

GOSHI I FEEL
SO ARCHAICI

ENTERTAINING YET MEANINGFUL



TRAPDOOR

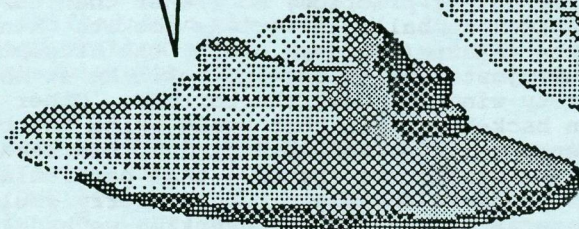
NUMBER SEVEN, GO TO HEAVEN



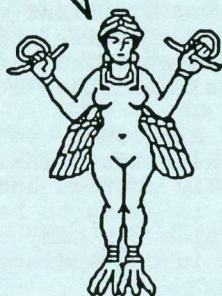
NONSENSE!
TRUE ART IS
TIMELESS!



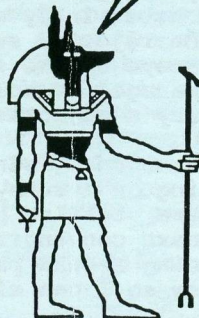
EARTHLINGS!
We want your
Women!!



FORGET IT!



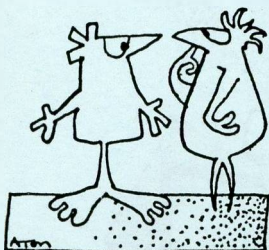
NO DICE!!



A Decidedly
Scaley
Proposition!



© Jay Kinney 87



remembering terry

MARTA RANDALL

We used to play tennis, Terry and I. The Mutt and Jeff of the local courts--I was lousy, and Terry out of practice, so rather than seriously flailing away, we'd clown. Hide the balls in various pockets then, instead of serving and waiting for the return (or, more often, the attempt at a return), the perpetrator would just keep on serving until he or she ran out of balls, while the other party windmilled at the barrage. Other players hated us. But he had a mean back-hand spin that would bring the ball across the net right toward me, bounce it once, and send it into San Leandro. I accused him of using his height against me (because that particular move is impossible if you are only five feet from the ground). Terry would giggle.

Late one night in Chicago after the world convention we huddled on a bed in the dead dog suite, whispering terrible slanders to each other about the other occupants of the room, until we were both laughing so hard we could barely breathe.

He used to go out of his way to find strange ways in which to reject my stories: on the phone; unsigned notes in my mailbox. Once I waved a script at him and demanded to know why he rejected such a brilliant piece of work. That little glint appeared in his eye and he said, loftily, that the story had an invisible subtext. Then managed to hold a straight face for one entire beat before laughing. Terry's rejections were often better than other folk's acceptances.

And there was that long afternoon at Point Richmond: Terry and Carol, me and Richard and Ed Bryant, lying on a sunny hillside drinking wine and munching and playing with my camera, telling silly stories and sillier jokes.

I miss him. Attending the next convention is going to be strange: I know that I'll catch myself glancing around parties for him, or listening for his laugh, or checking the program so I can sit in the audience at panels and heckle him.

No, it's not fair. But Terry will become a legend, a fannish legend and an editorial legend, and ten years from now his name will be mentioned reverently by young folk on panels, and I'll listen and nod and know that that is good--and remember his laugh.

DICK ELLINGTON

You would think that knowing in advance that a friend was going to die would make it somehow easier to deal with--that you could somehow prepare yourself for it. It doesn't seem to work that way for me and I found myself sitting around in a black funk on April 8th, finally acknowledging that our species is alone in having the insight to realize that our grief is selfish; we mourn not the dead but our own loss.

I have never shared our society's custom of honoring the dead just because they are dead, an attitude some people find hard to understand. I suppose I have shocked quite a few people over the years with this.

But Terry remains for me a very special person. We shared little in the way of deep thoughts; our common ground was fandom and our approach to it, and Terry, more than anyone else I've ever known, epitomized for me that aspect of fandom that keeps me--albeit tenuously--connected. I never mentioned it to him but I always felt that he was and will remain the quintessential Trufan.

I have no bad memories of him and a lot of good ones: small shared moments of Fannishness, that ephemeral, hard-to-define sense of silliness and hoo-hah. Most of them end with that great high-pitched laugh of his and that ain't bad, Meyer.

Coincidentally, a week or so after Terry died a copy of Eric Bentcliffe's WALDO 8 drifted into the mailbox. It contains a loc from Terry that could have been written a year ago--and with Eric the Bent's lackadaisical publishing schedule probably was. I find a couple of paragraphs worth quoting:

"But I keep wondering about people seeing so much 'love' in the 6th Fandom productions. Sure, it was there and it was an important element in the gestalt, but let's try to remember that the '50s were also the heyday of George Wetzel, G.M. Carr, and the Crusade to Clean Up Fandom, among others, none of them contributing much to fannish love and frivolity. The productions of the latter days don't get reprinted these days, though, which no doubt explains the not-completely-true picture of 6th Fandom that a lot of current fans seem to have.

"I was forcibly reminded of this during the recent convention Corflu, which was specifically designed as a con for fanzine fans and which produced a fannish feeling of togetherness that I haven't notice in fandom for many years. And there was an almost palpable air of excitement...a feeling that by God somethin' was happening, man. What was happening was a hundred people, all fanzine fans of one stripe or another, getting together and having fun. It was a lot like '50s fandom at times, but I wouldn't characterize the feeling as love exactly--not love for each other, anyhow. More like love for fandom itself, for the whole gestalt."

As usual, I found myself thinking that he had said it ever so much better than I ever could have.

F.M. BUSBY

Dammit Terry, this wasn't supposed to happen. I realize you can't still be 21 years old which is how I tend to think of you--even now, when you've accomplished so many things over the years. For quite a time I've figured you to have maybe the best Ear For Words in the editing business, and have said so to your face. But still you were this young guy I was glad to have for a friend, and I expected you to be around permanently.

You and Elinor and I had some on-paper contact earlier in '58, but she and I first met you and Ronel at the Alexandria: South Gate. Elinor asked if Carl Brandon would be there and you dropped the bomb: "Carl doesn't exist." We survived that shock, and after the Con, when we took a homebound stopover at the Shattuck in Berkeley, you came by: we had beer and good talk.

By '59 you were doing "Fandom Harvest" for CRY. A terrific column: it had to figure strongly in our Hugo win, that year.

Early '60: Four of you came up for the shindig when Ellingtons were here enroute NYC-to-Berkeley; you and Miriam shared our Rain Room. Evenings got hilarious; we derived QED into "I was right all along, you idiot!" and Ipso Facto became "You stupid clod of a woman!" which resulted in weird sidelights when Ella Parker came to our '61 Worldcon. You also did an "okay words" number, but the only one I recall from that session is "east Texas flatland negro," which seems to have faded into the mists of time.

Then in July there was the cozy little Westercon at Boise, which set up '61's Baycon at the Leamington; both places, we had some good times. After that you moved East and experienced the wonderful worlds of Scott Meredith and "Mister Ace" (A.A. Wyn), which you told about in lovely libelous detail at a Clarion West lecture, and I only wish the radio station hadn't lost the tapes.

Time skips: In 1965 at 35 or 44 Pierrepont I told Carol the world was not ready for a fat Terry Carr, but next time you weren't. Which was probably '69, when the four of us had a great weekend at Crater Lake, with all those stars up there and enough dōpe to make them seem like even more. '71 in NYC, a lot of us eating Greek in downtown Manhattan, Agbob turning us onto retsina, and then up to Boston.

'72, you and Carol hosted us at Broadway Terrace, and the orange Maxkitten sold me on being cat-owned which still applies. You were up here honchoing at Clarion West that year and next; from then on we seemed to meet only at a few Nebula bashes and the occasional Con. Meanwhile you bought four stories from me and (I think) thumbed out at least as many, probably for good cause though it never seems that way at the time. We always did get together sooner or later, and that was great, so wait for next time; no hurry, no hassle.

You weren't supposed to go yet. We had more to talk about.

--Seattle, April 8, 1987

REBECCA KURLAND

I want to talk about something important that might be neglected in remembering Terry as a great editor and a devoted fan, and that's grammar.

To his friends and the writers who worked with him, Terry was a veritable Caesar of grammar, and in that respect I have come to bury, not to praise him.

Terry's rules of grammar were as immutable as the pre-Copernican heavens. He was shameless about correcting his friends in their speech as well as their writing. Worst of all, he preferred his own authorities to my expertise as a graduate in linguistics.

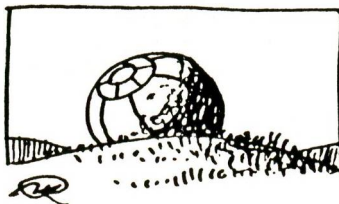
To put it bluntly, I considered Terry to be an inflexible, outmoded, prescriptionist linguistic foguey, and he returned the compliment. He regarded me as an uninformed, anarchistic, bastard child of a neologist.

He was unshaken to hear William Safire and Edwin Newman denounced as "popularizers." He remained unconvinced that no civilization had ever collapsed due to abuse of its adverbs. But in spite of that, and in spite of every time Terry capped a bon mot of mine with, "...Of course, you meant to say...", I couldn't help but feel a deep respect for his passion for language down to the structural level.

What Terry couldn't stand was careless expression. He worried that you might choose the right words, but still betray your idea with an ill-conceived presentation. And he wouldn't want you to do that, whatever your idea might be.

Marc Antony and I will remind you that the evil that men do lives after them. And if you used to think you knew the difference between "more" and "better," or if you still check to make sure the wind isn't blowing towards Broadway Terrace before you say "hopefully," you may tend to agree. But Terry would be delighted to live on in your everyday speech as a portion of his immortality.

And for myself, as soon as I step down I know I'll be waiting to hear, "...Of course, you meant to say...."



SIDNEY COLEMAN

I knew Terry for 33 years. We first met when we were both 17, at the San Francisco Worldcon. Terry was telling a long dumb joke about a planet ravaged by a monster named Harms; the punch line was, "Well, we'd better keep out of Harms' way."

In putting this together I tried to think of Terry Carr stories, but what I kept getting were flashes of Terry telling stories about other people, about Pete Graham and Ron Ellick, about Ted White and Carol, about Bob Silverberg and Becky Kurland. Terry was fascinated by the whole idea of other people, other experiences, other ways of looking at the world. He was extraordinary at imagining what it would be like to be someone else. His famous skill of pastiche and his even more famous skill as an editor are connected to this; so is the recurrent theme in his fiction of the frustrated attempt to comprehend the alien.

I have a friend, a neuropsychologist, who teaches that the nervous system is defined not by its anatomy but by its function, by the loops along which information goes out and is transformed and returns, and that many of these loops travel outside our skins before they return to our heads. Thus the mind is spread throughout the world.

For me, and for many of us, I think, a lot of those loops went through Terry. He was a friend, but he was also an organ of perception; because of him we saw the world clearer and truer than we would have otherwise. When he died, we suffered permanent neural damage. No wonder we felt so stupid and miserable.

In 1970, after the Heicon, Terry and Carol and I spent two weeks driving around Europe in a rental car. The plan had been for Terry and me to share the driving, but for some reason I got an anxiety attack whenever I thought of driving the car. I don't know why; I'd driven in Europe before; maybe I just had a flash of insight into my own driving skills. Anyway, whatever the reason, the result was that Terry ended up doing all the driving. And on some days we did a lot of driving. And he was having lower-back problems.

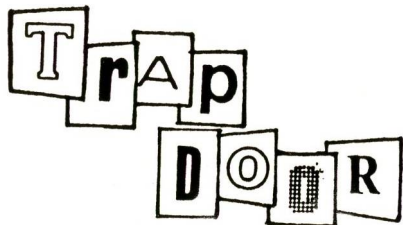
Why did Terry put up with this outstanding example of infantile behavior and/or shirking on my part? He did put up with it. Not only did he not get mad nor make me feel guilty during the trip, he wrote a generally cheery and dig-free trip report afterwards.

This sweetness was typical of Terry. It wasn't that he was after a martyr's crown. The joking sobriquet was "saintly Terry Carr," not "poor Terry Carr." Terry was nobody's victim; in his interactions with the world he usually emerged with a good portion of what he had gone after.

I think it was that he had the gift of judgment, of clear sight, of giving things their true values. I had turned out to be a non-driver--that was a disappointment, but it was no reason to blemish a vacation, or a friendship. Terry was interested neither in getting mad nor in getting even; he was interested in getting it to be as good as it could be, and at this he succeeded a remarkable amount of the time.

What Steele wrote of Lady Hastings can be transposed for Terry: To love him was a liberal education.

I would never have dreamed at 17 that 33 years would be so very much too few.



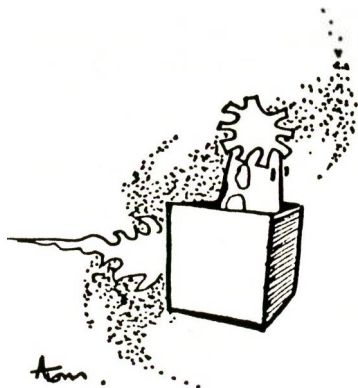
Issue #7, December 1987. Edited and published by Robert Lichtman, P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen CA 95442. Please send all trade fanzines and letters of comment to this address. Founding member: fwa. Local associates in fandom: Jeanne Bowman, Don Herron, Donna Nassar and Paul Williams. This fanzine is a party in print and all its recipients are fellow party-goers. Available for The Usual: fanzines in trade (all-for-all), letters of comment, written and/or artistic contributions, and other party favors. This issue \$4.00 to latecomers. A red "X" by your mailing label means I may be thinking of not inviting you next time around because I haven't seen you here for too long.

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DOORWAY

FIRST IMPRESSIONS (April 8, 1987): Terry Carr died today. I was working a temporary job in a law office in Santa Rosa when the call came through from Lucy Huntzinger. "Terry Carr died this morning," she told me. "I heard about it from Patrick Nielsen Hayden." News travels cross-country fast, I thought. We talked for a while about how we were going to miss him; I wished her well on her DUFF trip to Australia and New Zealand (she was leaving in two days) and said I was going to miss her; and I got off the phone. Shaking and numb. It was hard to believe what I had just heard. It was impossible to get back to the legal typing I was doing for nearly an hour. I stared at the word processor and made a stab at organizing my first thoughts into something I could put on the screen. A few incoherent words passed through my fingers but they were gibberish. I was in shock. Fortunately I was in an isolated cubbyhole and no one noticed. Somehow I made it through the rest of the afternoon and drove home safely.

One of the things I didn't realize when I got into fandom nearly thirty years ago was that I was going to end up spending such a large chunk of my life here. It was my normal pattern back then to get involved in some hobby or obsession and stay with it for two or maybe three years. (It must be a normal pattern for a lot of people since many fans come and go in that timeframe.) Before fandom it was collecting 45's. At the time I got into fandom I had over 300 rock and roll 45's. Before 45's it was cars. I didn't have a car, mind you, but I used to buy automobile magazines like Motor Trend, Hot Rod and Road & Track on a regular basis and drool over the hardware therein. (While not much of a collector of such things, I did have a copy of the first issue of Motor Trend of which I thought very highly.) Before all of that, I collected comic books and baseball cards.

The difference between all of these previous hobbies and fandom has been the personal contact. You can't get close to a comic book, a car magazine or a baseball card. Your chances of meeting Donald Duck or Satchell Paige or of driving a hot rod car when you're twelve years old (or any age) are pretty slim. But in fandom, I got to know a lot of people pretty rapidly. All well and good, but another thing I didn't realize when I got into fandom was that I would end up falling in love with a lot of the folks I found there, men and women alike, and would grow to care intensely about them. Since this happened to me, I can only assume that it is likely that other fans have experienced the same thing. The odd thing is that almost no one appears ever to talk about it.

The above observations had been percolating in my mind for some time, but Terry's death brought them to the surface once again. Whenever I get to thinking about why I stay around fandom year after year, and why I came back to fandom after leaving it for nearly ten years to follow a vision and go live in Tennessee, this is the only explanation I can think of that works. I don't stay around fandom for the joy of blowing vast sums of money publishing fanzines or even for whatever "popularity" that publishing them might accrue for me. I don't stay around fandom for the dubious joys of attending conventions composed of thousands of individuals I don't know so I can ferret out the few score I really want to see. And I definitely don't stick around fandom to participate in its heated feuds and foibles. Love is the only explanation.

Terry was a constant presence throughout my fannish life. He and his first wife, Miriam, were the first fans to visit me at my home in Los Angeles back when I was a neofan. (Terry was, therefore, one of the few fans to Meet My Parents.) Terry's style of fanzine publishing was a strong influence on my own. Terry was always there to lend a constructive hand to my projects, to provide well-considered and valuable criticism, and just to chitter chatter. It was a measure of his generosity that he was that way for many people. I was looking forward to many years to come of Terry's continued presence in fandom and in my life. I'm going to miss him for as long as I wish he would have lived.

ON SATURDAY, MAY 30TH, there was a memorial gathering for Terry at Tilden Park in the Berkeley hills. "In Celebration of the Life of Terry Carr," read the invitation that arrived in the mail a few weeks earlier. By my best estimate, some 75-80 people attended, including (in no particular order) Bob Silverberg, Harlan and Susan Ellison, Dick and Pat Lupoff, Karen and Poul Anderson, Greg and Jim Benford, Dick and Pat Ellington, Marta Randall, Ron Hoffman, David Bratman, Sidney Coleman, Barbara Silverberg, Rachel Holmen, Jack Rems, Jay Sheckley, Tom Condit, Rebecca Kurland, Elizabeth Lynn, Len Bailes, Frank Robinson, Lisa Goldstein, Dave Rike, Redd Boggs, Miriam Lloyd (Terry's first wife), William Rotsler, Alan Bostick, Jeanne Bowman, Michael Farren, Dave Nee, Debbie Notkin, Tom Whitmore, Jon Singer, Art Widner and Charlie Brown.

And there were two more. I don't know how long they'd been there before I noticed a familiar, though gray haired, individual and his wife talking with Miriam Lloyd. It was Calvin and India Demmon. Seeing them there was a particular surprise and pleasure. Calvin and I went to high school together. We had English and algebra classes together, where Calvin used to observe me reading fanzines stuck between the pages of my notebook. He expressed interest in what I was reading and, before long, he became an active fan himself and continued his activity long after I'd gone on to The Farm. We had not seen each other since approximately 1970.

It was but the work of a moment to make my way down to where they were standing. Calvin's initial recognition of me reminded me of what it must be like to attend a high school reunion, maybe a 20th or 25th anniversary high school reunion, after not attending

any of the previous ones. After his double take, Calvin, India and I had a pleasant time catching up with each other and especially talking about the problems and adventures of raising up four children.

A number of people spoke at the gathering: Greg Benford, Rebecca Kurland, Sidney Coleman, Dick Lupoff, Jay Sheckley and Carol Carr (the latter briefly, thanking everyone) come to mind, but there may have been one or two others. Rebecca's and Sidney's talks are reproduced in this issue. Since Terry had been a coeditor of VOID in the early '60s, Greg mainly sang the Void Boys song (all three lines of it). As is evident from the list of those attending, Terry was well remembered by fans from, so to speak, all walks of fandom. I took no notes so this is not a Full Report by any means. It was mainly a wonderful, though understandably somewhat subdued afternoon of remembering and commemorating Terry.

THE WEEKEND PRIOR TO the memorial gathering was Memorial Day weekend, a three-day mini-vacation. I packed up the younger two of my four boys and their sleeping bags into the car and took off to Carol's. We parked the boys in front of a big screen TV and VCR with Unlimited Movies and Snacks (just the sort of thing young boys like, at least my young boys) and set about the business of inventorying Terry's fanzine collection. I had offered to assist in doing so when I first heard Terry had died and now we were actually embarking on the project. By and large I pawed through the zines, handling each and every one of that vast expanse, and Carol took notes. Since I'm much more versed than Carol in fanzines and fan history, this was the best way to divide the work. That weekend, we noted some 75-85 percent of what was actually there, omitting only the relatively small number of minor fanzines. We were going through shelves that were organized more or less alphabetically, sometimes by title and sometimes with file folders of the output of a particular fan, all mixed together. We listed them by editor, title, issue number and date. Often finding out all of this information took some poking around in the fanzine involved; throughout fannish history there have been fans who made it challenging for those coming later to figure out when a fanzine appeared and what issue number it was. Terry's collection included a copy of the Pavlat-Swisher fanzine index and it was of some help in this, but we kept running across items that weren't in it. We also took note of contributions by people who later became famous, such as the likes of Arthur C. Clarke, Ray Bradbury, Harlan Ellison (Terry had his first fanzine, an awful crudzine from 1952 or so), Bob Silverberg, Jerry Pournelle, Roger Ebert, etc. Let me tell you that it took great restraint on my part to keep on going despite the strong urges to settle down and read some of those old fanzines--especially the choicer items, but even some of the all-time famous crudzines. (Terry's collection included a file of all three issues of THURBAN I, most notable for containing the first appearance of Roger Zelazny.) We kept each other diverted by talking about computers, admiring good examples of hektographed artwork in the earlier fanzines, and looking forward to the completion of our appointed task. We catalogued fanzines day and night for all three days of that weekend and made a considerable dent in the task, going through some 35 shelf feet of fanzines and compiling 140 pages of hand-written notes. We made a date to reconvene to finish the job a few weekends down the line.

That second weekend we once again parked the boys in front of the TV (no doubt I'll get letters of comments from people disapproving of this controversial but tried-and-true method of kidsitting but, believe me, We Did It For Fandom) and started off by finishing up the fanzines on the shelves. Then we began gathering up and working our way through the piles on the floor of the basement (a large room entirely lined with shelves bearing books, prozines and fanzines). Terry had quite a few items out of his filing system for various projects he was working on, such as "The Incomplete Burbee, Volume II," which will be published sometime in the not too distant future, I understand. (Len Bailes told me the other night that the publishers had sent Dave Rike the stencils to do headings and illustrations, so I know it should be out Real Soon Now.) There were also stacks of unsorted fanzines in nearly all of the rooms upstairs. We plowed through all of it, by no means making as thorough a listing of all this as we had the first weekend. Whenever we thought we were done we'd discover another pile of fanzines somewhere else and we'd have to gear up again and list them. By late Saturday evening, we had gone through everything we could find, making a much more abbreviated listing. (This second weekend we went through about 20 feet of fanzines but only compiled about 60 pages of notes. Mostly we ignored the repetitive ciumps of LOCUS, SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE, SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW and other

'70s and '80s semiprozines.) We settled down for some late night conversation about something besides fanzines.

The boys had gone off to sleep in the old guest room cum storage room and in the morning they came bursting out announcing noisily, "Robert! Carol! We found another pile of fanzines in the corner." Sure enough, they had, so we gritted our teeth and listed those, too. Altogether we went through around 55-60 shelf feet of fanzines and produced a catalog listing maybe as many as two thirds of them. The catalog itself runs 96 pages of small type. It's set forth to provide listings of interest both to faans (nothing pertaining to trufandom went unlisted) and to academics interested in fanzines as publications in which material appeared by famous (or later to become famous) individuals. (If anyone is really interested, send me \$7.00 and I'll send you a copy, postpaid. But I should warn you that it's unedited and contains some amusing juxtapositions of titles and editors.)

This catalog, incomplete though it was, helped Terry's fanzine collection find a home at the University of California at Riverside, where it is an adjunct to a major science fiction collection. It is intended to be the basis of a growing fanzine collection, to be called "the Terry Carr Fanzine Collection," and will be added to as time passes. For instance, in a recent communication, Greg Benford said he'd like to acquire all fifty years of FAPA mailings. And, although I haven't asked him, I imagine that the curator would not take unkindly to anyone reading this sending his/her ongoing fanzines for inclusion in the collection. (George Slusser, Eaton Curator, The University Library, U.C. Riverside, Box 5900, Riverside, CA 92507.)

Terry's collection is truly outstanding. To the best of my knowledge, it is quite complete in every major respect from about 1950 onwards and before that includes much of the major stuff including complete runs of rare newszines from the '30s and '40s. The oldest publications date back to 1933. Terry did not just save most of the fanzines he ever received (though, thankfully, he did highgrade apa mailings), he also purchased or otherwise came into numerous fanzines from well before his time. For anyone interested in fandom as a unique cultural phenomenon, it is probably one of a handful of collections of such distinction on the entire planet. I have to say that while it was enjoyable going through all these fanzines, the enjoyment was tempered by the circumstances which produced the occasion.

I feel a quiet pride in being able to assist in a project of such magnitude and am pleased that one of the premier collections of our genre has found a permanent home and will be enlarged as time passes and preserved for posterity. I know that last sentence sounds awfully sercon, but I believe that our fandom has produced an unusually good body of work in its years of existence, even granting Sturgeon's law.

IN ORDER TO COMPENSATE for an alarming lack of frequency, with this issue I'm allowing the zine to bust loose to the next ounce. I'd like to hear if this makes it too large to comment on easily, but so much good stuff showed up that cried out for inclusion that I have to yield. Redd Boggs' regular column, "Penseroso," even had to take an unscheduled sabbatical; it will return next issue with a longer-than-usual installment.

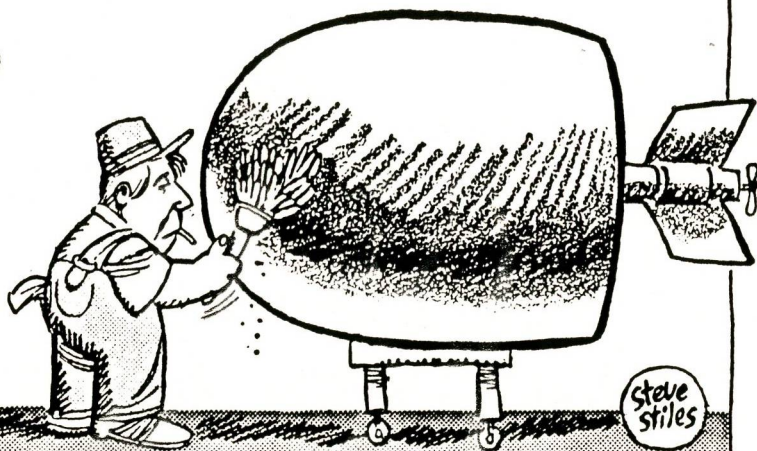
As always the mailing list has been tampered with so that some of you who used to read this fanzine aren't reading it anymore and others of you are reading it for the first time. One of our new readers is Boris Alexandrovich Zavgorodny, whose address is Poste Restante, Central P.O., Volgograd-66, USSR 400066. Boris wrote in response to the mention in LOCUS that I would be issuing a Terry Carr memorial publication. I've run across his name in a few other fanzines recently and it excites me that a fan in the USSR is reaching out to American fanzine fandom. I hope everyone reading this who publishes a fanzine will send your next issue to Boris and see if he understands the meaning of "the usual." It would be good for glasnost if Boris got it together, on his own or with a group of editors, to publish an English language fanzine. How 'bout it, Boris?

While there are memorials to Terry in this issue, the entire issue is a memorial to him in the sense that I've always tried to publish a fanzine that he would enjoy reading in the same way I've enjoyed reading his fanzines over the decades. I believe every fanzine editor has an unwritten short list of people for whom their fanzine is primarily directed, those they want to have see it the most. Terry was always near the top of mine.

--Robert Lichtman

THE CRACKED EYE

BY GARY
HUBBARD



9/11/87

IMAGINE, IF YOU WILL, a man. Let's call him "Ralph." (I have a cousin named Ralph, but this is another guy.) Ralph is about my age (40), a little paunchy, and losing his hair. He likes baseball and beer. Ralph works in a factory, and has to be there pretty early, so he's usually up before dawn. His wife gets up, too, to fix him breakfast. However, his teenaged daughter, Sara, won't be up for hours yet. Ralph has two kids, the aforementioned Sara, and Bill, who is a pilot in the Air Force.

Being a typical American, Ralph eats a typical American breakfast--bacon, eggs, toast--the works. Pat, his wife, just has a cup of coffee and a Stella Dora Diet Bar. She's watching her weight.

They talk a little bit. Nothing very important, just the usual chit-chat that goes down between two people who've been living together for years and years. They talk about their bills, the crab grass in the lawn, how the neighborhood seems to be going downhill, and so forth.

With breakfast finished, Ralph gets up, kisses Pat good-bye. He gets in his car, starts the engine, turns on the radio (he's partial to country music), and off he goes. As he pulls onto the highway, he thinks he's going to work but, unknown to him, Ralph has gotten into the fast lane to the Cracked Eye Zone (da, dum dum, da da, dum dum...).

Ralph arrives at the Plant and is waved past the protestors by the police. There's only a handful of them there today, but they're there every day. Ralph considers the protestors silly and deluded jerks, the product of too much education and Commie propaganda. Every day a few liberal media stars join the protestors for the sole purpose of getting arrested, so they can get publicity. Ralph considers the whole business disgusting.

Ralph is stopped by a guard at the front gate. He shows the guard his I.D. and is allowed to pass. There's a large mirror in the guard shack in which Ralph can see a reflection of himself and his car.

Ralph is inside the Plant now and heading for his division. He hitches a ride with a lift truck operator who's going his way. They talk about last night's game on TV and swap a few jokes about the protestors outside.

The Plant looks like factories all look, lots of big machines all over the place making a godawful racket. I forget who it was, but it might have been the poet Robert Burns who said that a visit to a factory was instructive, because it showed us what Hell was like. The only thing

that sets the Plant apart from most others is that there are mirrors all over the place. Mirrors and lots of TV cameras. Security is really tight in the Plant, due to the very, very sensitive nature of the work done here.

Ralph, for instance, is the supervisor of a department that makes a particular component for "triggering devices." Neither Ralph nor anyone else in the Plant has ever seen a triggering device; they are, in any event, put together in another factory somewhere else. Ralph couldn't even assemble one if he had all the parts in front of him; but then, that's not his job. Anywhere else in the world, this lack of information could be construed as ignorance, but inside the Plant it's called "security."

The morning goes by swiftly. His workers are an efficient crew. They do their jobs quickly and well. There is surprisingly little automation in this factory, mostly where the radioactive stuff is handled. Most of the assembly is done by hand. Every time there's a test, Ralph takes quiet pride in the knowledge that the bomb was built mostly by hand and that some things in America are still made the good old-fashioned way.

At noon, Ralph has lunch in the Supervisors' Cafeteria. There are three different cafeterias in the Plant. There is one for the assembly line workers, one for the office workers, and one for the supervisors. Presumably, the management eats, too, but nobody's ever seen them do it. Ralph has never wondered why the cafeterias and only the cafeterias are separated along class lines like this (I'm afraid he's not a very reflective person, is he?). Everybody uses the same rest rooms, after all, save for the traditional sexual distinctions--again, except for the management. No one's ever seen them pee, either. It's a question that even the Cracked Eye has no answer for, except to fall back upon the old adage, "you are where you eat."

Ralph has a buddy he usually eats with. We'll call him Ed (in honor of Edward Teller, the inventor of the hydrogen bomb). Ed works in another part of the Plant. Ralph doesn't know what Ed does, and Ed, of course, doesn't talk about it. Nobody talks about their work. They talk about baseball, TV, the weather, stuff like that. Ed often asks Ralph about his daughter, Sara. Ralph sees nothing unusual about this; he likes to talk about his kids.

Ralph thinks Ed is a great kidder, too. Ralph once complained about how high his car payments were, and Ed jokingly offered to set fire to it, so Ralph could collect the insurance. Maybe that doesn't sound so funny to you, but Ralph thought it was a stitch. I guess you had to be there.

Several hours later, Ralph's work day comes to a close. He punches out at the time clock, goes out to his car, gets in, and he's gone. Well, not quite, because it's rush hour and quite a number of others are leaving the Plant as well. So Ralph takes his place in a narrow stream of cars that moves sluggishly through the front gate, then fans out into a broader, faster-moving current on the other side.

Ralph again stops at the front gate and again watches himself in the guardhouse mirror while the guard fusses with his I.D. Then he pulls out into the street and heads for home. The protestors are gone, but they'll be back tomorrow, and so will Ralph. On the way, he drives past a large, makeshift sign that the protestors have put up. It reads: "ONE ATOMIC BOMB CAN SPOIL YOUR WHOLE DAY." This makes very little impression on Ralph. In fact, he's had a pretty good day.

All of the foregoing proceeds from a chain of thought that started a few weeks ago when I sat down to breakfast and turned on the radio to catch the morning news. There was a story on how they were having trouble with the people working in our nation's atom bomb factories; it seems that there are some people getting on the nuclear payroll who shouldn't.

Wow! What a heavy concept to have with corn flakes. Atom bomb

factories? I had no idea they made those things in factories. No, really, I didn't. I mean, cars are made in factories. My parents (both of them) worked in a factory. Even I worked in one for a while. But it's hard for me to associate anything as glamorous and science-fictiony as A-bombs with factories.

I must be suffering from a sort of mental time-warp, because I was still thinking of these things as being made by the Manhattan Project--you know, Oppie and the gang. I can see them now, working away like crazy to develop the Bomb before the Germans, or the Russians, or the Iranians, or the Patagonians (or whomever we happen to be pissed at by the time you read this article). But I guess that's pretty silly, because there are zillions of bombs in the world today and more coming off the assembly line all the time. There's more than a small, dedicated group of scientists could produce in a lifetime. They'd be pretty worn out by now if they tried.

It appears that most of my thinking about the Bomb can aptly be described as fantasy. I see images of Walt Disney shows about genies out of bottles and Roger Corman flicks with irradiated cucumbers trying to devour dreary heroines who are invariably named Lee or Pat. And I also see my favorite superhero from the 1950's, Captain Flash.

Captain Flash was not what you'd call a big name superhero. He never attained the stature of Superman or the Flaming Carrot, for example, but he was pretty good for his time, which was the mid-Fifties. He wore this snappy red, white and blue outfit that was all one piece and covered him from head to toe. He also wore dark goggles and these little bowl-shaped jobbie-dos over his ears. I'm not sure what they were for. They must have made his ears awfully hot. (This may seem like a digression from our main topic, but stay with me. There is a connection.)

Captain Flash got his name from a habit he had of clapping his hands. You see, every time he did this (clap) there would be a loud noise (usually BARROOM, but sometimes BLAM, or BAM) and a flash of light. He usually did this when he wanted to change clothes. It worked something like this: Captain Flash is walking along the street wearing his street clothes. Suddenly, he hears a cry for help. He looks up and sees a beautiful girl struggling against a slimy monster on a nearby roof top. He says, "This is a job for Captain Flash." He smacks his hands together (BLAM), there's a blinding flash, his street clothes fly to shreds, and he stands revealed in his super-underwear. Presumably he bought cheap suits.

Captain Flash worked for the Atomic Research Center, a government agency, where he was employed as a research scientist before he got his super powers. The A.R.C. was more like the kind of place I imagined A-bombs were made, with scientists in long lab coats toiling away in perfectly square rooms full of Jack Kirby-esque machinery behind doors labeled "TOP SECRET."

Anyway, Captain Flash was one of those scientists back when he was merely Joe Doe, or Lamont Cranston, or whatever his name was (I don't remember now; it was a long time ago). But one day he was accidentally exposed to radioactivity. As a result, they fired him. Couldn't have care-less people working for the A.R.C., after all, so they sent him packing.

He went into seclusion on the family farm, where he confidently expected to waste away and die. But he didn't. His nose didn't even fall off. His hair turned blue, but everybody in the comics has blue hair. In fact, instead of being sick from the radiation, he felt stronger than he ever had before. (In real life, of course, this never happens.) But he was still despondent about losing his job.

One day, while he was out walking around the north 40 and brooding about life, he kicked an old tree stump; it promptly disappeared in a flash

of light. This was unusual, to say the least, but after experimenting with a few other stumps, he came to the conclusion that the dose of X-rays he'd been exposed to gave him the power to convert matter into energy merely by stomping on it. (Again, in real life all radiation does is give you the power to catch degenerative bone diseases.)

With great power comes great responsibility, so our hero vows to use his great power for the good of humanity. He offers his services to the FBI--not what you or I would do, probably, given the same circumstances, but back then it seemed like the right thing to do.

Well, anyway, the FBI takes him on, gives him a fancy suit, and dubs him "Captain Flash." Captain was an honorary rank given to older superheroes (e.g., Captain America, Captain Huey) and it signified to the readers that he was mature--in his thirties. I think in real life you have to be in your forties before you can be a captain, but in the comics by that age most superheroes were either dead or in retirement ("Ah'm hangin' muh tight's up in thuh closet, Johnny Storm, an' that's where they're gonna stay!"). Really young superheroes were, of course, called "Kid" something, and if he were over 21, he be called "man," like "Bulletman" or "Mighty Man." It's good to know these things... Since he was a scientist in his former life, it's surprising they didn't call him "Doctor Flash." Maybe he never got his degree.

The FBI decides to put Captain Flash to use ferreting out Commie infiltrators who are trying to steal our atomic secrets. So they give him a new name (I don't remember what...something), and disguise his appearance by changing his hair from blond to blue. They sent him back to his old job at the A.R.C. where he went merrily to work turning subversives into high energy particles.

Presumably his fellow scientists and former colleagues accepted the situation without interest and never saw through his wig. Pretty far-fetched, you might think, but then these guys never stopped to consider the ethical consequences of their jobs, either.

For every superhero there's a supervillain: For every Superman there's a Luthor, for every Fantastic Four a Doctor Doom. Captain Flash had the Mirror Monster. The Mirror Monster, however, was something truly different in the annals of supervillainy. He--or more properly, it--was a gigantic, squid-like critter from another dimension (clearly a far cry from your average psycho in a red rubber skull mask) who could get into our dimension through mirrors like a cephalopodic Alice. Since it was so big, though, it couldn't get its whole body through the mirror, only a tentacle or two. But, Jesus, that was enough! I could take most comic book characters in stride. What the heck, even at a tender age I doubted that vampires or ghouls really existed. But this goober really gave me the willies...because mirrors were real, and I could see that there was another world inside of them.

Besides being really creepy, the Mirror Monster was also a Commie agent. (I will not insult your intelligence by belaboring the obvious metaphor.) M.M.'s mode of operation went something like this: say you're a highly trained, brilliant, loyal American scientist with absolutely no thought of ever doing anything disloyal. But let's say that it's morning and you're in the bathroom. You're getting ready for work, shaving. Suddenly, the Mirror Monster's tentacles come out of the mirror and wrap around your head. Now, if M.M. is feeling mean this morning, he'll just strangle you and that's that. But if he thinks you're liable to subversion, he'll force his tentacles inside your head and take over your mind.

And thus, once loyal atomic scientists become pawns for the Red Menace. Pretty scary, huh?

Well, think of the dilemma this posed for Captain Flash. Here were all

these atomic scientists either dropping dead or turning into traitors. As a government sponsored superhero, his job was to keep this sort of thing from happening, but he couldn't just go around stomping on people because they were deluded. (He could nowadays, of course, but in the Fifties, superheroes still had a sense of fair play.) Nor could he get to the source of the problem (M.M. himself), because, strictly speaking, M.M. didn't exist (he was only visiting).

It was quite a problem. And I'm not sure that he ever solved it, either. I followed the doings of Captain Flash and his ongoing struggle with the Mirror Monster for several months. Then, in a climactic episode, a couple of M.M.'s brainwashed zombies overpowered the Captain and locked him in a room...a room full of--mirrors!

I never saw another issue of Captain Flash comics. I don't know what happened to it. Maybe the distributor dropped it. Or maybe the publisher dropped it. Maybe the artist or the writer quit. Who knows. All I do know is that Captain Flash has never been heard from since.

I have a theory, of course. I think what happened is this: the Mirror Monster got to Captain Flash. Maybe M.M. killed him, or maybe just took over the Captain's mind, but he got him. In fact, M.M. got everybody at the Atomic Research Center. M.M. got all the atomic scientists in Russia, too. Because, you see, the Mirror Monster wasn't really working for the Commies; he was working for himself.

Think about it. It stands to reason that the production of atomic weapons is out of human control. Oppie and the boys only built two or three of the things. It was the best they could do--even by staying up all night. But now there are zillions of them and more coming off the production lines all the time. Does that make sense? Even if we have a war, neither we nor the Russians will need to use even a fraction of all those bombs to destroy each other. And consider this: every large A-bomb stockpile in the country is located on a major faultline. Does that make sense?

Can all of this be explained by ideology, national defense, patriotism, survival, or just plain blind aggression? All of these things enter into the equation, of course. Oppie and the boys were patriotic but no ideologues. Ralph think that what he does is good for the national defense. He hates the Commies, but he doesn't want a war. After all, he has a son in the Air Force. Actually, making bombs is just his job.

That's probably as good an explanation as any; it's just his job. It's just a job for hundreds of Americans. And over in Russia it's just a job for hundreds of Russians. Making bombs has become an end in itself, irrespective of whether or not we'd need them in a war. In fact, we've had plenty of wars in my lifetime alone, but so far we've managed to avoid using even one of these zillions of A-bombs stacked up there on those geologic faults (with the exception of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, of course).

We don't need all those A-bombs. So who does? Why, the Mirror Monster, of course. He's the one running the show. He's got everyone mesmerized. He wants us to make more A-bombs, and more, and more. As many as we can and as fast as we can. This may seem crazy to us, but it may make sense to someone with an alien psychology, like the Mirror Monster.

Or... Maybe M.M. has an ulterior motive for havng us make all these bombs; one that is chillingly easy to understand. Maybe M.M. is tired of just sticking his pinkies into our dimension. Maybe he wants to haul his whole body over. To do that he'd need a massive rip in the space-time continuum. A rip so massive that it could only be made by the combined energy of a zillion atomic bombs exploding at once.

No...wait! This is Roger Corman stuff. Herewe are discussing a serious social, moral and political problem and I'm talking mutated

cucumbers. If only the problem were that glamorous and that simple. But it's not; it's prosaic and complicated. Bomb-making has become a part of our life style and a key element of our economy. Even if we could stop making them, what would happen to guys like Ralph? He's been working in trigger assembly for 25 years now. What would he do if he were suddenly out of a job?

Speaking of job, remember how I said earlier that this whole chain of thought started from a story on the radio about how they were having trouble with some of the people working in the bomb plants. I got distracted and didn't mention what the trouble was then, but I will now.

It seems that for years and years they've been hiring people to work in these places, but despite all the guards and mirrors and other trappings of high security, they haven't really been checking these people out; they haven't been checking their past records. As a result, some pretty sleazy characters have found their way into some pretty sensitive jobs.

The story mentioned the case of one character in particular, a supervisor in a high security area, who had been convicted of raping a teenaged girl and committing arson for a fee. And this guy was making decisions that could affect all our lives.

I hope they've canned him by now. But you never know; maybe they promoted him. When you think about it, rape and arson are pretty good qualifications for being in the bomb business. At least I'm sure the Mirror Monster would think so.

In relating the above story, the radio did not mention what this guy's name was. But I think we know who he is. We've met him. Let's call him Ed.

--Gary Hubbard



FELIX WAS YOUNG BUT
IN HIS HEART HE WAS
A BALLET DANCER.
UNFORTUNATELY HE WAS
EMPLOYED AS A PIG
FARMER.
...AND BACON PRICES SOARED.



MY BREASTS ARE NO LONGER MY OWN.

They're still attached to me, of course, but they're suddenly at the beck and call of a tiny creature who can't even talk, but who's awfully good at communicating his wants, especially to my breasts. All he has to do is whimper and immediately they puff up like water balloons and drip like leaky faucets. This causes some pain; I must go feed him.

It's strange having a baby in the house. I've done this before, true, but that was a long time ago and Kelly's different from the other two. For starters, he doesn't sleep. Consequently, I haven't had eight hours consecutive sleep since I was anesthetized for his birth. Karl has become so accustomed to sleeping on the bus to work that he can no longer doze off unless surrounded by strangers rustling newspapers to the accompaniment of rush hour traffic.

I shouldn't say Kelly doesn't sleep, because he does--so long as he's being held. We'd read that caesarian babies need lots of extra cuddling; Kelly apparently read the same books. And he wants to be cuddled upright--none of this lay down in bed and snuggle up with Mum stuff. So it's 4 a.m. and I haven't been prone for three days and there he is burrowing between my breasts and it occurs to me that it's a good thing god made babies cute. This is their primary survival trait.

We've become experts on not just late night but all-night television. Of course, the good stations go off the air around 2 a.m. or so, but we've got cable, which offers 25 different stations for insomniacs and people with babies. We have our choice of:

- 1) the Canadian Parliament question and answer sessions (watch three political parties trade insults in two languages);
- 2) super-hero cartoons (do children, as opposed to babies, really get up at 3 a.m. to watch this stuff?);
- 3) real estate evangelists (make millions of dollars by putting the screws to everyone else through real estate);
- 4) yesterday's hockey game, or football highlights from 1937;
- 5) exercise programs (who gets up at 4:30 in the morning to do non-impact aerobics?);
- 6) old movies (the selection here is small, and rotated weekly);
- 7) sermons by born-again evangelists;
- 8) the 24-hour weather report;
- 9) music videos (country, pop, rock, each have their own channel);
- 10) 24 hour news;
- 11) variations on the above.

Because of Kelly, the State of California has made a quasi-bigamist of me. When I filled out the insurance application forms, there was a question of marital status. "Does this mean my marital status, or the baby's father's marital status?" I asked. "You see, he's single, and I'm married to but legally separated from someone else."

"Well," my case worker replied, "you are living with the baby's father, right?" "Yes." "Then he's your common-law husband." "Even though I'm already married to someone else?" "That's right." "You mean, I've now got two husbands, and it's legal?" "I guess so," she said, unperturbed.

Also because of Kelly, we've learned a few other interesting things, notably:

Babies float. Because he was so tiny at birth, we worried about bathing him. "You don't have to," our doctor told us; "babies don't get dirty." Maybe not, but after a while they begin to smell like a 6th and Mission Street wino. We'd already discovered that whenever we wanted to put arms in sleeves or legs in pajamas, his bones instantly dissolved, therefore figured that putting him in the sink would be rather like trying to wash jello. We decided we'd have more control if one of us got in the tub with him. That's when we found out that the only part of him that would readily go under the water was his head. So long as we kept his head out of the water, he was quite happy to splash around, doing the back stroke with his arms and frog kicks with his legs. Bathing in the tub was an unqualified success, even if he does have no qualms about peeing in the pool.

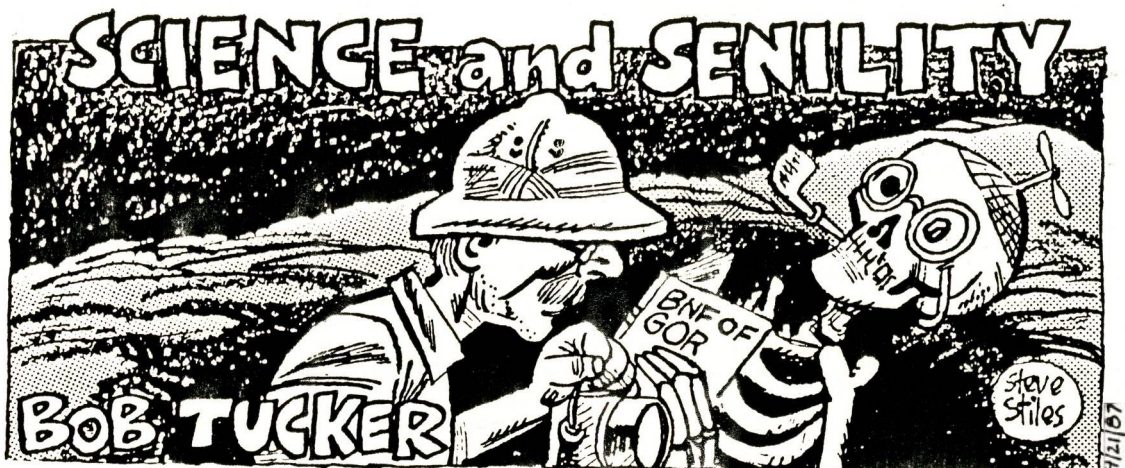
Babies get really sick of Brahms Lullaby. We have music boxes, musical mobiles, "singing" teddy bears. They all play Brahms Lullaby. The good news is that they only play it for thirty seconds; the bad news is that this is just five seconds less than Kelly cares to listen, therefore Mum spends all her waking hours winding up music boxes and singing teddy bears. To tell the truth, there is one musical mobile that plays for fifteen minutes, but it can be heard a block away over rush hour traffic, so Kelly's not too fond of it. And already we've been unable to answer one of those important questions that children ask: How come toy manufacturers have never heard of Tchaikovsky, or Hayden, or Vivaldi? Why hasn't it occurred to even one of them that a dancing pig mobile would go really well with In The Hall of the Mountain King?

We'd been told that breast feeding is an unreliable form of birth control. However, we've found it to be very reliable. It works like this: The second Karl and I get within ten feet of each other, Kelly wimpers. My breasts begin to leak. Kelly wails. Karl and I draw straws to see who'll change the diaper. You have to wonder how someone as tiny and inutterably sweet as Our Baby can possibly manufacture a substance the color and consistency of mustard that smells like something that died last Friday and was left to ripen in a warm climate. And how does he get it smeared all over his body from foot to armpit? Oh well, diaper changed, Kelly once more clean and dry, he roots around for tit. I feed him and he (for all intents and purposes) remains an only child.

Dawn breaks. I resign myself to viewing The Kennel Murders for the fifth time in as many weeks. Kelly has been awake for twelve hours and actively nursing for the past three. My nipples hurt. The novelty of having a baby in the house has begun to wear off; my patience is wearing thin. I look at him, he protesting loudly that there's no milk left, and wonder if it's time to phone one of those hotlines for overwrought parents. His second survival trait comes into play:

He looks me in the eye, he coos, and--for the first time--he smiles.

--Allyn Cadogan, January 1987.



[Editor's Note: The following lecture was inspired by a story Robert Bloch wrote about 30 years ago, title not remembered, that was reprinted in The Eighth Stage of Fandom (Advent: 1962). In that story, Bloch predicted a far-future convention at which Tucker would deliver a lecture on "Science and Senility." This lecture, delivered at OKcon in July 1987, is accompanied by four props: a file card, an aluminum beer can, a bottle of Beam's Choice, and a large bottle of pills.]

GOOD AFTERNOON. My lecture today is on the subject of senility and what very little science has done to overcome that dreadful condition. These notes have been incorporated into a paper to be published by the Oral Roberts University Press, and the paper will be available this autumn if the editors are successful in raising funds to keep the Press alive.

Senility is a truly dreadful disease, equally as serious as Twonk's Disease but, alas, science is tackling the problem much too late. A surprisingly large number of science fiction and fantasy people -- both fans and pros -- suffer this awful affliction. In fact, one of the points highlighted in that University study is that science fiction fans run the risk of premature senility by reading and collecting science fiction and fantasy. Oh, yes! The university study also cites case histories of early senility caused directly by the reading of Gor novels. Those who read with one hand are judged to be rigid cases.

These poor victims are not difficult to detect, to be recognized as already suffering the affliction. They appear to be lost, disoriented; they are ill-at-ease in consuites and tend to be wallflowers; they dwell in some fantasy world the rest of us do not see. They have difficulty carrying on a conversation and they often grope for words, or grope for you. Some of them carry notes to help them remember their names, their addresses, their own phone numbers. A few resort to file cards to remind themselves of the subject under discussion -- senility. [Holds up FILE CARD]

I have interviewed senile writers who could have written great stories and novels, if only they had remembered the pertinent details, if only their memories hadn't failed them at a crucial moment. They could have been Hugo winners! One well-known and respected writer told me that he had

stumbled across a very disturbing discovery in his researches into archeology. He truly believed that if he published a story of his discovery it would cause a sensation, it would bring him a million dollar advance, and it would win him a front page headline in LOCUS. It seems that a modern skeleton, a 20th century male skeleton, was discovered in a burial pit in Israel that dated to about 4000 BC. Artifacts in that pit, along with the ancient bones themselves, were positively identified as belonging to a farming culture that vanished about 4000 BC, the victims of widespread taxation. But the modern male skeleton was wearing the remains of a digital wristwatch, and his teeth revealed that he had undergone a type of dental work practiced in the 1970s.

The author was unable to write that startling story. He suffered [holds up FILE CARD] ...senility...and could no longer remember where he had read the original reports, in what magazine, and who had led the dig in Israel -- if, indeed, it was Israel and not Jordan. It may have been Iran, where modern man lives side by side with Neanderthals.

Another once-famous writer suffered the same ignoble fate, and once again it was in the field of archaeology. This writer was on a dig in southern Illinois -- he seems to remember it was Illinois and not southern Indiana -- and was helping a class of university students excavate an Indian burial mound. One of those pits revealed a family burial, a rather well-to-do family to judge by the rich artifacts, and the oldest male skeleton in that pit had both arms wrapped around a Mason jar filled with Indian head pennies. The burial was positively dated to about 1200 AD, while the pennies were minted in the early 20th century. The author under discussion here cannot write that Hugo-winning story. He cannot remember where or when the dig occurred, he cannot remember if it was in Illinois or Indiana, and he cannot remember the name of the university that sponsored the dig or what happened to the Mason jar. Another great story lost to [holds up FILE CARD] ...senility.

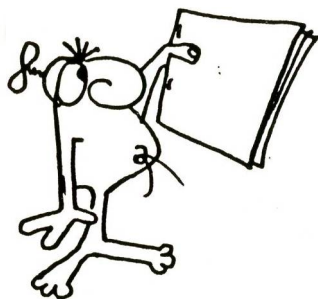
The writers of dark fantasy and weird tales also suffer from this dreadful disease. Several years ago I was present in a TV studio where a well-known fantasy writer was being interviewed live on the air. Senile people, both men and women, cannot always remember whether they are in a private or a public place, cannot remember if they are talking to friends or strangers, cannot remember if they are in a consuite or a TV studio. This poor fellow was suffering greatly that day, having partied until dawn that same day. Scotch will do that, you know. He was being interviewed on a noon talk show by a young woman who should have been warned of his condition.

The interview was going along reasonably well until the young woman began asking questions about his writing, his stories and his books. In particular, she asked about a certain shower scene in the movie Psycho in which a woman is murdered while she bathed. The writer modestly admitted that, yes, he had written that. Senile or not, he did remember the shower scene.

The interviewer then confessed that after seeing the movie, she was so frightened that she could not take a shower for a week. She was deathly afraid to step into that shower stall. The writer, possibly unaware of the cameras and microphones, smiled at the young woman and said, "Ah! Think of the consequences if I had killed the woman while she was seated on the throne."

That writer has since been banned from the air in Louisville, Kentucky. In his present senile state he isn't even aware of that.

What has science done to overcome senility? Not much. Science has conceded that senility robs men and women of those precious abilities they once possessed, robs them of their faculties, and in some extreme cases



debbie notkin

AN OPEN LETTER

TO ERIC MAYER

DEAR ERIC,

Two things happened on the same day last week.

First, I dug out HOLIER THAN THOU 22 with your article on café society fandom for Lucy Huntzinger, who needed it for a panel she'd been asked to be on in Australia, and I reread it before passing it along to her.

Second, Terry Carr died.

The other morning, lying in bed 3,000 miles from my desk and 6,000 miles from my copy of your article, those two things synthesized in my head.

Bear with me; I'll get to why and how slowly.

Fandom has a different purpose for those of us who know each other face to face than it does for those of you who choose to restrict it to paper. Paper fandom, which can certainly be wonderful, and is a perfectly legitimate choice, has two overriding characteristics which separate it out from person-to-person fandom. First, it consists entirely of information provided by the writer's choice. Second, it is (of necessity) an extremely distanced phenomenon.

I'm not denying the possibility of describing yourself clearly on paper, nor claiming that it isn't possible to know well and care deeply about a pen-friend or fanzine editor you've never met. When Darroll Pardoe was producing PIG ON THE WALL, he did an astonishingly fine job of creating and maintaining friendships on paper. But (at least for me) when the fanzine stopped, so did the friendships.

All of my lasting friendships exist as much in the realm of the senses as the realm of the mind--the people I see and hear and touch slip much deeper into my heart than even the Darroll Pardoes of this world. And, since I need personal contact (and lots of it) to thrive, people like Darroll, or you, whose writing intrigues and enmeshes me always feel like opportunities for future contacts, future three-dimensional friendships...should the wheel turn the right way.

People like you, who absent yourselves from the personal encounters, make a choice. You choose to create an on-paper persona, which presumably has numerous points of contact with yourself, but isn't you. You choose to communicate through that persona to large numbers of other personae, all of whom again have a lot of overlap with the people they represent. Fine. When I send a fanzine, or an article, out to people I don't know, I do the same thing. Clearly, the value in this choice is to write the most interesting things you can say to the widest possible segment of your audience, and that makes terrific fanwriting. Chris Priest's article on meeting John Lennon and

Paul McCartney comes immediately to mind here, but there are hundreds of other examples.

However, in the physically interactive "café society," we make another choice--we choose to intertwine our lives with fandom, to take some significant portion (in some cases all) of our emotional sustenance from fellow fans. We choose to take (or leave) each other whole--nose-picking or quick temper, obliviousness or surliness taken into account. We take many of each other as family--with all the infighting, rivalry, heart-deep love and nearly unbreakable bonding that word implies.

I've never met anyone who loves all of their relatives unreservedly. I've never met anyone who likes everyone in fandom, either. But what, from the outside may look like scandal-mongering or name-dropping, is also, from the inside, a frequently loving and generally constructive attempt to keep the news circulating, the bonds functioning, and the network alive. I don't mind if it bores you, I don't mind if you throw it away unread (or use it to line your birdcage), but I do mind if you try to cheapen it for the rest of us, who need it to flourish in our chosen universe.

The effect of your article on me a couple of years ago (even though you quoted me with apparent approval) was akin to how you might feel if someone told you that you and Kathy waste too much time talking about Fleur, or talking to Fleur. If they aren't part of your family, how can they possibly know what is wasted time and what is valuable, or necessary, time?

Terry Carr? If you don't know how his death fits into the topic of this letter, if you didn't share in the enormous sense of loss and loneliness that pervaded the cafés when we heard he was gone, that is because of the choices you made. My choices are different, and even in my grief for Terry, I don't regret them.

--Debbie Notkin
April 1987

SCIENCE & SENILITY (continued from page 20)

robs them of their physical powers. Have you ever pumped iron? With the onset of senility you will be hard-pressed to pump aluminum. [Holds up BEER CAN]

My studies for the University Press indicate that there are but two -- I repeat, only two -- possible cures for senility. But please bear in mind that these two possible cures have not been time-tested in the scientific sense. The first is an over-the-counter medication that the Federal Drug Administration refuses to endorse. But then, remember that the FDA seldom, if ever, endorses over-the-counter medications. I am pleased to report to you that I have been using it for years to cure my senility, and I heartily recommend Dr. Beam's Smooth Elixir. [Holds up BEAM BOTTLE]

Just recently the Federal Drug Administration has accepted a medication for general use, and at the present time this medication is being market tested in Virginia, Maryland and Washington DC.

I happen to have a sample bottle with me. Laboratory tests indicate that this medication has a 61% cure rate. I refer, of course, to Dr. Reagan's Memory Pills...

--Bob Tucker

WE NEVER SLEEP

paul williams



ON MY MIND this month: the drive for and disadvantages of fame for someone like me who lives by selling his creations to the public. "Fame" can be defined here as "public recognition." There are of course a great many gradations of public recognition, and therein lies the tale. Inarguably some degree of public recognition is necessary and inescapable in my line of work. How much is too much? What are the trade-offs? And how much control do people actually have over how famous they get and the baggage that comes with? Oh yeah, and how does our fear of and desire for fame shape our careers and our lives?

At the low end of the ladder we naturally tend to believe that fame and success would set us free—free to write the books we want to write and get them published, free to make our own music on our own terms, to say yes or no to projects on purely aesthetic grounds, free to go where we want and do what we want. Top of the ladder, fame and success very often turn out to be a prison. Enough fame and you're hardly free to walk down the street. You carry with you this perceived power to thrill and elevate and so people everywhere can't help but want things from you, money, an interview, help with an important project, a moment of your time so they can impress their friends with having met you, talked with you, spit in your face. Celebrity is the real booby prize in this respect. If you're a celebrity, people who don't even like you or know anything about what you do still want your autograph if they run into you somewhere (can't let the opportunity go by), and so it isn't just your actual fans you're beholden to but this whole mob of public and press who know nothing about you except that you're famous. On the plus side you can always turn your celebrity into a free meal or a paid TV appearance or not having to sleep alone, but it's thin comfort when it's actually your celebrity that's being fed and paid and held in the night, and not you.

And yet: I would like to sell more books, make more money, create more demand for my works that are out of print or presently unsellable, and I know or believe that being heard and seen on radio and tv and in the papers will help. I want my books to be read. The book I spent a year writing in '85-'86 was turned down by the publisher who contracted for it and by twelve other publishers who'd thought they'd be interested (finally I made a deal with some small press friends in the midwest—they can't pay much, but at least they'll get the book into the stores and end this pain of rejection, this feeling that the work's in vain). Some of those publishers just didn't like what I wrote, but many said they did like it but couldn't publish it because they were afraid it wouldn't sell. So insufficient public recognition, in the sense of guaranteed or at least probable demand for what I do, definitely gets in the way of my creativity (not only are unpaid bills a distraction, but there's something in me that rebels when asked to make a huge new creative effort while the last effort is sitting unread and unloved in my file cabinet).

I need to add, though, that the publisher who first contracted for my book (THE MAP, or REDISCOVERING ROCK AND ROLL) did so partly because they were satisfied and even titillated by the degree of public recognition (fame, reputation) they think I have as a writer about rock and roll. So it's not my low profile but my quirkiness—the fact that I write my books my own way and they tend to come out different from what are perceived as current market specs—that is the real obstacle here. It seems to me that if I were more famous, publishers would accept the way I write as a legitimate, charming, money-making eccentricity, and publish my books anyway, but that could be an illusion. Certainly fame

does not always bring legitimacy. It doesn't even necessarily bring sales. For all the attention John Lennon continues to get, and the success of many books about him, a recent book collecting his significant later writings, Skywriting by Word of Mouth, has not had the attention or sales I would have expected. People want to talk about and read about and speculate about Lennon; they aren't necessarily interested in his creative work, even though that's what he's famous for. Fame itself rapidly becomes the center of attention, and in that sense doesn't further and may even retard interest in the actual works of the creative person.

I woke up in the middle of the night two days ago with a stabbing pain in my throat. In my other recent book, REMEMBER YOUR ESSENCE, I describe headaches, stomach aches, throat or back pains or other recurring ailments as "wounds." "Most people wound themselves," the book says, "whenever they use more power than they're willing to admit they have." So I got up and asked my mentor, the I Ching (an ancient Chinese book that answers questions), what the fuck was going on, and was told: "Although there is strength within, in the present situation it is the weak element that must mediate with the outside world. If a person occupies a position of authority for which he is by nature really inadequate, extraordinary prudence is necessary." Specifically, "One should not strive after lofty things but hold to lowly things. A bird should not try to fly into the sun; it should descend to the earth, where its nest is. This brings good fortune." "But, but—", I mutter under my breath, "I'm not trying to be a superstar; all I want is to be able to sell what I write. A few crummy radio and magazine interviews...you call that trying to fly into the sun?" And the I Ching replies, "The situation here calls for extreme caution; one must make no attempt of one's own initiative to reach the desired end." There's some more commentary graphically describing what will happen to me if I "restlessly seek to press on and on" when it's time to lay low. Faced with the clarity of the warning, and the unpleasantly clear message my body's giving me (stabbing pains in the vicinity of the voice-box), I make an executive decision: "call off the fame campaign." But I don't want to do it, I have a lot of momentum going in that direction, and therein lies the struggle. A big part of me still wants to "restlessly press on"—I find it difficult to trust and believe that things will work out for the best if I hold back my ambition and let go of my desire for success.

In many ways I'm in a very good position right now and the problem I have is being patient. It makes me angry that the bastards can still turn down my books when there are so many people who love what I do. After twenty years of paying dues, of thin gruel and enforced patience, my ship is starting to come in and the danger is that the expectations released after long suppression so easily turn to arrogance. It would be nice to think that because I'm aware of this I'll be able to handle it. But maybe it's not so. I've seen the best minds of my generation (and not just my generation) blow their brains out with cocaine and alcohol and other "pleasures" under the pressure of "success" and why should I tell myself I'm immune? "Scaredy cat!" say my friends and associates who, perhaps unknownst to them, have some attachment to the reflected glory and vicarious thrills my growing fame might bring them. Well, yes. You're right. I'm scared.

And others goad me, intentionally or not, by pricking my vanity, scoffing that I kid myself to even fantasize that I'm in any danger of real "famosity" (as Bob Dylan once called it). Driving me on, therefore, to prove my boast by becoming a visible big deal. Oh vanity, the greatest vanity is to pretend we haven't any...

And how much control do we actually have, I asked at the beginning, over how famous we get? I don't know. Very possibly it's at the whim of the gods, or chance, or it's all been written in the book long since and nothing can alter what will be. But even so, the desire for it and fear of it, even if these emotions have little actual effect on our eventual fame or lack thereof, are real, and demonstrably shape the lives of those of us who try to sell ourselves to the public (and what creative artist doesn't, in one form or another?, I ask).

And damn, it's so undignified to even admit the presence of the issue! And such a dangerous crock to pretend it isn't there. And the stakes seem higher in the Twentieth Century than they've ever been. An illusion, maybe, but like all illusions, real in the impact of its presence. This is the game as we experience it, as we play it whether or not we choose to play, these days.

—Paul Williams



(In homage to Calvin Demmon and Gregory Benford,
authors, An Inquiry into the Theory and Function of Norman J. Clarke)

MOSKOWITZ'S PUBLIC REFUSAL of the Big Heart Award was an international sensation. It received forty-two column inches in the Neue Züricher Zeitung alone. To avoid newspaper photographers, Moskowitz had to spend a month in seclusion at a villa in the Poconos.

He has been seen disguised as a little girl playing jacks on Riverside Drive.

Shortly after the first Nycon, Moskowitz began to be followed by three Oriental seaman. One, a lascar, was taller than the others, and had only one eye. They disappeared the day of the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. Moskowitz is at a loss to explain this episode, but thinks it may be connected in some way with the machinations of the Futurians.

When he was young, Moskowitz would collect magazines by the "month" system. He would begin by acquiring all the January issues of a given magazine. Only after this task was completed would he buy February issues, etc. In this way he built his file of Weird Tales.

Later, he found this method puerile, and turned to the "page" system. First he would accumulate, in mint condition, all the covers of a given magazine, ruthlessly discarding the rest of the issue. Only after a complete set of covers had been acquired would he begin searching for contents pages. At the end of the process, the individual pages would be painstakingly rebound to form complete issues. Moskowitz's famous collection of Argosy was formed in this way. So skillful was the matching and re-binding that only infrared photography can show that it was not gathered in the conventional manner.

In his teens, Moskowitz aspired to be a heldentenor, and studied voice fourteen hours a day. Those who knew him then still speak with awe of his remarkable promise. Moskowitz refuses to discuss this period, and grows angry whenever music is mentioned.

Moskowitz awakens his wife at four in the morning to announce his intention to start a new life as a kosher butcher. The next day, he denies the incident.

Moskowitz feels himself in the avant-garde of rhetoric. At the Nycon banquet in 1967, he introduced techniques later to be made famous by Jim

Morrison. The audience was unappreciative: it hissed and booed and threw small pieces of decaying vegetable matter in the direction of the podium. Moskowitz was not daunted. "Everything I do," he told a confidante, "is for an audience of one man." When asked to name the man, he smiled inscrutably and strummed his samisen.

Moskowitz's fame grows. He receives numerous honorary degrees. His name appears in obscene limericks of great popularity. It is announced that a giant balloon in his image is being prepared for Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. At the great square in Marrakesh, dervishes recite verses cataloguing his attributes. Strangely, Moskowitz t-shirts continue to sell slowly. He remains modest and shy.

--Sidney Coleman

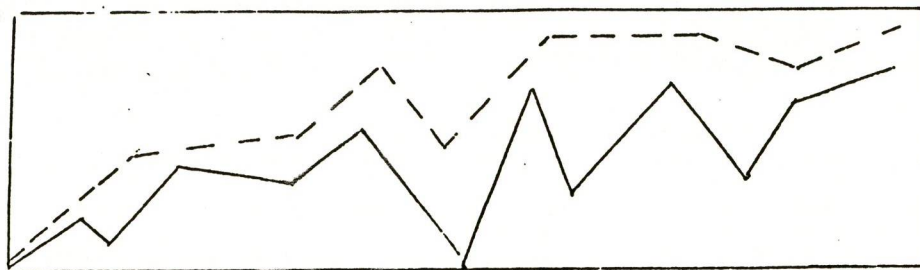


Fig. 1. Appearance of Moskowitz's name on washroom walls in four selected Middle Atlantic states. Solid line: correctly spelled. Dashed line: Including misspellings.

THREE BRIGGS TALES

by Don Herron

I. Horror Briggs, a guy I know who's trying to make it as a writer, and I were talking about Ramsey Campbell's introduction to the *Books of Blood* by Clive Barker. Campbell asserts that with the story "In the Hills, the Cities" Barker "gives lie to the notion, agreed to by too many horror writers, that there are no longer any original horror stories." In that story thousands of villagers in a remote corner of Europe ritualistically assemble and by twisting and climbing together form towering man-like figures that stalk the hills. Perhaps Barker was never low man of a human pyramid in phys ed class.

Suddenly infuriated, Briggs yelled at the nearest wall: "Hey, Ramsey! You can't call it original if the idea is so stupid no one ever bothered writing it before."

II. College In creative writing class Briggs turned in a paper. His professor read it and then suggested he go out and read everything he could find written by Henry James. Briggs went out, bought all the paperbacks he could find, and read each one with growing distress. Briggs went back to his professor with the question: "Why did you tell me to read this guy? He's a terrible writer."

"Yes," his professor agreed, "And you'll never write like him again, will you?"

III. Fame Briggs was driving east and decided to turn through St. Louis, Missouri, to see the birthplace of T.S. Eliot. He swept back and forth across the city looking for the inevitable large sign directing the way. Then he began asking at gas stations and yelling for information from pedestrians as he stopped at red lights. Finally, Briggs pulled off the street and phoned the Chamber of Commerce, asking for directions to Eliot's birthplace.

"Honey," the woman said, "T.S. Eliot was English."

--Don Herron



CHAPTER TWO: SCENE ONE

"I knew at last exactly how my story must be told. If the deeper truth could only be told by falsehood--in other words, through metaphor--then to achieve total truth I must create total falsehood. My manuscript had to become a metaphor for myself.

"I created an imaginary place and an imaginary life."¹

JUST COULD NOT BE FREE, JUST COULD NOT BE ME

We reinvent ourselves every morning. As the cold light of day strikes us between the eyes and we slide from the embrace of Morpheus, our consciousness is switched into being and the universe gradually reconstructed from the hardcopy of our warmed-over memories. Like some amusement arcade video game, our minds the screens for the rules of existence which now flicker into focus. Another dawn, another tournament out on the streets.

But what if the programming is faulty? What if the construct is inaccurate, the image a flawed facsimile and its creation--our perceptions of ourselves and the parameters of our personal multiverse--are unconfirmable falsehoods? We may no longer be the person we were last night, or will be tomorrow; trust no one, even yourself. Especially yourself.

In the summer of '84 I took a hatchet to my inner software and smashed my self-image. Reprogrammed, I faced the world anew.

CHAPTER TWO: SCENE TWO

"The most difficult performance in the world is acting naturally, isn't it? Everything else is awful."²

CHAINED TO THE TABLE, STUCK IN A RUT

It could have been worse. I might have woken to discover myself transformed into a gigantic insect, like Gregor Samsa in Kafka's Metamorphosis ("What has happened to me? he thought. It was no dream."). Instead, I simply greeted the sunrise with one statement emblazoned across my mind: I no longer wanted to be a journalist.

It wasn't an isolated decision by any means, though virtually everyone I spoke to about my deepening disenchantment with the Fourth Estate (including Pete Weston, who slipped on his businessman's bowler hat to supply me

with a glowing reference, an unexpected boon from fandom) seemed shocked that I was now committed to quitting a career most people would give their eye teeth to be part of.

Seven years earlier I would have agreed; even three years nearer I might have argued with myself against the choice I finally made on 26 July 1984. One month later I walked into my editor's office and handed in my resignation.

Fortunately, I did not have to make the decision alone. As I wrote in my then-fanzine RITUAL ECHO, it's times like this when you truly realize the inner strength a deep relationship (marital or otherwise) can instill. A trouble shared may not necessarily be halved, but the partnership can create the frame of mind necessary for such difficulties to be adequately tackled. Ann had sensed my growing discontent after five-and-a-half years with the Solihull News, its circulation gradually crumbling in the face of managerial indifference and public apathy; and whilst we both hoped that the situation would improve with my compulsory transfer to its sister title, the Walsall Observer, in February of that fateful year, such was not to be. There's a certain poetic irony that my final days as a journalist should be at Walsall, the same office where I first entered the "profession" in the summer of '78. My life had turned full circle; it was time to begin afresh.

The reasons for my escape go beyond despair at the collapse of the British newspaper industry or frustration at the nebulous corporate structure of the Birmingham Post & Mail (a monopolistic organisation I had never intended working for but which I was forced to join as its greed swallowed whole my original employers, slaughtering the weekly titles' editorial integrity on the altar of its own economic imperative). Should I sound bitter, I promise you it is with good cause; those years had not been totally wasted, true, but the cumulative effect was one of betrayal--not my betrayal by BPM, but my betrayal by myself. In denying the cracks in the illusion, I was merely postponing my eventual departure.

CHAPTER TWO: SCENE THREE

"The rest of his memories, his old life, were like uncut rushes, unsorted, unassembled, hanging around in the can of his mind for order to be edited into them."³

THE GHOST OF WHO YOU USED TO BE

"Pardon? Oh, thanks very much, I'll have a pint of Ruddles County if that's okay. Yes, a pint; I know I'm supposed to be dieting, but I always reckon you may as well indulge yourself when there's a decent brew on offer."

(The blonde at the corner table is scribbling frantically on a sodden beer-mat, her every move scrutinised by the ultraslick guy sitting opposite; maybe it's her home telephone number, maybe a few choice suggestions on where to plant his ego. As I turn away, my host returns from the bar.)

"Oh great, thanks. Shall we sit by the bookcase, or...? Yeah, here's okay, anything to avoid that guy over there. Here every night and I've kept out of his way ever since the time he and his mate started rambling about how they liberated Monte Casino from the Nazis with nothing but a toothpick and rolled-up copy of BOY'S OWN; triffic drivell, especially as they were buying the booze. I was still working for the paper then, so maybe they thought I was going to immortalize them in print.

"You haven't heard about my new job? Grief, it really has been a long time, hasn't it? Yeah, quit a month or so back, finally tossed the whole farce in and joined an investment brokers as their office manager.

Bit of a jolt at the time, but it's beginning to come together at last; wouldn't have made the change without Ann's support, tho'."

(The blonde exits, alone. But she's left her bag on the table.)

"Yes, you must meet Ann sometime, absolute nutcase--but then, she'd have to be to marry me in the first place, right? I mean, you of all people should know the kind of person I was.

"Never did go to university, by the way. All for the best as it turned out, funnily enough, but I suspect it was more than a coincidence that the first major turning point in my life took place whilst I was studying journalism at college in Essex; Autumn, 1980; I even wrote a short story with that title as a kind of literary footnote to the unwritten autobiography. Suddenly I felt motivated, socially as well as politically. I was no longer the same person I had been the previous year."

(The glass rests, half-empty, in his hand; the whirring and clicking in his mind as he charts the evening's progress is almost audible, even above the background rumble of the bar.)

"That's the way I've been feeling again just lately, as though someone's off rewriting the script but until the changes are drafted I'm having to make do with the original version, faults 'n' all.

"My mate Martin Tudor was over the other night, helping Ann and me dispose of a couple of bottles of cheap vino, and I was trying to articulate how I feel in control of my destiny in a way I haven't in years. And as usual I didn't explain myself properly--hell, I'd already downed most of a two-litre bottle of lager before he arrived--so he got the idea I'd ditched sf fandom for some sick fantasy affair with money. But it's more than that; I mean, I do enjoy the figure-juggling and the office interplay but I dunno, I guess I feel somehow distanced at the moment, growing away from the fannish religion. I still get a kick from meeting people--I haven't forgotten that it was through fandom that I met my wife--but now it's because I enjoy their company rather than because they're fans."

(The blonde signals from the doorway; he scurries over with her handbag and, after a few words are exchanged, she leaves him to the rest of his pint. Nice try, but no coconut.)

"Y'know, tonight's the tenth anniversary of the IRA pub bombings. Tell you something, I wouldn't like to visit either of those places tonight; I feel uneasy enough here in Atkinson's Bar.

"Can't remember much about the bombings myself; I was only 14 and just into the fringe of fandom, comics that is. What was it someone said about the 'Golden Age of SF' merely being whatever it is you were reading when you were 13 years old? Whatever, maybe the fact that I encountered fandom at that age explains why it made such a lasting impression on me. That and all the usual reasons, of course."

(My companion remains mute, then gestures towards the glass in my grasp.)

"Another? No thanks, have to get home tonight and work on an economics essay for night class tomorrow--something about short-run cost curves, whatever they are. But thanks for the offer, anyhow."

(There's a deafening silence in the heart of a roaring crowd as we both realise the audience is over, perhaps forever.)

"Cheers, then. See you again, p'haps?"

(And with that I turned and strode out of the bar, into the rain, into the night, into the future. Behind me remained the 14-year-old Steve Green, macabre in his transformation into the me I might have become without my years in fandom.

(Less than I, perhaps, but who is to say that some day I might not encounter some future self in another timecrossed bar and hear him speak the same of me?)

CHAPTER THREE: SCENE ONE

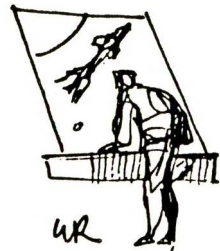
"Then I am afraid that this person I am now and know myself to be will be betrayed utterly by some future self, of whom I as yet know nothing... There are masks like layers of skin and until we peel off the first layer we cannot know the next and when we are wearing the next to the world, we have forgotten and betrayed the one which went before. And can you ever stop still, can you shout No, and stay the same, keep the same face forever, now and forever?"

--Steve Green

1. Chris Priest, The Affirmation
2. Angela Carter, Flesh and the Mirror
3. Chris Priest, The Glamour
4. Susan Hill, The Bird of Night

Subheadings: Tom Robinson

mail run jean young



For ten years now, I have lived much of the time in the tunnel of my headlights, under the dark arch of the sky. The walls of the tunnel are walls of air, and many things can penetrate it: rain, snow, sleet, wind; blowing leaves, blowing cornstalks, blowing dust, blowing mud; a dog, a cat, a fox, a coon, a deer: lots of deer. If I were sharp-eyed and very observant, I could see more than this, but my eyes are bad and I tend to be dreamy. The tunnel is the womb of dreams, of emotions, of thought. Beyond the walls the land looms in bluffs or stretches out, stretched out... Sometimes I follow it in mind, reaching through the gathered lands, across the dark arch that is cloud or stars, past the sparkling spread-out yard lights to the plain that lies north to the continent's edge.

Every month I see more, or less, as the sun reflects more and less from the Big Rock, the sister planet; as the moon waxes, as they say, and wanes. Some nights, that's how it looks: Luna, the moon, waxing, waning, a sentient entity increasing, decreasing, disappearing, coming back: Mother of Symbols. Some nights it's like a mysterious clock-face in an invisible tower in the sky, strange landmark that tells hours, days, suddenly informing us of something more than time. Most nights, it's just a bit more light, a bit less, a dim glow behind clouds, a lamp at my back...or the sum of all the angles and perceptions of all of us moving, moving, moving in the tunnel of the headlights.

--Jean Young

FOR FAPA AT

50



BY FREDRIK POHL

Steve Stiles 9/12/87

PEOPLE WHO ARE PAST the age of thirty (as I have been for some years now) often get ticked off at the youngsters of the day, who just don't seem to understand how good they have it. It's jealousy, of course. I share it. I'm not jealous of the much-vaunted increased sexual freedom (we managed somehow, you know) or of the wondrous pleasures of watching TV and video disks (reading Amazing Stories was more fun anyway). What I'm jealous of is fanzine publishing.

I mean, do you guys know what it used to be like? Back in those primitive days of the 1930s it was hard work to get a fanzine out, and when you had it done it still looked pretty sloppy. You did it on a hektograph, probably, to begin with--a tin tray of something like thick Jell-O, which you kept carefully moistened as you laid one sheet on the jelly, meticulously positioned because you couldn't correct it if it went down crooked. Then you picked it up, tried to keep it from curling as you set it down to dry, and wound up with your fingers purple from hektograph ink that simply would not come off. Or you did it with carbon copies (not for FAPA, though, because Don Wollheim wouldn't allow it), and then you were limited to making maybe a dozen copies of which the last six were illegible. Or you set type on something like my little Kelsey 3x5 press, and wound up with your fingers punctured with the sharp edges of the nasty, inky, jagged little bits of type. Or, most likely, you used a mimeograph. But not the kind of mimeograph people use today. What you had was a primitive A.B. Dick thing, hand powered, that you had to feed each sheet of paper into separately, and that you had to slipsheet to keep the ink from the last sheet out from offsetting onto the next page; and that if you wanted to illustrate you had to draw by hand right on the stencil with a kind of dentist's tool as a stylus. No electrostencils for us. If you wanted to justify the right-hand margins you had patiently to count out spaces and interpolate them between the words of the line--no word processors with automatic justification. Photo offset was possible, but expensive. (Who had that kind of money?) And, though we mostly all had jobs of some kind, none of us had employers with Xerox machines we could use for our own purposes after hours. (Unlike, for example, our late, lost brother, Terry Carr. When I went to work for Ace Books in 1971, shortly after Terry had left his Ace job to head out for California, the

place where the Xerox was kept was called "Terry's Corner" around the office, because he'd spent so much time Xeroxing fanzines there.)

(I do not even mention audiozines and computernetzines and whatever other newfangled gimmicks technology may yet confer on us. They're fine enough--I guess--but what I care about is print.)

Believe it, things were really tough for fan mag publishers half a century ago. And yet we did it.

And, you know, I'm glad we did. If I had to, I'd cheerfully do it all over again. It was our way of life. Fanzine publishing (although we didn't call it that then; the things were just known as "fan mags") was the glue that kept our science-fiction world together in those days before weekly cons (or, most of the time, any cons at all). It was our samizdat. It was our way of reaching out into the sparsely settled world of like-minded souls to exchange recognition signals.

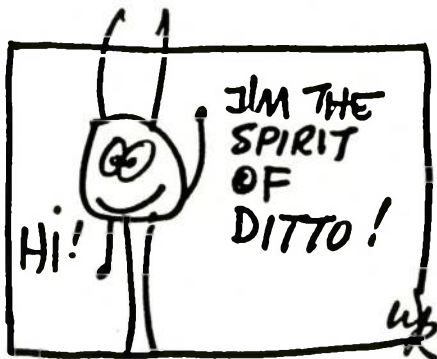
It was also a hell of a good way for a teenage kid (like myself, and also like Don Wollheim, Bob Lowndes, Charles Hornig, Terry, Judy Merrill, Damon Knight and a lot of others) to get enough of an idea of what editing was all about to be able to handle the work with at least some kind of rudimentary skill when fate handed us real pro editorial jobs.

I don't suppose fanzine publishing is much use for that kind of on-the-job training any more. It's not that fanzines have changed that much, it's that pro publishing has. In professional science-fiction publishing today, book or magazine, it's a lot more advantageous to a career to be good at interacting with all the other publishing departments and managing office politics than it is to have a knack for picking out good stuff and getting it into print. The great, strong-willed, herd-bull science-fiction editors of the past--Gernsback, Campbell, Gold and the others--are a seriously endangered species now, if not an extinct one; the changes in the world's publishing climate won't support such rambunctious individualists any more.

So maybe putting out fanzines won't help anybody get a pro job. But, you know, we didn't know it would when we were doing it, half a century or so ago. We didn't do it as job training. We did it because we wanted to--the same reason that keeps FAPA and all the other fanzine publishers going today--and, with any luck at all, people will go on publishing the stuff for the next half century as well.

So happy birthday, FAPA! Live long and prosper...and, tell you what, let's get together again in 2037 AD to see how things are working out then.

--Frederik Pohl





"NOW THAT'S
WHAT I CALL
Creative!"

by
Donna Nassar



Up until about a year ago I had an assortment of rubber stamps that filled an ordinary shoe box and three stamp pads, including one rainbow pad. Now and again I would decorate an envelope with a cascade of butterflies. When and if I ever got around to writing a note or letter, there would be a star or bird in the corner. I bought stamps for the kids: a clown for Erik, a lion for Heather. I'd buy one or two of the small discounted stamps at the gift shop across the street.

In summer of 1986 I bought a few more stamps and decorated a birthday card for my son's sixth birthday. Then it was Heather's birthday. Then I made Christmas cards for the Harvest Faire fundraiser at Heather's school. Using this as an excuse, I began to indulge heavily in rubber.

My collection took on new proportions when Bill and Emmy Good of Good Stamps began to let me buy quantities at wholesale prices. Now I mostly buy just the rubber images (unmounted rubber) and mount them myself on blocks of wood that I scrounge from my woodworking friends.

At this point I must digress a bit and tell on myself so that the reader may form a clear picture of what we're dealing with here. I haven't had a TV for 4½ years, smoked marijuana for two years, drank coffee for 44 months (not even "decaf"), eaten chocolate for three years, or eaten anything with sugar in the first five ingredients more than a dozen times since May 1984. I don't drink alcohol but I can't, on the other hand, give up butter and red meat.

I have a basically addictive personality and I've learned to limit myself to expressing it through three or four rather accepted (to me) channels, one of which is, these days, a collection of rubber stamps.

My passion was fanned (pardon the pun) this summer when I learned that Jerry Kaufman and Lucy Huntzinger were two of several fans who were also into rubber stamps. I visited their collections this summer at the same time I was beginning to fashion my own stamps from erasers. All that, coupled with encouragement from Paul, and soon my passion knew no bounds.

My eye constantly searches for images suitable for carving. I am always on the look out for the best deal on Mars Staedler Grand erasers. Anniversaries and birthdays are acknowledged with hand-made, hand-stamped books or cards and eraser carvings. I've divorced myself from "cute and sweet" and entered the world of serious "artist" stamps.

The sight of a naked page or envelope has become abhorrent to me. I can't even write a check that has not been stamped at least three times. I've seen the mailperson giggle upon removing my outgoing mail from the box.

I took a journaling seminar in October--a weekend of keeping a journal and learning new techniques. Actually, I don't as a rule keep a journal and I was hoping to be inspired to begin doing that on a regular basis. I knew there was little chance of that but I figured I'd go for it anyway.

Along with three empty notebooks and two dozen pens of various colors and descriptions, I also took three trays of rubber stamps, six stamp pads and my carving kit. Ultimately I know that, even though some "purists" may turn up their noses at the idea, what I do with rubber stamps is a kind of journaling. And, in fact, not far into my carving passion I began to keep a journal of my carvings--a print of the carving, the date and circumstances of the carving, and the source of the graphic inspiration.

I refer to myself, fondly of course, as a "binge carver." I will go sometimes two weeks without putting blade to plastic and then--ta da!--five or six new creations in one evening. Yet even during a dry spell my eye is constantly roving. I collect little pieces of art and graphics from the newspaper, greeting cards, fanzines and junk mail. (Imagine, for a moment, standing in the post office looking carefully through your junk mail, not for the value of the offering but for the pictures.) I've been known to peruse rubber stamp catalogues and rubber stamp fanzines for hours while insurance reports and patient billing (I'm a chiropractor) go untouched for weeks. Sometimes I work out a reward system that goes like this: Send out X dollars of insurance billings and you may order X dollars of rubber stamps.

I subscribe to a newsletter for eraser carvers and included in the last issue was a letter from me (my first loc). I also subscribe to Rubberstamp Madness and I am sending in my money for two other rubber stamp fanzines.

My kids are into it, too. Heather, age ten, makes name stamps as birthday gifts for friends and classmates. Erik, age seven, has done half a dozen "studies" of the Golden Gate Bridge on small erasers using a linoleum block cutter. One night when we were sitting around carving together, he asked me if I would carve a Golden Gate Bridge if he drew it for me. I agreed. He took a large eraser and drew around it on a piece of tracing paper. Then he drew the bridge and a couple of cars and the Toll Plaza in the space. "Challenging," I thought as I began.

I love the finished product and while I was busy musing about possible future collaborations, Erik checked it out and reported, "That was supposed to be a guy on a motorcycle. You made it into another car."



My children's friends are fascinated and love to come for a visit to play with and carve the stamps. When Erik's friend Jordan first saw my collection all spread out in the workshop I had just created in the garage, he asked, "Are these all stamps?" "Yes." "Do you collect them?" "Yes." "So this is a stamp collection!"

Among my friends this fetish has not gone unnoticed and I often find myself loaning stamps, ordering images for them, having stamping parties and generally sharing my love. I even taught two classes on eraser carving at the local art store only weeks after I had taught myself.

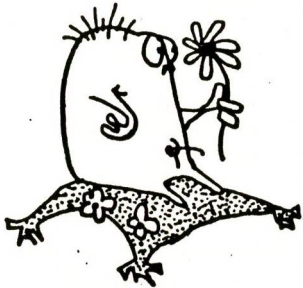
My friend Terri was clearly not impressed when I began collecting and using rubber stamps. She acknowledged that it was decidedly her "stuff" about what constituted "art" and what did not. She dropped by for a visit one night after I had just gotten the book, Rubber Stamps and How to Make Them, and I was teaching myself and the children how to carve erasers.

When she arrived I invited her to join us on our carving journey. She took one look at what we were doing and blurted out,

"Now that's what I call creative!"

--Donna Nassar

JEAN-HEURI HOLMBERG


 terry carr:
 swedish version

If you walk down Main Street, Sweden, you might be surprised. Not that it's indistinguishable from its counterparts in New Jersey or Oklahoma, but the similarities are more numerous than you would reasonably expect. At the corner of the town square, you'll almost certainly find a McDonald's; the cinema will be showing the latest Eastwood epic or knife kill flick with the original title retained as well as the English dialogue. The rock music you'll hear from the Walkmans or ghetto blasters will be the same Billboard hits you'll hear in the States; your cereals will be from Kellogg's; your coffee will be Maxwell; the latest Coke jingle will be as well known here as in Des Moines. Off in the fields on the outskirts of town, kids will be playing baseball; the graffiti has been retraced faithfully from originals found on the New York subways; clothes, hairstyles, subculture groups are all exact copies of last year's New York scene. And if you relax in front of the TV set at night, chances are you'll consume your Bud while watching "Dallas," "Falcon Crest" or a segment of "North and South."

It wasn't always like this. Long ago, around when I published my first fanzine, blue denim was frowned upon and nobody had heard of wines from the Napa Valley, Crest toothpaste or Kraft jellies and jams. American films were sneaked in under translated titles and the bestseller lists often diverged from last year's Publishers Weekly listings.

The same was true in Swedish fandom.

At thirteen I completed my rite of passage and became a fan. This was in 1962 and there were two main currents in Swedish fandom. The dominant one was the very sercon: the leading fanzines were called SCIENCE FICTION FORUM, SCIENCE FICTION NEWS and FORUM SCIENTIA FICTIVA, and they all published amateur stories, amateur reviews and amateur analyses of SF. The other was what Swedish fans called the fannish current. It consisted of a make-believe fannish "war" between fictitious countries inside Sweden, waged in correspondence, on tape and in fanzine writings. Leading fans assumed imposing dictatorial pennames (The Autark, The Overlord, The Emperor) and wrought horrible devastation on each other and their respective domains in sometimes quite funny fictitious newscasts, news items, short stories and essays. It was all pretty much a fan version of the shared universe kind of stories nowadays in vogue at Ace and Baen, and about as fannish--as the word is normally used.

Then came early Spring of 1963 and I attended my first convention. Since I was perceived as a promising neo, kindly BNFs gave me some of their old fanzines, and in the stacks they gave me I found treasures unimaginable: an almost complete run of FANAC, odd issues of INNUENDO, S---, CRY, SHAGGY

and even one or two issues of VOID. When I read Have Space Suit, Will Travel at eight, the impact of that novel was stunning; when at thirteen I read through the stack of second-hand fanzines and discovered the Berkeley variety of fannishness, I was certainly not less overwhelmed. This was what fandom could be and ought to be, I told myself, rereading Terry Carr's "Fandom Harvest" columns by flashlight beam under my bed covers long after my parents expected me to be asleep. And since it manifestly was not what Swedish fandom was at the time, Swedish fandom had to be transformed.

In the Summer of 1963 I was fourteen and believed that I was now a mature, sophisticated fan. I also believed that I knew English, which I had mostly learned from reading untranslated Heinlein novels in the original since fourth grade. And so I felt confident that I could safely get in touch with this Carr person, who had changed my outlook on life. I have a horrible feeling that at the time I perceived a slightly superior, sneering attitude to be evidence of great sophistication, and so I am happy I never kept copies of my letters. But I have kept Terry's reply, which was kind, encouraging, and in retrospect also a little bit amused. He gave me permission to transplant Berkeley fandom to Sweden, and I set out to do so.

Adopting the penname "Carl J Brandon, Jr" I started publishing the Swedish FANAC in late 1963. In 1964 I added an English edition and started to have some continuous contact with current American and British fandom. (The Swedish FANAC in the end outlived its model; the last issue was number 118.) In 1964 I started a fannish fanzine, GAFIAC, where I translated the first chapters of "The BNF of Iz," but more importantly had my first fling at writing the kind of fannish pseudo-essays about existing fans that characterized much of Terry's best fan pieces. To other fanzines I contributed articles with titles like, "More Fannishness in Swedish Fandom!", cartoons with bearded figures, and convention reports referring to Charles Burbee, Bloch, Roscoe and other ghods.

Gradually this deluge of peculiarities started to have some effect. Neos more recent than myself were influenced and began to adopt the same outlook I tried to imitate. Swedish fanzines became riddled with American fan slang. Conventions began gradually to separate SF and fan programming. And in the late '70s, it all came to fruition: led by numbingly active fans like Anders Bellis and Ahrvid Engholm, a whole new generation of Swedish fans adopted the late '50s American fannishness lock, stock and mythos. The great scheme was completed; that vision of fandom I had found in Terry's CRY and VOID columns finally devoured all of Swedish fandom.

Remember the Main Street, Sweden scene? If you pick up the Average Fanzine in Sweden these days, you'll find something full of Rotsler cartoons and bearded original drawings, faan fiction, faan columns, fanzine reviews, faan articles and essays and humor, a letter column where everybody talks about fandom, fan history pieces, interlineations and quotes without comment from old fanzines--and almost never a word about either the mundane world or about science fiction. But you will find references to the greats all Swedish fans know of: Bloch and Burbee, Terry and Ted White, the original Carl Brandon and the immortal Willis, Bob Tucker and even Hoy Ping Pong. And the greatest of them all is Terry Carr, who was through no fault of his own the cause of it all, and who has been part of it all these years. No other fan writer has been nearly as extensively translated into Swedish, or as diversely: faan fiction, columns, essays, Brandonizations.

The circle is completed, and if the Bheer Can Tower is ever forgotten in America, still it is well known to all Swedish active fans. Transplanted in time and space, Berkeley fandom is alive and well, and this autumn Carl Brandon's "On the Road" will be published in the 50th issue of GAFIAC, which also marks the 25th anniversary of my first fanzine.

But what about Terry?

When I told him of our antics, he was amused. Reasonably he thought us all mad in Sweden; in his place, I would have done so. But probably I would also have felt a bit flattered, and I hope Terry sometimes did. Ghod knows he deserved all the egoboo he may have had, even from cold and remote corners of the globe.

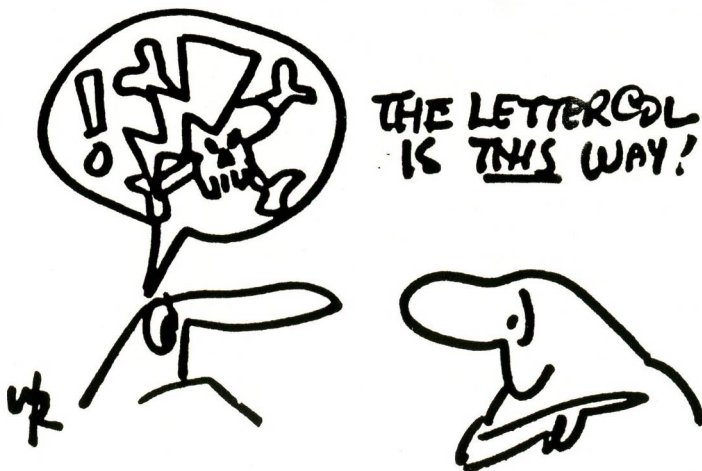
I knew Terry first from his writings, and at too impressionable an age. It took me much too long before I could look on him as a fellow fan and human being rather than as some kind of super-BNF whom ordinary mortals dared not address in earnest. Then I knew Terry from his letters, invariably kind, invariably thoughtful, always amusing as well as serious. And finally I got to know Terry in person, all too seldom: at a few conventions, a few fan meetings, a few parties. These were the times I wished that I had never idolized him, never had to overcome that idiotic and self-destructive guilt that simultaneously separates us from our private heroes and makes us behave inanely when we meet them or communicate with them. For the Terry Carr I began to know as a man was much more than those parts of him evident in his fan writings: a man of many facets, touched by pain, quiet, intensely emotional but with enormous control, a romantic ironic and a wry dreamer. I have known few people--and perhaps this is bizarre--with whom I have felt as much at ease or so much kinship. When at last I could meet Terry not as an admirer or a starry-eyed neo, he was a fellow man I could not help but love.

So there you have it: one of the peculiar romances of fandom. For nearly 25 years, across thousands of miles, my relationship to Terry went through many phases and many changes, but was still a constant. There is no other person of whom I could say the same. None of my friends I have today have been part of my life for as long, or meant as much to it.

Last summer in a letter he said that he did not believe that he would ever again appear as guest of honor after the worldcon. I knew of his illness, and hoped until the last few days before the con to be able to attend; it turned out not to be possible. And then I learned that we are never prepared. The news of his death shattered me. The ultimate tragedy, Poul Anderson once wrote, is that even those who do not deserve it die. In Terry, I felt, I lost both what had been and what might have been: a distant friendship which had lasted almost two thirds of my life and any chance for a closer one which might have existed.

Still, someone you know through his writing will never wholly die. And to me, looking back, truly, it all certainly was a wonderful thing.

--John-Henri Holmberg
Stockholm, July 1987





The Ether Still VIBRATES

AVEDON CAROL I'm glad you quoted that bit from Bloch. This relates to something I've been saying in response to people who complain that fanwriting couldn't be sold professionally. While I have seen fanarticles that could indeed go over well professionally, I can't honestly say it bothers me a lot that most of them can't. In fact, that's sort of what I like about them--that I'm getting something from fanzines I couldn't get for money anyplace else. I remember the whole time I was typing up Chris Priest's "Thank You Girls" for CHUCH, I kept thinking, "This deserves a wider audience," and Langford and I both kept harassing Chris to try to sell it professionally. I've showed it to lots of non-fans and they've all fallen all over themselves about it--even my sister, who doesn't generally bother to tell me whether she reads my fanzines, wrote me a letter raving about it. (She hardly writes letters that often; imagine my surprise when she sent me a loc!) But when Chris finally took it to his agents, you would have thought he was presenting them each with a case of the clap the way they recoiled. Eventually he got a new agent and sold it for £60 to THE FICTION MAGAZINE (!), but last I heard he still hadn't any takers in the US. And yet, most of us really dug that piece, and there are plenty of people who aren't even in fandom who would have paid to read it. But the only place in the US you can read it is in a fanzine. And that's just one little thing. There is a lot of stuff in fanzines which is, in many respects, the newspaper junk of an unusually literate small town. Our own LIFE, LOOK and even ROLLING STONE and MOTHER JONES exist in their way --but few outsiders would understand them because the landmarks, celebs, officials and scholars are all different. If it couldn't be sold to the "real" press, well, maybe that's because they don't know what they're doing, or maybe it's because they are right in suspecting most readers of being only barely literate, or maybe it's just their loss. All I know is that I'm happier to live in a world with fanzines than I was when I didn't know they existed.

I have to admit that I am baffled by all of this talk of monogamy as an answer to AIDS. The latest issue of TIME just spent another page or three talking about how the sexual revolution is over, again. Sigh. What does it mean when men would rather give up sex altogether or take the risk of death than roll on a condom? Imagine someone so incompetent, so wimpy, that even using a condom is too much effort for him? How such an individual could manage to endure even the lesser obstacle course of a one-night stand is beyond me. Even casual sex requires more effort than rolling on a condom--never mind actually having a relationship. So condom sales have gone up 10%--I wonder if gay men alone account for that? I just get the feeling that we've spent so much time letting men think that all the responsibilities in birth control, families, sexual hygiene, etc., are women's responsibilities that a lot of men just cannot face the idea that they're going to have to take some on-the-spot responsibility where sex is concerned for a change. When only women really had to worry about the consequences of unprotected sex--pregnancy--it was easy for a lot of guys to conclude that only women should deal with it at all. But men get AIDS, men die of AIDS--will they finally start learning what it means to have to worry about consequences? They can't just get a vasectomy and never think about it again, this time. If the consequences weren't so horribly tragic, it might almost be a blessing to know that something is finally teaching society that men have to be responsible, too--that is, if it does teach us that. Last week a judge here handed down an unusually stiff sentence to a rapist, opining that these days the fear of AIDS makes rape a particularly ugly crime. I wonder what it all means...

Excuse me while I spend my customary five minutes rolling over and laughing at Nigel Richardson's lot. It's not that I recognize the people he's referring to--I hear those

jokes all the time. No, it's the idea of Nigel Richardson as the judge of style and cool. Nigel Richardson--he looks like a fan!

I wrote a couple of good poems on acid once, but you'll note I don't exactly advertise myself as a poet. I once wrote a pretty good song on mescaline. But most pot just made me tired and hungry, or else I had the giggling fits, and either way I could never get anything done. Well, when I was a singer I was wrecked a lot of the time and it didn't hurt, but when you get on stage, pot can't compete with the performance high--I never even used to notice it. At the keyboards (black and white or qwerty) it's caffeine and nicotine for me, every time.

Well, Harry, it depends which part of the Thames you cross, and how. Going to Vince's place in the winter is not routine--which is why Vincent decided to suspend KTFs until the spring this year. On the other hand, you can cross the Thames without even noticing it if you take the Northern Line down to Waterloo or London Bridge or whatever. But you'd be amazed, Harry--after a while, even being in London is just like real life. Although I must admit, sometimes I still do find myself walking down a particularly picturesque street that just absolutely looks like it's out of a storybook and saying to myself, "Wow, this is London--and I actually live here!" (144 Plashet Grove, East Ham, London E6 1AB, UK)

MILT STEVENS Since I'm the same age you are, I have some of the same childhood memories you mention in your editorial. I had a Space Patrol smoke gun and also a Space Patrol plonker. I've still got the space ship control panel they sold at one point. I also remember when Space Patrol gave away a life-size spaceship (about the size of a house trailer) as a prize in some contest. A couple years ago, STARLOG reported that someone who also remembered that space ship had located it, bought it, and renovated it. Since I also grew up in the same city you did, I also remember Larsen's Book Shop. The science fiction was on the west side as you came in the front door and the owner smoked cigars. I have pleasant associations with the smell of cigar smoke and moldering paper. (Why, so do I for the smell of moldering paper, at least, and not just at Larsen's. Another favorite haunt which you may also remember is the A-to-Z Used Book Store on 8th Street west of downtown, where I got a lot of early GALAXY and F&SF in my collector days and once, as a neofan, five of the seven issues of SLANT for 35¢ each.)

In regards to Donna Nassar's column, I don't remember as a child ever thinking I came from anywhere. Since my parents were non-religious, I didn't even hear about God until after I entered school, and then I just thought it was one of those stories adults told to children. I very much remember when I first became self-aware (which was about when I was four). It suddenly hit me that the perceiver was separate from the perception. Things looked very funny for a while.

Not allowing her son to have candy at all may not be a good idea. When I was in high school I knew a girl who came from a family of vegetarians. She was the only person I have ever known who could get an absolutely immoral pleasure from a hamburger. Naturally, she headed for red meat every chance she got. If she hasn't changed her ways by now, she's probably eaten her way into a case of gout. (I'm a vegetarian, too, and my kids (who were raised vegetarian) are much the same way as your friend. They love to go to burger cook-outs at camp and the like. I don't mind as long as I don't have to have it at home, which I insist upon. And I keep them occasionally mindblown, like the time last year I ate five strips of bacon at the Glen Ellen Fire Department's annual pancake breakfast.)

Now that Terry Carr has reported advertising for SF cons on the back of milk cartons, maybe it's time to revive the old idea of SF bubble gum cards (complete with all the stats on your favorite pros). However, donating money to regular charities has its weaknesses. Today I was reading about the Hands Across America effort which raised 32 million dollars to help the poor last year. Seventeen million of it went to "expenses," and the other 15 million is yet to be distributed. Better they should have given the money to LASFS. At least we keep a few poverty stricken wretches out of the weather.

Before Paul Williams mentioned it, I didn't know that Scorpio was the sign of sex and death. I always thought us Scorpios were just supposed to be awfully sneaky. Williams' comments on AIDS reminds me of a debate my father and I have been having. I say that starvation will be raging across the planet by the early part of the next century. My father, on the other hand, says that war and plague will keep the population comfortably low. I

cite Ethiopia, and he cites AIDS. (My whole family are a bunch of real optimists.)
(7234 Capps Avenue, Reseda CA 91335)

BEV CLARK I especially enjoyed your reminiscences about your introduction to SF and fandom. I was tempted to respond with some of my own, but I won't. With a brief exception: I wasn't quite as young as you when I started to read SF--I was about eight--but it's still been a part of my life for a long time. And before that there was science, specifically astronomy, geology, paleontology and dinosaurs, which changed to astronaut about 1961. I also recall Space Patrol with great fondness, though I saw it in the '60s in syndication, and the SF or comics serials, which I also saw considerably after the fact. (I also wanted to be an astronomer pretty early on. I remember when I was eight years old starting an "astronomy club" with some of my friends. That was when I published my very first fanzine: one issue of our club bulletin, which I wrote out by hand in an edition of several carbon copies.)

I could go on. It's curious that so many of us are not only inclined to tell the story of how we discovered SF to anyone who will listen, but are in our turn enthralled listeners or readers of someone else's discovery. Rather like born-againists, we are, in that respect. The recitations inspire and reinforce a sense of shared community and are important for that reason, even if they are something of a cliché.

In the same article, I'm glad you printed those comments from Robert Bloch. Not only are they of intrinsic interest, they're even more true and more important now than they were when he wrote them, as you point out. In fact, if you hadn't given the original source of the remarks, only one thing would have given away their age: the figure of 170 million for the population of the United States. I don't know if I should be worried that things haven't improved or reassured that they haven't gotten too much worse. (10501 8th Avenue NE #119, Seattle WA 98125)

MIKE GLICKSOHN Remember the mole men! Who could forget! The very first movie I ever recall seeing, at about the age of six, accompanied by my slightly older brother and both parents, was "Superman and the Mole People" (or some very similar title) I suspect it was later broken into segments and shown as a serial but I saw it in a theatre as a first-run film. I must have already been a science fiction enthusiast at the time (from British comics which included prose stories as well) because if I hadn't been I expect that film would have destroyed any interest I might ever have felt for the genre. I wonder what ever happened to it? I've certainly never seen it on TV and none of my "movies on TV" listings make reference to it. Which is probably just as well, really.

If Redd Boggs is serious he may be one of the few people I've encountered who'd be worried about the idea of suddenly becoming wealthy. I spend \$3 a week on lottery tickets and on occasions when I've nothing better to do I occasionally speculated on what it would be like to actually win a big prize and how my life would change as a result. But I certainly don't do it "hopelessly" as Redd said he did. (Hell, Redd, give me the money if it'll ruin your life for you.)

The whole question of governmental lotteries is a murky one really. In theory they serve useful purposes with the government revenue (at least in Canada) being used for a large number of good causes. And of course they are completely voluntary. Yet typically the people who desperate enough to sink large amounts into them on a regular basis in the hope of getting lucky are the very people who can least afford to do so. So lotteries in reality cause a great deal of suffering among the poorer elements of society. If I had a strong conscience I'd be morally outraged at the very idea of lotteries and either boycott them or work towards their cancellation, but I don't, so I don't, and I can well afford my small weekly outlay and it's true that someone has to win, so what the hell. Besides, every now and then I win a small prize and even when I lose the price is worth the infrequent daydream about what it might be like to be independently wealthy. (Think of the fanzines you could publish! The cons you could attend! The parties you could throw in the suites you could afford to rent.)

Excellent piece by Terry Carr but I quibble with only one small point: I find that the bigger a worldcon is, the lonelier it is possible to feel at times. Case in point, the Atlanta worldcon. I went by myself since Doris didn't have any real interest in attending. By and large I had a great time, and thought it was an excellent convention, but every now

and then I'd miss Doris and if that happened when I was in a large crowd where I knew absolutely nobody (which is a frequent occurrence at a modern worldcon) then my feelings of loneliness would be considerably heightened. Happily it was never long before someone came along to share a hug or a drink or a conversation and dispel those feelings, but it is most definitely possible to be lonely in today's fragmented and frequently bizarre fandom, monstrously large though it may be. (508 Windermere Ave., Toronto, Ont. M6S 3L6, Canada)

DON FRANSON You really got into fanzine fandom under the wire. October 1958 was the last issue of IMAGINATION and the very last Bloch column. After that there were no more fanzine reviews in prozines to amount to anything till the ones by Rich Brown (briefly) in Ted White's AMAZING years later. I knew about fanzines before this time, but Bloch and Madle (in Lowndes' zines) convinced me to send for fanzines besides SF TIMES, which I subscribed to for pro information. I had stayed away from them all the years I'd been an SF fan, mainly because of the reviews characterizing them as trivial, and the stories about the feuding in DeCamp's SF HANDBOOK. In early 1958 I planned to go to the Solacon and wanted to find out more about fandom first. By August I not only had read lots of fanzines but had published letters and articles in some. And Bloch was right, they were worth reading. I still consider myself a fanzine fan, though I've never actually had a genzine of my own, and never owned a mimeo. I agree with you that the means of publication is not important, it's the editorial material. There's so much talk now about "desk-top publishing." Fans did it all the time. (6543 Babcock Ave., No. Hollywood CA 91606)

DAVID BRATMAN In your editorial I was caught quite offguard by your quote of Robert Bloch's 1958 paean to freedom of speech as a virtue of fanzines. Discussion of the political virtues in fandom has during my time been eclipsed by concern over the artistic virtues. Possibly that's because, for all the hoopla over the conservative resurgence, our political freedoms are in less danger today than our artistic freedoms, whereas in the '50s it was more the other way around. Maybe. Also, there are fanzines where saying something well is more important than what you say, and others where it's vice-versa; and the former are the ones that earn the most praise in serious fannish circles. (In this fannish circle, i.e., the editor's, both aspects have equal weight.)

Greg Benford hit on a point close to me in the last paragraph of his piece where he describes being a fan as something he also is, in addition to all the other things he is more of the time. I feel the same way. When I was in college I felt differently: fanac came first, because schoolwork, though I enjoyed it, was something I could fit in between the cracks. Now I'm beginning to settle down at my profession (which is librarianship), and am finding, as suits something that I made a conscious decision to spend my life doing, that that's where I'm investing most of my energy as well as my time. What really feels good is knowing that I can do that and have my fanac, too.

Donna Nassar may not realize it, but she's nicely defused a tough but neglected moral question posed by the metaphysical ideas she raises: If it's true that we choose our parents and station in life before we're born, should there be such things as poverty programs and affirmative action? All such social welfare rests of the assumption that people aren't responsible for certain aspects of their lives that we presume are outside of conscious control. But what if they are under our control? Should we then give the poor as much sympathy as we give the drunk driver? (The closest we've gotten to that in real life is a Reagan administration appointee who made such a remark about the handicapped and was laughed out of a congressional hearing for it.) Donna's great contribution is to point out that "control" is a slippery concept; even if we are in control of something, who put us there? (P.O. Box 662, Los Altos CA 94023)

HARRY WARNER JR. Your memories of how you became a fan gave me even stronger certainty that the 1950s were the best years for anyone to become a fan. There were those fan departments in prozines that made it easy for anyone with fannish instincts to find fandom. The Heinlein juveniles, the best science fiction stories ever written for young people, were comparatively new and hadn't been partly outmoded by the space program and improved knowledge about the solar system. The gloom and despair that became fashionable among young people in the 1960s hadn't dampened enthusiasm yet. Some of the most talented fans and best fanzines in history were at the height of their careers and exis-

tences. Most of the feuds were ludicrous rather than disgusting to everyone except the central figures in them. You were lucky.

Greg Benford's contribution was immense fun to read but simultaneously I felt as outraged as I do when I learn about someone ruining the environment over a wide area: Greg threw away the basis for 21 fine fanzine articles by condensing each of them into 21 paragraphs. Some fans whom I won't identify would even have gleaned 42 articles out of all this material by writing up each paragraph twice from different angles for different fanzines. The only thing I can recall that is equally wasteful in the sense of extravagance with creativity is Verdi's Falstaff which contains enough melodies and musical ideas to fill up a dozen operas, most of them heard just once, sometimes almost inaudibly in the orchestra behind the voices or as counterparts.

Art Widner is only half right in his fiendish plotting to prevent me from publishing another issue of a fanzine after the longest interval in fan history. If I produced another issue of SPACEWAYS and he countered with another issue of FANFARE, I would still be the winner if the Fanzine Index is correct. It lists the final issue of FANFARE as dated December 1943. September 1942 was the date on the last issue of SPACEWAYS. But he's right about THE POLL CAT whose first, last and only issue was published in 1941. Then I thought I could beat even THE POLL CAT with another fanzine I used to publish but I found via the Fanzine Index that I published a final issue of it in 1943, a single-sheeter. I'd forgotten about that last issue, thinking 1939 was the year when the last issue of it appeared. A good trivia question for competition at a con would be to locate the title of this third fanzine I published back in those prehistoric years, along with SPACEWAYS and HORIZONS.

Dick Ellington's loc deserved status as a separate article or maybe you could have run it as the first installment of a column in the hope that Dick would follow it up with more of these wonderful recollections. Just think how many millions upon millions of words like these could be written by older fans about all the episodes in fandom that never were put down into published words when they were new. (423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown MD 21740)

GLEN WARMINGER The highest preponderance of literate and entertaining fanzines from the UK? What the hell have I missed since Rubicon (August '86)? Or does that mean TRAP DOOR is the sole representative of literate and entertaining fanzines in the US? I thought UK fandom was in the doldrums and it's been like that since the '79 worldcon and I'm hoping what the last one took away the next one will revive. There have been some spiffy stuff (TAPPEN, FOR PARANOIDS ONLY, STOMACH PUMP, THE CHICKEN BROTHER'S ZINE [impounded by the authorities]), but I'm sure things could be much better.

The same could be said about the state of fans over here. Most of them seem to think a convention is their opportunity to don some of the most disgusting and ill-fitting items of clothing ever to come from a charity shop. Beer guts slopping from under too small tee-shirts, squatting about in jeans that are the wrong shape, wrong size, wrong cut and wrong fashion, showing yards of gruesome bum cleavage. With complexions the color of lard and a diet of lemon-curd sandwiches and beef (or vegetable) curry washed down with pasteurized beer, it's not surprising they look disheveled, unhealthy, limp haired and in need of a proper shave. Boy, and you should see the men! (Top Flat, 80a Waddington Street, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 4JS, UK)

STEVE STILES Your--and Bloch's--editorial almost seems to be a reply to Salmonson's fatuous letter; "centralist" seems to have all the potential of becoming that meaningless catch phrase Gary Deindorfer was straining after. I wonder if the same standards apply to her own paid ("merchantrist") writings? I'll have to admit that in my own quest for universality and art I am guilty of almost entirely skipping over the samurai and sorcery field (although I do dig Japanese rock gardens). (3003 Eilerslie Avenue, Baltimore MD 21218)

SID BIRCHBY One way and another, TRAP DOOR #6 has a lot of nostalgia about its articles. Even Greg Benford cannot forget that he is still, quote, despite the mad fraying forces of the world, a fan, unquote. And to me he's one of the new men. This penchant for quasi-melancholic golden days of youth seems out of character in SF fans, and I can only suppose that it is more of a survival factor than we think. You might say that

Nostalgia has a great future, though I can't imagine how, seeing that the Past as we remember it was never so rosy and usually black enough to give us memory-blocks.

When a particular section of our personal Past begins to generate nostalgia, a stereotype has formed, and if one thing's certain, no stereotype is much more than a cartoon of reality. SF fans have more sense than most ingroups, but still they are bound to share nostalgia-patterns and to some extent become encysted in non-real attitudes towards the Past. There are fans to this day who will talk to each other until the bar shuts about how wonderful it was to be young and fannish in, let's say, 1965, whereas the truth may be that they were still at play-school. Doesn't matter: they have a stereotype of how it was, and role-playing comes easy.

As I say, SF fans are not as daft as they're cabbage-looking. The mundane world now acting like one of the ridiculous 1930's satires by Stanton A. Coblenz, an air of comparative sanity prevails over fandom, and TRAP DOOR becomes as sober a journal as NATURE, in a different paradigm, naturally. (40 Parrs Wood Ave., Didsbury, Manchester M20 0ND, UK)

BOB SHAW I was pleased to see Greg Benford, as a professional scientist, coming down on the side of people taking personal responsibility for their statements. The jargon so loved by some scientists has oozed out into other fields, and I particularly hate the way politicians and trade union leaders use it in this country. Gone are the days when a person who was asked if A was better than B would come out with a straight "yes" or "no" and thus be identified with one position. Today a typical negative answer is "I am not aware of any evidence which suggests that A is better than B." Have you noticed the levels of shiftiness in that answer? It could mean that lots of evidence exists, but the speaker doesn't know about it. It could mean that he is aware of much evidence to the contrary, but he doesn't want to mention it because it hurts his cause. It could mean...

But why go on? What the sentence really means is that the speaker is a slippery customer.

I laughed when I read that Dave Langford felt old, simply because he remembers beer at one and fourpence a pint. Langford, you fresh-faced kid, I'll tell you what "old" really means in this context. The other night I took a returnable beer bottle back to the liquor store, received my tenpence deposit and suddenly realized that the deposit itself would have paid for two pints of beer when I started drinking. In other words, an empty bottle now costs more than a full one did then! That, my dear Langford, you fuzzy-cheeked boy, is what "old" really means. Why, I even remember when you could buy threepence worth of beer and twopence worth of tobacco, and get a penny change out of a sixpence. Come to think of it, I can still do that. Perhaps I'm not getting old, after all... (66 Knutsford Road, Grappenhall, Warrington, Cheshire WA4 2PB, UK)

REDD BOGGS I especially loved Greg Benford's last paragraph in which he tells about being confronted in his office occasionally by someone with a "frayed old fanzine," who whispers, "Are you the same person who...?" It reminds me of the time, more than 20 years ago by now, when I was a graduate student at UC Davis. I found myself in a Chaucer seminar, conducted in his office by a professor named John Magnus. At the first session I sat there musing to myself, "John Magnus! Is he the same person who...?" I had never met Magnus and never saw his photograph. I wasn't sure this fellow was the One and Only fan of the name, although he did seem to have a sensitive fannish face. After the first session of the seminar, I lingered after the others and inquired of him, very casually, "By the way, do you know Ted White?" Magnus look at me with, as they say, a wild surmise. "Sure, I used to room with him," he admitted. "Wh-who-who are you?" "I'm Redd Boggs," I said. I have often heard of people being bowled over, but I had never beheld the phenomenon before. At my words John fell over backwards onto the floor behind his desk, evidently even more shocked than the reporter at Gnut's last words in "Farewell to the Master." He tried to speak, but all he uttered were strange mewlings like Cthulhu. I tell you he really had the Innsmouth look!

The Salmonson letter is one of the most interesting in the letter column, but I don't agree with most of it. Fanzines, after all, are hardly the place where one should "have the quest in mind, of finding something that qualifies as art," any more than you should have the same quest in mind when reading the daily newspaper. Fanzines are a branch of "amateur journalism," and to be sure they are full of "current or recycled obsessions of

topics [that] are incomprehensible to an outsider." I'm sure that the daily paper of Bangor Maine is full of local topics that would puzzle a Californian, too, but it isn't published for us. Fans are writing pieces of journalism, not literature, and it's all going to be lost, tomorrow, on a dusty shelf or a box in the closet, if not quite as completely as yesterday's newspaper, if only because fanzines aren't much good for wrapping the garbage.

Some fans might think more seriously of writing literature instead of entertaining journalism if they had the advantage shared by the likes of E.B. White, Garrison Keillor, and "all the other comic writers" that Salmonson refers to--although "comic writers" is surely a misnomer for most of the, except perhaps for Woody Allen. I mean the advantage of having their fugitive pieces collected, eventually, in book form. But most fans don't have a book publisher interested in their pieces, which are therefore destined to languish in fanzine print for the rest of forever. As for fans who "would rather be appreciated by 200 or less centralist fans than be rejected from every syndicate or magazine," that sounds quite rational to me. Isn't it better to be read and perhaps appreciated by 200 readers than by nobody at all?

I do agree a little with Salmonson that sometimes fan writing might gain from being written for "a more competitive environment where polish and an ounce of subtlety is essential and keeps one on his toes." There are lots of good fan writers, whose talents easily compare with those of E.B. White and James Thurber, and even excel those of Woody Allen, but yes, Salmonson is right, that these fan writers often toss off writings of small worth because, after all, they are writing for a fanzine, not The New Yorker.

But what the hell, we are just having fun. Speaking of E.B. White--whose collaboration with James Thurber was one of their early books--I often think that fans are "Pulling a George Smith." In Is Sex Necessary? Thurber and White defined this term as "attempting to find something more important than, and just as interesting as women." Talk about vain quests! But after all fanac comes closer than most things.

The most memorable words in the letter column are those of Grania Davis: "Group minds make me feel uncomfortable and I try to avoid them. That's one reason I like fandom. It's a group composed of loners." Well said, and it's right up there with Neruda's lines: "En tal abierto patrocinio / no tuve adhesiones ardientes fui ferretero solitario." I often quote these lines to myself, or--since I don't speak much Spanish--at least call them to mind, or think of them in translation: "In this free confraternity I've no burning allegiances. I was always a lone ironmonger." As Jane Ace once said, memorably, "I'm a ragged individualist." (P.O. Box 1111, Berkeley CA 94701)

PAUL SKELTON I liked Greg Benford's description of Greeks. Sounds very much like fans to me. Of course, that's Greeks modern, as he is at pains to point out. Greeks ancient were another kettle of fish entirely. Wasn't homosexuality a strong motif of some of the later cultures of ancient Greece? If so, they didn't seem to be troubled by AIDS. Was it therefore sheer fluke that the disease first surfaced within the gay community? Then again, maybe they were troubled by it. Who's to say? They certainly couldn't have diagnosed it in those relatively unsophisticated (medicinally) times. Folks would simply have died of the same multiplicity of disease they'd always died of, just somewhat more frequently, is all. Perhaps here is a previously unsuspected element of the decline of certain past cultures. Who knows, maybe the plagues of Egypt, some of them anyway, may have had AIDS as their agency. Do we now have an inkling as to how God did it? After all, if the religious loonies are to be believed, he's doing it again. Oh well, I suppose it's at least some comfort to know that Christians won't get it...some comfort to Christians at any rate. Well, they didn't catch it back then because there weren't any, Christians not having been invented at the time of the Great Plagues of Egypt--and they can't catch it now because Tory government minister Edwina Currie assures us they can't. God apparently is pissed off with the rest of us. Well, Greater Manchester police chief James Anderton is pissed off with the rest of us, but he assures us that God is speaking through him. What is it with these people? I am thinking of digging a hole in the back garden, climbing in, and pulling it shut after me. (25 Bowland Close, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire SK2 5NW, UK)

ERIC MAYER Donna Nassar's article ties in well with the Robert Bloch article you quote.

I finally noticed only a few years ago that the only opinions mass media is interested in are from experts and it's disheartening to know that the same situation prevailed decades ago. Donna is not an expert, nor a "pro," but her piece here could easily replace most of what I've read about kids in magazines. Sure, it isn't as polished, and she doesn't choose to stick a degree after her byline--but so what? (Jessica Salmonson, in her loc, mentions that there are problems with the Burbee essay you ran last time that would prevent its professional publication, but if so it simply indicates the uselessness of the professional standards Jessica is talking about.)

What impresses me is that Donna looks to learn something from her kids. That's an attitude you don't see often expressed for mass consumption. Our local paper runs a syndicated column called, I think, "Coping With Kids," by an unpleasant, screwed-up woman. The focus of the column seems to be how to keep kids from interfering as much as possible with the more important aspects of one's life. Running throughout is the assumption, indefensible to me, that helping your boss turn a profit (euphemistically called "having a career") is of equal value to helping your own children. This woman--who I can't imagine having kids and if she does I pity them--seems to think kids can be "managed" in a corporate manner. Of course, kids haven't been messed up enough yet to submit to such treatment as, I would think, anybody actually raising them. The trouble is, the "experts" all lead very different lives than we do. Last night Kathy pointed out to me, in a slick homes magazine, a new column by Tom Sharpe, an excellent British writer. "Look," she said, "it's about the joys of living at home...sounds like your article." Then she read on about him lounging in his formal garden, etc. "Oh," she said, "his home has a lot different joys than ours." This is not the best of examples. I did, after all, pawn my own piece off on a national magazine and Tom Sharpe is a good writer, but the former was a fluke and the fact remains that Sharpe was given the opportunity to write his personal essay only because of his success as a novelist, a success which has led him to a lifestyle considerably different from that of most people.

I'm afraid I have no anecdotes to offer from my own two kids. We do not have a very religious household and ours seem to reflect that. I worry sometimes that I cannot supply them with answers to questions like, "What happens when we die?" But I recall, as a child, my own discomfort at attending Sunday school and realizing that the teachers, even there, didn't really believe the stuff they were telling me and I don't care to lie to my children. (1771 Ridge Road East, Rochester NY 14622)

SUE THOMASON Donna Nassar's data are fascinating and it's interesting that she doesn't try to pattern them or organize them in any way, or to draw any conclusions from them, but simply presents the raw experiences. Perhaps because they're reports from an alien culture, they don't strike me as being "cute" or forced, but genuine statements of mythic intensity. This is where it all comes from.

I don't remember being able to see God. Faces in trees, clowns in the toilet (why do so many children have toilet demons?), but not God. I do remember lying awake at night (age 5) wondering if I was really me, and if so, how could I tell? Would I be different if I was somebody else? (I think now I'd phrase the questions I was trying to ask as "What is consciousness?" and "What is personality?")

Langford should be more careful about revealing these arcane fannish mysteries. I mean, we all know about Numerology and that kind of thing. What he's done is to lay naked the doings of the Secret Masters of Fandom. Well, I mean, there's that New Wave short story called something like "35 Crunch Split Right On 2," which a simple process of decoding reveals as the telephone number of Michael Moorcock's ex-landlady. (31 Barfield Road, Muncastergate, N. Yorks. YO3 9AW, UK)

KRIS DEMIAN I really enjoyed Donna's article. I was reminded of my son, Doug's, questions when he was four years old. He would always ask me the tough questions when we were in the car. In that enclosed, private space, he would ask things like, "Why are there different kinds of trees?" or "How come the clouds change shape?" At those times I wished for charts or movies or a miniature TV set in the dashboard so I could cue up a video strip to answer his questions instead of having to rely on my sketchy knowledge of the subject. It's a funny thing about having kids--when they look at you, eyes wide,

waiting for the truth to fall from your lips, that's when you're struck dumb. But when you know you're right and the entire history of human experience confirms your opinion, that's when the kid won't believe a word you say.

Redd Boggs' comments about the lottery's support of education hit me in a sensitive area. Money for education is one of those issues I have difficulty being objective about. Activities like athletics and band keep borderline kids interested in coming to school. Nationally, the drop-out rate is scary. In some neighborhoods it goes as high as 35%. For Bo Derek it might not be an issue; she's got a steady income and she's only one uneducated, easily manipulated vote. But when we're dealing with 20%-35% of the populace, it becomes everyone's problem. The other issue involved with the funding of education is class size. The folks who do predicting say that within ten to twenty years, all current trends being constant, fewer people will become teachers because of the high stress and relatively low pay. When the children of today's yuppies enter the schools, they may be seated in a room with 40-45 others; not exactly an environment suited for innovation and attention to individual needs. Maybe lotteries aren't so bad. (4921 NE Killingsworth #2, Portland OR 97217-1913)

DICK LUPOFF Terry Carr's comments about fandom and the reading/writing of science fiction were hardly startling or new, but they were most striking. I find that the more involved I am with SF as a writer, the less I have to do with fannish matters. Maybe there's just one Node of Science Fiction in the normal human brain. We can use that node reading the stuff, writing it, or for fanac. But two-at-once requires a Special Brain, and all three at once would require a Major Mutation. (3208 Claremont Avenue, Berkeley CA 94705)

RAY NELSON Terry Carr's article, "Fandom Triumphant, Alas," throws into high relief the present state of fandom at the same time as it is a symptom of our greatest problem. Fandom is, indeed, triumphant but also unable to resist the temptation to add, "alas." It is this "alas" that prevents what Jessica Amanda Salmonson calls "Centralist Fans" from enjoying the victory we have sought for so long, from accepting our acceptance as a part of modern society.

Octocon makes a fine occasion for highlighting the irony of the situation, since it is the only convention I have attended whose attitude reflects the real contemporary position of science-fiction. All the others cling to postures that reflect instead the position of science-fiction in the '40s and '50s when most Centralist Fans entered our microcosm. In those days an us-and-them ethic was simple realism. Science-fiction was condemned by the literary establishment because it seemed like a way of escaping the "human condition" all respectable critics agreed was the only proper subject for literature. Everyone else condemned it for the much more American reason that it didn't make money.

Now it is not only taught in the universities, but is used at the high school level as the spoonful of sugar that makes the medicine of other more difficult subjects go down. And the Star Wars series has proved science-fiction can pull in big bucks. To continue to entertain an us-them ethic in the '80s is pure paranoia.

Octocon lives in the present, not the past, and should be a model for the future. "I have a dream" that some day all our conventions will follow Octocon's example on at least three of the Spellbinders' several innovations:

- (1) All those who speak on panels, not just guests of honor, should be provided with free room and board. Will fandom lag far behind the outside world in recognizing the star status of the creators of our genre?

- (2) All profits from conventions should be donated to charities in the outside world, not just to, say, TAFF or the LASFS clubhouse. We have a choice now. We can accept society's invitation to participate in the multiculture on an equal footing with the Lions Club, the Elks, the Knights of Columbus, or we can build walls and lock gates that will imprison us in our "proud and lonely" ghetto.

- (3) All conventions should advertise outside of the usual fannish channels. On milk cartons? Why not? And who are we to say that Michael J. Fox and Catherine Deneuve are not at least as fannish as those zinefans who boast of never reading science-fiction?

It would be a ghastly irony if the genre that made a specialty of the future were to become hopelessly stuck in the past; if we, who have been such good losers, should turn out

to be such bad winners. Can we live with the knowledge that it is we, and no one else, who sawed Courtney's boat? (333 Ramona Avenue, El Cerrito CA 94530)

LUKE MCGUFF Langford is surely one of the people Salmonson would wish is more widely read. I got pretty stitched up into a serious giggle by the middle of his article. And when I came upon, "The first number to come through clear, 'twenty-six'," I almost fell out of bed, difficult as it's a futon on the floor. If it's true that a group of students worked out all the fizz-buzz-clang-pow's for up to ten thousand, and printed them up, Langford should go into business as a dadaist onomatopoeian poet. He could do it, too. This could have been a game for the recreational mathematics column in Scientific American, in the Martin Gardner days. He would have left it to the reader to determine the maximum number of buzzwords possible for any single number. I just realized that there couldn't be a number for which all buzzwords apply, as it would have to be a prime multiple of 5 and 7...

I liked Robert Bloch's letter, adding up the ages of the contributors. Kind of senescent there, eh? I bet there are punk zines where the ages of the contributors will barely cross 100. (P.O. Box 3680, Minneapolis MN 55403)

WALTER A. WILLIS Dave Langford's article about FizzBuzz made me laugh so much I had to put it down and go outside lest I do myself some injury--like that splitting of the sides one hears about. A split side sounds so dangerous. I wonder if one could insure against it. It shouldn't be too expensive; so far in my lifetime only three other people have had this effect on me...Harpo Marx, Dean Grennell and Carol Carr. On the other hand, fandom seems to be a high risk area and maybe the rates are higher for us. Of course there's probably some sort of limited risk policy which doesn't cover your first two convention parties. Now that I come to think of it, I have heard of Third Party Insurance.

Williams was, I thought, justifiably ominous. I've noticed that sex scenes in modern movies are beginning to seem as dated as Bette Davis smoking. (32 Warren Road, Donaghadee BT21 OPD, Northern Ireland)

PASCAL THOMAS Lucy is indeed a cool dudette (the title was in the singular form, and can one apply it to the newly-wedded Dawn, no matter how cool the minister?) I've got the impression I missed the opportunity of my life, there. Let me explain. Although Christine is as French as me, and we met, up in Paris, a long time ago, we got married under the auspices of the great state of California. How this came to be is a story in itself, the telling of which usually meets with some wifely frowns. Briefly, this was at a time before Christine had moved to California to join me. She was earning a comfortable living as a teacher and I had no French-based income. Under French regulations, married couples are taxed under a bracket corresponding to their averaged income; and people who get married during the year see the periods before and after marriage considered separate for tax purposes. Anyway, it meant that by marrying early, before she came over and stopped being paid in France, she could save vast amounts in taxes.

So we did it on the sly over her Easter vacation in LA. ("Where is my boy?" my advisor asked my office mate the morning we had eloped for downtown LA and I had cut one class too many. "Oh, he went to get himself married.") Shocked to discover how the system works here (first you get a license, then you go to a minister--what happened to the separation of Church and State?), we finally managed to get married by a judge (not easy in LA). I had, however, briefly considered finding a non-conventional minister. Little did I know that, as we were waiting for the blood test results, killing time by relaxing in Northern California and listening to sweet Lucy Huntzinger chat about singing opera and hitching rides on eighteen-wheelers, that she actually had the awesome power to make us one in front of God and IRS. I'm sure her jokes would have been better than the judge's.

Paul tackles a subject of obvious concern to us (the signature of Jerry Jacks on the petition on your inside back cover brings this painful point home). Andy Porter has already rightfully wondered in one of his editorials in SF CHRONICLE why more SF writers have not tackled the topic. (I know of at least one who mentioned it with total lack of extrapolative flair--John Shirley in Eclipse, who posits a "new" disease, AIDS III, which has in his future the same status of incipient epidemic and, get this, strikes mostly homosexuals. What tripe.) Much has been written in the press, of course, on the changes

this has wrought in our social attitudes. I often wonder about what may happen if no cure or vaccine is really found--eventually, everyone will carry the virus (and it may not take so long). As in the great plagues, "ils ne mouraient pas tous, mais tous étaient frappés" (La Fontaine). Not all will die--maybe as few as 10%, or maybe the disease can wait decades before striking, so that everybody's life will be placed under a Damocles' sword. Why, it might even induce the kind of existential despair that could induce people into frantic, desperate, all-points fucking. After all, the prostitutes in Kinshasha still have a clientèle. (c/o Librairie Ailleurs, 28 Rue Pharoan, 31000 Toulouse, France)

NORMAN HOLLYN Paul Williams' article on AIDS is just the sort of over-reaction (if I can use that word while in the midst of an epidemic) that scares the living bejesus out of me almost as much as the disease does. Here, in the midst of Ronnie Raygun's Amerika (to use a quaint sixties-ism), it is fashionable and almost downright easy to ascribe the onset of the AIDS epidemic as some kind of retribution for "errant" sexual and recreational activity. Nature/God seems to be visiting the disease on those evil homos, druggies and non-white types (I want to make it clear, that I do not think that Paul said these things; I am using the hyperbole that can be found elsewhere as my example). This attitude makes about as much sense as saying that an epidemic of flu or the common cold is God's retribution for people sitting in crowded movie theaters or subway cars.

Let's not confuse the epidemic with anything else here. The only thing that the spread of AIDS within the "high-risk" groups (as presently defined) proves is that those people need to take heightened precautions. The high incidence of AIDS and intravenous needle users is a statistic and nothing more. Paul says, in this article, that "we who felt as Gods and flew so free towards the sun, may now be plunging with melted wings back to earth." This is not merely hysterical thinking and bad logic, but it is egocentricity on a mammoth level. Since when has there been a younger generation that didn't feel that they were above death? Since when was there a group of younger people who did not believe in "sowing the wild oats"? It is usually only a matter of time before any generation is pounded down enough by societal reality that they, individually or as a group, must confront their own mortality. It is this generation's unfortunate fate to have AIDS be one of the vehicles that forces us to grow up. It is unfortunate because the disease is taking many young people along with the self-realization. But, in earlier generations, it was polio, or war, or the bubonic plague, or any of a host of other maladies, either natural or man-made. We are not the first, and it is hubris to suggest that we are the first generation to drop, Daedalus-like, from its unrealistic heights.

The problem with all of this moralistic speculation about the cosmic meaning of the AIDS plague is that it too easily distracts the public from the true necessity--to find a way to combat this disease, just as we have been fighting cancer, tuberculosis, heart disease and a host of other "more acceptable" diseases.

Dick Ellington's mention of his experiences with Marie at Walden (wherein the teachers there would seriously debate the psychological implications of everything the children did or said) strikes a newly-created paternal chord within me. After years of being Dr. Spocked (not to mention the nearly one zillion other baby-rearing books on the market) it is hard not to think of the deeper implications of every one of our actions. If we let little Elizabeth cry at night, will she grow up feeling unloved? But, on the other hand, if we rush in to pick her up when she cries, might she not get too attached to having her needs immediately gratified, setting her up for a life of alternating spurts of being spoiled and being disappointed? It's difficult to know where to draw the line. Ultimately, the best we can do is follow our best wishes for her and hope that we aren't adding too much to some future psychiatrist's income. (3836 Mound View Avenue, Studio City CA 91604)

MOG DECARNIN Paul Williams' AIDS article certainly recapitulates a lot of things I've heard here and there. It especially reflects the strange ambivalence men feel when faced by the need to take responsibility for something in sex, i.e., condoms. In one paragraph he mentions that he'd surely use them if he were "single and horny in 1986-87." In the next he says the world of sexual adventure is now open only to "the totally reckless or foolhardy." I can only conclude that he either doesn't really believe condoms work, or somehow it's not an "adventure" if it involves latex.

I think it is more likely that if a vaccine or cure for AIDS isn't found soon, we will see a shift towards greater sexual freedom. I know that sounds strange. But there will ~~have~~ be greater and more explicit sexual education if anyone is to survive. And the facts favor greater freedom, as always. It is always mythology that favors such concepts as virginity (for girls, understood), chastity, monogamy (really also for females, since about 80% of married American men have sex outside their marriages, usually unbeknownst to their wives)--which shoots down the idea that women's sexual restrictions were based on attempts to control VD in Biblical times. We're just talking simple property rights, is all, not public health, when it's understood that one sex fucks around with impunity and the other does not. Please let's remember that pork isn't the only thing you can't eat if you're into kosher--nor are Jews the only people with complex food and crockery strictures (try Gypsies) most of which have zero public health value. There is an economic evolutionary principle that goes a lot further than individual health involved--for example, if women have to cook, making cooking as complicated and difficult and hemmed about with taboos as possible keeps women occupied with time-consuming rites around cooking, reinforces the idea that women are impure (where women's clothing may not touch cooking vessels, etc.) hence inferior, and of course often keeps women from eating the best food. Conversely, some pieces of very good medical advice never got incorporated into folk wisdom, let alone taboo. But it is rare--only a health educator could tell Paul and like speculators how very rare it is that folk wisdom and taboo come up with anything advantageous to public health (advantageous as they often can be to particular economic groups). The opposite is far more often the case, and if we don't get that firmly fixed in our noggins there is going to be hell to pay. AIDS won't wait for the fundamentalists to get over their snits, or for mass media to stop having hysterics at the thought of a moment of truth that might interrupt the hypnotic advertising trance, just as it hasn't waited while straights looked the other way from the gay community's fast-lane pile-up, from the warning that the road ahead was not safe. For five years. That's why nice clean white straights are now going to die of AIDS. Because they just didn't give a flying fuck when other people died of it. "Folk stupidity"? Il n'y a que la betise humaine qui donne une idee de l'infini. And you're going to hear these people say it is the gays' fault, the junkies' fault, that they, innocent victims, who sat on their asses and watched the holocaust, are now hearing a knock on their own doors.

Ten deep breaths... If I sound upset it is because the refusal to perceive has always touched off my own moral outrage: How dare they not comprehend this? How dare they not realize the implications of that? How dare they fuck things up with such excruciating predictability?

Where was I? Oh yes, locking TRAP DOOR. That quote from Robert Bloch is wonderful. It can be depressing, though, to see how little the basic situation has changed--but also inspiring to think that fandoms (there are many) still exist, that peculiar little pockets of art and expression still thrive untrammelled by commerce or critique. The zines with old fans in them do show a different way of looking at things, but none of the descriptions of just what the difference is (never mind which view is "better") have ever seemed to me to hit the nail on the head. I know that all too often you can scratch a charming, witty, erudite fannish writer and find (say) an indescribably tiresome sexist jerk, a smug "apolitical," a gentleman who in terms of monetary hostility says he can't see what all the fuss is about. The exact reverse doesn't seem to be true, since among the sexpol crowd enthusiasm for the oldphart revival runs high--those who can't write that way themselves can still appreciate the charm, wit and erudition. I'm not sure what you find, then, when you scratch a serious, liberationist, "political" fan writer, no doubt something equally dreadful. Everybody sees that there is a difference (despite lots of overlap) but what, or maybe why, that difference is, nobody seems to express well. Secretly...I just like them both and enjoy the fusion that's always been there, without worrying about the analysis. There is always something wonderful about learning (over and over and over) that your own generation wasn't the first to do nifty stuff. Sensahistoricalwunda. (512-B Cole Street, San Francisco CA 94117)

JUDITH HANNA Willies is wallies is indeed what AIDS means. That, on top of growing up into no jobs and the mean boredom of the dole, the world economy showing signs of tottering on the brink of collapse, Western civilization poised to end if not with

a bang then with a whimper. Après nous le déluge. If I was a youth of today, I'd feel cheated. Paul Williams' reflections on AIDS and nostalgia for his Woodstock peace love yeah youth were the most thought-provoking part of TD6. I doubt if any of us have come to any more conclusions than Paul has--still coming to grips with the questions. Only such moralists as James Anderton, Chief Constable of Manchester ("prostitutes, homosexuals and drug addicts swirling around in a cesspit of their own making" so God told him) and Edwina Currie, remorselessly self-publicizing junior Health Minister ("good Christians don't get AIDS") are broadcasting their answers. The Government has an "AIDS--don't die of ignorance" advertising campaign dominating billboards and cinema ads. A leaflet was distributed to all households sometime in January. The cinema ad, like the billboard, doesn't actually give any information about AIDS. It just urges you to "read the leaflet"--which you probably threw away the day after it arrived. Meanwhile, so the Guardian reports, catholic Ireland and Italy are stretched on the horns of a dilemma: can they justifiably encourage the use of condoms? "Dear Editor, Could AIDS be God's way of telling the Pope he's wrong about contraception?" Mind you, such perversity would be enough to make you believe that God is a man. (22 Denbigh Street, Pimlico, London SW1V 2ER, UK)

TOM PERRY Dick Ellington's anecdote about shocking Dick Eney encapsulates some of the changes that separate that day from this. In the fifties, humor could bounce off the verbal prohibitions that were not only endemic to that society then but even enforced by public censors. A. Langley Searles threatened in FAPA to send any FAPazine he considered questionable to the postal inspectors for them to act on; I wonder what he could send now in a day when words like "asshole" and "bullshit" are heard on prime time television and "fuck" and its gerundive are seen in public prints whenever an unimaginative writer desires emphasis. Hard to believe, now, that the word "balls" in the phrase "Balls to Mike Turner!" raised a storm in HYPHEN, where prim objections were raised to "the first word on page 28"--a phrase that was suggested as a synonym and a shibboleth. Or that Willis' typo in a book review, causing a publishing house to be referred to as "Funk & Wagballs" should have caused Damon Knight to comfort Walt with the thought, "It could have been much worse," and Walt to reply, "Ghod yes!"

Several times now I've read or heard Terry Carr explaining patiently that fans don't --or at least, didn't used to--use fan terms in actual conversation. Lest younger fans take this as an absolute, let me observe that maybe Terry and his friends in San Francisco didn't. In the fabulous fandom found in Lincoln, Nebraska, in the fifties (consisting of Jim Caughran and myself) our fan gatherings resounded with such terms. That was the only way we could distinguish our fan gatherings from our get-togethers on other subjects, like bikes, girls (Stage A, when "girls" means little sisters and annoying neighborhood tattletales), sports, car and girls (Stage B, when the term meant unattainable angelic bodies worn by the same annoying neighborhood tattletales). So we said "fanzine," "gafia," "BNF," and so forth a great deal. How else could we know we were fans, and special, and not just two scrawny teenage boys? (COA: P.O. Box 17998, Boulder CO 80308)

And, "WE ALSO HEARD FROM": HARRY ANDRUSCHAK, MAL ASHWORTH, ERIC BENTCLIFFE ("Do like the idea of an 'Elvis Presley Haters of America' society; it brings to mind the 'Tommy Steele Record Boiling Society' formed in the '50s by Boyd Raeburn and myself. Your society seems to have been more effective than ours though as the aim of our devoted apathy is still around. Maybe we should have made it the 'Tommy Steele Boiling Society'."), RICHARD BERGERON, JOHN D. BERRY, SHERYL BIRKHEAD, RICHARD BRANDT, GREGG CALKINS, SIDNEY COLEMAN, DAVE D'AMASSA, GARY DEINDORFER ("I hope sometime Paul will feel inspired to go into the specifically fannish ramifications of AIDS. Doesn't this disease spell the end to fannish promiscuity at conventions? I would think so, especially with so many alternatively sexed people floating around fandom, or it seems like that."), LILIAN EDWARDS, BRAD FOSTER, CYNTHIA GOLDSTONE, LEE HOFFMAN, TERRY JEEVES, ETHEL LINDSAY, JEANNE MEALY, JANICE MURRAY, ELMER PERDUE, BOYD RAEBURN, MARTA RANDALL, RON SALOMON, JOE SANDERS, NOREEN SHAW, AL SIROIS, CRAIG SMITH, TARAL, KAREN TREGO, OWEN WHITEOAK, MARTIN MORSE WOOSTER, BORIS ALEXANDROVICH ZAVGORODNY, and, finally, the last letter of comment I will ever receive from:

TERFY CARR Ordinarily I'd react negatively to any fan editor who solicited Hugo nominations, but I think you're quite right to point out to your readers that recent fan Hugo nominees and winners have often been undeserving because the fannish fans seldom nominate or vote.

¹ Fans who write about how they discovered fandom and all that are usually discussing matters that many others have written about and one would think the subject was nothing but a cliché by now, but I continue to find such memoirs fascinating and I suspect a lot of fans share my feelings--how else to account for the fact that fans keep on recounting their histories? They must think them interesting, or else they wouldn't bother to write about the subject. Hell, Earl Kemp surveyed fans on much the same topic 25 years ago and published the responses in Why Is A Fan?, a oneshot that was very well received. The subject was far from new even then, but fans such as I greatly enjoyed reading what others had to say about it. I thought your editorial about how you got into fandom was delightful and proved once again that such fannish memoirs can still be fascinating.

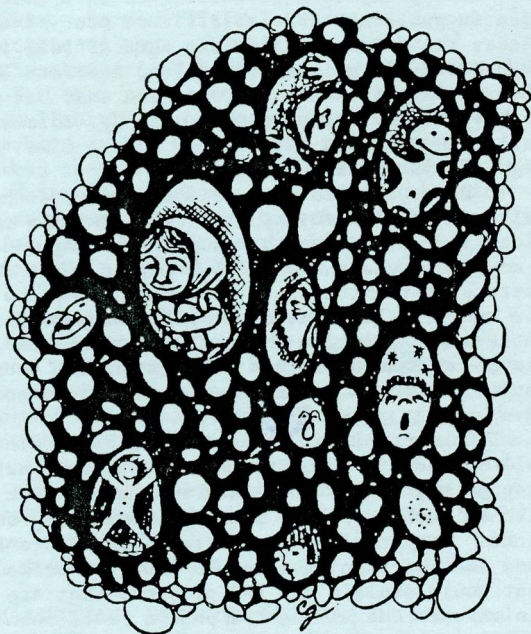
Greg Benford's piece had a lot of good observations in it, and some fine anecdotes too. I appreciated his writing it in a sort of collage style, a form that's rarely been seen in publications either fan or pro. I think Greg's always been a Writer even in his pieces for fanzines, and that this article is one of his best. Perhaps it could have been even better if he'd recounted the anecdote about a young physics student who was talking with Harlan Ellison about this and that but was brought up short when Harlan mentioned that he knew Sidney Coleman: "You mean Dr. Coleman, who teaches physics at Harvard?" Sure, said Harlan; we've been friends for a long time. "Goshwow!" said the student, who knew Sid as a Big Name in physics circles.

Dave Langford's article was witty as hell, thus proving to me again how well he can write about most anything; I think Dave is one of very few recent fan Hugo winners whose victories have shown that Hugo balloting can still occasionally produce sensible results. A couple of years ago Bob Silverberg wrote that he felt fandom had produced only four true masters of fannish prose (never mind who the four were; I was one of them, so right away you know his list was arguable), and wondered if anyone could name any other fanwriters whose names belonged on the list. I noticed that Dave Langford's name wasn't on Bob's list, and thought it was a shame for Bob that he hadn't been sufficiently in touch with fandom in recent years to enable him to discover the delights of Dave's writing. I mean, Dave's first rate.

Donna's piece was a bit of a disappointment to me because though it starts off very well indeed, it seems to fall apart about halfway through--right at the point where she stopped writing it for three months, in fact. Which just shows, I guess, that even writers with as much talent as she has should keep on writing while the subject is fresh in their minds: inspiration is apparently even more important than talent. Do you suppose there's some sort of fannish muse who inspires primo fanac but has a short attention span? If so, that would explain why fan projects that are begun so easily become almost impossible to finish once one allows the phrase "real soon now" to enter one's mind. It might also explain, since Harlan's an ex-fan, why we're still waiting for The Last Dangerous Visions.

I loved ATOM's drawing which you put at the head of my piece. Also loved the drawings by Steve Stiles (he caught Greg Benford's sensitive fannish face admirably well) and Harry Bell's cover. The letter column too was a delight, and not just because of Jessica Salmonson's alternative-world musings about why Burbee should try to write professionally instead of taking the easy way out by writing only for undiscerning fan editors. (Actually, Burbee did submit--and sell--a few of his articles a decade or so ago, after being prodded to do so by Wm. Rotsler. The articles he sold had originally appeared in fanzines.) I think your letter column is the best I've read in years--I mean, it's even better than "Brass Tacks"--because you gather comments from a wide variety of fans and then edit them.

As to whether or not I ever used much fanspeak in actual conversation, the answer is no. I may have gone around quoting lines from Burbee and Willis, but then, I also quoted J.D. Salinger and Dorothy Parker. I guess I used some fannish terms when speaking aloud, but they were always words like "gafia" and "egoboo," which fill real gaps in the English language, not just abbreviations of real words, such as "pub," "ish," and "bacover." ♦♦♦



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