deadlines, I've run out of scotch, etc., etc., and so on), and even in desperation a few that weren't overly applicable (my car is double-parked, I have a plague of hangnails, I'm thinking of having a midlife crisis just to get it out of the way, I'm waiting for Avedon Carol to ask my assistance in finding ballots cast by fans who tell me they wonder why their name wasn't on her list of TAFF voters, and Bill Bowers is filling me in on his vacation, personal business, and sick-leave schedule so that I can have material ready for his weekly fanzine), and have decided that when I do another genzine title in the 1990s I will not announce an initial publication date. In the meantime I cope best with all this abuse by hanging my head in shame and by standing around wondering what to do with my hands. To be frank about it, however, thus far this

strategy has not worked overly well.

I guess there's no choice, or at least certainly no peace, to be had in doing anything other than getting a round tuit.

Whatever happened to publishing just for the fun of it?

Good, I hate deadlines . . . but I keep running into them over and over, time and again. Perhaps I need to juggle my time a little more skillfully.

When I see the fannish (and professional) juggling team of Cosmos & Chaos, they appear to be working either just for the fun of it or also to collect money for numerous fan institutions/fan charities (though no longer for two of them, but that's a different couple of stories).

I know that when I watch them perform, it's quite a show. As long as they're anywhere within eyesight fans can't help but watch them, no matter how interesting the conversation is or was. The skill and showmanship of Steve Leigh (Cosmos) and Ro Lutz-Nagey (Chaos) generates a fascination within the audience, which heightens as they escalate their performance.

Between games of our fair-weather Sunday morning tennis matches, Steve Leigh will often juggle with his graphite racket and our three pressureless tennis balls. People walking down the street will stop to gawk. Between judging periods at the 1982 Chicon IV masquerade

tory.

What he told me, in part, was that although the means tend to be suspect if they don't achieve the ends, that the ends do not justify the means, and that the only thing you can hang onto in steering a course is "the flat, unvarnished truth." The curved and varnished kind is too slippery, and should be saved for tall tales when drinking with friends.

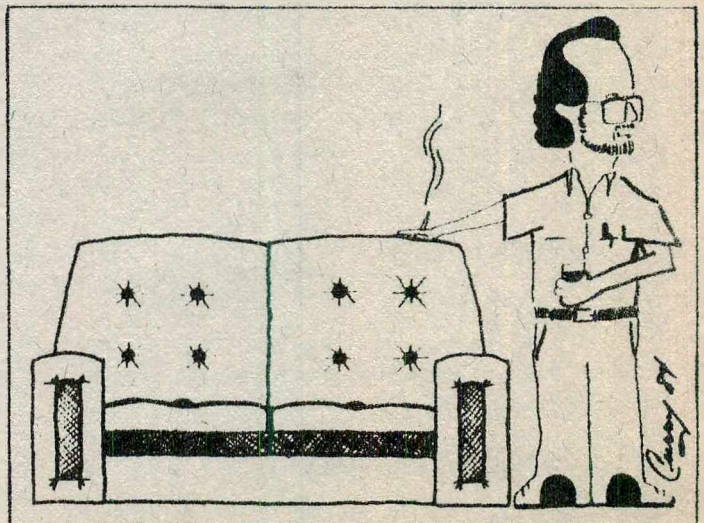
That was all good advice, and accepting it has allowed me to be comfortable in living with myself. In the final analysis, as the old bromide goes, it's not whether you win or lose that counts but how you play the game.

Anyone who deals with people for a living, as I have in so many fields -- the tourist trade, bartending, purchasing, recruiting, and customer service, among others -- encounters more types of people than they would elect to deal with under more casual, avocationally elective circumstances.

April marks the 24th anniversary of the month I stumbled into fandom after having walked around it for three years. It is as good a hobby for me now as it ever was, but I've decided that I need to fine-tune it a little. A socially interactive hobby is only as good as the people you're dealing with, and as I get grayer I find myself progressively less willing to have an open door policy on who I deal with when I come home, yank off my tie, and slip into my hobby mode. Any elective activity implies choice. I choose, therefore, to be more selective in dealing with the people I already know, in a circumstance where it is unnecessary and counterproductive to deal with anyone at all if I view them as being, shall we say, avid believers that the end justifies the means.

The other day a friend of mine divulged the old news that there are some in general fanzine fandom who are rather unhappy with me. I was drinking at the time and met this disclosure with habitual effrontery.

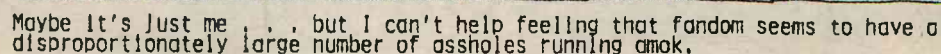
When I was a young man, back in the Pliocene epoch of the Tertiary period, my father told me about "the flat, unvarnished truth." My understanding was that he considered this to be the best kind. Better than the plain, unadorned truth or even the simple truth, either of which have the appearance of being adequately exposi-



Good, good ... auld lang syne to you too, Al.

"But how else to explain such fatuous lines as that on Patrick & Teresa's SINGING THE MARSEILLAISE, about Brits having the right to decide what qualifies a

(continued
on page 12)



Curry 25

Lon Atkins is one of the best and most versatile of all fanish wordwhippers. He is also one of the least well-known, yet despite that receives frequent and often prominent placement in best fanwriter polls. Intense negotiations plus extensive plying, wheedling, and cajoling have yielded up his willingness to produce a regular column. One of the contract provisions is that TUPPENCE A TUPLE will kick off with a reprint. This item first appeared in fan ordinaire #22, which was in FLAP #10 dated June of 1981, and was previously reprinted in THE WORKS #4, October 1981. Lon's paltry excuse for starting off with a reprint was the triangulation of getting married, getting a new job, and buying a house. Some people will come up with any snappy reason for avoiding the duties of crifanar.

Airplanes are good sources of natter. I've written perhaps more than my share of airplane stories, having done a fair bit of commercial traveling in the past decade. But I've never told a real disaster story. Maybe I've been lucky, or maybe if I'd had one the odds were thin I'd be in a position to write (unless they lend typewriters to the inmates in Hell).

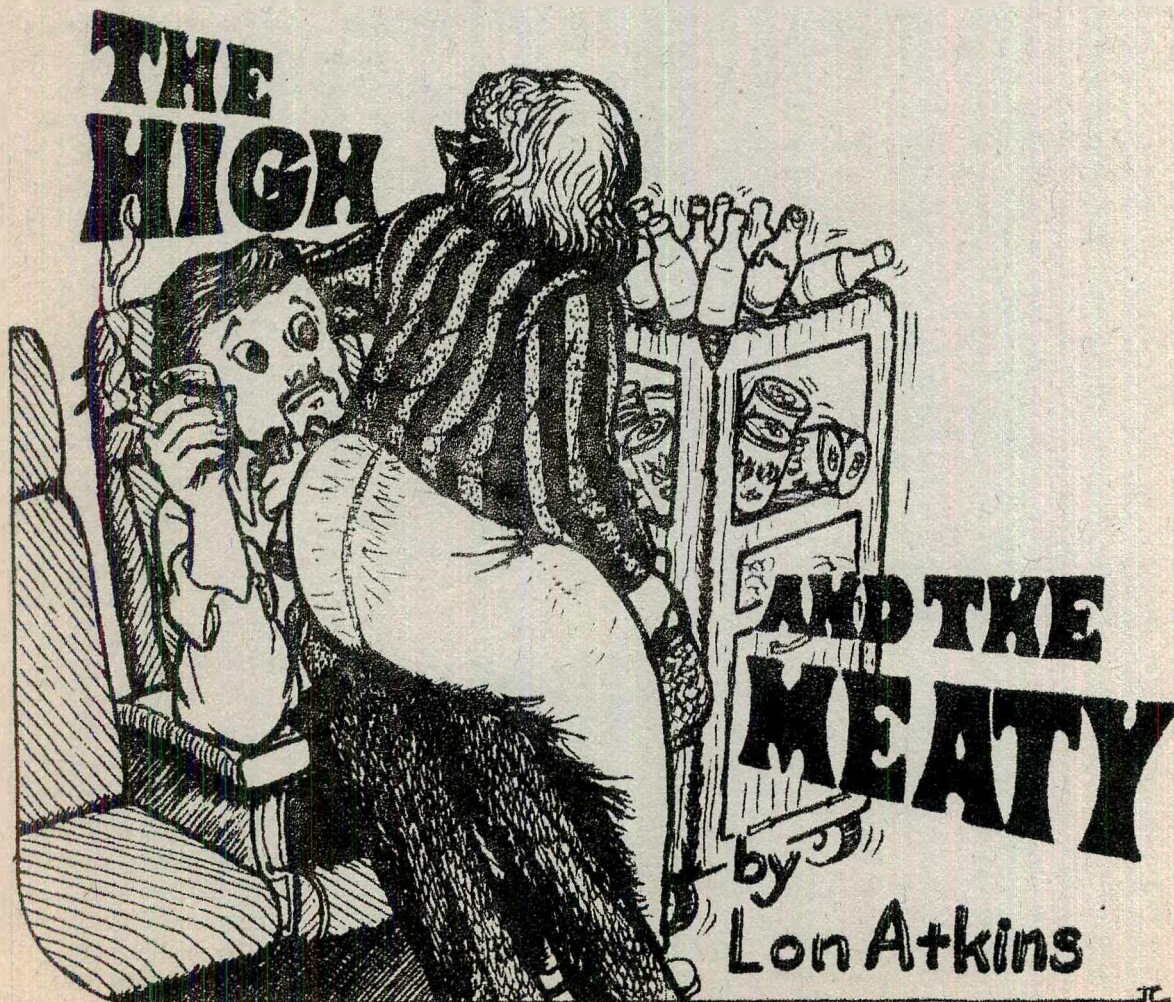
Last week I made a business trip to New Jersey, and now I'm in a position to tell a story about what I will call "the face of disaster"...

It has nothing to do with New Jersey. I went expecting that the Rockford Files number might be true. Garner gets in a rental car at the Newark Airport, finds

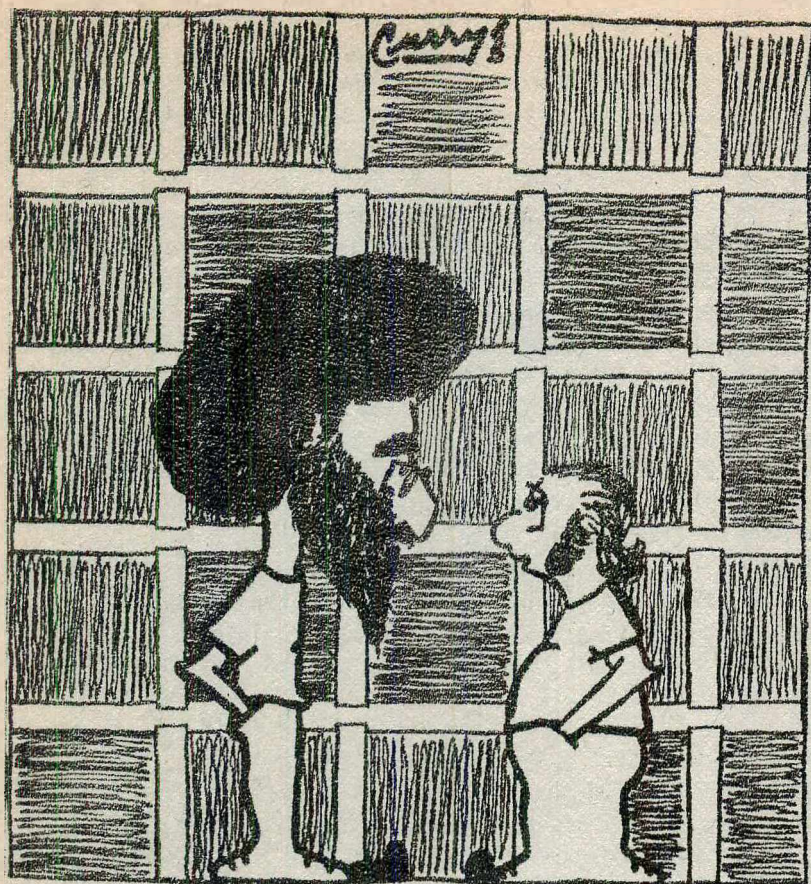
the turn indicators aren't working and makes a hand signal. Immediately some punk leaps off the curb and appropriates Garner's wrist watch. When Garner leaps from his car to pursue the thief, two men steal his car. The ultimate insult is trying to explain to the Newark police why he left his car with keys in the ignition in a known crime zone.

For me, New Jersey went fine. I was met at the airport and whisked into the idyllic Jersey countryside. The motel adjoined an excellent restaurant. All objectives of the trip were accomplished. New Jersey wasn't the disaster; that came on the trip back.

I was on a 707 nonstop. Fortune had brought me an



With stoic apathy, then, I assigned myself to doom. As the tortured fabric spilled into the seat itself, cracking the poor frail tray arms, I prayed that no jagged edge would rupture the mesh of turquoise-green.



No, this is the Harry Warner, Jr. Archive. The Collected
LoCs of Mike Glicksohn Room is in the other wing.

In his cover letter, Harry points this out to me: "You will notice that there is no title. I ran out of titles for fanzine articles as a result of having written so many of the latter which used up my supply of the former during my youth. Besides, I saw an article in the newspaper the other day about the latest Harris poll which surveyed the public's opinions about the rights of 61-year-old fans. The poll, with only a two percent error factor, showed 69% of those responding feel that fans of this age should not be expected to think up titles for their fanzine articles because it's surprising enough when they write fanzine articles at all, much less titling them."

I responded: "The older I get, the more I appreciate reading you, and now that you're retired you're beginning to sound younger than I am."

Hell of a rate. Well, then, while I go mix a Scotch & Genital I'll let this increasingly younger fellow entertain you with something which has to be called...

..... NO TITLE

..... article, by HARRY WARNER, JR.

Once upon a time, I went to services at a Hagers-town church which I'd never attended before. The organ played softly, as hushed ushers tiptoed along the aisles with the collection plates. Then someone suffered an attack of the butterfingers and dropped one of the plates. Seconds later, blinding searchlights flashed on from the balconies, focusing on the site of the mishap while coins and currency were scooped up with grim efficiency. It might have been a scene in a bank with unusually thorough defences against robbers.

I felt the impulse to snicker at this type of sacred preparedness, one I'd never experienced in other churches. Then I was saved from profaning the solemnity of the service by realizing something. This congregation's procedure for a dropped plate emergency didn't differ basically from one of my own traits, one that I share with many other fans. Church authorities couldn't bear to think of losing any money from the collection plates and I, like most fans, hate to lose any of the things we save, like old fanzines and prozines, autographed books, photos taken at cons, and a multitude of other things.

There's a difference between systematically collecting things and haphazardly accumulating stuff. But the

line that should be drawn between the two is too thin and faint to be visible to my tired old eyes. I suspect that about half of the fans who love to pile things up are genuine collectors and the remainder are obsessive accumulators, and many of us adulterate the one pastime with the other to lesser or greater extent. And gaffiation doesn't save all of us from this cumbersome habit.

Consider, for instance, the case of Burnett Toskey. Two decades ago he was an extremely active fan, publishing enormous fanzines for SAPS and serving as one of the key figures in the CRY publishing empire, in addition to holding a prominent role in the Nameless Ones, the Seattle fan club. Then he dropped most of his fanac and wasn't heard from to any great extent for quite a few years. Today, he is active again in SAPS, on a reduced activity scale. In the meantime, he managed to collect the printed music for more than 2,700 violin concertos, in addition to enough violin music of other types to create what may be the largest collection of its kind in the world in private hands. Walt Coslet was even more active in fandom around the middle years of this century. He eventually sold his fanzine collection to a university, to make room for the

tremendous collection of Bibles in various translations which had become his newest accumulative goal.

At the other extreme, there's Jack Speer, who has been active mainly in the Albuquerque fan club and in FAPA in recent years after playing an impressive part in every phase of fandom during the 1930s and 1940s. Jack admitted on one occasion that he saves the staples which are implanted into the jiffybags which carry FAPA mailings to members. The staples are a part of the mailings, he reasons, so he can't bear to throw them away after prying the container open.

I live in the 400 block of Summit Avenue in Hagerstown, Maryland, where most of the residential buildings have been converted from single-family homes into apartments in the past few decades. Families move in and out of these apartments frequently and I marvel at the fact that most of them can get all their possessions moved in or out in two or three round trips of a pickup truck or at most one stop by a U-Haul trailer. When the Coulsons moved a few months back, the ordeal was so interminable and fatiguing for themselves and their farmish helpers that I don't think precise statistics belong in a family fanzine like this one. The Coulsons are as habitual collectors and accumulators as I am.

Obviously, some fans get along very well without piling up secular treasures, either by necessity (like those still living with their parents and not permitted to put clutter anywhere except in their own room) or by nature (we all know a few fans who change their addresses six or eight times a year and succeed in packing all their possessions into a station wagon for each move). And there are mundanes who have gained national publicity for accumulating or collecting without ever showing any interest in fandom. Every so often, the newspapers describe an old person who dies in a house where almost every cubic inch is occupied by every newspaper published in that city for the past seventy years or garbage that was never put onto the sidewalk. But in general, I think, fans are accumulators and collectors to a much greater extent than mundanes.

That leaves the question of whether this proclivity is created by fanac, or if those with the urge tend to become fans because fandom offers such a gorgeous variety of opportunities to pile things up. I can be sure of only one individual, myself, for evidence in this problem. I had the desire to save almost everything long before I read my first science fiction story or knew that fandom existed.

When I was a little boy, for example, I loved the Sunday comic sections, which were two or three times as thick as their modern counterparts and offered comics in much larger, full-page dimensions. We used to take two or three Sunday papers every week. For years, I systematically saved every comic section that came in to the house. There were two or three piles of them taller than I was when we finally decided to move. My cat had occasionally used those stacks of colored comics in lieu of kitty litter, which hadn't been invented yet, I was older and not as fond of the funnies as

formerly, so I managed to say yes to hints that there was no sense in lugging them to the new house. Of course, if I'd saved that accumulation, I could have retired five or ten years sooner, because Sunday comic sections from the late 1920s and 1930s bring big prices from collectors nowadays.

After I grew up and should have attained more common sense, my unwillingness to throw things away grew much stronger. I can pinpoint the incident that settled the matter. After my father's death in 1960, I decided I should move into smaller living quarters and should dispose of a lot of stuff before moving. Almost at random, I picked up a couple of items from the hall closet to make a start on. One was a little cannon with a hole in its breach where a medium-sized firecracker would fit and a rubber ball in its mouth, which would fly across the room when the firecracker went off. The other was a little gadget with a sort of pinwheel at its top. This rotated when a lever was pressed repeatedly and a flint sparked behind the turning transparent colored panels in the wheel, creating multi-colored flashes of light. Both were left over from boyhood, I would never play with them again, and I couldn't give them to a child because firecrackers had become illegal in Hagerstown since my youth and the pinwheel was so fragile any modern kid would break it in the first sixty seconds of use. I threw them away. The next day I began to regret what I'd done. The day after that, Les Gerber paid me a visit, I poured out my remorseful soul to him, and he gave me the harsh scolding I deserved for such an awful deed. A quarter-century later, I still feel half-sick when I happen to think of that aberration. It decided my future, to some extent. After that, I pursued the philosophy that I'll eventually want at some future date anything I throw away, so I protect my future self by saving as much as physical limits of space and safety permit.

And the odd thing is: items which I can't imagine any future use for sometimes do come in handy. For example, a couple of years ago I decided to write for FAPA a long article about my adventures as a press photographer long ago when newspaper pictures were taken with those big Graphics you see in old movies. I found the writing difficult at first because my memory had failed on certain factual matters about the camera I hadn't used for twenty years or longer. Then I had an inspiration, dug out a large folder where I had stuffed all sorts of photographic publications, and sure enough, there it was: the instruction booklet published by the Graphic people for purchasers of their cameras, containing all the information I needed to know for the FAPA article. When the local newspapers converted their photographic operations to smaller cameras, there was no imaginable reason for me to save that manual, and now it had proved very useful. Then there was the case of the Edward Lucas White poem. The fantasy fiction writer had summered several years in a farmhouse not far from Hagerstown, I'd been in contact with the farm's present owner, he'd told me about a poem by White which still hangs in

one of its rooms, and he'd provided me with a Xerox copy of the verses in praise of the house and surroundings. I wrote about the local connection of the writer for the newspapers but didn't use the poem for lack of space. Langley Searles revived FANTASY COMMENTATOR, ran a great deal of material about White, and asked me about the poem which had never been published anywhere. It took about two months of off-and-on rummaging, but I managed to find the copy of it among journalistic debris I hadn't been able to throw away, and made another copy for Langley.

Unfortunately, my waste-not-want-not mania isn't confined to material objects. I worry about the potential loss of memories, too. This has impelled me to put into fanzines some reminiscences which should interest only myself, because I can't bear the thought of their memory disappearing with my death. (I've tried to confine most such material to FAPA, where other fans can evade it by the simple process of resigning membership.) Then there are the memories of other fans that bother me because they don't get converted to permanent form.

Every year, there are some cons whose talks, panels, and episodes survive only in the memories of those who attended because nobody writes a detailed con-report or systematically preserves tapes of what was said. This horrifies me because part of fannish history is being lost as those memories fade and get confused with memories of other cons. I wish every fan who receives a long trip from TAFF, DUFF, or some other organization would write a detailed account of it, even if it won't be published in the foreseeable future. If it's on paper or a floppy disc, it has a chance of surviving the traveler's senility or death.

By a rare bit of luck, I don't like automobiles. So I've been able to trade in every car I've worn out without hesitation or later regrets, and there aren't inoperable autos cluttering up my backyard. But the piano I've played since boyhood has grown so feeble that it's probably beyond repairs and it would kill me to give it up. Before long, I suspect, I'll know the answer to an uncertainty: whether this house can support the weight of two pianos in addition to all the other kipple.

(DIABOLOGIC, cont'd from page 12)

that in all the time I've been in Fandom she's never sent me more than a two paragraph note. You might think from the enclosed that we'd been carrying on some sort of terrific correspondence for years. Can't blame her for trying though since it seems to have worked quite effectively in many cases.")

Thank you for protecting your friends from the statement on the TAFF ballot that "'Write-in' candidates are permitted". Toward the end of September you were called from the Midwest and were requested to send a copy of an original ballot when it was created (as always, "Reproductions of this form are encouraged provided that the text is reproduced verbatim."), so that it could be reproduced and distributed. It came on 11/5. Meanwhile, ballots were in circulation in the middle of October in NYC where your candidate friends live. And thank you for clarifying this excessive time lag by explaining that it took you all that time to get a ballot to the competition because you couldn't get to the post office (by the way, thanks also for the letter you wrote to me on 10/16 which was postmarked 10/17, and for your 10/24 letter which was postmarked 10/25).

Thanks, too, for using TAFF funds to finance several pages of an in-print attack on me in your final TAFF administrative report. That caused a few people to sit up and take notice...

And thanks for the riff in TAFF OFFICIAL where you bitch at Jackie Causgrove and rail against the "list of fans whose names can be used on the ballot's reference line by voters unknown to the administrator", feeling that future administrators should deal with such things "in the harshest manner." An "unforgiveable filer" you call it. Fascinating. You see, if you don't know the administrator then you aren't qualified to vote, unless

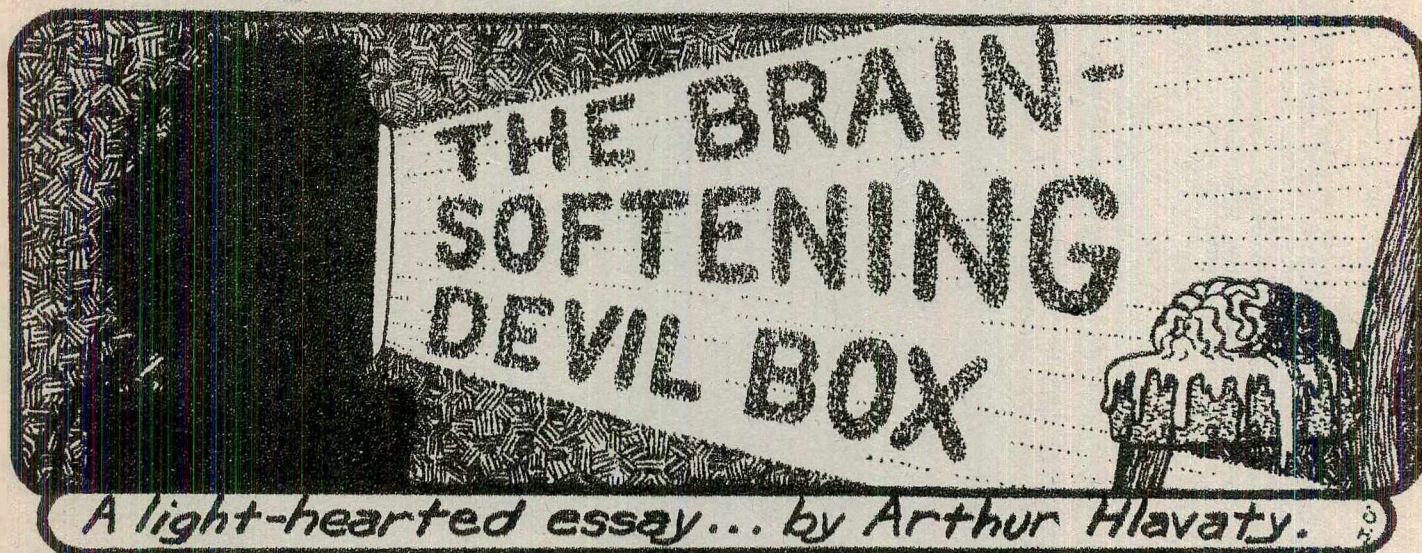
you provide the name and address of someone who can verify that you were active in fandom as of the date required by the ballot (in the last race: April 1983). If the reference you provide is also not someone known to the administrator, how can your reference provide verification when their own fandom is unknown? Doesn't work. So, if you don't know the administrator, you have to find as reference someone who knows the both of you, and you also have to find their address. That can be a real hassle. Life is easy for fans whom the administrator knows, but obviously it's "unforgiveable" to you, Avedon, when fans you don't know are provided with the names & addresses of some of your friends/acquaintances whom these strange fans are likely to know and can use as reference. Terrible! Let them guess, or hunt, or scratch their heads and give up! (A send-rhetorical question: Are you really that ignorant, or do you think everyone else is?)

There is so much to thank you for, but the loggers and pulp cutters are tiring from their heavy labors. So, thanks in general, and goodbye.

I must give thanks to the Nielsen Haydens for so many things, too. Like the phone and letter campaign to have Avedon's critic, Richard Bergeron, branded sick and insane. It did not result in an apology when the proof was shown to be grossly in error. (The proof centered on a statement from Bergeron which relayed data from Terry Carr. During the Worldcon weekend Carr was informed of the potential misunderstanding and called PNH to clarify the matter. Patrick again promulgated the misunderstanding the day after Worldcon [in a letter which was quoted in print], then after that wrote Carr and copied-out Bergeron's words to show that Bergeron had not misrepresented Carr, and then

(continued on page 25)

Arthur Hlavaty is not a member of the Illuminati, though we have only his word as evidence to support such a statement. Occasionally he will send out official-looking cards which testify that the cardholder is not a member of the Illuminati, either. One of these days Arthur's perennial Hugo nomination for Best Fanwriter may serve to actually land him this overdue award, at which point he might be moved to come clean and disclose all; like, for example, why it is that he lives well without visible means of support, or how it is that he can walk on water while only occasionally sinking in up to his knees.



The sinister object sits there, its malevolent single eye staring at me, calling to me to sink into its depths, to eat its lotos, to become its mindless slave ... Yes, I now have a television set.

I fear that I will start by straining your credulity. I am told that up there with "the check is in the mail" and "I'm from the government, and I'm here to help you" as statements you should never ever believe no matter who utters them, is "I never watch television" and, even worse, "I have a tv set, but I just watch football on it."

It's like being a man whose real true official name is John Smith, and checking into a hotel with a flashy-looking younger woman who is really and truly your lawful wedded wife. I was going to say that I have a tv set, but I just watch football on it.

[Pause here for a digression: Isn't it interesting that football is the sport that it's ok to have a tv set to watch? Baseball has always been the sport of intellectuals; it's attracted some of the best writers, from Lardner to Ackner. But you can go to a baseball game, and just watch what's going on in front of you. With football, they've got to do it over three or four times before you can figure out what's happening. We need instant replay, and unless the scoreboard shows instant replays, as more of them are doing, the only way to understand the game is to watch it on the tube.

The people who actually go to the games are not, as you might think, the real fans who want to see it all; they're outdoor drunks.]

I first encountered the dread one-eyed abomination when I was ten years old. Well, I'd seen them around before, but that was when my parents bought one. I didn't entirely turn into a vegetable, but I did cut down on reading science books and other such nerdy activities in favor of staring in wonderment at the antics of Howdy Doody, Joe McCarthy, and the other great tv personalities of the day.

The insidious device lured me deeper into its coils in my teenage years. I watched comedies, detective shows, and of course, that other mind poisoner, rock & roll. (Lascivious body movements and lewd pelvic thrusts. Curiously enough, I was in the company of the daughter of an opera star when I saw Elvis Presley's infamous tv appearance. My companion was utterly revolted by the whole thing, as the Generation Gap had not been invented yet. I was not utterly revolted, but I found it a lot more interesting when teenage females started doing similar things on AMERICAN BANDSTAND.) Nevertheless, I did not become a juvenile delinquent, possibly because of cowardice.

But then I went off to college and didn't have time to watch tv, so I had to kick the habit, cold turkey. I use that phrase deliberately, for what I learned then

was that television is like heroin: If you're not addicted to it, it makes you throw up.

I came home for Thanksgiving that year, eager to return to the tube from which I had sucked such joys. I turned on an old favorite, an hour-long detective show, starring Troy Donahue. (I do not recall the name. Memory tells me that in 1960, ABC had an hour-long detective show on every night, and that they all starred Troy Donahue, but I suspect that memory plays me false.)

I watched it. After a short while, I began to wonder why I had ever liked the stuff. After not too much more time, I was wondering why I had never had an impulse to throw things through the tube. Troy Donahue had three facial expressions, none terribly interesting. That put him two ahead of his female costar, name blessedly forgotten. She managed to give about the same intonation to "I think you're wonderful" and "Help! they're trying to kill me," and may have considered it a major triumph that she was able to pronounce all the long words correctly.

After college, I returned to watching television, far more moderately. I was relieved to learn that there were shows on in which Troy Donahue did not appear. There was THE ADDAMS FAMILY, which was admittedly somewhat weird, but it was the only situation comedy I can remember where the Mommy and Daddy liked each other and neither was an idiot. There was THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E., which had a sense of humor and brought back old friend Leo G. Carroll from one of the less imbecilic 50s shows, TOPPER. There were a few others that flee from memory at the moment.

But then I was wrenched away from the tube again, joining the war on poverty as a VISTA volunteer, partly out of idealism and partly out of draft dodging. Maybe the main reason I didn't become a Trekkie is that I didn't have a tv when STAR TREK went on the air, though the work I was doing represented a similar sensibility, as did the Peace Corps and the Green Berets: the idea that anything can be solved by sending in a few of Us.

When I came back, there was LAUGH-IN, that time capsule of the late sixties. I remember the McLuhanesque approach, the sly soundbyte references, sock it to me, the little old lady and the dirty old man, General Bullwright, Lily Tomlin and her instrument, Big Al's sports show ... If I don't stop, the nostalgia police are going to come get me.

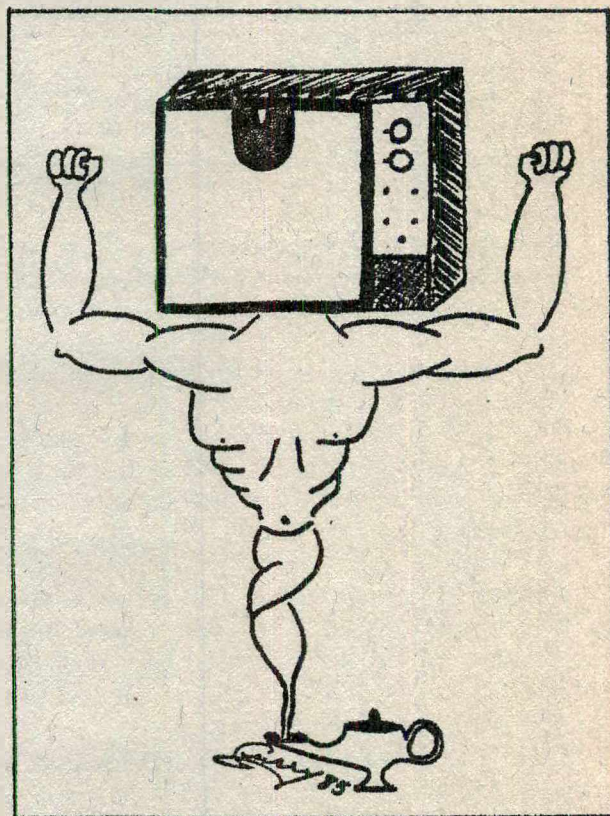
But that was it. After LAUGH-IN, I watched football on Sunday afternoons and Monday evenings, maybe staying tuned on Sundays if 60 MINUTES offered a particularly good appeal to my baser impulses, but other than that, the Evil Eye stayed closed.

Then I moved out of my parents' house, where the tv had always been, and moved in with Bernadette Bosky. We had a small, black-&-white tv, and I watched the football on that for a few years, but it wasn't as good, and we couldn't get Monday Night Football.

And now we've got a real tv. Bernadette, being

busy as a graduate assistant and PhD candidate in English Literature, does not have the time or the inclination to watch hours of network crap, and neither do I. We figured if we were going to get a tv, we might as well move all the way into the 20th century, so we've got cable, and a VCR, and that offers some amusements, from good flicks I really should have gotten around to seeing to good hardcore porn. (In case you haven't heard, it is possible to get porn showing lots of stuff that feels good, but no violence or domination.) But that's only a moderate interest, something to do a little of. I think that although I've got a television set, I'm free from the temptation to become a couch potato, spending hours a day mindlessly sucking up tv shows.

If you'll excuse me, I've got to go play WIZARD OF
WOR.



Dean Grennell, legendary BNF, has a lifestyle and a wordsmithing style which is strictly his own. As a stylist, I don't think he can string more than eight words together without someone painting and saying 'aha! Dean Grennell wrote that!', although there is no truth to the rumor that out of any eight words he uses three of them were coined on the spur of the moment. The first time I met him, in 1968, he was riding a motorcycle while holding a bottle of Mazola, and we had a lengthy conversation speculating on what kind of whiskey he might mix it with. One of the last times I saw him, in 1980, he decanted homemade Sangria and we got whipped just eating the fruit sludge. Inbetween, we shared more bizarre adventures than a zine twice this size could do justice to. I find it next to impossible that I would create a genzine without including a column by Dean Grennell. Kick off your shoes, sit back, enjoy, and don't light any matches.

THE BERYLLIUM BEGONIA

Not too long ago, the phone went off one evening and, on being answered, a voice thundered, "CRIBBIT!" into my wife's ear and she asked me to get on one of the other extensions.

With that greeting, it could be but one of two known entities, either Rebecca Corkwright or D. Asmodeus Locke. It turned out to be the latter and the motive for the call was that he had a wild hair up his nose to do a genuine again and would I perhaps care to let a column for same?

Wood eye?

A decade or so ago, I had bled off my meagering
farnish impulses by doing a column for Locke's genzine
of that epoch, called AWRY. It had been good fun, of
sorts and I felt a trifle sad when he tied it off with
issue #10 and dried up my outlet.

Locke reminded me that I'd done three more episodes for a zine called SHAMBLES that he had put out with the late Ed Cagle. In truth, that'd slid off the top of my recollection and the pity of it is, I no longer have copies readily on hand of the Cagle/Locke effort, nor do I have a file copy of the one on which Dave and I collaborated which was titled, in full inexorability, DAGLOOKE. It's a sad and shameful thing, but I do not usually keep old fanzines in a state of instant availability for a decade or more. I've also been known to cheat at solitaire.

I do, however, have the first ten issues of AWRY, readily at hand and, as a prudent precaution, have just completed a fast review of same, specifically of my own contributions, primarily for the sake of not repeating myself inadvertently. I hate repetition. Hate it,

hate it.

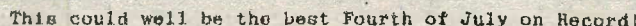
As the years slither off the calendar, it becomes exponentially more difficult to recall everything you've put onto paper over the course of them. That is particularly true if you've been dotting off columns for fanzines for the greater part of thirty-odd years, as in the example at hand.

Olive-witch is by way of leading up to the stipulation that I by no means guarantee that all of this is as fresh as a steaming cow-plop. Excuse if you can, the touch of bucolic, but I was raised to the age of 18 years and 13 days on dairy farms, first in Kansas and, from 1926 on, in Wisconsin and it tends to imbue thought processes with the occasional earthy touch.

But that does trigger a small rictus in the stream of bemuschluseness and, being hung up trying to write my first fanzine column in a number of recent years, I don't feel overly inclined to pass it by.

There is, or at least used to be a black humor story about the farmer whose kid slid through a hole in the outhouse seat. Being apprised of the misfortune, he went to the house, fetched back his shotgun and shoved the muzzle down the hole, triggering both barrels. The hired man was, understandably, quite appalled. The farmer merely explained it seemed to him a lot less bother to raise a replacement from scratch than to clean that one up.

That meshes with one of the less savory escapades of my own improbable youth. It was coming up the Fourth of July and I'd blown all my painfully hoarded savings on Zebra brand firecrackers for suitable celebration. Getting ready to haze the herd of cows down



COLUMN BY DEAN GRENNELL

the lane to the pasture that evening, I spotted a marvelously symmetrical and fresh mound of bovine solid waste in the barnyard and it was but the work of a moment to insert, with all due meticulous care, the business end of a Zebra into its periphery.

I had only recently mastered the knack of striking a kitchen match with my thumb nail and I did so, bringing the flame down to the tip of the fuse. Sadly enough, it turned out that that particular Zebra was one of those treacherous devils that had its fuse fat with powder. Once ignited, it burned very-very quickly. Sort of, "FWHIT-BAM!" I didn't have a chance in the world to retreat beyond the fallout. In a matter of microseconds, I became one of the very few, perhaps the only apple-cheeked Wisconsin farm lad with green freckles.

Fortunately, my father hadn't heard the particular item of humour-noir previously mentioned.

For a whole lot of years, July fourth tended to be one of the highest-water marks of any given year, fighting neck and neck with Christmas, down to the wire. On the Glorious Fourth in 1944, I found myself home on furlough in a bleak wartime economy in which there were no firecrackers to be had, none whatsoever. I faunched to generate loud bangs in commemoration of the nation's independence, but what to do?

Foraging about, I came upon a goodly quantity of punched-out slugs of aluminum from quarter-inch plates, salvaged from a stint of working at Waukesha Motors, before joining the Army. Hm, I speculated, with a bit of sodium hydroxide...

I rummaged up a can of Eagle Lye; practically pure

NaOH. Pummeling my memory of high school Chemistry from five years earlier, I knew that aluminum, in an aqueous solution of sodium hydroxide, generated bubbles of hydrogen gas in goodly abundance. Ah, but how to provide simultaneously bubbling oxygen?

Just a spot of scalp-scratching provided the answer to that, too. I found a bottle of hydrogen peroxide in the family medicine cabinet, and a jug of laundry bleach.

I turned up an empty gallon jug, formerly containing laundry bleach, Clorox by brand name, in the garbage can. Recalling, perhaps, the detonating cow-plop of some eight years earlier, I took care to dig a hole in the ground and bury the jug with its mouth even with the surface. That was just in case the jug gave way.

I brewed up a fairly saturated solution of lye, decanting that into the jug, followed by a handful of aluminum pellets. The contents began to fizz and bubble in a most interesting manner. I followed that with a hearty slosh of Clorox and then added a judicious amount of peroxide. The fizzing was most enthusiastic. According to every right-thinking theory, the brew should now be producing both free hydrogen and equally free oxygen in roughly suitable proportion. There was but one way to verify that.

Once again, I pulled forth a kitchen match and made the adroit ignition with educated thumb nail. I wafted the flame across the neck of the jug...

Ker-WHUMPPP!

Neighbors within a radius of a block or so came out to see what was going on. I gave it a bit of time to regenerate, struck another match and produced a

be happy to do so.

We move on to the Fourth of July for 1946 or, more precisely, to the late evening of the third of July, approaching the stroke of midnight. For just a bit, peace extended over the globe, albeit uneasily in places. The bluebirds were back over the White Cliffs of Dover, one hoped and all was well except that there still were no firecrackers to be purchased in the small town of Brandon, Wisconsin, to which I had more or less returned. Nor were any to be had in Markesan, Fairwater or, for that matter, Poy Sippi. Big deal. The Glorious Fourth was coming up and how could one make big noise to celebrate it?

I suppose some scrap aluminum could have been found, along with the lye, peroxide and laundry bleach, to say nothing of tap water. No matter, that was ancient history. It could be condoned in a poor-vintage year such as 1944 but it ranked as moldy cheese in the brave new world of 1946, the first of the post-war years. The boisterous formation of water vapor simply didn't seem to hack it. What was needed was the lusty commotion of nitrocellulose molecules rearranging. Four years were yet to come and go (Lorena) before the foam-fodder got anything approaching plentiful but, even in that bleakest of epochs, we managed to come up with a few rounds of .410-bore shotshells and a couple of other cartridges to fit available firearms. As the midnight hours came looming up, we repaired to the edge of the Brandon city limits and deployed ourselves into the depths of some unknown farmer's pea-patch with our guns and our munitions.

At the precise instant, we cut loose. It was now, most officially, the Fourth of July in the bright new year of 1946! Attendez-vous and rejoice appropriately!

The fragments of shattered polkin had hardly begun to start to subside when we saw a set of headlights tearing out of the heart of downtown, metropolitan Brandon, WI. The vehicle of the village marshal, ensnathed in his robes of office!

By common instinct, we hunkered. In step with my usual foul luck, my personal hunkering place happened to coincide with the home turf of a world-class Canadian thistle and I endured its prickly propinquity as stoically as I could manage until the vigilant marshal made personal peace with his anxieties and went his way. I recalled that I'd promised myself, a year earlier, that I was going to try to ease out of such suspenseful situations.

And I more or less did so. I can't call up the faintest memory of the Fourth of July in 1947, 1948, or 1949. On that date in 1950, a freakish cold front coursed across Wisconsin and it only got up to around 47° F. at the warmest part of the day. My brother and I went out to the local Isaac Walton range, fired a few shots and nearly froze off our ying-yangs at the cringing roots.

Of the 34 or so Fourths of July since that chilly one in 1950, I have doodley-zilch by way of retrievable recollections. Not, at least, concerning the production

of loud noises and the consequences thereof. After a lapse of only a few months, I can't even recall a single even from July 4, 1984. It has been a long time since I lived in a state where firecrackers could be bought and put to their rightful employment. California sanctions the sale of what they term safe and sane fireworks; what I call them is boring. Worse, expensive, as well.

Back about 1956, I gave a photographer in Green Bay, Wisconsin about \$6.50 for a bronze cannon he had uncovered while cleaning out the basement of his studio. It is a cute little gizmo, weighing about 6½ pounds and the bore diameter is roughly .729" -- about the size of a 12-gauge shotgun. It even has a tiny touch-hole at the breech end and what appears to be the residue of black powder suggests that some prior owner used it in generating decibels.

In an idle moment, years ago, I made up a rudimentary mount for it, somewhat like that of a naval gun of the turn between the 17th and 18th centuries, but without the wheels. I will have to ask you to believe that, during the several years I've owned it, I've yet to fire it. I could do so, easily and simply. It's just that I feel powerfully disinclined. I suspect I'm coming down with maturity, prudence, or perhaps boredom with the sound of loud noises, even on the Glorious Fourth. Yes, I find that alarming to contemplate. If all goes as planned, tomorrow will be Thanksgiving Day and, as I pause to ponder the matter, I doubt if the placid burghers of Missing Banjo, California have ever heard a canon's throaty bark on Thanksgiving Eve. Hmm. I have that can of Pyrodex out in the garage...

Don't go away, I'll be right back, okay?



Just in case you don't know, Bob Tucker has been around since before dirt was invented, he assisted Moses with the first fanzine (which explains why we do not have a commandment that reads "thou shalt not covet Jim Beam"), and as Wilson Tucker he corrupted my pubescence with his talent at writing skiffy stories (such as my favorite, THE LONG LOUD SILENCE, which Damon Knight declared to be one of the 10 most rereadable sf novels; an observation which I've agreed with several times). Bob Tucker is a beloved fannish institution, but he's fed up and he's not going to take it any more. Here he discloses all, or almost all, sandbagging just enough to keep him out of court.

LOOKING BACKWARD (at Fans and other Creatures)

by Bob Tucker

This year, 1985, I am observing my 55th year in fandom and I still don't know where I went wrong. I picked up a copy of WEIRD TALES in 1930 and I cannot, to save my life, explain why I have lasted this long in a microcosmos that is sometimes exhilarating and sometimes frustrating beyond belief. The only permanent lesson I've learned in those fifty-five years is that fans are not slans.

Several fans gleefully proclaimed that we were slans as soon as Van Vogt published his novel in AS-
TOUNDING in 1940, and some fans still repeat that fan-
tasy today. The misguided fools. As a group we are as
testy, irascible, inflammable, splenetic, and cantank-
erous (and often wrong) as any other like-sized group.
The only important differences I've noted is that we
publish fanzines that appear to be the last bastion of
a free press. We feel free to publish fanzines filled
with news, half-news, truths, half-truths, rumor, innue-
endo, and slander and libel presented as fact. Our con-
ception of the laws of copyright (both statutory and
commonlaw) is hilarious. Our fanzines operate in the
guise of a free press informing fellow fans of the won-
ders of the world, but yet hardly anybody sues. I
haven't heard of a real lawsuit since a married couple
on the Eastcoast started legal action against an editor
who questioned the woman's balls or lack of balls in a
baseball game. And that is a scatological reference.

Fans are signs? It is to snicker.

But some fans are churls and if I had it all to do over again I would not be so kind to some fellow fans. I'd put the dog on them. Forty-five years ago I lived within three hours driving distance of Chicago, and the Chicago fans of that day were in the habit of coming down to spend weekends with me. On a particular Saturday when my wife and I were away doing the Saturday chores a certain Chicago fan breezed into town and discovered our absence and the house locked. He broke in. Taking a ladder from the garage, the churl set the ladder against the house and climbed up to jimmy a kitchen window. When we returned we found him at his ease: the churl had taken a shower, taken my robe, and was

seated in a favorite chair smoking a cigar and reading a book. I was not amused but his reply was "Oh, come on, fandom is a family." If that event happened today I would cheerfully call the cops and let him explain away a charge of home invasion. He would, of course. That former fan is now a successful criminal lawyer in a Western city.

Another overnight visitor was a fan in the process of moving from an Eastern city to a Western one, and he assumed that all fans on his route would be delighted to give him bed and breakfast and then speed him on his way. At the breakfast table he regaled my wife and two small children with all he knew of my past peccadillos, using language which I still do not use today even at wild farmish parties. That fellow is still in fandom, a member of the LASTS.

Forty-five years ago I was on the committee of a world convention, and what a ghastly mistake that was.

The committee consisted of five people: three Jewish teenagers, one gentile teenager, and myself, "the only one who could legally sign checks." I soon discovered to my horror that the other gentile was an unreconstructed Jew-baiter, and the four of them were almost always in turmoil because of that baiting. They would hatch plots to dump the baiter, and the baiter would hatch plots to further demoralize the trio. That internecine warfare continued for several months right up to the opening day of the convention, and I still do not understand how we managed to stage a successful meeting. We did, somehow, and even managed to turn a profit with only 128 attendees, but I never again sat on a convention committee. Played the advisor, yes; played the parliamentarian, yes, but I refused all committee posts even though those refusals may have angered a few friends. And what, you may eagerly ask, became of the four unruly teenagers?

One soon dropped from fandom after the convention and vanished forever from our ken, another went to Washington to become a bureaucrat, while the third -- ah, the third! -- became that criminal lawyer mentioned a few paragraphs above. The fourth fellow, the gentile

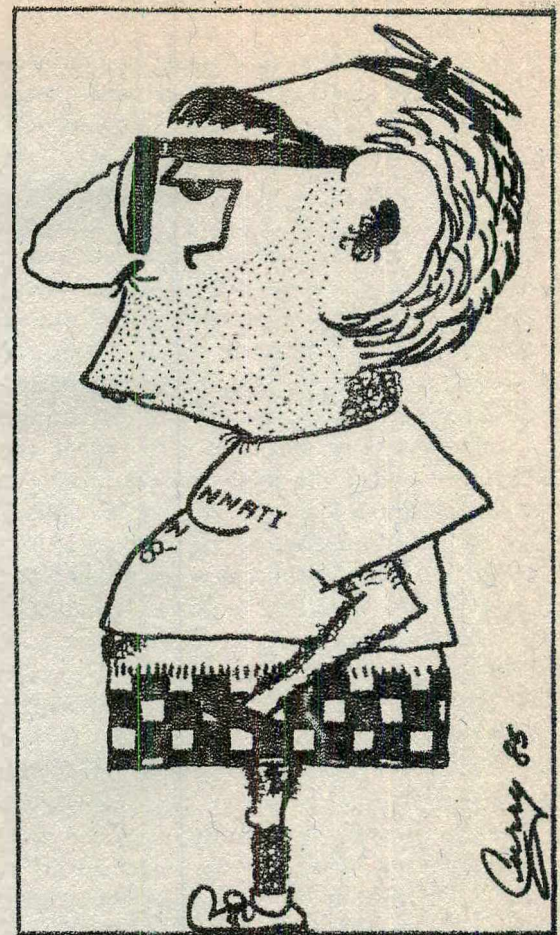
agitator, became a successful (of sorts) book and magazine publisher. The fifth member, "the only one who could legally sign checks," sits here at his desk writing history for Dave Locke. And making himself look good, of course.

Claude Degler never entered my house, because of a lucky stroke of fate. One or two of my children had some loathesome childhood disease like the measles or the mumps, and in those days the city health department had a policy of symbolically sealing the doors of a household where the disease raged, and of posting large red signs on the house wall near the door warning away all the innocent, healthy folk who wanted to visit. Degler came to visit when one of those large red signs was tacked beside the door and it impressed him. For perhaps a half-hour we talked through a screen door, he on the outside and me on the inside. He wanted bed and breakfast, of course, but I wasn't about to offer that or anything else. By that time his reputation had sunk into the pits and no one in his or her right mind would let him into the house. I was lucky in another respect: he never, afterward, published a manifesto or other broadside castigating me for not allowing him in, or taking advantage of him, or cheating him in any way. That red warning sign worked wonders.

Al Ashley, then of Battle Creek, Michigan was not so lucky. Ashley was in the happy habit of having weekend meetings, or small conventions, at his house where all comers were welcome -- except Claude Degler. Degler did show up one weekend when fifteen or twenty other people were expected and he claimed he had a written invitation, one that had arrived in his mail. I never saw the actual invitation, if it existed, because I arrived a day or so after the following incident took place. It plunged all fandom into war again, which was a popular expression of the day.

Degler arrived at the door and Ashley refused him entrance. Degler claimed to have been invited but Ashley denied ever having issued an invitation. They stood in the doorway for an hour or so, somewhat similar to my own doorway experience, while Degler pleaded to be admitted for the weekend and Ashley repeatedly told him to get lost quickly. In the end, Degler left and went downtown to spend the night in the bus station before departing for home, or some other hapless fan's home. The repercussions were soon visible.

Degler cranked out fanzines, manifestos, broadsides, and club bulletins as fast as his mimeograph could rotate its drum, branding Ashley a hypocrit, a liar, a fake fan, a dictator, and the inhospitable landlord who "turned him out into the cold to wander the streets, ragged and domed." 'Domed' was a typo for 'doomed' but like other fanish typos it quickly became famous and we circulated it with the glee of a counterfeiter circulating phony twenties. Degler claimed that he spent a miserable night in the bus station, which is probably true, and that he emerged with a terrible cold which just perhaps might be pneumonia.



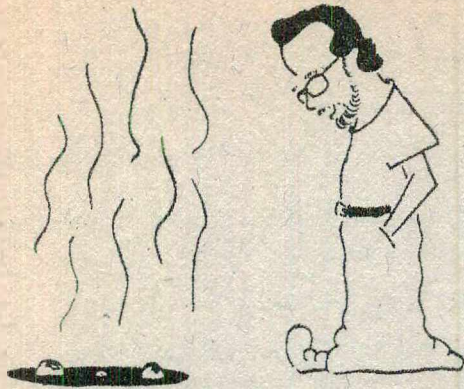
SLAN engrossed in pocket pool.

He proclaimed the existence of a new 'exclusion act' which, he said, would go down in infamy alongside that other exclusion act of 1939 at which six fans were barred from a world convention in New York City. He insisted that Ashley was the lowest of the low, and was a new dictator in fandom, and their battles raged in print for many months afterward.

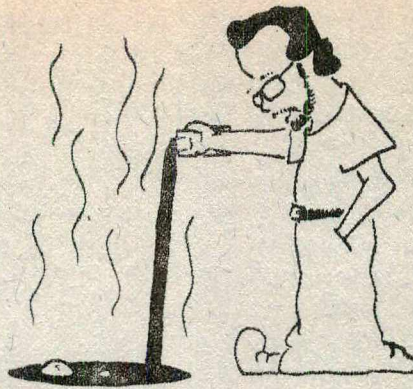
Al Ashley moved to Los Angeles and joined the LASFS. Claude Degler was expelled from the LASFS and eventually settled in Indianapolis, where he was still living when I met him a few years ago. I remember with fondness the red quarantine sign on my door.

I also remember with fondness another Illinois fan who was not connected in any way with the Chicago fans mentioned above, a fellow who worked hard when the powers-that-be allowed him to work, and who supported his wife and himself despite a double handicap. He was totally deaf, and he was one or two bricks shy of a full load. He worked as a mail handler in one of Chicago's railway stations and his job was to meet the incoming trains and relieve them of their mail sacks, for transfer to the post office. His co-workers covered for him when railroad and postal inspectors were around, passing signs and otherwise helping him avoid the snoopers. After some years an inspector eventually

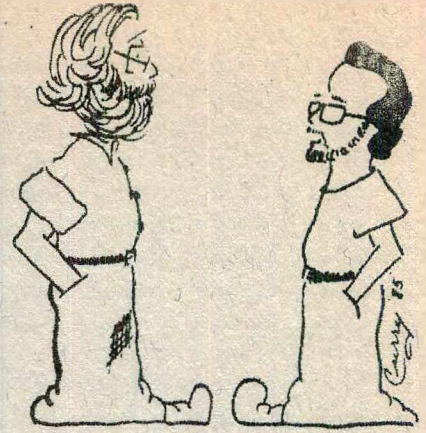
Once upon a time in darkest Illinois, two fans hit upon the idea of mailing pornographic fanzines in random cities and towns all across the country, to thwart the post office and its obscenity squad. One fan collected articles, stories, and artwork from a number of fans and pros, and produced the fanzine. He then delivered the completed package to the second fan whose job took him from coast to coast by train. The second fan would



Come on, you can do it. Be a brave little soldier.



Maybe a little of the ol' hair o' the dog.



I knew you could handle it, Curry. Now ... wipe off your shoes & let's get right back to that typewriter.

COLUMN: by Al Curry

stores. This does not mean they are likely to refuse other alcoholic thingies offered by generous souls, only that their preference is for sweet, clean shine.

One of Dave's concerns was whether or not I was certain that, after sampling it, he would not (a) go blind, (b) go through a mental transformation that would leave him grunting and snorting and rooting for truffles, or (c) both possibilities.

I informed him that I had already tested it. I always test the batches of shine before allowing it anywhere near my skin, much less sending it coursing through my system.

You see, there are different ways to make moonshine, and any number of these are more than capable of, literally, killing the drinker. I have personally seen the results. This is caused by degenerated and perverted fuckwads who give not a damn for either their fellow creatures or for the liquor produced. They are in it simply for the quick cash. There is no artistry in their hearts; there is no glory in their souls.

Distilling is a simple procedure. Recipe goes into large cauldron over fire ... cook, cook, cook ... steam rises through hole in top of lid ... cools while passing through coils ... condensation gathers on walls of coils ... goes dripping into jug or jar or whatever container one finds most pleasing esthetically.

And that's what I call ballin' the jack.

The collected condensation is what one imbibes. The secrets of individual distillers is, usually, in the recipe itself.

The health hazards (at least the more immediate ones dealing with blindness, poisoning, etc.) are caused by the mechanics of the process, the apparatus involved.

The true artist of shine (who, for some reason in this age of attempted equality of the sexes, still seems to be almost exclusively male) goes to the expense of buying good equipment. He uses pots or cauldrons that are in good shape and have never had to be patched. Patching can call in any number of nasty minerals that turn the pot into something that makes a lovely planter

for begonias, but which is no longer fit for preparing anything that will pass between human lips.

Also important is the condensing coil. It should be in one, long piece of coiled (preferably copper) tubing. If it is in more than one piece, the joints must be crimped ... never welded. Welding brings in some Godbloodyawful elements that can transform one's IQ into something not unlike that of a three-day-old blowfish.

Some of the manufacturers of dirty shine have even been known to run their foul product through the coils of old automobile radiators for the condensation process, exposing the liquor to soldered spots in the radiator and introducing lead to the shine.

This will killyoukillyoukillyou. You will probably die in agony. Blinded, convulsing, wracked with hellish pain and mumbling "'bout your mother on the hill" as your remaining three brain cells reach critical mass.

How then, after this long dissertation on production and quality control, does one test shine? And if it's that hazardous, why bother?

First of all, the test is simplicity itself.

You pour a capful into a bowl. You light a match and hold it just above the surface of the liquid. Shine fumes burn, you know.

If the flame is pure blue from bottom to tippy top, you have a batch of clean shine. This test proves nothing about the taste, of course. That will depend on the recipe. But at least you know it is safe to drink ... as long as you do not plan on driving a car or operating heavy machinery within the next few hours.

If the flame ... God forbid ... has traces of green or flecks of orange or anything other than blue, it means that the liquid contains such unpleasanties as phosphorus and lead and so forth. Other than possibly pouring it into an oil lamp, this liquor (as the old mountain saying goes) is about as useful as tits on a boar.

And as to the second question of why all this

effort is worthwhile ... that's quite simple.

In those woody hills and hallowed hollows of Appalachia, in those rolling and mist-shrouded mountains called Smokey, there live immortals. They are necromancers. They are wizards and alchemists. They transform base to precious with their time-honored and secret magicks.

There is one elderly gentleman in West Virginia who has been practicing his craft for over sixty years. Not only is the finished product excellent in its infancy, but he carries it one step further. He keeps it hidden in the hills for five long years while it ages in port wine casks that have known several generations of the whiskey's ancestors.

This is the stuff of dreams. It is uncanny in flavor.

At this moment, I sit in my easy chair by the living room window with clipboard and pad on my lap. My pipe sends curls of latakia-laced tobacco smoke floating ceilingward.

At my left hand stands the tall, thin whiskey glass that was given to me some years back by my wife, Lyn. Filling it to the rim is a clear liquid from Tennessee.

I tested it. The blue flame danced cheerily above the surface.

Hence, the title source for my column.

And for the sake of any employees of the Liquor, Tobacco, and Firearms branch of the U.S. Treasury Department who might be reading this ... GO AHEAD, SHITHEADS! TRY TO PROVE THAT THIS ISN'T JUST A PIECE OF FICTION!

§§§§§§§

EXPLANATORY INTERLUDE

being a play written in one, pathetic act by the What-The-Hell-Am-I-Doing-Here Department

Stage: The Locke/Causgrove kitchen.

Cast: Jackie Causgrove is sitting and staring about in squinty fashion while trying to decide whether they have actually filled the apartment with smoke or if her new contacts have just fogged up on her.

Dave Locke is standing at the Great Northwoods Bar & Grill while committing atrocities against Curry's driving record (which has been clean for nearly two years now, officer).

Al Curry is sitting across from Jackie. He is staring about in squinty fashion while trying to decide whether they have actually filled the apartment with smoke or if his blood alcohol level has simply fuzzed the edges of eternity.

He notices that the digital clock on the bookshelf seems to read 77 :: 22 33.

Locke: Yeah, so I've decided to jump back into it and start putting out a new fanzine.

Curry: Wuzza?

Locke: That's true.

Anyway, I hadn't figured on doing another one for a while, but it just goes to show you. Once the bug bites...

Curry: Fandhley moosh?

Locke: No, not really. But I've always wanted to.

But, back to the new fanzine. The working title is TIME AND AGAIN.

Curry: Arkls, arr uy gungudhu?

Locke: I wanted to talk to you about that. Uh, here. Let me freshen that up a bit.

Stage: Dave snatches up Al's drink and doses it mercilessly. Jackie has headed off somewhere to get her regular glasses, having decided that it must be the contacts causing the atmospheric difficulties.

Curry: NOOO *bte*! *c*! *h* OOO, pleeeze! I'bnot gungdhu...

Locke: Heh, no problem.

Anyway, I'd love to have something from you in the first issue if you feel like getting into it. I know you're pretty busy with your writing and performing and all, but whatta ya think?

Curry: Musha navvie plod!

Locke: A regular column? Heh, great, Al! Glad to have you on board.

Stage: Curry falls forward, pearl diving in his Irish whiskey. From the stereo comes the Mormon Tabernacle Choir singing Nearer My God To Thee as he practices liquor inhalation.

Locke: (rubbing his palms together and grinning): There's one more down for the first issue.

Causgrove: I would have to agree that down is definitely the operative word in this instance. Do you think he'll remember the language by the time you come out with the first issue?

§§§§§§§

I know that it is no longer the holiday season for you. But, you see, this is being written in mid-December, and you will simply have to accept this voice from the past. Look, if you were able to suspend your disbelief long enough to take in INDIANA JONES, you can surely handle this.

There we go, now. Stir the ice in your glass; hear the silver tinkle. Tuck your feet up against the Spring blasts of rain and wind...

Christmas, as a major hooahh affair, no longer really rattles the cage of my life.

Granted, I do love the special foods ... as must be obvious from the increase in my girth over the past few years. Every time I climb aboard a Cincinnati Metro bus, I expect the driver to ask for my Excess Tonnage Manifests.

But I hate the grocery store Armageddons required to obtain the ingredients.

I enjoy giving and receiving presents. Yet, I LOATHE the procurement of the ones I give; since Christmas shopping in downtown Cincinnati is the subject of a new holocaust book by Hal Lindsay, you probably know what I mean.

The Christmas tree is quite pretty to look at ... especially ours with its collection of old-fashioned hangiedowns, its handmade geegaws, the dated gimcracks that Lyn and I have bought each year since getting together.

But I am an unrepentant hilljack of the first water. Raised in the hills and valleys of the Appalachian chain, I ran the ridges as a child like any of the other wild things there. I decided early on that an evergreen with its toes buried in the earth or scrabbling and scratching to retain a hold on some rocky ledge was far more attractive than some shining and lighted corpse standing in the corner.

Oh, but my wife...

Lyn is an extraordinary chef/baker/culinary designer. When she turns her hand to it, she can do anything with a kitchen and its accoutrements.

What's more, she doesn't even mind the grocery stores!

The purchasing of gifts intimidates her not at all. As a matter of fact, crowds have been known to part for her as she wades toward the counters. She does not hesitate to tell anyone if they are being rude ... usually in a fashion that would get her barred from a ten-buck-a-night bordello. Why, the look on her face, by itself, would terrify Beowulf.

And wrapping presents? Oh, well, that is her very own bucket of clams. This Mad Woman of Shailiot with whom I share space and time simply adores the process.

Whereas the presents I wrap look as if they were prepared by a terribly bright lowland gorilla, Lyn's creations could be photographed for BETTER HOMES & GOODIES. The bows are perfect, and God forbid a ribbon or the paper on the end of a box should be crooked in the least. The planet would tilt on its axis.

The tree, too, is her domain. This year (thank
Cron), her mother picked the thing up ... all three
feet of it.

Lyn erected it.

She and our sons decorated it.

I took a nap to get rid of a screaming headache.

On Christmas morning, we will go through our yearly ritual. Breakfast will consist of tea and the goodies from our stockings ... which she hangs. In my case, this will be caviar and truffle pate, if bygone years are any indication.

We will open presents and say, "Ooh," and, "Oh ,

great," and other such expressions of surprise and wonder done as much for the giver as for the recipient.

We will look at the trappings of Christmas scattered in all directions and share a quiet day reading and listening to music and preparing our mini-feast for the early evening hours.

Well, shit! Maybe it's not so bad after all.

And may Bah Humberg us, everyone.

~~~~~

A FEW COMMENTS ON AWRY #4

Now, now, I know I'm a bit tardy with this, Dave; but a well-written fanzine is a joy forever (or something like that), so it surely must follow that it remains LoCfodder for the same timeframe. After all, March of 1973 (the pubbing date of ALRY #4) was only ... g r o a n ... about twelve years ago.

What was going on in my world then? Uh ... lemme think.

I was pushing twenty-three.

You were putting out fanzines; I was putting out poetry (still do, for that matter) and a small pond of other bits of usually rejected wordage.

AWRY #4 came out one month shy of my second anniversary with my first wife.

AWRY #4 came out three months shy of my separation from my first wife.

By March, our separation was already a decided thing, awaiting only the final determination of certain financial arrangements.

I was looking for appropriate articles for my knapsack ... a couple of journals I was keeping, clean socks, extra jeans, that sort of thing. By June 1st, I was in readiness. She and I had signed the papers to transfer the title for the Datsun (and the bank loan) into her name. By June 6th, I was off.

My friend, Jim McCallister, drove me the forty-some miles from Charleston to Huntington, where I was to spend the night with an old flame and her new candle.

Julia saw me to the bus station the next morning, along with Charlie (her new candle). We did the expected hugs and kisses and write-if-you-get-work rituals. Charlie studied the surrounding landscape for a few minutes. I suppose he decided that she might as well get it over with, since I was hitting the road and effectively removing myself from potential candlehood.

I climbed onto the big gray dog with my stuffed knapsack, my guitar, and my knarled and twisted walking stick dated 1844.

This episode served to end Julia's part in my life, except for one more incident that I will cover in some future column to be entitled "Curry Does Cleveland."

All of this was going on just before ... during ...  
and shortly after the unleashing of ALBY #4.

Great issue, Dave. Really looking forward to #5.

CCCCCCCC



# ITSY RAZORS, BITSY KNIVES

They are the universal truisms that knick their tiny knicks in your sanity, that slash their miniscule slashes in your reason. All the little things throughout the passing days that irk and piss off and generally wreak havoc with your sense of symmetry, your concepts of balanced cause and effect.

For instance:

The windshield wipers of buses never move at the same speed. Why is that? I mean, while one is scat singing a snicksnicksnicksnick boogie, the other is doing mournful swoooosh, swoooosh blues.

It's ridiculous. Do bus manufacturers think that less rain falls on one side of a windshield than on the other?

Besides, if there is some monotonous and repetitive percussion going on, I sing to myself mentally to take the edge of the boredom off. But even I cannot work on two clashing percussions simultaneously.

Give snicksnicksnicksnick to the Beatles.

"Woke up." snicksnick "Got outta bed." snicksnick

"Dragged a comb across my head." snicksnicksnick-snick

"Found my way downstairs and drank a cup,

"And looking up, I noticed I was late." snicksnick-snicksnick

At this point, let's drag Andy Williams into the fray:

Moon River wider than a mile  
swoooosh swoooosh swoooosh swoooosh

Now, put the two together.

AH HA! Can't do it, can ya, smartass?!

Another one that always gets me is the traffic light at the corner of Paxton and Isabella.

It matters not at all from which direction I hit the intersection. The damned thing will always turn yellow just in time for me to be a little too far away to make it.

If I drive slow enough to raise the blood pressure of drivers behind me, the light will change in time to stop me.

If I scream up Isabella as if my ass were aflame, the light will change in time to stop me.

This is a UNIVERSAL TRUISM decreed by whatever cosmic power first kicked loose the gears of entropy, that determined that we should circle Sol as opposed to the other way around, that wrote the law saying that all dogs should hate mail carriers.

Small town cops and straight citizens will always look on me as a hippy. I am not a hippy; I have never been one. I identify more closely (in spite of my lack of years) with the beatniks, the poets, the writers and painters of the early, mid, and late fifties than with the burrowers of philosophy of the sixties.

Small town cops and straight citizens will always look on my beloved friend, Mike Glicksohn, as a hippy.

He is not; as far as I know, he has never truly been one. Many of his personal realities would appear to be diametrically opposed to certain so-called hippy philosophies. This is no criticism of Mike, of course, only a statement that his philosophies seem, to me, different.

Small town cops and straight citizens will always look on Dave Locke as one of their own, despite the beard. He is not; as far as I can see, Dave would far rather open a vein than be such. Dave Locke is, instead, an observer from PLANET X.

The way these paragraphs fit into my bit about "ITSY RAZORS, BITSY KNIVES" (in case you were beginning to wonder) is that the small people, such as small town cops and straight citizens, will always generalize on the basis of appearance.

Am I generalizing? Well, of course.

But I figure ... fuck'em, they fired first!

§§§§§§§§

## EPILOGUE

This concludes the first installment of BLUE FLAME PURE SHINE CHRONICLES. The damned thing is getting too long.

Let me simply say, in closing, that today is Christmas Day, 1984.

I have stuffed myself for brunch on the caviar and the paté and all the other goodies from my stocking. I have tested both of my new pipes, and, at this very instant, I am sending up clouds of blue smoke, the burning of one sacrificial virgin drawn from a box of twenty-five Cuesta Rey black cigars that was under the tree with my name attached.

I am feeling quite mellow and cuddly in my bearded paunchiness. I can only pray each of you had a holiday season that showed how many friends you really have, and how much someone truly loves you.





All things fit together. When Jay Cornell had a moving sale, his fanzines didn't move and he gave them to Bill Bowers. Bill brought the ones he didn't need or want to a CFG meeting, which explains why Al Curry wound up with a copy of AURY #4. AURY was my last solo genzine, and its history provides explanation on why it was virtually impossible for me to start a new solo genzine without material from Dean Grennell ... or from my old drinking buddy Milt Stevens. However, AURY has no bearing on why I asked Milt for an arkle. I asked Milt for an arkle because, in UNCLE DICK'S, I read Milt saying that he wanted to get active in fanzines again, and that reminded me of AURY, and ...

Milt says: "I'm sure the title of the enclosed article will give some folks a hot flash before they read the text. Since I've retired from running conventions, I can admit that I was the one who made off with the missing millions from LACon II, and I spent it all on riotous living. Now people don't have to worry where the money went anymore."

Milt has been gone too long, but now he's back. And he's welcome here anytime.



"It's a Dirty Job, but somebody has to do it."

This is particularly true of Janitorship. In the three years I was official janitor of the LASFS, I had a unique opportunity to get up on all the dirt in the club. As an experienced staff worker, I naturally can handle any job. On assuming the duties of janitor, I first optimized, then prioritized, and finally bifurcated. After that, I upgraded my job title.

The previous incumbent had been known as the Head of Maintenance. I decided to upgrade my title to Grand High Janitor. I signed various notices that I posted on occasion as "Milton F. Stevens, By The Grace of God, Janitor." The idea of divine right janitorship is one that hasn't received a lot of attention. It seems logi-

cal to me that if God determined some people would be kings, He also determined that others would be janitors. The janitors of the world just haven't been looking at things the right way.

The job of cleaning the LASFS Clubhouse is a formidable one. At times, one can imagine that cleaning the Augean Stables must have been an easier job. Of course, Hercules had to do that job without modern detergents or a vacuum cleaner. I recall that Taral once commented disparagingly that LASFS was spending more money on a vacuum cleaner than it was on one of the never-ending revivals of SHAGGY, and that certainly indicated where the club's priorities were. If Taral had ever tried cleaning a 2000 square foot building with a



fanzine, his priorities might be a little bit different also.

All sorts of power comes along with the job of janitor. After all, what other club officer can make the entire membership disappear in crap if he chooses? The janitor also has the right to give anyone a bad dose of the evil eyeball if they are caught messing around. Some stories were circulated that exaggerated what I intended to do with the powers of janitorship. It isn't really true that I planned on covering the entire membership with slip covers in the interests of neatness. Not that it's a bad idea, but I didn't happen to think of it.

There are many exciting challenges to being a janitor. The Shadow may know what evil lurks in the hearts of men, but I know what lurks under the LASFS sinks. It certainly is exciting when you discover new life evolving in the LASFS refrigerator. I suspected that some of that life was plotting to promote itself up the food chain. There were also many puzzles to be considered. I could imagine how the members got footprints on the walls, but I never was able to figure out how they got them at eye level. For awhile, I was finding used surgical gloves in the LASFS trash. I had to wonder about that. Was The Mad Proctologist really a LASFS member? I eventually did find the answer. The gloves were being used to clean the mimeograph. As Sherlock Holmes put it, "When you've eliminated the impossible, the real answer is likely to be silly."

The job of janitor was also useful for avoiding certain situations. Tuesday was my regular cleaning night, and for awhile I was sharing the premises with the incipient writers' group. You all know what aspiring writers are like. They all seem to feel that it's OK to interrupt mopping the floor to read fiction at you. It's difficult to explain to them that mopping the floor is more interesting than listening to their fiction. While aspiring fiction writers are bad, aspiring poets are ten times worse.

Announcing that I was just the janitor and had no connection whatsoever with the writers' group saved me from a couple of bad doses of poetry. One of the aspiring Libertarian writers once interrupted my mopping with a downright accusation. "I've heard that you're Chairman of the Board and janitor; that sounds awfully Communist to me." "Yep" was about the only reply I could think of, although I was beginning to see why it was against state law to give sharp objects to Libertarians.

Once the habit of janitoring is established, it starts spreading to other areas. Eventually, it will spread to almost everything except cleaning your own house. You know that it's spreading when you start actively noticing that convention hotels full of fans start looking like a stampede of hogs has just passed through. The per capita crud that fans can produce is nothing short of amazing.

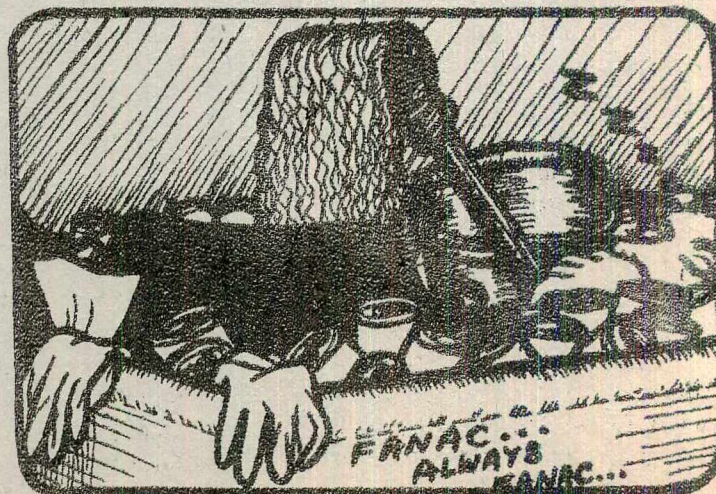
The hotel staff naturally bears the major brunt of cleaning up after fans. The famous peanut butter caper of 1972 would have to be one of the most loathsome clean-

up jobs in fanish history. When confronted with a bath tub full of crunchy peanut butter the maid reputedly said that she had seen worse. It's hard to imagine what that worse was, and I'm almost glad that the fans in question didn't ask for further details. In general, hotel maids do not seem to be easily excited. On one occasion when I was on the concom, I went into the con suite first thing in the morning. The place had been cleaned and the leftover junk had been neatly stacked on a table. On top of the stack was a hash pipe complete with residue. I got rid of that sucker in a hurry, and the committee resolved to keep closer track of what was going on late at night.

I've helped clean up after numerous room parties. This isn't too much of a problem except when the hotel is threatening to charge corkage on cans and bottles found in rooms. I recall that the Fontainebleau in Miami Beach was one of the hotels that threatened to do that. So after one party, we were left with the problem of what to do with ten gallons of aluminum cans. Our solution was to get a laundry hamper, fill it with cans, and put it in the service elevator. Corkage fees do ensure that the hotel will be able to find trash easily.

At another convention, I had a different problem with the con suite. Again, I walked into the con suite first thing in the morning to find two fans still chatting from the night before and one inert body. The body wasn't dead, but he sort of wished he was. Hotel maids may be tolerant, but I didn't think they would put up with a body. So began a series of events that began to resemble "The Trouble With Harry." Since the fellow didn't have a hotel room, I moved him to a concom sleeping room. Elayne Pelz made me move him from there two hours later, so I moved him to my room. My wife made me move him from there two hours after that. Fortunately, he was ambulatory again by 4 p.m., and I was able to get rid of him altogether.

They say that anything that doesn't kill you is good for experience. Janitoring was an experience. I think they also used to say "Join fandom and learn a trade."









His research always led him to the same conclusion. "Realism is coming back," he'd announce and proceed to outline his latest scheme for taking advantage of this trend which threatened for as long as I knew him. I'm sure he dreamed, as some dream of winning the lottery, that the major New York galleries would all, miraculously, be bought up by descendants of the nineteenth century French Academicians. But realistically, he understood that the renascent realism that would catapult him to success would have to be figurative painting -- one month -- or super realism -- the next.

He was handicapped in his efforts by living in East Orange rather than the East Village. By the time the art magazines reported the newest fads in the galleries the native artists were up to something else in their studios. His schemes were clever but obsolete at their inception and I guessed he had as much chance hitting the New York art market with them as he would've had hitting it with a refurbished V-2.

artist, when he was just a family friend. The unpainted house sat on a hill, beside a one lane dirt road, amid untended apple orchards and fields where I played baseball with his sons. Crowds of dogs fought for table-scraps in the driveway. Mr. Civiletti didn't have the heart to turn strays away but couldn't actually afford to feed them.

Mr. Civiletti's wife accepted her husband's artistic destiny without complaint and did piecework in a sewing factory. When I began to think of Mr. Civiletti as an artist it struck me that Dina was an oddly mundane match for him but the last I heard she had joined an obscure religious sect and was taking bus excursions to the site of the Second Coming so perhaps she had some of the visionary in her as well. I know she had a superior recipe for lasagna.

I suppose Mr. Civiletti could hardly have stopped us singing a song which so embodied his own outlook. However, the racket was so unbearable that, rather than talking around his pipe as usual, he was driven to actually remove it from the corner of his mouth periodically to shout, without rancor, "Will you goddamned kids shut up!" No doubt this incident impressed me because my parents would never have referred to "goddamn" anything within my earshot. They wouldn't have let us keep up the caterwauling, either.

Mr. Civiletti seemed inured to bedlam. Living under the same leaky roof with seven quarreling kids and two feuding mothers-in-law never seemed to phase him. He was so engrossed in Art that he didn't notice the great gray world beyond, or if he did it registered only as an occasional twinge in the duodenum. One year the FBI staked out an abandoned cold storage warehouse not 100 yards from the north facing windows of his studio. The warehouse had once been used to store apples but the Mafia had converted it into an illegal still and carried on bootlegging operations for months. When Mr. Civiletti claimed not to have noticed the hooch filled semis rolling past his windows and down the dirt road, you could











THREE

FROM ALEXIS GILLILAND



ALL WISDOM IS FOUND  
IN FANZINES... AT ABOUT  
0.001 N CONCENTRATION.

FORTUNATELY THERE  
ARE LOTS OF FANZINES



HELL HAS EVERY FANZINE  
EVER PUBLISHED! WE ASK  
THE WRITERS: WAS THIS THE  
BEST YOU COULD DO?

NO, WE SOCK IT TO 'EM  
FOR SHODDY WORK.

YES, WE  
GET THEM  
FOR HUBRIS!









giving. It has almost reached the stage where my first question to Cas, upon coming home in the evening is, "What did we get from Joni today?". Well, not yesterday. Yesterday the question was, "Why the hell has Joni sent us some handkerchiefs and carpet-squares?". Closer examination revealed that the carpet-squares were not in fact square, nor were they carpet. De-Luxe table-mats and napkins, were what they were, which answers one question whilst begging another, though it does reveal a degree of consistency. Now we can have a dinner party. The consistency comes in because one of Joni's earlier parcels contained 'a complete Japanese meal' (along with a sample of every nut in the known universe -- although what the connection is, other than the obvious, I fail to grasp). But I won't dwell upon this parcel, because I have already written it up into an article for another faned, coming soon (well, eventually) to a fanzine near you. Always assuming that is, that the Cantor's of this world ever get the lead out. Nor will I dwell upon the ones that arrived just before Christmas. After all, doesn't everyone receive a sock full of kisses for Christmas? The skelkids did, while I am sitting here typing this whilst wearing a cardigan that has travelled further than Senator Kennedy in search of votes. I have no idea where the sheep came from, that supplied the wool, but I'm certain it was half-a-world-away from Macao, where the raw materials were transformed into a bespoke garment which was shipped forthwith to Mr. Sears in New York (Mr. Sears does live in New York, doesn't he?). The garment was then rushed to the Wisconsin environs before being redirected to Stockport. They say that fabric can get 'tired'. I'm not surprised. What really shook me was when I wore it for a walk in the country. A sheep in the nearby field looked up at me and obviously recognised my cardigan. It went "Maaaaa". I felt so embarrassed! How can you answer an accusation like that? I hastily explained to the sheep that it was a case of mistaken identity. "You're wrong," I exclaimed, running home my denial, before taking it on the lam. I am quite prepared to talk to sheep, it is only geese that get my goat.

However, I don't want to write about those parcels either. Nor about the seashells and the coral, or any of the others that lie outside the main spectrum. Mainly what Joni sends us is jam. No kidding.

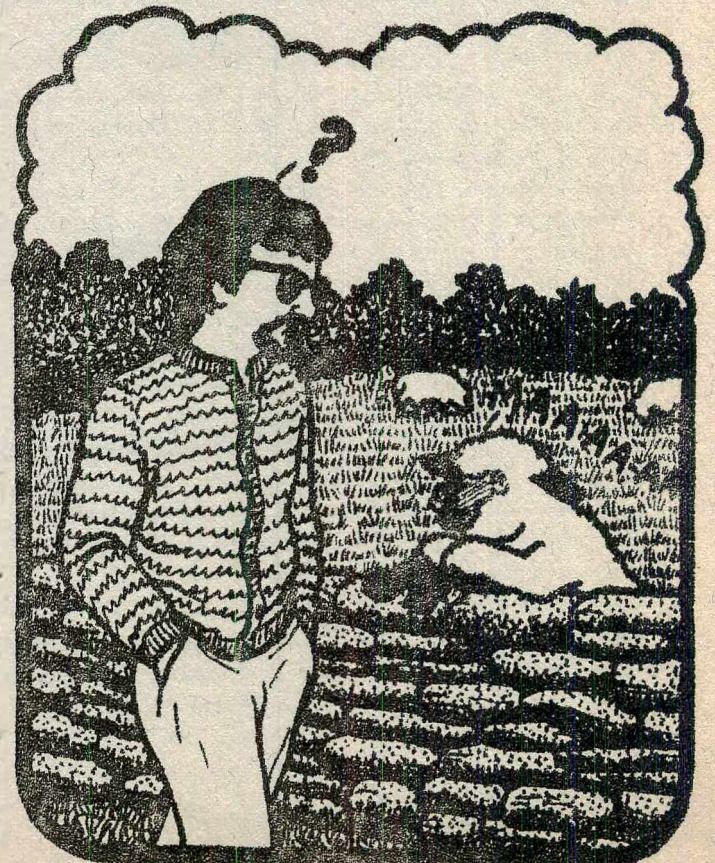
Joni makes these preserves. Assorted jellies. Apparently she auctions them at various Midwest Conventions, with the proceeds going to TAFF and DUFF. She also mails them to me. Well, that's OK. I am a fan. I have a Cosmic Mind. I can handle this concept. What if she does spend fifteen dollars sending me the same amount of jam that I can buy at the local Kwik Save for three? I certainly can't buy these varieties. So I do what any fan would do. I sit there, a satisfied smile upon my face, looking at an empty jar of 'Mother Joni's TAFF/DUFF Peach & Ginger Jelly', and I respond as I expect any fan would. Well, what would you do when you've enjoyed something that another fan has produced and which

you received through the mail? Well, that's what I did.  
I LoCed it.

It seemed the normal fannish thing to do.

Imagine my surprise when, in a subsequent letter, Joni revealed that this was the first LoC she'd ever got on her jellies. Well, at first I was kinda pleased. I mean, there are these famous LoCsmiths in fandom -- Harry Warner and Mike Glicksohn spring immediately to mind -- but none of them have ever written a LoC on Joni's jellies. It's me, ME! I am the only fan who has ever LoCed a jar of jam. I felt proud, though kinda humble. I mean, why am I so special? I guess I never really thought about it this way before, but I always thought fans were kind of special. "Show me a fan," I might have said (although I didn't), "and I'll show you someone who'd LoC a jar of jam". So, I began to feel disappointed in fandom. I began to feel let down. Fandom, how could you do this to me?

The fact is, I always thought that fandom was basically made up of lateral thinkers, and I like to think that I'm one. In fact my own definition of a lateral thinker would be someone who'd LoC a jar of jam. Fandom has let me down. Don't do it again, Fandom. Get your act together. There will be a test afterwards. I am reminded of this by what happened this morning, coupled with my own response to the first mailing of apa-jam. Well, we aren't in quite the same income bracket as Joni. Come to think of it, we aren't in the same income bracket as your basic abject pauper, although we expect to get that high eventually. We certainly aren't in the 'complete Japanese meal' league.





Now some people don't like Hedgehog Crisps. They say they're too prickly. Well, I haven't tried them myself, but I would have thought they were the ideal snack. You can eat and pick your teeth at the same time. Which recalls to my mind the situation in bed this morning. Now if you associate the words 'bed', and 'eating', and 'picking your teeth', and husband and wife, with \*rude things\*, then you get zero points, and you are in for a big disappointment. If you associate them with eating packets of crisps then you probably know Cas, and are therefore disqualified for cheating. But I suppose I ought to back up a ways and set the scene.

Gas works nights. Some nights anyway. One of the nights she works is Friday. She does a twelve hour shift starting at 2000 hours Friday night and stretching through until 0800 hours Saturday morning. Then she comes home. Then she goes to bed ... which is where she meets me. I am still there from Friday night and just about to get up and face Saturday. She takes her clothes off and says, "Hi. I'm Cas." I say "Hello. I'm Skel," before getting up and getting dressed. It makes a weird and freaky start to the weekend. However, there is a slight overlap. No, not that sort of overlap -- I told you there were no \*rude things\*. Cas is fucked before she comes to bed. A twelve-hour shift of looking after old ladies and believe me, you'd be fucked too. So we have an early-morning changeover. She comes to bed with her 'late-night' coffee, and joins me with my early-morning tea. She also brings her supper, which usually consists of a couple of packets of crisps. Don't knock it. It is the only meal we usually share, at least to so many decimal places.

Well, this morning she said it. "I wish someone would invent a packet of crisps that doesn't end up with more crisps in the bed than in you." Now Cas is a fan, but she isn't a trufan. She is quite happy to leave it at that, to sit and wait for someone to invent anti-gravity crisps. Quite what she intends to do with a ceilingful of crumbs, I have no idea. Not me though. I am a trufan. I can't leave it at that. I am a lateral thinker, and my lateral thinking stretches out until it reaches the horizon. Of course, such lateral thinking, to such an extent, must make for shallow thought processes, but if you suggest that in my hearing I'll scratch your toenails out.

Well, the fact is that nobody is likely to invent anti-gravity crisps. Let's face it, if they do invent anti-gravity blinkered scientific thinking will ensure that it doesn't get applied to anything useful, like crisps in bed, until all the military ramifications have been thoroughly explored. Well, not to worry, I am here. My mind immediately seized upon the concept. Well, it would. There I was, layed in bed reading TRAP-DOOR #3. Let's face it, when you're reading TRAPDOOR,

your brain will seize upon anything.

As a quick segue ... what exactly are the military ramifications of antigravity crisps? You can't think of any? Oh fandom, you've let me down again!

But I steel myself against such disappointments.  
Crisps in the bed, that's the problem.

Well, my first thought is an electrostatic charge. Isn't it yours? I have this thought that a strong positive charge on both the crisps and the duvet should solve the problem. Like charges repel, or repulse. You know this, I don't have to explain it. Let's face it, aren't you repulsed by anyone who, like charges for his fanzine? Of course you are. Thus, if you could apply the same electrostatic charge to the crisps and the duvet, you would end up with things that repelled each other. You couldn't get crumbs in the bed. I explained this to Cas. She said, "So how come you're here?" I put this down to a natural testiness caused by overwork and a crockful of crumbs. What else could it be? But then, she's been increasingly testy of late. Maybe she's...

However, I have this feeling that an electrostatic charge isn't the complete answer. Well, try and imagine the crisp-bits skittering across the duvet and plummeting lemming-like over the edge of the bed. I don't think you'd be up to such an experience first thing in the morning. Try and imagine a typical Midwestern household ... a typical Midwestern ski-resort-owning household:

"Joni? You know those crisps you're eating, the ones Skel sent you? Well, I think they're still alive."  
\*SHRIEK!!!\*

No. Plus of course the fact that all the crisp bits are going to end up on the floor, in the very place that you're going to step onto them when you go for a pee later. Well, there aren't many things worse to step into than scrunchy crisp bits. Getting out of bed and wrapping your toes around a slimy slug is one of the things that's worse, as are dung beetles. Every bit as bad is stepping into a pool of cold vomit. I can only speak for cold vomit you understand. For all I know stepping into a puddle of warm vomit might be quite an uplifting experience. I dunno. Let's face it, if the vomit is still warm, then it probably hasn't been there long enough for you to forget about it, and anyone who knowingly and deliberately steps into a pool of vomit isn't someone I want to have anything to do with anyway. If you are just such a person, then please stop reading this article immediately! Go away. Go for a paddle, or something. Just don't take your shoes and socks off when I'm in the room. OK?

God! I thought it was bad enough when fandom started getting filled up with trekkies and media fen, but vomit-paddlers? Jeezus!

Well obviously an alternative approach was called for. Fortunately, as a Systems Analyst I am used to considering alternative approaches. Nor does it matter how silly the approach is, because I am also a fan. No matter how silly the approach I know that some fan has







Tennis, unlike table tennis (the hardcore never call it ping pong), is even better than sex as exercise, but for tennis you do have to change your shoes and the scoring is somewhat different. There are other points in common, though: Serving, rushing, slamming, changing sides, getting a rhythm going, ground strokes, top spin, using two balls, and with mixed doubles there's a lot more playing around. Sex is not, however, sublimated tennis. ("I hear that you play with your husband, Mrs. Jones. Does he beat you?" "Yes, damnit, every time." "Can't understand it. Watched him play once. He rushed a lot, and his ground strokes were too short. Not enough stroke preparation, and he overruns the ball." "Yes, well, that's the problem.")

Even ignoring the blisters and wounded dignity, tennis is a hazardous sport. In the dark I once impaled my wrist on the loose end of a piece of steel strapping which held the court light timer switch to a pole. One time I was moving along the back of a non-standard court, keeping an eye on a high-bouncer and trying to be there before it hit the back wall, and almost knocked myself out on a pole which stood a foot out from the wall. Steve Leigh has sprained his ankle twice and his back once, and is thinking of getting a longer racket which can also double as a cane or a splint.

If what you want is exercise, it's probably best to do exercises. Sports can be fun, but they serve better as hazards than as exercise. Never, for instance, take up boxing for the exercise, though as training for marathon dancing it can't be beat. Tennis will get you in shape for carpet beating. Ping Pong is good training if you plan on moving to an area where malaria is a problem. Football is good if you want to hone your skills for pickpocketing in crowded urban areas.

To improve your farming skills you might consider a different set of sports. Basketball, for instance, will help keep the floor uncluttered around your wastebasket if you're a fanwriter. Three-legged sack races keep you in trim for coediting, as does tag-team wrestling.

Machine-gun target practice is good exercise for doing mailing comments, and Acapulco cliff diving and mud wrestling might get you in shape for involvement in a fan fund. Marathon racing can't be beat as warmup for all-night convention partying, though running in place or treading water is more useful if you're rooming in the main party hotel and use the elevators as often as you see them. Javelin throwing promotes muscle tone for fanzine and skiffy reviewers, or you might consider darts if you're not all that heavy into KTF reviewing. Personally, I think that mountain climbing gives you an edge in preparation for publishing a regular and frequent genzine, that flying and cranking over a single-prop airplane gets you ready for running a mimeo or ditto, and that arm-wrestling helps if you're not into plying, wheedling, and cajoling material for your fanzine.

But if healthful exercise were really related to sports, there'd be no such thing as sports medicine.

Or, at least, I don't think there would be.

Three skits in unremitting succession about sports.  
That's not too many.

Actually, in post-mortem, what we have in DIABOLOGIC is an introductory section of editorial matter, the first in a continuing series of sideways looks at the subject of time, a long overdue and well-deserved catharsis, a skit which reveals only that I'm not really into sports, and an obligatory exercise in filling-in the blank spot from here to the bottom of the page. Of such things are editorials made.

In the next editorial we (we: me and the cigarette lighter in my pocket) will have more natter, another sideways look at the subject of time, and whatever else comes to mind as I stare at blank paper (unless it's only to get up and fetch another drink).

In the next issue, which will not be three months late because it will not be this humongus, Lon and Al and Dean will kick in a second round of wordwhipping with their columns (Al has already turned in a good part of his next installment), and I don't think there will be outside articles mainly because I won't be soliciting any (but if they turn up, maybe there will be). In the absence of articles, there will be a fair-sized lettercolumn. Those of you familiar with my old gazette AWRY will be correct if you assume that it will not be your basic, standard, count-on-it routine type of lettercol. Those of you not familiar with AWRY can check with those who are, and thereby be assured that yes, indeed, it's okay to write without trepidation. (One note of caution, however. I subscribe to the Bruce D. Arthurs school of handling letters of comment: no DNQs or DNPs. If you send one of those, don't be surprised to see it as the lead item in the next lettercol...)

Also, beginning with the next issue, a new permanent feature: unpublished/reprinted material by erstwhile fan Ed Cagle. There's a story here, and I'll tell it next time. For now, look forward to it. And be sure to write.



