

TRAP DOOR



TRIP DOOR

#2. April 1984. Edited and published by Bob "Robert" Lichtman, PO Box 30, Glen Ellen CA 95442. (Use this address despite the return address on the back cover which is there to meet our bulk mail requirements on US copies.) Associates in this venture: Donna N. Ansell, Jeanne Bowman, Paul Williams, all of Glen Ellen. You are getting this because we sent it to you. We are interested in The Usual: letters of comment, written and/or drawn contributions, trade fan-zines (all-for-all please). Or as a final resort, \$2.00 per issue in cash or 20¢ stamps. Angels welcome.

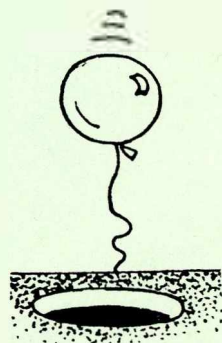
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DOORWAY

by Robert Lichtman



A SMALL BUT significant portion of those responding to the first issue expressed some disappointment in the fact that I didn't expound at length about my life on The Farm in Tennessee during the '70s.

For the even smaller minority who pleaded ignorance of The Farm, this brief description is offered: The Farm is a rural religious community started in 1971 by nearly 300 followers of a '60s hippie religious teacher, Stephen Gaskin--or simply Stephen, as he was known at first--of whom I was one. Most of us had attended Stephen's open meetings, held every Monday night in San Francisco. Many of us (though not me) had accompanied him on a school-bus caravan and lecture circuit around the United States. This community had a few temporary locations before buying and settling in the fall of 1971 on 1,014 acres of former cattle ranch up in the hills, 70 miles south of Nashville, in a small "dry" county. Farm the land and feed the people was more or less the early goal; self-sufficiency would follow through hard work. Many ventures developed to supplement this early fixation on farming which ended in a disastrous growing season in 1976 that indebted The Farm for years thereafter. The community grew to a population high of around

1,500 in 1979-80. Since then it has shrunk drastically due to rampant disaffection until now it stands at less than 400.

Well, no doubt many questions are raised by such an abbreviated description of an enterprise that endured so long, involved so many people, and affected directly or indirectly the lives of many thousands beyond those directly active. Somewhere in me, I'm sure, there lurks a book about The Farm and my time there just waiting to get out. To help it along, I make the following offer to all interested fanzine editors: if you can narrow my focus sufficiently through thoughtful questioning that there is an article I can produce in response to your nudging, I will try to write the article your prodding evokes. Wrestling with my self-proclaimed writer's block all the way, no doubt.

I may well also get into writing more about The Farm in future issues, but with a sharp editor's eye to reader response. I neither want to ignore the subject entirely nor do I want to devote a major part of the focus of the 'zine to it.

For this issue, I must recount how fandom (yes, fandom!) played an integral role in my move to The Farm. It was none other than Andrew Main who first told me of Stephen's early meetings. He was going to them, seemed to be getting a lot out of them, and was instrumental in audiotaping them, a practice later taken over by William Meyers, former editor and publisher of SPECTRE, another fan who also went on to become an early Farm resident.

One Monday evening in early 1969 Trina Robbins was in town and came over to go out with me. We had heard that the Jefferson Airplane and the Grateful Dead were playing a free concert at Winterland (a large rock hall) that night and went driving off to check it out. When we arrived it wasn't happening--so much for Hot Rumors--and so to save the evening we drove over to the Straight Theater on Haight Street because I remembered vaguely that "something" was happening there that evening. That something turned out to be the Congress of Wonders, a stand-up improvisational comedy group, and we sat down to take it in. When they were finished, Stephen came in and, after a few words of appreciation to the Wonders, went into his rap. I don't remember what Trina thought of it, but I was very impressed and came back the following week, and the following week, and... Trina didn't come back, but she didn't live in San Francisco full-time at that point. (She reenters this narrative some time later as the lucky recipient of my former cat when I left San Francisco for Tennessee.)

Thinking back on these fannish origins of one of the most major moves I made in my life, I wonder if it used to occur to William Meyers, former member of SAPS, as it did to me, that there were perhaps more parallels than met the eye between The Farm and the famous love camp in the Ozarks...?

ONE THING I did when I went to The Farm that I've later regretted is selling and/or giving away my entire fanzine collection, not excluding even my own file copies of my previous fanzines. If only I'd put them in sealed boxes and entrusted them to my parents' garage! I've said to myself in moments of fannish remorse. At that point, my collection was much winnowed and yet very extensive in its specialty: the best fannish fanzines of the '50s and '60s.

I especially miss having my own fanzines. It wasn't until Terry and Carol Carr's New Year's party this past winter that I was able to cast eyetracks once again on some of my own publications for the first time since 1971. I borrowed Terry's file of my three genzines. The first was PSI-PHI, started in 1958 when I had been in fandom about two months. It ran seven issues through December 1960 as a general circulation fanzine and improved vastly from the embarrassingly neoish first issue. It was later revived when I joined FAPA and two issues were published which also had extensive outside circulation. I published one issue of OUTWORLDS in 1959; this was before Bill Bowers was on the fannish scene, I believe. OUTWORLDS was to be more fannish than PSI-PHI, which had gotten deeply involved in discussing making a movie from the Tolkein trilogy, but handling two titles was too much and no further issues appeared.

The last was FRAP. To quote from my editorial in FRAP #4: "This magazine had its genesis at a poolside party at Jim and Greg Benford's old apartment in

Corona, California, the weekend of the Noncon last September. Absent from that brainstorming session only because he'd left for New York several days previously was Calvin Demmon, who thus escaped the likely possibility of being co-editor right from FRAP's inception. Greg Benford has been sort of a consulting editor right from the beginning..."

FRAP had six issues, bi-monthly, in 1963 and 1964, a focussed effort to provide regular doses of a relaxed brand of fannishness that was even then disappearing from the scene. Its circulation seldom exceeded 100. Rereading it was surprising to me--I didn't remember it being that good, that focussed. Inspired by the joy of rediscovery, I've produced an anthology, "Best of FRAP," by carefully unstapling and then photocopying every page of every issue. Using these, I collected 76 pages of the best of what was a consistently high-level publication, some 70% of the original content.

"Best of FRAP" includes contributions from Greg and Jim Benford, Norm Clarke, Calvin Demmon, Ray Nelson, Elmer Perdue and a host of others. It has front and rear covers by Steve Stiles and interior cartoons by Nelson and Rotsler. Though photocopied, it has an authentic "mimeo feel" since all off-set and ink blotches are faithfully reproduced. Copies are produced on order and are \$8.50 postpaid anywhere in the world. Any proceeds from this project will go initially to providing contributor's copies to at least the major participants, and beyond that may be sent to an unsuspecting but deserving fan fund.

Order from the editorial address if you want to see this collection.

OOPS! I wish to apologize to Grania Davis, whose article in the last issue appeared mistitled as "Confessions (& Confusions) of a Teen-Age Neofan." Those who remember it will agree with me that it doesn't make any sense at all to call it that. The correct title is "Confessions (& Confusions) of a Middle-Aged Neofan."

This not yet middle-aged neofan regrets any confusion that may have been caused to our loyal readers and assures you, one and all, that the titles in this issue have all been checked and double-checked for accuracy.

WOULD YOU accept for publication in your fanzine an article that had previously been accepted for publication by not one, but two, fan-editors who subsequently failed to pub their ishes? Larry Stark's "The Reviewers" has this sort of interesting history lurking behind its innocent facade.

It was originally written and scheduled to appear in the final issue of Bill Sarill's fanzine, RETRIQUE, which never appeared. Picking up the ball, Paul Williams took it over and stencilled it up for publication in the gigantic fifth issue of his own fanzine, WITHIN. He even ran off some copies of it and most of the rest of the issue before he, too, succumbed to annishnesia and never completed or circulated that issue.

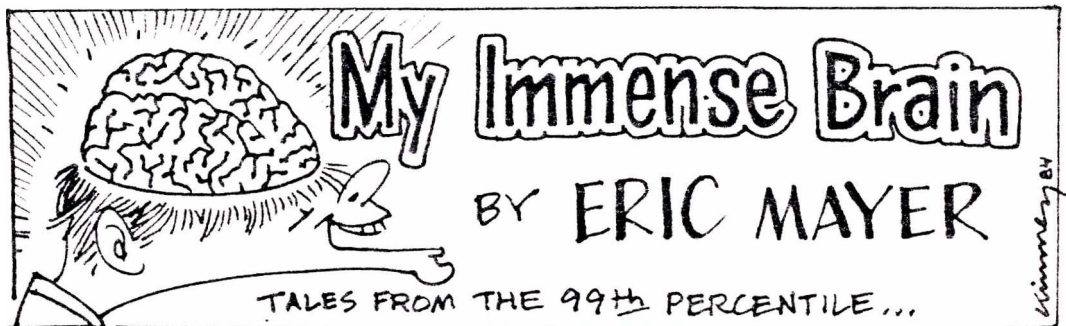
Well, twenty years have passed and if you are actually holding and/or reading this issue of TRAP DOOR, the jinx has been broken and this article is finally before the deserving and anxiously awaiting fannish public.

Enjoy!

IT FALLS UPON me to say this, but some of you, and you probably know who you are, will have to ask to be removed from the list of those who receive this fanzine. Others of you--and probably you know who you are, too--who are reading this and have not responded to #1 and were not planning to respond to this issue either may find themselves not receiving future issues.

This is a fanzine in search of an active participatory readership. If you can't think of any good reason why you've been receiving TRAP DOOR in the first place beyond your mere presence in fandom, and you want to keep receiving it, the time to act is now.

--Robert Lichtman



I'VE NEVER entirely recovered from my first love affair, the one I had as a child, with my brain. While watching a baseball telecast last summer, I got to thinking about that doomed relationship. I'd geared the evening's drinking to a typical nine-inning contest and so when the Phillies sent me back to the refrigerator for an unplanned Schmidt's by failing to push across the winning run in the bottom of the ninth I quickly became maudlin. My thoughts wandered naturally from the diamond to my boyhood when I'd as soon have had my balls chopped off as sacrifice brain cells to alcohol, and never mind that I possessed somewhat fewer of the former than the latter.

I took a gulp of beer. Suddenly those old childhood nightmares about alcohol-induced brain atrophy came rushing back. For a horrible moment it seemed I could feel the dying neurons popping off inside my skull like strings of cheap firecrackers in an attic. I must have cried out.

"What's the matter?" Kathy's voice startled me back to reality.

"Pete Rose," I said quickly, my mind functioning with an agility I'd long since ceased to expect of it. "He's already hitless in four at-bats. If he makes another out he'll be batting under .230."

I wouldn't have dared to try and explain what I was really thinking. I had no desire, after so many years, to confess to Kathy about my brain and me. It was one of those things best left safely buried, as Ann Landers might say. No snapshots of my cortex were likely to show up in the back of a dresser drawer to give me away. I'd burnt the sf stories my brain had written for me.

As I watched the baseball players gliding skillfully around the field, I told myself that it had been an understandable infatuation. My brain had appeared so superior to the gawky assemblage of flesh and bone that carted it about.

My body resembled something stuck together from an incomplete set of tinkertoys, arms barely strong enough to bat a ball over the infield, legs too weak to beat out a bunt. My brain, however, was playing in a whole different league. It had learned to spell my name, to add everything but fractions and to read Detective Comics.

I still recall the day I decided my brain and I were meant for each other. Recess was even more traumatic than usual. Sides were chosen up for baseball and after the name of every able-bodied male in my class had been called I was left standing by myself, between the two teams, scuffling at the gravel of the schoolyard with the toe of my sneaker, while the captains argued over whose turn it was to pick.

"Oh, okay," the kinder of the two boys finally said, "we'll take Eric, this time."

I was brooding in arithmetic class that afternoon when Mr Jewell, who doubled as speech therapist and guidance counselor, appeared in the classroom doorway and summoned me. My first fear was that I'd been forgetting to get my tongue up behind my teeth on my "th's" again and as I left the room I thought I could hear giggling at my back.

When we reached his tiny office, Mr Jewell showed me to a leather arm-

chair in front of his desk which was hemmed in by file cabinets, and asked me who I thought Kubla Khan was and could I define "bellicose."

"An ancient Asian conqueror, and fat," I responded brightly.

Mr Jewell leaned across his desk towards me. "I can tell you're nervous," he said. His little tuft of a mustache twitched as he gave me a brief, reassuring smile. "I shouldn't be telling you this, really, but I've asked you here because you tested out in the 99th percentile."

Immediately I recalled the intelligence tests the class had taken weeks before. So, they had added up the pencil marks on those answer sheets, probably even using computers, and I'd done better than 99 out of 100 test takers.

I couldn't have been more thrilled if he'd told me I'd begun to sprout tendrils. At last, the feeling I'd always had in my innermost heart had been validated. I was superior to the common run of humanity.

The battery of tests for the "gifted" lasted half an hour. When I left the office the sun, picking its way through the wire-reinforced windows at the end of the hall and striking the varnished floor, colored the air a muted gold, like the air in a Rembrandt. I walked back slowly, relishing being alone with myself, avoiding the track worn in the old floorboards by the student herds.

Mr Jewell had transformed me into a small monster of the intellect. I was still picked last for baseball. Stronger classmates still shoved me to the macadam during games of tag. But though my lower lip trembled at the indignities, in my mind I was exulting, like Edmund Hamilton's spindle-shanked Man Who Evolved.

"What is your big animal-like body beside my immense brain," I thought.

Fond as I was of the part of my immense brain that I used, it was the part I didn't use that I loved best. I haven't bothered to keep up with recent studies, but when I was a child the experts all agreed that humans didn't use 90% of their brain capacity. The old cartographers had filled the unexplored regions on their maps with warnings about monsters but the people who wrote articles about "The Untapped Potential of the Human Brain" were more optimistic. They weren't sure what all the spare cells were for but assumed it must be good. Maybe if we used just 11% of those cells, rather than the usual 10%, we could beat the Russians to the moon. Utilization of 13% could end world hunger, 15% result in immortality, and so forth.

Apparently these optimists hadn't given much thought to the effects of four billion assorted persons and astral bodies teleporting helter-skelter, bending spoons and predicting Liz Taylor's next marriage. I'd thought about the matter but concluded that there was nothing to worry about since only a select few, like myself, could ever hope to tap their unknown potential.

If not for my faith in my eventual psychic evolution my affair with my brain would have been little more than a one night stand because even during my gradeschool years there was ample evidence that my brain was not worthy of the pedestal I had set it on.

To begin with, I couldn't remember anything.

For a long time I avoided admitting this failing to myself. I figured I always sat down early during spelling bees because of stage fright, not because I could never recall which "e's" came before which "i's." My inability to memorize the capitals of Paraguay and Uruguay I attributed to the fact that they were in South America rather than someplace important, like Mars.

I might have been able to rationalize away my lousy memory indefinitely if not for the Day I Forgot My Little Brother. I remember nothing about the incident itself. What I do remember is being told about it, over and over and over.

The Day I Forgot My Little Brother is, in our family, a sort of oral equivalent of the nude baby picture, guaranteed to turn up at family gatherings. As soon as we've all settled in around the dinner table, whoever has had the most to drink will begin to hold forth on how quickly time passes

and children grow up, a subject I wish could be copyrighted so that anyone who considers using it would first have to consider whether it was worth paying royalties for. Instantly my mother will pipe up.

"Do you remember when Eric was in sixth grade..." she'll begin.

The various aunts, uncles and cousins all goggle at her in rapt expectation, as if they don't know what's coming. My brother and I start studying the pattern of the parsley on our mashed potatoes as if it were the most fascinating sight in the universe.

Then we are all treated to a real bare rump retelling of how I was responsible for escorting my brother Todd home from the first grade classes he attended at the white, wood frame schoolhouse just across the playground from my school and how, one afternoon, I FORGOT.

"We didn't find Todd until it was almost dark," my mother will say. "He was sitting by himself against the side of the building, crying. It was pitiful."

By this time Todd and I are both mortified, ready to crawl under the mashed potatoes and hide, but my mother isn't finished.

"I still don't know what Eric could've been thinking about to forget like that," she'll conclude. And since in all probability I was contemplating alien death rays or the caverns of Mercury or something equally more interesting than walking my little brother home, I have to bite my tongue.

Regular doses of that story would have brought most people to their senses, but I was too smart. According to my calculations, my lack of memory simply meant I was using even less than the normal 10% of my brain capacity, leaving that much extra untapped potential.

Rather than mere memory, I told myself, I might have precognition. During my sophomore year in college I bought a paperback I Ching and began casting pennies. The hexagrams' predictions were accurate enough but somehow unsatisfying. When they spoke of crossing water I assumed they meant something more than just crossing Bowman's Creek during my drive to classes every morning.

I decided telekinesis would be a better test. I suppose everyone tries to levitate objects during odd moments anyway. I worked with teacups, since I usually had one close at hand. I've always had the sensation that the part of my mind I use is located roughly in the area of my sinuses so in order to effect levitation I attempted to reach into the vacant space towards the back of my skull. This effort resulted in my straining generally unexercised eye muscles and no perceptible movement of teacup, saucer, spoon or teabag. Not even a tidal effect on the tea. Of course I didn't have proper instruments for measurements.

The years passed. There were no more SAT tests, no more LSATs. I got married. Kathy and I began to raise a family. My immense brain was nowhere to be found when the babies woke up crying at 3 am. We drifted apart.

It had become obvious that my brain had let me down. A high score on a standardized test did not guarantee that I was an actual mutation of the species. And Mr Jewell had never explained to me that even if those scores were meaningful and I was, in some way, smarter than 99 out of 100 people that still left hundreds of millions who were more intelligent still.

One day, after forgetting to set the garbage out for the third straight week, I even broke down and admitted to Kathy that I had no memory.

"But you can remember all those stupid baseball averages," she pointed out.

I took another slug of beer. On the TV screen Rose hit a weak pop to the shortstop, dropping his average to .232, 37 points below what he'd hit in his second season in 1964. I recalled what Kathy had said about my remembering baseball statistics and suddenly, as if I really did have an immense brain, it all became clear--the lack of memory, the untapped potential, the works.

At last I saw my brain for what it really was. A computer. Just another machine that I couldn't use. It was filled with cubbyholes for storing information. One area was devoted to memory. Looking at it like that I saw, in a flash of clarity, what the problem was.

Say, for example, that I want to recall my telephone number. I reach into the appropriate cubbyhole and what do I find? "Eric Mayer. 544-4324"? No. I find instead, "Carl Yastrzemski. .326 in 1967." All the cubbyholes are filled with baseball statistics. Instead of my social security number, there's the number of wins Steve Carlton had in 1972. Rather than the fact that garbage pickup is on Tuesdays I have, right at hand, the fact that Maris and Mantle hit 61 and 54 homeruns respectively for the 1961 Yankees who hit 240 as a team. I can't tell you what I had for supper last night but I know that Dan McGann hit .299 in 1905. "Where's the TV Guide?" Kathy asks. "Gee, I thought I was just looking at it," I say, "but in 1950 Jim Konstanty's ERA was 2.66."

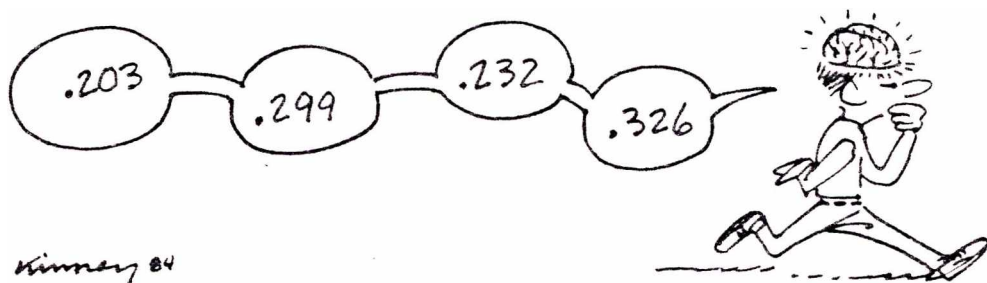
They've been playing baseball for more than 100 years. Every time anyone has touched a ball with bat or glove, or failed to do so, every time a foot has touched a base, someone has made note of the fact. And for a quarter of a century I've been reading those notes. It seems quite possible that the number of available baseball statistics, ranging from how many batters Joe McGinnity struck out in August 1907 to how many hits Pete Rose had in last year's World Series, might exceed the number of atoms in the universe, let alone the number of brain cells available in my head for memory. I've simply got no room left.

I let the last of the Schmidt's run down the back of my throat. I was hardly paying attention to the end of the baseball game. I'd peruse the boxscore in the morning anyway. I was busy basking in the warm glow of achievement. "So," I thought, "this is what it feels like to be a genius."

For I had not only solved the riddle of the missing memory, I had also figured out the function of the 90% of the brain cells we don't use. They aren't for ESP. They aren't indicative of untapped potential at all. Those are just the spare cells nature has kindly given us to kill off with alcohol.

Serves them right, too. Lazy buggers.

--Eric Mayer



LAUGHTER OUT
OF THE DARK

by REDD BOGGS



"Ride si sapiis." -- Martial

MYSTERY FICTION and Science Fiction encountered one another in an illimitable space.

"Well now," Mystery Fiction said, with a sad smile, peering through the darkness at his friend, "this last time I saw you, long since, you were dressed carelessly, even shabbily, with an open collar, ragged trousers, and barefoot. Now -- why, you dress in the garb of a second-line business executive. You're even sporting a necktie, heaven save us, although it's hardly in perfect taste. You're so neat and well-appareled and solemn of mien! Even your beard is trimmed and combed."

"Ah," Science Fiction said majestically, "you remember me when I was but a callow youth. Now, my friend, the literary critics take me seriously."

"Consider the source!" Mystery Fiction said with a sour chuckle. "Science Fiction, such pretensions! Aren't you aspiring to be something you really aren't? Tell me, where are your cross-garters?"

Science Fiction chose to ignore the remark since it was too obscure to comprehend without inquiries that would be beneath his dignity. "Once, only Damon Knight, William Atheling Jr, Arthur Jean Cox, and a bare handful of others wrote of me as though I were literature of some sort." He cleared his throat, and amended, "At least they seemed to suppose that once in a while I might be."

Mystery Fiction stood silently for a moment. Science Fiction studied him curiously and decided that his colleague was becoming a little threadbare, a little old, a little tired, even a little ugly in the manner of Dick Deadeye.

"I was about to say," Mystery Fiction remarked, uncomfortably aware of the scrutiny, "that once the literary took me half-seriously too. There was hardly a literary man in the English-speaking world that would think of going to sleep without reading a chapter or two of Sherlock Holmes or of novels by Raymond Chandler, Rex Stout, Agatha Christie...."

Science Fiction affected a yawn. "Yes yes. And President Roosevelt read you for relaxation when he was in the White House. I've heard all that, Mystery. But did you know that there's a special unit for Science Fiction in the Modern Language association? There are scholarly journals devoted to the study of the literature, new and old. Have you seen the recent issues of the M.L.A. annual bibliography?"

Mystery Fiction shook his head. "No, but I have a strange feeling that you're going to tell me all about it."

"The M.L.A. bibliography lists an amazing number of important articles about Science Fiction, so many you would hardly believe it. They all analyze significant aspects of the literature with penetrating cri-

tical vision. For instance, there's an essay on 'The Concept of the City in Adolescent Science Fiction.' And one on 'Science Fiction Theory: Internal and External Delimitation and Utopia'...."

"Wonderful!" Mystery Fiction said.

Something in his tone of voice gave Science Fiction a moment's pause. He listened to the echo, decided there was nothing suspicious, and resumed. "Then there's 'Nietzsche's Influence on the Superman in Science Fiction Literature,' 'The Forms and Functions of Science Fiction: A Theoretical Study of Its Dualistic Nature and Its Depiction of Alien Worlds,' There's 'Science Fiction Myths and Their Ambiguity,' and 'Reciprocity and Exchange in Science Fiction,' and 'Reason and Mysticism in Fantasy and Science Fiction.'"

He paused, but Mystery Fiction made no comment, contenting himself with a small smile. He went on, but with diminished enthusiasm. He didn't like that smile. "There are many essays on Science Fiction and religion, such as 'Religious Dimensions of Representative Science Fiction,' 'Apocalypse and Science Fiction: A Dialectic of Religious and Secular Soteriologies,' 'Religion and Science Fiction: A Dialectic of the Unproven.' There's a lot of writing about Indians, or I mean Native Americans, and Science Fiction, and all sorts of material about women in the genre: articles about Ursula LeGuin in plenty, analyzing her Jungian archetypes, androgyny, determinism and free will, 'Taoist Magic,' cyclical renewal, and her 'Song of Inmost Feminism'...."

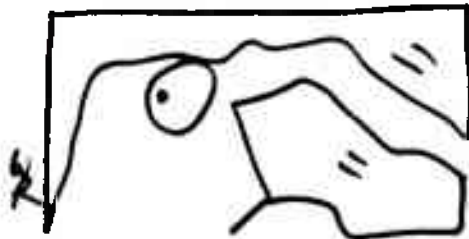
"But nothing, I take it, about Clare Winger Harris," Mystery Fiction interrupted. "I remember, Science Fiction, when we met before, a long time ago, that you complained about your sincere followers. You told me that they were taking themselves too seriously and had to be reminded that Fandom is Just a Goddamn Hobby. Maybe these alleged scholars ought to be told -- if you will pardon me, my friend -- that Science Fiction is Just Goddamn Escapist Fiction, exactly as Mystery Fiction is. Don't give yourself airs. Do you think pornography is literature? There are literary studies of pornography."

"But these are real critics and scholars!" Science Fiction insisted with wounded pomposity. "They are studying me analytically, not trivially. There's a whole book, for instance, on Language Study and Science Fiction. You should read an essay called 'New Worlds Through Old Forms: Some Traditional Critical Tools for Science Fiction'; then you wouldn't try to shrug all this activity away. Or better yet, you should look at the bibliography called 'Masterpieces of Science Fiction Criticism'.... What did you say?"

Mystery Fiction was uttering strange strangled noises. "Publish or perish!" he managed to say before he choked again. "Masterpieces -- !" He bowed his head and bit his lip. Then suddenly he turned and stumbled away. His shadowy figure melted into the darkness. Science Fiction stood alone, listening in puzzlement to the peals of laughter that came back to his ears out of the night.

--Redd Boggs

(Reprinted with permission from SPIROCHETS #27, February 1984, FAPA #186)



WE

NEVER

SLEEP

by PAUL WILLIAMS



There's too much dust on the floor. How can I possibly write my column with all this dust floating up through the air whenever I touch my foot to the rug? I'll just get the vacuum cleaner, move all these boxes and some of these piles of papers and spend the next four hours cleaning up the office, like should have been done three months ago. Of course, that may not sit too well with Robert when he comes by in the morning to see how I did on my column, for which the Final Absolute Deadline is now upon me. But at least I've set aside the several pages of dead-end semi-brilliance I turned out earlier and am making a promising Fresh Start. That's got to count for something.

There was an Est training going on across the hall from the Corflu program room at the Claremont Hotel last January. This naturally provoked a fair number of humorous comments from the fannish revelers, and I carefully refrained from embarrassing the jokesters and myself and just kept my mouth shut about how I was scheduled to take this very same seminar a month hence. We look ridiculous to them, they look ridiculous to us, and that's all well and good; but somehow I'm always the guy who gets to be the double agent and have a good time on both sides of the fence. So one of the challenging little tasks I've set myself for tonight's sleepless installment is to share something of my experience of the notorious Est training.

I'm not kidding about the dust. I just got up to try to find the latest issue of ROLLING STONE, a task which took me many minutes due to the high level of disorder my work-space has achieved (I found it under several reams of legallength copier paper Robert brought in earlier today to pub this ish), and the particle count is bad enough to close the LA school system. My nose itches, my eyes water. Actually, it's been a very tough evening for my eyes, and I may tell you more about that shortly. But anyway, what is significant about this ROLLING STONE is that it contains the first major-media mention of my 1962-63 genzine, disremembered today even in fandom except by persons like G. Farber and pnh who specialize in remembering what they never experienced in the first place.

The context is an article called "Rock & roll fanzines: a new underground press flourishes," by Michael Goldberg, ROLLING STONE, 3 29/84, p. 55, decorated with a glorious full-color photo of Greg Shaw, "the 'godfather' of the fanzine world." When I visited San Francisco in May of '67 I was interviewed live on KMPX, as a result of which Greg Shaw came by the studio and took me over to meet Chester Anderson. The rest I suppose is history. I remember being handed a joint in the back of an open pickup truck driving thru downtown SF--we didn't do that sort of thing back in NYC. Meanwhile Joan Didion was at that very amount tramping up and down Haight Street trying unsuccessfully to locate the mysterious & sinister C. Anderson, as she recounts in "Slouching Towards Bethlehem," but that's how it goes when you're writing

for the slicks. She didn't have the Fannish Connection.

So after several pages surveying the current rock fanzine scene, RS takes a cue from Ted White and Donn Brazier, and Mentions My Name: "In fact, many of the fanzines of the Eighties are published out of the same idealism--and love of rock & roll--that caused teenage rock fans like Greg Shaw and Paul Williams to start the original rock fanzines: Crawdaddy and Mojo-Navigator Rock 'n' Roll News.

"These were first published in 1966. At the time, the only magazines dealing with rock and pop music were commercial fan magazines like 16, which were aimed at a teen audience. Then along came Paul Williams, a seventeen-year-old high-school graduate who had published Within, a mimeographed science-fiction fanzine. Williams heard a record by the Rolling Stones, became a rock & roll fan and decided to start a rock magazine."

There's lots more (almost but not quite as satisfying as getting locs published in WIZ and IZZARD). Michael talks about how Crawdaddy, "a mimeographed flyer written entirely by Williams on a borrowed typewriter in a friend's New York apartment, debuted in January 1966" (the friend was David Hartwell; the mimeo was run by Ted White) and how a few months later "Greg Shaw, who had also published science-fiction fanzines and was unaware of Crawdaddy, had the same idea" and began Mojo-Navigator under similarly auspicious circumstances. Then the parenthetical aside I'm most proud of (having carefully planted it with Michael when he interviewed me by phone) and that justifies perhaps quoting all this in TRAP DOOR: "(It was because both Williams and Shaw were part of the science-fiction fanzine scene that the term fanzine, used for decades to describe amateur science-fiction magazines, was applied to rock magazines published by fans.)"

I also like the cover interview with Jack Nicholson. My girlfriend read the part where Angelica Huston says of Jack, "He makes my blood boil," and decided that I make her blood boil, and came back after running away. Magazine readers are so suggestible.

As for my eyes, yesterday I got soft contact lenses, for the first time since my unsuccessful attempt at wearing 'em back in '78-'79. Today I wore 'em for three hours, took 'em out as per my "breaking in" schedule, put 'em in again to drive the family to Kenta's basketball play-offs, and suddenly found myself in the same dry-eyed discomfort I used to get five years ago. Took 'em off soon after, and realized with Donna's help that although my optometrist had thoughtfully given me a prepared saline solution "for sensitive eyes" (something that didn't exist five years ago), he'd also given me eyedrops and lens cleaner that contain the very ingredient (thimerosal, a preservative that contains mercury) the special saline omits. And I had used both cleaner and drops shortly before my eyes started reacting. I still have pain in my right eye now, seven hours later (that could explain my dust phobia tonight; that plus the fact that dust really isn't good for anybody), and I think maybe I'll go to bed even though Ultimate Deadline looms over me.

We did find at the drugstore cleaner and eyedrops (both made by Barnes-Hind) that don't contain thimerosal and/or mercury, and also a kit for making normal saline everyday with distilled water and salt tablets (no preservatives whatever). I'm going to call my optometrist in the morning, and with his approval, after waiting a few days to see if my eye forgives me (five years ago I got two viral infections in my eye while wearing soft lenses, which various eye doctors assured me couldn't be related to the lenses and which information I never could believe), I plan to try again using homemade saline and these less-toxic drops & cleaner.

I mean, I know I'm resisting. But right now I'm not sure whether I'm resisting wearing soft lenses, or resisting giving them up. Probably both. Hmm. Sure is interesting being alive in the 1980s.

What about the Est training? Well, nobody called me an asshole. Nobody called anybody an asshole; if this was a highly confrontive exper-

ence in the early days, as has been widely reported, it isn't now. It is still a marathon. It isn't true that they won't let you pee, but people are discouraged from leaving to go to the bathroom except at breaks (or if you have a medical condition requiring frequent urination), and it can be five hours between breaks. The seminar runs two weekends, starts at seven-thirty in the morning and runs till midnight each day, and you can't eat from the time you get there till the dinner break at 6:30 or later. That's not exactly Chinese torture, but it's enough (combined with what sometimes seem like endless lectures on abstruse philosophical and linguistic matters) to make you squirm in your chair and propel you into some kind of altered state of consciousness. Ready to be brainwashed, perhaps.

I loved it. (Oops, I must be brainwashed. Especially since, I assure you, I went into this thing with at least as much hostility and resistance as the next person.) (See, I only took it because someone who graduated from one of my workshops offered to pay for the whole thing... but that's another story.) What did I love? I've been sitting here staring at that question, and the only answer I'm totally comfortable with is that I loved the other people who were taking the training with me (about 250 of us) and the way I was able to share myself with them much more than I'd expected.

I've always known in my mind that Est and related things offered a sense of community, and in a condescending way I'd allow that that could fill a real need for people who lack a sense of community in their lives. But that wouldn't be me: I live in a small town and I've been involved in the local volunteer fire department for eight years, and the local grade school for six, and I've got fandom, and I have all the people I've gotten in touch with in the last five years or so, especially in southern California, who love me because they love my books, and now I have the Phil Dick Society, 350 of us after only seven months or so. And not to forget the community of Bob Dylan fans around the world, who opened so many doors for me and Sasako in Germany. God, it's beginning to sound like I'm a community-junkie; but I've never thought of myself that way. I'm a writer. I'm a very private person. (And then there's the publishing/small press community...the list goes on and on.)

So what do I need with Est? Well, I didn't say I needed it. And it's a lot like the question, what do I need with fandom? I don't need it. But it done a lot for me. Many's the time it's helped me arrive at the heart of the beast, without half trying, while the Joan Didions of the world were walking in circles. In Est language, fandom for the last 22 years has created a space in which a lot of my life has shown up. That's jargon, and also it means some thing, just like the weird fannish doubletalk and inside jokes that peppered the last installment of this column. I don't want the whole world to speak fanspeak or talk Est-talk or hang out down at my fire station. But I do feel like I'm in touch with the whole world when I really make contact with people--not everyone, just a few here and there--within the various odd microcosms that I find myself swimming in in this lifetime.

And what I notice about myself during and since the Est training (a few weeks ago) is I seem to be opening myself more, and in some new ways, to other people. This couldn't be happening unless I was ready anyway for it to happen, but isn't it great that when you're ready for something to happen, there are places to go, like Est and Corflu and so many more, where just like that it can start happening? I liked and found myself intellectually sympathetic with and learned a lot from the actual content of the training, and also I experienced as great entertainment, but mostly I just liked what happened to me there. Sar with Corflu--best con I've been to in many years. Thanks, Allyn and Shay and I'm out of space. Too bad...now that the dust has settled, I feel like I could write all morning.

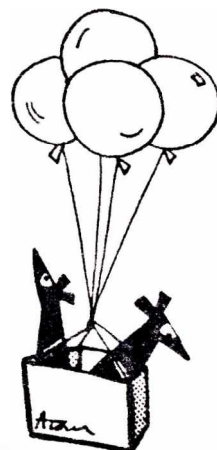
--Paul Williams

CRAWLING FROM

THE WRECKAGE

British Fanzine Reviews

by Lucy Huntzinger



I'M TOLD fanzine reviews require an introductory paragraph or two, explaining the reviewer's standards and biases as well as an overview of the current scene to provide some context. Fine. I don't think I'm up to snap analyses of the fannish context right now. Check with someone who gets more fanzines than I do, say six or seven per month. I've been receiving small press publications for something like two years now and I still feel like I'm on the fringe of Where It's At.

A desperate plea of mine, sent to my sole British contact, Darroll Pardoe, produced some really interesting mail last spring. Many people sent me their zines because Darroll cornered them at one of the cozy little British conventions and charmed them with smiles and soap. I got excited by all the pretty stamps and contrived to continue receiving the off-size foreign publications, even though I moved an ungodly number of times last year. Eventually, I developed a list of favorite editors, writers and articles, which I found in the pages of these overseas fanzines. As with all favorite items, I wanted to share my pleasure with my close friends. I tried to discuss all the great stuff I was getting and ran into the problem of being the only one getting it.

I don't have too many requirements from a fanzine other than legibility, reasonable acquaintance with the English language, and entertainment value. Litcrit is not my forte, generally speaking, so I've avoided reviewing fanzines until now. My standards and biases seemed too basic to provide much commentary beyond an "Igor like, Igor not like" style. However, I am so goddamn excited about the variety and content of British fanzines that I wanted to try sharing that excitement with you, my close friends. If any of these spark your interest please write to the addresses below. All publications are available for The Usual.

WASTE OF A TREE #2
Alex Stewart
(coeditor John Murphy)
11a Beverly Road
Colchester
Essex CO3 3NG

The clumsily executed cover is an unfortunate example of imitation comic book art. The inside contains a fair variety of stuff: Alex did a decent movie review and a passable account of donating blood. I dislike, however, reading a piece and cringing all the way through at various spelling errors (it just won't cut it as dialect). I really hated Mike Johnson's poetry. It bored me as did John Murphy's contributions; John's choice of subject matter did not seem fortuitous. The letter column was quite interesting if a little confusingly laid out. Sometimes the short quotes didn't seem worth breaking up the space; it ruined any flow if that be desired. Joe Nicholas' letter very good reading--sensible, fair, direct and reasonably sincere.

Strangely amateur tone...I liked reading this fanzine once but probably won't pull it out for rereading.

EMPTIES #4
Martin Tudor
8-5 Alum Rock Road
Ward End
Birmingham B8 2AG

This has a nice scruffy feel to it--I almost don't mind its inconvenient size. Resembles an apazine in tone; no surprise since Martin started out in apas. This, however, transcends the purely personal and is getting close to being a classic genzine. Martin seems to have gotten the hang of publishing and his choice of material consistently reflects high standards.

Lottie Eriksson has a good time recounting her recent exposure to British conventions and Ken Lake exposes the soul of the stamp collector type very well. Good, tight articles, these two. Paul Vincent does a laid-back run-through of fanzine reviews, quite clever and fun (I like this guy's writing, he has pacing and style). The letter column is fine, working more like a whole unit this time; the earlier EMPTIES were less sure. The layout is cluttered--I prefer definite space between article and editorial comment.

I wish someone else up there in Birmingham had duplicating facilities--Steve Green's produce a uniformly faded effect which is hard on the weak fannish eye. Other than that, I have no quibbles with the physical production, and as a personal friend of the editor I must say it expresses his personality quite well.

PREVERT #9
John Jarrold
31 Dukes Way
West Wickham
Kent BR4 9AU

Short but not exactly snappy. It does tell me a fair bit about JJ's interests and personality (2 points), amuses me with terribly In jokes (2 points), printed my last letter (10 points), and mentions Corflu (10 points!).

I've gotten five issues of PREVERT and each one is amazingly fannish. John writes about his life rather well; there's not a passionate rush to expose his soul but his subject matter leads him into revealing commentary. This particular issue, however, doesn't contain much of that. Rather, John addresses art and art criticism, the breathlessly inert TAFF race, and whips up a quasi-letter column to round out his little green fanzine. I don't especially appreciate the Damon Runyon approach to his own piece but you can't win 'em all and it's not badly done.

Fandom's Robert Mitchum is responsible for D. West's TAFF candidacy. Despite this handicap his fanzine is worth its weight in paper.

ASDUMP #3
Paul Vincent
25 Dovedale Avenue
Pelsall
Walsall
West Midlands WS3 4HG

Strange but good cover--an attention grabber mainly 'cause you don't know what you're looking at. Good old familiar Gutter Press fade--looks right nice against the blue of issue #3. Nice clean layout, thank you. The editorial is a (by now) standard Brit impassioned speech about con politics. They're all lunatics.

Probert's contribution left me cold. I did not find it entertaining. It didn't tell me much about Phil or his views on violence. I found it pointless and pedestrian.

I particularly liked Martin Tudor's "Dateline: Tesco's." It struck me as appropriate and funny material for a fanzine; it also has an appeal outside of its context because, by gosh, I've been on some real hilarious blind dates myself and it all came rushing back. I'll bet plenty of non-fans would relate to it which is not often true of fan-articles about the "real world." That's hardly a general criterion of mine but in this case, why not?

Paul's writing is comfortably consistent. His editorial presence has a steadiness of tone that contributes to my feeling that even though this zine simply reeks of apahood, PV is the genuine faanish article.

EPSILON #15
Rob Hansen
9A Greenleaf Road
East Ham
London E6 1DX

The front cover is keen, real fannish and all, but it isn't what I really wanted in the way of art--where's Trufan and Jr? Rob's style was the first in a while whose derivation (comics) didn't strike me as a liability. (Some really bad imitation comic book art shows up in fanzines.) Hansen uses it as a jumping-off point for his ideas and over the years has emerged with a recognisable combination. Obviously Brian Earl Brown recognised it.

Stu Shiffman's bacover looks good, visually rounding out the whole fanzine. This is one of the few British zines to feature artwork, always first-rate.

Clever opener and plug for Mexican--I of course was brainwashed at Constellation and I'm going to Mexican!!! You should, too.

The thing I like best about EPSILON is its polished seamlessness, something that's always a pleasure to read because nothing interrupts the flow of information. The Kettle conrep took me longer to read than the other sections of this issue because I paused to laugh so often. There were some great lines in it and I liked it a lot.

Rob's letter columns have substance and style. I love the smooth interplay between the readers. He certainly gets a literate bunch writing in. Simone Walsh writes a fine letter....and Ted is so Ted-like; I laughed out loud at his letter.

My favorite British fanzine. Period. Also the candidate I support for TAFF. Vote for Rob Hansen. Send in your money and send him to LA. A comics person deserves Disneyland!

--Lucy Huntzinger



SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT FAN-FICTION

from a letter

by LARRY STARK

I don't think anyone can write fan-fiction of any kind without being an active fan. "Con Report" [BOONFARK #57] came directly out of my three days of the convention in Boston. As a matter of fact, the girl was real. She came to the booth for The Million Dollar Picnic that I was huckstering at twice, each time in a differently-colored diaphanous gown. She was drooling over Dr. Who books, and we never spoke. Or no; one night when Erica and Jean and I were leaving the hotel she was standing with a couple of friends in the trattoria around the skyscraper, with the eternal breezes there making her dress and her hair dance, and as we went by I said, "You know, you ought to stand in the wind like this more often!" And that was it. Other than the fact that Lin Carter was the only person at the 1956 New York convention to spend the whole week-end in costume, the rest was purely embroidery.

But that was embroidery on a fannish core. And I wrote it mostly for my own amusement, as a sexual fantasy, because fandom likes its fan-fiction funny, and the mundane world cannot comprehend fandom. The closest the real world comes to a situation in which everything you know about a good and true friend comes to you only through the mailbox would be a "pen-pal" situation, which is a one-to-one experience, not a group thing.

About the only sort of fan-writing I think I could do right now would have to be a nostalgia trip. I have occasionally thought of trying to recreate a lost piece of writing--a con-report of that First Con of mine, the 1956 "Bilt-Con" in New York. The report, scribbled in impenetrable feverish longhand which he swore he could read, went to John Hitchcock, who confessed after several editions of UMBRA went by that, apparently, he had lost it.

Shob Stewart at one time--taking the ball and running with it, as he often does in conversation--insisted that I turn the whole thing into a serious novel and sell it. He had, you see, already "written" the thing in his mind. We sat around vaguely admiring what the book was going to be, but of course neither of us wanted to do any of the work on the thing...

GHOSTING

CORFLU

by DONNA N. ANSELL



TERRY FLOYD FEELS PURPLE AND TASTES GREEN AT CORFLU

SERIOUSLY. I don't know what made me do it. Somewhere I'd probably heard that sex was the best at Cons. And there were sure to be at least several BNFs there! (Great, what's a BNF?) And parties--lots of them, with people that I've never met standing around talking in apas and stencils. What joy!

It would be such an opportunity... (watch out for what comes up after a lead-in like that!) You know, to practice remembering names. To meet new people. To practice my social skills and restraining my lust while in the company of strangers. And let's not forget the chance to hob-nob with the friends that send Paul these thoroughly creative newsletters that make no sense whatsoever to me. Such an opportunity!

Ultimately, I went because the I Ching said "Abundance" and Paul promised to buy me a Corflu T-shirt. And besides--my crystals were up for high adventure. And there were these unanswered questions--I mean, really what is a BNF? (I know, "big-name-fan"--give me a break. But what does that mean? Someone who is famous and a fan or someone who is famous as a fan? I still don't know.)

Following a soul-searching process I concluded that it would probably be safe for me to go to the fannish parties with Paul on Friday night since we wouldn't get there till late and I would be leaving early Saturday morning for another commitment in Sacramento.

"I'm not a fan," I announced upon arriving at the con suite. "I'm just a friend of the Glen Ellen delegation. We're going for the award for the greatest per-capita representation." Four out of 1,014. Not bad.

I looked around for someone I knew. There was Robert Lichtman fondling his FRAP, Jeanne looking good as usual, and Paul in a corner talking Dick. Typical. He always talks Dick at these parties--so I'm told.

It was in the con suite that night that I learned of Hugo and DUFF from Jerry Kaufman. He also did a little tap dance through fandom for me. "Yes," I shook my head as if it all made perfect sense to me.

It was later, in Ted White's suite, that I began to experience upset. "Oh, no," I moaned to Paul as we listened to Terry Carr and Ted White carrying on about French curves. "What's the matter?" he asked with concern. "I just remembered Jeanne's warning." "Jeanne's warning?" "Yes, she said when it started to make sense all hope was lost and I'd be forever hooked on fandom." How insensitive of him to laugh, I thought, panicked.

Ted White said it was real different coming to a small convention again--more like what the cons used to be. (I notice all fans talk a lot about what cons used to be like. 1968 Claremont was a hit from what I could gather.)

Terry chuckled a timely warning as I gave Ted my address. What's to fear? So I'll be getting a copy of Bosscam? I mean, how dangerous can that be?

Then it happened. I was alone with Ted White. He drew me in close and began. Slowly, gently, with great sensitivity (as appropriate for first rites) he wrapped me softly in the magic of fandom. He danced a little soft shoe through the culture, the people, the geography, psychology, and technology of fandom. I felt initiated. I no longer felt like a stranger or someone who didn't know. Before my very eyes I metamorphosed into a fan--not unwillingly.

I turned to Paul and said, "I think I could probably leave Sacramento rather early and come back for tomorrow night's party..."

Later, still wrapped in magic, the party floated down a flight to Suzie and Jerry's suite. Unconsciously I walked smack into a discussion of four-color spreads on mimeograph machines. I was afraid to look too interested for fear that I would end up face down in the corflu.

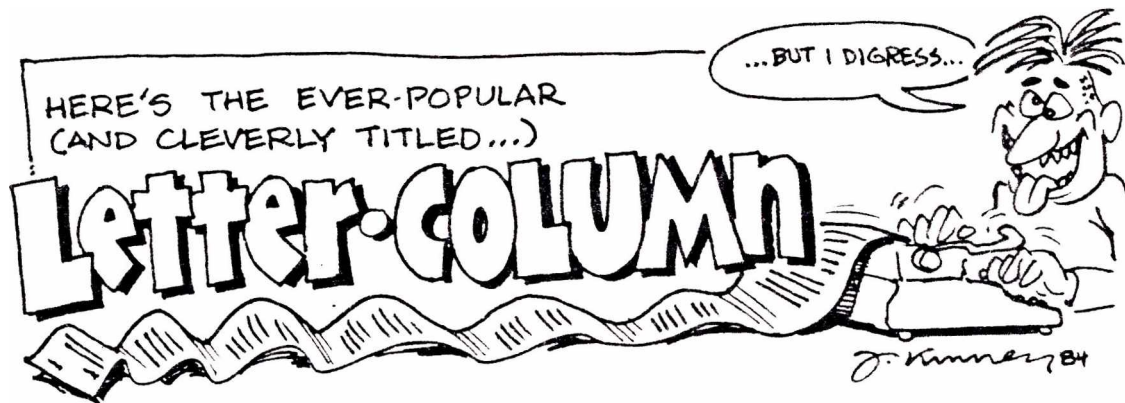
I caught my attention on something Jerry Kaufman was saying on the other side of the room. "I think we should call them 'ghosts.' When someone comes to a con and doesn't pay then they're ghosting the convention." I took out my notebook. I'm just going to write that down. I like it, that's all. No, I'm not taking notes for a con report...

--Donna N Ansell

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(Unrelated comments by Ed)

TERRY CARR TRAP DOOR #1 certainly isn't yer basic first-issue fanzine, nor forthat matter much like anyone else's sixth issue. Strikes me as an intriguing combination of editing&publishing experience mitigated by a certain rustiness from your long layoff. But rustiness isn't very similar to dustiness in this case: you're obviously not just some oldphart fan making a comeback and telling us how much better it all was in 1944, 1958, or even 1974. I'm sure even the people who didn't know Bob Lichtman in the '50s and '60s will recognize the fact that your experiences since then have changed you (yeah, and Paul too): you're not just rerunning programs from those years, but instead you-plural write from an '80s perspective. Which means that you are talking to us, which is surely the prime criterion of fannishness.

These thoughts came to me, perhaps curiously, when I read Chester Anderson's piece. It's quite fannish in most senses, which made me think about what "fannish" really means. I've said elsewhere and often that fannish writing is mainly personal journalism, the sort of writing in which the writer speaks directly to the readers assuming they're friends or at least acquaintances in a given social circle, and that this kind of writing usually can't be sold for money: commercial magazines are aimed at an audience of strangers. But the last bastion of personal journalism, or at least of first-person writing, in professional print is the newspaper column, of which I assume Chester's piece is more or less an example. But even syndicated columnists are writing for the nation at large, so there's less of the personal element than might be ideal. People who write columns for local papers are able to come closer to it, whether they're Chester Anderson writing for a Mendocino publication or Calvin Demmon columnizing for his paper in Monterey. (PONG reprinted one or two of Calvin's columns, and certainly not just because he used to be a fan.)

I think it all has to do with the vast growth in population in this country, not to mention elsewhere. We used to be a nation made up of communities, mostly geographical ones; thus we had local writers speaking to readerships many of whom they actually knew. Bierce, Twain, Mencken, and so on could rely on that basic readership, so they were able to write and publish personal journalism of a high order; people like Thurber and White profited artistically from that tradition. But while we've become a national and even global community as a result of the technological breakthroughs that have given us audiences so huge that even Twain couldn't have dreamed of them, our columnists have had to give up most of their assumptions in order to say their saying or even tell their offhand jokes. Recognition-humor has faded as enlarged audiences came forth: common experiences have become much less common.

So in this curious way, true personal journalism has mostly died and

fanwriting has become perhaps the last stand of this form of writing. Fanzine fans are still a minute minority, and we have built our own traditions and attitudes and in-jokes during the fifty years since The First Fanzine, whichever one that was. Fanzine writers know they're speaking to only a few hundred, at most, selected readers, and that all of those readers are part of the fan community, who share a lot of experiences in reading and even in life-at-large. We like to think of fandom as being future-oriented, and there's a good case to be made in that direction, but in this respect I think fandom is definitely a throwback to the past: fandom is a community much like those that, taken together and working together, made the U.S. and other countries great. Fandom is a small town like Chester Anderson's Mendocino; we have our people who live in the center and those who inhabit the environs, but we all share an individual identity within the larger culture. And we speak a dialect that's funny to outsiders but to us it's full of specific nuances.

In such a mini-culture, art can flourish; and, in fandom, it does. Here and there, anyhow. Sure, most fanwriting isn't great--Sturgeon's Law certainly applies here. And Carr's Addendum, too, which states that Sturgeon is an optimist.

RICH BROWN While intellectually I agree with Chester that a good deal of the time answering machines are an infernal nuisance, my emotional reaction is more favorable than not because, without them, I wouldn't know I was living in the world of the future... Do you happen to recall, around 1950 or so, some magazines like MECHANIX ILLUSTRATED or POPULAR SCIENCE having (as a year-end feature) a few prominent sf authors' "predictions" about what the world would be like in 25 years (1975), 50 years (2000), etc? If you do, it might give you an understanding of just where I'm coming from. I had read enough of that crazy Buck Rogers stuff at the time to know sf authors didn't really try to "predict" the future, that the few instances where sf stories accurately predicted some future event, it was a fluke--and, as I recall, this was explained for the more mundane readers of MI and PS in the preface. I knew the difference between "prediction" and "extrapolation"; the specifics were only possible but the broad outlines seemed (at least to me) quite probable. You know?

Now here we are, more than 25 (albeit less than 50) years down the road yet even the near-term extrapolations have proven wrong. Okay, we've "gone to the moon"--but the spaceship wasn't built in someone's backyard. What a disappointment! And, by this time, we were all of us supposed to have our own rocket-pack helicopters; we'd just step outside, strap it on and take to the air. Just hundreds and hundreds of us filling the skies. With the possible exception of 1984, time and again these sfnal extrapolations evaporated only to be replaced by the "real"--and certainly more plonking than one had been led to expect--events. So even though we're living in what was then "the world of the future," it doesn't seem much like it.

Well, I've never owned an answering machine. But I lived at Ted White's house the year he was editor of HEAVY METAL and Ted had one. (The how-to-leave your-message message was Lynn Steffan, in a throaty sexy voice: "Hi, there. Ted's not home and (*sigh*) I'm a machine. If you care to leave a message...") I would listen to the machine every day, in case Ted called from New York, so I could give him any important message he may have received.

What I got one of those times was a female voice: "...I'm sorry, I didn't hear your answer--would you mind repeating that?" ('Repeating' what? I wondered.) "Thank you. My next question is, how many bedrooms do you have in your home?" (Whaa???) "I'm sorry, I didn't hear your answer--would you mind repeating that?" (I still don't--?) "Thank you. My next question..." It went on for about five minutes; I finally "got" it. See, someone was doing a survey --via computer. The computer had the questions recorded and either dialed numbers consecutively or at random; it probably let the phone ring a few times before going to the next. If it got an answer, it went into its spiel--probably even acknowledging that it was a computer, that it would like to ask a few questions. If it got a response, it asked the questions and recorded the ans-

wers until or unless the person who answered hung up. It obviously even had a little "fail-safe"--if the person answering was not speaking loud enough to be recorded, the computer asked for a repeat. But what triggered the series of questions, just as obviously, was the how-to-leave-a-message message on Ted's machine.

Well, I mean, goshwow. One machine actually talking to another machine. That's the sort of thing which was supposed to happen in the world of the future. And it was happening, before my very ears. So while I grant you that the damned things can be a nuisance, I really can't complain about something which brought that fact home to me. We have to find our sensawunda wherever we can, y'know.

MIKE GLICKSOHN There's something good about the thought of Paul Williams, of legendary Paul Williams fame, reading D West, the famous Dave, and having his fannish sense of wonder so revitalized that he decides to co-edit another fanzine. It says much for the continuity of the more positive aspects of fandom and leads me to believe that there really must be something in this hobby I pursue with whatever energy I can afford to donate to it at the time. Not that I was doubting it, you understand, but external verification of one's beliefs can be very satisfying.

HARRY WARNER JR I enjoyed very much the first TRAP DOOR. It's much more sophisticated than the fanzines you used to publish and I've become more naive and inexperienced with the passing of the years so it might not be as easy to loc as your earlier fanzines were. But somehow I think you remain you in your writing, in your style and in the general outlook on things. You might take that as a nasty insult on the theory that you should have improved over the years. But I think for most fans, the intangible style is the factor that shows little change after long periods of time, just as an actor or actress may become more skillful at the trade and may change radically in the physical sense but usually retains much the same voice from youth to senility.

Wanda's worm's eye view of the First Annual Beanie Brigade Picnic sounded more like a report on a successful time travel experience. Redd Boggs, Dave Rike, Grania Davis, Pat Ellington, those are names that should be one with Nineveh and Tyre.

I was touched by Sachiko's tribute to Philip K Dick. Every time I read someone writing so well about how much the writer meant to him or her, I feel deprived as if I'd missed one of life's great experiences. Phil Dick's fiction and I have always been incompatible. I've read four or five of his books and started several others and nothing happened other than a vague sense of why am I doing this. Obviously, either I'm unable to appreciate good writing or the Dick enthusiast must have a different set of values and beliefs than mine.

I get all sweaty and my stomach starts to hurt when there's a birth scene on a television drama. So it wouldn't do for me to attend something like Jason Allen's coming into this world. In fact, it seems to have shaken you up, too. In describing it you referred to Jeanne Bowman as the "erstwhile associate of TRAP DOOR" and I can't find any other evidence in this issue to believe in that adjective. You apparently share the common belief of the proletariat that it means honorable or respected or something similar. #Urk! Yes, but no longer, after you and others pointed out this error in my memory banks.*

D. WEST I must say, you have quite an effective touch with the crushing put-downs. What really hurts is not so much the description of me as a "minor-league opinionator" as the fact that my name isn't even mentioned until the third line. Subtle stuff.

Quite apart from this, I managed to read the whole issue with rather more interest than is usually the case with a US fanzine. Well, maybe the issue was rather more interesting than is usually the case with a US fanzine--or maybe it's just that I've started paying more attention now that I'm in some danger of actually meeting all these strange people.

In case you haven't heard: I have been shanghaied into standing for TAFF. This is not my fault. After all, what rational human being would want to spend whole days cooped up in aeroplanes being carried thousands of miles just to meet a bunch of cola-swilling overweight dope-fiends with balloons stuck up their noses? Not me. So I was all set to let the whole thing slide safely past, same as usual. But then this clique of super-keen and super-interfering people ganged up on me (right when I was somewhat distracted by other affairs and not thinking too straight) and before I knew it the Fix was in and that was it.

So I am now an Official Candidate and having to adjust to the horrifying prospect of Making An Effort. (Philip Larkin once said he wouldn't mind seeing China provided he could come back the same day, and that's more or less my attitude to California.) Even though I'm campaigning on the (arrogant and elitist) Platform of Keeping American Fandom In Its Place (i.e. well and truly crushed beneath the iron heel of British fandom) I figure I'll probably win the damn thing. Too many people are too enthusiastic about voting for me--half of them because they hope I'll go to the USA and do Awful Things to the Americans, and the other half because they hope I'll go to the USA and the Americans will do Awful Things to me. Either way I seem to be in for a wearing time.

Kismet. Manifest Destiny. Sheer bad luck. Whatever it is, if you fancy a different scenario then get yourselves organized and VOTE FOR ROB HANSEN. (or the People's Friend, H.O. Funds.) Just don't go blaming me for the result. All another fucking fannish conspiracy, that's what it is.

Anyway--good issue. Even though I can't summon up much response on specific points. But keep them coming. And, as far as possible, keep them coming frequently. That's one reason WIZ seems so lively. Nothing like a fanzine that has you permanently in arrears with the locs. Though in the case of Bergeron's publications that's due to his evil tease of never sending me the damn things until everyone else in the British Isles has had theirs for at least three weeks. In this situation my nerve does collapse, and I have to rush out and borrow a copy just to get up to date with the latest wild Bergeronic fantasy about my sex-life.

Same old question: is it all these other people who are crazy, or is it just me?

ART RAPP Bob, I don't know how to put this delicately, but have you ever considered the lifelong psychic trauma it is apt to inflict on an innocent baby when he opens his eyes in this world for the first time and sees YOU? Miroscoo, it would be enough to make him grow up to be a FATE subscriber! Or at least a video-game addict. Surely you've noticed that your last period of activity in fandom was about 15 years ago, and all the little babies of that era have grown up to be Frontier players and Saturday morning cartoon watchers and D&D players and other unenviable destinies... (True, and my own kids are No Exception.) (And it's no coincidence!--b)

The obvious conclusion to be drawn from Grania Davis' confessions is that science-fiction is to fandom as is sex to polite society in Victorian England, a concept whose ramifications dazzle me more the longer I think about them.

For Paul Williams, a quote: "What rage for fame attends both great and small! Better be damned than mentioned not at all!" (Peter Pindar, 1738-1819) By the way, isn't the slow loris far surpassed by the fast loris? What, you've never seen a fast loris? You obviously haven't looked quickly enough... If you want a fannish personality, Paul, why not become the Old Curmudgeon With a Heart of Gold? Your slogan could be "Bah, Humbug, But On The Other Hand--" I mean, there have been lots of old fannish curmudgeons, but they lacked the ~~redeeming social value~~ sense of humor that kept earnest neofen and shapely femmes from being permanently alienated by the initial gruffness. There are lots of advantages to a personality like this: once you get it established, you can make your comments about other fans and their crifanac as acid as you please, and they'll just grin with pride instead of writing letters to WARHOON denouncing your morals and speculating on your secret vices.

STEVE MILLER The "Unlimited Cokes" episode of the Conreport reminds me of the time in NYC for (I think) INFINITY when the Hotel Commodore man-

aged to run out of coke/pepsi/brown stuff that fizzes and has caffeine in it sometime in the mid-evening. Most of the parties were also out of coke-stuff, so a group consisting of (in part) Sue Nice (not yet the former Mrs Miller), Asenath Hammond, Rick Sternbach, and two people I still don't know (me too) all headed down to Grand Central Station at midnight to find coke to drink. We carried our party supply of rum with us--I don't know why--and ended up putting dimes into a cup-at-a-time drink dispenser and then pouring the coke into the rum bottle. Having munchies we set upon the machine next to the soda machine, and found that it would give its entire supply of each item for only a quarter payment. We returned to the room of the party burdened with a large rum bottle filled with Rumandocke, and various armfuls of potato chips, pretzels, and corn chips. The odd thing is that we didn't think anything of running barefoot in October or November (those of us who were barefoot) through Grand Central Station at midnight. Didn't faze us at all. Of course it also didn't faze several of the revelers to finish the rum and coke and then break open a large bottle of very cheap wine. The sick-in-the-morning part didn't affect my stomach, but several of the partiers actually wouldn't drink the next night...

DAVID STEVER Whilst reading TRAP DOOR, I had the feeling I was looking at my own life, fifteen years from now. I just don't know how to take that, any more than you must now, hearing it from me. Will I be enjoying myself when I get there? Oh, well, that's growing up/old for you.

Wally the Snake, whose last year's Disclave report at least mentioned in passing my encounters with the Falls Church Inhaling Society, writes a report much the poorer for not knowing anything about the history of Disclaves. Wally should be greatly chastised in print by Ted White for his not knowing that the Twin Bridges is but a pale imitation of the Park Sheraton (hosanna! hosanna!), that late but great DC hotel. Who can forget the great cons held there? Who, who has ever explored their hotel, can forget the lunar eclipse from the roof, or the furlined tunnel, large enough for a piper cub, which led one to the hotel laundry, buried in the hillside, under the hotel. The first hotel I had ever seen that handed you a map of the layout, when you checked in. (hosanna! hosanna!) That's the trouble with those snakes, they got no sense of history, of what has gone before them; they're just bound and determined to reinvent the wheel. When he does his own fanzine, it will likely look like RUNE.

Wanda leaves too many clues as to her identity. The version of life in the truck lane sounds a little weirder and less appetizing than Paul's. Maybe it was the ice cubes on the balls, I dunno.

HARRY ANDRUSCHAK As for "Amazing Fannish Birthday Tales," I can submit my 13th birthday, October 4, 1957. Sputnik One went into orbit. Not that I knew it at the time. I was staying with my grandparents at their flat in Sladegreen, England. 13th birthday or no, I went to bed at 9 pm as always. I snuggled up to the hot water bottle (we had no central heating, just a fireplace in the living room) and went to sleep thinking about the USA's Project Vanguard.

I came down to breakfast and heard the news on the radio. Standing there in my nightgown (something of an anachronism, I'll admit, but nightgowns are much more comfortable than pyjamas) I listened with disbelief. The Russians had done it! They had put up a satellite. And, far more important, they had shown that their boast of having an ICBM was valid.

As I understand it, the USA went apeshit. I myself was no better. Monday I went around school waving a copy of ASTOUNDING and telling everybody "I told you so." Thank goodness for the strict school discipline of the 1950's...I wasn't lynched. There can be nothing more obnoxious than a 13-year-old know-it-all who has been proved right. {Try Rich Coad's vampire variations.--jb}

NORMAN HOLLYN Being the city person that I am (as well as the non-parent that I also am) my main experience with babies is watching other peoples' grow up. That in itself is a fascinating experience. I like the changes that come over children as they move from one week old to two to four to three months to six months and on and on. Each visit seems to reveal new

changes, new personalities, and new relationships with those around the baby/child. If you let yourself (and I sense, Bob, that you do) it is almost as if you are experiencing these new worlds with the child. In fact, the experience must be even more intense when you are living with the baby day-to-day. Parenting ain't like nothing else, is it? #Thank Ghod for that!#

Answering machines, eh? Well, I've got one. I have to have one in my business otherwise I don't get a lot of job offers (I am a film and music editor). It was either get the Accursed Machine or get an answering service. I would like to compare the two for you. First, the answering machine:

MACHINE: Hi, this is the Accursed Machine of Charles Waddinabbie.

Good ol' Chuck isn't in right now so if you ever want to hear from him again, please leave your name and phone number after the beep. (BEEP!)

ME: Uh... ah... hiya... uh... this is Norman... uh... please call me. (CLICK!)

Now, let's compare that to the mess and fuss of a "human" answering service:

SERVICE: Oh, yeah?

ME: Uh, is Charles home?

SERVICE: Nope.

ME: Is this the service?

SERVICE: (long sneering pause) Yep.

ME: Okay, could you tell him that

Norman Hollyn called.

SERVICE: Who?

ME: Norman Hollyn.

SERVICE: Spell that name please.

ME: H-O-L ...

SERVICE: No, the first name.

ME: Oh, N-O-R ...

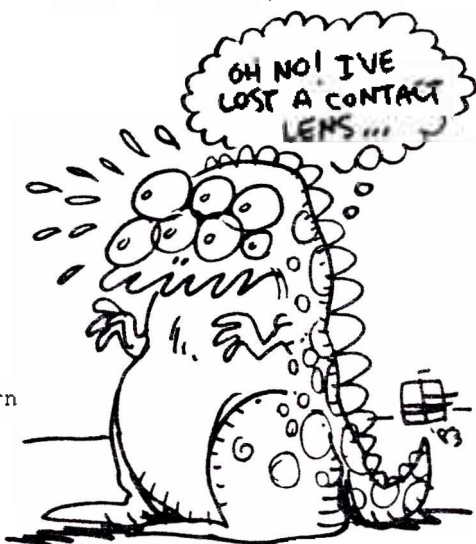
SERVICE: Could you hold on for a moment? (CLICK!!)

Tell Chester he should learn to love answering machines. Otherwise he might just have to learn to love telephone answering service operators. Personally, I'll take the diodes any day.

Paul's comment on putting one's name into the public domain reminds me of a boring story that I can tell you. A friend of mine is a screenwriter in Hollywood who wrote a script about a bunch of pilots or astronauts or somesuch. Faced with the perennial writer's problem of "What do I name my characters?" she gave one of them my name. Naturally, she forgot to tell me this (we only see or speak to each other once or twice a year). Well, Janet (the woman who I live with) is reading a script the other day and she leaps out of the chair screaming, "Look at this! Look at this!" There, on page one, is NORMAN "MAC" HOLLYN, fighter pilot extraordinaire! Janet was a bit upset. As for me, I can't wait until the spin-off merchandising starts to hit. Just think of it--Norman Hollyn Dolls, Norman Hollyn Games, even Norman Hollyn Lunchboxes!! Now, that's fame.

GARY MATTINGLY Gee, you mean Roscoe invented nitrous oxide? All along I thought Bob had done it for the greater distribution of Slack. Is Paul sure he has his mythology down pat? I mean what would Connie say? I can't help on creating fannish personae. I've been searching for one for over 14 years and still haven't found one to my liking. Maybe Wally would have some ideas.

Tell Wanda she has to hit more parties and tell more. I've been wanting to do it for years but I've never felt that suicidal. What other people are doing is what one talks about in Kansas, where I grew up, since that's almost all there is to do after the cows come home. I do hope Wanda understands that I've never waltzed in my life. I did tap dance when I was five or six though.



LOREN MACGREGOR Years ago I attended my one and only birthing. A good friend, with whom I have unfortunately lost contact over the years, was having her child in a "clinic;" but that word sums up many images, none of which would be correct in this case. I worked in a hospital for years, and I knew what my image would have been, before I met Dr Goldman. It would have been white, sterile, cold and...well, clinical. Fortunately Dr Goldman showed me otherwise. His clinic was out in the woods in Washington State, with a river nearby and a long, winding dirt road leading to the nearest highway.

Carol's father was a doctor, and he had very definite ideas of the proper way to deliver a child. This required, at the least, an operating theatre, anesthetic, and a trained crew. He believed it impossible to perform a "simple" birth without performing simultaneously an episiotomy. I remember asking what an episiotomy was; I remember saying, incredulously, "You're kidding!" I was much more naive then.

Carol's first child was born with physical problems, and her father pointed to this as proof of his theories and superior knowledge. Although it was evident that not even the most advanced hospital could have delivered a healthy baby in this particular case, he attempted to use Carol's initial tragedy as a reason why she shouldn't attempt natural birth for her second child. She did anyway, and the child was born healthy and happy, into the middle of a wonderful party. (I haven't since mentioned this to people whose initial response was, "Oo, how gross;" to this day the response puzzles me. One person said it had to do with the ickiness of birth itself: "I'd never let my husband see me like that," she said, and her husband added that he wouldn't want to. I prefer not to understand this attitude.) Carol and her husband, by the way, were, the last I heard of them, living on a 110-foot ex-sub chaser.

I will send to you, once I get back to Headlines, the squeaky-clean faggoty headshop (I wonder how many people I can offend with that description) on Polk Street, the tape some enterprising soul has made for use in recorder phones. It apparently has lots of silly and/or obscene things on it, although I haven't heard it; once you, too, haven't heard it, you can send it along to Chester Anderson so he can not hear it as well. I figure this will take at least one of the damn things out of circulation so an acquaintance of mine--currently unknown--won't buy it. I have a friend whose current tape recording is something like this: "Hi, I can't come to the phone right now, but I will return your call as soon as I can. For the moment I will continue to talk, because for some reason I can't adjust the message length, and if I quit talking now it will emit a long series of high pitched beeps which are very painful if you're sensitive to high pitched noise. If you're in the market for a phone message machine, don't get a (and here he named a brand I've never heard of), because that's what I've got, and it's an absolute piece of shit. I think I've talked long enough now that you'll only hear a single tone. Please leave your name and number." He timed it just right, by the way--the next thing I heard was one single high-pitched tone that eradicated my ear drum.

I think the controversy schtick is highly overrated. I get very tired of people bonking each other upside the head (metaphorically speaking) in efforts to claim some attention. Ted White in egogscan hails rudeness and declares there isn't nearly enough rudeness in fanzines. I think he's mistaking rudeness for bluntness and honesty, and although all three can sometimes be contained in the same piece, they're not the same thing at all. I, for example, am sometimes more blunt than need be, and sometimes this results in my sarcasm being taken seriously. *sigh* Shall I tell you more stories about what conversations between husbands and wives are like? #If you wish, but then I've got some nine years of my own backlog in that department...#

I have a burning question for Ms Wanda: couldn't I just pretend I slept with Robert before 1962? After all, the first person I ever "slept" with I slept with in 1962 and his name was Bob. He was also a cousin of John F. Kennedy. Is there a connection? This is a burning issue for me, Ms Wanda; please answer soonest. +Okay, sweets, it's ice cubes for the fanning flames and you may pretend. Of course you may get real blunt honest rudeness in response. We'll just call him 'Robobert,' shall we, hmm? --Wanda+

As a result of the location of my "real job," I frequently eat lunch at a Japanese restaurant in the Financial District of San Francisco. Tachibana is a very pleasant, low-key kind of place, with the attractions of (1) good food and (2) low prices. I like sashimi, and Tachibana is a good place to get it. Recently, though, I was halfway through my lunch when I noticed I was being watched by somebody. This is one of those subliminal feelings that surface vaguely. "Something is weird," one says. "I...think I'm being watched. Oh, now, let's not be paranoid. I mean. But, well. Um." And gradually it builds. And builds. And builds. And then I looked up. Across the table a middle-aged man ("middle age" is any age 15-20 years older than whatever age I'm at when the thought strikes me) watching me with a combination of awe and horror. It is a very uncomfortable feeling, trying to eat while someone is staring at you with abject fascination.

"Why is this man looking at me like that," I wondered. "What is there about me that makes me so fascinating? And why doesn't he look at someone else?" (Don't you love the way I'm drawing this out? Just edit out every other word; it'll make nearly as much sense that way.) It occurred to me finally that he had chosen and was eating the safest thing on the menu--one of the tempura dishes, almost like fried chicken, you know--and that the fact that I was eating raw fish was upsetting him no end. So I took a big chunk of obviously raw flesh, slathered it with mustard (my mucosa love it), grinned at him and began to eat, chewing with relish. (Hello, Stacey, I have to clear the record here. Stacey eats fried not live squid. --Wanda)

JEFF SCHALLES My best-friend-from-college, or actually, one of my two best-friends from college, spent May-August of 1978 at the Farm in order to have his son. I shared a house with the three of them in Maryland in 1981, and I got the impression that they didn't enjoy the Farm. They are a pair of people, however, who constantly reinvent the physical laws of the universe to fit each day's new concepts, about 90% of which is so cockeyed to an old cosmic engineer like me. They both have the refreshing attitude of staying on the opposite side of a sidewalk from a crowd, refusing to read fiction, not wanting their kid to hear the word "no," listening to mellow music and staying away from The World News Tonight. I have a feeling I'd enjoy and benefit from the Farm much more than Dennis did, for a while. I've heard that the Farm has an ambulance service in the South Bronx, but I don't know where to look--they aren't in the phone book. (Try under "Plenty Ambulance Service.")* Somehow I feel like I should volunteer some energy, if they accept it (my mother keeps telling me to be a Boy Scout leader) to balance my wild and reckless rock'n'roll existence. Someday maybe I'll escape and retire to some green acreage out There somewhere, maybe I'll join the volunteer fire department. Or, at least, grow fine pot for my deserving friends. (Oh, are you single?--jb)

In the meantime, I read every fanzine that makes its way here, some I read sooner than others, yours I read at once, with breakfast, on the day it came. Especially enjoyed the Society Column and liked the feeling throughout.

So I live in New York and I see the most and do the most that I can, and sometimes I get very tired, but then I remember back to my 1970's, where I spent many years living in cabins in woods, and this gives me an edge (whether competition exists in my field or not) over the New Yorkers who've been here all along.

Yes, I Never Sleep.

AND FURTHERMORE

JOHN D BERRY observes: "It's interesting that the two most conspicuous things you use to define where you stand and what you're doing are PONG and D West. For all your returning from the glades, you seem to be firmly situating your new fanzine in the most interesting part of contemporary fandom." Well, where else...?

REDD BOGGS says, "I received FRAP DOOR--oh, uh, TRAP DOOR #1, which I liked a great deal. I predict Great Things for the fanzine!"

DAN STEFFAN predicts: "Probably when you do get more material from other cartoonists, this will start looking like a Bob Lichtman fanzine. But then, that is really just my reflecting and imposing expectations on you. Because when I really think about it, this is a Robert Lichtman fanzine which is at least a subtle difference. Especially to you. Actually, this is a star studded fanzine. Goddamn, when was the last time anybody ever saw a Chester Anderson fanzine contribution? Or Grania Davis? Or, even Paul Williams and Robert 'Bob' Lichtman? Gee, I'm surprised that with Paul's access to the Dick estate, he hasn't come up with a Philip K Dick column. He's particularly hard to get a fanzine contribution out of these days."

JEANNE GOMOLL exaggerates: "For TRAP DOOR alone I would promise to continue producing WHIMSEY for I enjoyed TRAP DOOR a lot. Especially, I was amazed and charmed by Paul Williams' piece--reminding me of Bergeron's and Gibson's tangential/layered sort of fan writing and I'm looking forward to more, please." You got it!

And speaking of RICHARD BERGERON: "Enjoyed TD and look forward to more incestuous issues. Though I cannot imagine Paul in fishnet stocking. This re his mad desire to be that baroque wonder of fandom: D West. Passing strange, indeed!" C'mon, Dick, try harder to imagine it.

BRAD FOSTER has a "minor nitpick": "The artist for pages 10 and 11 should have been listed as 'unknown' rather than 'anonymous.' They did after all initial the work, and might have gotten credit in the original version, but were certainly not attempting to do the work anonymously. Minor point, but then what's an loc for if not to be incredibly snotty about such things?" A good point, but the publication from which Chester's article was printed didn't give specific art credits, either.

The Other JOHN BERRY states: "Nice to read TRAP DOOR...liked the Disclave '83 article, besides being full of observation, I was impressed with the condom squiggles on page 7, the reference to smofing activity on a balcony, and the fact that Ted White has now been rightly accorded the accolade of being referred to as 'Mr.'"

ROELOF GOUDRIAAN has a problem: "I find it hard to react with an loc. The comments I might make are oozing out of my mind like water from a leaking bucket. Let's face it: though I recognize the excellence of TRAP DOOR, and enjoy it, I find it hard to relate to the zine right now. It might be the typical problem of a first issue, it might be that I still don't know the Fan Faces of American fandom as I'd like to. I don't know, but I hope to find out."

And so does RICK SNEARY: "It is hard for me to think of you or rich brown as grown men with families and all. But babies I once knew are marrying at 30." I wrote "South Gate Again in 2010" on Rick's copy of #1 and he comments: "No more 'South Gate Again in 2010'--fandom has changed so, there never could be the kind of a con I would be happy with, even if given in my memory, so have killed idea. There are still enough True Fans around to have a good time, but not at cons." Well, Rick, Corflu seems to be an exception to this; come around next year. And looking not so far in the future, how about "Corflu at the 'Gate in '88"?"

"We Also Heard From": CALVIN DEMMON, CYNTHIA GOLDSTONE, TERRY JEEVES, JERRY KAUFMAN, ETHEL LINDSAY, ERIC MAYER, JESSICA AMANDA SALMONSON, LARRY STARK, STEVE STILES, ARTHUR THOMSON, ROBERT WHITAKER, and JEAN YOUNG.

Is Glen Ellen Fandom Dick-oriented?

THE REVIEWERS

by LARRY STARK



"Say, Larry?"

"Yes, Bill."

"How would you review HABAKKUK?"

"Do your own review column, Bill. I am old and tired and above such things."

"But I already did review it. Now I wanna know if you think I'm right."

"Wnat did you say?"

"'HABAKKUK is a real great fanzine'..."

"Go on."

"That's all."

"Hmmm. Kinda brief, isn't it?"

"What else can I say?"

"Say what you honestly think of it."

"I like it."

"Now say why you like it."

"Because I think it's a real great fanzine."

"Well, if you really think that, say so."

"Don't you think HABAKKUK is a real great fanzine?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Oh, I mean, sure, I think it's a great fanzine. HABAKKUK is probably the greatest fanzine of its kind. But it's not a 'real great fanzine,' like VOID is; it's not even a 'real great fanzine' like RETRIBUTION is. It's just a great fanzine, that's all. But if you think it's a real great fanzine, Bill, go right ahead and say so, it's your fanzine review column, and you'll have to take the blame for any silly statements you make in it without thinking first; I won't."

"Well, no, I just said..."

"Besides, people might get the wrong impression, saying a little neo-rag like HABAKKUK is 'real great fanzine,' like that."

"What wrong impression?"

"Well, people might just get the idea that you were comparing this little neo-zine to some of the Truly Great Fanzines, and that wouldn't do at all."

"Like what truly great fanzines?"

"Like GRUE, and A BAS, and HYPHEN, truly great fanzines like that. You wouldn't want people to think you were comparing a neo-zine to Truly Great Fanzines like those, would you?"

"No, but I..."

"Why, people might even think you were calling HABAKKUK a fanzine that is worthy to rank with the Real Truly Great Fanzines...like DIMENSIONS, SLANT, QUANDRY...Real Truly Great Fanzines like those. Then you'd really have a review column that people would laugh at."

"But how can I help giving that impression?"

"Well, take a look at what you wrote. You just don't word it right."

"'HABAKKUK is a real great fanzine.' How else can I say it?"

"Be more precise; after all, that's what a review is for: to place a zine exactly on a scale of values."

"Well, how would you word it, then?"

"Oh..... 'HABAKKUK is a pretty great fanzine.' There. That's about right. After all, it's not like going off the deep end and saying the damn zine is good, or anything like that. See what I mean?"

"Yeah. Thanks, Larry."

"Sure. Any time, Bill. Always glad to help a neo with the finer points of fanac."

--Larry Stark (1962+)

HAND-

DELIVERED



by JEANNE BOWMAN

Social column? Wanda, Wanda? Wanda's hiding behind the washing machine in the bathroom and making nocturnal excursions out through the floor boards for feasts of succulent growth. California spring is December. She says, "Now Jeanne, you've been out after all. Take Gary's advice. Go for it!"

"But Wanda, that's it. That's my life."

"So tell about your life," Wanda said between mouthfuls.

But Linda Blanchard warned me, if I do that then I could walk into a room full of total strangers who would talk to me like they know me. And they would or will or do. How weird! Or it could get like it is for Lucy. Remember at Corflu, when she walked into a room or even showed her face in the door, the conversation stopped. All heads turned her way and there's a chorus of "Lucy! Hey Lucy!" If that's the price of fame with fen, I dunno. She says even she doesn't know why and shrugs "C'mon, guys."

"Well Jeanne, you know Robert asked for birth stories and don't you think he was setting that up just for you? He knows what events your babies were. I think he's bamboozling you into this."

"Bambini-ing more likely. I dunno, Wanda, it's personal stuff, lots of blood and guts too, ya know? I mean it's like being asked do you want to see my scars by a veteran. Hmm, should I tell the long version contraction by contraction or the simple short one without blood and some guts?"

"Do the short one. Tell about Jesse. You were a mess with Jaime."

"Hey, it was a first!"

"Besides, you'd upset Harry with that one."

"Well, Daddy did say new babies are not pretty."

"You wouldn't be if some mother just got through sitting on your face."

That is how Jesse came into this world. I'm sitting on Katie's lap. Jaime's sitting in Grandmother's lap. The midwife's sitting between my legs. I'm pushing on Catherine's and Gail's arms while they hold Katie up and we're all sitting on the floor.

"What about your father? Remember how he said, 'I think it's fine your having a baby at home and all, just don't expect me to be at the birth.' And then he came. But only to do some finish carpentry work, right?"

We had finished the bathroom the week before so there was a shower in-

side and hot running water. I seem to recall stalling our midwife's home visit until that was done. Yeah--and Dad went to the rental store on his way up and got a machine to rip up the old linoleum on the floor. He brought it in, plugged it in, and started it up at a time when I could no longer stand. All of us had to shout down the machine so he'd turn it off.

"Jan, not now!"

"I just want to see how it works. It works good..."

"No, Dad."

"But the rental's only good for four hours..."

"No, Dad. Pant, pant."

"Can't I do a bit? It'll only take a few minutes."

"Pant, pant! No, Dad, not now!"

Jaime came in with a big green frog. That's not unusual for him after all. I think Dad was with my sister taking care of the frog out in the garden when Jesse was born.

"You had fun, huh?"

A real hands-on experience that. I did catch him myself. Once his head showed I never took my hands off him. Sort of surprised the midwife when I slipped my hand over his head and under his neck and pulled him up onto my lap after squeezing his shoulders out. What control!

Jaime looked like he's just seen a bug-eyed monster. (Remember, this is the bloodless version.) Shell shocked in fact.

"Hey Jaime, this is your brother Jesse."

Wide-eyed stare.

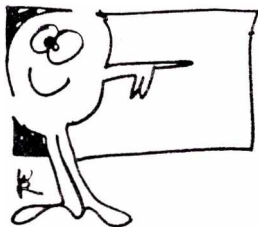
"Jeanne, Jeanne," in a very small voice. "But is that his penis?" he asked as he touched the 3/4" thick throbbing blue spiral of yard-long (still connected all the way) umbilical cord. I exposed a bit more of Jesse to him and he was thoroughly relieved.

I--we actually--went to some home birth movies some time later in Napa (way out of town--another county, in fact) and in the course of the meeting that followed I introduced myself and Jesse to a group of total strangers which included, unbeknownst to me, several midwives. When I told them where I lived, faces lit up with a knowing grin: "Ah, yes, aren't you the woman who laughed all the way through transition and birth?"

Blush! Oh, God.

"Yes."

--Jeanne Bowman



SEND D. WEST TO DE WEST!

It's later than you think! TAPP ballots are due April 30. Send at least \$1. or 50p & your vote (for D. West or Rob Hansen) to Avedon Carol, 4409 Woodfield Rd, Kensington, MD 20895, or Kevin Smith, 53 Altrincham Road, Gatley, Cheshire, SK9 4EL, U.K.

It's time for a West, America--
BRING D. TO DISNEYLAND

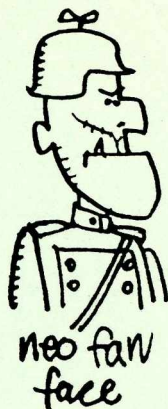
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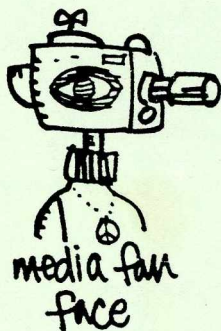
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