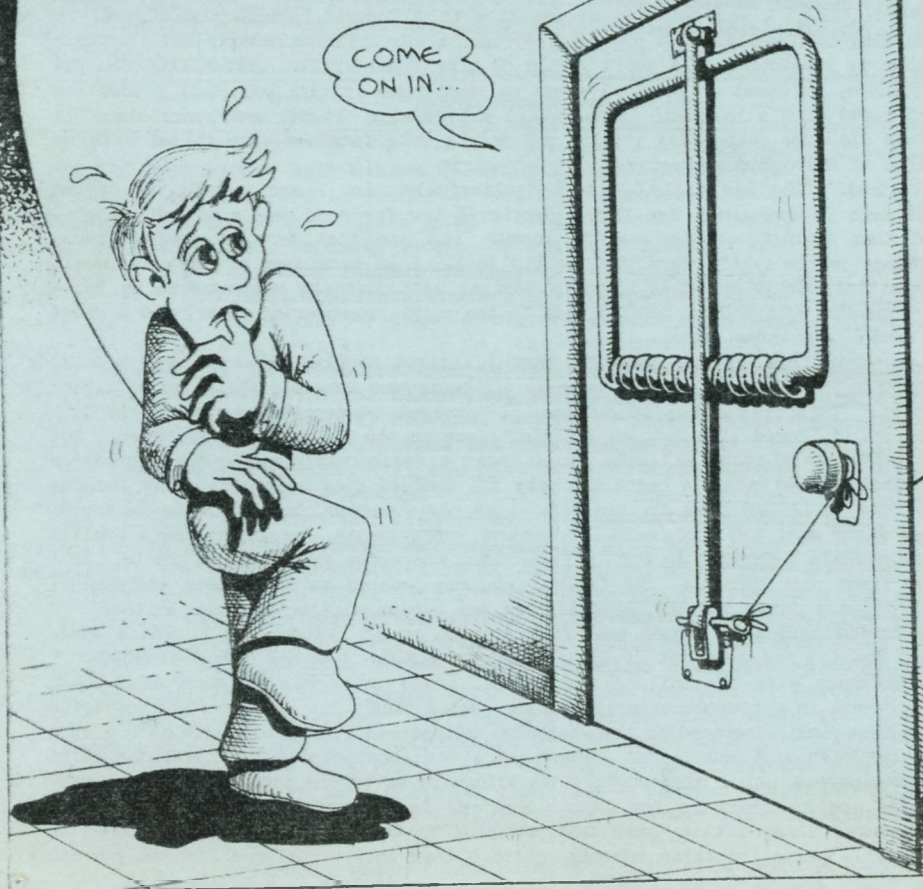


# TRAP DOOR



# HANDKERCHIEF MAN

by GARY DEINDORFER



What have I been doing since we last had fannish contact in the '60s, Robert "Bob" asks in a recent letter. A few things. Let me tell you about them. After Bob rejected my 90-page satire on fannish dating habits in 1965 I decided I had had it with fandom. I moved to New York City and, after a few canny investments, ended up as the biggest thing in ladies' underwear. After a while this began to pall. Flicking my effete wrist in despair, I decided, "It's not the real ME." So I liquidated the ladies' underwear business and started a custom lacquer wallpaper concern. I had long been on the waiting list for residence in the exclusive Central Park West Gothic apartment building, the Dakota. I was accepted in the summer of 1966, much to my joy. I moved in, proud to number among my neighbors such celebrities as Pinky Lee and General William Westmoreland. But the lacquer wallpaper was not selling, since I had not thought to invest any of my capital in advertising.

I sold the wallpaper enterprise and used the money to move to Puerto Rico because I like greaseballs. I became friends with a lovely man named Cesar and decided it was time to get back into fandom. Before long, though, I was embroiled in a nasty feud with everybody else in fandom. I decided that a strategic regafiation was in order.

About this time the unbearably hot Puerto Rican climate was wearing me down. I should mention that I have always been good with numbers. I sent doctored resumes to public schools in cool climates. Before long, I was teaching mathematics in a Toronto, Canada high school. I hadn't realized teaching involved so much pressure, so soon I was drinking heavily and playing a lot of poker to ease my tensions. In a short period of time I had written over 1,000 LoCs, 90% of which were published, at least in part. I spent so much time writing LoCs that I lost the teaching job, so I moved into a basement apartment in Willowdale. It had been years since I'd done fanart, but the old urge reasserted itself, and before long fanzines were filled with my well-turned drawings of androgynous creatures wearing skirts.

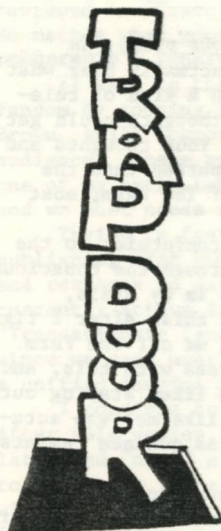
Yet I was restless. "The law calls," I moaned blissfully. Lo, I was soon living on the other side of Lake Erie in Rochester, New York, practicing law for rich people out of a storefront. I noticed that faanish writing was no longer "in," and that personal essays transfiguring little things in one's life were the new big deal. I am sure many of you will recall fondly my many sensitive, wryly humorous articles dealing with planting rutabagas in my backyard, watching a woman in a bird suit feed pigeons in the park, remembering when I saw a ghost in a toilet bowl when I was three, etc.

I made enough money from my law practice that I retired to live the life of a country gentleman in Hagerstown, Maryland. In half a year my old house was entirely filled up with back issues of newspapers. "This cramps me; it rankles," I muttered. I decided to move to The City of the Angels, because it looked like such an exciting place on the TV crime shows. When I got there, I found myself lonely among millions, so I began a deliberately high-quality crudzine filled with jokes about fried rats. A certain touchy fan decided that he resembled my remarks and threatened to come to LA and gnaw my legs off. I am not a coward, but this made me apprehensive. I hid out at my aunt and uncle's in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, keeping as low a profile as possible. After a while I decided to form a new fandom where the rat guy would not be. So I published the very first rock fanzine. The first issue was devoted to a thematic analysis of the entire output of Tommy James and the Shondells and has become a major collector's item.

Soon, a rock fandom sprang up around me. The magazine grew. Before long it was a business, not a hobby. The fun had gone out of it. "All these WORDS. I've had enough of WORDS. I want to get back in touch with the Soil," I repined. I moved to a communal farm down south where we raised soybeans in a countercultural manner. But I didn't fit in. I am not really an alternative lifestyle person, ensconced in the wholesome mainstream of American life as I always have been. I settled down in Trenton, New Jersey, in a semi-condominium and lived the quiet life of a single grandparent. And, my friends, this brings us up to the present. It's not easy fixing Ovaltine and graham crackers for Manny, Moe and Jack every morning, but it's LIFE and...that's what counts. These little tykes love anything to do with cars and their ambition is to own an automobile parts franchise someday. I tell them only to believe, and their dream will come true.

--Gary Deindorfer





Issue #4. May 1985. Edited and published by Robert Lichtman, PO Box 30, Glen Ellen CA 95442. Assistant editors: Jeanne Bowman and Paul Williams. We are all Founding Members: fwa. You are getting this fanzine because we sent it to you. We are interested in The Usual: letters of comment, written and/or artistic contributions, fanzines in trade (all-for-all, please), and other forms of Showing Support. As a final resort, and on a one-time-only basis, \$2 per issue in cash or US stamps. Please note: an "X" on your mailing label means this may be your final issue unless we hear from you in some fashion.

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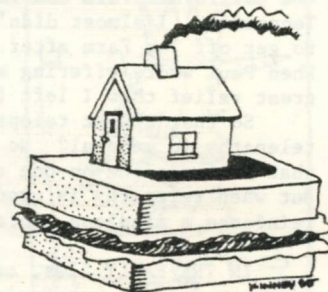
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Happy 50th Birthday, Ghu!

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IN THE LAST ISSUE, Bill Gibson quoted a Canadian radio producer who visited The Farm in Tennessee and came home convinced they were Hiding Something. "Like what?" Gibson asked. "Group sex and telepathy," the producer said. My editorial comment was "Half right." Not too many readers of that issue picked up on these remarks, but Linda Blanchard threw a postscript into her letter that said, "Telepathy, right? Not group sex." And Creath Thorne had a little more to say: "To me, the most interesting part of life on The Farm (and one that no one will ever give me a straight answer about) is the claim that some type of mass telepathy (or group mindedness) had been achieved--that there really was something to psi phenomena and that people on The Farm had tapped into it. So, will you give me a straight answer on this? Did this actually happen?"



DOORWAY

Yes, Linda, telepathy, not group sex. (Disappointed?) Yes, Creath, it did actually happen. But, of course, just as science fiction never comes true in just exactly the same fashion in which it is written, so telepathy on The Farm was just a little different than you might have expected.

But how? Well, the real truth of the matter was that telepathy on The Farm served, however unintentionally, to make the population a little more unquestioning than ordinary everyday reality. A little dumber, if you will. What was the cause of this? Those of you well-steeped in the fantasy-horror genre will recall the writings of masters such as HPL, where whole towns would be "possessed" by "eldritch horrors" that would grip the entire population. And readers of mainstream quasi-literature will perhaps recall the 1956 best-seller, Peyton Place, in which the more negative aspects of small-town life--namely the way in which everyone knows everyone else's business down to the tiniest minutiae--served to drive some of the characters in the book totally bananas. The Farm was sort of a combination of these two genres, only in Real Life.

The Farm, like fandom, was a functioning anarchy. Its ongoing precepts, especially in

its early days, trickled down from Stephen, the "teacher" or "guru" (take your pick), in alarmingly rapid fashion through the group mind so that even if you didn't actually hear what was going on verbally, the information got to and stuck in your mind through a kind of telepathic consensus. In addition to that, details of one's personal life and thoughts could get circulation on the group mind circuit if one did nothing to prevent it. If your thoughts and actions were totally "pure"—that is, you agreed with everything Stephen inputted into the group mind—then this was not a problem. And indeed, in the earlier days of The Farm, most people (but not yours truly) fell into this category.

As for me, I found some of what was contained in the group mind to be conformist to the point of stupidity, but since it was out there, constantly reverberating through the consciousness of the community, it was hard to overlook and avoid. There it was, up in my brain, whether I wanted it there or not. Talk about a conflict! What I did about this, after I figured it out, was to make every effort to have my work for the community get me off The Farm and into the surrounding community as much as possible. I had amazing success with this, and not the least reason for this success was that members of the community who liked staying out in the woods and having their telepathic input be "pure" thought of people like me, who actually volunteered to take those positions that involved a lot of going out, as goddamn' saints or something. I did nothing to dissuade this opinion, of course.

Others, perhaps also discovering that mental freedom was aided by liberal doses of the more general telepathy of the outside world, competed with me for these positions as the years went by, but by exercising the Broad Mental Horizons I had learned in my years as a faan, I was generally able to prevail. My move to California during 1978 to sell books for The Farm's publishing house was probably the high point of my subversive career. I had my own car, lots of work to do (the entire west coast to scour for increased sales of The Farm's books), and even control over my own checking account so long as I kept shipping lots of money back to the home office—but then I was Hot and accounted for 15% of the overall sales volume of the publishing company during my 14 months in California. Ultimately this freedom got to the other members of the California Farm contingent and I was "busted" from this choice position and sent back to Tennessee. I almost didn't go and regretted it when I did. I never got quite as much freedom to get off The Farm after that and could feel myself sinking into the mud of the Group Mind. When Paul wrote offering me work in California, after my marriage had broken up, it was with great relief that I left for better things.

So that's what telepathy was like on The Farm, at least for me. Has this soured me on telepathy in general? No way! I know from personal experience that some forms of telepathy that are more one-on-one can be infinitely rewarding, as in some of my loving relationships. But when telepathy is used, even unintentionally as I believe was the case on The Farm, to reinforce a mindless conformity, it is not at all desirable. Next issue: group sex.

IN THE EARLY '70s, as the fanzines to follow me to The Farm became fewer and fewer, each one that arrived was fandom—my only window on the subculture I'd left behind to pursue this new one connected with a dream. Remembering this, I tend to keep on the TRAP DOOR mailing list a number of fans, or "former fans," for whom this may be one of the few fanzines—perhaps the only one—they receive. Few of these readers respond and one does wonder if they even read, much less enjoy, the magazine. Since none have written to say they would rather be cut from the list, one can only assume that they do get something out of it and hope that the copy is not simply being tossed out. Response from this group, as from everyone, is more than welcome and in a way doubly so because it serves a time-binding function. (Ken Rudolph's letter this issue is an example of this, as is Jean Young's.) Yet silence is a response, too, no matter how much one wishes for more.

Other members of our mailing list interact with us in their own interesting fashion. And Porter, for instance, never writes but has written real GoshWow reviews of our last two issues in the pages of SF Chronicle that have netted us some \$2 checks (today's equivalent of sticky quarters). I regard this as part of my recruiting efforts for fanzine fandom. However, out of the dozen or so \$2 checks so far, only one subscriber has written back a letter of comment (If you are someone reading this issue because you sent me \$2, I invite you to address this matter, especially if this fanzine isn't what you wanted or expected contents-wise.) Another person who never writes is Donald Franson, but regular as clockwork each issue I send him is



reviewed in "Trash Barrel," a listing of fanzines Don circulates to all (?) members of the NFFF. No matter what your opinion of the NJF, if any, exposure through Don's brief reviews to its membership I regard as still another part of my recruiting efforts for fanzine fandom.

(I want to thank Andy and Don for providing me with these outreaches into the Greater Fandom by touting TRAP DOOR in their pages. I'm especially pleased that Andy, unlike Charlie Brown, still acknowledges his roots and provides coverage of fanzine fandom for a larger audience. These are valuable services. Egoboo-wise, these reviews are not as heady as when one of my early fanzines was reviewed in \*a prozine\*, but that was in the Good Old Days of 1959 and we must needs make do with what we can get in these latter days.)

Trying to foster and maintain a unity between English-speaking fandoms is another goal in publishing TRAP DOOR. Nearly fifty copies of each issue are sent to the UK towards this end and response to date has been heartening, though I'm still trying to figure out who are the currently active British fanzine fans. I agree with Patrick and Teresa (in TAFFLUVIA #1) that "Transatlantic fannish contact is a special interest in its own right." Transpacific, too, since we send nearly a dozen copies to Australia. I feel that all of this is recruiting for a unified fanzine fandom in our pages, at least.

I continue to restrict our initial circulation to around 225, printing 250 of each issue. After file copies, this leaves me with some copies for subscribers, for friends who come along later and "need" a selection of back issues, sets to save for TAFP and DUFF auctions in years to come, etc. The list currently breaks down to around 175 "hardcore"--those who have responded with some form of "The Usual" and those who are on my "permanent" mailing list. The other fifty are being tried out to see how and if they respond. Depending on my wholly subjective standards I'll carry these people two or three issues, depending on how many new names I come up with to replace them. This issue marks a major turnover, with many new readers (welcome!) replacing those who never responded (you're not reading this anymore). This is my own personal recruiting effort to develop a wholly interactive mailing list.

My finances are such that my present twice-yearly pace is about what I can handle. (After all, this is just a god-damn' hobby, not a way of bankruptcy.) Production costs, with the newly increased postage rates and the addition of four more pages with this issue (bringing us up to the two-ounce limit), are about \$150 per issue. It's cheaper, amazingly, to send out 225 copies using bulk mail for the Stateside ones (about 40 of which are addressed to me and then relabelled for overseas) than it would be to mail only 175 copies--the hardcore list--with all US copies having to go first class. My overall production costs are so low because we print at the spacious Typo Press facilities in beautiful suburban Concord, whose proprietors--Cheryl Cline and Lynn Kuehl--must be gratefully acknowledged (at long last!) as the people who really make this fanzine possible by providing low-cost, high-quality, do-it-myself printing. Without this, TRAP DOOR probably would not exist.

See you next issue if you're still on our list by then. (--RL)

## UNIROYAL



Dewey was telling his nephew Carey of the beautiful line, "And there stood Meyer, mouthing his cigar as though he were saying good-bye to an old and very dear friend," followed by Dewey's recollection of Burbee giving Laney his comeuppance in two perfect words: It seems that Laney had parked his car before the clubroom on Bixel Street, locked the door, and gone to meeting. Present also was the Burb. The meeting over, adjournment to the car, consternation. Laney had locked the car with the key in the ignition. Laney, cursing, attacking the windwing gently with a rock, in order to reach in and retrieve key. Gently so as not to make a larger hole than necessary. Meanwhile, slivers and fragments of glass sprinkling over the floorboards and front seat. Success, and the key retrieved without a cut wrist, Laney opened the door, reached in the back seat for a whiskbroom, and naturally dusted the glass fragments off the front seat. Meanwhile, a recital was given to Burbee about the many unexpected uses of a whiskbroom and the advantage of keeping one in the car. "Yes," said Burbee. "Foresight."

—Elmer Perdue, BURBLINGS c/w ELMURMURINGS #4 or 5 or possibly 7, February 1959

# FACE TO FACE

by Eric Mager



ON ONE OF THOSE sweltering late September afternoons that people who have never lived in Rochester suppose the city must be immune to, Kathy and I showed up at the House of Guitars where Dave Davies, Kinks guitarist from time immemorial, was appearing to promote his newest solo album. On the way, somewhere between Titus and Kings Highway, we took a turn into the sixties when a long distance phone call to the British band's New York City hotel had gotten Kathy as far as their manager who charmed her by calling her "Duckie." The pretext had been a possible interview for a non-existent Wilkes-Barre rock newspaper, and it probably says something about the fortunes of the band at the time that such a cock-and-bull story could have gotten Kathy past the hotel switchboard. No one but kids who'd never been out of Wilkes-Barre would have been impressed by a band's manager but to us the Kinks, no matter what their ranking on the Billboard charts, were close enough to God that we felt as though one of us had been called "Duckie" by the Pope. The real God only knows what we would have done had the ruse actually brought us face to face with our idols, but we were prepared to find out thirteen years later.

In the car, we chattered like a couple of teenagers about what Dave might be like in person and only came to our senses when we found ourselves queued up in the record store with a two-year-old daughter and a six-month-old son. The offspring startled us. It had only been yesterday, thanks to the Kinks, we'd spent our first night together, with Joe Potera, on the Main Concourse of the New York City Port Authority. Still, Tristan was undeniably in Kathy's arms and Fleur was, so to speak, in my hands. We were all squeezed into a narrow aisle, between open windows and cases of guitars, at the tail end of a long line leading up to what had once been a stage, the store having once served as an I.O.O.F. lodge.

Dave was late and in his absence his album was being played over and



over at high volume. The songs on "Chosen People" bear little resemblance to Kinks songs, most of which have been written by Dave's brother, Ray. In fact, they bear little resemblance to anything else, being an idiosyncratic mix of heavy metal riffs and what seems to be eastern mysticism, with the album being dedicated on the back, mysteriously, to a Sir George King and the Aetherious Society.

Tristan was not particularly enjoying the music and Kathy switched him from arm to arm while I tried to restrain Fleur from climbing up onto the window sills. After twenty minutes or so Fleur discovered a box full of drumsticks which she proceeded to try out, with good effect, on the guitar cases.

I studied the guitars, which I knew I didn't understand, thanks to an unpleasant experience with an A chord in my college days, and the impossibly young crowd which I suspected I didn't understand. Where were the fans from the Fillmore who'd carried on till Ray drove them out into the night with an acoustic version of "You Are My Sunshine"? I guessed they'd be around our age now.

The crowd gathered to meet Dave this particular afternoon consisted mainly of kids, most of junior high school age. Just in front of us, a youngster clutched a poster he'd brought for autographing, a photo of Dave made up as a mime. It made me happy to think that an artist I'd admired for close to twenty years could find new listeners among people for whom the sixties were just a legend, or a rumor. It also made me a little jealous.

The kid must have noticed me looking at his poster. "Do you think Dave'll have on his make-up?" he asked expectantly.

You don't know our Dave, I thought. The onstage brawler, the fellow who'd forked his brother over an order of fries, wouldn't show up looking like a clown. To the kid Dave was just a voice on a record, an image on a poster. To Kathy and me he was much more. Twenty years of albums, anxiously read reviews, discussions, magazine articles, speculations and expectations and arguments. He was the guy who'd played lead on "You Really Got Me" no matter what anyone else said. He was, in short, someone we were queued up to shake hands with.

We first saw the Kinks at the Fillmore East. We were still swimming through the haze of the sixties, though it was already 1970, and such things as caring for children and living in Rochester were not on our minds. What concerned us most was getting out of Wilkes-Barre with its culm banks and passion for high school football. Unable to leave physically, we left spiritually. We grew our hair and listened to rock albums and dreamed of better places. If we were trapped in a backward and bigoted coal mining town, at least we had the satisfaction of feeling that we didn't belong.

On a day in November, Kathy and I, and college friend Joe Potera, arranged to visit New York City, where we felt our future lay, and where the Kinks were appearing in concert. Since we had never been to New York, we arranged to meet Joe's friend Suzi who was to be in the city all week on a class excursion of some sort. Looking back, I imagine her supposed familiarity with the place was based mostly on her having arrived there a day earlier than we did. No matter, we were at the age when people become eager to throw themselves into the hands of unreliable guides.

From the Trailways bus we caught our first glimpse of the fabled skyline. We had barely enough time to identify the Empire State Building before we were plunged down into the Lincoln Tunnel, emerging after what seemed a long while in an area of unremarkable tenements. "Oh, no," Joe said, "they've taken us back to Wilkes-Barre."

We disembarked, stiffly, in the Port Authority. The air had a metallic taste. Around us, in the low-ceilinged caverns, under bare light bulbs, busses steamed and roared. The concrete platform radiated a paralyzing

cold up into the holed sneakers I affected during all seasons back then. Our spirits soared. At last, we had left behind the deadening provincialism of our childhood home. We were where we belonged.

Within two minutes of our arrival a polite young man who looked less Hindu than I sold to me, for five dollars, a color illustrated edition of the "Bhagavad Gita" which weighed a bit less than thirty pounds. So, when Suzi arrived, very businesslike but fifteen minutes late having taken a wrong escalator, I headed out into the city with cold feet and under the weight of eastern deities.

Long afterwards, when I attended law school, Kathy and I lived in New York but it was not the same city we visited. That first New York was a fantasy city of nameless streets where subways propelled us through the abrupt scene shifts of dreams. When we went to live in New York we were unable to find the stores run by ponytailed men in beaded vests and girls in granny dresses, full of leather goods and handmade jewelry, all too expensive for us, or the cramped record shop where I bought an album by a group named Juicy Lucy for no reason except that it was a record I'd never seen at Nardone's Gallery of Sound.

Most of the day, we had no idea where we were. We kept congratulating ourselves on being in Greenwich Village, though that was by no means certain. We strolled around, gawking at everything and everyone and feeling "with it"--Kathy with her long straight hair, sporting a riding jacket Elizabeth Taylor might have worn in "National Velvet" but which was actually Kathy's mother's; Joe with his peacoat and Beatlecut; I with my hair down over the shoulders of my army surplus jacket. "We look just like the people our parents told us to watch out for," I said. If Suzi, sensibly attired in an overcoat and woolen cap, felt any twinge of embarrassment at being seen in the company of such freaks, she kept it to herself.

When the street lights began to come on, Kathy and Suzi decided to stop at a pizza parlor before heading for the concert. I would have preferred to continue wandering. Food was nothing to me, and I often went days with only unsweetened tea, but even Joe felt the need to bolster himself at lunchtime with a brownie, so I was overruled. I was glad, at least, to be able to set my Bhagavad Gita down on the table.

We had taken a booth in the back from which we could watch the glass doors and the traffic beyond, moving slowly down whatever wide and impressive street it was that we had managed to get ourselves onto. We were extolling the virtues of New York City pizza when a nun, dressed in a simple black habit and carrying a collection plate, came through the door and began moving from booth to booth, meeting the rebuffs she received with equanimity. When she arrived at our booth I saw that she was young and not unattractive, although there was about her mouth and eyes the same hardness I'd seen in the faces of the nuns who'd chased me off the swings in back of the Gate of Heaven school years before.

"Please excuse me," she said. "I'm collecting for needy children." Her eyes lit on the Bhagavad Gita. "I see you are a person of faith."

Joe, his Beatlecut notwithstanding, had had a Catholic upbringing and he immediately produced a crumpled dollar bill. I followed suit, having to unzip several pockets of my Army jacket before finding one which contained cash.

"It doesn't really matter what you believe in," the nun said, "so long as you believe in something. Bless you."

For a moment I felt a double sense of satisfaction from having helped my fellow man while at the same time demonstrating that anti-establishment types could, for the proper cause, be generous even towards hidebound institutions like the Catholic Church. The nun was barely out the door when a business-suited man in the next booth turned towards us. "You know you just made a donation to a prostitute."



The information was offered not unkindly but loudly. I had the sensation that everyone in the pizza parlor was staring at me and I couldn't have felt more humiliated if the hard-eyed nun had had me up on the table doing whatever it is that New York City prostitutes do for two dollars. Our pizza was suddenly no better than what you could buy back at the Victory Pig. We finished hurriedly and started out.

"Hey, bud," my friend called after me. "You forgot your Bible."

Maybe it was because we were all a bit shaken by our encounter with the seedy underside of the city, but for whatever reason we promptly got lost. True, we had been totally disoriented all day long, but in the daylight, with the sidewalks crowded, we had been exploring. In the dark, with the streets deserted and the entranceways of the buildings black and menacing, we were simply lost. The cold helped keep our minds off sudden, violent death. It was windy and though we kept turning corners the wind seemed to stay in our faces.

I suppose the Fillmore concert was the high-water mark of my career in the counterculture. Mostly I was a spectator at the sixties, at least at those sixties you can read about in books or listen to on records. But for a few hours on that November night in 1970 I was a child who'd stepped into his favorite fairytale. It was just a fairy tale, and I can admit to myself now what I couldn't at the time, that there was no more likelihood of me joining a commune, or going underground, or living outside society than there was of a child climbing a beanstalk to slay a giant. But the idea appealed to me. I thought it wonderful to be part of a crowd of people, not one of whom could've walked down a Wilkes-Barre street without attracting stares or worse. I was thrilled to be offered a nickel bag right under the lighted marquee, even though I've never smoked pot. When I nearly dropped my ticket in my flustered excitement, and the bell-bottomed usher said, "Hey, man, cool it," with perfect seriousness, I had to pinch myself.

I don't recall the concert itself so well and can't reconstruct it accurately. Once I had a program booklet but during our move to Rochester I lost the battered manila envelope I kept it in, along with the minutes of the Horseshoe Club and my Junior Safety Patrol Captain lapel pin. I remember that a group called Quatermass led off, featuring arty organ with lightshow amoebas crawling over the three players and the wall. Love followed and towards the end of the set Arthur Lee trotted onto the stage for a guest appearance which I pretended to be as delighted with as everyone else although I had no idea who he was.

The Kinks themselves were an artistic triumph, I'm sure. I distinctly recall Ray Davies' outrageous bowtie and the fact that he performed "Waterloo Sunset." The actual sound is inextricably jumbled in my memory with the sounds of the albums I've played so many times. The people in front of us smoked spliffs the size of stogies and we left the theatre ecstatic and probably half-stoned.

There was no way we could return home in our exhilarated state so rather than heading back uptown to catch our bus we pooled our money and bought tickets for the second show. We killed the hour between shows in an earnestly Bohemian coffee house where a sensitive looking fellow sat on a table and picked at a guitar and the barefoot waitress told us there was a minimum charge of \$2.50. On the way back to the Fillmore we passed a flower vendor, still miraculously out on the cold street at that hour, and Kathy said, "Let's buy them flowers."

Again we sat in the smoky balcony, but when the Kinks came on Suzi and Kathy, clutching their bouquets, left us. They reappeared far below, approaching the stage, tiny and unreal as the Kinks themselves, as if they had entered the same unreal scene as the Kinks, a scene which Joe and I were merely observing rather than participating in. After they had laid the bouquet down and retreated back up the aisle, Ray picked up a single flower.

"I just love flowers," he said and the crowd cheered. Later, at the end of the set, he came out onto the bare stage alone, sat on a stool and sang "You Are My Sunshine," accompanying himself on acoustic guitar. He asked the audience to sing along. I guess most did, but I've always suspected I'm tone deaf and couldn't bring myself to attempt it.

We had missed the night's last bus home. Kathy, Joe and I wearily accompanied Suzi back to her midtown hotel. In the plush lobby we looked conspicuous and Kathy's riding jacket smelled of pot. Our halfhearted efforts to get into Suzi's room were thwarted easily so we said our good-byes, then stood counting our change in front of a warm looking Chock Full O'Nuts on Times Square, discovering we were down to our last 87 cents. We ended up sitting on the floor of the Main Concourse of the Port Authority, our backs against the cold tile walls, dozing off while cops strolled by without curiosity. On the way home the next morning we made a contest out of staying awake. I finally went to sleep and when I woke up the bus was pulling into the terminal in Wilkes-Barre.

By the time Dave arrived, an hour and a half late, Tristan was turning red and Fleur had gotten hold of the album we'd brought for autographing and was threatening to sail it out the window. Kathy and I had not, however, wavered in our determination to stay the course. Dave bounded out onto the stage, accompanied by an entourage of local DJs and House of Guitars owner Armand who in his spare time records albums about how he was sent to prison and raped. He was dressed entirely in black, except for a T-shirt silk-screened as tux. The kid who'd been hoping he'd show up in clown make-up was disappointed but seemed willing to accept this attire as adequately eccentric. Dave sat down behind the table that had been placed on stage, someone put a rock star standard-issue Heineken before him, and the line began to move. "I forgot to wear my 'God Save the Kinks' button," I said to Kathy.

By now a large crowd had gathered, aside from those of us in line. When we went out onto the stage Fleur stopped in her tracks and stood gaping at the faces staring up at her. I slid the album onto the table. I was on the same stage as Dave Davies. I was speechless.

"We saw you at the Fillmore," Kathy said to Dave.

"Cor," he said. "That was a long time ago. You're not that old."

Dave signed the album. He looked in person just as he did in pictures and I had the feeling I was looking at a childhood friend whom I'd lost track of years before. Without any warning, Kathy thrust Tristan towards him. "Will you hold him, while I take a snapshot?"

"Really?" Dave looked genuinely surprised, but he took Tristan with obviously practiced dexterity and Kathy whipped the camera out of her purse. Tristan had stuck his lower lip out and was making up his mind to cry. Dave held him up for the crowd to see and they cheered.

"I love kids," Dave said. "I have five."

When we left the stage I had not uttered a word. I had not, I realized, even shaken his hand. The DJs tossed some commemorative Dave Davies Visits Rochester T-shirts off the stage and Kathy, with Tristan in one arm, fought her way to the front of the crowd, caught one, then wangled her way back on to the stage where Dave signed it in indelible ink.

We went back outside finally into the unseasonable heat. Storm clouds were building up over Lake Ontario and a breeze turned up the white sides of the leaves on the trees. The air was suffused with that peculiar light that often precedes a storm. The weather was not unlike that of the late sixties, our late adolescence, when we had seen the world in a mysterious golden haze, even as we listened fearfully to the thunder in the distance. The storm had passed us. For better or worse, the lightning had struck elsewhere.

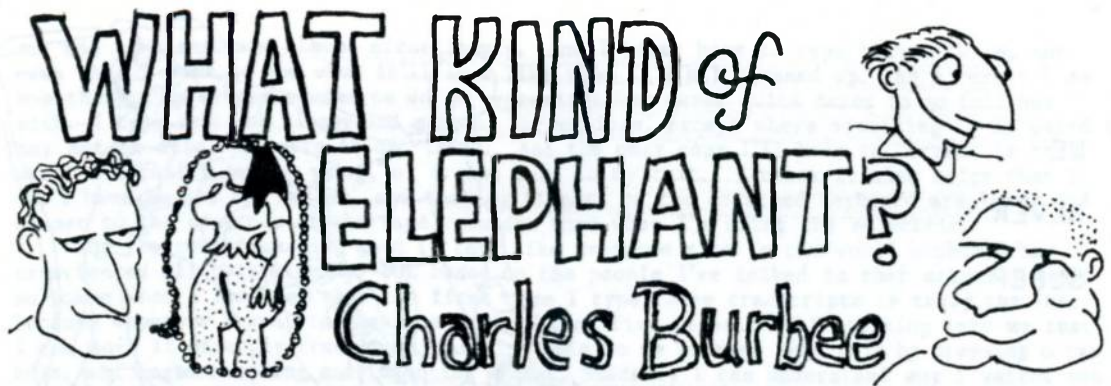
"Did you hear?" said Kathy. "He said 'cor'."

--Eric Mayer



# WHAT KIND of ELEPHANT?

Charles Burbee



"Charlie," said Cliff, my co-worker in the shop I worked at in Santa Ana, "how long does it take an elephant to have a baby?"

"You mean, how long is the period of gestation?"

"Huh?"

"How long does it take for an elephant to have a baby?"

"Yes."

"Is that an African elephant or an Indian elephant?"

"There's more than one kind? Oh, I guess just an elephant elephant."

"You probably mean the Indian elephant. We know the most about it because they've been domesticated for hundreds of years. Their gestation period is about two years. In the case of the African elephant we know less. They can't be tamed, you know. Their gestation period is less, we think. Maybe more like nineteen months."

"You mean it isn't nine years?"

"That's a popular misconception. An old wives' tale. Anyway, why do you want to know?"

"The girls out there were arguing with Harry about it."

Harry was the foreman out there.

"You mean the Fucking German?" I always called him that.

"Yes, and Rosalinda said it was nine years and Harry said it was less. They made a bet on it."

I snapped to attention. Rosalinda was a pretty Mexican girl who frequently wore tight sweaters.

"How much is the bet for?"

"Ten dollars. And Evelyn is holding the stakes."

"Ten dollars!" Rosalinda was in a low Labor Grade, probably making about three dollars an hour, while the Fucking German was making more like twelve. A greedy German cheating an American girl! My blood boiled with patriotism.

"Cliff, run out there and tell her to cancel the bet!"

Just then, Harry came up behind Cliff.

"Cliff," he said, "how long does it take an elephant to have a baby?"

Cliff turned around and said, "What kind of elephant, Harry? An Indian elephant or an African elephant?"

"There's more than one kind? Oh, I don't know. Just an elephant elephant."

"You probably mean the Indian elephant. That's the one we know the most about because we've been domesticating them. For them it's about two years. The African elephants we know a lot less about. We estimate it to be about nineteen months. They're too hard to tame. In fact, we can't tame them."

"Then it's not nine years in either case?"

"No, Harry, that's an old wives' tale. It's a popular misconception."

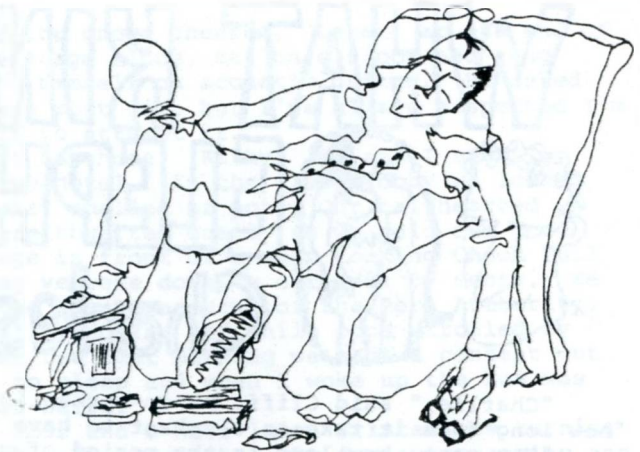
"Gee, Cliff, you sure know a lot about elephants."

"I sure do, don't I, Charlie?" said Cliff turning to me with a smile.

--Charles Burbee

WE  
NEVER  
SLEEP

by PAUL WILLIAMS



THIS IS SOME kind of a test. I'm still in the honeymoon phase with my new word processing system, and I'm very much in love. So while I wouldn't mind writing *We Never Sleep* on my Selectric Two, doing it on the Sanyo sounds like much more fun. And Robert already told me I could, long as I don't mind ending up in real tiny print like the lettercolumn. Well, the lettercolumn is the best-read part of this fanzine, so that doesn't sound too bad to me; you guys probably have your bifocals on already. But...

But Robert was just here and we were figuring out the specs, and it seems I need a 90-column screen to get this to come out TRAP DOOR-size. Now I've got lots more width than that on Wordstar, no problem; but you see, only 80 columns can be seen on the monitor at any given moment, which means when I glance up at what I've just written a significant part of it is running off the screen on one side or another. I mean I can get to it if I need to, but I can't just run my eyes over my copy in motherly fashion and see what pearls I've written so far. This feels weird. This makes me very insecure.

But I'm trying it, as you see, and so far it really isn't so bad. Consider it the next step in fanpersonship after composing on the stick (preferably on stencil with no corflu, but this is a xerox fanzine): composing on the stick with your eyes closed. Well, partly closed. Don't look back. If I give up and go back to the Selectric, you'll know, because all this will have been deleted.

My intention this issue is not to be real clever or weird or insult any good friends, but instead give you some straight scoop about what I've been up to. Basically what I'm up to (this may not surprise you, but it surprises and pleases me) is writing books. I've got two new ones just embarked on, both of them projects that, in typical Taurus fashion, I've been preparing for for 16-18 years. The amazing thing is not that it's taken so long, but that I've finally admitted I'm ready.

One of the projects is a book about Philip K. Dick—not a biography but more like a portrait or profile, with a lot of interview material. It's called Only Apparently Real: The World of Philip K. Dick (or maybe A Visit with Philip K. Dick), and it is an expansion of the profile of Phil I wrote for Rolling Stone back in 1975. I have 6 1/2 hours of taped interviews with Phil, and much of this will go into the book. I'm finding that the word processor is tremendously helpful with transcribing tapes—it seems to go about four times as fast, which makes an impossible and overwhelming task almost pleasant.

If I can digress for a moment, the reasons transcribing is so much easier seem to be the following: when I transcribe by typewriter, I have to triple space, because I'm constantly hearing phrases I missed or reinterpreting words I'd guessed at wrongly the first time around. Which means endless crossing out, very frequent paper changes, and often even triple space isn't enough for me to fit in some sentence I was going to skip over and then decided was vital. And then there are reams of pages to edit, and it seems typical of interviews that something said here will fit better over there, and so forth. On the word processor I can just move blocks of type wherever I want them. I can go back



and add in a sentence almost effortlessly. And I never have to type things twice, not even when I want to see what it'll look like when it's all cleaned up. As a result I do something I've always wanted to do on typewriter but never quite dared to go full out with—I type fast and sloppy and make no corrections, except where something is so weird I may not be able to figure it out later. And the only copy I'll have to correct is the stuff I actually end up using, or trying out, in my text. I think it also helps that I don't have to hit the return, and that my fingers on the detached keyboard are lower and closer to the controls of the tape recorder than when I'm using the selectric.

But the really amazing part (I feel like everyone else in the world probably has experienced all this already, but based on the people I've talked to that actually isn't so) came when I realized that the first time I type these transcripts is truly the last, because whenever I want to insert a paragraph or five pages of Phil talking into my text, I can move it directly from the transcript file to my current text file by pressing a few keys, and maybe removing and inserting a disk. Suddenly I can understand why I waited ten years to write this book. Maybe technology is on our side after all.

The PKD book is under contract to Arbor House, with a tip of the hat to my first and favorite editor, David Hartwell. (David used to read and comment on my Crawdaddy articles as they came out of the typewriter.) I've been asked to write it real quick, which suits my temperament (and seems appropriate for a book on Phil, who wrote the majority of his novels in less than a month, on a manual typewriter)(and chemicals)...the way I figure it, most of the real work starts when you get within three months of deadline—making the deadline three months from today is just a way of sparing myself the doodling around time.

And that's especially good, because I have another project I've already started on and am equally excited about and expect to complete before the end of the year. This is an exploration and appreciation of Carlos Castaneda's seven books about his studies with Don Juan. I've been fascinated by these books for a long time, and the fascination has only increased with each new book that's appeared, and each rereading I've done. And I've always felt like I wanted to talk to someone about the books as I read them, particularly the later ones which get weirder and weirder and at the same time, if you stick with them, more and more stimulating. The Fire from Within is wonderful. So I'm writing a book-length appreciation and guide, done in my usual colloquial fashion, not scholarly, aimed at the hundreds of thousands of people who like me read these books faithfully and assimilate them into their lives in odd and powerful ways...and at those millions who've read one or two or several of the books, or have been thinking about reading them (or trying and failing) for the last fifteen years or so. I figure the qualification for this kind of work is the same as that for writing about rock and roll or science fiction: intelligence, common sense, enthusiasm, an experience of really having been touched in a deep way by whatever it is one is writing about. I don't write about the work or the creator of the work, but rather about the listener or reader's experience of the work. That seems to me where the real story is taking place.

So no, I haven't met Castaneda, and I don't want to—at least not before I've finished my book. It would only confuse the issue hopelessly. Everything I need to talk about is already there in the books, available to me as it is available to any reader.

My new agent (having a new agent when you haven't had one for years feels as good if not better than having a new word processor) is very optimistic about selling the Castaneda book, and so am I. And when I finish the PKD book, and the one about Castaneda, I have a Das Energi-like book of meditation called Remember Your Essence which is about a third written and waiting patiently for me to get back to it.

So what I'm up to is writing, and I love it. Four months ago I thought my focus this year would be on getting out more as a speaker. That was before David visited at Corflutime and asked me why I'd stopped writing essay-type books. Both of the books I'm working on came out of that afternoon conversation, and it'll have to be next year for the speaking tour. Such is the power of inspiration.

It's been more years than I care to count since I sold a book to a New York publisher (or any publisher other than myself). So this whole thing has been quite a breakthrough, and it feels like it's just the beginning. My creative juices are flowing. I wish you all similar breakthroughs, and equal joy.

My computer set-up—you knew I'd get around to talking about this eventually, right?—is a Sanyo MBC-555, similar to an IBM PC (MS-DOS) and partially compatible. The processor is 256K; I have two double-sided double-density drives with 360K capacity on each disk. Detached keyboard. Amdek high resolution low glare amber monitor. Fortis DX 15x1 printer (made by Brother), prints 18 characters per second, looks good. The system comes with Wordstar, Datastar, Spellstar, Mailmerge, Calcstar, Basic, Reportstar, and EasyWriter. Basically I plan to use it for word processing, and some database, like mailing lists. I'm delighted with Wordstar, delighted with the amount of disk capacity I have, and quite pleased with the printer. The whole system basically stays out of my way and lets me write. I also bought a surge protector, 20 disks, two books and some paper and ribbons, and the whole thing with tax was \$2000. Many thanks to Grania Davis, whose research I piggybacked on. From what I can tell, this is probably the best set-up available right now for a writer in this price range. I don't think you could get the equivalent hardware and software IBM PC system for under \$3000. at even the cheapest discount house.

What else goes on in my life? Kids (doing fine, thanks), great relationship with Donna, whose bodywork practice is doing splendidly and who's busy studying for her Calif chiropractic boards, I've been benefiting tremendously from my participation in something called the ARAS seminars, and I continue to be quite busy with my job as literary executor for the Philip K. Dick estate. Some of you may not know that I put out a fanzine (semipro category) called the Philip K. Dick Society Newsletter—four issues a year, averaging 14 8-1/2 x 11 pages of two column reduced type, with articles, interviews, letters, photographs, a long news column—we avoid critical or analytical stuff, and stick with memoirs, source material, information, gossip.... At the moment there are over 600 paid subscribers, 75 in the UK and another 75 spread around the world, the rest in the U.S. The 6th issue just went out last week. It's remarkable that so much material can be generated about a single person and his work without becoming really trivial and repetitive, and I

suppose it's not for me to say, but it seems like the newsletter stays fresh and fun, for us PKD nuts anyway, I think because of something intrinsic in Phil's work and his way of relating to the world. He lived a life on paper, to a large degree, and the more you read of his or about him it seems the more, rather than less, questions there are. So it's not so much like obsessively focusing on one person as that he serves as a lens through which a great variety of subjects can be seen and explored. Or maybe we really are nuts. But I have a fairly low boredom threshold, and although I do get overwhelmed with PKDiana at times and have to take a breather (he has five previously unpublished books coming out in hardcover this year, all of which I was involved with in some fashion as caretaker of his posthumous career), I have yet to even come close to getting bored with Phil and his books, letters, interviews, obsessions...even his fans. The caliber of people who've volunteered help with the newsletter has been excellent.

So there you have it, PW and his current wild enthusiasms. It wasn't so bad, not being able to read as I go. You might try it—just read 4/5ths of each line. The nasty part is proofreading—I have to push 2 buttons twice every line. Fandom is suffering.

—Paul Williams





TALK OF  
THE TOWN

by LUCY HUNTZINGER



I WAS ABSOLUTELY determined not to fall in love. For the last five years every female writer who visited Great Britain's fan community either became engaged upon contact or carried on a torrid love affair which was written up in embarrassing detail in fanzines on both sides of the ocean. This would not happen to me. I took my best friend with me to guard me from the sly fellows waiting to smear my reputation as a pure, unblemished fanzine fan. She promised to spring valiantly to my side if any of them so much as whispered, "I just love you for your fanac." In the end she betrayed me by falling for some Welsh guy with a huge comics collection. But that is another story for someone with a stomach stronger than mine.

I flew into Heathrow Airport last May, alone except for my sombrero. I was bound for a convention in the north at which I was to meet my friend. I caught the first Tube to South Ealing where a small man with large hair greeted me by name. We strolled down to his flat and had a pint or two while we waited for his wife to come home. That evening, my long-lost sisters, Pam Wells and Anne Warren, dropped by to welcome me to England. I was impressed with my first glimpses of their society and impulsively gave Pam and Linda Pickersgill gifts of pink polythene cowgirl jackets to wear at the convention. They were charmed and we talked far into the night about the different customs of our lands.

The next day we acquired Abigail Frost and a large van, not in that order. We set off for Newcastle via Birmingham. I was assured it was merely a small side trip and perhaps it would have been if we had not gotten sucked into the vicious whirlpool of the dread Inner Ring Road. Round and round we went, our destination clearly visible from the road but each succeeding exit a false promise, always leading us inexorably back onto the Inner Ring circle. Finally, we made contact with Rog Peyton and gathered up a vanload of books to convey to the Mexican. Pam drove like one possessed and we rolled into Gateshead at sundown, exhausted from our journey. Harry Bell fed us tea and I got to sleep very late. The streetlight made an odd buzzing noise and I couldn't seem to stop poring over all the fanzines piled up around my bed in the attic. I dreamt of A4 paper and laughing chihuahuas.

In the morning we trundled over to the hotel and began setting up. Abi's stories of fannish absurdity and Leroy Kettle anecdotes kept me busy and the day flew by quickly. Before I had time to get nervous, Greg Pickersgill rushed me into the back of the van, whispering, "Here's John Jarrold. Pretend you don't know him." A tall, thin man folded himself into the cramped space across from me, adjusted his black leather jacket lovingly, and said, "Hullo, Lucy, I'm John Jarrold." I was disappointed that he knew who I was.

I was hoping to be taken for Avedon Carol but I must have been too quiet. I smiled tentatively and held on for dear life as Linda maneuvered the van into traffic on our way to dinner. Afterwards, the Mexican committee plus several enjoyed beer and snooker at Sue and Kev Williams' spacious home. I began looking forward to the con.

For the next four days I was whisked from one party to the next, introduced to correspondents, forced to appear on a panel and asked about Dorsai, barred from the Philip K. Dick play on account of being late, drank far too much delicious brown ale, gossiped endlessly about U.S. fandom, and watched Martin Tudor get ousted from the hotel for having too much fun at his room party. Someone put a keg in his bed and the mattress got ruined; it really wasn't his fault but the staff wouldn't listen to reason. They were even less thrilled with Twisted Sister, a touring American rock band that affected long permed hair and too much makeup who happened to be staying in the hotel as well.

The night of the disco I was dragged reluctantly to the ballroom. "But," I said, "I can't stand disco music and flashing lights." "Oh, it's not like that at all," Rob Hansen declared. "We Brits call any dance program a disco. Come on, you'll love it." Fifty yards from the doorway I heard the whump! whump! whump! of the Bee Gees doing Soft Cell. Dazzled by the red, yellow and chartreuse lights blinking on and off in rhythm to the beat, I stood to one side waiting for my eyes to adjust. As they cleared I observed famous Glaswegian author and bon vivant Alisdair Gray doing a heel-and-toe with Linda on the dance floor. After showing 'em what for, Mr. Gray collapsed gracefully on the steps and passed out for the rest of the evening, thus endaring himself to all Mexican attendees and guaranteeing his permanent invitation to all future Mexicans.

Much later, the infamous and previously unknown Las Hermanas Chingadas performed a song-and-dance routine in honor of John Jarrold's birthday. A grateful audience responded by singing old dance hall themes and movie soundtracks in twelve different keys while the Seesters retired in pink-coated glory. The Riverside Musicians' Collective forced the dj's to play music of the '60s and '80s and the dance carried on all night.

Don West offered to flip a coin, double or quits for the price of his fannish autobiography. I stalled, knowing myself to be a poor gambler but not wanting to give in too easily, and ended up simply handing over five pounds for it. I comforted myself with the thought that I, unlike most Americans, actually had my copy in hand. I accumulated a backpack-full of fanzines at the giveaway table for my collection at home. I turned around in time to see Leroy Kettle leap upon Malcolm Edwards from behind and cause Malcolm's pint glass to launch its contents into his face. Paul Vincent stared at me morosely from across the room on several occasions but never got close enough for me to thank him for the Britbeat tapes he'd sent me. Avedon, Chris Atkinson and I discussed ideologically sound women's apas and Chris allowed as to how there was only one good-looking man at this con. I disagreed, thinking there were several attractive people around. Thankfully, most of them were married. My reputation was safe, I decided.

Then it happened. I was minding my own business behind one of the tables and bopping happily to the tape blasting way on the boom box. I looked up into the face of a friendly young man. He asked me if I would like to come with him and see the doctor. I stared at him uncertainly and said I wasn't sick, wondering why my heart had begun to beat faster. He explained that "seeing the doctor" was a euphemism for getting sercon. I followed him to a room upstairs, then, and spent a quiet hour getting to know him on a fairly intimate level. Roz Kaveney tried to warn me off him--"He's not like us, sweetheart, he has a military background"--but I didn't listen to

(continued on page 19)



## Comin' Down That Railroad Track

At the end of a recent movie called "Racing With The Moon," a couple of young men are shown chasing after, not the moon, but a railroad train--and catching it. The movie takes place, it hardly needs saying, in the far-off past. (I doubt it does any good to chase after an Amtrak train.) According to the reviews the movie is set in 1942 or 1943. I haven't seen the picture because it was difficult enough to live those years in the first place, and I don't want to re-live them. If it's like most recreations of the past--the film version of "The Great Gatsby," for instance--the movie doesn't recapture the spirit of the times anyway. Yesterday is not today decked out in old costumes.

But the railroad train! I haven't ridden a train since 1947, but trains were so much in the foreground of my existence when I was a kid living in railroad towns of the midwest that they still seem more of a fact, a presence, than jet liners and space shuttles. As a matter of cold reality, of course, passenger trains have almost vanished from the American scene, aside from the semi-visibility of Amtrak. Railroad companies long ago phased out passenger trains on the theory that they were unprofitable and cluttered up the rails in the way of freight trains. Only a few shellbacks like E.B. White protested the eclipse of an institution that helped illumine and glorify the nation for more than a hundred years.

While admitting that there is a "strong streak of insanity in railroads, which accounts for a child's instinctive feeling for them and for a man's unashamed devotion to them," White writes elsewhere that "a land without rail service is a land in decline, or in suspension." He remarks, "If our future journeys are to be little different from flashes of light, with no interim landscape and no interim thought, I think we will have lost the whole good of journeying and will have succumbed to a mere preoccupation with getting there. I believe journeys have value in themselves, and are not just a device for saving time...."

The railroad has, or had, one great advantage over jet liners which is memorably expressed by an ex-bomber pilot: "I like trains because their landing gear is always down," and perhaps even more memorably by an Amtrak passenger: "You can see the ground all the way." In the case of accident you don't have so far to fall. But another advantage, in the past, was that you hadn't missed your train until it outraced you on the open track. Like the two kids in "Racing With The Moon," you could catch a train on the fly as it steamed away if you were fast enough on your feet. Try that with a 747 next time you're held up in traffic and arrive late at San Francisco International airport.

My father often told of chasing trains successfully, no doubt on many occasions, but of one time in particular. He arrived at the station just as his train, with a gush of hot steam and a well-greased clank of the drivers, lurched into motion. He was wearing a hat and he was burdened with his suitcase in one hand and his grip in the other. The grip, a familiar travel bag

## PENSEROSO



*An Occasional Column*

*by REDD BOGGS*

of bygone days, was of triangular shape when seen in cross-section but opened to straight sides to facilitate packing. He always carried it. The grip was taken from the closet and packed first thing when he left on a trip to Fargo or Minneapolis. It was black and gleaming and smelled richly of good leather.

As he gained the platform, already puffing from his hurry, and saw the train departing, a big blast of wind almost tore the hat from his head. He thereupon set down his bags momentarily, removed his hat, and clenched it firmly in his teeth. The hat flying off and getting lost is a standard gimmick in movie scenes depicting such mad flights, perhaps even in "Racing With the Moon," but my father made sure it wouldn't happen to him. The hat was held tightly in his bared teeth as he dashed frantically after the train. I was not there to witness the drama. Perhaps the incident took place before I was born, but it was spoken of for years afterwards. With my own eyes I inspected the famous hat with tooth marks gashed deep in the brim. In those days you didn't dispose of a hat just because it was marred with an arc of ragged indentations.

I can still see the scene in my mind's eye: my father sprinting desperately after the swiftly accelerating train, his flying figure half lost in the smoke billowing back from the stoked-up locomotive, travel bags swinging from his fists, feet churning rapidly in the cinders, breath sawing in and out of his lungs, and the hat flopping wildly against his chin and chest in the wind of his passage. I can imagine him drawing alongside the speeding cars at the last possible moment, hurling his bags aboard, reaching the grab-rail on the last coach and being jerked aboard by the speed of the train. It must have been one of my father's finest hours. I wish I had been there to see it. O.J. Simpson galloping through an airport terminal in the commercials is a poor spectacle in comparison.

### Speaking of Hats

When I was a kid I always liked time travel stories where the hero traveled backward or forward or sideways in time and met himself. The best of these stories, obviously, is "By His Bootstraps," which I have reread many times. In real life, unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately), I have never met myself coming or going, but sometimes I have phoned my home number and talked to myself. That's something that Bob Wilson did in the Heinlein story, if you remember. In my case, however, my voice at home is taped, being the outgoing message on my Record-A-Call. Still, like Whitman ("A call in the midst of the crowd,/My own voice, orotund sweeping and final"), I find the experience a little bizarre.

I had an even stranger vision, not many nights ago, in a dream that shook me a little when I awoke and remembered it. I dreamed that I was living, more or less as I am just now, in an apartment complex of two buildings separated by a patio. Looking out the door I saw that someone was moving out of an apartment in the other building. The man was wearing, unlikely as it was, a blue western hat.

The sight of the odd hat inspired me to don my own cowboy hat, which is a high-crowned XXXX beaver Stetson, certainly not blue, but brown. But I couldn't find the hat. As I searched futilely among the litter of my possessions I became aware of someone sitting behind me in an easy chair. "There's the hat," he said, pointing, and sure enough I saw it perched on the top shelf of a tall bookcase. I turned and regarded this person puzzledly. He not only knew where my hat was, but without being told, knew that I was looking for it. He was dressed in very familiar attire: a brown corduroy sports jacket, Thunderbird bolo tie, red trousers.... My own clothes! With a shock I realized that the man was myself! There the dream ended, as it should have.

I don't know what my dream means. Maybe I am becoming schizoid. More likely it means I read too many time travel yarns when I was young.



## A Lovely Day

I am sitting on a bench alongside the BART elevated in El Cerrito this warm and windy afternoon. I have violated a custom of long standing. Usually I carry letters all the way home from the post office to open and savor in private over coffee or Coca-Cola, or sometimes Campari, one higher pleasure among low animal ones. I don't have many pleasures any more. But I have read your letter out here in the open air, and now, holding your letter in my hand, I am feeling pleased, but thinking of almost nothing. The day is too spacious and beautiful to inspire anything but contemplation.

In a dreamy, trance-like state I notice the sky, how delicately blue, crowded at the edges with light hazy clouds. In the yard just beyond the fence from the BART right-of-way geraniums--a whole hedge of them--are nodding in the wind, pink and white and red. A small palm tree is twiddling its fronds in the wind like a woman waving goodbye. A Twix candy wrapper eddies at my feet.

The pillar to my right, supporting the BART trains that from time to time shudder and rumble overhead, is painted grey in irregular patches to obliterate graffiti. A new crop of graffiti is already being laid down, a Troy atop Troy, each sadder than its predecessor in the layer underneath: "Kill niggers!" "Rock rules" "The Scorps" "Heavy Metal Thunder" "Los Latin Image Cyclones." And there's a swastika in red spray paint, or maybe blood. I can only suppose that these markings were put there by very stupid, perhaps rather frenzied children. God has given us spray paint, but has not inspired us to say anything worth publishing to the world.

A few joggers steam past like engines laboring upgrade, gloomy and puffing, straining against air, earth, gravity and advancing age. The female joggers are lighter on their feet and run more gracefully, like dancers rather than athletes.

Nobody says a word to me till an old woman strolls by, leading a little brown dog on a leash. "A lovely day," she says, more animated than her dog that sniffs sadly at the pillar with the swastika. She limps slowly on, unaware that she has suddenly become part of a letter, a fanzine. Who knows, perhaps I have become part of a letter too, or a phrase or two in her diary. As we travel through the world we stir up cross-currents that have unknown and unforeseen influences.

I look again at the misty sky, the pink and white and red geraniums and the smeary, ignorant swastika, marking all of it as if it were every bit important. "A lovely day," the woman said, but who is to know this if I don't report it to you? This is what the world is all about. Composing this message as I go, I trudge homeward, carrying your letter in my hand. I am sorry to leave the swaying geraniums, but I hide my eyes from the swastika. The little palm tree waves goodbye to me.

--Redd Boggs

(Reprinted from PENSEROSO #4, published for SAPS)

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(continued from page 16)

reason. I couldn't when my heart was singing so loudly. The rest of the weekend passed in a blur.

I'm married now. It was a small ceremony with only my best friend and her Welshman as witnesses. We mailed an announcement to Ted White to ask his blessing but nothing could really have stopped us. Some will see me as one more victim of the British plot to steal all the American female fanzine fans but they're wrong. Sure, we plan on living together and making lots of little fanzines. I'm not ashamed to say he loves me. But no one can say I've lost my head as well as my heart. I've kept my personal integrity.

Phil Palmer is moving to San Francisco.

--Lucy Huntzinger

I ALMOST WENT to the convention in Baltimore. Almost, but not quite. Actually I hadn't even considered it until I got this letter from Dan Steffan asking me if I was going, and that got me thinking. It would be neat, after all, to see what the Number One Fan Face looked like, and it had been almost eight years since I'd attended a con. How can you call yourself a trufan if you don't go to the cons, eh?

Well, after that I was pretty hot on the idea for a while. I saw myself at wild con parties where I was the center of attraction, dazzling everybody with my succinct wit. I envisioned pros coming up to me and complimenting my fanzine stuff. I dream big.

But I know that in all probability it wouldn't be like that at all. I mean, it wasn't like that at the last convention I went to, was it? That was back in 1975, when August 1st, Fanfare III, and I all occurred in Toronto at the same time.

Toronto was all the rage in those days. For SF fans it was the moral equivalent of Paris in the Twenties. But it was not the easiest place in the world to get around in looking for a science fiction convention. Eventually I found the hotel, pulled my car into a parking lot across the street from it and shut off the engine. John Benson, Todd Bake and Mark Bernstein, my passengers and local Detroit fans, filed out and hauled their luggage out of the trunk; then they went ahead into the hotel. Meanwhile, I went over to the parking lot attendant and asked him what it would cost to keep my car there for the duration; he named a small fortune. I sighed, but paid him, and he, in turn, gave me a piece of shirt cardboard with some numbers stamped on it as a token of our agreement. I stuck it into my pocket and sauntered across the street into the hotel.

The King Edward Sheraton was situated on York Street, and may still be there, I dunno. At the time I was there, Toronto was a city in transition; a lot of shiny new glass and chrome buildings were rising up from the rubble of the old. And the King Edward Hotel was an old building. It was a vision of faded Canadian Victorian elegance with a few tawdry modern touches. The con was on the second floor, which was actually the third floor; I couldn't find the elevator, so I took the stairs. At the top of the third floor landing I ran into Leah, Marge and Diane, three Detroit femmefen at whom I had made futile passes in the past. They were going down. I know how that sounds. An amusing image, isn't it? Let's savor it awhile before going on.

So there I was at the big-ass convention; what now? I was stuck here for the next three days, so I might as well do something. I wandered over to the hucksters' room, met some people that I knew, talked with them for awhile, made a few insincere promises to write something for their magazines, and wandered off. In the art room I was accosted by a young man who told me that no one was allowed into the room without a name tag. You see, I hadn't gotten around to registering yet. I tried to explain to him that I would get around to it, but the little fascist was resolute, so I left.

I never did get around to registering. The little twerp had put me off of it. I was suddenly feeling very hostile. But it wasn't just the twerp, you know; all during the previous month my disposition had been growing steadily





worse. I think it had something to do with the fact that I was nearing thirty, but in any event I sure was on the rag.

Whenever I get into one of these moods, there is nothing for it but for me to stash myself into a corner and "ugh" it out of my system. So I found myself a chair in an obscure part of the lobby and dumped myself into it. Fortunately, the chair I had selected was located near the ladies' room, so I got to watch the girls on their way to the john. So I sat there, moping and observing the complex motions of halter tops until sometime in the evening, when I finally went upstairs to my room and moped around in there for the rest of the night. If this kind of behavior sounds petty to you, remember, I'm an artiste and allowed to have these little bouts of temperament.

The next day was Saturday. I got up around six and went back down to the con floor. People were sleeping on all of the couches. Everything else was covered with trash--crumpled potato chip bags, empty Coke cans, and beer bottles. I found one that was still half full, so I picked it up and drank. It was pretty flat. A stout gentleman entered the room and looked around at the mess; he was noticeably upset. He went over to a telephone and started complaining to someone on the other end.

My mood hadn't improved to any significant extent over yesterday; I was still feeling just as nasty as ever. The way I saw it, I had two options: I could cheer up and get with the spirit of the con, or I could spend the whole weekend in my room watching television. Then it struck me; there really wasn't anything holding me at the convention, and here I was in Toronto, one of the most fabulous cities in the Western Hemisphere. Who knew what wonders awaited on the street right outside the hotel? Maybe a walk around town would help dissolve some of my funk. It was worth a try.

At six-fifty-seven in the morning Toronto was a city of big empty buildings with scarcely anybody on the streets. Towering above all was the CNN tower, winking solemnly.

I wandered onto King Street, and about a block from the hotel I passed a building that had "Massage Parlour Figure Studio" stenciled on an upper story window. I paused and stared up at it. Maybe later.

Time passed; the city was beginning to show some signs of life. A trolley car came around the corner and chugged up the street. So did a few cars and trucks. People were beginning to fill up the sidewalks. A tall, very straight-looking gentleman came up to me and asked me how to get to a location on Yonge Street; apparently he had taken me for a Canadian. I should have told him that I was a stranger in town, myself, but, since I was feeling malicious, I made up some directions that I hoped would get him hopelessly lost. I wandered up York Street where I met another man asking for directions. I was beginning to wonder if everybody was from out of town. Maybe nobody really lived in Toronto, after all. Maybe they just rent the city out on a nightly basis like some sort of huge motel.

At the end of York Street I came across a sort of plaza with a large fountain on the Queen Street side and the famous Toronto City Hall at the other end. An elevated walkway bordered the square and wound around the City Hall itself. To get a better view of things, I went up onto the walkway and took a look around. Directly in front of me was the City Hall building, consisting of two curved structures that rose up into the air to a great height; one was slightly taller than the other. Between these, at their common base, was a top-like building that reminded me of a flying saucer.

The plaza below me was full of people. Little old ladies wearing more clothes than should be comfortable, considering that it was turning into a very warm day, were sitting around the fountain chattering and waving their arms in the air. Nearby were a bunch of old men who were comparatively inert. At one end of the fountain, which was rectangular, four concrete arches had been erected as decorations. A boy, maybe eight or nine years old, had climbed to the top of one of these arches, where he was leaping up and down and shouting

excitedly. At the bottom of the arch, a middle-aged man was shouting just as excitedly at the kid.

As I stood there looking out over the courtyard I wondered what was going on back at the convention. Probably a bunch of people were standing around chanting "smooth" or "lime jello" or something like that; you know how fans are. I decided I still wasn't quite ready to face that yet, so I made my way out to University Avenue. I followed University to Dundas Street where I met a beggar who asked me for a "dime or something for coffee." When I refused he became very angry and called me a blockhead. That scared me a little, and even though I had never heard of anyone being attacked by a beggar I didn't care to risk making a first, so I got away from him as fast as I could.

I headed up McCaul Street and found myself passing through the University of Toronto campus, where I saw three Japanese girls taking turns photographing each other. At the end of McCaul I turned right and found myself in University Park, which was crowded with people, most of them black; but this was Toronto, not Detroit, so I wasn't too worried. Music started coming from somewhere, so I looked around. In the back of a pick-up truck a group of men without shirts (or hats) were playing on guitars, trumpets, and various other musical instruments. This was the first time I had ever heard reggae music. And it was awful.

By now I was starting to feel like I'd stepped into a scene from "Black Orpheus," for plainly I had come upon some sort of carnival.

The truck moved out into University Avenue, followed by a bunch of people in fantastic costumes who were carrying huge flowers made out of paper-mache and signs that said "Everything is Beautiful." Well, everyone is entitled to his opinion, I suppose. After the first truck and its attendant mob had moved well down the street, another truck and another band came into view. These musicians were a little bit better than the others and they were dressed in natty devil costumes. There was a big banner on the side of their truck that announced "Hell's Kingdom," and all around it was a swarm of people, also dressed in devil suits, who were dancing and carrying on like maniacs.

Someone came up and slapped something into my hand. For a brief panicky moment I feared he was trying to sell me drugs. Unfortunately it turned out merely to be a little newspaper called "The Islander." Reading a bit of the front page, I found out that all these carryings-on were in celebration of something called "Caribaena." It turns out that Toronto has a large West Indian ethnic community. The year before they had had a Caribaena celebration as part of Toronto's bicentennial and the party was still going on.

University Avenue is very broad with an island in the center that extends most of the length of the street. All along this island there are shrubs and benches and statues and small fountains. People were swarming all over now, dancing on the benches, climbing on the statues and splashing around in the fountains. I paused to stare with considerable interest at a girl in a thoroughly soaked tee-shirt. Several other trucks, bands, and dancers passed by and as soon as the last group did so, the crowd surged out after them. I was carried along like a bit of flotsam in a fast-moving stream. I was swept into an eddy and flung onto King Street where I ran into my Detroit friends, who took me to lunch.

The rest of the convention was nice, but uneventful. Saturday night I went up to my room early, watched Burt Lancaster on the tube, and took some notes on what I'd seen that morning. That was nine years ago, and in all that time, I haven't been able to build up enough interest to go to another convention. Maybe I'm just not the con-going type. But I would like to meet Dan someday, as I've said, so maybe...


Just don't look for me in the hotel.

--Gary Hubbard



by jeanne

# cal column



SEVERAL OF YOU FANS have asked me, "What is it with you and TRAP DOOR? Are you an editor, or what?" And my answer is, "Nope." Those of you who have received written communications from me will understand. I don't have a typer. Robert is even more of a perfectionist than I. I just read the mail and occasionally make suggestions, like "Oh, get a job," which are usually heard and ignored. "An agent in Britain? Too complicated."

Others have wondered why I did nothing in the last issue. Well, I didn't know what to say for a couple of months and then there was the accident. Things are okay now, and my jaw's loose, so you can all stop speculating about rifts in the Glen Ellen meta-mind. Yes, indeed, member (active): fwa.

You will be expecting some sort of Corflu report, right? So here's my "I'm here at the con but I don't believe my eyes" story. In the consuite it was Morningstar and husband and we talked about midwest fans and normalcy. People being married, wanting to have children, and now, even, going to church. I looked into the smoking room. I saw Dick Ellington, Terry Carr, Robert Lichtman, Dave Rike, Bill Bowers, Dave Hartwell, Ted White, Art Widner, and it seemed many more (but wasn't). All in a circle, all talking fan. I couldn't go in. I stopped in the doorway. Several times I stood looking in and finally said, "I don't think I can handle this." I was midway out of the suite when I heard my name and Terry Carr insulted me until I must needs come sit and join them. "It's all this gray hair," I muttered. Dick continued to attempt to convince Ted that he had actually been published in time to belong to, er, First Fandom. In 1938 a local newspaper printed a book review Dick had written when he was nine years old.

If you want a more personal Corflu report send me an earring and your address to reserve your copy of the forthcoming one-shot, PUNK DYKES ON DOPE. And before you lick the envelope shut, consider helping me with my Honest Appeal chain letter. It works like this. You won't get lucky or end the nuclear arms race or be blessed by a slew, nay, deluge of dollar bills in your mail box. You won't have to concentrate while I explain how to put your name in the first place, juggle three others, send money to the second from the bottom, and then make twenty copies. No promises or threats, golden, platinum, or universal peace. No thank you notes either.

Simply put my name on the list. Send me \$5.00 at any (or all) of my addresses. Make copies for all your friends. Have them send me \$5.00 and do the same with their friends. You see, it's really an experiment, a scientific inquiry. Can I get rich through science with little effort? (And no schooling.) Let's find out. (Addresses follow.)

Is my spring fever obvious yet? Rich Coad wants to know about the wonderful social gaffe I made the other day. I was asked how I was. You know, a polite "How's it going?" and I told the truth. Again. "Can't complain, ya know, but if I did I'd say I wasn't getting laid enough." My correspondent wasn't amused. He let me know he was too close to being a total stranger to be comfortable with such, ah, intimate detail. He also assured me that it didn't fall off if it didn't get used. Which led me to think that many such common phrases about self and sexuality involve an organ that could be dangling in the first place. What I could think of for myself was maybe I'd dry out and shrivel up or gum up tight. But mine can't drop off. I don't know of enough good common phrases for female masturbation: jerk and beat off don't make it, rubbin' the nubbin is just too cute. Well, that tells you I've been out of feminist circles for far too long.

I gave myself two, three hours of rock videos in a spike of the fever. Bad music, trash phantasies. My momma once said I might calm down a little if I didn't listen to fast AM radio junk music. She ain't seen the videos. Anyhow, it's been six months since I've watched these mental munchies. And it's like I was saying, I've got these wild teenage rumblings in the basement of my soul and they's gotta get loose.

The women in those videos either wear tennis shoes, jeans, and shag hair cut with mousse and black eyeliner in perpetual mess, or wear '50s chic with gloves. They don't have well-developed arm muscles. Legs, sure, interesting bodies, but without well-defined hoisting muscles like biceps. Like mine, which delight me. Jeanne Gomoll's talk of weight lifting coincided with my noticing that mothering has built more than stamina, patience and lung capacity in me.

So I dyed my hair. Blonde on blonde. No one noticed. I mean, I told Robert and he said, "Yeah, I thought something was different." Heck, my roots aren't even growing in black. It's back to toy airplanes in my ears. If only someone would make plastic jelly bean, or M&M, or Gummi Bear earrings. I'm ready to get get a Gummi Worm and thread it on a paper clip and make some of my kind of ear clips. Those rambunctious blues...

They've leaked out when I call people I know with phone machines. I know they listen for your message and then decide whether to pick up the phone and answer. So I start talking as soon as the machine does (unless it's a new recording). I don't talk nice until the beep. Then I return to civility and--my favorite--give my number as slowly and clearly as I can. I mimic the "person" from Information, say "that number again is" and repeat it. I have recovered enough self-control (reading Miss Manners helped) to stop talking for as long as I can on the machines that allow monologues.

\*Beep\*

--Jeanne Bowman

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# LETTER COLUMN



GARY HUBBARD As a big Kinney fan, and as fandom's resident UFOlogist, I found Jay's cover particularly poignant. That pictured UFO from the Pleiades looks more like a toy tank with the gun barrel removed to me, but I believe Jay was trying to depict the George Adamski dinner plate and coffee can space ship that has virtually become the Model T of the flying saucers.

Saucers, you know, have been of abiding interest to me even though I know the whole thing is hogwash. They are the stuff of folklore, like the hoopsnake or the basilisk. I've been a skeptic ever since I was 14, but, vet, UFOs have a glamour that I can't get out of my system. It's too bad that most of the UFO literature is of such a low grade of quality. What it lacks in veracity, it could at least make up for by being entertaining.

Recently, I came into possession of two books on the subject that are a bit more readable than most; two old classics of UFO folklore: Behind the Flying Saucers by Frank Scully and They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers by Grey Baker. Together, they only cost me \$34.95. I call these books "classics" for a couple of reasons. First, as I mentioned above, they are more readable than most--although Scully gets a bit tedious at times--and, secondly, these two books contain a lot of stuff that has come down to us as UFO archetypes. They represent the Homer and Hesiod of UFO mythology. Scully gave us the Little Green Men and the famous government cover-up. Baker took the cover-up business one step better by introducing the Men in Black, that infamous trio of government agents who--in the '50s--went around trying to hush up UFO investigations. They are still around, by the way, and still scaring the bejesus out of saucer fans, although they must surely be eligible for retirement by now.

Another interesting thing about Baker's book is his description of the early days of UFO fandom. There was a UFO fandom, you know, and it was very much like SF fandom. In fact, a lot of the original saucer fans were SF fans, Shaverites for whom saucers held more possibilities than stim-rays did. And they brought with them all the special methods of communicating that they had learned as fans; they published fanzines, organized conventions, feuded, and all that.

Speaking of the Shaver Mystery, it is featured prominently in both these books, especially Baker's. SM is all but forgotten today, even in UFO circles, but it was quite a thing in its day. There were even a few Shaver Mystery fanzines published, I understand. (Might make interesting reading if any could be found.) The connection between SM and UFOs is interesting because Ray Palmer, the famous Amazing editor, was heavily involved in promoting both crazes. In fact, I'd go as far as to say that the first saucer flap was just a spin-off of the Shaver Mystery.

Actually, the saucers may soon have a rival in their neighborhood. I recently read an article about the stealth fighter, or F-19 as it's known. According to this story, once a month a fleet of Air Force transport planes land under cover of darkness at the Lockheed plant there in California where several canvas-shrouded planes are loaded onto them. Then they are flown out to secret bases in Nevada for testing. The story goes on to say that Reagan was prepared to unveil the F-19 if it looked like Mondale had a chance of winning the election. But as he didn't, the stealth plane remains shrouded in mystery as it streaks through the skies of America. It's just a story, of course, but who knows? Maybe the next time you see a UFO, it'll be one of ours.

I have to take exception to Chester Anderson over his statement that slaves have always

worn short hair, but free men long hair. Well, Mr. Know-It-All Anderson, not all of us were graced with long, flowing tresses. I started going bald in my late twenties thanks to a gene I got from my mother. At first I tried growing what was left long with the hope that it would make me look like Ben Franklin, but I turned out looking more like Bozo the Clown, instead. So I cut it all off, and, you know, it's a funny thing, but I finally started getting laid after I did. Length of hair is no index of a man's freedom. Besides, what good is freedom if you can't get laid?

Chester's conversation with the kid at the Democratic convention who wanted to know about the gay life in San Francisco was thought-provoking. I suppose Frisco holds some interesting temptations for visitors, and not just teenaged Democrats with tendencies, either. I mean, imagine some straight arrow who's lived all his life in a place where they only eat hamburger who suddenly finds himself in a place where they serve hot dogs.  
(4622 Green Acre, Kalamazoo MI 49009)

GARY DEINDORFER The cover cartoon is really funny, something true of Jay Kinney's work, that it evokes yocks and not merely smiles. It appears to have been done with computer graphics. If not, it is a good simulation of computer graphics. It gets your magazine off to a momentous start, promising hilarity and fun within.

Chester Anderson is not a legendary figure to me. I don't revere hippie eminences much. But as a writer for TRAP DOOR I like his work. His conreport is one of the better ones of those I have read recently. It gives me a new perspective on this convention I saw more of on TV than I intended to. Perhaps the Dems made a mistake holding their convention in San Francisco, choosing the most radical city in the US. Sounds as though SF has become even stranger than it was when I lived there. People there seem to think the whole country is as gonzo and fairified as they are but it's not, which the Republicans had in mind by choosing conservative Dallas for their worldcon. The most enlightening insight I got from Chester is that the Dems at the con are as out of touch with the rank and file of the country as the Republicans are. Part of why the Dems lost. Mainly, this is writing in the personal essay mode that we can be thankful there are fanzines to publish.

Take ordinary life and transfigure it into a genteel personal essay. That is an idea whose time has come. Paul Williams is one of the best at doing this. But it is not that often that he writes about fannish topics as such, which he has done this time in "We Never Sleep." He is light, deft, wry, spidery. Perhaps those adjectives are arbitrary. I think they are. They are what comes to mind for me. He makes neat, incisive satirical points from the perspective of detached sanity. Yes, maybe he does that. And maybe Avedon Carol should go to bed with D. West. I like the idea of astral fanning since I don't get to conventions. It is just as well that Paul has handled many ideas briefly rather than spinning them out to turgid length. Maybe one of the things that would heal Fandom nowadays is if some of the feuders got into brevity.

I have to sympathize with Redd Boggs' positional statement. I don't much want to be identified with science fiction either. I hardly ever read it. I almost never like SF movies. I am a member of the core fandom and for me SF doesn't even need to be a pretext to have something to talk or write about. I don't know what that leaves me. A human being, of sorts. A member of some kind of "tribe," as John D. Berry calls it all the time. But not a science fiction fan anymore. Maybe a gentleman amateur, though that suggests "Masterpiece Theatre" and old men in red coats chasing a fox. I know...it is that I am Beyond Labels. You can't pin me down. I am, ah, protean. Yes, that's it. I think I've got it now. But science fiction means nearly nothing to me anymore. It has become...debased. Yes, it has lost its primal purity now that it is the thoughtdreams of the average 10 year old kid. So you have enough of us old time fans who don't care anymore about science fiction and you see why fannish fandom is being inundated by tidal waves of young, fresh, snotty, vital, virile, proletarian media fandoms. We have become effete, cut off from our nourishing roots, and all we have left is to make favorable remarks upon the lost art of the personal essay as exemplified by certain masters in The New Yorker in its heyday.

I don't know of any fan who ever managed to break into The New Yorker. Why doesn't the core fannish fandom group with its sparkling personal essayists and cartoonists make a concerted effort to get published in that magazine and eventually take it over and make a fannish fanzine out of it? (447 Bellevue Ave #9B, Trenton NJ 08618)



TOM PERRY I do like your notion of keeping the fannish folk memory alive. Let's not forget, though, that feuds were part of the stuff of fandom from the start. The Immortal Storm has been validated now by a dozen or so corroborating texts of the same era, and of course there's Ah! Sweet Idioty! and the Degler stuff and so on. Somehow we need to vasten the degree on which fandom's energy arises from burning controversy. That isn't all there is to it, to be sure, but it is a part. Most of us have been involved in a fan feud one time or another and can testify that when you're in the grip of it--churning out letters and whole fanzines with midnight passion--it is as overpowering as sex. I don't want to go so far as to suggest that Feuds Are The Health Of Fandom as Clausewitz (or someone) once said "War is the health of the state," but surely controversy has been with us from the beginning, in the letter columns of Gernsback's mags and the battles over the commercialism of his SFL.

The notion of a conreport on a Democratic convention was a nice one, but I'm sorry to say I don't believe Chester Anderson carried it off very well. All his anecdotes seem blunted and the whole thing rather pointless. I can't figure out why he would bother to vote for Mondale against Reagan, as he said he planned to, if he can't see more difference between them than he claims here. Equating the life of a homosexual today in the US to that of a Jew in Germany in 1938 is such a ghastly distortion that good taste ought to militate against it even if good sense does not. It all seems to crystalize in his attitude towards short hair. He's free to wear long hair if he likes, but I bet he sees his hairdresser more often and pays more than I do. "Slaves have always worn short hair, free men long"? Bullshit! Hasn't he ever heard of the Roundheads? Doesn't he know that college boys once shocked elders by imitating the short haircuts of convicts and soldiers? And that the big change "26 years" ago (which must be when he noticed it) was just another swing of the fashion pendulum starting? What Anderson might do well to reflect upon is how much more effective a party of minorities could be if each minority could restrain its own rabid intolerance.

I think he's wrong about Chicago in '68, too. I don't recall anyone so stupid naive as to think they were going to "enjoy Act Two of the Summer of Love, and possibly to end the Vietnam War"--at least not among those of us who left for Chicago from New York. At that point, Kennedy was dead and Gene McCarthy clearly had a Chinaman's chance and Humphrey could not escape from LBJ's apron strings, and the most we could do was register a protest. Nor did we think the city would welcome us. The requested parade permits had been denied and only an optimist on acid would think appeals in that city were likely to reverse that decision.

None of this was secret, either--it was not only in the daily press but in the leftist journals and fliers. The leaders may not have expected tanks and helicopters and nationalized militia, but I know they expected tear gas and cops' "batons" because they were telling people what to do about them when they came. The people they told should have expected 'em, too.

And mess though it was, I know of nothing to justify the claim that what happened at the Democratic convention had anything to do with sending Nixon to the White House. Polls at that time shows that most of the public didn't particularly mind that the Chicago cops beat up "phreaks" (probably more approved than would admit it). Humphrey came close to beating Tricky, and anyway they were both running on promises to end the war, cha cha cha. "Hippies did that!"--nah, Americans just won't buy the same lie from the same party twice in a row, all other things being equal...which of course they weren't in '72 or '84.

I wound up in a hospital with near fatal wounds during Convention Week in Chicago '68, and have had a lot of time to think over what was risked vs. what was gained. Conclusion: a lot, and not much. To that end, I think all the people who didn't show up at the anti-Klan rally showed smarts. I would have done the same thing. Come to think of it, I did. (PO Box 2134, Boca Raton FL 33427)

GARY MATTINGLY Chester Anderson's remark, "Slaves have always worn short hair, free men long" seemed one of the more ridiculous ones I've heard of late. Times and styles change. Rednecks in the midwest and south now have long hair although a peace-loving few with long hair also still do exist. When you see a male with long hair through the back window (with the gun rack) of the pick-up truck careening down mainstreet with a drunk wearing long hair, images of peace and love do not fill my mind.

I value my own experiences but rarely do I find them interesting enough to write about.

More often than not my experiences are just like everyone else's and I don't really want to read about my experiences again and again and again. (I just finished reading my nth convention/restaurant/funny story and I'm still uncertain whether or not I needed to read the first such story.) Also I like feeling bad. It's quite entertaining. When I'm feeling good, it's usually due to physical pleasure. During such time, I'm not really thinking that much because I'm mainly just feeling, and also it's not something about which I would normally write. I also feel good when I pass a test remarkably well, in or out of class, and I don't think it's in good taste to go on about one's successes; therefore I don't wish to write about that. Therefore I don't usually write about good times. Also the other good times don't come out on the page in the same blissful light as when they actually occurred or in my memory.

Of late my grouchy interior has surfaced more than the usual seemingly bashful silence (often more a matter of disgruntled humor and an experienced certainty that if I open my mouth my foot will immediately disappear through it and down my throat). Of course there's also the little facet of fandom called talking very fast and being sure to hog the conversation as much as possible. It usually takes several seconds just for me to start to pronounce the words by which time innumerable sentences have gone by and no such interminable gaps have appeared. It takes me 30 minutes to think up a good response anyway. Of course 25 of the 30 minutes may have been taken up with others' bad responses. Oh well. Golden silence is not around much these days. People keep trying to impinge upon it.  
(7501 Honey Court, Dublin CA 94568)

ROBERT BLOCH My thanks for TD3, which contains much food for thought--some of which is still stuck in my teeth. Also a couple of things that stick in my craw, like Anderson's flat-out revelation that "slaves have always worn short hair, free men long." I'd like to see a little historical validation for that statement, perhaps including an explanation of why Egyptian pharaohs, nobility and priestcraft all had shorn heads while the "fellaheen"--like all the brutish serfs of medieval England and continental Europe, plus the entire Slavic slavedom--had long hair. A goodly percentage were also bearded.

And as long as I'm leery of generalizations, might as well have at that question about whether "sex is better at cons." The real point is--"compared to what"? I've been to a lot of cons in my day (and my night, too) and I can tell you from personal experience that sex is better than filksinging, video-gaming, or watching the Star Trek Bloopers film. Whether or not it's better than listening to Rotsler on "The Art of Flirting," I very much doubt.  
(2111 Sunset Crest Drive, Los Angeles CA 90046)

MICHAEL ASHLEY People tend to think I only slag fanzines off so keep this quiet to protect the image--I thought TRAP DOOR #3 was excellent. As Paul Skelton points out, British fanzines are a pretty dull affair at the moment, so TD was a useful corrective to the notion that fanzines are necessarily poorly written and devoid of substance.

Particularly fine was Chester Anderson's article, the sentiments of which I was sympathetic towards despite having no real knowledge of US party politics. If anything, though, I'm more cynical than he is. At one point he says of politicians, "They have entered electoral politics for money and for power, not to further the goals of the Constitution and Thos. Jefferson et al., and certainly neither to protect nor to represent us." Well yes, this is true but so far as I know this is the normal state of affairs. I don't--and never have--expected a politician to act 'decently' and put what's best in front of the aims of himself or his party. Anyone who expected otherwise I would treat as ludicrously naive or idealistic. My own views I would regard, not as cynical, but purely realistic. Again, a while back in a British fanzine called WALLBANGER someone wrote about how great our heritage of democracy was and how we ought to Be Proud and Hold On To It. I was genuinely surprised to find someone believing this and wrote back suggesting that to all intents and purposes Britain is a pretty undemocratic country. Possibly it's depressing to have no political ideals at my age (22) but that's the way it is.

Saying which, I'm not ruling out other ideals--which brings me to Debbie Notkin's letter. For some reason, she lumps together EST, Christianity, Scientology, and Marxism (she even adds "etc."--I have no idea what's included in that) as if they were vaguely similar. Unfortunately, they're simply too complex to make glib generalisations about. She then



suggests that there are two fallacies: "A) There is such a thing as An Answer; B) We can give it to you." Various things are wrong here. Firstly, D. Notkin doesn't know that there isn't an answer, any more than I do. Secondly, if you genuinely feel that you do have "An Answer," a belief to live by, then you are going to try and convert other people (by your own ideals, it would be wrong not to). Thirdly, to suggest that there isn't "An Answer" is --in its own way-- "An Answer." (Something I've found recently is that those people who pride themselves on an "open mind" are actually curiously narrow minded; they refuse to believe in anything.) (86 St. James Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 2DB, UK)

LEIGH EDMONDS That piece by Chester Anderson was one of the best pieces of writing--in the style discussed by Eric Mayer et al in the letter column--that I've seen for some time. Not only does it say the usual interesting things about politics and Chester Anderson, it says something about the ordering of society and the human cortex. Now, they don't write much stuff like that these days. I suppose that "the new pragmatics" does away with much of this kind of insight stuff. It also makes one aware that things are about as crook in the US as they are here--the Australian Labor Party had its national conference around the road from here and it was interesting to see that all the blue-suited delegates were inside and the less conservatively dressed members were outside protesting about what was going on on the inside, the unfortunate nature of which I won't bore you with. The difference is that it seems while the Democrats put up the public front at their convention, the ALP show all their dirty linen at theirs, which is probably why such events are so popular.

After all these years I can now inform Chuck Harris that his lack of success at cricket probably only came from his trouble with field placemats or problems with geometry. Everybody knows that slips and silly mid on are 180° apart from each other on the field. When I used to play cricket they used to put me out on the fence where the rest of the team and I could happily forget about each other. I never quite got to the stage of taking a Doc Smith book with me. But for a sci-fi fan cricket has definite advantages over baseball. In cricket the batsman has 360° in which to hit the ball and thus there is much less chance of it coming in your direction. And since there is generally only one inning, a cunning person can conspire to only have to face one ball before finding themselves heading back to the companionship of Robert Heinlein or somebody similar.

If one is statistically minded there is plenty to keep one interested in cricket, and if it weren't for fandom I'm sure that I'd enjoy being a scorer. But cricket statistics are much more in the historical vein. Commentators never tire of chattering on about how the current 7th nicket partnership is the 5th best played by two left-handers facing an all-pace West Indian attack on that particular ground since the memorable match in 1953 when, as everybody will recall, it rained for 47 minutes in the last session of play. But I won't bore you with cricket since I can assure you that I find baseball an unutterably tedious matter to contemplate. (PO Box 433, Civic Square ACT 2608, Australia)



STEVE GREEN Chester Anderson's excellent overview of the Democrat party ~~catalist~~ conference put me in mind (a rare occurrence; I'm normally out of it) of the time I saw the Margaret Thatcher fan club in action during the last general election (ironically, the dispatch of the Belgrano had made her campaign unsinkable by then even if that ill-fated vessel was not). The event bore less resemblance to democracy in action than the star attraction at Barnum & Bailey's. This unswerving movement towards personality politics, even more noticeable I'm sorry to say in your own country's choice of 'leader,' is a justifiable cause for concern throughout the world. Nixon knew the nightmarish power of television, but it has taken until Reagan for the nightmare to be realized. (11 Fox Green Crescent, Acocks Green, Birmingham B27 7SD, UK)

AVEDON CAROL The best is Chester Anderson. Wow! This is so good, and I hardly know whether I can say anything to do it justice. It's just...it was marvelous. And that's a bit moving, the part where the kid comes up and asks about the, um, y'know, I mean, about the gay community (...?). (But you know, Chester, it's more than everyone going through "phases." I think being gay is more a matter of identity than of sexuality anyway--most of us are just degrees of straight, and even a lot of that is more a matter of opportunity than inclination. Sometimes it's just that you are attracted to the people, and sometimes the people are members of your own sex, and sometimes they aren't. But how you think of yourself, and how you deal with it--like whether you are out-of-the-closet, or activist, or whatever--that's what makes it a part of your identity. If you're absolutely bound and determined to be Straight-By-God-If-It-Kills-Me, then maybe you are.)

I know what Redd Boggs means, I think. I've had a good time at some of the movies I've been to lately that were supposed to be SF films, but I usually ended saying something like, "But it isn't SF--I want to see 'The Day The Earth Stood Still'" again. And sometimes--as with the most recent example I saw ("Dune"), I wind up shaking my head and clutching my belly and wondering why it was thought necessary to make it all so distractingly gruesome. And when I first got into fandom, we used to talk a lot about the potential of the human race, given the limits and/or reasonable potential of technology as we know it, but someone told me it wasn't fannish to talk about stuff like that. (4409 Woodfield Road, Kensington MD 20895)

DAVE WOOD Worrying times when a fan has to start examining his navel because of the flickering doubt that he may no longer be a true SF fan...I too suffer these moments of anguish. Times like when I find myself unable to plow through the latest work being hailed as the current state of the art. My heart sinks and I get this overwhelming fear that I'm just a dull old philistine when I despair at the third attempt to turn yet another page of a book which arrives complete with dust-jacket accolade of the "impressive...a signpost to SF's literary future" variety. My eyes glaze over and the livery freckles pulsate with a dull red glow when I find myself up against another "stellar publishing event." I can no longer face "Book one of a new fantasy series...an Awe-Inspiring Tale of Worlds Beyond Our Own." Some strange allergy always attacks my left sinus and causes weeping eye when I try to tackle a "witty romantic fantasy in the tradition of Marion Zimmer Bradley and Katherine Kurtz." (Tell me, wasn't there a time when they were in the best tradition of some obscure Oxford don?) Even now my nerves are screaming from a sudden attack of "a meteoric talent whose works have illumined SF."

And let's be honest, at the same time as I am cringing at this turgidity, I find no problems coping with, say, Graham Greene's Ways of Escape, Ronald Firbank's Valmouth, Bob Holdstock's Mythago Wood, and the latest letter from Joseph Nicholas. So there must be something wrong in the state of Dellberk...

There used to be that something called "A Sense of Wonder"; I suspect that was the result of rather insignificant writing. But where are the Gullie Foyles today? Ah, for another Hodge Backmaker or Horton Bluett to set my imagination tumbling. I get the impression that nowadays the only way people can get that "sense of strange" is if it hits them between the eyes backed by a mega-dollar hype. In some ways the present cult of SF related ideas dominating the media is akin to the hold the western once had: truly Bat Masterson has come forth blasters ablazing. Sigh. (1 Friary Close, Marine Hill, Clevedon, Avon BS21 7QA, UK)

HARRY WARNER JR. I wish sometimes fandom were structured enough to create a "third fan in" regulation like the one the National Hockey League established four or five years ago. Too many hockey games were slowed by brawls when a player from team A and a player from team B began throwing punches, a buddy of the player from team A came to his assistance, another player from team B rushed to equalize the two-against-one unfairness, and then the benches emptied. Under the current rule, the third man in the fight gets penalized more severely than the ones who start it. The original fighters normally receive similar two-minute or five-minute terms in the penalty box, giving neither team an advantage, but the third man in is automatically ejected from the game, costing his team the services of one player, possibly an important one. Mass brawls have become rare since the rule went into effect. In fandom, feuds wouldn't be serious if only the fans originally involved went at it against one another; it's the injection of fresh ink as other fans get involved that causes



the feuds to grow more nasty and last longer. Sometimes, of course, it's almost impossible to prevent a feud from engulfing much of fandom. That's what happened when the Boondoggle smashed up fandom: since it consisted of an attempt to ostracize a fan from fandom, a fan who wanted no part of the feud could be counted on one side or the other, depending on whether he was known to have any contact with the controversial storm center or not.

I must side with Redd Boggs in what he writes about most modern science fiction. Has anyone theorized that today's science fiction must be mostly badly written and conceived because it's selling so well, while the science fiction of the 1930s and 1940s must have been marvelous stuff because hardly anyone bought it?

Terry Carr is so right about the decline of the conreport as an art form. Almost all the information about cons I used in my two long fan histories came from conreports. Now I wonder how someone undertaking a history of fandom in the 1970s, for instance, could gather enough information to cover comprehensively all of its cons. Program books provide little help other than identifying the con committee, site, guests of honor, and general nature of the programming. Is anyone in fandom possesses of a memory so good that he or she can remember more than a few scattered specific incidents and link them to the cons to which they belonged during the 1970s? Some of the larger cons received brief descriptions in the newszines, but what of the dozens of smaller ones? And where would you find, for example, anecdotes and unusual sidelights about each of the Philcons during the 1970s?

Paul Skelton's letter was delightful. I appreciated so much his analysis of baseball that I'm going to cater to his interest in the series of Heidi books, and send him my prized copy of "Heidi Vacations on Gor." And I'm surprised to learn from your comment on Mal Ashworth's letter that Burb told the Watermelon Story at the worldcon. I thought the Supreme Court had ruled against it. (423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown MD 21740)

ERIC MAYER I had to laugh reading Paul Williams' line, "...everyone attends conventions, whether they're there or not." How true. For years I've tried to make a virtue out of my necessary convention abstinence. Two years ago, however, Taral borrowed some GROGGYS for display in an art show he put on at the Worldcon. I don't know whether my fanzine covers were any more comfortable attending than I would've been, but then they had no choice. I suppose, as laborious as the printing of those zines was, there must have been just a bit of me there with them--some dried sweat that dripped onto the pages as I pulled them off the hectograph, praying the gel wouldn't rip loose from the pan, maybe. This last year was even worse, of course. From what I've heard my ghost has been stalking room parties. Mind you, I haven't had any real inking of this. Haven't dreamt of Ted White, for instance, although I have awakened several times with inexplicable hangovers, and in fact I've been awfully tired this year, as though I've spent the night walking around rather than sleeping. This convention projection appears to be a somewhat Hyde-like character, unfortunately. Apparently it is quite the opposite of what I'd be like were I there in the flesh--although it does have the advantage, so I gather, of not cowering in a corner at the approach of more than two people. I have to admit, I've heard only rumors. I don't know myself what the thing is really up to, what Machiavellian schemes it's hatched to purge fandom. Maybe it'll write a convention report someday.

Enjoyed Redd Boggs. I guess I'm even less a fan than he is though. Not only haven't I read Hugo or Nebula winners lately, I don't even want to talk about Yngvi. Oh, Yngvi and Roscoe and FooFoo are kind of amusing, but those are the games Redd and his friends made up. It's one thing to play the games you made up, another thing to play the games others have already made up for you. I think fandom would be more fun, maybe was more fun, before it was all invented. It must have been great to make it all up. (It was fun making it all up, Eric, and it's still fun. Fandom is created anew with each new ish we pub, each new room party we attend at a convention, each local party or club meeting we attend. None of these activities are mutually exclusive, you don't have to do them all to be a part of it, and we all mutually do it as we go along. Including you...and since you write of them, Kathy, Tristan and Fleur. Keep up the good work inventing with us all.)

Chester Anderson's article was great. It elicits few comments from me though because I consider politics a spectator sport, mainly for the reason Chester so brilliantly and bluntly sets forth at the end: "They are not our friends." During the election the New York

Post kept harping on how rich Geraldine Ferraro was, how shady her husband's business deals were, etc., etc., etc. I had to yawn. Has anyone ever heard of a poor politician? The day someone who can't even afford to get his car fixed when it breaks down runs for president, I'll vote. Until then I assume that politicians and I are separated by an uncrossable gulf. (1771 Ridge Road East, Rochester NY 14622)

BERNADETTE BOSKY I liked Williams' Marvell-ous reference to "vaster than empires and more slow," coyly introduced into such a fine and private place as a fanzine. Do I get the free subscription to his N'apazine? If I do, I will even be willing to forego discussion of how the zine title (VEGETABLE LOVE) was, in the original poem, a reference not to the actual plant kingdom, but to one of the four faculties of the soul in medieval philosophy (as laid down, I believe though I am open to correction, by Aristotle); and how Sir Thomas Browne uses the recapitulation of the four faculties by the human embryo to show that man is quite literally a microcosm. Certainly the postage sending me the zine is a small price to pay for that, now.

Despite Bruce Arthurs' good argument, I think that sex at conventions often is better, apart from availability. Because of enjoyable, enthusiastic meetings with friends and discussion of ideas, energy is high, and that's bound to be reflected with one's partner, new or familiar. I remember one Lunacon at which Arthur and I arrived separately, since I had to teach that Friday afternoon but he could leave early; I described the event later as, "Right as soon as I got to the hotel, I met this wonderful man; we went right up to his room, and spent the whole weekend either socializing together or screwing like minks." And so it was. The fact that the man I met was my pledgemate and life-partner just made it that much better.

Of course, hotel rooms generally lack VCRs which, with the proper video-cassette, can help make things interesting; but I can even recall one exception to that, an adjunct to the other sacraments at a GetHi Knights meeting last year at Lunacon. All the ~~petrifications~~ comforts of home. (919 W Markham Avenue, Durham NC 27701)

DAVID STEVER One thing that you almost hit on in "Doorway" is the idea of some of those better known fannish names--the Teds, Patricks, Richards, and Eric's of this crowded pond--supplying the rest of us more normal types with dinner conversation. It gave me pause to realize that in my crowd (shall I name names?--let's just say that Cvetko's and my Group Minds know each other very well) those people and others really do keep us supplied with hours of sparkling conversation and sniggering giggle fits.

That is really important, you know. We have all gone through those times when we come to discover whether or not We Are Normal. Fans being the social cripples that we are, the answer that usually comes up is that we're not normal, not at all. (Go to any convention and look around you; that group of fellows over there that are all dressed like Indiana Jones can not possibly be normal, can they?) In any case, some fans have always been up to the second chance they get for acquiring charm and social graces, and manage to get some. These are the ones who are known by many well known fans, but are not known by large numbers of people in turn. These are the ones who hang around the edges of large groups, the ones who dress normally and discreetly, the ones who are laughing--sometimes out loud--at that group of Indiana Joneses and at that woman over there in the corner who is dressed like Princess Leia and who appears to have some sort of cinnamon bun or pastry over her ears.

These are the folks who are not taking any of these things very seriously. They're the ones from whom BeB gleaned the catchy little phrase, "Sixth Fandom Fandom," and the ones who can point out which ones have the nasty social diseases. They're the mentally mature ones who (irregardless of age) have chosen to no longer jam themselves eight into a hotel room and live off peanut butter for a weekend. I think that the ones who have stopped laughing at this circus are the ones who have clutched fandom to themselves so tightly that they are distressed when they find any element or odor not to their liking. The ones who are "working the edges," to use Joe Wesson's term, are the ones who were never satisfied with the package, but who have found that life does go on. They are the ones who will read Ted's and Eric's writings, Avedon's and Richard's writings, and they find something to laugh about, every time.

For FWA, I prefer the phonetic definition Fwa Why-tahs of Anah-wah-cah. One of the cells in my group mind has said that it seemed likely that it meant Foppish Whimps of America. I did chastise them, after I giggled about it. (788 Dayton Ave., St Paul MN 55104)



CREATH THORNE I found Eric Mayer's comments on the possibilities of the essay as a popular form of writing quite interesting. I do think that if you look around you can see any number of "essayistic" writers writing. Our local newspaper carries two local columns that are really personal essays; the New Yorker, for example, often prints personal accounts (alas, usually of people who have become Famous in other ways); and magazine journalism, in general, has a much stronger personal flavor to it than did such pieces written, say, back in the '50s for a mass-circulation mag like Collier's. So it seems to me that the approach of the essayist is still around but that the form is no longer popular, just as the popular short story is no longer read.

Eric blames all this on TV. That's all right; I suppose you can blame anything on TV. I don't know how anyone would ever prove or disprove that the personal essay disappeared because people watch TV. My own sense is that the disappearance stems, rather, from the more general disappearance of a middle-class literary culture, fairly unified and homogenous. I think there are lots of books and magazines still being read, but the audience for each seems more fragmented and isolated. I don't think one can, for example, rank-order novelists the way one could in the late '40s and early '50s. That literary consensus seems to be gone. And I think shorter forms of literary expression disappeared with it. (7537 Walnut, Kansas City MO 64114)

KEN RUDOLPH Yours is only the third or fourth fanzine I've received in the past 14 years.

I read every word. Does that mean that I am starved for fanac? Probably. Certainly I am and always have been the prototypical fan type alluded to in your lettercol, even if I'm in the throes of perpetual gafia. Oddly enough, even after all this time over half the names mentioned are familiar and most of the issues remain the same. Oh, there's no way I'm going to get involved in the current merry-go-round of faanish controversy; but it is comforting somehow to realize that the continuum has continued since I stepped off. And it's great to see that British fandom is so powerfully present in current fandom (eighth? tenth? twentieth?--just exactly where are we these days, anyway?). Even if the Brits show an appalling lack of appreciation for the subtleties of baseball.

I've been quietly playing in computer fandom for the past year. When are the SF fans going to discover the wonders of modern technology and begin distributing fanzines by modem? It is possible for large special interest groups to teleconference in real time for access charges (\$6 per hour and a local phone call on CompuServe, one of the international data utilities). I've been in typed conferences with people all over the US and Britain simultaneously. And electronic mail would allow the uploading of entire fanzines to hundreds of people internationally at very little cost to the sender (the receivers would have to pay their own access charges to get the zines--but could respond by E-mail immediately--and lettercols could be edited on computer without retyping!). All that is needed is a certain critical mass of computer/modem owning fanzine fans. The people who are using these facilities now are fairly illiterate and mostly into computer nattering and "compusex." Something like a personal or apa zine online would be like a breath of fresh air. (Well, many fanzines these days are done on word processing computers. What you describe above would probably work for an online apa or a round-robin letter exchange; but how would you transmit an ATom or Rotsler cartoon over the modem? And how would you account for differences in equipment in printing out the faned's layouts and designs? Many bugs to work out here, Ken!+) (6220 Hollymont Dr, Los Angeles 90068)

DARROLL PARDOE Debbie Notkin makes a comment which rings true to me. She says she writes to make connections, rather than to provide entertainment, and I suppose that's what I do too. Ideally a fanzine does both, but I think there can be a real difference in mental attitudes (and therefore in the words on the page) between someone who sets out to create a well-crafted piece of writing to delight the reader, whoever that reader may be, and a person whose fanzine is intended to facilitate the two-way communication between fans (what I usually call "networking").

These are artificial poles, of course, and most fans' intentions surely fall in between. But I'm sure you can think of examples of fans whose main intention seemed to be the creation of a fanzine excellent in content and appearance, to the exclusion of using it to make and maintain contacts with other fans. This often leads to the "bigger and better" syndrome and ultimate gafiation. (11B Cote Lea Square, Southgate, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2SA, UK)

JEFF SCHALLES Several weeks ago Avedon inquired as to fanac I might be up to of late, and I replied, "Well, I've been loocking TRAP DOOR." She snorted in derision, saying, "That's not enough! You're gafiated, if you have not noticed lately." Of course, I am not truly gafia. I talk to NYC fans nearly every day, even go to parties once in a while, though not as often as I did several years ago, when I had first just moved here and hadn't gotten as involved in playing in rock bands again, as I currently very much am. My new band is called "War Pigs." We do a punk tribute to Ozzie Osborne, playing old Black Sabbath songs at punk speed. We hope our energetic novelty set will get the attention of some of the NYC clubs. To quote Ozzie: "Isn't this fun? Yah ha ha ha ha!" (30-70 48 St #3A, LI City NY 11103)

JEAN YOUNG I loved Harry Warner's description of his upstairs rooms and the mental processes that went with wondering if he had a broken window. I also feel for his remarks about local newspapers, as I'm sure old "L" would, too. He ("L") had been movie-reviewing for the La Crosse Tribune (he is "Waukon correspondent" for the paper, covering Board and Council meetings, doing an occasional feature story), a job he had greatly desired and labored over intensely even though he lost money at it. Just before Christmas, they informed him that the paper was in hard times with finances and they were switching to wire service reviews. Of course, the real tiny hometown papers--the county-seat papers, the Decorah and Waukon papers (there's even one in Lansing, Iowa)--have local staff. Only someone who had lived in one of these poverty pockets forever and was stuck there would work for what they pay--or even for free, I expect, for the glory of the name in the paper.

Actually, I was the fat, slow kid with glasses who was never picked for baseball--or for anything else. Almost all my friends nowadays--especially the younger ones--are so healthy and athletic and great at sports and exercise, and had typical American childhoods and teenagedoms, cruising about, drinking, picking up members of the opposite sex. I've always felt cheated of not having a Typical American Teenagery.

I would guess that the "cute role reversals" Jane Hawkins contemplates are pretty common. Isn't a kind of Alterations of Generations a general facet of humanosociologicowockle behavior? I am, I suppose, employed by a Big Corporation (well, my boss is a medium-time mail contractor), indirectly anyway--hauling mail for the USPS--but my lifestyle is sort of Reformed Hippie Rural, while my daughter lives in the Urban East and is married to an upwardly mobile chemist-turned-management type at Wyeth's, the pillrollers. Even my son, the factory hand, Mr. Plain Folks Down Home, has just been promoted, and is clearly on an upward spiral. Mail haulers don't get promoted (to what, after all?).

Did I ever mention to you that, early in my "housemother to hippies" days, I went out to Beautiful California with two young hippie companions (one of them was sort of my "Ol' Man" for a while) and we drove up the coast, me without my glasses, which had been stolen out of my boot (right by my head) while I slept at night at a park in Yuma, Arizona; and everybody looked at the map and said, "Tassajara Hot Springs! We Gotta Go There," so we went, almost out of gas, and Lee, who was driving, decided to coast to save gas, and burned out the brakes on the way down; and we went up to the monastery to try to get some gas (that was Lee's idea of a suitable entree to a Zen monastery--but he was young then, and always stoned). We camped outside the monastery for three days. We did get a tour, and talked to some people. It seemed rather harsh to me at the time; especially it seemed cold. (The discipline of cold does nothing for me except produce hypothermia. I have tried and tried to warm myself using auto-suggestion, trances, will power--the vessels just don't do it.) I remember one day when Lee and Jamie were about their various soul-searchings and inner communings, cooking acorn mush over a fire, quite naked, and rather liking it (but this was at a sunny, warm noontime). One day we all three went for a long walk in the hills, me pretty much being led by the hand (I'd been induced to believe that my eyesight was improving without my "dependence" on my glasses--this belief was later dispelled when I found I couldn't read any road signs or billboards). Lee and I got separated from Jamie and got lost. We didn't get back to camp until 10 at night, stumbling through hills in the dark, and later by moonlight. I remember thinking that was oh, far out. I was 35 or 36 at the time.

I was particularly taken with the various interesting remarks in your lettercol: Alan Bostick on the vivid "reality" of "history and myth" (the '30s for Larry, f'rinstance--and even for me). "But it was like sharing a joint with History"--wonderful! And Bill Harris: "I've always been leery of being too happy; it just ain't natural, so I resisted." Yeah! (Also,



"Hear, hear.") And, most especially, Gary Deindorfer: "I think of fanwriting as wordage between consenting adults," my all-time (this issue anyway) favorite quote which I intend to steal and use locally to impress people with how clever I am. I love it. (Goes off muttering "wordage between consenting adults" and grumpily snickering, like Porkypine in Pogo of days gone by...) (RR#4, Box 47, Decorah IA 52101)

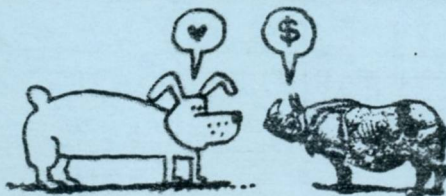
WALTER A WILLIS Suddenly, it seems, you have one helluva fanzine there. Even the real gone gaffate I live with, name of Madeleine (with whom you sneaked out ostensibly to buy a bottle of wine but arousing dark suspicions I have been harbouring for 23 years now) has remarked on it as has Chuck Harris in a letter today. I admired the editorial and the lettersection (Skelton & Harris the funniest, Deindorfer the most delightfully Deindorferish) but Paul Williams fought his corner valiantly even if some of his blows appeared to me to land on innocent bystanders. I liked his Have A Don Fund, though wondering exactly what we get to vote for. (32 Warren Road, Donaghadee NI BT21 0PD)

ANDREW MAIN {updating from last issue} Arizona's desert and mountains are wondrously beautiful, and Tucson is very pleasant for a city its size (ca 500,000), but soon it was clear it wasn't my place: I couldn't feel connected with the earth, and the fall weather (cool windy rain) wasn't enough different from California to be different enough. After a few months of helpful rest and pleasant exploration, I drove up to Santa Fe to look into a work possibility and check out the country. Right away I felt at home, despite confronting an unusually severe winter (January temperatures in November, and snow and ice everywhere). On returning to Tucson I knew it was time to make the move; I drove up again before Christmas with a load of belongings, then again at year's end, arriving finally and completely in Santa Fe on New Year's Eve.

After staying a week with a kind friend, I was connected by another friend with a perfect Santa Fe dwelling: a cozy semi-detached guest apartment, all built of adobe and rough wood beams, with a loft-bedroom and upper windows facing south, woodstove, just enough room for me and my kipple. It's located on an unpaved side street in the historical east side of town, just a block from the state capital and a ten-minute walk from the Plaza. Work materialized quickly also, starting again at the bottom at a local natural grocery.

Every now and then I pinch myself—I made it! I'm here! Mesas and sky and sun! Ups and downs for me here, but always I return to a feeling of staying here and making a home. Partly I'm just tired of moving, also I don't know where else I'd go. There are negative sides to anyplace--those here I think I can live with. Spring is coming. (NEW ADDRESS: Box 6384, Santa Fe NM 87502 ... (505) 982-0486)

"WE ALSO HEARD FROM": HARRY ANDRUSCHAK, BRUCE ARTHURS, RICHARD BERGERON, LINDA BLANCHARD, DAVID BRIDGES, BRIAN EARL BROWN, RICH BROWN, CALVIN DEMMON, DANIEL FARR, DONALD FRANSON, BILL GIBSON, ROB HANSEN, TERRY HUGHES, TERRY JEEVES, NEIL KADEN, ETHEL LINDSAY, IAN MAULE, JIM MEADOWS, PATRICK & TERESA NIELSEN HAYDEN (the latter writing under duress & more: "I'm writing from inside a cocoon made of three pairs of socks, four sweaters, a heavy wool blanket, a beach towel, and a large lidded pot full of hot water. There's ice on the insides of all the windows, all the bathroom plumbing (including, alas, the w.c.) has frozen solid, and as far as I can tell, even the cockroaches under the sink have died of exposure. We tell ourselves that it's a lot like camping out, and ritually recite in unison, 'At least we'll get an article out of this.'"), SARAH PRINCE, JESSICA AMANDA SALMONSON, HANK STINE ("Your 'also-heard-froms' look more interesting than most prozines these days"), and BRUCE TOWNLEY ("There are two rug rats in this room talking to each other with—get this—walkie-talkies, from opposite ends of the room, and yet all this does not dim my enjoyment of TRAP DOOR #3.")



Kimmy '85

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