

Atom

Trap Door

Issue No. 9, January 1990. 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. You are receiving this fanzine because I sent it to you. It is available for \$4.00 per issue (no long-term subs) or by editorial whim in response to The Usual. All contents copyright © 1990 by TRAP DOOR with all rights reverting to individual contributors upon publication. If a red "X" appears on your mailing envelope, it means your position on my mailing list has become precarious.

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ART & GRAPHICS: ATom (cover, 2, 11), Harry Bell (back cover), Jeanne Bowman (27), Grant Canfield (20), David Haugh (25), Lee Hoffman (21), Donna Nassar (12, 13 & 15), William Rotsler (5), Dan Steffan (20) and Steve Stiles (6, 16, 19, 29 & 32).



DOORWAY

IN THE SECOND POSTCARD he's sent me recently (in crabbed, tiny, almost Lovecraft-like handwriting) in his efforts to stay on TRAP DOOR's mailing list, Roger Weddall writes: "If your being a fan fund winner means that you have lapsed into a coma while writing a trip report and the production of TRAP DOOR has become indefinitely suspended, too bad for us, your readers." Not at all, Roger! TRAP DOOR is a little later in appearing this time around, but the last I heard fandom was still just a goddamn' hobby—an observation which has saved me from getting too serious about it over the years.

Anyway, Roger, in the best tradition of fanzine editors throughout the long and checkered history of fandom, I have plenty of excuses. Not only was I a fan fund winner in 1989, as you point out, but I also completed my third year as Secretary-Treasurer of FAPA, participated in four apas, wrote an inadequate but noticeable batch of LoCs, and of course did all the editorial work in getting this issue together. (An additional comment here regarding FAPA: It has interesting and diverse mailings, a short waiting list, and can still make some claim to its old nickname, the Elephant's Graveyard. Yes, Bruce Pelz is still a member, but FAPA had that handle long before Bruce's time and members well predating Bruce are still participating. For more information on FAPA, including requirements for membership, drop me a line.) This hardly makes me out to be an old fan and tired. A lively oldphart, perhaps. I certainly was more active in fandom in 1989 than any year since I was a teenager in my first burst of fan activity (800 pages of fanzines in my first two years, says Harry in *A Wealth of Fable*). Thank ghod for this computer to help make it all possible. I'd never be able to do this like I did back then: on 3x5 cards, in pocket notebooks, and pounding away on my old Remington Noiseless. But I digress before I start to Talk Computer.

On top of all the foregoing, I've had a Special Project in the works, too.

In May 1989 I agreed to take on completing the long-delayed final issue of Terry Carr's INNUENDO. Originally intended to be a one-shot revival to help raise funds for the 1971 fund to bring Bob Shaw to that year's Worldcon in Boston, it was never completed and sat moribund for many years. I assembled INN from something of a kit that Terry left. This consisted of pages run off by Lucy Huntzinger (in 1984) on green Twiltone and a set of pretty decent photocopies of those pages on white paper. Some of these pages were graphically complete and all I had to do was decide their playing order. Others lacked illustrations and/or lettering guide work. In some cases the illustrations were there and needed only to be put in place; in others, headings needed to be lettered and illustrations had to be chosen — fortunately I had Terry's art file and lettering guides. Some artwork was non-existent but our unofficial staff artist, Steve Stiles, offered to fill in where necessary.

The above makes it all sound like a smooth job, but there was a cliffhanger. For the longest time it looked as if one item, the Carl Brandon piece, was lost except for a rough and incomplete handwritten first draft I discovered in Terry's files. Since *all* issues of INN have had appearances by Carl, it would have been unseemly to proceed without it. Finally the stencils turned up at Dave Rike's house; they were in precarious condition, but Redd Boggs was able to coax some copies into life on his Gafia Press.

INN will be large — nearly 80 pages — with contributions from Carol Carr, Sidney Coleman, Arnie Katz, Elmer Perdue, Tom Perry, Harry Warner Jr., Susan Wood, and an amusing collaboration between Greg Benford and Calvin Demmon. There's that Carl Brandon item, of course, and Terry's editorial (complete with excuses for the lateness of the issue). Oh, yeah, and an eleven-page letter column with comments on the last issue of LIGHTHOUSE (which was published in 1967), with letters from the likes of Bloch, Tucker, Tom Disch, Phil Dick and naturally Harry Warner Jr. Lots of artwork, too, from such stalwarts as Stiles, Steffan, Rotsler, Kinney, Lee Hoffman and others. Despite the age of the material, this is a lively fanzine.

At this writing, all but eleven of its pages have been sent off to Jerry Kaufman, who plans to publish it in time for the New York Corflu in early May. Part of the proceeds will go to pump up the DUFF treasury, currently at a low ebb. Write to him (8738 First Ave. NW, Seattle, WA 98117) for information on price and availability.

In a coma? Who's got the time?

WHEN I CAME BACK from my TAFF trip, a huge stack of mail was waiting. Even after I threw out the junk mail, there were still ten fanzines (in

addition to the dozen or so new zines handed to me while in England), a dozen letters (most of them LoCs), some FAPA dues payments and other business, and a whole flock of orders in response to the "fanzines by the pound" advertisements that the editors of LOCUS and SFC had generously run gratis for TAFF. It worked out that I received paid orders for more than twice as many fanzines as I had available. One person sent a check for fifty pounds! After filling as many orders as possible — smallest ones first in order to spread the zines as widely as possible (never got near the fifty-pounder!) — I had to return quite a few orders with a letter of apology. In addition, there were several apa deadlines to meet and, before many weeks had passed, a FAPA Secretary-Treasurer's report to prepare.

I was fanning my butt off in an effort to stay on top of the huge wave of fannish energy that I'd brought in off the road with me. Also, at odd moments my mind would boil over with instant replays of various portions of my trip. I let it out somewhat by writing a fairly brief report for a very small apa in which I participate, mostly just a loose chronology of my travels and bare bones reportage; later, I expanded on one day (the one I spent with a non-fan friend in Cambridge) in my FAPazine. Altogether I wrote about 8,000 words, making no reference whatsoever to my two hours of taped notes (which I *still* have not played, wanting to save them for when I Get Serious about writing my report). As summer heated up, I allowed myself to enter without guilt into my annual summer slump. This is usually caused by the weather; it gets too hot to sit in my room over a keyboard for anything other than the bare minimum of maintenance fanac. I believe I combined this slump with a belated post-trip one, for by the time it finally struck it was impossible to say whether weather or post-TAFF letdown was the cause. But whatever, I have not worked further on that pre-report since the end of July. If anyone is interested in seeing what I've written so far, send me a \$2 donation to TAFF and a long SASE, and I'll run one off for you. If you like, I'll also include a copy of a six-page list of fanzines and other items for sale to benefit TAFF. For anyone wanting only the sale list, it is available for a long SASE (overseas send an IRC instead).

My three weeks in the U.K. were (*insert your own pet superlative*). While this is not going to lead into any sort of serious trip report — it's too soon for that — I can't just let this editorial slide on by without restating my belief that fannish institutions like TAFF do work and are for the people involved (as well as for fandom as a whole) well worth the risk and hard work involved beyond the glory days of the trip itself. (To explain, the risk is that, in running, one puts oneself in place as a public target for any possible surprise potshots or downright nastiness from anyone

so inclined; the work is in administering your half of the fund after your trip is over and the coma Roger refers to may have set in.)

In my own case, the prospect of finally getting to meet the people who have been in and on my mind for up to thirty years was the stuff of sheer fantasy; that's what buoyed my spirits through the months of Being a Candidate. To have it actually happen was overwhelmingly fulfilling.

The truth of the old adage "All knowledge is contained in fanzines" really hits home when you travel around a familiar yet strange new land and meet, visit, and live a little of your life with people who previously were only names at another end of the fannish nexus. Although it is all new, it is also quite familiar. You've been there in your mind already. Of course, sometimes reality and the contents of your imagination can clash. For instance, as a youngfan in the late '50s, I imagined ATom's residence, at 17 Brockham House, Brockham Drive, to be an elderly red brick low-rise apartment block situated in a verdant, park-like setting, amidst stately oaks, rose gardens and manicured hedges, in a cul-de-sac with no traffic. One would leave one's car in a nearby parking area and stroll through the formal gardens to Arf's front door. Of course, in my neoish dreams I couldn't ever work out whether he lived on the ground floor or up a flight of stairs. But the address itself was exotic to me. In reality, Chuch and Sue Harris and I ascended to the Thomsons' apartment on a lift. The building was not red brick. I don't remember much greenery. Damn good to see Art again, though (only other time was in '64 during his TAFF trip), and meet Olive, a dynamo of energy who brews a mean pot of tea and kept us plied with sweets and good conversation.

Many other disparities between illusion and reality come to mind, but the most interesting are the cultural features you didn't even think of. For instance, I knew that in the U.K. one drives on the left side of the road in cars with the driver's seat on the right side, but I was completely unaware of the use of roundabouts (traffic circles) for the junctions of arterial roads. The joys of "freshly cut" sandwiches (as opposed to ones embalmed in plastic wrappings) and pub food were brought home to me. There were whole categories of stores mostly non-existent in post-industrial America but in evidence in generous quantities wherever I went: little news agents, bakeries and betting parlors. Another surprise was how old and new architecture was all situated together, just like in America. My mental picture was that the old stuff would be in separate places, to enhance its historicity. Juxtapositions like the modern buildings at one edge of the centuries-old Cambridge open market were constant mind-bogglers. I don't know *why* I thought it would be different.

One of the fringe benefits of being a TAFF dele-

gate is that you can generally move between feuding elements of the host fandom without rancor on anyone's part. Often I felt like a Heinlein-esque "fair witness" as I spent time with various of the warring factions and got to hear their respective viewpoints of the battle lines of British fandom. Preferring mostly to socialize and sightsee, when interfan hassles were discussed, I usually just listened—to scope out for myself (if possible) the truth (ever shifting and often elusive) of the various positions I'd previously seen espoused in fanzines. When I occasionally commented, it was mostly in a general way, trying my best not to take sides. Sometimes this was challenging, but I felt (and feel) that I can be a more effective commentator than participant if I'm equally informed by all parties. In retrospect, the main thing I regret about 1989's version of the good ol' fan feud (I've never enjoyed feuds—they are not among my reasons for participating in fandom) is the apparent loss of Owen Whiteoak, one of my favorite fanwriters throughout the '80s who also turned out to be a Good Person when I finally met him. If there was anything I could have said or done that would have helped to prevent that particularly unhappy turn of events, I'm sorry to have overlooked it.

Well, life does go on despite these setbacks, and TAFF is continuing in its appointed ways, too. This year, since the Worldcon is in the Netherlands it will be *the* convention most European fans will attend that time of year. This fact has resulted, despite much canvassing by the Twins and me, in an overwhelming lack of candidates interested in going the following weekend to a Nasfic in Southern California. Therefore, Christina, Lilian and I decided (after also soliciting the opinion of a wide range of TAFF founders and former administrators in order to broaden the consensus) last fall that there would be no 1990 TAFF race. The next race will be from Europe to North America for the 1991 Worldcon. This summer, in my first TAFF newsletter, the schedule for that race—from opening nominations to announcing the result—will be published. There will also be fannish items for sale and up for auction (mostly fanzines—one particular oddity to be offered is a small collection of *riders* that accompanied various issues of SLANT). (Contributions of auctionable items, by the way, are always in order.) The newsletter will go to TAFF's rather large mailing list, which will include all all North American and Southern Hemisphere TRAP DOOR readers, since they are within the sphere of activity of a "North American TAFF administrator." (A few Europeans, primarily newswine editors and former TAFF administrators, will also get it, and others need only apply.) Watch for it.

I'VE BEEN AMONG those occasionally lamenting the gradual fading away of Fanzine Fandom As We Have Known It, especially in the United States.

By way of statistical documentation, for the past four years I've kept a log of fanzines (but not apazines) and other mail received. Since I'm a fairly active fan and seem to receive just about all the currently appearing fanzines I care about — based on reviews and listings I see elsewhere — it would seem that my situation is perhaps typical. Anyway, here are the figures:

	1986	1987	1988	1989
Australia	27	32	15	12
Canada	7	4	1	2
U.K.	33	33	51	61
U.S.	98	58	67	55
Other	1	3	4	0
Totals:	166	130	138	130

The 1988 "other" fanzines consisted of one each from France (hi, Pascall) and New Zealand (hi, Tim!) plus two from the Netherlands (hi, Roeloff!). Two of '87's "other" were from Roelof and the third from Tim. 1986's one "other" was also from Roelof. What happened in '89, "others"?

In my opinion, the most interesting statistic this year is the eclipsing of American fanzine production by British fanzines in terms of overall numbers (excluding apazines). Considering the relative numbers participating in the two fandoms, this is astonishing. I can think of a couple of factors that are probably relevant: American fanzines are distributed mostly by mail, while British zines are aimed for in-person distribution at popular conventions. This makes postage a higher percentage of the overall cost of an American fanzine. Second, even if postage weren't a factor, the number of copies needed to cover British fandom (and a handful of Yanks and others) involves a markedly smaller press run in their zines than most American fanzines. Most British faneds I polled last spring said their circulation was in the 100-125 range, with 10-25 North American fans and a handful of Europeans and Australians. By contrast, TRAP DOOR goes to not quite 250 (including 65 U.K. residents). Small is functional.

The figures may be skewed somewhat in that I'm more active in U.K. fandom than in American fandom (outside the apas); however, based on listings in other American fanzines, it appears to me that I'm getting all the non-apa U.S. zines in which I have any interest. I prefer not to trade with clubzines, book review zines, fiction zines, or zines from Trekkies, gamers, filkers, etc., and I haven't counted the trickle of unsolicited zines from these sources in the above figures.

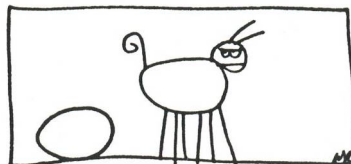
It appears to me that U.S. fanzine fans have disappeared into numerous apas in droves. Perhaps this

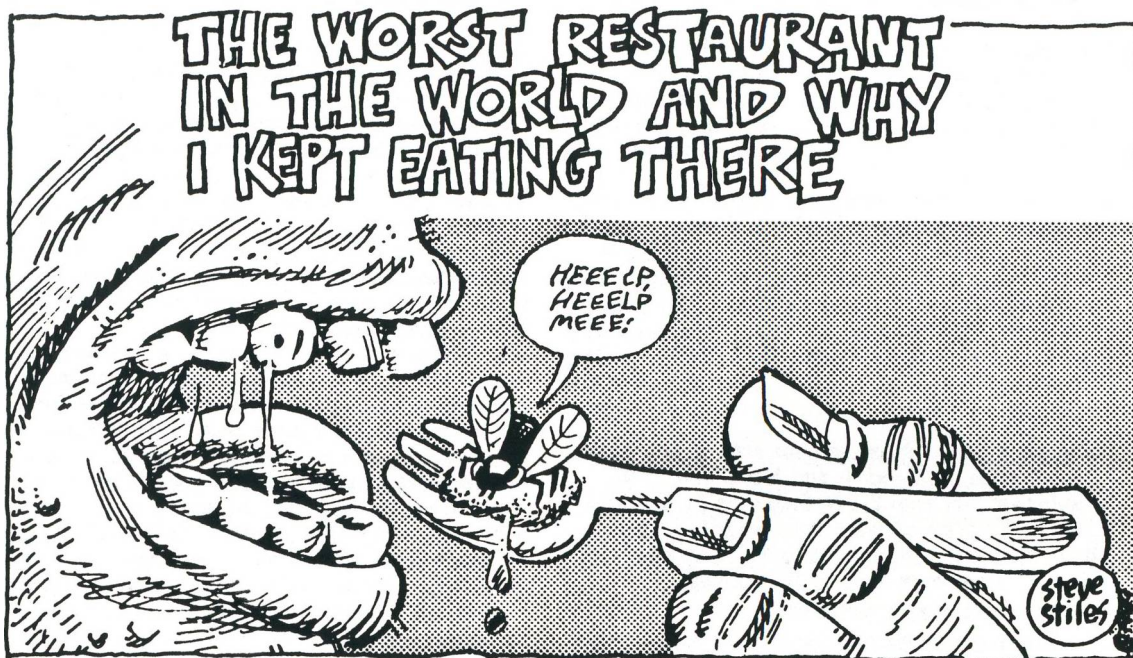
is at least partially due to the high cost of producing and mailing a genzine to several hundred people, but some people spend large sums to be active in multiple apas. Apas are enjoyable — I like the ones I'm in — but they are ultimately limiting in that your words reach only the apa, that particular configuration of fans which, although it changes gradually, is basically fixed. Members of apas refer to membership in a wide variety of other apas; the average American fan seems to be in four to five apas. Not everyone in all your apas is going to be of interest to you. Outside of the apas, publishing on your own hook, one can, so to speak, create one's own "personal apa," limited only by your finances but tailored closely to the cross-section of fandom you want to reach, based on your own interests. I'd like to see a flowering of perzines and small genzines in the U.S. instead of the continued creation of ever more apas. I think it anchors the continuity of fandom to have it taking place not only at conventions, but in print, on the record as it were. If even a couple dozen people dropped out of a few apas and used that extra time to publish a limited circulation fanzine, it would energize fandom so much that we would soon be calling it a Golden Age.

When I first started keeping track of fanzines received, I was looking for some confirmation of my theory that there are considerably fewer fanzines being published now than back in the late '50s when I first began receiving them. Looking back in the distant past, I checked out the listings for the top twenty fanzines of 1959 and 1960, as published in the FANAC Poll results for each of those years. In both years the top twenty fanzines published between them 111 separate issues. *Many* more non-apa fanzine titles of lesser quality were also being published in each of those years. So, it's obvious that overall fanzine production has fallen. But maybe not if apazines are counted. After all, in 1959 there were half a dozen fannish apas and now there are well over a hundred in the United States alone.

Does it matter? Now that fandom is so convention oriented, maybe the paper that's being saved by publishing fewer fanzines is being manufactured instead into those thousands of bar napkins used by convention-goers in our con-every-weekend-somewhere fandom. Fanzines leave a permanent record, however, whereas bar napkins are pretty certain to end up in the trash heap of posterity along with yesterday's hangovers.

(-RL)





BY DICK ELLINGTON

In the early and mid 1940s Seattle was a good town for the working poor. The only problem was housing, as thousands of work-hungry migrants from the rest of the country, which was still hurting from the Depression, poured in to fill jobs at Boeing and the shipyards. One of the answers was the government-built Yesler Terrace housing project where I spent most of my teenage years. If viewed from the opposite hill, the rows of flat-roofed buildings trailing down the south slope of the aptly-named First Hill southeast of downtown Seattle did look a bit like rabbit hutches and opponents of this sort of thing labeled them with that name. Like Herb Caen's "Berserkeley" it stuck.

We funneled in with the other working poor (my mom worked variously for Harborview, the county hospital a few blocks away, and as one of the very first "femail men" hired by the Post Office as temporary mail carriers). Rabbit hutches they were, but Bunnies we were not. We teenagers rapidly became known as Terrace Rats, based on the rather overblown reputation the place rapidly acquired. By the standards of today's housing projects the Terrace was a model city, but in those less cynical times a little tough went a long way. There were, for instance, no real teenage gangs in the Terrace, just loose groupings that formed casually among boys who lived and played on the same block. We went to a number of different schools and most of us socialized somewhat with school friends also. Really, the main thing we had in common was that we were all poor and that meant, in those wartime years, that we all had the easily available after-school jobs, disdaining thereby the teenage sports experience since the jobs allowed no time for that after-school-only experience.

We did have a little money, however, and while we did a little drinking now and then (mostly cheap Muscatel wine) and smoking (cigarettes were getting scarce even for adults), mostly we spent our little hordes on accessories for our bikes, movies to the point we resembled moles, and food. Ah yes, the food. There is no possibility of exaggerating a healthy teenage boy's appetite. It simply

shoplifted as opportunity presented itself. If flush, we gorged; if not, we nibbled. A favorite wanderspot was the Pike Street Market and we routinely hit the free mineral water stand for a glass of that metallic-tasting brew, then the big animal foods stall where we simply lifted large quantities of one particular brand of dog biscuit which we had discovered was quite tasty. Dog biscuits, you mutter, ugh. They tasted pretty good and, besides, they fit our image, which was Real Weird. The middle-class could afford the Very In bleached cords and the highly polished, extra-soled cordovan oxfords; we made do with our own premature Punk fashions which were about 90% Army surplus.

We pigged out at the various delis, smuggling immense sacks of food into every theatre in town and sitting in the front row picnicking as the double bills rolled (triple bill at the Embassy – and only a quarter before 1 p.m.!).

There was some stocking for our cave feasts too. The cave was in a strange bluff almost on top of downtown Seattle, near Yesler. We and some of the other rats had dug out a probably dangerous cave and had barbecue feasts there – overlooking police headquarters, the county building and about eye-level with the tenth floor of the Smith Tower. Seattle had a horse-meat market and for ridiculous sums you could enjoy a choice horse sirloin. Maybe a touch tough and slightly gamier than beef, but for two bits who cared?

We biked like crazy, but when we went to the movies the bikes stayed home. Never would I have left my monstrous old Schwinn World with its array of accessories alone outside some theatre and they wouldn't let me park the bike in the lobby – I know because I tried. These bikes were the younger set's equivalent of a big Harley hog and our greatest treasures. It was easy enough to walk downtown – all downhill – but coming home we usually took the bus. You could catch one of the electric "trackless trolleys," as they were called, which wandered south and east and veered away half a dozen blocks short of the Terrace or, taking the lazy way out, you could take a trackless trolley south and get a free transfer to the Yesler line going east which would drop you right at my door.

It should be understood that Yesler was one steep mother of a hill, a veritable San Francisco-style hill and much too steep for the underpowered trolleys. It had actually been serviced for many years by a cable car but, sometime in the '30s if I remember right, the city, with incredible lack of foresight, had torn it out and replaced it with big noisy diesels that howled and screamed and labored up the hill, belching clouds of black smoke at everyone.

One could put up with the noise and dirt but the damned things didn't run very often either. At best there was one every half hour, and evenings, nights and weekends considerably less than that. I suppose most patient adults just stood there at one of those unsheltered bus stops in sun, rain or wind, and waited. The bolder and less patient teenager walked down to the end of the line where the bus crouched. The drivers, like bus drivers everywhere, speeded up so's to spend ten minutes or so there, relieving themselves, having a smoke, and sometimes sleeping. I say bolder because this took you into the depths of Seattle's Skidroad. I do not know if this was the Original Skidroad but it did have the distinction of once having actually been a lumber skidroad, a trail along which logs were dragged to the bay. It was now the heart of the Depths of Degradation – I would place its epicenter as the corner of Occidental and Washington.

Like most skidroads in most big cities, it was dirty and smelly but not in the least dangerous to anyone. At worst you might get spare-changed a whole lot. It had a very special attraction for me because here, right at the bus stop, was an alcove-in-the-wall tobacco shop and newsstand with racks along some twenty feet or so of the walls, overhung with awnings, and on those racks, lots and lots of pulp magazines, untrimmed edges and all.

I was as big then as I am now but I really was just a kid and certainly too shy to venture into the Skidroad taverns, so I started haunting that newsstand, and this is where my little skin-popping habit of an occasional look at *TWS* or *SS* slowly changed into a full-scale, main-line, gotta-have-it-every-month monkey. I found *Planet* too childish and *Astounding* too cerebral but Ray Palmer knew what us 14-year-olds wanted and I bought *Amazing* and *Fantastic* every month. I even remember when they added *Mammoth Adventure* to the line. And of course, once you get started you have to have More, so I started buying *Weird Tales* and then it was *FFN* and *FFM*....

There were other attractions on that corner too, particularly on Saturdays and Sundays when all the do-gooders came out to help the poor sinners Find Jesus. "Put a nickel on the drum; save another drunken bum." There was a series of invisible lines of demarcation on the four corners of Occidental and Washington, subdividing that turf into eight distinct zones of operation, and while some were free zones, others definitely had large, albeit invisible Reserved signs on them. The free zones were populated by a drifting population of miscellaneous Jesus screamers and an equally interchangeable group of political ranters. None of them drew much of a crowd. Location 6 always amused me because it was Reserved – well, I never saw anyone else try to use it – for the Seven Elders of the Church of God, all seven of them uniformed in matching dark suits, brown wide-brimmed Stetson hats and matching long hair and beards. They took turns mounting a tiny footstool and exhorting the masses, sometimes as many as three if you did not count me, to find Jesus. Besides being uniform in appearance, they were totally alike in their absolute inability to sell anything to anyone. They droned and mumbled and rambled on and on until the fascination and humor changed to pity.

At about 1 p.m. there would be a faint distant thumping and if you looked way off south down Occidental, you could discern the distant steady marching approach of the Salvation Army band, striding along in step to the beat of their bass drum until they wheeled smartly and took up their special Reserved spot at Location No. 4. Because they had music – loud if not good – they always got a good crowd and they had sense enough to alternate the lugubrious hymns with some shouters.

Later though, all the crowds moved away in fickle disdain from all the other preachers as the big hit of the day arrived at Location No. 5. I don't remember what church they represented (neither I nor the bums really cared) but the group of a dozen or so was fronted by a big fat woman in her fifties. Her clothes and makeup were strictly from the 1920s – "she wore 'em high with the rolled down socks." She had been a hoor in Alaska for some years and delighted in telling with great enthusiasm and relish all the intimate details of the great life of Sin and DEG-ruh-dation she had lived (cheers went up at particularly spicy episodes) UNTIL she had found Sweet JEE-sus and gave it all up. This was all done with laughter, jokes and good humor – a sense of love and easygoing camaraderie that was really fun to watch. And mainly she punctuated her talking regularly with hymns – but not sad old hymns, no way. I can't give you a name now but they all sounded suspiciously like "Rock Me Jesus." She belted them out with a big hearty whiskey alto that would have turned Sophie Tucker green with envy and accompanied herself on an old banjo, fat little fingers dancing in lightning runs and trills of some complexity. Feet shuffled and eyes lit up and, hell, I dunno, maybe somebody did get saved.

All of this plus the long wait built up the appetite but that was one thing that was lacking in the area – food. Oh, there were candy bars at the cigar store, and also up the street at the "drug store" which, for all the years I went by there, had the same tattered, weathered old sign slowly fading to almost-illegible as its canvas flapped sadly, letting you know that there was a "Wine Sale Today." Let us not forget that this was where if I got a nickel and you got a dime, we really could get some wine – a mickey of Nawico muscatel went for 15 cents. The few restaurants were mostly offshoots of the bars and Skidroad or no, sensible folks stayed out of the bars – 'scuse me, make that "taverns" – as Seattle was Very Blue in those days and only a few specially licensed private clubs could dispense whisky; the rest had only beer and wine. On Skidroad those were big, barnlike affairs with high lights encased in wire cages, big, big thick bars with no mirrors behind them, only the flimsiest of furniture and plank floors covered with sawdust – in other words utilitarian places for their clientele, mostly divided between loggers, who insisted on wearing their caked boots to town, seamen, who, because of the loggers' caked boots, insisted on carrying their knives, and bums, who routinely puked on everything in sight.

And that's where the place came in. What got me about it was the smell: if the wind was blowing from the southeast one would get a whiff now and then of this strange smell and even if I was only a little hungry I would salivate like a Pavlovian dog. I'd seen it dozens of times but the appearance was such a downer I'd never considered eating there. Finally, late one evening, coming

back from a movie alone, one of those hunger attacks hit me and the wind was blowing the right way...

"Scroot," I muttered to myself and marched across the street. Acute Starvation was not to be tolerated regardless of possible ptomaine. The problem was, the closer you got the worse the place looked. It was basically an alcove in the brick wall, some eight or ten feet wide and maybe six feet plus deep, with a simple shutter that could be dropped down over the front to lock it up. There were no chairs or stools, just a rather high counter. You ate standing. On the left a glass-fronted cabinet held buns, on the right, behind a low glass shield, was a grill, and in the center a small steam table with three pots in it. Behind this was the walk space and behind that a few shelves and in the center a sliding window so that patrons in the bar that occupied the corner could order food direct. If there was a sign saying "EATS" or something, I don't remember it. There was a small, faded, almost indecipherable, hand-lettered "menu" in one corner of the back wall. The only thing I remember about it was the filth, "indescribable" in the Lovecraftian sense. In other words, we gone tell you all 'bout it. This was dirt and grime that had taken many years to accumulate, patinas of deep set grease and soot piled layer upon layer. The ancient rough wood of the counter was slick with grease, the two panes of glass almost opaque with grease, the grill a solid cake of black cinders, the walls running with steamy tracks through grease and mildew, and yes, there were roaches. Oh, they didn't swarm out in armies but you could damn well not stand there for five minutes and miss seeing a few racing furtively across the walls.

In the center of this crouched the Proprietor, who fit in so well you hardly noticed him until he moved. He was a man of indeterminate age, I should guess over 60, skinny and tough and lantern-jawed and hairy-armed and just as filthy as everything else. He always wore a shirt and tie, and they were always the same and always caked with layers of dirt and grease, giving the appearance that he never took them off. Surprisingly, the apron he wore was changed occasionally, and though not clean, it appeared so in comparison to the rest of the place. A green eyeshade held down thin wisps of black hair and from deep under it blazed a pair of angry, suspicious black eyes over a hard, thin-lipped mouth. He was one of those men who mysteriously always seem to have a three-day growth of beard. I never heard him say anything unnecessary, and only a few times did I hear him speak without a snarl.

Everything about the place was absolutely bottom-line, a perfect match for his clientele. Except for a few freaks like me, they were all total Skidroad alcoholics. The menu was simple to the point of total austerity:

Stew	.05
Chili	.10
Hamburger	.10
Hot Dog	.10
Milk	.05

That's it. No desserts, no salads, no coffee or tea, no soda, and *don't* ask for a second piece of bread.

At various times I saw the rest of the menu dished out but I have to admit I never had the courage to try them. The stew was a grease-water concoction with each bowl sporting a lone chunk of gristly looking meat and some wilted vegetables. The hamburgers were gray with grain filler, ridiculously small though they bulked large when compared to the shrivelled little hot dogs which were sliced in half lengthwise and fried until they were quite evenly black on both sides. The buns (very small hamburger buns for both the hot dogs and hamburgers) were always long past the day-old state. They were, for reasons unknown, always sliced diagonally. The mustard was watered to a sad pallor and so, obviously, was the milk.

There being no other customers that first time I received the owner's full attention, which is to say he eyed me like a junk yard dog with a bad ulcer. He remained totally motionless and said absolutely nothing.

I decided to play it safe. "Hot dog," I said. He continued to eye me suspiciously for another minute, apparently not sure if I really meant it. When I was about ready to give up and leave, he picked up a wickedly sharp boning knife worn down to a sliver from sharpening and did the diagonal slice on one of the buns. He banged the top off the chili pot and dipped a tablespoon scoop of the scum that floated on top of the reddish mass onto the bun and quickly forked one of the tiny blackened hot dogs into it. He stopped and glared at me again and we had the first play of what was to become a ritual of some standing:

"You wanna mustud?"

"Yeah."

"You wanna awnecawn?"

"Yeah."

Hot dog now wrapped in tiny, cheap napkin but held back as the other hand demanded money – first you pay, then you eat. I forked over my dime and took the hot dog, hesitated and walked away. I didn't relish eating under that suspicious glare.

Back at the bus stop I looked suspiciously at the hot dog and decided wot the hell. I bit into it tentatively, then again. Incredible! The smell had not lied at all. In four more quick bites it was gone and I wanted more. But about then the bus driver started his motor so I passed. All the way up the hill I could taste the damned thing.

I was eventually to eat some hundreds of those damned hot dogs and of course I finally figured out the key – it was the chili. When he served it up by the bowl, he stirred it vigorously first (no, I never got up the courage to try a whole bowl; it looked even less appetizing than the stew) but as it sat in the pot it apparently separated out and when he used it as seasoning he carefully skimmed only the top layer. He used it on the hot dogs, the hamburgers and even the stew got a dollop of it. I had far too little experience with foods to even be able to guess at the spices used but Gawdamighty, it was wondrous good. I'm sure my ravenous teenage hunger had a lot to do with it, but even when I wasn't approaching 15-year-old starvation I could revel in several of those hot dogs.

The next couple of times I was down there I was again alone and I had sense enough to buy the hot dogs two at a time – one just left you hungrier than before. Inevitably, the time came when I was down there with my friends, Buddy Mattila, Herman Wong and Jim Larsen. I casually mentioned I was hungry and headed across the street from the bus stop. They immediately caught on that it was gross-out time and that I was doing a number and dutifully lined up to do their share. The owner had enough glare for all four of us, though he did respond to our numbers with a little added snarl. Following my lead they all ordered hot dogs and ate them. Buddy and Herman acknowledged they tasted okay but I think they were really offed a little by the roaches. Larsen, who often matched me for gross-outs, developed a taste for them as heavy as mine and even used to try the hamburgers on occasion, though he admitted it was like eating a bread sandwich.

Eventually the old man stopped really glaring at us. Not that he smiled or anything, but, unlike much of his clientele, we did not try to stiff him for the tab or puke his food back up onto the counter. But whether we were ordering two or ten hot dogs (there were two Skidroad theatres which we frequented when money was tight and their double bills definitely required sustenance), the ritual was the same:

"You wanna mustud?"

"Yeah."

"You wanna awnecawn?"

"Yeah."

The last time I ate one of those hot dogs was in the early summer of '48. When I came back from the army in the summer of '52, the stand was firmly and solidly boarded up and, like most of the good bad things, just a memory.



The first thing I remember about large scale art vandalism is from my days as a university student in Santa Cruz. There was a large billboard that became - instead of advertising - an enormous air-brushed abstraction something like a giant orange. It was only coincidentally on the same block as the building for the records/comics/comix store. This billboard art lasted a long time until someone ran a truck into a support. (My memory is so short I had to make that up. Sounds good, huh?)

Some of the clever students would more than occasionally alter regular Bank of America ads to read "Amerika." I thought this sort of thing had great potential. I used to hang out with pals and play "What if we just changed one letter?" on signs like - for instance - the current "We have the Best Slots" ad for a Reno casino. That was fun until one of the Amazonian women said, "Hell with that! Capitalist exploiters! Do it right!" She explained, "Get a light bulb, fill it with paint, use it as an arrowhead, take aim with a bow...and voila! True billboard art and political commentary." She was a tad too leftist for my tastes, but I have been looking for that splat on offensive signs ever since. A big light bulb, hmm, like throwing an old TV to watch the tube explode. Just too radical for a nice girl like me.

My fantasy of alteration is slightly more subtle.

Remember when cigarette ads started to feature bare chested men? I wanted to add nipple rings. A little gold spray paint would change the whole tone. I mentioned this idea to a friend's friend and - lo and behold - I'm looking at a scrapbook of billboard liberation. A bare chested guy is wearing a brassiere. "One of a kind" ad copy is unretouched by paint yet totally ~~trans~~formed. I recently saw another cigarette sign changed from "Kent: The Choice Is Clear" to "Kant: The Choice Is Heteronomy." But I don't know what that means.

I'm involved these days with some natural history buffs at the local Audobon preserve. I guess I am becoming more radical as my pals and I foment a "not just for doctor's wives" evolution. We take school children on hikes through the 400-acre sanctuary. One of our favorite learning aids is scat. The kids all want to see critters and what they get, largely, is excrement. We have seen deer and rabbits a couple of time, but fifth graders out of classrooms want bears, bobcats, skunks, raccoons and rattlesnakes. (We found one of the latter once, but that's another story.) We use these certain territorial markers as evidence of animal presence. Do you know that before clothing moths found your closets they were breeding in furry wildcat scat? But I digress.

I don't read just the slick, white bread nature magazines - *Nature*, *Pacific Discovery* (I don't get *Audobon*, maybe I ought. Heck, I don't really read *Nature*, it just sounded good.), *Smithsonian* (I'm being truthful here), *National Geographic* and *Ranger Rick* (you don't want to know any more). Every now and then I sneak into the city and raid my friend's library of 100% recycled paper eco-freak journals. You know the ones... Big interviews with guys living in first growth trees; discussions of whether the earth will forgive you if you don't put sugar in bulldozers' gas tanks; how to spike trees; the kind of stuff one doesn't advocate with Audobon Society docents. I just read them, really, and not very often. I don't even think about their point of view too much either.

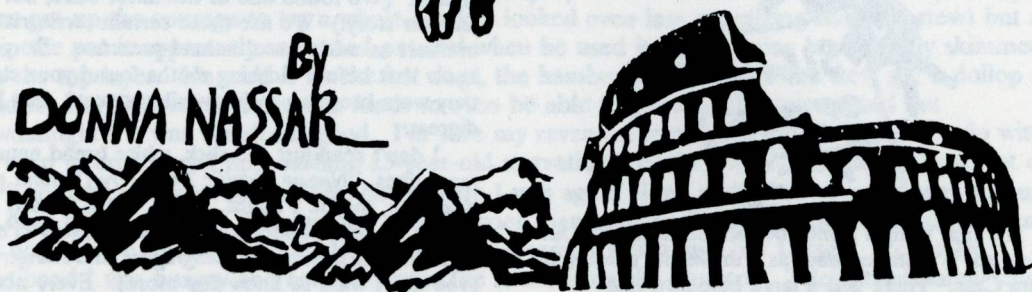
You can imagine my enormous delight in discovering a smeary photo of an altered - no, liberated - billboard with a ridiculous accompanying letter. The letter said, "Back Off Earth First. Pave Alaska." But the illustration belied that rhetoric. Maybe I'm so used to reading trail signs that I'm finding more than was left. This black billboard had said, "Hits Happen," in large white letters with a radio call sign tastefully at the bottom of an expanse of dark space. The radio call sign was covered over by an Exxon logo, a real one, and you already guessed how the slogan read. My iconoclastic friend tells me this artistic happening did not stay on display for long. But boy, oh boy, I'm still ecstatic about it.

- Jeanne Bowman

Stamping Through Europe



By
DONNA NASSAR



I want to write about sharing. About building bridges across cultural and language barriers with nothing more than images, color, and enthusiasm. I want to tell you about my experience of taking my rubber stamps on a three-week jaunt to Europe in the summer of '89.

It is Wednesday night and the last Stamp Out Stress (S.O.S.) class before Paul and I leave for three weeks in Europe. The regulars have shown up and a couple of "hardly-evens" are here, too. They are quizzing me about our upcoming trip. "Which rubber stamps are you taking?" asks Tasha. "Do you need some help choosing?" It's a fair question — I have over two thousand stamps.

"Actually, I've decided to take a break...not take any stamps. We want to travel light and it's too hard to choose and too heavy to haul." They are all sitting, staring at me with mouths dropped open.

"Not even your survival kit?" cries Lisa. My 'survival kit' is a handful of plastic eraser pieces, shapes, carvings, and a couple of very small stamp pads.

In the end they convinced me it was my duty to take rubber stamping to Europe and wow the multitudes. I spent the next three days remounting stamps — double, triple, and quadruple mounting onto single wood blocks, choosing the smallest stamps, remounting larger stamps onto plastic pieces, figuring the most efficient way to pack as many stamps and pads into as small a space as possible. I ended by packing two plastic boxes crammed with stamps and pads into my suitcase and stashing my survival kit into my carry-on luggage for the long flight.

It was rare when my invitation to "play with my rubber stamps" was not met with a mixture of disbelief/hesitation/reluctance. These sometimes lapsed into suspicion or rejection/refusal, the fear of which often made me pause before offering but almost never stopped me. Ultimately I was a

missionary with a job to do, but I didn't recognize that right away. Initially I played quietly with my survival kit in my own small space on the huge, cramped jet to Zurich.

First on our itinerary was a visit to the immaculate Swiss countryside. Paul's Swiss publisher and his wife share a farmhouse with two other couples in the Emmental, a grain and green, Swiss-cheese-producing, farming valley. Breathtakingly, beautifully organized.

Dieter and Asti were easy. First of all, they already had rubber stamping experience. (You must know that as rare as that is in this country, it is even rarer — shall we say foreign? — in Europe.) They were also open and enthusiastic to share themselves and give themselves to a new experience. The stamping took over the kitchen table almost immediately following our first dinner together. Asti went into the apartment of the vacationing couple upstairs and brought down Christine's stamp collection to share. A wonderful connection was begun.

After only a couple of days in Switzerland we traveled by rented car to Milan at the invitation of an Italian publisher named Carlo. He and Paul share a passion for the music of Bob Dylan. Carlo set us up in our own little guest apartment on the sixth floor. One night I was stamping and writing in my journal, sitting at the desk facing the window and overlooking the rooftops. We were called to go out to dinner and I left everything sitting out on the desk. When we came back it was evident that we had had a return visit from the "cookie monster," who we'd decided was a rodent when we'd returned to find a mass of cookie crumbs on the table the previous night.

But this time there was clear evidence that this was no rat. A cat had apparently gained entrance via the open window (which abutted a roof-edge), and had walked across the desk, stepping neatly into the rainbow stamp pad open there, leaving colorful paw prints across the desk with one neat one planted firmly on a blank space in my journal. I would have to label this visitor the most unusual stamper of the trip...though I do have some tales.

"Italians are the easiest," declared Diane, who is an American, married to a German and running a rubber stamp company in Hagen, Germany. This was two weeks after the experience in Italy. I was with friends near Heidelberg, and Diane and I were swapping stamp-sharing experiences by telephone. "Perhaps because they are so innately playful and unself-conscious?" I love to offer explanations.

I had happy stamping experiences everywhere I went, but a personal breakthrough occurred in Italy. It was at a large publishing party at a castle in the countryside; we were personal guests (not connected to the publishing company) of the lord and host, Carlo, and the only Americans at the party (I think). It was a beautiful sun-filled day. We ate, explored the castle grounds, swam, sunned, and talked, talked, talked. Fortunately for us, some of the guests spoke English. As the late afternoon shadows lengthened and a rousing game of soccer was being played on the upper lawn, I enlisted the help of Andreas and Pierrot, two non-soccer-playing young men, and very quietly set up my rubber stamps on two small round cocktail tables set out for guests in the top middle turret of the castle. It proved to be an ideal location as guests coming from the pool had to pass the tables on their way back to the center of the party. I soon had a small crowd playing with stamps.

"Does she always travel with her rubber stamps?" Barbara asked Anna, who translated to me. "Whenever possible," I answered. I was excited by the response I was getting to my stamps. "I think it is very like a musician who loves to share his music, carrying his guitar with him everywhere and looking for or creating opportunities to sing."

I'm experienced at taking my stamps to parties and also at creating stamping parties, but this was the first time I had shared stamps across a language barrier. It was also the first time that the guitar-player analogy surfaced. Suddenly even I understood what I was doing.

As twilight approached we finished up and began putting the stamps away. People took up their art and joined other groups at the party. I saw one group of people who had not stamped examining the work of some of the stampers. They were talking excitedly in Italian; I asked Pierrot to tell me what was being said. "I thought rubber stamps were for children, but these are not children's



stamps, and these are not children's pictures!" Adults playing, creating, in this very unadult fashion, this can be hard to understand in any language.

We took the train from Milan to Rome. The couple sharing the compartment were young students on holiday and very literally wrapped up in each other. I invited them to stamp and, finally convinced, they stamped together on a page taken from my journal. What a delightful time they had – thanks are pretty easily communicated in any language. They returned the page to me after stamping. I fitted it back in my journal. Obviously in this case the process was the product.

On the return trip a young dance therapist from Florence needed nothing more than a simple invitation. She stamped straight through from Bologna to Milan – three pages, both sides, and did not begin to offer them back. This is when I began to feel like a missionary. Turns out she's a Taurus like Paul and I.

We traveled to Germany to lead a workshop in a lovely secluded resort in the Black Forest. Werner, the workshop's translator, turned me on to the idea of having people stamp directly in my journal book and thereby keeping a record of stampers on my travels. What a great idea! I started with the people attending our workshop. They loved the stamps, and we incorporated them into an exercise having to do with the "masks" we all wear for disguise and protection. The exercise was such a success that people from another class given at the same hotel asked if they might be allowed to play with the stamps after lunch on Sunday. One of these women suggested to Ludwig, who coordinated both workshops, that I be brought back next summer for a weekend of therapeutic stamping. She was ready to enroll!

None of these people had stamped for fun or even knew anyone who had, with the exception of Werner Pieper, who actually offers recreational stamps in his catalog (which mostly advertises books). He is the one who explained to me the Germanic view of rubber stamps. They are seen either as Educational Toys for children or punishing tools of the bureaucracy. This explanation helped me to understand why Ilse (who, although the oldest at 69 of the workshop's participants, was one of the most open and forthcoming) could not bear to bring herself to play with the stamps. She was the only one to leave blank her page in my journal.

We stamped with our host and hostess in Lyon, France. I can see the headlines now: "Famous French Science Fiction Editor Patrice Duvic Spends Bastille Day Playing with Rubber Stamps."

We returned to the Swiss Emmental through the beautiful French countryside. Once back at the farmhouse we settled in to enjoy our last few days in Europe. We met the other two couples who lived in the big tri-level farmhouse, and soon I was again sharing stamps.

I taught Moko how to carve designs from large plastic erasers and we spent one whole Sunday afternoon creating stamps. Christine's 14-year-old nephew joined us in the carving for a time. Two minutes into his first eraser he declared it to be like a drug. Moko and I had to agree – I mean, we were obviously hooked.

Airport stories: We are in the Zurich airport. We're told our departure flight has a "scheduled" 1½ hour delay. We stand in line with our luggage waiting to check in. The line is not moving. Really. The young woman behind us is heading back to her banking job in NYC. We talk for a while. The line doesn't move. Here is a situation that calls for my survival kit. Margaret fills another page in my journal. "I have never stamped before. I have no artistic talent..." Another one bites the dust.

New York City. We are waiting. Yes, some more. Waiting for connecting flights that were delayed, cancelled, renumbered, etc. I am using Paul's technique for avoiding jet lag: "Don't try to figure out what time it is in Zurich, how long you've been awake or in transit; just be where you are now." I reach for my survival kit once more and find I'm almost too tired.

Two boy children share a seat that backs up to mine in this endless lobby of activity. They are restless, listless, foreign. I begin to talk to them, but they don't want to attempt to use what little English they know. They are encouraged by their mom to stamp with the small eraser carvings I've offered up. The younger (5 or 6) boy takes longer to decide to do it. The older one (7 or 8) goes right to it. Their grandmother tells me of the many hours (almost days) they have been traveling

after almost two years of waiting to be allowed to join the father, who is a teacher at U.C. Berkeley. They are travelling from Eastern Europe. I am in Kennedy Airport, New York, USA. It is 7:30 p.m., July 17, 1989.

The day after we arrived home from three weeks in Europe, Paul's brother David, his wife and two sons came to spend a week with us. They were traveling cross-country by station wagon, and had been on the road for weeks. We had a really good time together and the jet lag didn't even kick in for me till the third or fourth day of their visit. I turned them on to stamping. Sam, the 9-year-old, got into it. I still have some of his art on my fridge door. Nathan (12) was more interested in computers, numbers, and details. I set him to work counting the number of different images I took with me to Europe. It was a week after they left before I realized the missed opportunity — I could have asked him to count my entire collection. The Europe count was 250 — including the ones I picked up from Werner and in Bern; also counting the stamps I gave away to people who couldn't live without them.

Recently a friend asked me to tell her how I had benefited from using stamps over the last three years. My response was that it had shifted my ability to see. Visually, things are connected differently for me lately. Also, I feel more open in the other creative areas: dancing, drawing, writing, healing.

Sharing my stamps and enthusiasm as I did on this trip takes all this one step further. It takes it to a kind of intimacy that's not easy or even possible through the regular channels of conversation or socializing. I love what I learn from people, about people, by their use of form, color, image, placement. This process of stamping together opens my intuitive channels, invites me to put aside preconceived notions and language barriers. I find myself available to know and feel someone on a completely new and exciting level.

Now, when I go back to my journal and look at the collages left for me there by friends and casual acquaintances, I feel my connection to these people and the intimate times shared more clearly than when I read my notes or look at photos. There is something magical about sharing self-expression with strangers, stamping out new friends wherever you go.

— Donna Nassar



THE UNREAL GEORGE AFFAIR



BY JAMES WHITE

Except in moments of great surprise, sudden pain, severe emotional stress or all three together, I try to avoid using exclamation marks, italics or profane language. But this was the first time anything like this had happened to me.

"George!" I said. "What the hell are you doing here?"

He looked at me uncertainly, tilted his head slightly to one side and gave one of his shy smiles, just the way he used to do when somebody had said or done something stupid and his innate politeness forbade him reminding them of it. Then suddenly he turned, smiled again and walked away. Some people coming out of the supermarket behind me got between us and I lost sight of him.

After I had recovered, I directed some more profane words and exclamation marks at myself, under my breath this time, which doesn't count. No one would ever dream of speaking in such uncouth fashion to a person as gentle and mild-mannered as George Charters – except when he would make a very bad pun, which doesn't count either – and up until then I had never even spoken sharply to him. I was very ashamed of myself.

Ghosts, I thought, must have feelings, too.

It was pretty certain that he was a ghost because he was George exactly as I remembered him in the fifties and sixties, not as he had been towards the end when his hair had been white and tinnitus, one of the results of his car accident that had caused a hairline cranial fracture, had made it difficult for him to sleep as well as dulling the fine mind that could solve the *Times* crossword as quickly, it seemed, as the rest of us took to write a grocery list. This had been the George we liked to

remember, the editor of THE SCARR, contributor to SLANT's "The Corn Is Green" column, and the man who by his gentle, old world charm had so captivated Bea Mahaffey during her visit in 1954 that she had unknowingly christened him with the fannish name that has remained to this day.

It had been after he had left us to catch the last train home to Bangor that we asked Bea what she thought of him. "He's George," she had said enthusiastically, using a form of Cincinnati slang we had not heard until then. "He's *real* George. No, he's George All The Way!" Later we discovered that there were very few things that she considered Real George at that time – the movie "Shane," the Empire State Building, the Stewart novel *Earth Abides* – and even fewer that were George All The Way. And so it was that the fan George Charters became from that time on the redoubtable GATWC.

And now he had come back.

It had to be more of an enchantment than a haunting, I thought, because George's ghost was not a thing (oops, sorry) that anyone could possibly be afraid of, and I was sorely puzzled rather than sore afraid. If I was given a second chance to talk to him, my opening words would be more circumspect and certainly more polite, but my question would remain the same.

George, what are you doing here?

As a confirmed hard (sf) case, ghosts were outside my area of expertise. But there had been a recent program on BBC-2 called, I think, "The Haunts of Britain," which had given valuable if sometimes confusing information on the subject.

It had stated that one person in every ten saw a ghost sometime in his or her lifetime, but of that number only three in ten knew that they were actually seeing ghosts. Interesting, I had thought, but where on Earth, or wherever, had they gathered those statistics? But then the program had gone on to discuss information that was more commonly accepted.

For example, ghosts only came back if they were unquiet and unhappy spirits whose work on Earth had been unfinished. They wanted something done, or they had left something undone but, being immaterial on this plane of existence, they needed the help of a material pair of hands to do it for them. Still, none of this fitted the George who had been waiting for me outside the supermarket. He had been quiet, as he always had been in life, rather than unquiet, and his smile had not looked the slightest bit unhappy. But my rude and intemperate manner had caused him to leave without speaking or, if he was not allowed to speak down here, of making any other signal.

What could he possibly want me to do?

In the past the only things he had ever asked me for were contributions to THE SCARR. Much to our surprise and admiration, he had become a fanzine editor late in life, and the title was an anagram of the name "Charters." Despite us being close friends, his requests for material from the group were more like gentle hints to the effect that if there were too many blank pages between the ATom cover and the letters of comment at the back, the letters would become fewer and the comments more hostile. And then he would smile shyly and incline his head in exactly the same way as he had done a few minutes ago. He understood that in my case the mundane responsibilities of a wife, a growing family and a mortgage necessitated most of my spare time being devoted to writing pro rather than fan stuff, and the others had similar worldly pressures. But in spite of his ultra-soft approach, he got material from all of us.

And now, knowing from intelligence sources not available to people down here that our children are grown up and away or married and that I have now retired to Portstewart with its scenery, sunsets, storms and, it seems, a haunted supermarket entrance, he must also know that there is nothing, except for a possible age-expired brain, to stop me writing for him.

But there are serious metaphysical and financial problems in sending material to an immaterial fanzine.

Back in the days of SLANT we used to listen to Walter's home-made, all-wave super-superhet as a means of relieving the tedium of typesetting and in the hope of improving our minds, and once there was a very metaphysical play on by C.S. Lewis, the title of which I have forgotten, which had some sense of wondrous things to say about Heaven. One of them was that, to accommodate all the

people who had died and moved there since the dawn of mankind, Heaven would have to cover an area of many light years squared. Even if I was to find out his exact address and post code, and the local Post Office was willing to accept it for delivery without consigning the consignor to the nearest mental hospital, sending anything to a place that size would cost the Earth in postage especially, as seemed logical, it would have to go airmail.

It never entered my mind that George would go to the other place. A gentle easy going Protestant and Orangeman so liberal in his views that he would allow a Catholic to try on his sash was not, I felt sure, going to end up anywhere unpleasant. But that did not help me with the simple and seemingly insoluble problem of submitting material to him.

On the way home I went, as is my wont, by way of the cliff walk, but spared scarcely a glance for the sunlit beauty of the Innishowen Peninsula or the whitecaps on the deep blue of Lough Foyle, because my mind was a prey to wild surmises and crazy thoughts, mostly having to do with Dave Langford.

Four winters ago, when the computer and I were living together but were not even good friends, Dave had brought about a reconciliation that has lasted to this day. One of my problems had been to do with a weeks long winter storm that was interfering with the power supply and causing me to lose anything from thirty-six and a half up to, on one catastrophic occasion, five hundred words of uniquely fine pieces of sheer writing – in rough draft, of course. When I told him that those words had been the product of much mental labor, that for many hours they had existed in this spacetime continuum in my computer's memory and on the monitor screen and that they had been, well, *there*, and I asked him if in his expert opinion there was any way of getting them back again, he said no.

No, he had elaborated, because when your computer loses power it also loses its memory and your words are gone, lost and forever inaccessible in a hyperdimension of philosophical quasi-unreality or, in layman's terms, like consigned to Limbo. He also said that henceforth I should save on disk after every thirty-six and a *quarter* words and that, owing to my evident emotional distress and me being a fellow Celt and all, he would waive the consultation fee.

That was *it*! I thought, knowing that I was using far too many italics and exclamation marks for a short article but not caring anymore. In the immaterial environmental sense, and bearing in mind the laws governing such places, Limbo could only be a metaphysical stone's throw from Heaven. Now I knew what must be done.

The piece I wrote for George was not long, but it was revised and polished on-screen until it was as good as I could make it. Even the puns were pretty good, for me. One's friends deserve one's best shot, and besides, I had no idea who or how tough the competition would be from his other contributors up there. The temptation was very strong to save it on disk or take a hard copy. But if I had done that the piece would have existed Here instead of There, and someday it might have found its way into an ordinary fanzine which might have precluded its appearance in an immaterial one, and besides, none of us would dream of sending George a simultaneous submission.

When it was finished I switched off the disk drive and the printer and read it over again on-screen, changing the odd phrase here and there and then changing them back again. Then without giving myself any more time to think I switched off the computer and the piece was gone, wiped out of existence and, hopefully, on its way.

That was three months ago. Since then I have been looking for George wherever I go, without success, and thinking about the whole affair. It is possible that, my eyesight being what it is, I saw someone who only looked and smiled like the old, younger George we know, and who left quickly because my first words to him lacked politeness. If that is the case, then I would rather not see him again to have the error confirmed. But it is also possible that the one appearance was all that was necessary because I got and understood his message, which leaves me waiting and wondering about something else.

George always sends contributor's copies.

– James White

LEAPING THE ABYSS



GREG
BENFORD

Steve
Shiles
12/7/84

Stephen Hawking seemed slightly worse, as always. It is a miracle that he has clung to life for over twenty years with Lou Gehrig's Disease. Each time I visit him I feel that it will be the last. His shrunken form lolled in his motorized chair, staring out, rendered somewhat goggle-eyed by his thick glasses – but a strong spirit animates all he says, and you can sense the inner fire.

I was in Cambridge to film conversations with three astronomers. We'd had a good morning with Martin Rees, talking on the green outside the Institute for Astronomy, and after that a less successful interlude with Donald Lynden-Bell. After lunch at Kings' College with Martin, I wandered through the atmospheric turns of the colleges and then met the Japanese camera crew for our final, longest shooting.

The Japanese had done exterior shots of him the day before, but Stephen had become leery of coverage of his personal life, and permitted no shots of his family. The enormous success of *A Brief History of Time* has made him a curious kind of cultural icon, and he himself wonders how many people, including starlets and rock singers, bought it as a gesture toward the infinite, and left it unread. He presented us with a short essay which answered in serial order the questions I had sent. Entering his office, I was struck that this man who has suffered such an agonizing decline of his physical abilities had posted several large posters on his wall of a person very nearly his opposite: Marilyn Monroe. I mentioned her and he responded instantly, tapping one-handed on his keyboard, so that soon his American-accented, transduced voice replied, "Yes, she's wonderful."

For the first time in years I was nervous. I almost savored the experience; decades of university lecturing have leached away any self-consciousness in me, and this was nearly a fresh experience. I think Hawking's obvious preparation and his great politeness paradoxically put me ill at ease; I felt that I had somehow taken up more of his time than I thought justified. When he remarked that this was the last television interview he would do, and only because I was asking the questions, which he liked, I felt a humble, strangely thrilled sensation.

It went well. He likes the tug of the philosophical that runs through his work, and was willing to answer more questions than I'd sent. I watched him rapidly flit through the menu of often-used words on his liquid crystal display, riding before him in his wheelchair. (Only a few are names; "Coleman" in the Cs suggested how often he refers to Sidney's work.)

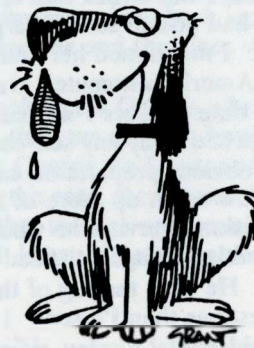
His secretary quietly asked if I would join Stephen for dinner at Caius College, so after the TV shooting was over we made our way through misty twilight, student shouts echoing, his wheelchair jouncing over cobbled streets. He insists on steering it himself, though his nurse hovers, as he must have round-the-clock care. He kept up a flow of conversation as well as anyone could through a keyboard. The dinner was noisy, with the year's new undergraduates staring at the famous Hawking. His nurse must chop up his food and spoon feed him, not a pleasant sight since he has only slight control of his lips. But Stephen carries on in a matter-of-fact way. His only concession was to let himself be seated with his back to the students, so they could not see him being fed.

High table afterward was the traditional walnuts and port, Cuban cigars and somewhat arch conversation, occasionally skewered by a witty interjection from Stephen. When we left Stephen guided his wheelchair through the shadowy reaches of the college, indulging my curiosity about a time-honored undergraduate sport: climbing Cambridge. At night young men scramble among the upper reaches of the steeply steeped old buildings, scaling the most difficult points for the glory of it. There is even a booklet describing the triumphs and centuries-long history. Stephen took me to a passageway I had been through many times, between high buildings. It looked to be about ten feet across. I couldn't imagine leaping that abyss from the slate-dark roofs. "All that distance?" I asked. "Yes," he said. "Any miss?" "Yes." "Injured?" "Yes." "Killed?" His eyes twinkled and he gave us a broad smile. "Yes." These Cambridge sorts had the real stuff all right.

Passing through London, I spent a morning with Arthur Clarke. He had recovered nicely from his bout the year before with post-polio syndrome and was positively bouncy. He had fled Sri Lanka, but was determined to go back after he received his Commander of the British Empire from the queen. We were going out to a show together, but he proved a bit too tired in the evening. We spent most of our time discussing *Beyond the Fall of Night*, in which I attempted to follow his grand perspectives of *Against the Fall of Night*, written over forty years before. Throughout Arthur was quick, spontaneous, brimming with news.

Both these men had faced physical constrictions with a renewed attack on the large issues, on great sweeps of space and time, struggling without much fuss against the narrowing that is perhaps the worst element of infirmity. Stephen rapt with Marilyn, Arthur showing off his latest laptop computer – both seemed still deeply engaged with life, holding against tides of entropy. I had learned a good deal from these few days, I realized, and most of it not at all about astronomy.

– Greg Benford, November 1989



TANTALUS REVISITED

"As you know," Lili Wilmot Morgan PhD said brightly, "this class is an introduction to 'Erotic Dominance and Submission.'" In the living room of her home the lot of us sat in a circle, mostly on folding chairs, dripping rain and mud, while we waited solemnly to be told something we didn't know. Presumably that's why we were there. I looked at the other attendees, nine or ten of them, mostly middle class people, fairly prosperous looking, middleaged and ordinary. I wondered why each of us had come out on a cold drizzly evening for this meeting, a curious decision withal, and one I never figured out. I liked the Morgan abode, an expensive older house in the Rockridge edge of Oakland, with a high beamed ceiling in the spacious living room, a brick wall at the far end for a fireplace (slight smudges above), and an attractive Ojo de Dios decoration on the wall. I envisioned a buttery somewhere underneath our feet, with a Fortunato secretly immured behind casks of Amontillado. The house was about all I liked so far, aside from the one woman attendee, who wore a blouse cut just low enough to show a little cleavage, and the instructor herself, Ms. Morgan, who was worth looking at.

She is perhaps not really beautiful, and certainly not sexy. She wears her hair short and simply arranged. She wears no obtrusive makeup or nail polish. She wears no rings or other adornments. I seldom remember a woman's clothing, but I believe - I have a vague impression of this - she wore a turtleneck sweater (pale rose with white horizontal stripes), black slacks, and medium heels, perhaps sandals. She doesn't bother to enhance her good features, not out of carelessness but out of a sublime certainty that she is she, and that people will take her for the glory that she is. Probably almost everybody does. She sat most of the time in a wicker chair at the far side of the circle and didn't move around much, but she commanded attention. She has charisma and takes charge without doing much to demand it.

I decided that her impressive poise and assurance came from always having Enough Money. She has never wondered where her next month's rent money is coming from or had to shake cockroaches out of her pantyhose in the cold light of dawn. But money was only the bedrock; atop it, she has erected an imposing edifice: Lili Wilmot Morgan PhD. She is not absolute perfection. If she were a Nebraska farm girl she would be adjudged a little coltish and angular. Her arms are perhaps slightly too long and slender; at times she seems to have a couple too many elbows. Once or twice I thought I detected something vaguely lemur-like in her otherwise graceful gestures. But most of the time she has superb control of her body. I rejoice in minor imperfections. I would be a bit timorous of meeting a goddess.

She explained that she received her doctorate in sociology from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1976, but now considers herself an anthropologist. Evidently she is more interested in studying us natives than in trekking off to Kathmandu or Ulan Bator. Her particular study at the moment is the dominant woman, and she has written a book on the subject.

After introducing herself, Ms. Morgan asked each person to introduce himself in turn and explain his interest in the subject. When it came around to me I said briefly that I was curious about the matter, and carefully refrained from a more honest testament: that I am interested in woman-kind in all her aspects. The secret quiddities of one's life, especially mulierose tendencies, perhaps,

PENSEROSO



A Column by REDD BOGGS

make one sound embarrassingly perverse. The other attendees expressed mild-sounding curiosity about the dominant woman. A few seemed somewhat conversant on the subject, but none seemed an enigma of D&S, at least not at the moment.

The class was devoted largely to a couple of slide shows. The more interesting one depicted the rise of the "dominant woman" in our society as revealed in ads, greeting cards, and other pop culture materials. I thought this was a valid exhibit, although I was unable to detect the "steely gaze" that Ms. Morgan professes to see in the eyes of some of the models. I guess I don't find women very menacing. Many of the women looked rather passive and lackadaisical to me, however "dominant" they were supposed to be. Ms. Morgan herself looks a lot more dominating.

The other slide show included a series of photographs showing Ms. Morgan's own experiments in B&D. She explained lightly that she asks the male "victim" about his fantasies and then tries to bring these fantasies to life. Basically they were humiliating, rather than painful, situations, from which she considerably rescues the "victim" before he is seriously embarrassed. One scene showed a male tied up and left in a secluded spot in Tilden park, above the University campus, but of course he was released as soon as someone chanced along. Other scenes were taken in this very house or out in her backyard. She wondered drolly what the neighbors think, but evidently no one has called the police. I cared not a fig about the "victims" and their silly fantasies, and began to wonder about Ms. Morgan's own part in such activities. She herself did not appear in any of the photos, or at least I didn't recognize her if she did. She seems to imply merely a clinical interest, but surely that can't be all. One wonders, as others have wondered about Margaret Mead's real interest in the sex practices of the primitive peoples of Oceania.

After seeing a lot of similar photos, some of which flashed by as fast as the blips of a pulsar, I grew bored and didn't pay much attention. Then my interest sharpened. One of the photos showed one of Ms. Morgan's "victims" thoroughly trussed up in front of a bricks-and-boards set of bookshelves, probably in another room of this house. The shelves were entirely empty of books. "My god," I thought, "that's *real* torture. A bookcase without any books. The Marquis de Sade never devised any torment to compare with that!"

STRAUNGE STRONDES AND SONDRY LONDES

Once upon a time, a long way back in another world, Gretchen had a chance for a faculty appointment. I think it was at SUNY Brockport or perhaps it was SUNY Binghamton. In fact, she was one of the six finalists for the opening. She didn't get the job, but for a while we had to face the possibility that she might. "What will I do if I'm offered the job?" she asked me one night, having called a council of war between the two of us.

"Well, you'll have to accept it of course," I said. "Jobs in academia are too scarce these days to turn a good one down."

"Heavens," she said, or probably something much more pungent, "what have I done? I don't want to live in the east."

"I don't even want to *visit* the east again," I said gloomily. "It's dirty, overcrowded, hidebound, uptight - an awful place. Once I thought it would be wonderful and exciting to live in New York City, the cultural center of the country, but now - I'd rather live in Tucson, Arizona if I had to choose one or the other."

We remembered how distressed she was, years earlier, when she was told with proper solemnity that to write an acceptable Berkeley dissertation she would have to do research in Europe. We had held a council of war then, too. We discovered that each of us had a strong reluctance to travel to Europe again for any reason. We had each visited Europe once, separately, but we weren't eager to return.

"We're getting hidebound," Gretchen said darkly. "We're getting stick-in-the-mud. But I've lost my desire to travel anywhere except maybe to places in the west. I'm a westerner by nature. The rest of the world doesn't really interest me anymore."

"You're giving up so much!" I told her, spreading my arms and turning all the way around to encompass the universe. "The Taj Mahal reflected in silvery splendor! The Pyramids at sunrise! Tokyo in cherry blossom time! You'll never see the Petit Trianon, the Victoria and Albert museum, St. Paul's or Santa Sophia. You'll never see Sutherland falls, Rindjani volcano, Lake Chad, Chimborazo, Cotopaxi. . . .!"

"At least we can see the Painted Desert, Mount Shasta and San Clemente beach again," she said wistfully. We also talked of visiting Mexico, where she had lived for seven years. Unfortunately she never lived to see once more most of those places, and of course while they are beautiful and well worth seeing, they aren't quite the same thing as the wonders of the great world beyond.

There are many wonderful and exciting places I will never live to see, either. It is a melancholy fact, but - like Gretchen - I have lost my spirit of adventure. I have become an ancient, a fuddy-duddy, a provincial. If I won a year-long, all-expenses-paid trip around the world, I would probably say, "How about two weeks in San Luis Potosi instead?" I don't even want to go to Paris again, as all good Americans are supposed to do when they die. As a ghost I think I will haunt some place in Berkeley, maybe the neighborhood of Prince and Wheeler streets. The wide world? "When I was at home, I was in a better place."

THE UNSPEAKABLE TURK

"Let's eat at the little Turkish place," Parrish said. "Does that sound OK?" I didn't say anything. "It's great food," he added. "Really great. I eat there often." I still didn't say anything. I was too busy thinking of eggplant, surely the most tasteless vegetable ever invented. A Turkish restaurant inevitably would offer eggplant, as well as other barely edible things like lamb bones, black olives, bulgar, and grape leaves, to mention a few.

Humankind, in order to survive, eats up the world, but there are some things I prefer not to ingest. I'm a lover of music, too, as well as of food, but that doesn't make me a connoisseur of noise. I don't go out to hear buildings fall under the wrecking ball. I wouldn't even attend a concert featuring John Cage or Stockhausen. A person ought to put some limits on his enthusiasms.

Parrish looked at me closely, and added the clincher. "The place is right around the corner," he said. The worst restaurants in town are always just around the corner, and you go to them because it's easier than driving three miles in the rain in order to wait for a table at a really good restaurant. Since we were in San Francisco I thought wistfully of beef brisket and latkes at David's and the bountiful buffet at Lehr's Greenhouse amid the blossoming flowers - neither are gourmet palaces, but at least they are acceptable places for a leisurely meal. Then I capitulated politely. We walked around the corner.

I think the place, if it had a name, was called the Sultan's Delight, or perhaps the Arabian Steed. It was one of those places where you order at the counter, being sort of a Middle Eastern hofbrau. All the food was displayed in trays behind glass, which was convenient because the people dishing up the food neither spoke nor understood English. You could point at whatever you wanted, or were willing to chance. Everything looked about the same: unappetizing. I pointed at some entree more or less at random, and we went out into a little courtyard to eat. Our food was brought to us by a young waitress who was far more attractive than the food. She told us she had learned her English at a school in Istanbul. At least she could make herself understood.

We didn't say much during the meal. Parrish was too busy stowing away his food to talk, and I was too busy choking down whatever it was I had ordered. The anticipated eggplant was cold and limp, the pilaf cold and hard. Dessert was a dish of mushy rice, swimming in thin milk, and overladen with a crust of cinnamon. The coffee had a turgid taste of cardamon. Finally Parrish said, "What are you thinking about?" I hesitated. It might sound too much like Walter Mitty saying "Puppy biscuit," but I decided to tell the truth. "Meddybemps," I said.

He waited for the punchline, and when none was forthcoming he said, "Meddybemps? What's that?" "It's a little town in Maine," I explained. "I'm always thinking of Meddybemps." Robert Frost

once wrote that he found it "restful just to think about New Hampshire," adding that "at present I am living in Vermont." Well, sometimes, at present living in California, I find it restful just to think about Meddybemps. Although I have never been there, I picture it as a rustic village with (as someone might remark) a marmalade works at the edge of town. Anyway, it's a long way from here, and there's not a Turkish restaurant in sight.

THE ROAD TO GUMBO-GUMBO

"Everything will be hunky-dory when we get to Gumbo-Gumbo," I assured a friend the other day. Immediately I felt abashed. We weren't really going anywhere, after all, and certainly not to Gumbo-Gumbo, wherever that is. I had merely wanted to say that all was going well, and we should feel encouraged. The rest had just slipped out before I could stop my tongue. I couldn't blame her for falling silent. She looked askance, I looked at the floor and tried to remember. What in the world did I mean? Then I was able to make the connection. "Oh, it's an old catch-phrase," I explained. "It recurred a number of times in a very old movie called *The Cohens and Kellys in Africa*."

I don't think I had called the movie to mind in many long decades, although (for all I know) it may have been seen often on the Late Late Show. On the other hand I may be the last person in the world to remember the film. There was a whole series of Cohen and Kelly movies, if I'm not mistaken. The only other picture I can recall the title of was *The Cohens and Kellys in Hollywood*. I suppose the films rivalled the later series of *Blondie, Ma and Pa Kettle*, and *Porky's* for cinematic excellence. Looking back, I surmise that the pairing of two families named Cohen and Kelly in the movies was inspired by the success of the stage play *Abie's Irish Rose* a few years earlier. I thought the films were pretty funny, but I suppose I wasn't very critical back in those days. I can easily imagine the level of ethnic humor in such films in the Age of Unenlightenment.

For all I know, *The Cohens and Kellys in Africa* may have been the first movie I ever saw. I must have seen it on a very early trip to the "movie show." At the age of 11 I started keeping a list of every film I saw, continuing the custom till sometime during my career in the armed forces during world war 2, at which time (for the only time in my life) I was seeing nearly every movie currently being made. But none of the *Cohens and Kellys* appeared on that list. I don't think I saw too many movies before I was 11. We were poor, and counted every dime and penny. I saw a few pictures: Charlie Chaplin's *City Lights*, Amos 'n' Andy in *Check an' Double Check*, and nearly every episode (silent, I think) of the serial *Eagle of the Night*. I don't suppose, on second thought, that *The Cohens and Kellys in Africa* could have been the first film I ever saw. I must have been only five or six when my grandfather took me to my first movie. I remember being confused by the flickering images on the screen, which I could barely see because of all the towering grownups sitting in the dark in front and on both sides of me. I don't think I could figure out what was going on in the picture at all. *The Cohens and Kellys in Africa*, on the other hand, impressed me sufficiently that I remember a catch-phrase from it after all these years. It is disconcerting to find such trivia from childhood cluttering one's mind at this late date.

Round about A.D. 2035 somebody who is a mere tad today will chuckle with satisfaction and say to a friend, "I love it when a plan comes together!" - and have to explain, a little lamely, "It comes from an old TV show called *The A-Team*. I remember it from when I was a kid."

- Redd Boggs



GOODBYE, ELMER

520 07 0328
2125 Baxter Street
Los Angeles 90039

by Ed Burbee

I KNEW ELMER PERDUE since I was a child. We met shortly after I entered this world in 1941. My view of him developed from the standpoint of a nonfan, who grew to know him as a friend of the family. Of course I also heard of Elmer's doings from my childhood on. In fact, one might even say I became a fan by osmosis through word of mouth and from involuntary association with a variety of fans over my lifetime. Elmer Perdue took a stellar position in this process.

In this farewell I give you my personal memory of him. It is time to say good bye to a family friend.

I LIKED ELMER. He was big-hearted. His personality was expansive, generous, interesting and different. He added something to the room he was in. Just these few qualities alone distinguish him from all but the tiniest fraction of our race.

As well, his life showed the wild yet calls us away from the humdrum. Poets urge us, by every device, to abandon ourselves to this voice, if we are to be human. Elmer Perdue tried to live this universal. To him for that I say bravo.

But I rush ahead. Let me start at the beginning.

I remember Elmer assembling fanzine mailings for FAPA in our home upstairs at 1057 S. Normandie Ave. in Los Angeles. It was sometime after World War II. He was one among many others present. Nothing fannish about him stands out from those days, only his friendliness and attentiveness.

Even now that setting remains clear to me: Stacks of multicolored, mimeographed papers lay atop chairs, tables and other flat surfaces, in a kind of loose-chained order. Grown men walked by these stacks, picking up sheets of paper from each, talking and joking, while drinking beer and smoking cigarettes. They let me help. It was a party to them, although it had a serious note because of the Postmark and the Deadline, which were always mentioned

with an overtone of urgency. The smell of fresh mimeograph ink on paper still makes me nostalgic.

Lines from a rowdy song current at the time bring back those days, too: "Cigareets and whiskey/and wild, wild women/they'll drive you crazy/they'll drive you insane." They forever evoke that time and place. If I were to hear them right now, my eyes would glaze and mist . . . Excuse me. I digress. This is about Elmer Perdue.

AND THERE IS A LOT to say of this man Elmer. Others have recorded his deeds and adventures over the years and will rank him in the cosmology of fandom. To them I leave the telling of stories touching on his craftiness at poker playing, the vagaries of his love life, his collections of valuable memorabilia, the content of his writing, his contribution to FAPA, his musicality, his genial impishness, his shrewdness in financial matters, his peccadillos, and all the rest.

Here I confine myself to a few wanderings and a glimpse of his place in the sun.

I relish the anecdote of how he once met FAPA's requirement of eight written pages a year to stay a member. He bought a typewriter with an oversized typeface so fewer words than expected filled each page. Apparently, nobody had thought of this loophole when drafting the requirement. Elmer did, and thereby twitted a segment of fandom. The hubbub lasted months.

But do not suppose, even for an iota of eternity, that Elmer disdained this requirement. It was only his sense of humor playing itself out.

Along this line, veteran fans will recall the occasion when he travelled nearly a thousand miles round-trip to deliver his written material for a FAPA mailing deadline at the very last minute. It was to Gregg Calkins' house, via taxicab, airplane and rented car. He made the delivery at the front door, uttered mini-

mal comment, and then immediately turned around and headed home. His stunt-like journey transformed an otherwise trivial act into an event. He took the deadline seriously, but saw it also as an object of sport. Afterward, who could ever again mention a FAPA deadline with a frown? Who could ever again regard it without thinking of Elmer's high jinks?

On another occasion, at a fan convention, he appeared wearing a button with the word "God" on it. By itself this button must have shocked some convention-goers. But he carried it further. During his fraternizing he came upon a fan and presented him with a fifty dollar bill, saying, "The Lord giveth."

Later he went up to the same fan and took back the bill, saying, "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away."

To this day I think of the button episode. For me it epitomizes the humor of Elmer Perdue, thumbing his nose at standard views or stirring up a black-and-white controversy, while having big fun along the way. At the same time, he also enjoyed surprise and the unexpected, being a natural source of both. The combination of it all made for a colorful individual impossible to pigeonhole.

HE WAS TRAINED as an engineer and worked many years for the City of Los Angeles as a traffic engineer. Obviously he was an intelligent, sensitive man. I believe he was born and raised in Wyoming and came to L.A. looking for a job after college. My knowledge of his biography beyond these few facts is sketchy, although I am aware he had a sister, and I even met her. Generally he kept his background to himself, not volunteering information. As a result, some facets of his life remain unknown, which only compounds the interest attaching to him.

Once he told me when he retired he wanted to buy a Rolls Royce. I asked him why, but his answer was vague, as if to say explanation were not needed; the act would speak. He never did buy the car, but his desire to own this symbol of opulence fitted his character. Such a fabulous automobile would call notice to pretension in general and to himself as its deflator. In the meantime, of course, he would drive around in splendor. An irony probably enters here, too, if I could put my finger on it. He did not say all this; I am filling in the blanks.

Maybe I give him too much credit for seeing the purpose of his own acts. So be it. While some men wish to examine the future or measure the past, I would be content to have you know Elmer Perdue, even if embellished a little beyond the truth, for this moment is my time to speak of him. And I wear rosy glasses if I please.

SEVERAL TIMES IN THE 1970s, I visited him at his home on Baxter Street in Los Angeles. We had talks. We discussed the fickleness of women,

but not much on the subject, and with no bitterness from him.

He showed me his collection of gold coins, and we laughed when I mentioned its impact on the opposite sex. Imagine how alert women must have become on learning of its existence. I still see his wry smile.

On drinking he said, "Don't start," with that tone of conviction which only long reflection imparts. In so many words, he pointed to himself as an example of how drinking befouls and destroys a man.

Yes, he was lonely, too. It is plain no good for a man to grow old without a female companion. He kept poor dietary habits, eating too much factory-processed food, which is one of the curses of our day. He also had certain ailments, but neglected to look after them properly. His drinking exacerbated everything. I hated to see this condition of his.

HOW INGLORIOUS SIMPLY TO DIE, and nothing else to it. Tragedy arises partly from the gap between the promise of life and its shortfall. Fandom thrives because it gives the not-so-ordinary man who has talent an avenue whereby he may emerge into prominence among his immediate peers, thus easing life's natural tragedy. From that realm he may advance to a plane of life in which a measure of fannish fame sprinkles its denizens. Elmer Perdue, of course, went beyond this level, but not so far as to escape the sober facts. After all, a man can pull himself out of the dirt only so much. We are not yet angels. Elmer took wing, to be sure, but fell back to Earth in the end, just as every man has and must. We saw him fly. We wince at his inevitable fall and turn our heads to avoid seeing his crash to the ground. But we all at last return to this domain. We cleave to the planet, not the sky, except in our dreams. Who would have it any other way? We soar, we fall. It is a circle. I remember Elmer Perdue as he soared.

My father told me of his death in January of this year. The news made me sad. He went so quickly and quietly for such an advertised man. No details came with the news. I suppose I expected some kind of flourish or melodrama, in keeping with his life. I later learned he entered the hospital one day, died the next, and was cremated the day after. If only I had known of his final illness, I would have visited him one more time, to say good bye, to hold his hand and squeeze it. But alas he went too fast.

Even unfading skeptics, who have no use for the spiritual dimension of life, will perhaps agree that we had a hundred dollar bill in our hands, so easily given to us, yet so easily taken back. Where is Elmer now? Some of us know, some do not, but let us all hope he rests in peace.

- Ed Burbee

WE NEVER SLEEP

We must quit now this nation of lawyers.

Without criticizing or condemning what we leave behind, let us open our arms to a life based on trust in the spirit, not the letter, of the Law.

Let us do what we can – and what we have to – to take money down a peg or two from its place of importance in our lives.

You are not what you buy. You are not what you get paid. Remembering this, you'll find it a lot easier not to be for sale.

What can we do to improve our world? We can take apart the lie machine.

This is not just a job for those who have lived in authoritarian nations. It is also a job for all who live in media nations, corporate takeover nations, banker nations, nations of advertisers, nations of bureaucrats, nations of senators, nations of lawyers.

Take apart the lie machine – not only in the world around you, but most of all in your own daily life. Unplug the sucker. Speak from your heart.

Be truthful, be loving. Be gentle, be firm. Be radical, be courageous. Be yourself. // It sounds so simple. It's not. Because in the name of the self, our worst lies are spoken.

Our great enemy is self-importance. It keeps us apart when we could be together. It keeps us proud and confused when we could be asking for guidance. It keeps us angry when we could forgive.

Nation of lawyers doesn't get paid for forgiveness. Nation of advertisers can't afford higher guidance. Nation of journalists knows only too well it's easier to sell fear than love.

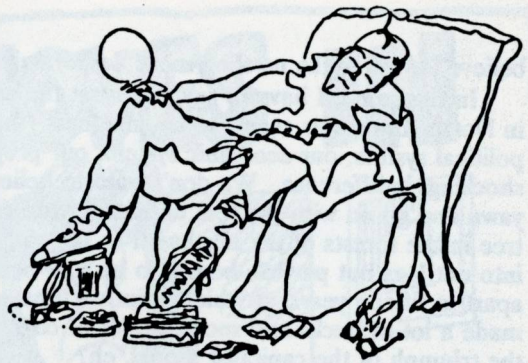
Today we transform ourselves. Today the wall of fear and control comes down. Today the passageway of courage and risk is opened. And we don't know where it leads.

Today we renounce our materialism. Today we take our eyes off the prize and let go. Today we begin to trust that this really is the great adventure we always wanted it to be.

...You have been reading the first twelve pages of a work in progress, December 1989, entitled *Nation of Lawyers*. This is one of my prose poetry essays, a booklet or book depending on how long it turns out to be, with each of the paragraphs above on a separate page (stretched out a little to help slow down the pace of the reading; I'm a slow – contemplative, associative – reader, and I guess I like to encourage the same vice in others).

One of a number of things influencing the content of *Nation of Lawyers* is, of course, the transformative revolution occurring in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union. It is inspiring; on this we all agree. But *what* does it inspire in, say, folks in the U.S.A.? I am of two minds on this.

One of my minds is cynical, in relation to the U.S.A. (though quite optimistic about Europe and about the political world as a whole – one can't be very optimistic in the short run about the planetary ecology, except insofar as a saner body politic among the planet's humans is the only hope and therefore political optimism implies good news for the environment in the long run). This mind, which I have on much of the time, regards the people of the U.S. as desperately and dreadfully asleep to almost everything that's going on (a) in the world and (b) in their own country. And the projection, as far as the state of awareness of the average American, is that it'll get worse before it gets worse. Our short-sighted greed and smugness and self-absorption and amazing ability to lie to ourselves (notably in fueling a decade of economic boom-times for the haves by borrowing against the future like there's no tomorrow, robbing and plundering the nation's natural resources and economic infrastructure and calling it enlightened leadership, calling it "good for business" when in fact it's poison for business) will soon cause America's economic position to decline rapidly, and this decline will not sober us but will only make us more desperate to find a lying politician we can



believe in, will make us cling more desperately to our materialism as we see it ebb away from us.

In this mind, I have to say that what the news from the (formerly) Communist nations inspires in North Americans seems to be smugness (the dangerous and absurd notion that "we" - our political system, our economic system, our propaganda - were right all along) and, even more shocking, indifference. We don't want to believe the world is changing, so we'll smile and wave and yawn and go on with the real important work we're doing, like figuring out how to strip harvest every tree in the forests of the northwest so they can be shipped to mills in poorer countries and turned into not logs but particle board, to be sold back to the U.S. to build houses that will literally fall apart in fifteen years, at which point we'll have no forest and no housing but someone will have made a lot of bucks and snorted a lot of coke out of the deal. That's free enterprise in 1990, that's the triumph of the capitalist model, eh?

Oooh, bitter, bitter. My other mind argues that it's always darkest before the dawn, and that a true structural and behavioral transformation is possible here and that it can happen just as suddenly and unexpectedly as it's happened in the "communist" world. I'm certainly pleased and excited about the triumph over nationalism that's been occurring in *Western* Europe. Nothing like that seems to be going on in the U.S. - but possibly the lies our system is based on will be destabilized so thoroughly by the collapse of the balancing lie in the east that authentic change will take place in this land. If so, I ask myself, what form could it take? What could we do that would be even half as radical as what's happening in Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R.? How can we compete in this race for awakening?

Harlem
An obvious answer is dismantling the military-industrial complex. Trouble is, putting it that way is too linear; it suggests a continuation of old politics and old forms, struggling with the beast on its terms, which doesn't allow for the kind of sudden sweeping change that has been so inspiring in Eastern Europe. Certainly I want to see such a dismantling (to say I expect it, though, would be overly optimistic), but to really make it work we need to go further.

What I can imagine that would be truly radical, truly transformative, is a successful revolt against advertising (political and commercial, in virtually all its forms) and against the rule of law insofar as what we really have is rule by lawyers. I can imagine it in a general, abstract sense, but I can't envision the actual scenario - and that's good, any scenario that can be envisioned is probably just the same old thing dressed up as new, like fall TV programming. When I say we need transformation, I mean real transformation. Imagine shutting off the drug of TV news and entertainment - wouldn't that daze the citizenry and the powers that be, eh?

I got a tape from Gary Deindorfer that really delights me - it's a history of jazz he did for a local radio station, not using recordings but instead playing fragments of the music he's talking about on his saxophone, unaccompanied. It's courageous, naked, full of heart. Different. Modest, arrogant, charming - it communicates a personal truth. This, I think, is what we need: simpler, cruder, truer ways of telling our own stories. Redefining reality by cutting through the samenesses of the forms in which we communicate about it. Breaking out of the prison of the daily newspaper. In this sense the obviousness with which President Bush positions himself on both sides of so many issues, simultaneously, is fascinating - I don't think it's working, except in the sense that he hasn't been lynched yet, but it does sort of fry the circuits, doesn't it? Listen, the less powerful and important the American presidency is the better I like it. Let the disinformation machine jam itself. Maybe the era of the believable lie ended with Reagan - given that it was only believable because our desire to believe was so intense. Maybe there are forces at work - no, scratch that. There *are* forces at work much larger than our petty imaginations. This is exciting. This is the awareness my "other" mind clings to, and it's right. History is not what's been but what's becoming. Jazz is what one person hears, and is shared when he stands before you and tells you his story, blowing it out through a shaky horn. This truth cuts through millions of dollars of entertainment industry packaging. The Wall is down. The Iron Curtain is down. We thought it only affected and oppressed "them," the people on the other side. We gonna find out how wrong we were.

- Paul Williams

NATURE MOVES IN

BY
JUDITH
HANNA



The trouble with living close to nature is the way nature moves in with you.

Not such a problem when the invasion is a stray blue fair wren (*Malurus superbus*, not to be confused with the superb blue wren, *Malurus splendens*, which does not live in the part of southern West Australia where my family has a farm, and where I grew up). Every now and then, a wren would chase an insect through an open door into the house. And we would shepherd it out as gently as we could, given the bloody bird's panicky determination to keep going the wrong way. A couple of times we ended up having to take the fly screens off all the lounge room windows for particularly silly birds which seemed bent on battering themselves into nervous collapse rather than obey our perfectly clear and explicit tea-towel signals.

The blue wrens were shy birds who would lie low when there were strangers about. Once they had got used to us, we got used to seeing them darting about the garden hunting down insects. Tiny birds, out of breeding season they were brown with iridescent blue tails and wing tips. Come spring, the adult males became all over royal blue, with eye patches of turquoise and purple caps, vivid as jewels on the wing. Although we got used to their presence, they aren't a bird one takes for granted. We were fascinated when a pair built a nest inside the fuschia bush outside the back door, where we could see into it from the louvred windows. Unfortunately, the cat also discovered the nest. Then one of the boys gave the fuschia a pruning from which it never recovered, so that was that.

Come spring, the wrens waged war on windows. At first we wondered whether they were catching the spiders which build their webs to catch the moths attracted to the night-time lights inside. Then we noticed that they flew at the kitchen and living room windows in the morning and the bedroom windows after lunch. In fact, at the windows which were catching and reflecting back the sun. The male wrens were attacking their own reflections, trying to drive off the aggressive rival they saw flying at them, refusing to be driven off their territory! To save the poor little buggers from exhausting themselves in the Mirror Wars, we hung dark plastic fly-netting outside the windows, to banish the Phantom Foe. The light machine gun rat-tat-tat of beak and claw on glass ceased, and

the wrens could concentrate on looking decorative, producing baby wrens, and biological control of the insect population.

The insect and arachnid population did more than support the wrens and various other birds. It is well known that Australia has the friendliest flies in the world. Despite flyscreens on all windows and doors, it just isn't possible to keep the house entirely fly-free. For one thing, you have to open the flyproof doors to go in and out. And on hot summer days, each time you do, a herd of flies charges through the gap.

There are three main sorts of flies. There are the little black bush flies, or heat flies, which seek out shade and will gather on your back (or the back of your shirt – a good reason for wearing one) or around your eyes, if not constantly waved away, a gesture known as the Great Australian Salute. Or you douse yourself with Aeroguard or some other insect repellent. But they don't accompany you into the house. Except when the temperature outside has crept up to unbearable, i.e., over 110° F.

Then there are the blowflies, which are large and buzz annoyingly. They lay their eggs on meat. The shiny green ones like to lay on live meat: for instance, in the warm wet wool around a sheep's crutch or pizzle. The dull hair black ones prefer dead meat as a meal for their maggots, which makes them major competitors with human beings for any chop, joint or other meat, cooked or uncooked, left uncovered even a moment in the kitchen. On the sheep, their smooth maggots burrow in the wake of the hairy maggots laid by the shiny green blowies, feeding on the rotting flesh of the living, soon enough dead, sheep. So they are a major farm problem and chemical warfare is waged against them. The noise blowies make is not the major reason for disliking them.

And of course there are plenty of houseflies, as found in city and suburb, which hang about in the hope of food. Did you know flies feed by regurgitating their acid stomach contents onto the titbit they're about to tackle, paddling about on it with their germ-laden feet to reduce it to a mushy liquid consistency which they can suck up through their proboscis. Not knowing these things can be so much more comfortable.

Naturally, there are lots of spiders doing their best to keep up with the abundance of flies. This is why we not only tolerate but rather like spiders. Some build their webs on the outside of the house, under the eaves and around the window frames where flies rest in the shade during daytime, and moths frustrated by the flyscreens blocking the lit up windows sink to rest at night. There is no need for curtains or blinds out on the farm – there's no one but the insects and the sheep dogs to peer in.

Arachnid insect control units are also present in the house. We treasure a couple of Phyllis Diller quotes (printed in the *Australian Women's Weekly* years ago, back when it was less glossy and a sensible size you could sit on at a picnic before you fed it into the fire). "This house has gone beyond the lived-in look. It looks more like no survivors," seemed pretty apt for our lifestyle of everyone leaving all sorts of things everywhere. The other one we treasured was, "That spider web? Oh, you mean little Johnny's science project!" We had lots of science projects, all over the house.

Most of the webs that trailed across any corners they could find were the homes of harmless daddy-long-legs. It wasn't that we didn't try to keep them under control. Just about every weekend, and whenever visitors were expected or were heard approaching, one of us girls would go around with the decobwebbing brush on its long handle, sweeping away the flimsy festoons of silk, dust and fly corpses. We'd clean them off the brush by wiping it along long grass, leaving the wrens to pick out any juicy corpses. But most of the daddy-long-legs would have dodged into the crevices between the wooden battens and fibro (i.e., pressed asbestos) board of the walls and ceiling, then saunter out nonchalantly once the fit of housekeeping had passed to set up their bio-pest-control project anew. On the whole, we preferred having cobwebs to having flies.

Nor did the huntsmen, or wolf spiders, bother us. They'd come out late at night, after the bright lights had been turned off, and they hunted by prowling along walls, ceiling or floor, and pouncing on their supper. They were flat, like soft crabs with palps instead of claws, pale browns, and varied from two to four inches across. Their idea of supper was something smaller than they were, so

humans were fairly safe. Although "tarantula" was one of their common names, most of them weren't at all poisonous. Admittedly, it was disconcerting to look down at a tickle and find this huge hair spider padding over the terrain of your leg or arm. Or to gaze up the wall above your bed and find one contemplating whether to leap onto your face. But on the whole they were well-behaved house guests, and sensible enough to keep a safe distance from unchancy humans.

It was when we found redbacks inside the house that we got annoyed. Redbacks are nasty secretive spiders, which build fairly dense sticky webs in dark corners and hidden places. You recognize them by their sleek build and the red splash on their globular abdomens, or by the yellow egg sacs woven into their webs ready to disgorge more little redbacks. The first time we found a redback invasion was on return from holidaying down the coast one Christmas.

"Goodness," I said as I opened the front screen door, "that looks like a redback web." And sure enough, the spider in it looked just like a redback too. So we squashed it with a broom handle and brushed away its web. And that, we thought, was that. Over the next couple of days we launched the usual onslaught to fight back the tide of nature to semi-civilized standards. So I decided to give a good polishing to the carved oval Chinese table with its little of six little carved tables. Pulling out the first of the pup tables, my fingers met sticky, spider-webby stuff. So I whipped it out and flipped it over. More nasty poisonous redbacks. So Operation Genocide was launched, with the dustpan brush as the Deadly Redback Squasher, and the carved table family got the most ruthless cleaning it had encountered since it left the workshop.

But the buggers keep coming back. Last time I was home, I decided to clear out and dust all the books and bookcases. At least, the six in the living room. By managing to resist the temptation to read the books, I finished the job, too. Found half a dozen or so redbacks in various hiding places. You stop worrying about them after a while. Just as long as you look where you're about to put your hand - before you grab. But we've never (so far) found a redback on the toilet seat like the great Australian song says. And luckily we don't get funnelweb spiders, who sneak into shoes left empty overnight. Nor trapdoor spiders. They're both members of the black widow (or real tarantula) family, and are found on the east coast of Australia.

Finding a scorpion on my hairbrush one evening was much more worrying. It was a very elegant scorpion, delicately carved in gleaming dark bronze. And it curved its tail at me most gracefully. Then it launched itself onto my pillow. So I beat it up with the hairbrush. What was most worrying was that it vanished. No clue whether it was living or massacred. Still, couldn't stay awake worrying all night. So after checking again it was definitely, absolutely nowhere on the bed, I curled up and turned off the light. Next morning I found the corpse caught up in the bristles of the hairbrush and was able to admire its elegance at greater leisure.

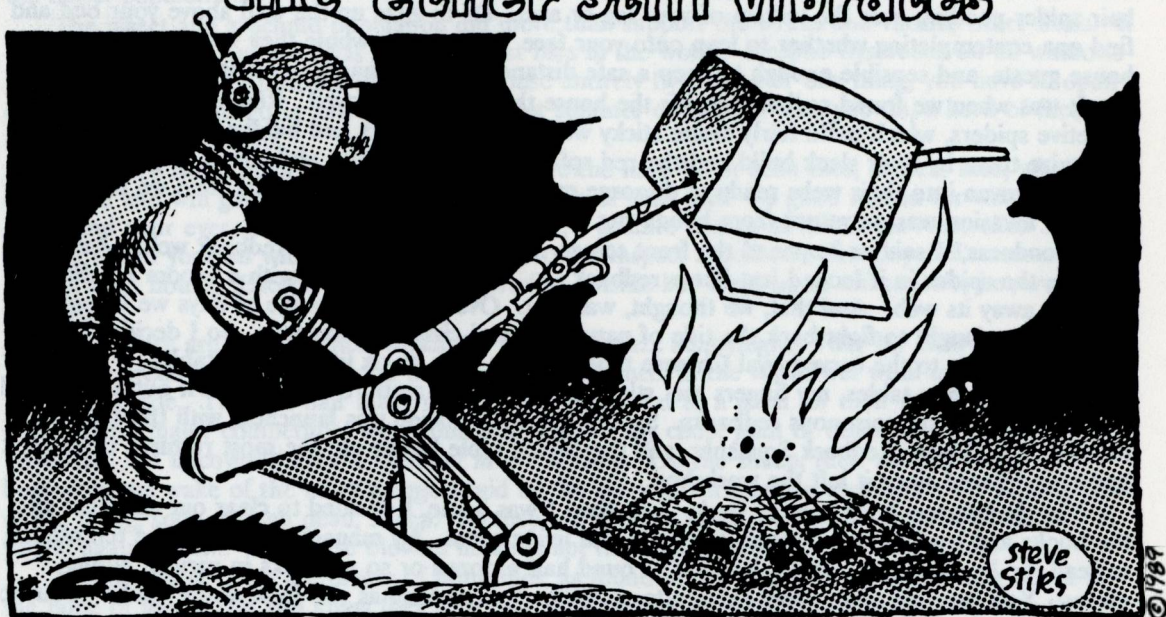
Then there were snakes. We had always wanted a pet carpet snake, which is a non-poisonous python, to live in the shearing shed as rodent control. But the only carpet snakes we've seen have been on the road, flattened and dead.

Poisonous snakes we've had visit us, tiger snakes and dugites (which are black snakes). Dad would get out the rifle, to deal with them from a safe distance. We were impressed: he shot the first couple of them clean through their heads. But I don't think we've had any snakes since the day Julian spotted a dugite heading straight for the front of the house. The boys got down the rifles and took shots at it in turn. As the first few bullets raised dust around it, the snake checked, confused. Then it jerked as one winged it. The bullets kept coming; it turned tail, jerking more and more frantically each time it was hit. Still alive, still struggling to escape, but to crippled to get away. Poor little snake. The boys put it out of its misery with the axe.

It's a complex ecological interaction, living on a farm. The couple of thousand merino sheep out in the paddocks growing wool have infrequent traumatic contacts with humans, their dogs and machines: shearing, dipping, drenching, jetting against blowfly strike. Scattered areas of bush provide a diminishing habitat for kangaroos, emus and several hundred varieties of wildflowers;

(continued to inside back cover)

the ether still vibrates



ERIC MAYER

I'm afraid I just don't loc voluminously as I used to. One reason is the uneasy feeling I have that some fans are liable to pounce onto the infelicitous phrase, the unwisely chosen word, the offhand remark, and proceed to give to it an import and importance that was never intended for it. The Mike Glicksohn letter Dave Langford alludes to is a mild example. I've seen this "quote" from Mike before - though I haven't read the original. I'm quite sure Mike never meant to imply that I was literally kicked out of fandom. Dave is quite correct in noting that this isn't the case, that it is in any event an impossibility. I've certainly never felt anything like that. I imagine that all Mike meant was that the aggro I was getting was such that fandom was more unpleasant to me than not and so I turned most of my efforts elsewhere. I certainly agree with Dave that there is no reason to think that there is something fraudulent about the face one presents to fandom via the typewriter. Obviously most people try to put their best foot forward when meeting others, either on paper or in person. (And some are better at doing so in person than on paper, and vice versa.) But mainly, in writing, people try to communicate and one of the attractions of amateur press is that you can be honest, be yourself, say what's important to you without the constraints of the marketplace.

I don't get too many fanzines these days and a lot of them seem to bemoan the dearth of fanzines and

new fans. Now, I don't want to become embroiled in any arguments so let me preface this by saying that the following is strictly *my opinion*. It isn't intended as a value judgment or a position paper or anything; it's just some thoughts. My first thought is that the sheer cost of producing a US genzine might be the biggest factor mitigating against them. A genzine, almost by definition, should have a pretty wide readership and there are so many US fans that means a big circulation and all the resulting costs. I would imagine a British faned could make some pretense of wide distribution with fewer copies. *{This is true in terms of a British faned reaching all the active fans in the UK. Based on queries while over there, I determined that the typical British genzine has a circulation of 100-125, with 10-25 copies going to fans in the US and a scattering elsewhere. This excludes zines like PULP with a wider US circulation.}*

Then there is the problem that what many sf fans say they want differs from what their actions show they want. You don't go to a lot of cons and have trouble even finding the \$250 it takes to put out an issue of TRAP DOOR, so you may well cite finances as the reason it's infrequent. *{One reason, anyway. And this issue is a new, larger size involving over \$300 in expenses.}* But a lot of fans - among them, I suspect, many of those who wonder where all the zines have gone - spend a lot of time and a lot of money attending cons. Why not spend some on zines if they are, indeed, important? The point I'm trying to make

is that you make your choice. If your choice is to go to cons, you can't expect someone else to do the zines for you.

Maybe a more interesting question is not why fans are seemingly choosing, more and more, to center their activity on in-person fanac, but why - even so - a lot of fans still seem to feel the decline in paper fanac? Is paper fanac something of real value, or is the concern about its decline related more to fannish tradition?

The impulse toward self publishing is thriving outside of fandom. (And I'm not so sure the activity inside is so dire as some people seem to think either.) In the past couple years I've been involved in things from mini-comics to general underground type zines and apas...not literary things...just people communicating about their lives...same as sf fandom. Many of these folks could, just as well, be in sf fandom. When I've printed their writing in DEJA VU, a lot of my readers who are fans just assumed they were sf fans also.

Now I'm much more comfortable with the idea that fandom is, more basically, rooted in a love for friendly communication, a love of writing, publishing. Fans often perceive themselves as somehow "different." But what makes them different? When you stop and think about it, you see it can't be that they are fans...they became "fans" because of whatever this perceived difference is that they share with other fans. I won't even speculate on that, except to say that it strikes me there must be other traits, interests, outlooks sf fans could concentrate on underneath the accoutrements of fandom. Joe Fan (news)

As you say, the Roman Empire lasted a long time. The Eastern part, in fact, lasted by adhering to tradition, adhering to its Roman heritage. Maybe fandom will be like that. On the other hand, life went on in the Western part, too, although the empire there became less and less identifiable as Roman.

Well, once you get to the Roman Empire parallels, it's time to quit. (279 Collingwood Drive, Rochester NY 14621)

(Actually, I think you're on to something here. Fandom as it is practiced in the pages of this fanzine and a few others might be characterized as Eastern in the above framework, while fandom as practiced in zines like LAN'S LANTERN (to cite the most prominent current example) represents the other, newer (Western?) manifestation. Considering the primary sources of new fans these days are conventions and the media, both of which are not print oriented and thus draw a different sort of individual than the older fans who largely came in through the prozines and other print mediums, it's no surprise that the fanzines produced in this new tradition bear only a passing resemblance to "our" fanzines. One can hardly fault them considering their more immediate roots; however, not

faulting them doesn't make them any more interesting or engaging to read for Eastern fans. But to their readers, whose names in the letter columns have little overlap with those reading this fanzine, they're *What's Happening, Man!*)

SAM MOSKOWITZ

I was particularly interested in your editorial comments about the decline of the in-group fan magazines such as OUTWORLDS. I buy a lot of fan or semi-pro magazines including *(and here follows a list of 35 titles which I will not reproduce)* and a number of others, and the degree of specialization is obvious and, quite frankly, more desirable than some of the masses of aimless waifs that were so common in the '50s and '60s, which I possess in staggering quantities. It is literally impossible to buy them all any longer, especially since the price per copy is in dollars and not in cents, and impossible (except for superman Harry Warner Jr.) to send them all a letter of comment.

Then, too, I am getting older and more afflicted and I have a mass of fascinating information available nowhere else that I would like to codify and pass on to those interested before I go on to my great reward beyond Social Security. You know, I didn't stop writing *The Immortal Storm* because of inertia, but simply because FANTASY COMMENTATOR, where it was running, gaffiated for about 25 years. The research and information to bring it up to at least World War II and further if I wanted to make it a dedication is in perfect order and can be revived from suspended animation anytime, provided I am not stricken with further physical woes. It is my intention to carry on another substantial segment for FANTASY COMMENTATOR.

I have noticed for a long time that fandom was no longer in orbit around some central mass. I can remember when attending world conventions, when if there was a face I didn't recognize I either introduced myself or asked someone to identify it. Now I am grateful to recognize a face, any face, in the masses around me.

But more than a fan era is passing. When I put together my book, *Seekers of Tomorrow*, in 1966 and subtitled it "Modern Masters of Science Fiction," I was already asking the question, "How Modern is Modern?" The era of "modern" science fiction which started with Campbell in 1938 was already 27 years old when that book appeared, and magazine science fiction was only 13 years old when Campbell took over! Unless there are some unknown manuscripts published posthumously, there will be no more new Heinlein, Herbert, Simak, Sturgeon, Kuttner, Moore, Bester and others who flourished under Campbell. Those who remain from his era range from the sixties to the eighties, and will become an increasingly small

percentage of the total. Many of them have been fortunate that science fiction went into its biggest boom in their old age, enhancing the value of their past contributions and raising their potential earnings beyond anything dreamed of when they started. (361 Roseville Ave., Newark NJ 07107)

HARRY ANDRUSCHAK

You mention some of the reasons fanzine fans are in decline, but you didn't mention how time consuming fanzines can be. For many of us, holding down a steady job, commuting, shopping, cooking, housework, and all the other requirements of civilized living leave little time for hobbies. How do fans like Laskowski do it? How do *you* do it? And part of my problem is like that of Jeff Schalles. I, too, like to hike outdoors. Here in Southern California, although considered by many to be a concrete jungle, we have many wilderness and forest areas near to Los Angeles. One of my favorite hiking and backpacking areas is Joshua Tree National Monument, about three hours away and consisting of 850 square miles of pristine desert. So I spend my two days off work hiking around the deserts and mountains and come back home to more fanzines. Are fanzines decreasing in number? I doubt it, or why am I always so far behind in my correspondence. And how does Harry Warner Jr. do it?! (P.O. Box 5309, Torrance CA 90510)

DAVID E. ROMM

I didn't get into fandom because it was sexy, and I'm not going to leave just because Avedon Carol says it isn't. Fandom in my first active fanzine period (1974-78) was very much how you see fandom today. Few major genzines, a verbose British fandom, clubzines, a focus on fans from earlier periods, and US fandom splintered horizontally and vertically. Back then, blame was laid on *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, media in general, the SCA and conventions. Now, blame is laid on *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, media in general, the SCA, conventions and computers. Hooray for computers; at least *something* has changed!

Fandom has changed from the small coterie of social outcasts in the late '30s to the larger groups of friends which cross geographic and educational boundaries. In my cursory examination of fandoms then and now, a few conclusions can be drawn. I would say that the average fan now knows more fans, has been to more conventions, has seen more fanzines, and has more fun than fans at any time previously. What has changed is that today's fans don't regard fanzines as the backbone of their fannish experience. Those were someone else's Good Old Days, not mine.

But all this has been said before - by me if no one else.

The Old and Tired Fans of my era (many of the same people as now, interestingly enough) com-

plained that there was no Big Zine, no Leader of the Pack for all and sundry to admire and emulate. So what? That just means that fandom has grown beyond the confines of a room party. That's good, don't you think?

Regarding rich brown's article, God would win the Ultimate Marvel Comic given the proper writer. But I dread all the crossovers and tie-ins. (3308 Stevens Ave. S., Minneapolis MN 55408)

JOHN-HENRI HOLMBERG

Your editorial struck a truly sad note, I believe. What identifiable fannish genzines I have seen in the last dozen years or so (or almost all) to my recollection were published by fans who were active in the '50s or '60s and then made comebacks. I would assume that simple fact may largely explain the demise of fannish fandom. With a faster turnover in fans, and with thousands of them instead of dozens or hundreds, the fundamental closeness of shared contacts, backgrounds, reading and so on probably necessary to the kind of ingroup informality fannish fandom large consisted of becomes impossible. To reach people where the majority is always unknown, it is reasonably much more profitable to talk about *Star Wars* than, say, Charles Burbee.

I would like to go on here, but if I am to get this off this week, even, I simply can't. Today's first meeting is coming up in a few minutes; then I am supposed to hold another one to discuss graphic profile; from that I should talk to an agent for probably quite some time; today's mail will be here in half an hour and must be checked - and so it goes. In fact, I suspect this is also an experience I share with many fannish fans, and which may in its way also contribute to our gradual fading from the scene - the simple fact that as we grow older and, one hopes, more successful in whatever fields we have entered professionally, the demands on time, creativity and consistency of effort made by fanac simply become impossible to combine with professional obligations. Which of course may be viewed with some equanimity. Perhaps in from 10 to 25 years, fannish fandom will experience a renewed, late but fairly long flowering when we all retire and spend our declining years publishing the resurrected legendary fanzines of the 1950s and '60s. (Aldermansvagen 13, S-260 40 Viken, Sweden)

DON FITCH

Harry Andruschak is fond of saying that we apa and fanzine fans are fossils, and recently Fred Patten (in an APA L comment) marked the decline of the LASFS from the time it grew so large that no longer was everyone aware of and involved in every club project. Maybe my vision was unduly limited at the time, or memory is faulty, but it sure seems to me that back during at least my first decade in fandom

(1955-1965) practically everyone in fandom was linked with practically everyone else through the communications network of fanzines. If you thought of yourself as a fan, and were considered a fan by others, you got and participated in at least a couple of fanzines. Every significant idea or attitude of importance to fandom could be expected to show up in a fanzine and be spread, quickly, to most of the others. You knew what was going on, you expressed your opinions (which probably had some effect), you *participated* in fandom.

There's no possibility that those halcyon days (fan feuds and all) can be brought back; things have changed too much, in too many ways. *{Except for the continuing existence of fan feuds, eh?}* There's a finite number of interpersonal relationships which can be handled by one individual. When there were 500 people at a Westercon, we could have a speaking acquaintance with half of them, perhaps, but not when there are 2,000. We could have a reasonable number of things in common with 300 or so people, perhaps, but as the number increases, this community of interest and attitude attenuates rapidly. We have always had fringe fans and fringe fandoms, of course, but in the past decade or so they seem not to have spun off the way the SCA did. And many of the new "fans" are simply not oriented towards the printed word - fanzines would be a totally alien world for them. It seems likely, too, that there has been a significant change in mundane society; twenty or so years ago, young people of a certain unconventional personality type found themselves largely ostracized by their peers and fandom was the only place they could even begin to find themselves reasonably comfortable and at home, while today that sort of unconventionality seems to be acceptable in mundane contexts. In any event, contemporary "fandom" certainly contains a large percentage of young people for whom it is merely another social outlet (of many), and from whom we cannot expect the Intense Involvement once characteristic of fandom. *{I think that, more than society accepting unconventionality (far from it, as witness the impact of the religious right with convention sources ranging from the Bible to "Father Knows Best" reruns), there are these days many more paths as unconventional as fandom (some even more so) available to young people of a "certain unconventional personality type." And many of these other hobby obsessions include fanzines. As Eric Mayer said above, amateur publishing is flourishing. Check out FACTSHEET FIVE for a good sampling of what's out there.}* (3908 Frijo, Covina CA 91722)

BERNI PHILLIPS

Besides the points you listed in "Doorway" concerning the dearth of genzines, I see some additional reasons.

First Fandom came together, as I understand it, primarily as a result of letter columns in the prozines of the time. SF then was concentrated in the magazines. This has shifted, with now a greater volume of novels being sold as compared to the number of magazines. There is no way to be interactive with the SF community as a whole through the reading of a novel. In the modern prozines, the letter columns have declined and in some cases are non-existent, so again there is no hook to draw one into fandom.

Another reason, of which I'm sure you're painfully aware, is that fanzines receive very little exposure at most cons. Progress reports do not spend time reporting fanzines as they do events such as dances, masquerades and Japanese animation. With no fanzine room, a neo is unlikely to be drawn into fanzine fandom. Fanzine fen keep a pretty low profile.

I think a big reason for a lack of new blood in fanzines is the Catch-22 quality of starting out, making fanzine fandom the hardest to break into. Most genzines seem to operate on the trade/loc system. So let's say I'm a neo interested in fanzines. Assuming I even know what I want and who to get it from, how do I get it? I have nothing to trade it for and I can't write a loc when I haven't seen any issues. (I notice TRAP DOOR can be obtained for actual money. Good for you! At the 1988 Corflu I was reprimanded for the gaucheness of offering money to obtain fanzines. "You don't buy fanzines, you trade them." Fine, but I had nothing to trade them for.) *{TRAP DOOR hasn't been available on a continuing basis for money (i.e., for subs) but the quandry you cite above is the reason it's available on a one time basis for money. I think many faneds do this, despite not necessarily saying so in their publications. I'm also quick to "try out" a promising new name I see in another zine's letter column and I believe I'm not alone in this practice. It's to fandom's advantage to encourage promising newcomers, whatever their origins. In my opinion, your advisors were the ones being a tad gauche.}*

The only way I got involved in fanzine fandom is through happening to date a fanzine fan. He lent me many zines to read in preparation for last year's Corflu. Without David, I'd be a fan eager for fanzines, stuck in limbo.

Back to our hypothetical fan, let's assume that by this time, s/he has figured out how to do a fanzine, has done one, and is ready to mail it out. Who do you mail it to? Our fan is a little shy and it seems presumptuous to mail it to the BNFs, who may be the only ones s/he has heard of who are interested in zines. That is one of the appealing qualities of apas, the instant mailing list effect. *{In that respect, apas are too easy, and no one apa has everyone in it you want to reach. Your hypothetical fan is a little too shy, in my opinion.}* (2065 Latham St. #36, Mountain View CA 94040)

MIKE DECKINGER

I wonder if the trend exhibited by some zines to contain lengthy reminiscences about the past could be due to a desire to proclaim our roots, in much the same manner that every compacted organization uses its humble beginnings as a means of generating pride among the present coteries. With the vast diversification of interests in fandom today, I'm sure many adherents would be startled to learn that the whole blamed thing sprung up because a few kids liked reading about Buck Rogers. "Who's Buck Rogers?" they might wish to know.

Jeff Schalles mentions he's a New York survivor because he's suspicious and paranoid. That has long been the proper remedy for life in the big city: assume everyone is a mugger and you won't be disappointed when the real thing comes along. This may be the wrong course of action, according to recent items I've read. Fearful people, looking for a thug behind every rock, have a noticeable look and stance - for want of a better term, a victim's aura. The mugger recognizes it and gravitates towards the holder immediately. Instead of protecting yourself, you're setting yourself up. A better course of action is to proceed with caution, but also with confidence and a bit of swagger. Let the other side know you're self-assured and ready to respond to anything coming your way. Not playing the role of victim could well save you from some hard times. I can't attest to the validity of this theory but it sounds reasonable. (649 16th Avenue, San Francisco CA 94118)

HARRY WARNER JR.

The quest for sugar substitutes on The Farm reminds me of what I read recently about old days in Austria when sugar was too expensive for anyone except the upper crust, and how the nation's eating and cooking habits were transformed with the discovery of how to obtain sugar from beets. So I wonder why sugar beets wouldn't have solved your problem. Maybe the refining process is too complicated to be done on the small scale of The Farm. *(Though the latter is true, the problem was more spiritual than material. Most hippies held that white sugar was the devil's own dessert.)*

After thinking it over, I decided that I shouldn't have enjoyed Jeff Schalles' article so much but should instead have worried about his safety all the way through it. Much of his narrative dealt with experiences while hiking alone and I hope it doesn't inspire too many TRAP DOOR recipients to go and do likewise. Even on a popular and well-maintained path like the Appalachian Trail, it's much better to have a companion. A fall that breaks a hip or a leg or an abrupt serious illness like a stroke or heart attack can be much worse if there's no one on hand to go for help at once. The Appalachian Trail passes

within about ten miles of Hagerstown and there's an occasional horror story of this sort in the newspapers.

Jan Kauffman has overlooked one problem in her inquiry into the universality of English in *Star Trek* country. When one views *Star Trek* in France, all the crew members and residents of other solar systems speak French, not English. In Latin America and much of South America, it's Spanish that is all over the galaxy. If it weren't for this puzzling circumstance, I would conjecture that Dr. Who was the source of English as a universal language throughout time and space.

Skel's loc deserved publication as a separate article where it would be more apt to attract attention the next time someone is assembling fanzine material for a fanthology. I'm sure my own boyhood would have been even happier if a river had flowed just beyond my backyard. The Potomac comes within a half dozen miles of Hagerstown and it was easily reached on the trolley, but trolley fare was too hard to come by in the Depression years.

I was inspired again by Eric Bentcliffe's loc to think some sercon fan should Do Something about the contents of ancient open reel tapes containing fannish magnetism. A few of us still have the capacity to play open reel tapes but the cheap tape most of us used for fannish purposes must be deteriorating both in strength of recording and in physical condition. I keep telling myself that next week or next month or next year I will definitely dub from open reel tape to cassette my own archives, which include some legendary voices: Fran Laney, Charles Burbee, Jean Linard, Walt Willis, even some Japanese fans. But I'm sure some fans' voices have been silenced forever in the sense that all the tapes bearing their voices have been destroyed or erased or lost.

John Berry's question about the Big Bang and what came before it is a good one, and I doubt if any of your readers will be able to prove that Mrs. Thatcher or Mr. Reagan has suppressed the truth about this matter. I've long wondered about an allied matter: how could there have been a Big Bang before the atmosphere was created? We keep reading all these fanzine complaints about the fallacy of sound-track detonations in movies when a spaceship or planet blows up squillions of miles away. Nobody ever seems to complain about a Big Bang under non-atmospheric conditions.

Gary Deindorfer wonders about Russian translations of fanzine material. The thing that bothers me is: how will the Russians cope with bheer and other fannish terms into which an "h" has been inserted? There is no letter "h" in Russian.

It's good to see so many long-gatified fans coming back to fannish life in your loc section. Why not try for a special issue of TRAP DOOR entirely written and illustrated by them? Show modern fans why

those of us who have persisted keep raving about the pleasures of fanzines when they were filled with material by Noreen Shaw, Andy Main, Bill Meyers, Lenny Kaye, Jean Young and their peers. (423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown MD 21740)

MIKE GLICKSOHN

Your descriptions of life on The Farm continue to reinforce my belief that communal living is not for me. My father spent many years on a religious commune in British Columbia and I visited him there a couple of times. The people were most friendly, extremely sincere, quite comfortable and laid back where it came to their beliefs, but there was always an underlying feeling that things were being done in the way they were because that's what the two or three spiritual leaders of the group said should be done. There never seemed to be any room for individual tastes or interests; everything was controlled and regimented to a degree I found disagreeable. Your article indicates you found things much the same during your own experiences: I was particularly taken by your aside that The Farm took to sorghum "because Stephen said he liked it." Did you find these sort of attitudes unhealthy at the time or only through hindsight? *{At the time, but I kept thinking we would grow out of it; otherwise it would have made me leave long before I finally did.}*

Excellent article by Jeff. At times I almost find myself envying people who can enjoy that sort of activity but then I realize it's foolish to regret being the sort of person you are unless you're willing to do something about it and I'm not. I'd rather sit in a comfortable chair with a bottle of good gin in the freezer and a decent television set nearby for when a good movie comes on or it's time for the NFL divisional finals. Jeff will probably live a longer, healthier life than I will, but on the other hand there is very little chance I'll get eaten by a bear. I rate that a fair trade-off.

I'm hard-pressed to believe that Ms. Kauffman is actually serious about her question concerning the *Star Trek* universe since the answer is so obvious. Everyone in the *ST* universe spoke English because the show was produced by and for lowest-common-denominator Americans, who speak English. Subtitling all alien dialogue would probably have been too expensive and difficult for the show's producers and too unusual and difficult for the show's audience. Certainly attempting to find a logical rationale for this aspect of the show is a waste of time when all we're really dealing with is a little willing suspension of disbelief.

Excellent letter from Skel, even if he continues to annoy me by remembering more about his childhood than I can recall about last summer. At first I didn't see quite where Paul was going but he tied it together

nically when he got to the connection with Terry and it became clear that the letter had been carefully planned from the start. I think Terry would have approved.

If Harry really believes it would ever be possible to halt the production of armaments through a popular movement of refusing to work on such projects, I'd like to have a little of whatever he's taking. Unfortunately this is almost the 21st century and the very best I think we can hope for is a cut back in arms proliferation and production. And I wouldn't bet the price of a good steak on even that much.

There isn't an adult in Canada or Britain today who isn't directly familiar with the impact of munitions factories on everyday life. (I don't know about America but the same might be true there also.) The unusual opening hours that British pubs followed until just a few months ago were introduced because munitions workers were getting plastered in the afternoon and production was suffering. And, at least in Canada, income tax was a similar "temporary measure" introduced to fund wartime expenses. At least the Brits have gone to more reasonable pub hours but somehow I don't expect any comparable withdrawal of my taxes this year. (508 Windermere Ave., Toronto, Ont. M6S 3L6, Canada)

T. L. BOHMAN

Your adventures of the sorghum mill were interesting and amusing. It's amazing how people - perfectly normal people, too (is a fan "perfectly normal"? - can wander blind-eyed into such ridiculously laborious projects as making sugar. No wonder mundanes scratch their heads with sense of wonder. *{I don't know if anyone would accuse 300+ hippie types of being "perfectly normal," either; bear in mind that's who started The Farm and its sorghum mill.}*

The odd folk up this way have a similar activity called "sugrin," aka "[maple] sugaring." This involves driving taps into the hide of certain carefully-selected trees and collecting the slowly dripping sap in buckets. A lot of the bigger producers lay plastic tubing to a central collection point, but the idea's the same: during those few perfect cold nights and sunny days of early spring one scurries madly about to collect the thin maple sap (these days that usually means snowmobiles or ATVs although I've known some who've actually gone about on snowshoes to their more remote maples) and to quickly boil it down into syrup before it goes stale. Since this typically involves frantic, almost 24-hour-a-day activity during a single short season, some years lasting only days, you have to wonder why people still subject themselves to such self-abuse for a few jugs of maple syrup. Tradition, I suppose, and the feeling that those trees ain't there for nothing, and what would Vermont be without sugrin...? (P.O. Box 14, East Theford VT 05043)

HARRY TURNER

I am still trying to work out the visual logic of Jeanne Gomoll's cover drawing and can't decide whether it depicts our unfortunate fan falling down a hole which we are viewing from the fourth side, or if he's clinging to the outside edge of a pillar-like structure. Either way he's in a tough spot. But what does it mean? I must have a word with John Berry and get his reactions to the situation. (10 Carlton Avenue, Romiley, Stockport, Cheshire SK6 4EG, UK)

CRAIG SMITH

I'd like Jeanne's cover better if bits of it didn't flake off every time I opened the zine (the perils of xerox, I guess). I used a post-it note to mark my place in another recent fmz & when I removed it I found I'd pulled off most of a paragraph of type too. I wonder if twenty years from now the fanzines of today will be little more than a collection of yellowing pages sprinkled with a coating of fine black dust? (14155 91st Court NE, Bothell WA 98011)

MILT STEVENS

It will probably come as a great disappointment to rich brown, but God has already appeared in Marvel Comics opposite Dr. Strange. Dr. Strange encounters a sorcerer from the future who is traveling backwards in time and acquiring magical energy as he goes. His intention is to get to the beginning of the universe and redesign it according to his specifications. Dr. Strange can't stop him, but by the time the sorcerer has become God he decides Creation was okay the way it was. The *National Lampoon* also did "Son of God Comics." In that one, the late JC appears in modern times to foil the Pope's evil plans to conquer America.

The religious climate at the moment would probably be a major problem in doing Thor as a TV series. I notice that Dr. Strange didn't go beyond the pilot stage. The Hulk was okay, because it showed the dire consequences of messing around with science.

What TV needs is a religiously correct source for super hero characters. An obvious possibility is the medieval hagiographies. Those church continuity writers were no slouches when it came to miracles and super powers. You wouldn't have any problems with the number or variety of saints. The saints could outnumber the Legion of Super Heroes by a wide margin. Of course, you also get a supply of time tested super villains along with the saints. I think folks like the Beast of 666, the Whore of Babylon and Dr. Faustus still have a lot of potential.

The motivation of super villains is something you can wonder about. It would seem that many of them could make a bundle by patenting all the technology that goes into their gimmicks. Even those without much technology could probably make better money

in professional sports. One can speculate on the preparation you might need for a career in super villainy. With the rise of inter-disciplinary majors, there must be a few colleges offering a major in the subject. Going out and fighting a few super heroes is undoubtedly part of the dissertation process. After demonstrating complete failure as a super villain, the person can probably get a job teaching. (7234 Capps Ave., Reseda CA 91335)

MARC ORTLIEB

Jan Kauffman does get a little carried away over what is, after all, simply a plot device. In historical dramas, we are quite willing to accept the fact that the dialogue is not only in English, but in contemporary English. Occasionally an author will postulate an interpreter when different nationalities meet, but it's far easier to have a multilingual hero. It's only because science fiction offers us a plausible mechanism for translation that we allow it to bother us. James White, in his Hospital Station series, has a computerized translation system, and Douglas Adams, in the Hitchhikers' series, has the Babel fish.

In mentioning Koko, Jan enters the gray areas of the continuum between language and non-language. There are those who see Koko's use of language as simply a sophisticated example of the Clever Hans phenomenon, i.e., that Koko is responding to unconscious cues from her trainer, rather than genuinely using language. Martin Gardner's article, "Two Books on Talking Apes," which appears in his collection *Science Good, Bad and Bogus* is interesting reading in this context. While gorillas certainly communicate, there does not seem to be conclusive evidence that they use language as humans do. Not that this failure is a bad thing; it's easy to see the unpleasant things that humans do with language.

I'll answer Jan's question about the computer and the teletype if Jan will explain to me why the Enterprise goes "Woosh" in a vacuum. Attendees at local marathons of *Star Trek* episodes have taken to joining in with a "Woosh" chorus during the opening credits. (P.O. Box 215, Forest Hill, Vict. 3131, Australia)

BOYD RAE BURN

The Enterprise's mission was to "explore new worlds, to go to where no man has gone before," but very often, it seemed, they went (in the words of F.M. Busby) "where everybody had gone before," which explained the use of English in those circumstances. But as for alien races speaking English – of course it's a crock, but what else are the producers to do? Mess around with translation gimmicks? Even a "universal translator" is a crock, for such a device has to have references before it can begin translating, unless they started getting really arcane claiming it read brain

waves or something equally far out. But just as illogical, which I don't think anybody has commented on, is that the officers and crew of the Enterprise (when? 300 years from now?) with the exception of Chekhov speak with late 20th century Standard American Accents, even Spock. But that is logical on the part of the producers, for otherwise they would have to try to extrapolate what English speech and vocabulary would be like in 300 years' time, and then the audience would have trouble understanding it. No, for *ST*, like other sf and fantasy items, the audience just suspends disbelief. After all, it's not as dumb as the films which showed cave men battling dinosaurs. (189 Maxome Ave., Willowdale, Ont. M2M 3L1, Canada)

MOG DECARNIN

I can't agree with Jan Kauffman that it is anything as isolated as language that "makes us human." Feral children "who have been deprived of opportunities to acquire language in the formative years" just *aren't* "normal in all other respects." Enormous amounts of socialization take place in the language-acquiring years. If that socialization is not human, the child will not become "human" in the sense Kauffman means.

That great apes have their own languages, and that humans *understand* those languages is almost humiliatingly obvious to anyone who has watched *Quest For Fire*. The incredible range and subtlety of communication through gesture and wordless vocalization in the film is pure, authentic Great Ape, and it is *language*. Other animals do this too, with progressively smaller vocabularies.

It isn't that humans are sudden unique, unprecedented creatures. It's just that we do some things *a lot better* than other animals can. People have posited reasoning power, emotional responses, all kinds of stuff as "the difference," and they always come up against animals doing it too. For my money, the real difference came in the gradual loss of instinct, permitting behavioral choice, *i.e.*, greater learning capacity. We know that though two sparrows are sold for a farthing, they *taught* each other to peck through milk bottle lids on doorsteps all over Great Britain to get at the cream. We're not the *only* ones who can learn, true; but we *are* very clever at it. After all, we knew how to get at the cream long before the sparrows figured it out.

I'm not convinced it would require a great command of English for a beautiful woman to get Kirk into the sack, but language was a weakness that helped reduce some *ST* episodes to the Flash Gordon level (never mind the problem of homo sapiens clones even existing on those planets). However, since the plots would have been impossibly cumbersome without English Spoken Here, two slightly feeble devices actually were proposed to "explain" it. First, there was the "Theory of Parallel Development" (I *told* you

they were feeble) accounting for all those Roman, Native American, etc. civilizations - all of whom happened to parallel-develop English instead of Latin or Algonquin, yeah sure. Second, there was the Universal Translator, which you *could* sort of assume was in operation unmentioned in other episodes besides "Metamorphosis."

Rich brown puzzles me with his "in the late 1950s ...all we *had* were condoms." I thought the use of the diaphragm was already pretty widespread by then, but he doesn't even mention it. (2020 Portland Ave. S. #3, Minneapolis MN 55404)

RICK SNEARY

Kauffman is nitpicking, and with so many nits in *Star Trek*, it is hardly fair to pick out one....one of the reasons I couldn't stand to watch the original shows. I find the new Next Generation much better; it does pick up some of the problems left from the first, though they still run into much super-normal activities - the Deux ex Machina Syndrome, I call it. But the lack of language problem is, I would guess, mainly a time saver, as the Transporter beams that saved endless shots of little scout ships taking off and returning. I see they have thought a little more about what the ability to transport matter, without a receiving station, means, but they still don't make much of it.

On English on Earth: I don't know if it is still true but English was the second official language in India, because it was the only one that all the mixed races and nationalities all could understand. Some people call the English Only groups, in this country, racist. My view is that they are the opposite, for wherever there is more than one language used, there is also an instant "them" and "us" every time there is a disagreement. Ethnic pride is great, but every demagogue that comes along uses it to prove his group is better than the other ones. I like difference myself; it makes life more interesting.

Skelton writes article type letters and is just as interesting. I've thought he was the best new fan writer to come along in years; for some reason he reminds me of the early writings of Burbee, and his ability to tell a story is similar.

Warner's remarks about workers at bomb manufacturing plants striking to prevent their being built seems surprisingly naive for Harry. Between people who truly believe we need the bombs for our defense and those who just don't give a damn, there would always be people willing to do the work. I know we have more than we need, and that there is the constant danger of some Dr. Strangelove getting things started, but before you can get that kind of people to give them up, you have to offer an alternative they will accept.

It was good to read a letter from Jean Young again. Though our worlds are very different, I could

understand what she was saying and share the feeling. Living alone and growing older changes the way the world seems. I too find it grows easier to sit and daydream, and feel the unease of things undone. To feel the emptiness of friends who are gone, but to enjoy the quiet of being alone with one's thoughts. I miss the conversations, too. But life goes on. (2962 Santa Ana St., South Gate CA 90280)

KEN RUDOLPH

I'm very curious about your "look." Obviously the proportional spacing is the product of high technology, namely a computer and word processing software. But as far as I know you've never let us in on the particular hardware and software you're using. For those of us who are techie inclined, I wish you would divulge. I think that if we had this kind of technology when I was editing SHAGGY in the late '60s, I'd probably still be in fandom and not the burned out hulk I became after a mere year and a half of fan pubbing. *{There's a danger here that printing and responding to this paragraph may result in an invasion of computerspeak in letters to this issue, but for the morbidly curious: TRAP DOOR is produced on an IBM-XT clone, using Word Perfect 5.0. Illustrations are placed in the text utilizing the increasingly esoteric "by hand" method and Scotch #665 double-coated tape. The text is printed on a Hewlett Packard LaserJet Series II with H-P's downloadable soft fonts.}*

I will undoubtedly pick up on all the music Paul Williams presents, as long as I can find them on CDs (I've relegated all the other stereo components to oblivion). I wish I was more *au courant* with the music of today. I still read two daily newspapers and an average of four magazines and three books a week (hardly any SF anymore, however). And I see practically every movie released (mostly because I'm in the Motion Picture Academy and enjoy qualifying to vote for the Academy Awards). But my receptivity to the current music scene is lowered by all these other specializations. We are assaulted by such an enormous amount of creative input. Here in L.A. there are additional distractions such as theater, art shows and sports, to say nothing about the things I ignore (TV, opera, concerts, etc.). If a person also has an involvement with work, it's hard to find the time and energy to participate in everything. So of all my loves, current pop music gets short shrift. I guess everyone has to establish priorities, and it seems as if most of the music I buy is old stuff which I am duplicating in the CD format since all of my old LPs are in storage or too fragile or too scratched to listen to. Besides, I like the sound of the digital remasterings better than the originals. Another consequence of media overload is that I've given up reading the pop music mags (*Rolling Stone*, *Crawdaddy*, *Creem*, *Fusion*, et al.) which were a mainstay during the '60s

and '70s. Without that media reinforcement and critical input, it is difficult to keep in touch with where it's at. *{Tell me about it! I no longer have any of my LPs from the '50s and '60s to not play; they all went in the great Material Plane Reduction I underwent upon moving to The Farm. Most of my music is on tapes - the CD revolution hasn't hit this home in Glen Ellen yet - and is Old Stuff. Occasionally I will get some recent stuff (and thank you, Gordon Eklund, for that Ramones tape; much enjoyed and played to death of late) but mostly I catch new stuff on the radio and don't keep much track of who's performing what. Paul helps fill me in from time to time, mostly by passing references, though I don't seek out being filled in, especially.}*

Richard Lupoff's letter was a particular revelation. Like many others, I would suppose, I had assumed Jerry Jacks was a victim of AIDS. Not that it really matters; it wasn't any of my business anyway. But the tragedy of how a person can be a victim of this vicious disease without having it struck me like a thunderbolt. I know many people who have died of AIDS; but this was the first time I had considered just how the spectre of the disease can kill. There are so many manifestations of the AIDS plague which are surprising and unexpected. I know it has had a major effect on my life-style during the past six years (and maybe that isn't so bad on a personal level). (6220 Hollywood Drive, Hollywood CA 90068)

AVEDON CAROL

Although I fully recognize the importance of the Pill and the IUD in the sexual revolution (and, undoubtedly, certain aspects of the feminist wave of the last twenty years - but there were a number of feminist waves before the days of the Pill, forgotten though they be now), I think rich brown overstates the case for AIDS as something which should draw the curtain on it. For one thing, the sexual revolution as it existed before the advent of the last feminist wave left a lot to be desired - a lot of women experienced it as the liberation of men from having to listen to women say "no," without women necessarily gaining anything from it.

The double standard *still* exists, as do most of the reasons why women say "no" in the first place. By 1968 I was beginning to wonder if I'd ever get through a week without having to spend some ungodly amount of time trying to think of a polite way to explain to some guy that he had no business expecting me to go to bed with him. "I'm not attracted to you," had no meaning to these guys - what you (as a woman) felt like didn't matter. You were being selfish, bourgeois, etc. "I'm not on the pill," only led to stupid lectures about how artificial stuff like birth control was "unnatural" anyway and you should be "free," blah blah blah. Some revolution.

And to add insult to injury, when a woman got pregnant by accident (even if it was because of lots of pressure from her boyfriend to fuck without birth control), it was now all *her* fault, since everyone knew there was this mysterious birth control stuff and any woman who got pregnant must have *wanted* to. Of course, until the free clinics started to spring up, condoms were really still the only type of birth control freely available unless you were old enough not to have to worry about your parents finding out (and to be able to afford the visit to the doctor's office).

And rich is definitely wrong when he implies that before the pill and the IUD, the condom was all we had. The fight for legalization of birth control was fought over the vaginal diaphragm – you may recall that Margaret Sanger (who died in 1966) was arrested over and over for trying to distribute and teach the use of the diaphragm. But rich isn't entirely alone in trying to pretend that birth control was more a burden to men than to women, despite the fact that it is women, and not men, who must *use* a diaphragm – Sanger was constantly frustrated in her efforts not only by the police, church and government, but also by husbands who for some reason felt unmanned by the idea that their wives were using the diaphragm. Women complained that their husbands would find them and throw them out.

And so it was that Sanger turned to other scientists and hustled her rich husband's friends and contacts for money to develop the oral birth control pill. One of the men on the team described the importance of the project this way: "Any damn woman can take a pill."

Anyway, they succeeded, and H. G. Wells called Sanger the greatest scientist who ever lived.

When the IUD came along, it was supposed to be even safer than the pill, partly because it didn't screw around with your body chemistry, but also because it took responsibility out of the untrustworthy hands of women – once a doctor inserted it, there was nothing a woman could do to interfere with it, and she couldn't forget to use it. It would be there, presumably doing its job, until a doctor removed it again.

Of course, it didn't work that way. The pill and the IUD both proved to be able to thwart a woman's intention to remain infertile, and both turned out to pose threats to a woman's health. In addition, a substantial number of women found the IUD grossly uncomfortable – it caused a dramatic increase in menstrual bleeding, longer periods, and heavy cramps. Moreover, women still got pregnant, but tended to miscarry – sometimes late enough to pose serious danger. And a woman has a 20% chance of death when miscarrying with an IUD in place.

However, the pill, IUD, and even the lowly diaphragm did accomplish one very important thing – they provided competition with the condom, and thus

an incentive to improve it. For this reason, modern condoms are both stronger and thinner, and sold in greater variety than ever before. Which is fortunate, because some people who wanted to participate in the sexual revolution turned out to be unable to use the pill, the diaphragm, or the IUD – and some just didn't want to risk it.

Now, I've met a few rubber freaks who actually like using condoms, but I think most of us would prefer not to need them. We all tend to think of barriers as – well, as barriers. It's just more romantic without that piece of latex. And it would be nice not to *have* to stop to make sure you've got your little foil packet and then put the thing on. But until my fairy godmother comes along to sweep away all fear of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection (or sexually transmitted cancer), condoms do take the worry out of being close.

Except that the other night over at the Troy Club, Kev McVeigh announced that scientists had discovered that smog and ozone cause holes in condoms. Don't ask me how they discovered this or under what conditions, but it certainly does lead to some interesting speculation. Obvious, rich brown will have to take the pill and risk AIDS if there's a smog alert. (144 Plashet Grove, East Ham, London E6 1AB, UK)

LESLEY WARD

Found rich brown's comments on condoms interesting. I don't like the blasted things much, either. I'm not sure which brands to get, there are so many of them. They seem to range from the super-strong Houdini-proof ones (as issued by family planning clinics); unless you're seriously into rubber fetishism, they're not a lot of fun. Then there are the ones that are advertised as being ultra-light. I don't trust these, not after one split open. As a result of that I had to spend the day after going to a family planning clinic in the nearest big city for the morning-after pill (as the local clinic didn't issue them). What a waste of a day's annual leave from work!

One point about choices in contraception: After age 30-35, family planning clinics now refuse to prescribe the pill to women, because of health risks. The vast majority of women are still fertile at that age, so it's usually a case of back to the horrible rubber things. IUDs can cause problems, particularly if there is a past history of heavy periods – I certainly wouldn't fancy the idea, myself. I'd also be nervous of a cap being dislodged. After years of being on the pill, I'm not looking forward to alternative contraception again when the inevitable day comes. Neither is my other half, who describes wearing rubbers as "a little like having to wear a rubber tuxedo to go to a dinner dance".

Rich made a good point concerning the gestation period of the AIDS virus. No matter how impossible

some people may be for fear of it NOW, it may already be too late because they didn't realize the risk five years ago. {Or even longer. I read in the local newspaper in November of a woman in her 40s, a member of the county AIDS commission, who was recently diagnosed as having AIDS. Tracing things back, she was able to determine that the infection came from 1978-79, when she had a relationship with a medical student who had been doing graduate work in Africa just prior to her meeting and becoming involved with him.} (71 Branksome Road, Southend, Essex SS2 4HG, UK)

CHUCH HARRIS

After reading Avedon and rich brown on condoms, I think fandom is about ready for my research on the subject. In all modesty I have probably handled more of the product than the rest of the Circulation combined. Listen to the Voice of Experience....

Long ago, after they gave me a sailor suit, a Sick Bay Manual and six weeks training on how not to kill patients before you got them to a qualified doctor, my basic function in Serving My Country was not ministering to the sick, or soothing the fevered brow, but handing out condoms to the oversexed and over eager. The only defense against a Navy-wide VD epidemic was Chuchy and his mates.

The Admiralty provided unlimited free condoms – nothing fancy or aesthetic, these were primarily disease preventatives rather than birth control aids – but distribution was always a problem. There were no vending machines, few chemists or shops who sold them, just me and the local barber who, after you'd had your hair cut, would murmur the traditional words, "Something for the weekend, sir?" before sending you on your way rejoicing or horrified according to the broadness of your mind.

The barber must have found it a pretty profitable sideline, but I did it for nothing, because it was part of the job. Every time we went ashore – as us bedpan sailors called the other side of the hospital gates – we took pocketfuls of the damn things to distribute to the needy. The badge on our arms was as good as a Durex advert. You grew resigned to importunate jacks stopping you in the middle of the dance floor demanding party pieces, the ruined chat-ups when you reached into your pocket for the cigarette pack and scattered dozens and dozens of little buff packets all over the floor, and the inevitable nasty arguments when the pockets were empty and the customers still eager.

Well now, the Royal Navy doesn't just throw you in at the deep end without trying to explain things. Whilst you are still a Probationer you get a lecture from the Warrant Wardmaster stressing these are disease preventatives and not – never, never, never,

definitely NOT – contraceptive devices which might offend our religious beliefs. If any. They have *always* been so and this is How It All Began....

Once upon a time – about 1650, I guess – syphilis was sweeping out of Asia into Europe and felling more of the English armies than the whole of the Continental troops combined. A humble English cavalry colonel, concerned for the welfare of his men like the officer class immemorial, bought, washed and knotted sheep gut and distributed pieces to the brutal and licentious soldiery with instructions that in future they must always "engage in armor" – a phrase and method still used by James Boswell in 1760.

There were no patent laws and lots of sheep available, and in no time at all everyone got in on the act, even though it took a lot of guts. Casanova swore by his *redingotes d'Angleterra* ("English overcoats") whilst the French still acknowledge *les capotes Anglais* ("English cloaks") (and mighod, do I have to translate everything!?).

One universal benefactor was called Colonel Condom and in no time at all his name entered the language like that of Captain Boycott, the Earl of Sandwich and Walter J Daugherty....

End of Wardmaster's lecture, double away smartly and scrub those spitkids 'til they shine.

And for forty years and more I believed every word of it. I even regretted that he hadn't thought to slip a couple of chicken feathers in the knot and invented the French tickler at the same time.

And then I wondered if this was just the sort of cultural snippet that would entrance the TRAP DOOR intelligentsia (and stop Lichtman from crossing my name off the mailing list). But first, knowing full well what a crowd of nit-picking bastards he caters to, I thought I'd better check my sources at the library.

And surprise! surprise! there ain't no Colonel Condom. Never was, never will be. Nobody, not even the Encyclopedia Britannica, the OED, or Eric Partridge knows where the word originated. Even I dunno. Mind you, a "cundum" is the oilskin sheath that they use to protect the regimental colours when they aren't flapping them around in front of Her Majesty on Trooping of the Color Day, and maybe, maybe....but that's only speculation and certainly not good enough for the TRAP DOOR horde.

{And from a later letter:} Continuing my researches for your respected journal, I consulted *Weird and Wonderful Words* by an American gentleman called Paul Hellweg. He says that "Dr. Condom, an 18th Century English physician and inventor, gave the name to the prophylactic." Personally I doubt it. The book is a lightweight trifle and I wouldn't have bothered to mention it except for his lists of various methods of divination and magic. I particularly liked "omphalomaney" ("divination by counting the knots in

the umbilical cord of a woman's first-born to predict the number of children she will eventually have") and "caprimancy" (divination by studying the movement of goats). (I'm working on this.) Sadly, although this is an English edition, there is no way of telling it, as the text has been anglicized for its British audience. For us a rooster is a one-eyed John Wayne and a cock is a cock. So "alectromancy" ("divination by means of a cock with grains of corn") remains an insoluble mystery. Can anyone tell us how it works? Does the corn get eaten or flipped? Or??? I don't suppose we'll ever know.

And do many Californians worry about "arachibutyrophobia" – the fear of peanut butter sticking to the roofs of their mouths. Truly? Odd folks, these Americans. (32 Lake Crescent, Daventry, Northants NN11 5EB, UK)

SID BIRCHBY

The dominant theme of several letters in TRAP DOOR #8 is AIDS, mostly considered for its implications on social and sexual mores. All very worthy, to be sure. Unless the HIV virus can be controlled in the next few years, such implications may well become realities, and one of the greatest joys of the mid-century (so I'm told) will become anti-survival. A 21st Century National Sperm Bank with conception either *in vitro* or by means of State-certified mothers sounds like the lowest kind of SF, yet it's a real possibility.

Personally, I am fairly confident that the virus will be conquered as genetic engineering advances. The present talk of mapping the entire human genome will no doubt result in action, and maybe given the best chance of true success. The task of finding what each gene does, what the interactions do, and how to modify them is on the scale of mapping all the stars. It can be done – an ideal task for computers – but can it be done soon enough to save the present generation of AIDS victims and HIV positives?

Probably not. It grieves me to say that the only truly final solution may be to engineer a genetically immune generation. Of course, there is a chance of a miracle drug, as with (I think) syphilis. One leap and you're free! There's always a chance.

Meanwhile, we have a few other problems to face in the hag-ridden 1990s. The greenhouse effect is possibly a Halloween ghost. What's wrong with the GHE? Without it, the Earth would be a frozen planet – and don't forget that other doomsayers claim that the Sun is in a cooling phase. Can't breathe carbon dioxide, you cry? Then plant more trees – and that is a problem. Sorry about Trantor, Isaac Asimov, but your metal-coated planet is not the place for a holiday.

On the whole, I tend towards the Gaia hypothesis of Prof. Lovelock – that the planet Earth is an

integrated eco-system, and maybe a living one, which we disturb at our peril. What went wrong with the rest of the solar system is not testified. Why are we, apparently, the only living planet in a solar graveyard? Why is Earth the only seed to germinate? Mars, it seems, nearly did. It had rivers in the early days, and probably an atmosphere and more heat than it now has. The seed analogy comes to mind. See your Bible about the various seeds sown on various types of soil. Some fall on stony ground. It's the same with my words of wisdom.

One major problem is rather subtle: the diffusion of intelligence. Due to improved mass media and increased population, more and more relatively uncritical people are subjected to the opinions of a smaller and smaller group of communicators. In the long run, things balance. How long do you have to read the papers or watch TV before asking questions? Of course, some people never do – for them, the Earth is flat! – but most of us catch on. TRAP DOOR readers always did. But never mind the long run. In the long run, we're all dead. The likes of – I was going to name names, but let's say most of your correspondents – know this very well, and I salute them. (40 Parrs Wood Avenue, Didsbury, Manchester M20 0ND, UK)

GERI SULLIVAN

Having not seen Gary Hubbard's article, I had a harder time clicking into the comments; however, I was reminded of my tour through a Honeywell Defense Systems facility back in 1979. It was "family day" and while I found it interesting to see where my then-spouse was working, I found it most unnerving. Two images are still with me. The first is of a grandmotherly type, a woman in her late 50s or early 60s, operating a piece of machinery she works on every day. She was so proud that people were watching her, listening to her, as she demonstrated how the machine worked and what she did. "What are you doing?" I asked. She smiled a huge, warm smile, filled with pride: "Oh, I'm threading the triggers for land mines." Well yes, it's important that it be done right and well, if it is to be done at all. It made it all so real.

Still numb from the shock, I walked down a corridor, reading (as I often do) the exhibit signs prepared for the open house. There was a little stack of bomb casings, six high I think, for a new kind of bomb that Honeywell had just developed. The sign explained that the bomb would be in full production by the next summer, with monthly production scheduled to be 300 bombs. Folks, it doesn't take a mathematician to know that's 3,600 of those "little" bombs a year. And that's only one kind of bomb, and Honeywell is only one of the bomb manufacturers.

While writing and talking in person are certainly

different forms of communication, I don't follow the implied logic of everything on paper being a "partial persona" and (again implied) everything in person being "the real person." Most of us act differently under different circumstances. How well I can get to know a person, through writing or first-hand, depends on how much energy and effort we are both willing to put into it. Different people have different writing styles, but I think mine reflects and matches the "in person Geri Sullivan" in most ways. A partial persona? Perhaps, as I am still discovering just who it is I am, and I know myself better than any one other person does.

I know some people who I'd *rather* know only through writing, as I find them much easier to get along with in that form. Since I didn't read Debbie Notkin's original piece, or Eric Mayer's infamous piece on Cafe Society Fandom, I'll stop babbling and shut up after saying that I'm not sold on either premise as reflected in the reactions of other readers. (3444 Blaisdell Ave. So., Minneapolis MN 55408-4315)

RICHARD BRANDT

On various responses to Debbie Notkin: I don't accept that the face we present to others in person is any less of a persona, a "mask," than the one we present in our writing. What we say and let our expressions reveal in public may be no more revealing of what's going on inside our minds (which to me is where the real "us" lives) than what spills out onto our pages. I'm more likely to express my innermost feelings in writing than in conversation with casual acquaintances; so which Richard is wearing the funny face? (4740 N. Mesa #111, El Paso TX 79912)

SUE THOMASON

Thanks for TRAP DOOR #8, which I've just read in my lunch hour (cheese/tomato brown roll, small carton of apple juice, small pot of coleslaw, cup of chocolate). Outside it's gray, chilly, the small rain falling, the fitful end of yesterday's storm still kicking the leaves around (beech leaves from the hedge outside the library, just now being pushed off the twigs by the new leaves coming through).

There are different modes of stimulus, reaching different levels of being, creating different responses. A lot of the fanzines that I think are "interesting" are full of well-reasoned articles on thought provoking topics, or discussions/descriptions of subjects that interest me. Some other fanzines have what I've seen described as "mood pieces." Instead of making me THINK, this writing makes me FEEL. I'm not talking about strong emotions, but about an enlarging of perception, a mental slowing down, relaxing, slowly unfolding in a way of looking at not just the fanzine but my present environment, being more aware of it, more responsive to it.

TRAP DOOR #8 has done this to me. Instead of discussing the gastronomic merits and Ideological Soundness of various sweeteners (honey? maple syrup?) I want to describe the exact sensation of the light rain falling on my face as I walked across to the library from the salad bar....contrasting it with a summer memory from a few years back: being up on the moors, the heavy scent of heather and dust, the sound of bees, looking at the different species of bees, the different colors of the heather.... (111 Albemarle Road, York, N. Yorks YO2 1EP, UK)

JEAN YOUNG

That's one of your better cartoon covers - or Jeanne's cartoon covers, that is. It tickled me a good deal. I'm also a complete sucker for "graded shading," especially "dark-at-the-bottom," so my aesthetics were also tickled. Scratching an itchy aesthetic is soooo pleasing. I did just that a few weeks ago on a weekend visit to friends in Madison, who took me down on State Street to see the art galleries. I hadn't been in a gallery or museum in years and I like to broke my neck with my head whipping back and forth and round and 'bout from new stimulus to new stimulus.

I was quite taken with your account of sweeteners on The Farm. During my co-op years, when I was not only manager at Oneota (Decorah) and "President" (ho-ho) of the Board for Great Rivers Wholesale in Winona, but also Great River's main trucker in my old 3/4 ton '63 Ford pickup, I got around to a lot of co-ops and actually worked one day a week at the Winona Storefront Co-op, where there were more persuasions and diehards than even in Decorah. One of the coordinators there had spent time on The Farm and opposed using or selling honey because it was "ripping off the bees." That was the first time I'd encountered such a notion and thought it pretty strange that he and the other Farm followers I knew then ate white sugar. (WHITE SUGAR!!?? The Death Drug!?! Shows you whose propaganda I'd followed.) This same coordinator at Winona was so anti-dairy products that he would not restock the powdered milk because he didn't want to get "that stuff" on his hands.

Jeff Schalles' "Looking for Sunrise Mountain" was not aggressively humorous, nor yet sappy Nature Lore. It came near being the kind of thing I like best: true (pretty much) encounters between land and people who love it. Some of the things he talks about are why I stay here in northeastern Iowa despite the miserable winters, the poor wages and few jobs (means I'm lucky to have the one I do despite its disadvantages), and the fact that art that ain't Nice Boy On A Pony doesn't sell here. (A local store just refused to carry my cards even though the owner thought they were lovely, because she knew they

wouldn't sell.)

Among Jeff's "monsters" in "civilization" is the television. From the few glimpses I've had of it, I certain agree, and for years I didn't have one. For some years before that I had an old black and white set someone had loaned me (permanently) so I could watch *Star Trek* reruns. I tried to do that but somehow I got the picture for *Star Trek* and the audio for *Bonanza*, and it somehow didn't quite do the trick for me. A friend and colleague of mine, Paul, used to use it, during the summers he stayed at my place, to watch "his" Yankees. The second summer the picture tube blew up, fittingly enough, in the middle of a game the Yankees lost. I didn't bother moving it to the new place and, on one of my trips back for more stuff, I found vandals had been in and smashed it. Now Paul and his wife has just given me, during that trip to Madison, their old b&w TV so I can watch Public TV (including, perhaps, *Dr. Who*). It's been in my house three weeks now and I haven't even plugged it in yet, let alone turn it on.

I agree with Paul Williams' experience of travel, to a point. I can see getting upset over someone speeding or driving dangerously, I'm not quite so into this "freedom to do anything, including get killed" stuff for people in relationships. (On the other hand, I'm not "in" a "relationship" in the usual sense.) One of the advantages of my job is that I get to have that "bubble of motion" every night and, as I've said before, many of my ideas for pictures, for sequence tapes, and philosophical questions and arguments come during mail runs. I used to tell my friend, Kent, the philosophy professor, that a philosophy major was an ideal one for a truck driver, since truck drivers (except in bad weather or crowded conditions) get lots and lots of nothing but time to think. (*When I used to go out on the road selling books wholesale, first for The Farm and later for Paul's Entwistle Books, that built-in time to think was a great luxury. It could be that this is one of the great and mostly unstated fringe benefits of travel.*)

If I wrote, I think I might write about music. I spent a lot of time listening, thinking, talking about and comparing music for some years (1979 to about 1985), from the time I could bear to listen to music again until the last couple of years when my diminishing energies have turned almost exclusively to the visual, and I feel I haven't had one brain cell left to rub against another as far as Real Thinking (and thinking about thinking, etc.) goes. I may think some more again when warmer weather comes (*Jean is writing in February*), if I get up the energy to take music with me on mail run. (I don't in winter because the cold is hard on the player and because I want my attention on the road more). Anyway, I don't think it peculiar to write about music, whether one has had "musical training" or not - nor peculiar to do it for low pay. I "do art" (whatever "art" is) for

low pay, for *maybe* pay, for sometimes pay, the way a lot of writers write. Of course, the music I was thinking about was most "New Age" and instrumental Rock, with some Euro-Electronic (Tangerine Dream, who/m I still think are/is the greatest thing since sliced bread). It's more "in" to think and write about Jazz or Rock, and to talk about vocalists and people's relationships to their instruments and to each other. That's what Larry listened for.

I like synthesizer sounds and I don't want to be made aware of the performers as *performers* during the performance, while I'm listening. It doesn't mean I don't *like* or *appreciate* their roles as artists; it's just that the cult of the artist/performer, and virtuosity on instruments, isn't what I want. I want a vehicle for thinking/dreaming and I don't want the maker to intrude while I'm doing it. Of course the maker is *there*; there's a difference between being *there* and being *intrusive*. As an example of the extreme of totally intrusive, I offer the person Stephen Hill of Hearts of Space always calls "the incomparable [thank Ghu!] Keith Jarrett." I saw a video of a performance of his, and now I "see" his writhing, grimacing and groaning whenever I hear something by him. He seemed to be a parody of The Sensitive Performer.

But each to his own taste. It doesn't seem strange, for instance, for Paul to write about what he cares about. I was quite taken with his remark, "I wanna teach but *not* be perceived as a teacher, you get me?" Oh, indeed I get you. Right on the button, old friend or acquaintance. I suffer from the same, or perhaps a similar, syndrome, such as wanting to do, and even sell, what one may loosely call "art" - enough of it to pay for itself and help with the bills and give me some egoboo - and not be perceived as an "artist." I'd like to know how he (Paul) or one (me) writes about any of the arts in such a way as to say anything other than variations on "Wow, man, it's great!" Dan and Larry and I, both in person while Larry was here and on tapes since he left, have tried for years to find out and express unequivocally what it was we liked in music and why, and we got just about nowhere. It came down to a matter of pointing to sounds and contexts, but the why of why we liked particular sounds of contexts remained elusive. Patently, none of the "universalist" theories of music appeal or consciousness-reaching worked, because not the same thing reached all of us, or all of anybody.

I was interested in Paul's remarks on "repackaging" in albums. Dan said something similar about the Pink Floyd album, *Delicate Sound of Thunder* which we were listening to in Dan's pickup during a rare daytime trip: that it sounded different, and interesting - pleasing - to hear those particular songs together in that sequence. Further note: Music sounds quite different to me when I hear it in the van, or otherwise while moving, than it does when I'm

sitting at home (or at someone else's house). This is, of course, partly because of the quality of the machines and the presence of engine noise and air rushing noise. Engine noise may, however, be beneficial as well as detrimental - the rhythm, the beat (partly from tires on those tarred cracks across the road) enhances the existing beat and covers up "gaps" in the tape (places so soft you can't hear 'em, places where I have too long a pause between numbers in my sequence tapes, etc.). It adds some bass, it makes the music richer. Many times, I've heard a tape first - or mostly - in the van and find it sounds "thin" on my better sound system at home. This may be partly because I don't have a graphic equalizer, but partly because I don't have the low noise and the beat and the landscape rushing by - the movement. Which is what Paul was (in part) talking about. (See, I found a way to bring this long digression around.) However, unlike Paul, I think ego and attachments are normal and not to be got rid of. But that's not music, or is it?

Harry Warner suggests getting to the little guys on the production lines in nuke plants with an anti-nuke message, but I fear that's idealistic in the extreme. The paycheck is pretty important to people, and they'll close their minds to the horrors of what they're making (all but a few, and a few isn't enough), no matter how loudly or persuasively you argue. If the guys at the top decide to change over to manufacturing some non-lethal, non-toxic, non-detrimental substances or objects, and guarantee that everybody gets to keep their jobs, that retraining will be free and pay collected during training time, and that there will be raises in six months or a year, *then* people would go for it, and perhaps even be relieved, feel better about themselves. Perhaps even the guarantee of another job, comparable or better in the same geographic area if desired, would work. But people, especially people with families, just don't give up jobs; jobs are too hard to come by.

A lot of comments, I see, on Debbie Notkin's defense of face-to-face contact. Well, what can I say that I haven't already said? One of my closest and most valued relationships, dating back now 33 years, is with someone I've never met. I'd like to meet him, especially on my own turf since his doesn't appeal to me; sometimes I even *long* to meet him; and other things being equal (like money, time and someone to look after my place) I'd make a strong effort to meet him. But other things are almost never equal (what a strange locution), and I value his letters and other communications as much as I value many of my acquaintances locally.

I was enormously impressed by rich brown's letter on AIDS and birth control/disease control. Mog Decarnin's letter was also pretty impressive. The AIDS business is *very frightening* and will change many people's sexual behavior, and a lot of them will

die. I worry especially about my many gay friends and acquaintances, but pretty soon I'll have to worry about damn near everybody, it seems.

William Meyers' brief letter echoes many of my feelings about receiving fanzines - "strangely familiar objects delivered via timewarp from a past world only dimly remembered." What a lovely, lovely line. And I, like him, think I'll not become truly "active" in fandom again. I appreciate the friends I have in fandom, but have no desire to publish.

The letter from Gary Deindorfer seemed strange and curious to me. I didn't know of his incarnation as Gary Dawson, or what the reference is for "The Son." I felt for his points about the negative aspects of fannish "togetherness"; and I agree that there's an awful lot of backbiting and maliciousness in fandom - always was. I'm pleased that TRAP DOOR avoids that, without avoiding controversy. ...I'm a *fannish legend* to Gary?!? My ghod! (RR 4, Bax 47, Decorah IA 52101)

GARY DEINDORFER

There have been times when I have felt like the poor guy on the cover of the new issue. I would hazard the guess that nearly all of us have felt like that at least once in a while in our lives of quiet desperation (or in the case of Harlan Ellison and Morton Downey, noisy desperation). A harrowing but indisputably well-drawn offering from Jeanne Gomoll.

I know one thing: I would have been a flop on The Farm because I am too physically lazy for all that back-breaking work. I have to hand it to you, and not for the first time, that you and your wife and children were *real*, honest-to-ghod hippies when I was only playing at being a hippie. *{Well, my kids are just my kids; they didn't have any choice about where they were born, except cosmically if you're into that. Undeniably, though, they have ingrained attitudes from their early environment. My oldest kid, for instance, wants to be an environmental scientist. He wants to help save the world from the mess it's gotten into, but being influenced by the '70s and '80s he wants to make good bucks doing it}*

Jeff Schalles' article is rich in sense impression memory, putting him right up there with Eric Mayer, who is to me unsurpassed when it comes to sense-memory writing in a fannish purview. So many superbly turned phrases and mordant descriptions of the outdoors life, a life I dare admit I have never much been into. However, I remember that back when I was a callow, pimpled, bespectacled teenager I used to attend a YMCA camp every summer, and one memory is of being led by our counselor through High Point NJ State Park, climbing over hill and dale, hopelessly lost and searching for the public campsite as sundown encroached. We finally found it at twi-

light and relieved we were. I also might add, in a sort of risible way, that New Jersey's High Point (its highest point, get it?) would, for the country of Nepal, be a low point. But in New Jersey's defense (and it needs it, let me tell ya), let it be said that Jeff Schalles may demonstrate to those who know New Jersey only by its oil refineries along the Turnpike that New Jersey has more than a few "wilderness areas" left such as the ones he mentioned, yes, even in these ecologically benighted times.

I never liked *Star Trek*; it seemed hopelessly rudimentary to me, so it is no surprise to me that everybody spoke English. So Jan Kauffman's article seemed much ado about not much. Yet it is well written and well reasoned for all of that. But *Star Trek* was always nearly anathema to me even before it became fannishly hip for it to be anathema, and no apologies to Bjo Trimble either.

Paul Williams is so enthusiastic! I am a rather enthusiastic person, much to my continual chagrin as I am brought face to face with this reality by cynical fen, but I believe that Paul Williams is even more enthusiastic about things than I am. Really, positive people are so rare, that as a positive person I get lonely sometime, especially in fandom, where it is so hip to be negative. But then along comes the latest installment of "We Never Sleep" and I realize that I am not alone after all, thank god.

Good to see something from Lenny Kaye. I sent him some cartoons and writings for his fanzine in the very early '60s; met him at the 1963 Worldcon in Washington DC but was drunk and managed to insult the poor guy; saw him make a most amusing appearance with bandmate Patti Smith on "The Mike Douglas Show" some years ago; and have bought two fine recent albums which he produced, the Suzanne Vega *Solitude Standing* lp, with some beautiful, haunting songs on it, with lovely, fitting like a glove arrangements, and Soul Asylum of Minnesota's superb *Hang Time* lp. (447 Bellevue Ave. #9-B, Trenton NJ 08618)

CHARLES BURBEE

I was interested in noting all the people who had nice things to say about Terry Carr. He deserved them all. I have nice memories of him, too. Last time I saw him was at some convention in Pasadena where he and a couple other guys came to my rescue when I couldn't see my notes.

Elmer Perdue is gone, too, but it didn't surprise me like Terry's sudden death. After all, Elmer was 69 and had abused his body for years with drugs and alcohol. Died January 2 and cremated January 3, so he helped to pollute the atmosphere. Think on that next time you breathe. (46749 Pala Road, Temecula CA 92390)

And besides the many above, We Also Heard From:

KRISTI AUSTIN (commenting on the 7th issue), SHERYL BIRKHEAD, HARRY BOND ("It's comforting to see from the attitudes of many loccers that the lessons of AIDS have been taken to heart by fandom."), BRIAN EARL BROWN (who writes on a postcard showing him and Denice at the AIDS quilt showing in DC last year), GREGG CALKINS, GRANT CANFIELD (who sent his "leftover fanart" file), KEN CHESLIN, KRIS DEMIEN, GORDON EKLUND, DONALD FRANSON, JUDITH HANNA ("I enjoyed reading TD #8, particularly all the politics in it. Made me feel quite at home, almost like being in an FTT, as it were."), DAVID HAUGH, IRWIN HIRSH, GARY HUBBARD, ETHEL LINDSAY, MARK MANNING, JEANNE MEALY, JANICE MURRAY, JOHN OWEN, JEFF SCHALLES, A. LANGLEY SEARLES, NICK SHEARS, PAUL SKELTON, JACK SPEER, STEVE STILES and ROGER WEDDALL.

And so another issue of TRAP DOOR, the slowest focal point fanzine that fandom has ever known, draws to a close. That this fanzine has persisted, however infrequently, for as many years as it has, is due entirely to reader response. Thanks to all who've taken part. Now that you've read through this issue, I hope you will take time to provide your comments and impressions before the immediacy of the experience fades. Meanwhile, best wishes until next issue....

Nature Moves In (continued)

farmers are in principle in favor of wildlife, but don't look after it very well. Wild fauna do their best to avoid contact, but are occasionally seen. The hectare or so around the house and sheds is the main theatre of conflict.

Various species want to exploit interesting resources we want them to keep away from. Flies want our food and the shade. Moths want our light at night. Spiders want the flies and the moths. Mice want our food, and grain stored for the sheep or for seed. The cat and snakes want the mice. Nature greedy in tooth and claw. And we humans think civilization means banishing nature and keeping it all for ourselves. Nice and tidy.

Certainly, nature isn't tidy. Which is why Joseph disapproves of nature and insists on exterminating any scrap of it which manages to crawl into our living space. "Stop beating up the ecology, dear," I tell him. But he is determined to keep nature in its place - outside the house.

- Judith Hanna

TRAPDOOR

