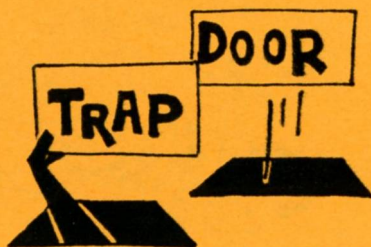


# TRAPDOOR



STEVE  
STILES  
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Issue #5. December 1985. Edited and published by Robert Lichtman, PO Box 30, Glen Ellen CA 95442. Send all trade fanzines and letters to this address. Assistant editors: Jeanne Bowman, Donna Nassar (Ansell) and Paul Williams. Founding members: fwa. This fanzine comes to you because of your pivotal role in this Golden Age of fandom. We are seeking the Usual, as usual: letters of comment, written and/or artistic contributions, fanzines in trade (all-for-all, please; we do), and other forms of Activity Credit. As a final resort, and only once, \$2.50 cash. "X" on your label means bye, unless we get soft-hearted.

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ART & GRAPHICS: ATom (2, 19, back cover), Jeanne Bowman (10), Brad Foster (4, 15, 28), Lee Hoffman (13), Lucy Huntzinger (25), Dave Rike (20), and Steve Stiles (cover).

I DO MY BEST fan writing in my head on my way to the monthly Third Saturday parties in San Francisco. My absolute best, I tell you. I'm feeling really fannish because I'm going down to see all my friends and acquaintances in Bay Area fandom. The Third Saturday parties are in their third year now and are kind of a smoky, verbal Golden Age happening monthly, which is far more frequently than any fanzines appear from here. I mean, you can see and talk to living legends from many sub-branches of fandom. There's Patty Peters, Gary Mattingly, Dave Rike, Len Bailes, and even Rich Coad. Pretty eclectic crowd, eh. We talk out our Golden Age speaking in interlineations. And on the way to these events, kind of tuning up for them, I guess, absolutely triff fan writing just spews out of my mind like a well-structured mailing comment. And then it's gone, forever.

Every time this happens, I swear up and down that I am going to purchase a mini-cassette recorder so I can carry it with me everywhere I go, flick it on when inspiration strikes no matter how offbeat, be it car, walking or on the escalator in the mall. But has this happened yet? We fans are so good at procrastination.

My life has altered substantially since the last issue. After several years of Jeanne admonishing me at every opportunity to "get a job," I actually have one. I'm a legal secretary, of all things, and in a cute bit of role reversal I'm working for a female attorney who is *younger* than me. This is my first 9-5 job since leaving The Farm (though 9-5 there was considered luxury, seldom attained) and it's meant a huge shift in my "personal" schedule. Gone are almost all the blocks of time without my kids around when I could get creative, except for the one late at night, when they're all asleep, and that one I agonize over because I should be asleep too, instead of writing this column.

The law office I work in is only two blocks from Sonoma County's only for real newsstand (as opposed to racks in grocery and other stores) so I get to stroll over there on my lunch break and browse. In so doing, I've discovered that there are still prozines! What a shocker. I now read them as I did when I was 14: standing up and browsing, reading primarily the nonfiction sections. There are even fewer prozines now than there were when I was 14, so this doesn't take long in any given month. There's been some neat "fannish" stuff.



In the October 1985 aSF, for instance, the first letter in "Brass Tacks" begins, "Although I am only 68 years old, I have been reading your magazine since 1930. (How's that for a start?)" The writer goes on to say, "I know my opinions will sound 'dated' (!) because I remember science fiction the way it was at the beginning of the magazines, and frankly, I liked it that way--say from 1929 to 1940--best of all. I am so old-fashioned that I still prefer 'Outer Limits' and 'Twilight Zone' to 'Battlestar Galactica' and 'Space 1999.'" When I read this, I remember thinking that there are probably fans at modern day conventions who are so old-fashioned that they still prefer 'Battlestar Galactica' and 'Space 1999' to upstart shows like 'V' and 'Amazing Stories.' The letter writer concludes, "Occasionally I appear at conventions as the dodo at the rear of the room. I salute you from the dinosaur generation." This from none other than Charles D. Hornig, who published his first fanzine, THE FANTASY FAN, in 1932. I love his new appellation for First Fandom, but am astounded to note from his stated age that he is younger than Charles Burbee, hardly a dinosaur himself. Still, despite his relative youth, it was good to hear from him.

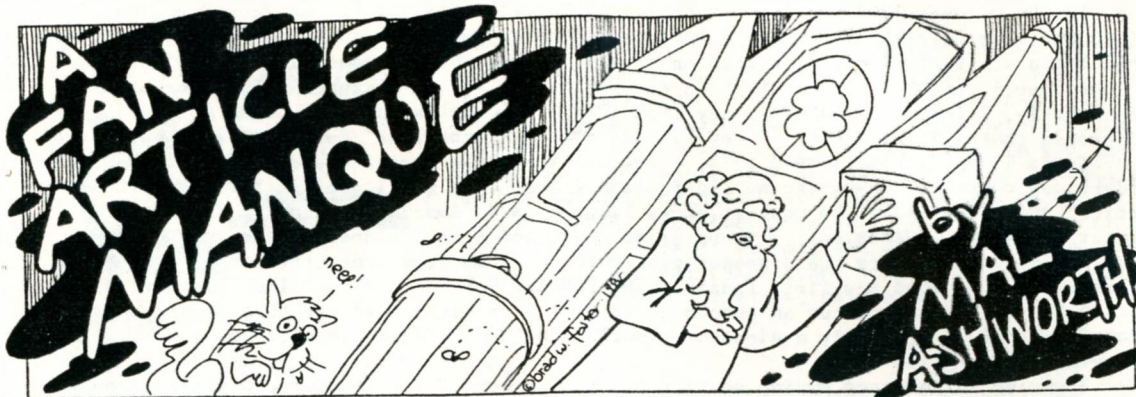
Browsing further and moving up five or six "fandoms," I encountered a stormy fannish petrel, Harlan Ellison, reviewing films in the January 1986 F&SF, stating in his usual modest, unassuming manner, "The filmic genres of fantasy and science fiction have been wrung dry, have sprouted moss and ugly little white squiggly things, and are no more." In the very next paragraph, he reflects that this is "one of those pronouncements one lives to regret at leisure," and then, in a stroke of unexpected fannishness, "My last one, 'The mad dogs have knees us in the groin,' has hounded me, er make that dogged my footsteps, uh, make that blighted my life...since my teens." Thank the fannish ghods that I was employed in December 1985 and could find my way to that newsstand to browse that issue of F&SF or this amazing bit of fannish self-revelation might never have come to the attention of fannish fandom. I mean, do you read F&SF?

And speaking of Amazing, in the issue most recently on the stands, there's Bob Silverberg discussing sci-fi as opposed to science-fiction and, as I recall the article (that issue sold out before I could crib portions of it for this piece; you don't think I buy them, do you?), being tongue-in-cheek grateful to Forry Ackerman for having the foresight to invent the term so far in advance of the actual need for it that we have in these latter days.

Leaving the prozines behind, I found myself nodding my head in agreement a lot when I read Patrick Nielsen Hayden in the latest issue of PREVERT and Ted White (as quoted by Judith Hanna) in the first issue of FTT saying in no uncertain terms that North American fanzines, by and large, were a pretty sorry lot these days. I expect a 50-page article on the subject from Ted any time now, and look forward to Patrick's review of HOLIER THAN THOU in the next PREVERT. I could easily echo Patrick in saying "I find myself more and more drawn to fanzines east of the Atlantic, both as reading matter and as inspiration to my own publishing." I don't have so much of a problem with the different flavors of fandom on either side of the Big Pond; I realize the anti-intellectualism in US culture that leaks over into fandom is just cultural, just as the tolerance of intellectualism in British fandom is also cultural, I imagine. Both have their place, but the ~~temp~~ and overall quality of British fanzines I've been receiving is on a higher level than that of the general run of US fanzines also finding their way here. Of course there's exceptions, there's always exceptions. There's a few lively US fanzines and a few dull Britzines. But for me London area fandom seems as vital and productive, in terms of its fanzines, as, say, Berkeley fandom in the late '50s. I wish I could go see first hand, too. "Now," as Patrick says.

A good deal of commentary about apas has appeared in British fanzines lately. Not much of the talk is about whether or not apas, per se, are okay--there seems to be an agreement to have schools of thought about that--but whether or not it's all right to reprint choice bits from apazines in general circulation fanzines. Much of this has appeared, not uncoincidentally, in fanzines which often reprint from sources such as Frank's.

Well, I think this is one of those ultimately unanswerable koans that surface in fannish thought and agonizing from time to time. I can remember this discussion on more  
(continued on page 24)



SOMETIMES IT IS mighty difficult, is it not, to figure out the real starting point of things. I suppose if you really kept pushing hard you'd get back to that pretty distant Big Bang every time. (Some would say "Even beyond," but then some, as we know, will say anything.) And, of course, that's where they're all going to end too--with a Big Bang. Although on present indications this won't be anything like as distant as the one in the other direction.

But I don't want to go as far as that original Primordial Plop this time around since what I'm trying to write about is philosophers, dustbins (trashcans to some), people, squirrels, Gothic cathedrals, and any number of things manqué. After all, did Wittgenstein not write: "We must have the courage to stop at surfaces"? (At least I think he said "surfaces" and not "circuses.") This always struck me as a remark that went very deep (except when you want to drill for oil or go swimming. It's okay if you want to walk on water, though. Whether it's okay if you want to write an article about philosophers, dustbins, people, squirrels, Gothic cathedrals, and things manqué is what we are all gathered together here today to find out.)

According to my rough notes I was going to start this article in a pub, which is a policy I always try to adopt. Finish in a pub, too, if I can manage it. Sometimes even the same pub. (If you happen to be a sufficiently talented fan-writer to arrange things so that you don't move out of the pub in between these two terminal points, you may not have a great fan article, but you will have a happy one. But I'm not that good yet, alas.) This pub I was going to start in is called the "Craven." (The vast international readership of this publication indicates a note of explanation, I surmise; no, it is not that the inn-sign hanging outside depicts a cringing coward shudderingly refusing a tenth pint of beer. It is just that the district, and one of its foremost ancient families, happens to be called "Craven." A pity, I feel, but it's a fact we are all stuck with.) It is a building of huge, lofty rooms in the back streets of Skipton, and word has it that right up in the topmost story is a bath which will hold eleven people and which was used long years ago by the navvies building the nearby railway. Used for what, though, I never did find out, and the furthest I ever penetrated in that direction was the first story (of the "Craven" itself, not of the bath) for a blue film show. It comes to me now, with all the crystal clarity of yet another outstanding opportunity missed and gone the way of the dodo that there was a situation tailor-made for a budding entrepreneur. Make the blue films right on the spot, up top there in that huge bath, to the ghostly accompaniment of long-gone clay pipes and clinkers suddenly sluiced out of eyebrows (hell, you could even develop the film in it too, once you'd shooed out the bodies and whatall accessories they had to

help along the cinematic excitement); then zip 'em downstairs and onto the projector on the First Floor. Have to be a bit careful, though; Skipton's a pretty small town: "By Gow, that's our Mavis there wi' that tortoise and back-scratcher! Ee, I didn't know she could do things like that! I'll give 'er what for when I get 'ome." Tricky, that.

But most of what went on at the "Craven," I guess, went on downstairs in the pub itself. And what went on there was, as you might expect, drinking and talking and, on Tuesday evenings, listening to a trad jazz band; that was when all the trendy "young professionals, upwardly mobile" to the last button-down cliché, gathered there, along with a few of us hangers-on who wouldn't have recognized a trend even if it did a tap-dance in clogs while playing a bassoon right in front of us. A motley selection of lecturers (like me), teachers, social workers, and scads of psychologists. Two, in fact. (In Skipton, two is a scad, especially of psychologists.) One of these talked incessantly about drains and everyone tried to avoid him. I was pretty good at it except when he caught me in a narrow corridor with a trayful of drinks. Then I'd get my Non-Aggression factor tested to some high degree (and all for free) while he told me the latest thrilling episodes of his encounters with joints and sections. The other psychologist, who was much sharper (foolhardy, even; he once lent Hazel and I his yacht for a week and ever since we have been inordinately proud of the fact that, despite total inexperience and Force Ten gales--I kid you not--we avoided running it aground or colliding with even so much as a drunken duck by the simple, if unadventurous, expedient of never leaving the mooring)--this rather more together Think Theorist, seizing his opportunity while I was still being belabored by stress-factors (in sewer-systems, not in human head-boxes, remember?) and flow-rates, would be putting a lot of effort into chatting up Hazel and she would be expending impressively little effort into putting him down with some scintillatingly sweet-and-sour snubs. If I could manage to break away I liked to be around to hear these interchanges. Second best entertainment of the evening after the jazz band, that was. (Well, third if you count the beer, but that's something I always advise against--counting the beer. Just accept it as a Gift of the Gods and the ground of all human experience.) The one guy in all this human maelstrom with whom we really got on was John Watt, and some part of this upcoming fan-article which is about to start any minute now, is meant to be about him (though, of course, in an insufficiently disguised way it will no doubt be about me too, and what a humdinger I am if only you take the trouble to get to know the Real Inner Me). And it may well invite Reader Participation in a small competition too. Whether there will be freebies and a singalong also is too early to say. What we're trying to figure out right now, if you remember, is where to start the thing. With a heart as heavy as a leaden lollipop I conclude that we are not going to get it off the ground in the pub, after all. With a certain amount of prescience, and an even heavier heart, I can tell you I see damn little prospect of us ending up in the pub either (I warned you I was a fan-writer of but limited talents). But we'll do our best.

Leave us, then, explore the possibility of giving birth to this most recalcitrant of fan articles in a bookshop, in part because, excluding any much ruder alternatives, such places are about my second favorite type of haunt after pubs. And if, finally, after much furrowing of brows and gnawing of nails, a bookshop should be our choice for point of origin, we then have a further agonizing decision to face--which bookshop? One in York yesterday or one in Bradford thirty years ago? Existential angst such as this plays havoc with the homelife of a conscientious fan-writer, for sure. You notice how cadences and correspondences reverberate and rattle all around us? No? Oh well, never mind.

At the bookshop in York yesterday I bought The Best of Myles by Myles na Gopaleen (Flann O'Brien), possibly one of the most fannish of published humorists; and I remembered that it was John Watt who had originally recommended him and enthused volubly over many a Gopaleenism. Yup. I guess we could get a pretty solid starting point out of that.

Then again, so we could out of a morning thirty or so years ago at Daley's Bookshop, upstairs in a little alleyway in old Bradford. In the midst of Daley's sat Winston, the proprietor, seeking animatedly through the strange volumes, stranger substances and yet stranger ideas which passed through his hands and head, for the Secret of Life. Winston, who was for many years my guide and mentor in things outré and otherly which maybe one day I'll get to write about too. But what I need him for right now is a remark he made to me on this particular morning, after many years of conversation about drugs, Dianetics, Zen Buddhism and numinous whatalls: "You know," he said, thoughtfully, "I always used to think I was a meditative manqué. But recently I've concluded that really I'm a Man of Action manqué." He was dead serious, but I cracked up. And remembered his words ever since.

Uh oh, word's got around. See all those would-be Starting Points crowding round, jumping up and down shouting "Me, me..." just like a bunch of Hugo Award nominees? Look at that engaging little blighter just there, with the ingratiating grin on its face--a piece by Stephen Pile in The Sunday Times of a few weeks back about the eminent ex-Oxford philosopher, Sir A.J. Ayer, "Freddie" Ayer to Us In The Trade. ("It is autumn and the names are dropping like leaves," I hear Hazel crooning softly to herself in the back-ground.) "...the Older Man," writes Pile, "is at it again. We give them retirement presents. We make speeches. We wave them off at the station. And days later they are all back, hooting and trumpeting louder than ever..." My, it could almost be me he's writing about, I dimple prettily, thinking of my own "Early Retirement" a year ago--presents (sensible, too--a nice heavy pint tankard), speeches (being quite newly in contact with fandom again from beyond the Graves--oops, the Glades--of Gafia, I got my wires crossed at times and half expected the speech-makers to come out with "Well, so long, you oldpharts"), all the usual politely-disguised For-Godssake-Get-Them-Swept-Out-The-Door-And-Let's-Get-On-With-Things leaving jazz. And, of course, I too shall be back doing ever so many Really Impressive things just as soon as I've got all the accumulated detritus of a chaotic lifetime tidied up a little. And maybe labelled as well. But since Professor Ayer, whom Pile takes as a particularly rip-snorting example of his theme, is now 74, there's no great rush in my case. I've got another 23 years or so to get this stuff sorted. Ayer, it seems, has recently completed two new books, travels and lectures widely (even Peru appears in the list), holds a visiting Professorship, is rethinking his whole philosophical position on Wittgenstein, recently remarried (the Chancellor of the Exchequer's ex-wife, with Ayer's Indian maid as witness and her Punk musician boyfriend as his Best Man) and can still tap-dance. But he may have slowed up on the drinking and the gambling just a little. Not bad, as lifestyles go, not bad at all, especially when you compare it with a lot of philosophers I could show you. I like Freddie Ayer's philosophy, too, always have done. It doesn't conflict with my early General Semantics training, it is sound, tough-minded, precise, and good sense--and it can still verge on the whimsical in places. Freddie Ayer is (with one small reservation I'll tell you about in a moment) okay with me. And--giggle if you will--it seems the feeling is mutual. Later for that. (This article, assuming it ever gets started, probably won't be unmitigatedly revolting throughout, but there is one pretty yucky bit coming up where you may need your sicky-bag.)

By way of balance, however, let us pick up this other furry little Starting Point which is nearly standing on our toes in its eagerness to be

noticed. This one is from a couple of months back when Ayer was the chosen guest on the radio program, "Desert Island Discs." Ah, how eagerly I listened, all set to record the keen-edged, finely-honed musical preferences of my hot-shit philosophical buddy! (You're not missing these little hints, are you?) Ah, with what an uncomprehending "Glug" I sank in that sea of schmaltz, which would have given even a Reader's Digest selector a few moments of niggling doubts! And, to cap it all, the book he chose to take with him to his desert island--Boswell's Life of Johnson! ("No man but a blockhead ever wrote except for money"--Dr. J. Okay, Sammy, baby, if it's a battle of wits, up yours too!) (Well, it's no worse than Johnson's own "refutation" of the Idealist philosopher, Berkeley--kicked a stone which happened to be in his path: "Thus I refute Berkeley." What a jerk!) Tell me it was all a put-on, Freddie, please. Next time we are sitting around in some overheated university seminar room discussing squirrels and Gothic cathedrals, all you have to do is slip me a little note saying "Don't worry, Malcolm, it was all a put-on" and things will once again be just as they always were.

But I see that that little tortoiseshell Starting Point with the long whiskers has caught your attention. It's quite true what he's telling you--John Watt had his brief moment of glory as a media-celebrity too. Two, as a matter of fact, but the second one was really brief and nothing like as entertaining as the first. This second television appearance was when he took part in Magnus Magnusson's rather dull show, "Mastermind," answering questions on the "Flashman" books. He lost out that time--by one point, if I remember aright--to the guy who went on to win the British and subsequently the World "Mastermind" title. But his first appearance on the box--a series of appearances really--was much more fun. This was as part of the Bradford University team on the high-speed, super-charged "University Challenge" program, compered by Bamber Gascoigne. (Mebbe I should tell you this joke I heard, right about here. Q: What has an IQ of 200 and green pubic hair? A: Bamber Grassgroin.) Bradford, a less-than-no-account provincial University, ripped through all the opposition, including the prestigious Oxbridge entries, that year, to win the championship in fine style, and the truth is that John nearly won the thing single-handed. Towards the end of the series he was so well into his stride that he was, literally, answering the questions before they'd been fully put--and getting them all right. Even Bamber Gascoigne was impressed. Fine entertainment that was.

John is about six foot two, blond, and looks a bit like Michael Caine, and if he happens to be wearing his leather overcoat when he tells you his German dustbin story, that is really something. Probably ranks second only to Burbee telling his watermelon story, I reckon. No, I've never heard Burbee telling his watermelon story; the fact that I've never met Burbee may have more than a little to do with that. But I've read enough Burbee to give me faith unshakeable. I feel about Burbee a bit like a Bluesman friend of mine felt about Delta Blues singer Robert Johnson, that made him exclaim, "Hell, I'd even buy an LP of Robert Johnson blowing his nose." I don't know that I'd buy an LP of Burbee blowing his nose but I'd certainly rush my order for a three-volume, gold-embossed, boxed set of Charles Burbee's laundry list (so long as it was unexpurgated). So I'm prepared to go to bat for his watermelon story against all comers. Even unheard. All I do say is that I reckon John's German dustbin story must run it close. But you may cease shuddering, even though you are doing it ever so discreetly; I am not about to try and tell it. I couldn't begin to do it justice. And anyway I am not blond enough. And I don't suppose you'd be able to see from there even if I put on my leather overcoat. And come to that I haven't got a leather overcoat.

Germany was one of a long list of places around the world where John had at one time taught English and loaded his memory banks with that vast store of knowledge which electrified the "University Challenge" programs. He has itchy feet and a Jackson Pollock brainbox. A divergent (or, in De Bono's termin-

ology, "lateral") thinker. And in my experience they are exceedingly thin on the ground. For sure I've met more of them in Ted Sturgeon's short stories than I ever have in real life. While most people's minds would proceed in orderly fashion along the main highway, John's would leap the fence, wade through a stream, climb a tree and crawl through a couple of badger setts and be at the destination (or maybe somewhere else altogether) long before the main party of convergent logical thinkers hove into view. And along with all that he has a delightfully offbeat sense of humor. An idiosyncrat and a half, John, with his lack of simple, single-minded ambition and inability to keep his thoughts in one rut for very long, was something of an outsider to the young professional crowd at the "Craven," which was how Hazel and I came to get on so well with him. He was Deputy Head of Centre at Skipton's smallish Craven College at the time (and used to get wolf-whistled by a goodly proportion of the contorted ladies in the evening Yoga class Hazel taught whenever he went around to collect the fees). But it wasn't long before the itchy feet and the bored-out-of-the-bonce brainbox moved him on. He gave it all up and went off to Bradford University to do a course in Computer Studies. Which was how he came to be on that "University Challenge" team--three of them from the Computer Department and one from Humanities. I don't doubt you can reconstruct for yourself the cracks that made for. And that was how he came to be around Bradford University when I got the invite to attend the Senior Philosophy Seminar there to be addressed by Professor A.J. Ayer and take along some of my Honours degree students. (I was teaching at a small college on the very edge of that most famous bit of Yorkshire, Ilkley Moor, at the time.) So, of course, I invited John along too. (I advise dropping that cuddly little Starting Point you've got there and grabbing a'holt of that sickly-bag good and tight; we're coming on real fast now.) (And anyway the squirrels will be along any minute. Yes, I know it seems unlikely but you'll just have to trust me.) I suppose there can't have been more than a dozen or sixteen folk at the seminar, which seems pretty remarkable considering Ayer's eminence but then, for some inexplicable reason, philosophy has never had the crowd-pulling power of the really big-time spectator sports like Giant Octopus Wrestling and Nose Picking. (Pity, really, I'd have liked an audience of thousands just that once!) I suppose my empathy with Ayer's brand of philosophy must have come across more in a group that size than it might otherwise and he obviously picked up on this. I did try to keep most of my head-nodding metaphorical, but I'd allow that the physical counterpart may have twitched a bit also at some of his best lines, such as, "Could the philosopher Plato have been a squirrel? Yes, possibly. Could he have been a Gothic cathedral? No, probably not." And then we were into Question and Discussion time and that was pretty lively too. In the thick of it, host-Professor, Philip Pettit, asked a question, and Freddie Ayer (to general, politely smothered, amazement, no doubt) turned to me and said, "Perhaps you'd like to answer that?" So I did, and nobody fell about in hysterics, but I'd be rather surprised if Prof Pettit didn't feel he'd been short-changed, being handed the burlblings of some grungy old sf fan in place of the expected pearls of wisdom by one of the world's top philosophers. (What was the question? I hear you ask, manfully controlling your retching response. Dunno, I reply, dismally--can't remember the answer either. Truth is, I mutter, downcast, I'm not much of a whiz at handling real heavyweight egoboo. The ordinary, middle-of-the-road, rather-tatty-round-the-edges kind, I can get by with, but for the rest I really wish I'd taken that Pelmanism Institute course on "The Collection, Storage and Discreet Display of Grade-A Egoboo." Would you credit this, for instance? I have reason to believe that, oncet, about 25 years ago, Charles Burbee himself wrote--possibly to Walt Willis--something like: "Mal Ashworth may well turn out to be the best writer fandom has ever had." What "reason to believe," I hear you rasp incredulously. Well, I have this memory, see.... MEMORY? Haven't you got it written down anywhere--in a letter or something?

Well...I thought I had, but...er...I don't seem to have it any more. That is ...you mean a 25 year old memory is all you've got to show of something like that? Sheesh, kid, every pimple-faced, knock-kneed neo in fandom dreams Burbee said that about him some time or other! Memory! Pfui! And so on. So I never mention it any more.) Anyway, the hell with you (he muttered sullenly at his contemptuous, parenthesized interlocutor)--at least I'm gonna milk this one for all it's got.

So--for the next few weeks John Watt went around telling everyone he met: "I was most impressed. Professor Ayer kept looking at Malcolm to see if he was doing all right and wouldn't go on with his lecture until Malcolm gave him the nod. And then in Question Time he just passed all the difficult ones on to Malcolm." Ah, shucks.

Well, I warned you to hang on tight to your sicky-bag; where is it? Well, you'll just have to go outside and throw up in the gutter. And look, when you're finished, would you give the boot to all these other Starting Points that are still hanging around hopefully? The hell with it, I'm never gonna get the damn thing started. I'm going back to the "Craven"...

...oh, there you are. Feeling better now? Manage a pint? Pretty quiet in here tonight. Not like some times I can remember. And not just those Sunday lunchtimes when they used to have a stripper on either. No, some of the old jazz nights were the best. Got pretty lively then. I remember one night in particular Hazel and I had this real goofy session with that guy John Watt I mentioned a while ago. The two of us had picked up again on that old thing of Winston's about discovering after many years that he was a Man of Action manqué, rather than the meditative manqué he'd thought he was, and for a couple of days we'd been trying to top each other's ideas of the most way-out things manqué. This was just John's kind of thing, too, so we got him in on it and for the rest of the evening, to a background of "Basin Street Blues" and "Doctor Jazz," and a couple of psychologists talking loudly about promotion and drains (a psychological manqué? No, probably a drain-layer manqué!), the air around us crackled with spectacular failure...

..."Do you reckon Frankenstein was a monster-maker manqué?" "What do you figure a Balrog manqué would be like? Maybe you could chuck it under the chin and it would roll over for you." "Probably be controlled by a Lord of Evil manqué." "Well, how about his counterpart, a Savior manqué?" "Ouch, that's scary, somewhere out the other side of that Francis Bacon painting, 'The Screaming Pope.' I prefer to come back down to earth a bit--which, come to think of it, would be the one thing a parachutist manqué wouldn't be able to do; he'd float away upwards, I guess." "Yes, and his counterpart would be a deep-sea diver manqué who'd just keep rising back to the surface." "I wonder what a psychopath manqué would be like?" "Yeah, and how fast you'd have to move to keep out of the way of a catatonic manqué?" "I was voted The Man Most Likely To Succeed Manqué." "Well, I'm gonna do better than you, I aim to be an Abject Failure Manqué." "Don't care, I'll just withdraw from this whole materialistic scene and become a Fully Enlightened Being Manqué."...

...If I'd ever gotten that fan article started I was going to invite general participation in this harmless little game, but maybe you have some ideas anyway?

Tell you the truth, I'm not too sorry I didn't manage to get it started. For one thing, if I had, round about now I'd have to be worrying about how to finish the damn thing. Just have to regard myself as a fan-writer manqué, I guess. After all, if Plato can be a Gothic cathedral manqué... Quite happy jus' sitting here proving to you I'm not a drunk manqué. S'matter of fact, that line about Plato there s'ggests I'm making a pretty good start on that at leas'.

'nother one?

--Mal Ashworth



by Paul Williams & Donna Nassar

"YOU'RE LIVING WITH a writer!" Paul exclaimed.

"I know," I smiled weakly--half-asleep.

"A writer who's writing!" he proclaimed with even greater enthusiasm, and with a flourish he pushed the last few buttons on the word processor and the printer began clacking magically away.

I knew I was about to be read to.

"I believe everything the I Ching says," said Paul as he pulled off the first sheet and the printer continued on.

"Me too," I said; then I wondered, "What did it tell you this time?"

"Rapid and easy progress...when I asked about the new book. And I believe it! Look at this!" He pulled and trimmed the second and third sheets and the printer just kept keeping on.

What time was it anyway? I wondered. He must have been writing for hours. "Fortunately the I Ching didn't say 'Standstill,'" I pointed out.

We Never Sleep--good name for this column. When I first heard the name I was sure it referred to the several times a week when we would stay up practically all night engaging in nocturnal activities. I mean, if it was about staying up till all hours typing away on the latest ms., the the title would be I Never Sleep, right? Wrong.

I live with a writer. And believe me, I much prefer him when he's writing--than not. Now, however, we have moved to a brand new house, and the word processor has been relocated to the master bedroom. (Glad it's not the typewriter.)

I can sleep with the lights on and the tapp-p-ty tapping on the keyboard--even the strains of rock and roll leaking from the headphones. But the printer! I mean, it's like I'm programmed. When I hear the printer I come to life to hear the latest installment and give critical (if not incoherent) feedback.

And then (on a good night)...I get to reinspire this writer that I live with.

The preceding bit of column was written while riding a bus to San Francisco--a school bus to the Zoo, that is, with 50 or 60 second and third graders, two teachers, and several parent chaperones (including myself and the infamous J. Bowman). The little girl sitting next to me and the young boy across the aisle kept asking me what I was writing and if I would read it to them. They could barely hear my reply above the din.

"It's a story--no, I won't read it to you--no, it's not for kids. Just keep watching for the Golden Gate Bridge and remember to hold your breath in the tunnels!"

Once we arrived at the Zoo we broke up into groups--two parents, eight to ten kids, and a Zoo guide. I wanted to be in a group with Jeanne so I could tell her about the

article but instead the first chance I got was an hour or so later when we regrouped for some play in the big plastic bubble toy. (The kids played, we watched--anticipating lunch, which would be eaten during the ride home in the school bus.)

I read it to her on the playground and she--you guessed it--laughed the infamous J. Bowman laugh. I knew she must like it.

Couldn't wait to get home and read it to Paul. It went something like this:

I burst into the bedroom with a big, breathless "Hi!"

I paused--he was at the console tapp-p-ty tapping nimbly away. I waited. Not too long. He completed that thought, looked up, smiled--"How was the Zoo?"

"Great, it amazes me just what I'll do to get a ride to the City. Ha! Guess what?"

"What?"

"I've written your column for TRAP DOOR. I know how busy you are with the new book, and how eager Robert is to pub this ish" (I love to talk fannish) "so...I wrote We Never Sleep for you."

"I have three pages; did you write three pages?" he asked, doubtful.

I looked down at my tiny notebook and gestured--"Four!" I beamed. "Well, kinda small--but listen to this..."

I read it to him. He seemed to like it up 'til the last few sentences. Sometimes (not too often for me lately) it's hard to tell just what Paul's thinking.

"Well?"

"It's kinda short."

"Did you expect me to write the whole column? What would TRAP DOOR be without a sentence or so from Paul Williams?"

"You're right," he said, and turned his attention back to his keyboard.

Later that evening:

"I've been thinking about ways I could expand on that column for you. Want me to do that?" I was eager.

"Could you do something fannish?" he quizzed.

"What do you mean fannish?" I was exasperated. "I wrote about living with a writer--what's more fannish than that?" I demanded.

"Something about living with a fan." He was serious.

I was hurt and confused. What the f--k is fandom anyway? I get such mixed signals. Can't get a clear definition from anyone. And to say, "Let it speak for itself--read the fanzines and find out"...well, have you ever watched just one episode of a soap opera? What's worse--watched it with someone who's been watching it for years and tries to catch you up while you watch?

So I dropped the whole thing. Didn't even mention it again--or, really, think about it until about three days later.

Robert came over to see our new house and talk to Paul about...? Probably TRAP DOOR--but, I mean, I had really forgotten it. I didn't even think to mention my piece to Robert until the phone rang. It was Jeanne. "Hi--I heard Robert was there." "Yes, you need to speak to him?" "Have you showed him your piece for TRAP DOOR?"

"No." After a pause. "I read it to Paul. I don't think he liked it so I just forgot about it."

"Paul didn't like it?" She sounded surprised.

I told her of our conversation.

"Well," she said, "I guess that stuff's really between you and Paul--but I liked it."

"Is it fannish?" I asked.

"Seems pretty fannish to me. Robert's the editor. He'll tell you if it doesn't fit. I mean, if you decide to show it to him."

I found Paul and Robert discussing the intro and first chapter of Paul's rock and roll book.

"Robert, Jeanne just called, she wants you to call her. I've written something for TRAP DOOR--part of Paul's column..."

"Yeah--Paul told me."

Paul told him?!

My face must have betrayed my shock.

I looked at Paul. "You told him about it? I thought you didn't like it--didn't think it was fannish."

I read it to Robert (he could never have deciphered my schoolbus scribble). Soon we were calling Jeanne to draw a new heading picture for the column, and talking about the possibility of Paul framing my bit and going on to write something about writing his new book or whatever.

I was still confused about Paul's initial reaction. After Robert left, I asked Paul about it.

"I thought you didn't like what I wrote?"

"I liked it," he said shyly. "It was just embarrassing."

"Oh," I said--really confused. Paul Williams, embarrassed?

--Donna Nassar

Nah, never happen. Must've been somebody else. The book referred to above is called THE MAP: A ROCK AND ROLL JOURNEY, and is being written for Poseidon Press, publishers of George R.R. Martin and like that. Writing a book under contract makes the sweat pop out on my brow, but ONLY APPARENTLY REAL met the deadline and will be out in April, so I guess it can be done, even by me. In the last several weeks I've been to almost a dozen rock shows, including Simple Minds/Shriekback, the Alarm, Translator three times, Grateful Dead three times in a row, Motley Crue & Autograph, AC/DC & Yngwie Malmsteen, and tomorrow night Heart & Phantom Rocker + Slick at the Oakland Coliseum, followed by the Replacements at the Berkeley Square. The kid is checking out the scene. He's also having a tough time trying to find a way to write about live rock experiences, a problem I never did solve first time around, 18 or 19 years ago.

Changing the subject quickly, with just an aside that my very favorite piece of music so far experienced on this voyage of rediscovery is "Bad (Live)"/"A Sort of Homecoming (Live)" on U2's EP Wide Awake in America--dive into it, I urge you--I want to acknowledge some of the better fanzines people have been foolish enough to send me lately, including Axolotl 1, Parasite 1, Flash Point 7, and (count them) three monthly issues of Crank. I also like the Shiffman artwork on Tafflivia 3. Does this mean Frightwig has made it to New York, or is it mere coincidence? The more I look at this cartoon, the funnier it gets. What do you suppose she's knitting?

Flash Point is particularly good. When I lived in Washington Heights I used to grab my shoes and go into paroxysmal spasms of cockroach stomping in the bathroom circa 3 am each morning. I definitely knew I was being weird and seriously out of control but I guess it's better than berserking on the street. Eventually I moved to California, where I have recently won a temporary victory over the house ants.

I am bemused by Patrick's ravings about the trouble with (the concept of) Corflu, a convention he's never attended, and his apparently sincere assertion that the corflu bottle is an overly sercon and limiting mythic image as opposed to the safely irrelevant guy in a sombrero of Mexican (couldn't be racist--after all they don't have wetbacks in the U.K.--maybe us yanks could set up a Paki-con)...I assert in any case that conventions aren't planned, they just happen, and so far Corflu has happened to be as marvelous as any con I've ever attended, regardless of the appropriateness of its conceptual positioning. But I liked where pnh went with this, his observations about the knee-jerk anti-intellectual stance of American fannish myth and so forth (speaking of which, can someone explain to me the Burbee piece in the previous TD?). Anyway, I have vague & unrealistic hopes of making it to Falls Church in Feb., we'll see...

God, she really didn't leave me much space, did she? Be careful what you ask for... I wish to inquire of you all, somewhat seriously, what your experiences are of the plusses and minuses of writing, for fanzines or otherwise, under the influence of marijuana. To some extent this is inspired by my observations of our editor's struggles with the writing part of the TD process--I suspect that the tool he's convinced is needed for the job has actually become the primary obstacle. But I have my own struggles in this regard, and they do confuse me. I recognize that my desire, as I sit with blank mind staring at the computer monitor, for a little hit of inspiration, is a classic case of the drug thinking

(continued on page 27)

## Halloween in the City

After a while even the most outrageous costumes worn by the flamingest drag queens in the universe began to grow a little tiresome, a little boring. We hadn't seen them all, but we had seen enough. Judd and I left the surging Halloween crowds parading along both sides of Polk Street in San Francisco for the comparative quiet of California street. The familiar whicker of the cable cars was soothing after the frenzy of the gay scene behind us. "Let's go back to my room," Judd said, looking a little weary. "I want to show you my copy of The Mists of Avalon. You've never seen a copy, right?" "Sounds really exciting," I assured him.

We entered the tumbledown old Hotel Paulis, on the lower slope of Nob Hill, no less. Judd has lived there (by choice) for more than two decades--all the years I have known him--in a dingy little cubicle crammed with books, magazines, and trinkets. In the lower hallway we were hailed by one of Judd's

friends, who invited us into a corner room, a sanctum more spacious and better furnished than Judd's cubbyhole. This person was huge, nearly shapeless, nearly toothless, and dressed in an all-enveloping but incredibly sleazy robe or gown. I didn't catch Judd's mumbled introduction and for half an hour took the person for a man. Then "he" handed me the manuscript of a story "he" had written (having learned that I am now-and-then an editor) and I read with amazement the byline: Donna Robertson. If the person is a transvestite, the transformation isn't a very good job. Neither was the story.

She (as I will call her) talked in a gruff voice, very animatedly, with gestures, about her current reading. She reads a novel a day, on the average, mostly historical novels, adventure stories, mysteries, only a little "sci-fi," which she doesn't like very much. I was staggered by the thought of reading 365 novels a year, but was somewhat intrigued by her dislike of science fiction.

A while later we were joined by another denizen of the hotel, a younger man who brought along a six-pack of imported beer and a revitalizing new line of chatter. His name was Rex; he looked vaguely Oriental, with brilliant almond eyes, and was dressed cap-a-pie in black leather. His clothes, especially his boots with sharply pointed toes, looked so expensive that I wondered why he was living in a fleabag like the Paulis hotel. To my surprise he said he had been spending his time on a far more commendable and significant activity than reading paperback trash. He had been out stumping for Walter Mondale. He claimed that he (Rex) has an IQ of 163, and after this revelation I believed him. He talked knowledgeably about politics and economics, and related anecdotes about his life on the street with a Bjo-like verve and originality. He spends a lot of time in North Beach, he said.

"I'm as straight as a corkscrew," he told us, a remark I leaned back and treasured. He sat there guzzling tepid beer and killing cockroaches with kung fu slaps of his hand. The roaches ran up and down the walls and across the floor and into the crevices of a black-and-white TV that flickered silently, showing "St. Elsewhere" while nobody watched.

## PENSEROSO



*A Column*

by REDD BOGGS

At the Powell street BART station a little later, heading back to Berkeley, I boarded an almost empty coach of an eastbound train that was occupied by four or five punk rockers: teenage children in crazy clothes and garishly tinted faces. A pimply kid with lavender-streaked hair was playing with a knife. He made it glisten into view on his open palm, then dance in a dazzle on the back of his hand, which had a dragon tattoo in red and black.

"Trick or treat!" I thought to myself. "I wonder what went on tonight in Bloomsburg and Hagerstown."

### The Man With the Glassy Gaze\*

"Ich bin zu den Leuten freundlich...." -- Bertolt Brecht

On a recent sunny afternoon I was stopped safely, sanely, and even legally at a red traffic signal on San Pablo avenue in Oakland or maybe Emeryville when a big Ford pickup truck came charging up behind me. In the rear-view mirror I saw that it wasn't slowing down as it drew near, and I felt the impulse to pull ahead, but before I could do so the VW, already almost as ravished in the rear as a character in a Laney anecdote, took still another pummeling from behind. The truck braked only belatedly and slewed violently into my car with a noise that sounded like the crash of cymbals. Luckily no one was ahead of me, for I felt the VW lunge forward about five feet.

"My god, Amos, get up! The cat's broke every dish in the house!" I shouted. After settling my head more securely on my shoulders I climbed out to inspect the damage. Despite the collision I could find nothing amiss. I thanked whatever gods may be for the fact that the VW has a Rear Bumper. Then I glanced up at the driver of the pickup, which was stopped hard against the back of my car. He was an elderly, greyheaded black, who was staring fixedly at me. His glassy gaze seemed not entirely due to the fact that he was looking through the windshield.

I don't have much racial prejudice. I was almost as annoyed at him as I would have been if he were white. I cuffed back my cap and walked up to him till I was ranged alongside the driver's window. "What the hell?" I said in reasonable tones. "What kind of driving is that?"

He didn't look at me. He lowered his head and regarded the steering wheel very intently. "Glub-bub-bub-glunk-gerumph," he said.

"What?" I said, rubbing my chin dubiously.

"Blug-bloog-blubble-boo."

I eased my cap on my head and pondered this remark solemnly. The fellow still didn't look at me. "Kriggle-quigggle-blunk-blunk," he added after a moment. I stared at him for a while in baffled exasperation. He continued to gibber unintelligibly. Finally I gave up and walked back to my car. "What the hell?" I asked myself as I drove away.

Later, at home, I told Gretchen about the incident. "All the fellow did was gabble at me. 'Gluck-gloople-blup'--like that. What was ailing him anyway? Was he talking Swahili? Was he in shock from the collision? I guess he must have been drunk, or stoned."

"Were you dressed as usual?" she asked. "Were you wearing your Mao cap?"

"Sure."

"With the red star on it?"

"Of course."

"Did you have your shades on?"

"Naturally."

"And you were garbed in your usual lumpen fashion, and unshaven, looking

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\* This incident took place on 19 July 1973. This account was written shortly afterward, but was never before published.

# THAT'S NOT TOO MANY

by HARRY WARNER JR.



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OLDER FANS SHOULD RECOGNIZE the source of the title. It's the punchline of a Burbee story that became a fannish slogan some years ago. The original appearance of the four words climaxed an anecdote about a man who owned an improbable number of player pianos, and fans soon delighted in chanting it every time it had even the flimsiest relevance to a conversational remark or a paragraph in a fanzine.

It could also apply in a way to my current sermon topic: the need for a compilation of a fannish sourcebook equivalent to the mundane Guinness Book of Records. How are we to know for sure if that's not too many, when we have no way of looking up the facts about how many some other fan has already accomplished? Naturally, we also ought to know how few, how often, how rarely, how long, and various other parameters of fannish accomplishment.

I sketched a rough outline of the situation in a recent SAPS mailing. Other members of that apa seemed interested and supplemented my guesses with more information. What follows is partly based on the original article, partly on my further cogitations, and partly on the kindness of Mike Gunderloy, Leigh Edmonds, Art Rapp, Nancy Rapp, Megret Stull, and Jim Woosley.

Some categories that might appear in a Guinness Book of Fannish Records are clearcut with little doubt about the champion performances to date. Because of the nature of fandom, other categories are nebulous enough to have an excellent chance of inspiring exciting feuds over rival claims to leadership.

It's easy to determine a few fannish records. But most of them involve matters that would require a lot of research and verification to settle, once and for all. For instance, nobody is apt to dispute the fact that the biggest fanzine ever published in number of pages was the Willis reprint issue of WARHOON four or five years ago. The Fantasy Amateur Press Association, which began in 1938, has never been challenged as the oldest fannish ayjay group. The largest apa mailing seems definitely to have been the 100th SFPA mailing which ran to more than 1,700 pages.

But there has been recent debate in fanzines over the old question of what was the first con, one in Philadelphia which occurred a few months before one in Leeds but was closer to a visit by a group of New York City fans to Philadelphia fans than the more structured British event. Similarly, the identity of the first fanzine will never be agreed on because different people have different ways of defining a fanzine.

Then there are the fannish records that would be fairly easy to agree on, if enough fans put their minds to it. One example: who has attended the most worldcons? Forrest J Ackerman might be the record-holder. I know he

missed one worldcon in the 1950s, I haven't heard of him failing to show up at any since then, and I can't think of anyone who could equal or top his worldcon total. Who has had the same address for the longest period of time in fandom? If you count gaffiated fans in this respect, Walter Coslet might be the champion, because he has been living in Box 6, Helena, Montana, ever since the 1940s. If you insist on a home address or a fan who has remained active, I don't know who is tops.

A good example of how definitions could foul up fannish record claims involves the apparently simple question of which is the oldest surviving fanzine. You could claim the honor for THE FANTASY AMATEUR, which has appeared four times a year for the past 47 years, but it's the official organ of FAPA, has had a long succession of editors, and might be considered unfair competition. I could put in a claim for my FAPA publication, HORIZONS, which first appeared late in 1939 and has averaged four issues per year ever since. Suppose someone in First Fandom produces another issue of a fanzine he published back in the mid-1930s; would he take over first place in this category? Bob Tucker could do it if he issued another LE ZOMBIE, which first appeared in 1938.

This brings up another possible category: what was the longest gap between issues of a fanzine in fandom's history? Just at a guess, I would suspect that Art Widner might hold it, because he revived YHOS as a FAPazine about five years ago, after having produced the last previous issue in 1945. At the other extreme, I seem to remember someone or other turning out an hourly fanzine at a worldcon a few years ago, but I can't dredge out of my recollections the identity of the fan or the con where and when it happened.

Sometimes I feel qualified to hold another fannish record, that of having been an active fan at the oldest age. But I suppose Australian fan Pat Terry deserved that honor. When he died in 1970, he was 86 years old and still writing locs. Pat probably held another fannish distinction: I don't know of any other fan who could claim to have been engaged in a World War One encounter with the real Red Baron.

Fred Patten is still a considerable distance from his 86th birthday, but he holds a fannish record you'd think offhand might require extreme old age to reach. Fred passed some months ago the 1,000 mark in respect to consecutive distributions of an apa in which he has had a fanzine. He did it by belonging to one of the few weekly apas in history, APA-L. The only time his RABANOS RADIATIVOS failed to appear weekly during a span of more than twenty years was a six-month period when APA-L went into suspended animation. FAPA is a quarterly apa so I can't hope to match Fred's accomplishment for a few more years, but I believe I do hold the record for most consecutive years without failing to have a publication in an apa. In December 1943, intestinal flu caused HORIZONS to miss an issue, but since then I've had at least 12 pages of it in every FAPA mailing, a 41-year span.

FAPA is probably the home for the record of longest period of uninterrupted membership in an apa. Jack Speer has been a member from its creation to the present time. Once, I believe, he technically lost his right to renew his membership because of lack of activity credits, but the membership roster wasn't filled at the time so he could instantly join again without a perceptible dropping out period.

I don't dare risk a guess on who has published more apa material than anyone else in fandom. Patten, Thom Digby, Bruce Pelz and Dan Alderson are all reputed to have passed the 1,000-issue mark for apa contributions, so they automatically should be candidates for the honor. I suspect a few older fans who have published fewer but much larger apazines over a longer period of years might also be front runners, like Art Rapp and me.

Then there's the question of who has been a member of more apas than anyone else. Charles Korbas reputedly belonged to 23 apas simultaneously at one time, a mindboggling record.

There probably should be separate records for non-apa fanzines, because they're more expensive and difficult to edit and distribute. I'm afraid I'll forget some obvious candidate if I speculate too much about the identity of the non-apa fanzine that has produced the greatest number of issues or the largest cumulative page total. Two or three of the old newszines like FANTASY FICTION FIELD, FANEWS, and FANTASY TIMES went over 200 issues apiece, I believe, although sometimes with changes in editorship and title. The NFFF's official organ under various editors and titles must have emerged even more often by now. YANDRO is an obvious strong contender for cumulative page total, even though it hasn't appeared often lately. A darkhorse might be a German fanzine, MUNICH ROUNDUP, more than 130 issues of which have been published, fat ones in the case of all the issues of recent years. If you take clubzines into consideration, INSTANT MESSAGE, the NESFA fanzine, has passed the 380-issue point and many of those issues ran to a dozen pages or more.

There's absolutely nothing in print to provide even scanty facts about who has done the most contributing to fanzines. Instinctively, I would estimate that Bill Rotsler holds the record for the number of illustrations published in fanzines. He has been lavish with his art to fans everywhere for three decades or longer. His fannish output must be far up in the thousands. Which artist might be second is harder to guess. ATOM might be a contender for place position in this race. He hasn't been as prolific in any given year as certain other artists, but he has been lavishing his talent on fanzines so consistently for so long.

A tougher question is who has had the most prose published in fanzines, exclusive of apa publications or counting them. I can't think of any fan-writer who is the equivalent of Rotsler for abundant contributions for such a long period of time. Some basic fannish law seems to prevent any of us from contributing prolifically formal articles, columns and other structured prose in great quantities for more than a few years before needing a long rest. The leader might be someone who achieved a stupendous amount of writing in a comparatively short span, like the Irish John Berry or Francis T. Laney, or it might be someone like Ted White who indulges in much fan writing for a while, hibernates for some years, then resumes contributing to fanzines.

However, I believe I could lay claim to the record for having contributed the greatest number of locs to fanzines. Others have been more prolific loc writers for a year or two but I've done it so much longer on a regular basis than anyone else. Once I tried to estimate my loc output and came up with a ballpark figure in the neighborhood of seven to eight thousand.

Definitions would cause trouble again if you seek the identity of the smallest fanzine. I think Speer might have won a competition in FAPA with a rubberstamped fanzine but I no longer remember its dimensions. However, at least one Australian fan published several issues in microfiche format.

I don't attend cons often enough to guess properly at con records. Who has attended more cons than anyone else? Mike Glicksohn has told of averaging seventeen cons per year over one seven-year period. Tucker sometimes gives the impression of being guest of honor or toastmaster at seventeen cons each year. Who has been on the most con committees, participated in the most panels about women in science fiction, stayed awake the greatest number of consecutive hours at a con, given the longest speech at a con banquet? What's the record for the most fans crashing in one hotel room? I understand as many as 25 Nashville fans have used the same two-room suite, but I'm sure there are greater achievements than that.

Then there are the local fan club records that need tracking down. Los Angeles and Philadelphia probably have the oldest fan clubs, but the former underwent a name change and the latter was down to one resident member for a while. The 1984 worldcon seems to have made the LASFS the most prosperous local club in history. Is NESFA the largest ever in membership? Does New

York or San Francisco hold the record for the largest number of simultaneously existing and competing local fan clubs? Is Ackerman, Ossie Train, or someone else holder of the record for longest continuous membership in a local fan club?

How about the largest collections? Ackerman obviously has the most prestigious assembly of sercon-type publications. But nobody has ever figured out who owns the most fanzines. I've been credited with this record from time to time but I don't think it's so. Bruce Pelz started late but might be the biggest fanzine owner by now. Or that honor might belong to the Baltimore County campus of the University of Maryland which acquired the enormous Coslet fanzine collection. For that matter, how do you define the largest collection of fanzines, by weight or shelf space or total number of copies? A fan strong in apa mailings might have more individual fanzines but a smaller collection in the physical sense than a fellow who specializes in genzines. I wouldn't even try to guess at the identity of those who own the largest number of prozines or books.

There are lots of miscellaneous records that could be claimed. I believe Don Thompson and Bob Stewart are more or less tied for having been the most fans. At least five or six fans have possessed each of those names in the history of fandom. You could probably make a case for no less an eminence than H.P. Lovecraft as the fan who wrote the most letters as correspondence, not as locs. Art Rapp claims to have been fandom's first skinnydipper, under highly dramatic circumstances (he bobbed out of the water in a Korean pond and startled George Young, who had no notion Art was in Asia, with a question on the whereabouts of the Detroit fan club's treasury). Big Hearted Howard Devore probably owns more typewriters than any other fan, unless it's Bill Danner. Both Nancy Rapp and I claim the distinction of never having asked a pro to autograph anything. The Austin clan must have the most members as active fans in the past quarter-century.

But there's one drawback to this whole concept of publishing fannish records. In the mundane world, people have done the most idiotic things to win themselves a place in the Guinness book. Fans tend to act idiotically in the normal course of events and it boggles the mind to think what fans might attempt to gain admittance to their very own record book.

--Harry Warner, Jr.

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PENSEROSO (continued from page 14)

more or less--aside from the cap and the fact that you weren't Japanese--like Toshio Mifune in 'Yojimbo'?"

"Well, I wasn't wearing a kimono, either," I said, "but otherwise...."

"The poor man was scared of you," she said. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, scaring an old black man like that."

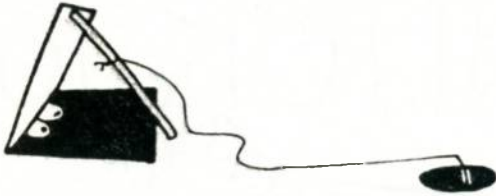
"Scared of me?" I said, somewhat nettled. "I spoke to him in a calm, unemotional fashion. How could I have scared him? I think I even smiled at him."

She mentioned "Yojimbo" again. She recalled the scene late in the movie when Toshio Mifune is captured, brutally beaten, and escapes, with blood still streaming down his face. Takashi Shimura, the sake merchant, regards him with horror. After Mifune flashes him a tough grin, Shimura says protestingly, "It's even worse when you smile."

She quoted the line to me, and added, "In that get-up you looked like the smiling killer. Of course he was frightened of you."

I could only shake my head. Frightened of me? Of good old, peaceful, kindly Redd Boggs?

--Redd Boggs



## LOCAL SCOOP

by Donna Nassar

"WELL," SAID I, feeling cocky and daring after completing more than half of Paul's column, "if Jeanne doesn't come through in time I could always interview her for TRAP DOOR."

"Great idea!" Robert smiled. "I'm on my way over there now; if she hasn't written it, I'll call you and we'll shift to Plan B."

Oh, dear, I thought, what have I set myself up for? Relax, said another, foolish part of me. I had talked to Jeanne earlier that afternoon and she said that she had spent the morning preparing to write her column. That is, she had cleaned off the top of her desk. By now she surely has the whole thing written.

When I arrived back at home a short time later, there was a message from Robert on my phone machine asking me to please expedite Plan B. At first I thought he was kidding and I decided that if I didn't say or do anything about it for a while, the whole thing would blow over, Jeanne would write her piece, Robert would pub his ish, and I could keep on with what was up for me—being uninvolved. But approximately one week later...

"I've been requested by our friend and editor to interview you. When can we do that?"

"Right now."

"On the phone? I want to do it in person, and besides I'm expecting a client."

"You want to know why I haven't written my piece for TRAP DOOR, right?"

"Well, yes. Uh. Jeanne, can you tell our friends and readers why you haven't written your TRAP DOOR piece yet?"

"Yes. Well, it's a clear-cut case of uninspiration. I don't want to just write something uninspired and kind of dumb ~~like last issue~~ so I'm refusing to bend to the pressure of Deadline and..."

Interrupting: "Can you tell our readers how you happened to get involved in fandom?"

"Not again! It was Robert. I went naturally from getting in his pants to getting into fandom. It's all in the first issue."

"But, well, I mean, the real question we've all wanted to ask is...what are you still doing here? (What am I still doing here?)"

"Well, I like being liked." "Liked?" "Yes, I like it when I write something and people like it." "LoCs?" (I love to talk fannish.) "LoCs." "Didn't you get any LoCs from that last issue?" "One." "Oh."

"And that's it. I want to know that what I write and share is out there making a difference, that what I have to say counts."

"So, Jeanne, what's the block? When you sit down to write, what's the big, thick wall that's right in front of your face in any direction?"

"Just that. What I said. Who am I to be writing this? What do I have to say that will be taken seriously, that will make an impact. Will they think I'm a fool? Will they like me? Will I get any letters?"

"Why don't you just fill a page about that? Tell the truth."

"I did that last time."

"Maybe you need to really ask for what you want...or threaten, 'If I don't get any letters of comment I am going to take my toys and go home.'"

"That's what I'm doing."

"Oh, so this is what it looks like when you've taken your toys and gone home? No column for TRAP DOOR."

"Not this time."

Doorbell. (Saved by the bell?) "There's my client, gotta go now. Bye."

"Bye..."

--Donna Nassar

# MY JANITOR IS DEAD



## Charles Burbee

"A WOMAN WITHOUT TITS is like a man without a cock!" said the janitor to me. I might even say he roared it. The woman he was talking about had just left the room. She was on her way back to the Assembly area where she worked.

"She's pretty," I said.

"But ain't got no tits! That's as bad as a man with no cock."

"She has a pretty face and keeps herself looking nice. She has a nice figure, she moves gracefully, she's witty and intelligent, and all the girls she works with like her."

"But she ain't got no tits and that's what I'm talking about."

"You want her to have a forty-two inch bust?"

"Well, no, but she could have more than she's got."

"Frank, you're bosom crazy. She's a well-proportioned girl. She's quiet and attractive. That's the kind that can grow on you. She doesn't hit you between the eyes at first but just take a good look at her. She's got everything she needs. I noticed you were staring at her rear end as she walked away. It's nicely shaped and she moves it gracefully, doesn't she?"

"Well, yes, I guess she's not so bad. And you're right, she is kind of pretty."

That was the sort of thing we talked about. Frank was the janitor in this machine shop in Santa Ana and I was a machine operator, running lathes, automatic screw machines--cliché comment--"You mean they have machines that do that?"--vertical mills, and so on.

Frank's work took him all over the plant. Around 9 p.m. he'd arrive in my department, and, leaning on his broom, learn about the outside world from me. We talked about model airplanes, jazz, and women. He was a model airplane fan, liked jazz, and thought a lot about women. His constant complaint was that there were no available women. I told him the world was teeming with pretty women. The real shortage was in the man department. Ladies in their 40's and 50's found acceptable men in short supply. Men around 40 or 45 tended to be slobs who want to bed a woman after buying her a hamburger, or they're members of the Great Unwashed, or they're drunks, or gay, or mama's boys, or looking for Wife #5.

Women, I said, were all over the place, like right out there in Assembly. "You could ask one of them out."

"Nah. They'd just get mad at me."

"Mad? No woman will get mad at you for just asking, if you ask her nicely."

"You sound like a fella who came to work here with me last year. Right away he wanted to know about the girls in Assembly. There was one I thought

was special. I liked her a lot. I told him she was single and he said he was going to ask her out for a drink after work, and I told him she wasn't the type. He said, 'What do you mean, not the type?' and went ahead and asked her anyway."

"So did she go out with him?"

"Yes she did. And god dammit a week later they were screwing! God dammit!"

"Did you want to screw her?"

"Yes!"

"So why didn't you ask her out for a drink after work?"

"I already told you that. She wasn't the type!"

Once he said that that fella on TV that advertised cars wasn't a real man.

"You mean he's a robot? He looks real to me."

"I mean, he's not really Ralph Williams. He's an actor who says his name is Ralph Williams."

There was this ubiquitous car salesman--used cars were his bag--named Ralph Williams. Come to think of it, he also pitched new cars. He always started out with: "Hi, friends. Ralph Williams here, owner of the biggest Ford dealership in the West"...and he'd spiel on from there. One of the remarks I liked best was his description of how carefully his used cars had been overhauled: "No detail too small to be overlooked."

I'm still trying to figure out exactly what that line means.

He stopped using it after a while because the local wags got to kidding him about it. But he should have kept that line. He'd have had a lot of people tuning him in just to hear him say it, and they'd unwittingly be subjecting themselves to his sales pitch and be subliminally led to buying one of his cars. But he stopped using the line. Anyhow, Frank claimed the fella was just an actor. He further claimed that none of the car salesmen on TV was really who he said he was. They were all actors, every one.

I didn't think so. I felt that used-car salesmen are all hams at heart and really were who they said they were.

Frank said the guys were all actors because a real car-lot owner wouldn't have time to be on TV morning, noon, and night.

Sheeks, I told him. They obviously taped a flock of ads and ran them off at convenient times.

He couldn't see that.

Sometimes Ralph Williams' sales manager, Chick Lambert, would come on in place of Ralph. After "Hi, I'm Chick Lambert, Sales Manager here at Ralph Williams" he'd go into his pitch. Lots of times he'd have his dog Storm with him. Sometimes she'd be curled up on the hood of the car he was pitching, and Chick would say, "This is my dog Storm. The car is for sale, the dog is not."

Taking off on the "dog Storm" bit is another ever-present car salesman, Cal Worthington. After an off-camera announcer says "It's Cal Worthington and his dog, Spot" we cut to a man in a ten-gallon hat and other Hollywood cowboy wear, and his "dog Spot" turns out to be a goat, a tiger, a pony, a hippopotamus, an orca, an elephant, and so on. The other day "Spot" was seven penguins, toddling along in close formation.

A couple of years ago Cal and the other car salesmen got hooked on a phrase I got sick on very quickly: "These cars are all on the front line." After a few months that line dropped out of their vocabularies. Good. Now if only "The bottom line is..." would fall out of use...

One day Frank expressed outrage at mini-skirts. What year was that, I wonder? Sometime in the '70s? Anyhow, Frank said they weren't modest.

"By God, no daughter of mine would wear one of those things!" he bellowed. "I'd never let her!"

"Frank, you're a bachelor. You've never even lived with a woman for more than a weekend. How do you know what you'd let your mythical daughter do?"

"No daughter of mine is gonna wear any mini-skirt. I don't want any daughter of mine showing everything she's got. I'd beat the hell out of her with a razor strop!"

"You couldn't do that."

"The hell I couldn't. I'd beat her ass good."

"How could you do that? Your pretty little sixteen-year-old daughter, who weighs barely 105 pounds, and who just last night sat in your lap and said you were the sweetest and nicest daddy in all the world--you could beat her ass?"

"Damned right...well, maybe I wouldn't hit her real hard. But I don't want her wearing those damned short skirts. They're not modest."

"How about if she wears petti-pants?"

"What's petti-pants?"

"Hell, you ought to know. You've been staring up mini-skirts for months now. You know, those little ruffled panties. They're about an inch shorter than the skirt."

"Oh, yeah."

"They're modest, aren't they? She'd be covered and wouldn't be showing everything."

He didn't say anything. He just stood there frowning a little.

"Okay, then, Frank. Can your sixteen-year-old daughter wear a mini-skirt?"

"Oh, yeah, I guess it'll be all right."

"Frank, you're a great human being," I said.

Later I went to see a couple of women in Assembly. Charming ladies, both, but Frank barely noticed them.

"I've got good news, ladies," I said, as I walked into their section. "Frank Holliday is going to let his sixteen-year-old daughter wear a mini-skirt."

They looked at me in puzzlement.

Esther, the dark sexy one, said, "But....Frank has never been married. He hasn't got a sixteen-year-old daughter."

"I know. But if he did have a sixteen-year-old daughter, he'd let her wear a mini-skirt."

They still looked rather puzzled, so I gave them the whole story, the way I did just now.

Frank was a Dixieland jazz fan. He was one of the few persons I'd ever spoken to in the Southern California jazz scene who had a record of The Girls Go Crazy. 90% of the jazz fans hadn't even heard of it. But he had a record of it. Liked it. But would he go to Disneyland, just a miles from where he lived, to see Turk Murphy, the fella who'd made the record? No.

But I went. Frank wanted to know the personnel of the band. When I told him, he shook his head. "That's not the same band."

I said of course it wasn't the identical group; after all, his Turk Murphy records had been cut in 1945 or so and this was the '70s. Same old Turk on trombone and same fine tunes and sound. But he wouldn't go.

Another time I tried to get him to go to a nearby Pizza Palace to see a seven-piece jazz band that played there every Friday and Saturday, the South Frisco Jazz Band. He said he didn't eat pizza. "Neither do I," I said. "But I drink beer and so do you and they serve beer there."

Couldn't arouse any interest.

Ah, I have fond memories of that Pizza Palace. At that time Vince Saunders and his South Frisco Jazz Band were playing there. Imagine, we could walk into a Pizza Palace and listen to some fine Dixieland jazz played by a seven-piece orchestra. They never played crap like Alexander's Ragtime Band, or When The Saints Go Marching In. They played the real stuff.

Cora used to come pick me up Friday nights when I got out at midnight,

bringing a "cold shoe." That was our term for the can of beer she'd bring me to get started on. So it wouldn't roll around while she was driving, she'd put the can into one of my dress shoes. I'd quickly wash up and charge out the door and hop into her car and off we'd go with her driving while I sipped for the five miles or so to the Pizza Palace.

One Friday night, Cora brought along a lovely lady from her place of work. Maggie. Ah, Maggie, a tall slender charmer. Pretty, sexy, intelligent. The best kind. "Do you think Frank would like to come along?" Cora asked.

"Sure he would!" I said, positive that when he got one look at Maggie he would jump at the idea.

But when I asked him, he said no, he wasn't dressed to go out. I said that none of us was. The girls were in work clothes, pants and blouses. "They look just like the girls that work here, except they're prettier. Look at me, work pants, work shirt. I do change shoes because those machines have a tendency sometimes to splatter my work shoes. Other than that, all four of us are dressed alike."

He still shook his head.

"Frank, this is no formal place with strict dress codes--men wear-a-tie-and-jacket sort of place. This is a Pizza Palace."

He shook his head again, "No, I can't go like this."

I said, "Frank, this could be the nicest thing that ever happened to you. These are two fun-to-be-with women. Just think, in about twenty minutes you can be sitting at a table with a pretty woman, drinking beer and listening to a first-class live jazz band."

He wouldn't go.

A week or so later I said to him: "Frank, you're going to die of old age before you're forty years old."

"How come?"

"You seem to have lost a zest for life. You wouldn't drive to San Diego to see the restored SBD, Scout Bomber, Douglas, that they have down there, even after you'd spent twenty or so hours assembling a model kit. You love airplanes, but every time there's an air show nearby you figure out some reason not to go. You yearn for women but you wouldn't even go four miles down the road the other night to listen to fine jazz and drink beer with a pretty woman. There are four or five attractive women in your age bracket just a few yards from here and you won't ask one out for a drink."

He just frowned and didn't say anything. I felt ashamed.

"Sorry, Frank. I'm sorry. I spoke out of turn. Your life is your business."

"Oh, that's all right, Charlie," he said.

Later, I was to regret very much bringing up the matter.

One night, at our 9 o'clock rap session, he told me he had something wrong with his throat and could I tell him what it was. I asked for symptoms, even while I told him I couldn't do anything or tell him anything helpful.

"Last night I woke up half choking. I felt like my throat was closing up and I couldn't breathe. But after a while I felt better. Scared the hell out of me."

"You're talking to the wrong person, Frank. I don't know anything about medicine. I'm a machine man. I can tell why machines are making holes that vary, or why the finish is coming out rough, or why the threads won't take the gauge, and I can fix the trouble, too. But that's because I'm a machine mechanic. What you need right now is a body mechanic. A mechanic who knows about bodies. They call them doctors."

"Aw, doctors!" he grunted, hooking a thumb over his shoulder as though he was pointing at somebody. "Doctors! Twenty-five dollars just to walk into their office."

"Hell with twenty-five bucks. This could be serious as all get-out."

You know what you ought to do, right now? Drop that broom, walk out of here and drive to the hospital, you know where it is, go into the Emergency entrance and tell the people there just what you told me. Somebody that knows something will ask you questions and maybe treat you right there and then. Or send you to a specialist. Somebody there could diagnose you which is far more than I can do."

"Specialist! That'd cost a fortune!"

"Hell with the money. This could mean your life. What's a few dollars when your life might be at stake?"

But he didn't go. He had another choking attack a few nights later. But he didn't go to a doctor.

About a week later the first person I saw when I entered my area asked me, "Have you heard about Frank?"

"No."

"He's dead. When he didn't show up for work Saturday, his boss went over to his place. Saw his car parked in the driveway. The front door was locked so he went around back and peeked through the kitchen window and saw Frank lying on a cot.

"He rapped on the window and called and Frank didn't respond so he called the cops and they broke in and found him dead, his throat and face all purple, like he'd been strangled."

I went to his funeral. The little card they gave me listed his birth date. I did a simple subtraction; he was 39.

--Charles Burbee

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#### DOORWAY (continued from page 3)

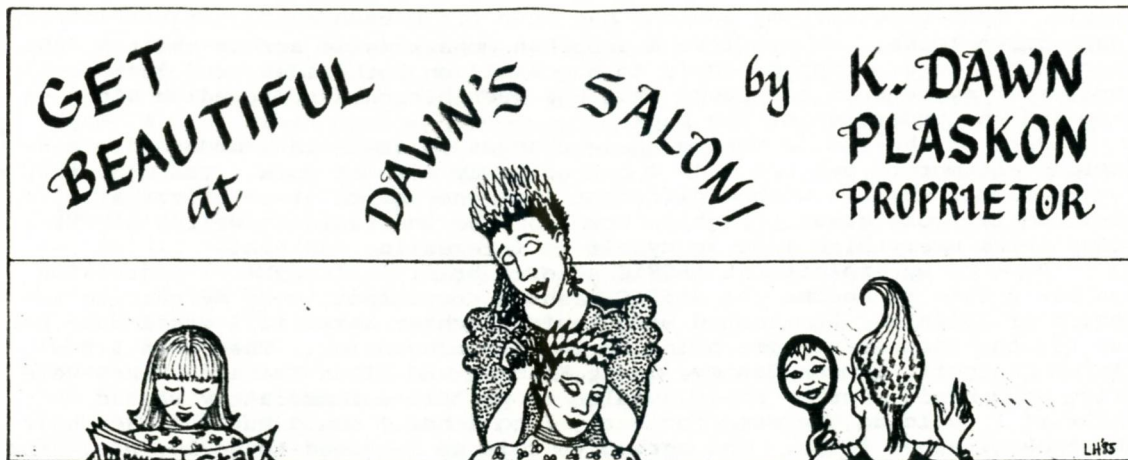
than one occasion in the past. As a fanzine editor, I take a more pragmatic view. If good material is available and a majority of my readers will not have seen its appearance, I'll go for it, if I can get permission.

I'm once again a member of both FAPA and SAPS, the "original" apas of fandom. The former has 65 members, the latter 25, and in each case about one third of the membership receives this fanzine, too. So far in these pages, all the articles and columns that have appeared by Redd Boggs have been reprinted, mostly from SAPS. Harry Warner's article in this issue appeared originally, albeit in rather different form, in SAPS. Charles Burbee's pieces in this and last issue appeared in FAPA first. All this material is new to at least 200 readers. I feel like that speaks for itself.

With apologies to Chuch and all the others who admonished me to be sure to write an article about "Group Sex on The Farm," I'm going to have to demur. The real truth of the matter is that while there was some Group Sex on The Farm, it didn't happen to me and so, lacking firsthand knowledge, I can only plead ignorance. One member of our readership could provide this article, but will he? I hope that he is reading these pages, not using them to line his cat box or whatever. I'm not going to write anything about The Farm this time around, but I do want to commend to your attention a long and well-done interview, "Why We Left The Farm," with comments by others that are in many instances just what I would say if quizzed on many of the topics breached. This article appears in *Whole Earth Review* #49 (the magazine that used to be *CoEvolution Quarterly*) and is available for \$4.50 postpaid from Whole Earth Access, 2990 Seventh Street, Berkeley CA 94710, and besides the interview has articles and artwork by Jay Kinney.

Speaking of Jay reminds me that I didn't mean to slight anyone back there in the first paragraph by leaving them out of my listing of Third Saturday partygoers. I mean, the list is near endless. Besides everyone above, and Jay and Dixie, there's also Bruce Towmley, Lucy Huntzinger, Terry Carr, Steve and Grania Davis, Allyn Cadogan, Sharee Carton, Cheryl Cline & Lynn Kuehl...and the list could go on and on, certainly not excluding our genial hosts, Lord Jim and Shay. It's our local Golden Age, and fanzines are often known to be passed out there. Verbal LoCs are passed. Fandom goes on.

--Robert Lichtman



I NEVER INTENDED TO BE a fashion consultant, but my appearance at the NASFIC was greeted with cries of "Ooo, I really like what you did with your hair. You look terrific. Can you do that to me?" Since one of my favorite activities is playing with clothes, hair, and makeup, I welcomed the opportunity to do so with heads and bodies other than my own.

It all started last year when I decided to cut my seven-year growth of hair. I'd sworn to let it grow until it wouldn't any more, and then left it that way for three years. But the time and frustration involved in caring for a hip length growth of pigmented protein filaments finally exceeded my tolerance levels, and last August I took drastic measures and got cropped. This required a search for a hairdresser I could trust not to leave me to walk out of the shop looking as though I had had an encounter with a dull meat grinder. So I began to interview hairdressers.

This required going to a shop, unbraiding my hair, and trying to come up with a coherent idea of what I wanted done. Luckily, on my first try, I found Jorunn. She was excited at the prospect of cutting and styling my hair, so we made an appointment for the following week. I entered the shop on Saturday with some trepidation, closing my eyes and wincing as I heard the first sharp snips of the scissors at the back of my head. Having three feet of hair become eighteen inches is not a trivial action. The way you wear your hair is one of the more obvious statements you can make about who you are and how you wish people to accept you, and changing that fashion does change the manner in which people relate to you.

Since that first rather conservative cut (my hair mostly remained long in the back, the front being layered and cut rather short), I've become a past master at getting shorn. And the most favorable reactions to my changes in hairstyle have resulted in my bringing a number of additional clients to Jorunn. It also gave a few people the courage to have their own locks cut after years of remaining the same. Now when I walk into a place I've not been in a month or so, friends approach saying "You've changed your hair again." And when I walk into Jorunn's shop it's with a fairly well thought out plan for what I want to look like when I leave.

The only real problem is that each time I leave the shop I seem to have less hair on my head. I was warned by Laurie Gottlieb that haircuts can become habit-forming and I've discovered that she was right. I've also discovered that I have about a six month tolerance level for a general style of cut. Since last August, my hair has not remained in the same style for more than two months.

And after I leave the shop, I go home to do other things to the new

style. Most recently, my passion has been for bleaching highlights into my dark brown locks. So now I've a suburban mohawk (wide across the top, about two inches long, cropped nearly to the skull on both sides, and just to the bottom of my neck in the back) that has been bleached to a medium blond on top and the underside of the back.

Part of the fun in making these changes of style is a moderately conscious attempt to see how much I can get away with at work. Too bad, though, every time I walk in with a different look they stare at me quizzically, and tell me it looks great. Sigh!! How can I be the resident weirdo at VMI if they think everything I do to myself is interesting and neat?

Back to my exploits at NASFIC after a brief philosophical digression on how I came to become the NASFIC fashion consultant among my particular group of friends. It started when Louise Sachter asked if I would make her up for the parties at some point during the convention. Then when I saw Anton Chernoff, Tamzen Cannoy, Janet Kramer, and Ellen Franklin, they were rife with praise for my newly purpled crop. Ellen immediately wanted to know if I could do the same for her. I told her I could but that her hair must be bleached first. She agreed to this so I agreed to go buy bleaching agents the next day. This began a whole train of people with dark hair who wanted streaks of various types placed on their heads.

And, of course, Sharee Carton had shown up while I was in the midst of be-purpling myself. Sharee, of the variegated mohawk, instantly asked if I would dye her already bleached hawk. I agreed and we decided to play by putting her one-inch wide strip of hair into eight braids that we alternately dyed purple or left white. The next day we borrowed Terry Floyd's car and headed into Austin to acquire bleach. Having done so (and our adventures with the Floyd-mobile are another story entirely) we returned to the hotel and began collecting people. Tamzen wanted Anton to have a couple of streaks, Janet Kramer wanted one strand on the underside bleached, as did Ellen Franklin. Then Laurie got into the line to ask if I could place a very narrow stripe along her shortly cropped hair and into the fringe at the base of her neck. Oh boy, fun! I always have liked to play dress-up.

As I mixed up the dye to begin bleaching, Anton sat in the bathroom and cringed. I asked if he was nervous, and he responded that his conservative streak was acting up, but that he wanted to continue. So I began the application, giving him a small tail and a 1" x 3" streak on the left side of his head. While he waited for the dye to take, I began on Janet. Taking a strand from the back of her head we applied the bleach to its entire length. Ellen showed up late and we agreed to do her the next day along with Laurie and Laurie's daughter Misty.

Saturday morning, the bleach which had been entirely mixed up the night before (a bad idea as the chemical reaction causes it to foam up and to explode if left in an airtight container) was less easily used than it had been the previous evening, but enough of sufficient strength remained so that I could grab Ellen and bleach her. When that was complete I showed up at the dealers' room with bleach and gloves and began on Laurie. We received some interested looks from passers-by and occasionally Laurie would interrupt the operation to deal with customers, but finally it was complete. I then took Misty into the ladies' room where I further bleached her already streaked hair and used the last of the now unusable concoction on my own head. This time, though, I simply left the bleach in my hair until I took a shower that night.

Hair care done, we began preparing for parties on Saturday night. Although I don't mind playing with makeup, my time frame for myself from start to finish is about twenty minutes. Making up two other people, and with four others present kibitzing, required an additional two hours. But, but I want to go party! Hartwell's running at the Driskill and I have to go on shift as a rover at the Sheraton at midnight. I promised, though,

and it is fun, so makeup kit in hand I start on Louise. First, we (Sharee and I) insist that the Springsteen tee-shirt must go. Louise has a rainbow patterned leotard and goes to put it on. I offer the loan of my black satin brocade vest (actually, a mid-'60s dress suit top) and gray belt. I band Louise's deep brown eyes with turquoise, gray, and gold eyeshadow, apply a moderate amount of blush, and deep red lipstick. To her hair I apply styling gel and with a blow dry and my hands I lift it back and up from her forehead. It curls naturally, though slightly, and looks great. As a final touch, I add glitter gel to her hair and cheeks. When complete, she looks glamorous and chic. She leaves to blow the minds of the operations crew in the Pan-handle Room. Dawn Atkins needs only eyeshadow, done in blue, silver, and brown. I add some glitter gel for good measure.

For myself, I wear one of my favorites, black lace over pink and purple lace. I am shod in the killer black boots given me by my work friend, Sherri, with seamed and run black stockings over deep rose. More glitter gel, and Sharee clips the sides of my recently cut hair as close to the scalp as is practicable with my need to return to work the following week. We finally set off to party. As we head to the Driskill, Sharee comments that I should go into business doing party makeovers. Charge ten dollars a head for a half hour session in their room. Neat idea, maybe I will. Arriving at Hartwell's I find he has Freixenet which is one of my favorite champagnes. Too soon I go to rove. But at least this lets me hit the parties. Great parties, some of them, especially the New Orleans one where they are handing out really cool Mardi Gras beads. I collect some. When I come off shift at 4 a.m. though, I'm too tired to go back across the bridge to find more, so I go to bed.

Now it's Sunday evening and the con is nearly over. For tonight, I attire myself in a great lavender dress from about 1943 given to me by Jeanne Bowman. With it I wear my beads from the previous night and a long length of black lace around my hips. At midnight, Sharee, I and a few others go off to see "Harold and Maude." When we get back to the Sheraton we party for a while and I head off to bed at around 3 a.m.

No, I did not see much of the convention barring hotel bathrooms and parties, but I had a great time. I did put in some time on panels. One was the ongoing, traveling "Fat, Feminism and Fandom" panel. The other done with Sharee and Terry Floyd was the "Hardcore Mohawk Multi-Color Day-Glo Punk Fanzine" panel. Both were interesting and fun in different ways. I also met a few new people all of whom I came to like immensely. And the "Mark of Dawn" became a byword of my particular circle. So we'll just have to see what mark I can leave on future conventions.

--K. Dawn Plaskon

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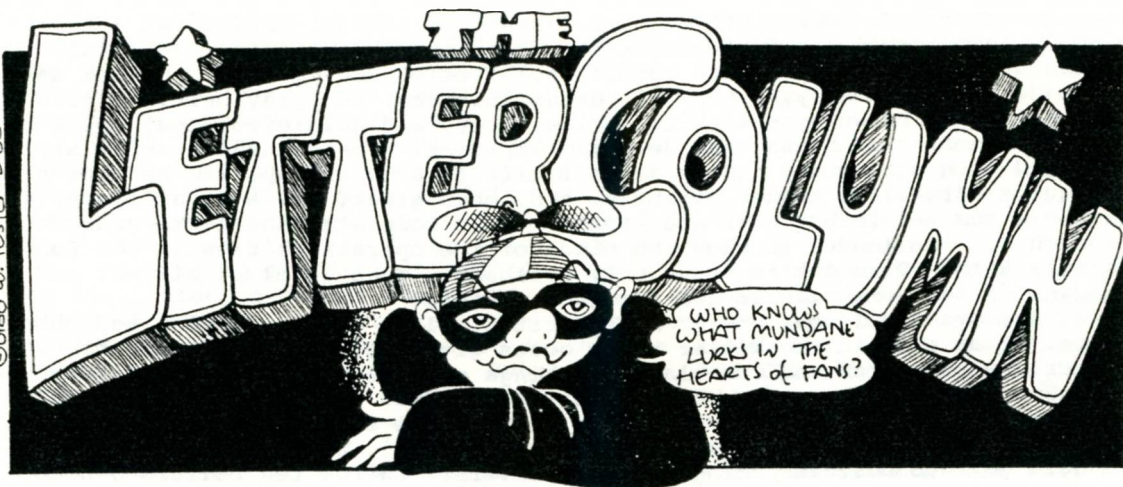
#### WE NEVER SLEEP (continued from page 12)

for me. Wouldn't a cigarette taste good right now, etc etc.

But I also find that a modicum of grass does often seem to open the door for the unexpected phrase, the new approach, the bit of daring spontaneity that can give fresh energy and create new structural or thematic possibilities for everything that follows. Sometimes this happens without the grass, of course--but other times it really serves as an effective shortcut out of the doldrums, the predictable, the ho-hum.

Trouble is, there are side-effects: sleepiness, loss of energy, obsessive pickiness as I go back and rewrite some perfectly serviceable sentence a dozen different ways. And on a more subtle level: loss of heart. Grass encourages me to be in my head, and that can definitely limit the quality and impact of what I write. So I smoke a little, and then I don't, and I try to balance it out, and wonder what's best, not for me, but for the writing. And find I don't know. How is it for you?

--Paul Williams



JANE HAWKINS I've been wanting to hear more about The Farm from Bob. I probably wouldn't use the word 'telepathy' to label what he's describing, but I can't come up with a better one, offhand. It is interesting and weird how people can get into sync with each other. This is especially strong where a group is formed by people with shared mores and purposes coming together, as with The Farm, but it happens even with more randomly formed groups.

I wasn't strongly aware of this kind of thing until I started work after college. I began feeling odd after a while. My nearest friends were about a twenty-four hour round trip by car and I couldn't afford to fly, so I wasn't seeing people I felt comfortable with very often. The only people I saw regularly were the folks at work. They were nice enough, the best people I'd ever worked with.

Yet, we very clearly didn't share values. The people my age were either young married couples or wanted to be. I didn't dislike them, and they were friendly to me, but they just plain wanted different things from themselves and life than I wanted.

Despite the fact that I did not really accept this group, the Group Mind operated. I was especially vulnerable to it because I had no other group in the area. I felt as though I were being brainwashed, that my values were shifting under the impact of all this suburban Yuppie-hood (though they weren't called Yuppies in those days).

I was flabbergasted when I finally figured out why I was feeling bad and confused. The idea that we can be influenced by other people wasn't new to me. As a woman, I've been well aware for a long time that the expectations and mores of others can affect one's behavior and self-image. What was new to me was that I'd thought if I maintained a careful awareness of pressures on me, I could defend myself against them. I still think that is partly true, but not as much as I once did.

I've come to think of us as basically pack animals. Pack animals are hard-wired to cling together in groups. It is a crucial survival characteristic. A crucial survival advantage for humans is that we appear to be somewhat less hard-wired than most other animals. (Probably not as much less as we'd like to think.) Perhaps we're still somehow built to be susceptible to our fellows.

Anyway, I did what Bob did to alleviate the effects—I sought out contacts with outside people. Driving twenty-four hours during a weekend was too grueling to do often. I needed to find people who were closer. I found those odd little events I could go to over a weekend that were full of people wandering around looking for talk. There were jerks but there were also a lot of people who felt just right.

I went to a lot of science fiction conventions before making any real friends through them, but they provided a place to go where I could find people I enjoyed. They thought about things besides babies and lawn fertilizer, and didn't think my political views were unduly bizarre.

Even though Bob's group was a chosen one, I think I could sympathize with the sense

of relief he probably felt when he went off The Farm. (Your observation that you'd thought if you "maintained a careful awareness of pressures" bearing on you, you'd be able to stay on top of the Group Mind, but didn't, sounded very familiar to me. I'd get more and more immersed in The Farm group mind the longer it was since I'd gotten away to mix with other people for the day, or travel, or live elsewhere. I'd return deprogrammed and knowing exactly where it was at, and then it would gradually slide away, again. Fortunately my cosmic mind and experience in dealing with the same sort of thing in fandom helped me through.) (4121 Interlake N., Seattle WA 98103)

CHUCK HARRIS I do wish you'd been a bit more specific about the Group Telepathy, instead of leaving us all wondering about exact instances. Personally, with certain reservations concerning the Dr. Rhine experiments, I group all these manifestations along with flying saucers and the miraculously liquifying blood of St. Sebastian. I doubt if I'd believe in it no matter what was "proved," but it would be interesting to read about it. I think I've spent the best part of my life trying to prove that mental telepathy exists. I sit there esping away with all of my supernatural psi powers, but so far nary a one of my fellow experimenters has so much as rolled down her tights. (I discount as inconclusive the two separate instances when she got up and, unasked, handed me a large glass of ice-water and said "Drink or dunk." The choice is immaterial; the, er, end result is still the same.)

Whatever you do, though, don't miss out the Group Sex report you promised.

Now I think of myself as a member of the Sixth Fandom fandom that David Stever is so cross about. I think of it as a sort of Golden Age, a warm friendly fun time with the strongest links ever between British and US fandom. But I don't think I'm anything like the person David seems to imagine.

For instance, at the last con I attended this year at Leeds, Madeline Willis (and you won't get much more Sixth Fandom fannish than that) was busy judging the fancy dress whilst Walt photographed the entries. Vin Clarke, Mal Ashworth and Chuck Harris sat there applauding everyone except Brian Burgess. The only Princess Leia was desired, not derided.

I think that if there is a fault it lies more with David than with us. Why doesn't he go over and say "hi" to these ogres? He might be pleasantly surprised because we all have one thing in common. We have chosen fandom. All of us, from Forry Ackerman right down to David Stever have decided that fandom is where they want to spend their spare time trying to find pleasure and enjoyment in a mutually shared hobby. Obviously those of us who have been around longest make the most friends and contacts. It must be 30 years since Willis wrote to me and I sent him a BRE Weird Tales as a SLANT sub and began a friendship with all the Irish fans. This year I met Patrick and Teresa Nielsen Hayden and Avedon and started another lot of valued friendships. Perhaps, if David would only make the effort to mingle instead of bitching on the sidelines, he would find it more worthwhile, too. (32 Lake Crescent, Daventry, Northants, England NN11 5EB)

RICH BROWN I've experienced the telepathy you speak of, and/or other forms of esp, mostly with the aid of certain chemical substances--but at least once, although perhaps not in the same category, with my ex-wife without the aid of consciousness expanding drugs.

A femmefan of our acquaintance was coming to our apartment to pay a visit, leaving her husband and daughter behind. But Colleen couldn't stay at home; her best friend, Maura, needed money and the companionship of a friend to get her through an abortion. Or so Colleen said; she took about \$200 with her and provided me with Maura's new phone number before she left. A few hours later, I had barely explained to our visitor what was happening when Maura called and wanted to speak to Colleen. Since she lived no more than an hour's subway ride away, I was non-plussed by this; and, in talking to Maura, I discovered that she (a) did not need an abortion and (b) was not expecting a visit from Colleen.

After that phone call, with what sangfroid I could muster, I dialed the number Colleen had left for me; a male voice answered. "Let me speak to Colleen," I said gruffly. Colleen got on the line. "What the hell is going on," I asked. I explained about the phone call from Maura. Colleen said she couldn't tell me anything; she'd promised not to and so I'd just have to trust her. I did trust her--or thought I did. But she hadn't told me the truth about where she was going. She'd taken money with her. A male voice had answered the phone.

And, while we weren't into any kind of "open" relationship, I couldn't help but recall that she'd told me only a couple of days before about some of the "cute guys" in her office. However, I managed to wrap some self composure about myself like an old and ragged cloak and chitter-chatter with our visitor--but I went to sleep that night a troubled person.

The esp-like revelation hit me while I was in the dream state; I woke about 6 a.m., went into the kitchen to find the phone book and looked up the number of a fringe fan who was a fairly close friend of our visitor. It was the number that Colleen had left for me; I knew then (and subsequently verified) that my revelation was correct and that it was our visitor's teenage daughter, whom I'd thought she'd left behind. who needed the abortion and the companionship of a friend. My unconscious had somehow made all the correct intuitive leaps, so I guess this wasn't quite telepathy--but it certainly had the feel of it.  
(1808 Lamont NW, Washington DC 20010)

KATE SCHAEFER The reminiscences about life on The Farm have been fascinating. Telepathy is probably more interesting than group sex, unless the group sex were to involve telepathy as well. One of the major problems with sex with any group larger than one is that it's impossible to know exactly what other people really want, a problem which might be resolved with telepathy. I say might, because telepathy would definitionally only involve knowing what the other people were thinking, and another problem with sex, even with groups no larger than one, is that it's difficult to tell exactly what one really wants and to express it, sometimes even to think it, so that to be really helpful in group sex telepathy would have to go farther than mind reading and involve a bit of precognition as well ("Now, how will X react if I do this? Oh, I see...")

Gary Deindorfer is one of my favorite writers in fandom, but I don't know that I'd ever want to meet him. Maybe in person he isn't as weird as he is in print, but he's weird enough in print that he could be a great deal less weird in person and still be stranger than I'd want to be in the same room with. He could even be boring in person. He could turn out to be someone who never talks and saves up all his clever observations on the human condition for his writing.

Ken Rudolph asks what fandom we're in now. I don't know. Anne Laurie Logan or possibly Avedon Carol or possibly both of them defined our generation of fans as Last Fandom. I've been in and around fandom for ten years now, and I can see that my generation wasn't really Last Fandom. Following generations have been different; I think the apas my generation wallowed in during the mid-'70s could be responsible for that. Apas are very satisfying to the participants as they provide as close to instant gratification as one can get in written fanac. I have called apas group letters when explaining them to non-fans; I think that they're more like room parties in print, full of incoherent conversation snatches and humorous in-jokes. I enjoy apas; I enjoy room parties. I think I would have enjoyed my time in fandom more if apas hadn't been the wave of the present when I got into fandom. The energy I spent on apas could have been spent on locs or articles or publishing my own fanzine, and I would be a better writer today. Of course, I could have done all those other things, too. Plenty of the people in Last Fandom did and do, as do some people who have joined fandom since then. It just seems to be harder to find fanzine fandom in the midst of all the other special interest fandoms. (1405 N. 41st, Seattle WA 98103)

LESLEIGH LUTTRELL I enjoyed (too mild a word?) your editorial on telepathy at The Farm.

I think what you describe, or something similar to it, probably happens in many small-scale societies (especially those that are isolated, physically or philosophically, from surrounding groups). It would be interesting to speculate on the possible connections between the origins of religion and the 'group mind.' In some cultures, religion serves to keep knowledge away from members of the group who for reasons of sex or age aren't supposed to know it. (Maybe it operates that way in all cultures.) In that way it is opposed to the group mind. But it seems that religion has also taken over what you describe as the main function of that form of telepathy, which is to make sure that everyone in the community is "right thinking." Scary thought, hey? (Yeah, and in this and other cultures you have high-powered advertising attempting the same thing, doing for the material what religion attempts to do for the spiritual.) (1906 Kropf Avenue, Madison WI 53704)

HARRY WARNER JR. Eric Mayer's article achieved the remarkable feat of reminding me of personal experience and containing a topic which seemed terribly alien to me. As you may have guessed, the nostalgia for rock is something I must postpone until about twenty years after whatever future date brings me the capacity to enjoy rock. But when Eric wrote about his first visit to New York City, that struck home. Some of his and Kathy's reactions to that first visit resembled very much how I felt on the spring day in 1961 when I celebrated recovery from a broken hip by making my first trip up there. At that time, the Greyhound bus route took travelers from my part of the East Coast into New York City via the Lower West Side, and that was the first big thrill for me, because those slum blocks looked almost as real as the West Side reproductions on Hollywood back lots that I'd seen in one movie after another. I didn't mistake a whore for a nun but I did have a little adventure in a coffeehouse in the Village where I realized only after about six verses that the folk song being sung by a huge fellow with a guitar was an improvisation with me as the subject of the lyrics.

I liked Jeanne Bowman's description of rock videos as mental munchies. Occasionally when I have a spare quarter-hour I turn on MTV, but with the volume control all the way down so the music is inaudible. I can understand why some kids are obsessed by rock videos, but I do wonder why the photography quality is so bad for many of them. Severe grain, lack of contrast, out of focus footage, and other flaws seem to be cultivated rather than avoided. Maybe it has something to do with the deliberate distortion that the audio engineers introduce into rock recordings, pre-washings of jeans to make them look badly worn when they are brand new, and other phenomena of the younger generation's passion for having things worse than they should be. (423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown MD 21740)

ERIC MAYER I loved the con reports from Jeanne Bowman and Gary Hubbard. Now these are two people I'd like to meet at a con! Most telling was Jeanne's line, looking in on people "talking fan": "I don't think I can handle this." I felt that way when I attended some fan meetings in NYC. You see, fandom, as a paper game, is fine, and I'll rattle on, on paper, about locs and egoboo and ensmalled zines with the unselfconscious glee that I'll read about Hobbits, say; but once it's off paper my suspension of disbelief vanishes and half the time, even talking to Kathy, I'll refer to "my magazine" rather than fanzine, when speaking of GROGGY. If I talk to a fan on the phone I'll say, "I wrote you a letter yesterday," not "I locced you." Somehow, in real face-to-face communication all the trappings of fandom strike me as ludicrous. As a game, it's neat, but as between flesh and blood adults, I can't handle it. (I don't say "loc" either, because it's a term that came into being after my formative years in fandom and I've never fully accepted it. I joggle a little when other fans say it to me. Amongst fans the main "fannish words" I use in verbalizing are egoboo, kipple, "pub my ish," sercon, and fugghead. Beyond fandom as we know it, I find that the concept of fandoms is pretty widespread among younger people--I'm 43--and people will accept as more or less ordinary the concept that I publish a magazine for some people spread around the world who all get it because they stumbled into a subculture of magazine publishers who have their roots in science fiction, even though their magazines may not address it hardly at all. The concept of "egoboo" is also widespread and easy to explain. Or maybe it's just being in California....) (1771 Ridge Road East, Rochester NY 14622)

MARC ORTLEIB I have no sympathy for Redd Boggs' nostalgia for trains. Australia has far too much scenery and trains that travel far too slowly through it. The joy of aeroplanes is that, by the time the train has cleared the suburbs the plane is already touching down at one's destination. The story is told of a very slow train in Northern Queensland that stopped every two hours or so, miles from anywhere. During one of the stops, a passenger got out and went walking into the bush. The conductor asked him where he was going, to which he replied that he was going to pick some flowers.

"But there aren't any flowers out there," said the conductor.

"It's all right," replied the passenger. "I've got a packet of seeds."

(To cite my credentials in such matters, when I taught in Naracoorte, a small town in the southeast of South Australia, I was a regular passenger on the train. It took 12 hours to cover just over 200 miles. It stopped at every small station to offload freight cars of noisy sheep.) (P.O. Box 215, Forest Hill, Vict. 3131, Australia--new address.)

NOREEN SHAW David Stever's comment that there is a type of fan whose very outrageousness serves as fodder for the rest of us reminds me of a remark my son made recently. I was waxing nostalgic about fandom and our early outlaw days when we generated ideas faster than Al Ashley. He said, "Don't you realize that Society (capital S) will always tolerate a band of people like you on its fringes? Society needs you and will take and co-opt any creativity you have. It then waters it down and uses it as its own." I think he was right and I think that's what much of fandom does in turn with these fans--takes their ideas, waters them down and uses them up. Fandom will always need a fresh supply, just as Society does. (4441 Stern Avenue, Sherman Oaks CA 91423)

BOB LEMAN The stuff about The Farm is exceedingly interesting, but all I know about it is from your writings, which seem to assume that the reader has some prior knowledge of the enterprise. Was this an actual attempt to secure a livelihood from the soil? As a former farm (small f) boy, it seems to me to be almost an impossibility to obtain from a clutch of pampered young people (who prized their different drummers) the requisite unrelenting will that subsistence farming requires. I gather that there were other sources of revenue. (No assumption is made of prior knowledge and most readers, yourself included, have been on board since the first issue and thus all know the same stuff via these pages. The Farm was to some extent a farming venture, but if that was all we had had to go on we'd never have lasted. So, yes, there were other ventures to raise operating capital, with varying degrees of success or failure. As for more, keep reading TRAP DOOR.) (2615 Broad Street, Bethel Park PA 15102)

MIKE GLICKSOHN I know for sure I missed a few of the in-jokes in Deindorfer's parody but it was highly amusing nevertheless, not to mention flattering to see myself included with all those BNFs. Gary exaggerates a little though; only 87% of my locs normally see print. (You'll note that this is part of The Other Thirteen Percent!)

It's strange to imagine Gary Hubbard wandering the streets of Toronto but when I recall what a non-event Fan Fair III was I think he had a damned fine idea! In fact, if I hadn't had enough knowledge to recognize that FF3 was an atypically dull and focusless weekend I might well have given up on conventions as a result of being there! Come back, Gary; go to Corflu; give us another chance! But in the meantime your recollection of the geography of downtown Toronto after ten years leaves me in absolute awe. Did you take notes while being bored out of your skull? (508 Windermere Avenue, Toronto, Ont. M6S 3L6, Canada)

ARTHUR THOMSON I saw TRAP DOOR #4 first when I went over to Vince Clarke's for a KTF meeting. His had arrived in before my copy. Avedon and Rob Hansen were coming over for the meeting. They live in East Ham over on the other side of the Thames from Vince and come over on the Woolwich ferry. I volunteered to go down and collect them when they arrived on this side of the river and took Vince's copy of TRAP DOOR with me to look at in case I got there first and had to wait for them. Didn't get more than a glance at it when the ferry pulled in and Avedon, Rob, and Pam Wells got off. They hadn't received their copies and Avedon read aloud to us Gary Deindorfer's hilarious "Handkerchief Man" as we drove back to Vincent's.

Interesting to read a little more information about The Farm. Here in Britain we knew of the various types of communes and such that existed in the US and even had some of our own here in Britain...Roddy Lewellyn, a 'special' friend of Princess Margaret, lived in a farming commune for a number of years in the '60s. Was also intrigued to see the reference to George Metzger a few issues back. I remember him well from the '50s; he wrote scads of handwritten letters to Walt and Irish Fandom with all the pages decorated round the edges with inked illos of leatherjacketed motorbike type people. His drawings were quite good and his letters bubbled with enthusiasm about his life and times. So where is he at now, I wonder? (I know a lady still living on The Farm who used to keep me informed about George's whereabouts and doings, but I haven't spoken with her in many years. I will write and report further in a letter or perhaps in these pages.)

Sorry to hear about the twice yearly schedule. I can't argue against the fact of publishing costs. I was putting the theory to Greg Pickersgill a while back, that some older established fans who maybe had a bob or two to spare could 'fund' a regular fmz to be put

out by some good young fmz editor; no strings to the cash other than to see a good regular fmz appearing. Greg put up several arguments against the idea but I dunno... {In the first two issues, we stated "Angels welcome" in the colophon but dropped it due to lack of response. Also, at this point it takes six months to generate the material to put together a good, solid issue, and it would remain to be seen if greater frequency would inspire more to contribute.} (17 Brockham House, Brockham Drive, London SW2 3RU, UK)

DAVID BRATMAN Interesting that so many of the letter writers should pick up on Chester Anderson's remark about short hair being a badge of slavery. I read Chester's conreport and discounted that remark as hyperbole. What bothered me was the context of the remark: that Chester himself was the only longhaired male at the Democratic National Convention, and the implication that as far as hair was concerned the Sixties Revolution had failed. Forgive me, but I didn't think the Revolution was about wearing long hair, but about wearing hair any length you wanted, and wearing anything else you wanted, and the freedom to be lots of other things, even conservative. Long hair wasn't a good in itself, but a way to set new limits on acceptability in a short-haired world. I still know more guys with hair halfway down their backs than guys with crewcuts, and I don't forget that my "short hair" of today would have been scandalously long 25 years ago. So cheer up, Chester. The Revolution succeeded. (P.O. Box 662, Los Altos CA 94023)

JUDITH HANNA Highlight of #4 was Gary Deindorfer's "Handkerchief Man" - neatly and economically done. More than most fanwriting it depends on your recognising the name that goes with each stage of the life he sketches out. But only slightly more than the average fannish article. I can feel myself coming over all philosophical about the nature of fanzine writing, which inevitably leads to the nature of fandom. Not to propound any new insight, but to reflect on how true that old saw is about a fanzine being a conversation in print.

TRAPDOOR is a very lively conversation in print. But I feel like I'm eavesdropping on it rather than participating in it. There's this group of people, quite a large group, all clearly good friends, old friends who go a long way back, having a good time swapping stories. Not actually talking about the good old days but you get a sense from the way they grin at turns of phrase or names you don't recognize that the words you hear (or read) are only giving you about half the story. To get the rest you need someone to pick up the cue and tell the joke that goes with the punchline or add another anecdote to the name, before you'll be able to keep up with the context. Until you suss out the undercurrents, it seems safer to sit silent and listen. If this were a conversation instead of a fanzine, it would be politer not to interrupt with some neoish irrelevancy. But since TRAPDOOR is a fanzine, it's politer to write and own up to this shy feeling of sitting on the sidelines. If I were new to this fanzine game, I doubt I'd have the courage to do so. Perhaps I'd even feel actively excluded and want to accuse you guys of some sort of elitism. But there are enough people I know in the group to make me feel comfortable hanging about on the outskirts (Hi Lucy, Leigh, Marc, Steve, Avedon, Stu, ATom!). There's also Eric Mayer, whose writing I admire--but he's been having this heavy disagreement with some good friends of mine, so is it safe to talk to him? Would he be rude to me because I'm part of their gang? And I'd like to read more from that feisty Jeanne Bowman. {Easy to agree about the "lively conversation in print" but since I've gone out of my way to make it a "general" fanzine I would ask that you make the effort to jump in. My mailing list includes everyone from fannish ancients to total neofans; if you look at who's responded in these first five issues, you'll be hardput to call us cliquish. Write us an article?} (22 Denbigh Street, London SW1V 2ER, UK)

WALTER A. WILLIS "Doctor," I said, "you remember that certificate you gave me for gafia?" "Yes," she said. "Well," I said, "maybe it isn't important, but I keep getting this terrible craving to publish a fanzine again, just so I can solicit material from a man called Deindorfer." She paled. "There was an article in The Lancet about that," she said, "I'm afraid there's no cure except to persuade Deindorfer to write dull and unoriginal articles and he isn't capable of that. We doctors call it The Deindorfer Syndrome."

"What do the big ones call it?" I asked. She shook her head and handed me a leaflet called HELP STAMP OUT FANNISHNESS. "Just keep taking the tablets--I mean, writing the postcards," she said.

Mayer was great, too. Lessee, I could ask him to write a column....aaaargh!  
(32 Warren Road, Donaghadee, Northern Ireland BT21 OPD, UK)

NORMAN HOLLYN Eric Mayer must be about my age. I guess this both from his rock and roll references and also from his tendency to look back on The Good Old Days a lot now. I do the same. Today I've listened to newer albums on The Old Junky Stereo, but I've had a tendency recently to delve back into the old Yes, CSN&Y, Jeff Airplane, Velvet Underground, and even the Cat Stevens albums. I try not to dwell on it too much (reminiscing about old times makes me think that I'm acting too much like my own parents; next I'll start hating people with hair that's different than mine) but it is interesting to look back nostalgically.

As for being unable to find "the stores run by ponytailed men in beaded vests and girls in granny dresses" all I can say is--Good Fucking Luck, Eric. Those folks are now wearing LaCoste T-shirts, pressed jeans or khaki pants, and selling things down in my neighborhood. "Scenic Soho," I call it, the neighborhood where you've got to dodge the limousines on the weekends. I tell you--it's easier living down here when I'm unemployed. I get to play in the streets on the weekdays. When Janet and I got married last year we made a move three blocks further east to get us out of the worst of the craziness. Now, it seems to be following us. Too bad we like the place so much.

Gary Hubbard's mention of his artistic snit won't carry any weight with me. Not only have I known plenty of artist-types who would sneer at such a snit but I seriously question the integrity of a so-called artist who gets up at six a.m.!! What kind of tempermental artist can he claim to be? Now, if he was awake at six a.m. because he hadn't gone to sleep yet, that would be one thing. But if I understand his sentence correctly ("I got up around six") he is saying that he was asleep and then woke up at six in the morning. (Pardon me while I gasp for breath here...)

And his analogy, in the letter column, re coming to San Francisco and finding something new ("I mean, imagine some straight arrow who'd lived all his life in a place where they only eat hamburger, who suddenly finds himself in a place where they serve hot dogs") is too much to believe. Way too graphic for my tastes. Eating hot dogs! In San Francisco! The mind boggles.

I'm not sure that I agree with Tom Perry when he says that "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 1972 and 1984." I'd like to know, actually, just what he would define as the "same lie" and "things being equal." In 1980 I finally got fed up with voting for the lesser of two evils, that is, with voting against someone instead of for someone, and so I voted for neither Carter nor Reagan but for Barry Commoner. My feelings about the political system haven't changed all that much since then--the candidates that the political system keeps on feeding us aren't exactly the same but they are close enough to make any kind of real choice meaningless. To use a Gary Hubbardian analogy, it is like being offered a choice between a McIntosh apple and a Delicious apple when what you really want is a Cadbury semi-sweet chocolate bar. The wonder is that McGovern got as far as he did in 1972 before having his financial and other supports pulled from him. Not that McGovern was a million miles different from the average run of U.S. Senators, but he seemed a bit different than the average run of people running for President.

I sort of like Harry Warner's suggestion that fandom make a "third man in" rule like in hockey. And naturally I have a suggestion for the penalty. That fan would have to write reams and reams of trash on the feud and then he or she would have to read it. It couldn't be published anywhere. It couldn't be read by anyone else. Only the poor "third fan in" could read it. That would stop the flow of vitriol simply by boring the fan into such a state of sleep that he or she would be incapable of writing anything more.

Tell Robert Bloch that the phrase, "sex is better at cons," is in comparison to "no sex at cons." (93 Mercer Street, #5E, New York NY 10012)

ROBERT WHITAKER SIRIGNANO Jeff Schalles has gone CAFIA. I seldom see him at various fan-nish functions in NYC anymore. I haven't seen him in over two years. He did show up at one of my birthday parties at the time. And having a punk band is not fannish, unless he does filk of various current rock songs with fannish references. Of course, I can't really say much for Jeff. He likes to listen to Lou Reed's Metal Machine Music. Frequently. {Jeff?!} (P.O. Box 7709, Newark DE 19714)

PEGGY RAE PAVLAT Yes, I saw the hint that I should send a loc to you for the TRAP DOORS which you have sent to me. While I, eventually, read fanzines, I don't write letters of comment nor do any of the other "usual."

You see, once upon a time Ron Ellik and I were visiting Larry and Noreen Shaw while they were still living in New York. We happened to be there when the mail was delivered. I was appalled when they brought in eight inches of mail! Neither Larry nor Noreen looked particularly surprised. Upon close questioning, they amazed us further by informing us that this was a "normal" mail day. This, I should remind you, was in the heyday of AXE, the Shaws' Hugo-winning newszine.

The rest of the visit was fun and relaxing with no further incidents. The connection between this one incident and my own life seemed non-existent.

As the years went by, I continued to publish fanzines (on a more or less irregular basis) and write locs to other fan publishers.

Some years later, now married to Bob, I went to pick up our own mail. There to my horror was a three-inch stack of fanzines lurking in the mailbox.

Now the lesson of this earlier scene was clear.

That day I vowed to protect my mail carrier from the same operations that the Shaws' carrier was certain to have endured over the years. With great restraint and much silent prayer I decided that the true path was to cease (cold turkey) doing the "usual" after fanzines arrived.

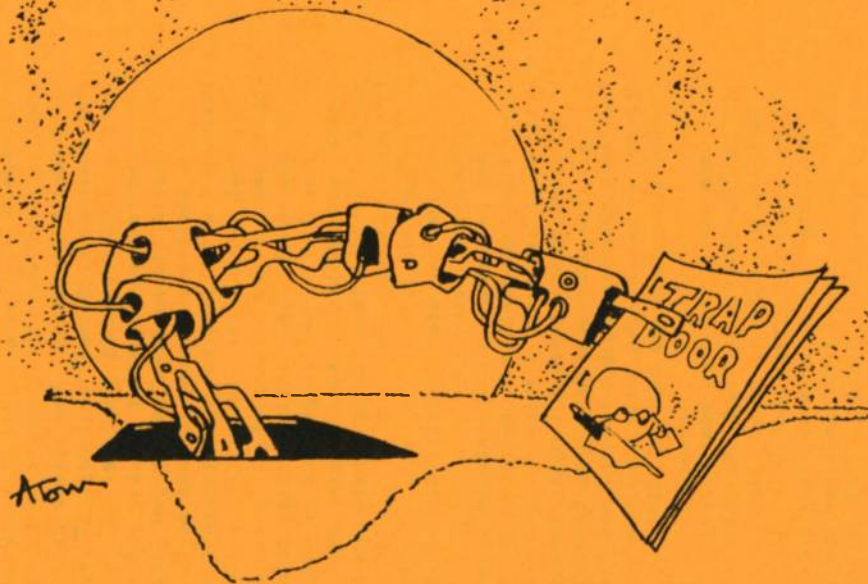
From that day to this, this is only the second lapse of my faith. May my carrier forgive me should the small trickle of fanzines which complement the FAPA bundles grow to a mighty river again.

And for you, who successfully tempted me by a simple "Hi!" to the left of the paragraph which by itself only hypothesized that some of us who never comment do read the fanzines which are sent, despite the silence...are you willing to share the shame of my fall? If the addictive nature of fanzine fandom draws me to her clutches, and the postal carrier must pay the price of multiplying fanzines, and the other activities which I've used to sublimate those urges lie ignored and barren, then are you willing to accept the guilt of drawing me back to the early 1960's and the passion of fanzine fandom? {Yes!} (5709 Goucher Drive, College Park MD 20740)

ONCE AGAIN, "We Also Heard From": HARRY ANDRUSCHAK, BRUCE D. ARTHURS, SID BIRCHBY, REDD BOGGS, BRIAN EARL BROWN, DANIEL FARR, BRAD W. FOSTER, DONALD FRANSON, ROBB GREGG ("Your letter column is remarkable for the number of unfamiliar (to me) faces which appear in it. Could it be that TRAP DOOR is the center of U.S. BAFFdom?" Probably, but only by default, Robb; and we're more, much more. Actually, the real center of U.S. BAFFdom is SAPS, a nearly 40-year-old American apa where over 75% of the current members date back to earlier eras.), JOY HIBBERT, TERRY JEEVES, DICK LUPOFF (who would like to write, and perhaps someday actually will write, an article for us about his adventures with Stephen Gaskin, founder of The Farm), DEBBIE NOTKIN, ELMER PERDUE (God is an Angel), NIGEL RICHARDSON, ROBERT SILVERBERG ("I've been reading TRAP DOOR generally with pleasure, though often with some incomprehension (time was when I kept up with things fannish even as Terry still does, but I don't pretend to these days)."), BRUCE TOWNLEY, BOB TUCKER, and JEAN YOUNG.

There's an old faned's tale that for some reason, the fourth issue of a fanzine draws significantly less comment. That certainly was true for the fourth issue of TRAP DOOR, which garnered fewer letters than any issue since the first. It just goes to show you, I suppose, that fandom really is a Group Mind and to what lengths fans will go to maintain "tradition." Thanks to all those who, in keeping with this tradition, didn't write.

Fifth issues, on the other hand, traditionally get lots of letters...



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