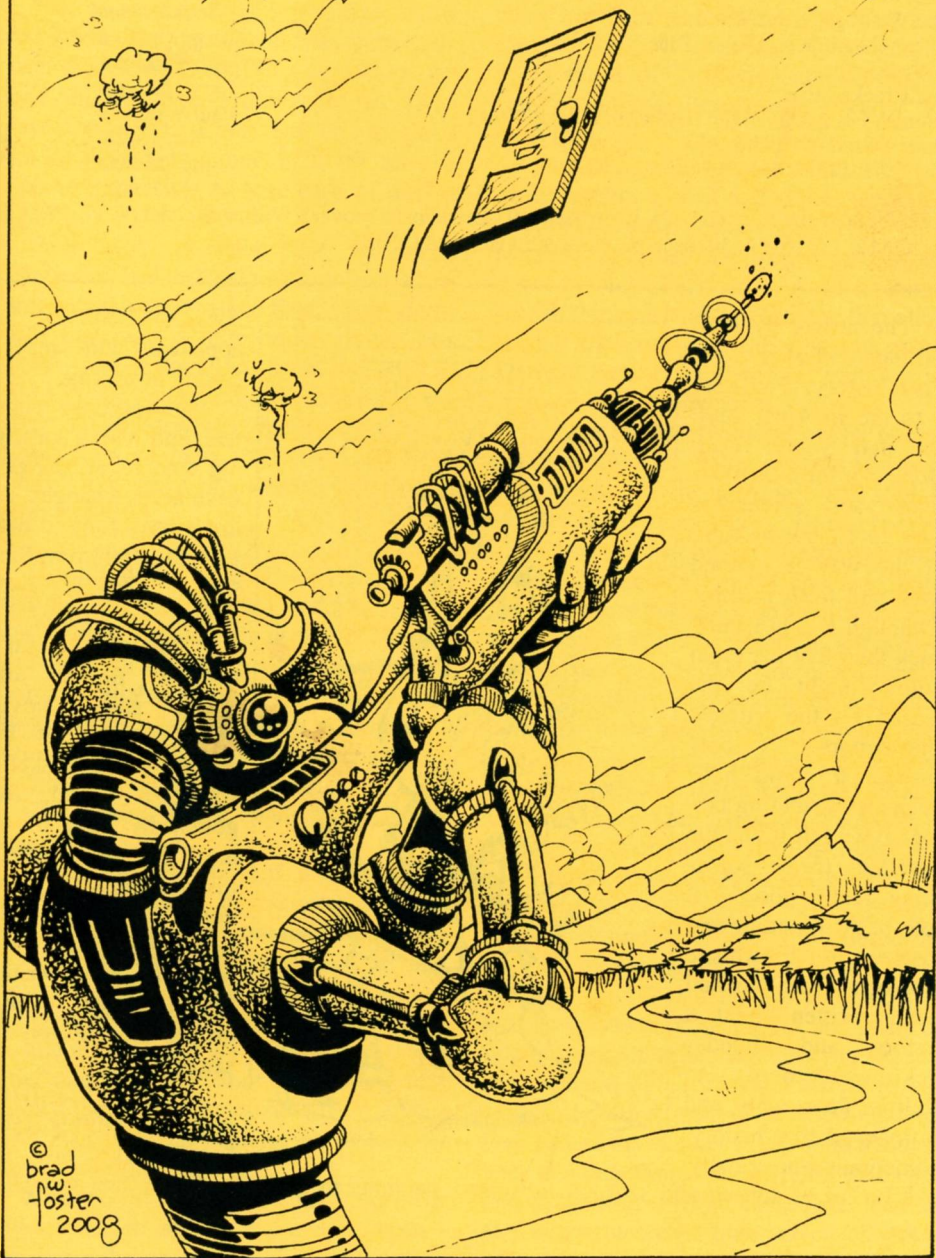


# TRAP DOOR



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The article by Paul Williams in this issue has a history. Paul sent it to me in April 2000 for that year's *Trap Door* in a form that was rough and sometimes hard to follow because of the way it jumped back and forth in time. Although I didn't think back then that his brain injury might be the reason for the article's shortcomings, I now suspect it could have been a contributing factor. But I felt it had the potential to be something really good. It tells of the founding and history of Entwistle Books in a way Paul had never written about it before, and includes acknowledgments to fellow fans who had influenced that history, sometimes dramatically.

I did a lot of editing and sent my version versions to his wife, Cindy Lee Berryhill.



back to Paul for his approval and maybe further polishing.

His response came late, and with a surprising amount of belligerence at my changes. "I don't have time to deal with this right now," he said. "Let's get back together on it soon."

"Soon" didn't happen, neither did "later," and I moved both versions of the article to a diskette, where it rested, forgotten by both of us, until this year when I discovered it pretty much by accident. Reading it again, I still felt that he'd written something that, even a decade later, deserved to see print.

After a little additional editing, I sent both Paul's and my

Assuming that in his current diminished condition Paul couldn't deal with it, I asked for her opinion. She saw the same problems with the original manuscript that had bothered me, and opted for the edited version. I'm glad to finally give it the audience it deserves.

Just to update Paul's situation: As I wrote in the last issue, he suffers from early onset dementia, a delayed symptom of the head injuries he sustained in his 1995 bicycle accident. Cindy Lee had to move him in a nursing home in 2009 after it became impossible to take care of him at home.

Paul was accepted for Medi-Cal (Medicaid) late in 2009 and has been at the same nursing home since then. But Medi-Cal's coverage is bare bones—room and board—and so donations are still needed to help with the continuing expenses it doesn't cover. Please visit <http://paulwilliams.com/> if you want to help. (There's a link to Cindy's blog there, too, worth a visit for her latest updates.)

I don't often have dreams involving fandom. The one I'm going to describe here was, I think, brought about by the fannish wish-fulfillment to have all the fanzines of the past available on-line. This wish was re-ignited around the time Harry Warner Jr.'s entire fanzine collection was purchased by ex-comics fan James Halperin.

Cue weird music and fuzzy wavy imagery.

I'm sitting in front of a large color monitor with Google on the screen. I type in "old fanzines" and thousands of hits pop up. The first one is "Fanzines Past and Present." I click it, and am taken to an uncluttered home page. Immediately below the title in large type are two links, "Sort by Title" and "Sort by Editor," with some text which I can't, of course, actually read but that I take to be an explanation of how to navigate the site.

With no hesitation I click "Sort by Editor," which shows me a new screen displaying the alphabet in large Helvetica

capital letters. I select the "C." My computer churns and up pops a page of faneds' names, each one a link. I click "Calkins, Gregg" and get a long list of his fanzine titles. I pick *Oops! #24*, which happens to be the first fanzine I ever received. A full-sized image of the cover appears in beautiful color and high resolution. The color isn't the print itself, which is black mimeography, but a shade of Twiltone—and although I can't actually see the artwork, I "know" it's by ATom.

I notice a small right arrow at the bottom of the screen. I click it, and the page turns. I do this a few times, marveling at how completely "readable" the pages are and the speed at which they turn. (Am I inventing the fanzine as e-book?) After the first click, a small left arrow joins the right one, and in between them is another icon with arrows pointing in both directions.

I linger on that double arrow for a time, and then click it. What appears is a two-page spread of the fanzine. It's slightly smaller but just as clear. How clever, I think, that the full layout of each spread is exactly the way it originally appeared in the paper fanzine published so long ago. And then I notice that new right and left arrows have appeared on either side of the screen. I click the right one several times, each click taking me to the next two-page spread—and as I do so the background colors change. This reminds me that Gregg had printed *Oops!* on various shades of Twiltone. I am at first startled and then fantisted that even these color changes are part of the presentation.

No—it's not over yet. I'm offered the options of saving the issue as a file or printing it. When I choose to print, I'm asked whether to print in black and white or retain the paper color. But now I'm becoming confused, or maybe both I and the dream have had quite enough of decision-making. I try to hold the choices in my mind but they keep slipping away—and I realize that's not all I'm holding. Nature has called...and all else evaporates on a blue screen of wakefulness.

The underlying reality of this dream remains. I'm referring here to the collective efforts, my own included, that have made dozens—no, hundreds—of fanzines past and present available at the Fanac.org Website, as well via Bill Burns's indispensable Efanazines.com. Perhaps in time my dream will come true!

As I've mentioned before, some of the contents of *Trap Door* are gleaned from their original appearances in other venues. In this issue Gordon Eklund's article first appeared in *Sweet Jane*, his FAPazine. And Gregg Calkins's piece had its origins as a post on his "family and friends" blog. Gordon's story in the previous issue also came from *Sweet Jane*, and Graham Char-nock's gout poem was taken from an InTheBar post.

Fewer than ten percent of *Trap Door* readers will have already seen Gordon's and Graham's work—and no one in fandom besides me gets Gregg's blog. Of course, I'm not the only fanzine editor who does this sort of reprinting. For instance, Marty Cantor's *No Award* has benefitted from his mining of secondary sources.

I think this is one of those win-win situations. The authors get wider circulation (and more egoboo when the comments come in), I get material to fill *Trap Door*'s pages, and you get to read articles you wouldn't otherwise have access to.

2010 has been good to me.

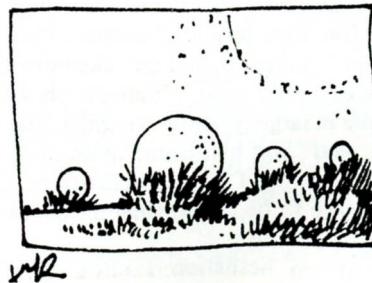
First, I/we thank my/our lucky stars that Carol's repaired leg is in good enough shape to, with some revisions, let us resume our mainly couch potato lives. If you don't know what I'm talking about, please refer to her article in the last issue (now on-line at efanazines.com).

After years of being an eBay buyer of old fanzines to fill in the holes in my collection, I stepped into selling. Most of what I auctioned was duplicate fanzines, so one might say *Trap Door* is being angeled by Redd Boggs, Charles Burbee, Bill Donaho and Boyd Raeburn. And I've also

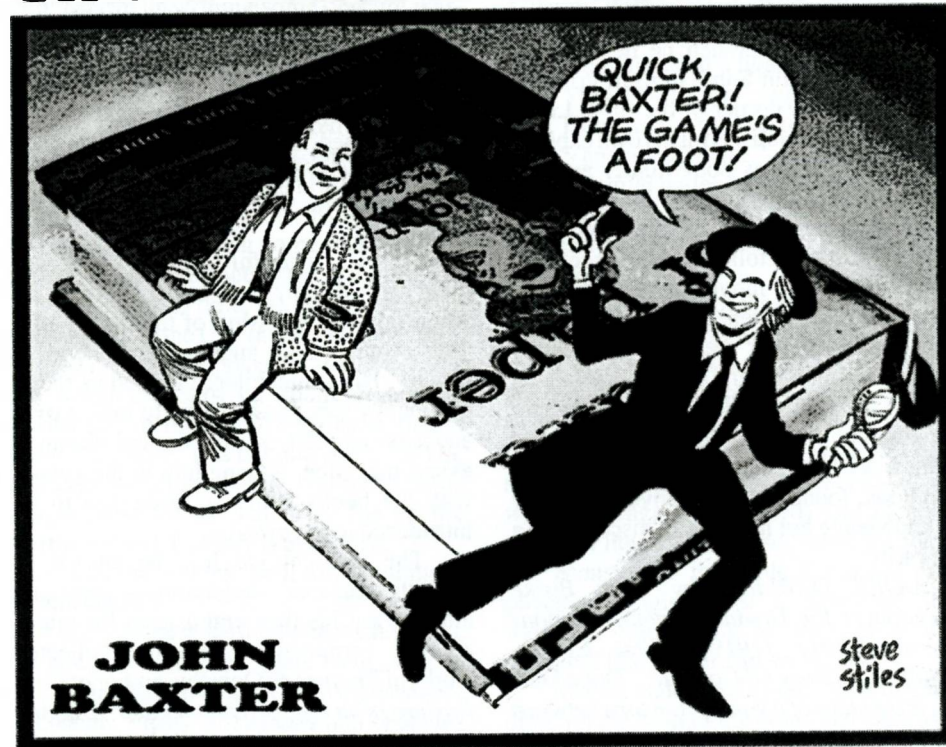
done some mutually beneficial trading with various people. It felt good to redistribute fanzines to fellow collectors—not all of whom were known to me. I discovered people out there who leap to bid on fanzines with material by, for instance, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Clifford Simak, Poul Anderson and, of course, Harlan Ellison. There is also one fellow whose criterion seems to be, "If I don't have it, I want it," and who has accounted for close to half of my eBay sales. It's been fun, and I've made a few new friends, one of whom has even joined FAPA at my suggestion and is proving to be a valuable member.

Finally, although I've won FAAn awards before, it's always an honor when it happens again. So I was thrilled when the FAAn Award polling results for 2009 were announced at Corflu Cobalt that I'd won the letterhack vote and *Trap Door* had come in third in a stiff field for best fanzine, with enough votes in other categories to also be named the "#1 Fan Face." I had a Tucker/Ackerman moment when I heard that result. As always, I appreciate the recognition and support of my peers. The engraved twin tankards that were this year's tangible mementos look great sharing space with the 2007 "Golden Banie" award from Sheryl Birkhead, the Corflu Silver certificate for 2007's best letterhack, and the Corflu Blackjack certificate for 2003's best fanzine.

—Robert Lichtman



## THE WENDIGO IN THE WOODS



They say that when great figures of literature gather, they talk about the best place to sell review copies. With collectors of rare books, the topic is often the latest exploits of Martin Stone. Martin's a "runner"—called in the U.S. a "scout." He's not a collector but a finder; probably the world's best. His scholarship is celebrated in the book trade, as are his eccentricities.

We first met in a north London flea market one cold Saturday in 1978. Rail-thin and corpse-pale, in a black beret, tatty suit, winkle-picker shoes with upturned toes, and a hand-rolled butt guttering between bony fingers, he sold me some Graham Greenes. It took time to discover his mythic status, not only in the book trade but in music, as former guitarist with groups like The Action, Chilli Willi, Mighty Baby, and the Savoy Brown Blues Band.

Martin gathers legends as a boat does

barnacles. A couple of years ago, he dropped by a London recording session to see an old friend.

A stranger approached and asked for an autograph.

"Sure." Martin took the pen and paper. "Who should I make it to?"

There was a pause. Then the man said, "Just 'Phil'."

After he'd gone, Martin's friend said, "Wow!! That was cool! Blowing off Phil Collins like that."

Martin can't drive, but dealers unhesitatingly chauffeur him. Peter Howard of Serendipity Books in Berkeley, known as "The Emperor" for the quality of his stock and the breadth of his influence, periodically flew Martin from England, gave him a car and driver, and sent him out to hunt. He'd cruise the west coast in an apparently aimless pattern that unerringly led to caches of won-

derful books. In the early 1980s, Peter found that my then-wife, a photographer, had covered Martin's wedding. He ordered a dozen large prints. When he next visited Serendipity, Martin found himself grinning down from every corner of the shop. Later, Peter wrote and published at his own expense a paean to Martin as book-hunter and all-round good guy, then commissioned another set of portraits, which he produced in a limited edition portfolio at \$5,000 a set.

After Martin moved to Paris in the 1980s, his patch widened to include most of France, in particular the Riviera. Wealthy English retirees often owned interesting libraries, parts of which found their way into second-hand shops in Nice, Antibes and Cannes. A catalogue entry he wrote for one such book, found in Nice, conveys not only his knowledge but his glee on discovering a true rarity:

*DOPE DARLING* by Leda Burke (pseudonym for David Garnett). London: Werner Laurie [1919]. First edition. Subtitled "A Story Of Cocaine," Dope Darling is the story of a young man torn between two women, one of whom has a drug habit. Garnett was urged by his father to publish Dope Darling under a pseudonym. According to Carolyn G. Heilbrun's biography of the notable Garnett family, David "aped the style of the women's magazine serials, used every cliché he could remember, and wrote the book as badly as he could." Only two copies are located by the comprehensive OCLC—one at Yale, the other in The British Library, the latter copy being rebound. A remarkably fine copy in a custom-made chemise that bears the armorial bookplate of Lord Esher. We have never seen another copy, though we have sought one for many years. Rare. The black tulip of drug literature.

We lost touch when I left London for the US, but met up again when I moved to Paris in 1989. Alcohol and drugs had helped put a lot more mileage on his already battered frame. He appeared to subsist on red wine, black coffee—his system couldn't absorb milk—and unfiltered Gauloises, boosted

with toots of cocaine. He'd lost most of his teeth and, following a rash leap from a column in Place de la Bastille at the climax of the Bicentennial celebrations, limped on reconstructed feet reinforced with steel pins. His clothes were dusted with cigarette ash and ventilated with the occasional burned hole. The beret had given way to a mangled black felt hat, which only added to his criminal air.

This was a useful disguise when haggling with dealers, but could backfire, as when my wife got wind of the library of a 19th century duke and former general of cavalry. His grandchildren invited us to the old-money suburb of Neuilly to look it over and make an offer, so we recruited Martin to assess the value, leaving him in the garage with the books while we ascended to be introduced to the owners.

The moment we left, he started to unearth treasures, beginning—appropriately, given his then-enthusiasm for mind-altering compounds—with the collected works of Thomas de Quincey, author of *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*. Digging deeper, he uncovered memoirs by generals of the American Civil War inscribed to the duke. There were leather-bound sets of Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth—the library, in short, of a cultivated French Anglophile of a hundred years before, and all hugely saleable.

In France, selling by auction is a gentlemanly business. Each licensed auctioneer or *commiseur priseur* employs an *expert*—pronounced "ex-pair"—to guarantee authenticity. The term carries implications of high class. *Les experts* are invariably cultivated, scholarly and well-dressed; the French title for the CSI TV series is *Les Experts*.

As we entered the gloom of the garage, the owners looked round expectantly.

"And where is your colleague, l'expert?" inquired the countess.

Ragged, gap-toothed, his face lit only by his flashlight, Martin rose from behind the cartons. Bela Lugosi never achieved such an effect. The countess grabbed her husband's hand and, I swear, began to cross herself.

Ours was a Holmes and Watson relationship: Martin unearthing some obscure masterpiece, me standing by in awe as he explained its significance. I was happy to drive him, and even help fund the larger purchases. Technically, we shared the profits—usually illusory, since, as soon as I built up a credit, he delved into his briefcase with a murmured "I don't know if this will interest you..." and, producing some rarity for my collection, put me once again in the red.

From time to time, we fantasized about a buying trip to the US. In the winter of 2003, it suddenly became possible. We both had a few weeks free between Thanksgiving and Christmas. My memoir of book collecting, *A Pound of Paper*, was coming out in the US, and its publisher grudgingly offered to lay on a west coast promotional tour. The Pacific Northwest and California beckoned.

"You really think we'll find anything?" Martin asked.

We scoured maps of northern California, Oregon, Washington State and British Columbia. All shared a tradition of resistance to change. Plenty of radicals and dropouts had settled there, a few of whom, given the affinity of such people for literature, inevitably opened bookstores.

Just to check, Martin rang Peter Howard.

"If you can't find books in Vancouver," growled The Emperor, "you'd have to be dead."

#### Day 1:

"You don't *really* want a convertible," said the woman behind the Alamo desk at SeaTac Airport. 'You'll freeze!'

One expects car-rental people to hustle. *We haven't any more compacts, but for just \$25 more there's this 12-cylinder Super Anaconda Gran Turismo...* However, her you-must-be-kidding tone carried conviction. She simply couldn't believe anyone would be so dumb.

"We really fancied the convertible..."

"What if there's snow?"

We hadn't considered that possibility. Snow doesn't really exist in Paris. It's more like a movie of weather than the thing itself:

drifting flakes, to be enjoyed behind glass on a warm terrace, with a *double express*, fortified with a shot of Calvados.

"You think that's likely?"

"Travel Advisory says probability is high. How far do you plan to go?"

"Vancouver Island."

Her smile flattened at the edges. "Look. I've lived in Seattle all my life. And...well...I really wish you wouldn't take the convertible."

Amid thoughts of the Donner Party, the fantasy of a silver rag-top evaporated.

Twenty minutes later, we pulled out into the night. A goose-shit-green Jeep Liberty 4x4 would not have been my first choice. But behind the wheel, its merits were obvious: roomy seats, comfortably distanced—useful with a passenger who smoked—and plenty of space for literary loot. Also, rarest for someone accustomed to feeble European cars, power. Swinging past a dawdling VW Rabbit, I fractionally hit the gas. It disappeared like a beer can in our wake.

Martin, undeterred by the "No Smoking" decal on the dash or the holes that once held plug-in lighter and ashtray, lit the first of some hundreds of unfiltered Gauloises he'd smoke on the trip. He ashed his politically incorrect butt into the Seattle night and looked round the interior.

"Don't mind it," he said. "Actually."

*Kings of the road, man.*

#### Day 2:

"You guys just passing through?"

The waitress at the International House of Pancakes on the Seattle bypass brought me back to earth. I'd been staring out at the highway, swept by curtains of rain.

"Yes. We arrived from Paris last night."

"Paris! Well, how about that!"

The name didn't really register. She'd have said the same thing if we were from Nyack.

Jetlag made it hard to focus. Maybe William Gibson was right in *Pattern Recognition*; as we transit continents, our souls lag behind, and it takes them time to catch up.

We'd found a guide to the bookshops of

the Northwest and California. It was two years old, but there didn't seem to be a more recent edition.

"Plenty of places in Seattle," Martin said, browsing. "Though some don't open until noon. Let's catch them on the way back."

We climbed out of Seattle in a withering storm of sleet. Looking down on its black towers huddled to the grey waters of Puget Sound, I silently thanked the girl at Alamo. Ahead lay forests and mountains I was already investing with glamour; roads winding through sunlit woods, and log cabin bookshops where, after offering us coffee, the owner, a cross between Kris Kristofferson and Abe Lincoln, would wave us towards his back room with the magic words, "Ignore the pencilled prices. We can work out a deal."

"Hill Valley sounds good," Martin said, studying the guide. "Half a dozen shops. Says here one has a stock of a hundred thousand books."

Reached along one of those interminable approach roads lined with McDonalds, KFC and Taco Bell, Hill Valley proved to be a grid of Victorian red brick buildings spread down the side of a steep hill. Except for a handful of cars nosed in to the curb, its wide streets, made to give eight-horse wagon teams plenty of turning room, were empty at 11 a.m. The middle class had long since moved out. Old department stores had become "boutique markets," and a theater was tacked onto the back of the Victorian town hall. Where we parked, an old bank had been adapted into a karate *dojo*. Inside, a dozen pajama-clad students, teenagers or younger, flailed one another.

The shop with 100,000 books no longer existed; was now, in fact, a parking lot. But the second place in our guide, a double-fronted shop with two crowded windows, was just opening as we arrived. The shop was neat, the stock well arranged in the spacious ground floor of what, from the wide staircase at the back, had once been a clothing or furniture store, but, the way you know a bar is Not Your Kind of Place, I knew we'd find nothing.

*Well, at least give it a chance.*

"Anything from the Paris expatriate presses?" I asked the owner, an amiable gent in his sixties.

He smiled in genial bafflement. "Um....and they would be...?"

"Hours Press? Olympia or Obelisk? Black Sun? Three Mountains?"

No reaction.

"Shakespeare and Company?"

"Ah!"

Dare I hope for a copy of the Shakespeare and Company *Ulysses*, perhaps rebound as *Principles of Economics*, like so many other copies smuggled past US Customs?

"Now..." he continued tentatively, "Would that have anything to do with William Shakespeare?"

"Not really."

"Oh, well," he said, crestfallen. "I guess you'd better check our First Editions cabinet."

Had I wanted the collected works of Rod McKuen or Jonathan Livingstone Seagull, I'd have been in heaven. There were dozens, along with misattributed Book Club printings, tattered second impressions, obscure local self-published poetry, and scholarly works on the ethnology of the long-since-exterminated original inhabitants. I toyed with buying Frank Scully's *Fun in Bed*—disappointingly, a book about games for shut-in children. It's one of Those Titles, along with the Girl Guides' manual *Whippings and Lashings*, and John L. Di Gaetani's *Penetrating Wagner's Ring*. All the while, Martin just wandered about, barely taking down a book. A place like this insulted his expertise. It was like asking a wine taster to assess Kool Aid. We left feeling as we had when we entered: *not worth the effort*. And asking *How could we know that, even before we'd looked at a single book?*

### Day 3:

Our second stop was a one-time logging town, now in decline. Of course the shop recommended in our guide was empty, but the owner had moved one block back from

the main street, to a cheaper location, where some consultant had persuaded him to learn from the antique business. More like a doctor's waiting room than a bookshop, it featured wall to wall carpet, scented candles, and piped music. A few books, chosen for the brightness of their dust-wrappers, were displayed in glass cabinets like period porcelain, with prices to match. Out of stubbornness, I invested \$60 in a second impression of Edward Abbey's novel *Black Sun*, entirely for its pristine dust-wrapper, destined for my naked first edition back in Paris. I knew Martin disapproved. A wrapper only counted with him if it had been with the book from the start. Otherwise his listing carried the coded warning "dw supplied" (i.e., not original).

At a mall outside town, we stopped to buy a cellphone. Its halls were relentlessly festive, thick with tinsel and ersatz Christmas cheer, but otherwise almost entirely empty. At Santa's stand, the old boy and his elf took a load off their feet by sharing the throne on which he usually cuddled kids. Nobody wanted the giant boxes of chocolates, the gift-wrapped Game Boys with complimentary additional mayhem, and least of all the lingerie in Victoria's Secret. Overestimating the market among loggers for lace teddies and suspender belts, the franchise owners had decided, instead of boudoir intimacy, to go for space, and rented a former carpet warehouse. To fill the windows, they enlarged the standard peekaboo photos to billboard size. Models huge as whales lounged in black net bras that could hold a couple of hippos.

Things didn't improve further north. The few surviving bookshops were staffed by drowsing drop-outs who couldn't price a paperback without ringing the store owner at home. Others spent twenty minutes on the internet researching a title, then demanded a dizzyingly high price.

"That's what's listed here," they'd say truculently, pointing to the same title on the website of a Manhattan dealer notorious for his mark-ups.

"Yes, but that's the first edition," we'd point out. "Also, it has its dust-wrapper. *Your* copy is the third impression and has no wrapper.

Also, someone has underlined half of page 208 and written 'How true!' in the margin."

But this just confirmed the suspicion that we were cheats. Anyone who knew so much *had* to be a crook. "If you don't want it," they said with a sullen glare, "you don't have to buy it."

Paradoxically, being treated as swindlers encouraged us to fulfill their expectations. When a shortsighted assistant mistook "\$50" for "\$5," I said nothing. *Never give a sucker an even break.*

If our ethics were degenerating, so was our diet. People ate dinner at 5:30 and the night owls at 6. By 7, everything was shut tighter than a clam. Our next motel had no coffee shop, no kitchen, no refrigerators in the rooms, and no room service. *Even Norman Bates offered Marion Crane a sandwich.* There'd be coffee in the lobby next morning, explained the overweight girl who checked us in—"and our wonderful cinnamon rolls. Ya gotta try them. They're to die for!" We found this to be true. With the consistency of Kleenex wads soaked in pungent, glutinous goo, they were, indeed, life-threatening.

### Day 4:

"Disappointing," Martin said as we set out next morning, searching for a breakfast with a cholesterol level less than Toxic. "We should do better in Vancouver. That reminds me. I must call Lulu."

"Who's Lulu?"

"She used to work for..." He named a London dealer who'd recently gone bankrupt. "She did all his leg work. Talked to clients, buttered up dealers and collectors. She knows *everybody*. And she lives in Vancouver." Not only that—she was beautiful too, according to Martin, and smolderingly seductive.

"What's she doing in Vancouver then?"

"Born there. Went back home when the shop closed."

Thereafter, every question about Vancouver had only one answer. Any good restaurants? Lulu would know. How about a trip to Vancouver Island, where, we'd been

told, bookshops still flourished as in the golden age, and rarities fell into one's hands for a few cents? Lulu could set it up. A fusion of secretary, negotiator and vamp, Lulu would deal with *everything*....

But repeated calls produced frustrating information, or no information at all. Instead, with my encouragement, Martin told stories of his rock career: tales of dope-high, sex-crazed, music-mad days on the road with the Pink Fairies and the Savoy Brown Blues Band. That's how he'd got interested in books. In afternoons, between the sound check and the first show, when the others were getting pissed, he browsed bookshops.

Towards the end of the day, we passed a sign saying "*Canadian Border 100 miles.*"

"Should you try Lulu again?"

"Right."

We were in woods now, but not as I'd visualized. Smoke from chimneys rose to tree-top height, flattened against an invisible ceiling, and crept sideways. It helped explain the origin of the Wendigo, that hairy creature of the woods, supposed to run across the treetops, crying "My burning, fiery feet!" (Since then, of course, he's been coopted into the Marvel comic book bestiary, where there's always room for a new monster, even if he just resembles the Incredible Hulk in a polar-bear coat.)

Perfectly in tune with the moment, a call to Lulu's parents at last produced news. As Martin listened, his face lengthened until it would have fitted a Phiz illustration to Dickens' *Bleak House*.

"Lulu's had a breakdown," he said when he rang off. "They checked her into a psychiatric hospital on Vancouver Island. She's on suicide watch in the locked-down ward."

In the circumstances, we decided to skip Vancouver altogether and cross to the island by ferry. A storm paced us across desolate kilometers of marsh as we headed for the scatter of lights that marked the terminal. Occasional flashes of lightning lit a dismal swamp, with moss-covered wooden sheds sagging as if weary of existence. The title of an obscure fantasy story kept running through my brain. *The House at the End of*

*the West.*

We docked in Victoria, the island's largest town, in the middle of the same storm. Two blokes in a car at night in driving rain—it was like the first reel of *An American Werewolf in London*. Fortunately we found a hotel before local lycanthropes learned of new blood in town and managed to check in, though not without a struggle. It was obvious that Victoria was the Dirty Weekend capital of British Columbia, if not the whole northwest. Bed-and-breakfasts advertised secrecy that would credit a CIA safe house. In restaurants, high wooden partitions segregated customers. You almost expected a mask with the menus. Of the amenities listed by our hotel, Seclusion and Discretion rated above cable TV. They were surprised we didn't want to share a bed, and only gave us separate rooms when Martin insisted on one where he could smoke.

Once checked in, we went looking for the Psychiatric hospital. While Martin visited Lulu, I waited in the Recreation Room. Patients in robes and pyjamas shuffled along strips of plastic flooring laid across colorless institutional carpet. Relentlessly cheerful signs decorated the walls, the colors and designs reminiscent of child art.

Before he abandoned poetry for pop, Leonard Cohen liked to do short stand-up-comedy routines at his readings. One told of visiting a friend in such a facility. Persuaded to go to the Rec. Room in search of snacks, he left his coat and set out into the corridors, only to be stopped by a large guard in white.

"Where should you be now?" the guard asked.

Cohen tried to explain about the snacks, but the guard just waited until he'd finished, and said again, but with greater emphasis, "*Where should you be now?*"

It took a while to sort this out. Eventually, the guard escorted him back to the room—"where," concluded Cohen, "my friend had eaten my coat."

For all I knew, it could have been this same hospital; Cohen was, after all, Canadian. Across the room, a TV blared an ice hockey game until the din penetrated even

the daze of the lone woman seated in the fan of armchairs ranged in front of it. Sluggishly, she got up and switched to a *Seinfeld* rerun.

*Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it.*

#### Day 5:

The next day, we took the ferry back across the Sound. Martin hadn't bought anything, and I'd found only one item: a copy of *His Idea*, a tiny book containing a single poem by Robert Creeley, illustrated by photographs by Elsa Dorfman of a couple making love. (The husband suggested she take the pictures. Hence the title.) Otherwise, our total purchases for the trip, mostly from charity shops, barely filled a single carton. We no longer consulted the guide. Obviously that world of retail bookselling had ceased to exist, leveled by the internet as completely as loggers cleared a forest. Instead, as we approached Seattle again, Martin dug out a tattered address book.

"There's this bloke... I met him at a fair once. Oscar something. Didn't have a shop. Sold from his home...."

Oscar, once located, sounded amiable. Yes, he had books. Yes, he'd be happy to see us. No, it didn't matter if we came late. He would delay his dinner to accommodate us.

Since he lived on the other side of Seattle, we decided to pay a call, in passing, on the city's most distinguished booksellers. Their shop, sited in a converted bank, was carpeted and quietly luxurious. They treated Martin like visiting royalty. Since it seemed vulgar to browse their meticulously well-ordered glass cases, we sat and chatted.

"I'm sorry we can't stay longer," Martin said, "but we have an appointment with Oscar."

The booksellers stared. "Oscar's agreed to see you?"

"Yes," I said, looking at my watch. "He's delaying his dinner, so...."

"His dinner?"

"That's what he said? Why?"

One of the partners glowered. "Oscar doesn't see *anyone*."

We've been trying..." said the other

"...he's got this collection...."

"...unique Native American documents...."

"...ready to pay cash...."

"...Princeton... Yale...."

"...won't let us see it...."

"...won't even take our calls...."

"But he's *skipping dinner* to see you?"

Five minutes later, we slunk out, like house guests caught stealing the towels. Purely from guilt, I'd bought an overpriced first edition of Andre Norton's *The Beast Master* that I didn't really want.

Oscar's single-story house, screened from the road by a grove of bamboo, looked anything but mysterious. He opened the door promptly, a portly bearded gentleman with a winning smile.

"Welcome! Great to see you. So glad you could visit."

I looked for hidden signs of his supposed monasticism, but not for long. The house was too startling for that.

What had been the living room was jammed not only with books, which filled floor-to-ceiling shelves on every wall, but an accumulation of objects, some in glass cases, others at large, including a spittoon and a full skeleton. Whose? Whitman? Thoreau? I didn't like to ask. Besides, I was more interested in the books. Was that really a first edition of *The Beautiful and Damned*? A thin blue leaflet proved to be Dashiell Hammett's *The Battle of the Aleutians*, printed in 1943, after the author of *The Maltese Falcon* had been posted, in some Surrealistic boondoggle, to the 29th Engineers in Adak, Alaska.

An hour later, I staggered into the kitchen, arms loaded.

"Maybe we should settle up," I said to Oscar. "We're keeping you from your dinner. And we need to find a motel."

"You don't want to see downstairs?" he asked innocently.

"There's *more*?"

"Of course!" *Silly question.*

What part of Oscar's accumulation was the most memorable? Maybe it was his bedroom, filled with books about the body, with entire shelves devoted to the liver, the

tongue, the penis. Even to get through the doorway, one had to leap a hedge of books—devoted, appropriately, to the feet. Or was it the container behind the house that he'd fitted out with shelves, but with aisles so narrow that one's nose literally touched the spines?

At about three in the morning, as we groped back across the yard in the inky dark, arms filled with early Steinbecks, Oscar paused by a set of double doors, and flung them open to reveal the entrance to another cellar, filled to the top step with more books.

"God only knows what's down there," he said. "I haven't looked in years."

It was enough. We fled, as from a fun-house mirror in which we recognized a distorted vision of ourselves.

#### Day 6:

"To awaken quite alone in a strange town," wrote the explorer Freya Stark, "is one of the pleasantest sensations in the world." But what if the town is Portland, Oregon, the time is 2 a.m., it's raining a torrent and, in the next room, your traveling companion appears to be expiring to a terminal cough?

A combination of disappointment, the constant rain, plus his coffee and tobacco diet, had laid Martin low, and he'd come down with bronchitis. By the time we reached Portland, his bark sounded like someone shoveling coal in the furnace room of hell. Fortunately, a dealer friend, Charles Seluzicki, took us in, dosed Martin, and sent him off to bed while he and I sat up and talked books.

After the second bottle of Bordeaux, we got onto Harry Crosby and his wife Caresse. It's hard to imagine two people more suited to Paris in the 1920s than the Crosbys. They traveled in a chauffeured Bugatti accompanied by Caresse's whippet Clitoris. Harry invented his own religion, a kind of sun worship, and had a cross tattooed on the sole of his left foot, so that he defiled the symbol of Christianity with each step. One year, he attended the annual artists and models ball wearing a coat of ochre paint and a necklace of dead pigeons.

As J. P. Morgan's nephew, he had almost unlimited funds, which he spent lavishly on travel, drugs, real estate, cars, planes, parties and, oddly, publishing. His Black Sun Press began as a way to print his poetry, but expanded to produce beautiful if ridiculously expensive editions of D. H. Lawrence, Hart Crane (with photographs by Walker Evans), and an *Alice in Wonderland* illustrated by Marie Laurencin. But a demon possessed Harry. Like Hemingway, he'd volunteered to drive an ambulance during World War I, and was also, like Hemingway, blown up. Unlike Hemingway, he escaped without a scratch, but the rest of his unit died—a fact that haunted him, feeding the belief that he lived on borrowed time. In 1929, he returned to New York with his current mistress, shot her, then himself. He was 31.

Charlie listened with amiable attention as I rambled about Crosby and the special appeal of Black Sun Press books, a few of which I'd managed to acquire, mostly with Martin's help.

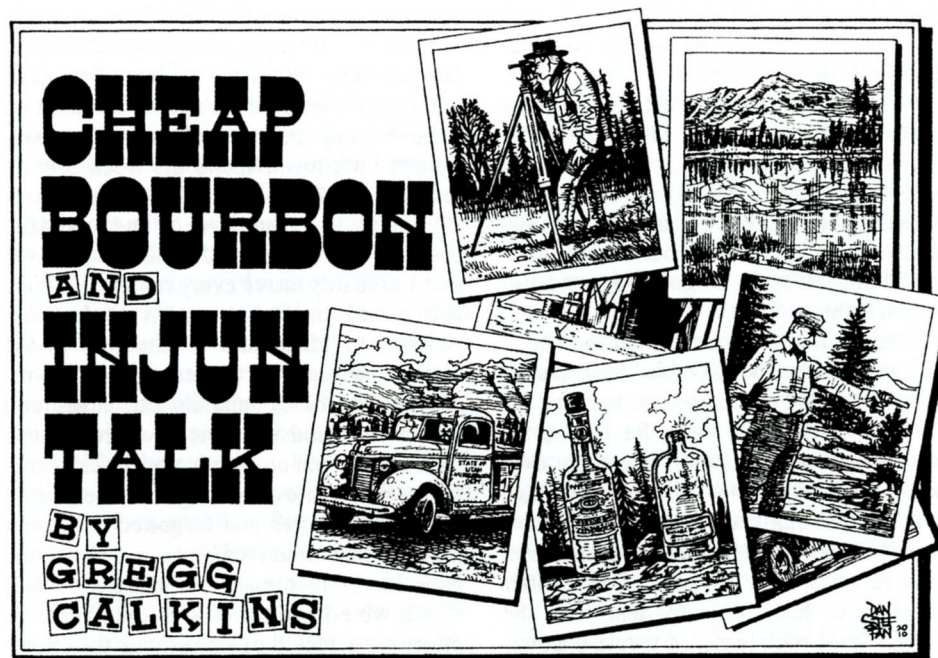
"I may have something you'll like," he said, and disappeared into the back.

He returned with two small books bound in brown leather. On their covers, I recognized Harry's own gilt stamped emblem, incorporating the symbols of his ersatz religion. His tiny green cruciform bookplate, "CARESSE" down, "HARRY" across, intersecting like a crossword at the "R," was fixed to the inside pastedown. It was Harry's own copy of the two-volume first edition of Henri Barbusse's *Le Feu—Under Fire*, the greatest of all French novels about the trenches of World War I. Throughout, the pages were scrawled with his anguished underlinings and crawling marginalia.

"Don't bother about the pencilled price," Charlie said. "We can make a deal."

Buying Harry Crosby's copy of *Le Feu* was, for me, the high point of that trip, and, in some senses, of my collecting. In a way not possible in Paris, Martin and I had seen the desolation inflicted by the internet, and it changed the way we dealt with books.

(continued after next article)



What does a FIJAGH fan do, when he's not in fannish mode? I loved reading published science fiction and fantasy from the first sight I ever got of a coverless issue of *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* in a remote part of southern Utah circa 1950—as improbable a location as I could subsequently imagine. I suppose technically I was a fan from the moment they published my first letter in their letter column and I started getting mail from others as a result. One of my very first fannish friends was fan artist Ray (Raul Garcia) Capella.

Not long after that I started publishing my own fanzine, *Oopsla!*, and continued doing so through my three years in the Marine Corps, but I was always too remote from other fans and too deeply rooted in the mundane world to ever be able to escape to the happier land of FIAWOL that I enjoyed watching only from those fringes. For instance, I was aware of the existence of LASFS when I lived in Santa Monica for a time, but somehow never managed to attend a meeting. After I was discharged I went back to college and continued *Oopsla!*

and my FAPazine, but fan centers were far from Salt Lake City and the only fans I knew personally were fans I had myself created by introduction, most notably Jim Webbert, so the real world intruded more and more.

One memorable non-fannish summer was the one I spent helping create the State of Utah's first-ever statewide geologic map. The initial work consisted of collecting, correcting and piecing together all of the previous fragmentary maps which had been made as a result of various geological theses from several universities in the state (geophysics, at that time, was a still-emergent science), and my two mineralogy professors were deeply involved in the project. I was still an undergrad so my job was a combination of helper, gofer, and trainee, and I guess I got the job because they liked me and thought I showed promise. It was a change from fighting forest fires, paid better, and was also an opportunity to be recognized academically. So I was delighted to have the opportunity, little realizing all of the side benefits which

would be included.

I spent the first half of the summer working with my major professor, Dr. Bronson Stringham, a great guy I truly loved. Bronson was a "Jack Mormon," which meant basically that he liked to drink bourbon and coffee and didn't follow all of the lesser rules or beliefs as rigidly as his church might have liked, but he still considered himself to be a "good" Mormon in his own fashion.

Bronson had sort of adopted me and, I think, considered me to be his heir apparent in the Mineralogy Department, wanting me to finish my B.S. and work for him in his department, teaching, while I got my own doctorate. (I sometimes think I should have done that, but that's another story.) Since I was to become his surrogate, he considered it his responsibility as part of my wider education to learn how to deal with the ordinary hard-rock miners I would encounter in the field, who were for the most part unlettered, definitely drinkers, and not likely to take well to sissified college types. This unofficial education included, among other things, learning the correct way to drink from a shared pint bottle of "room temperature" whiskey passed hand-to-hand. There's a specific etiquette involved, and "room temperature" meant whatever the sun made the entire western Utah desert that afternoon, no ice or mixer.

I knew what he meant because I had just spent three years in the Marine Corps as an enlistee who had attended two years of college before I got there—and it was the unlettered Marines I had to swim with and survive, so I understood the situation very well. Rudyard Kipling touched on this in one of my favorite poems, "If," when he spoke about how you needed not to "look too good, nor talk too wise" and be careful not to "lose the common touch" as a result of having progressed too far in a different direction than they had.

Our job that summer was to drive to every mine or mining district in western Utah which had ever resulted in a thesis describing intrusive and extrusive igneous

rocks to make sure they had been properly identified. Bronson, a renowned expert, labeled them all as we collected samples and roughly verified the maps. We'd set up a base camp in a motel in some small, remote little town, spend the week driving each day to all the locations we could reach from there, and then move on and repeat the process. An unexpected benefit to me was that I probably drove every remote dirt road and rutted track in western Utah, from Arizona to Idaho and all the way to the Nevada border. I've seen ghost towns, played-out mines, abandoned farms and homesteads and equipment where dreams died and moved on, leaving only desiccated bones few will ever see again. There are a lot of failed holes and forgotten hopes out there in that desert wilderness. I've gone back into tiny tunnels for dozens of feet which were hand-hewn with unimaginable effort as a result of something the miner saw on the surface which induced him to invest that much time and effort in what typically proved to be a failure, all the time wondering why they did it...and what they did next, after abandoning this effort.

Mining is a strange profession populated by some decidedly different people, and in pioneer times they were even stranger. I did my thesis on one desolate spot where yet years prior to my arrival someone had made a serious attempt at a copper mine. They had constructed an A-frame and a hoist, and had a dump-car running out a short length of track to dump the mining waste off the edge and down into the canyon. It was a large shaft but I don't know how deep...no way was I going to climb down that ancient wooden ladder, and dropping rocks produced only indeterminate echoes and lots of rattlesnake songs of warning. The dump contained beautiful mineral samples of azurite and malachite, among others, but apparently nothing rich enough to make a successful mine. Two vast and trunkless legs of stone still stood, and as evening fell and I camped in the vastness all alone, it seemed like I could hear in the distance "My name is Ozy-

mandias, king of kings..."

Bronson's off-curriculum agenda included teaching me how to shoot, although this was after my Marine Corps years and he knew I was an expert rifleman. So he was delighted whenever he managed to outshoot me with his .38 pistol in the late afternoons after we finished emptying our whiskey bottles on some rough hillside in the back-ass country of western Utah.

Not having a sociable drink, when invited, was the worst possible social sin a working miner or even mineralogist could commit, especially if you were someone the miner might suspect of possibly believing yourself to be superior...like a goddamn' college graduate, for instance. (Later on another advisor told me that you never, ever turned down an invitation to have either a beer or a cup of coffee, because those were drinks that meant the other person wanted to talk to you. Hard booze meant they wanted to relax and kick back.)

Bronson wouldn't drink until the day's work was over—not even a beer for lunch—but he also thought that working until 5 p.m. was enough for one day. So no matter where we were on hell's back half-acre, we'd sit down and dig our bottles out of our bags in the back of our Mineralogy Department pickup truck. We'd finish our bottles, set the empties up on some distant perch, and blaze away with our guns. Bronson couldn't shoot better than I could, sober, but he sure could drunk. This was before a sometimes long drive back to our motel rooms and dinner over unpaved roads, and he always insisted I drive. I was lucky to be able to stand up by that time.

The day he gave me my first drinking etiquette lesson was memorable because I was far from the point of enjoying sun-warmed cheap bourbon whiskey straight from the bottle, but what could I say? I was driving the pickup, and we were at least a mile from the fringes of human civilization when he hauled out his bottle and handed it to me with the instruction to take a swig. I did and handed it back. Nope, he said, you did it wrong...do it over. First thing you

have to do is take the palm of your hand and wipe off the mouth of the bottle. So I did. Nope, he said, when I tried to hand it back again, when you tip up the bottle you can't pretend to drink—the bottle has to "gurgle" to prove you took a full swallow. So I tipped up the bottle and made sure it gurgled. Nope, he said, you forgot to wipe it off first. It's six hours after lunch by this time on a blistering hot day and by the time I got it right we were having a fine time.

On one memorable afternoon after we got back to our motel rooms in Delta, Utah, while I was getting ready to go to dinner I dropped my soap in the shower, stooped too quickly to pick it up, and banged my head against the tiled wall so hard that it knocked me flat and almost out. It took me what seemed like forever to crawl back up on my feet again.

When we got to the restaurant later and our steaks arrived, I realized I didn't feel so well and decided a breath of fresh air would help, so I went for a walk around the block. Utah towns have long blocks and very wide streets, and about halfway around I realized I was taking a long time. I thought that if fresh air was helping my improvement, running the rest of the way would accomplish solving both problems that much quicker. To my great surprise, though, I could not find enough coordination to run! I couldn't believe it! Talk about blitzed! But strangely enough I remember it all like it was yesterday, and could even tell you where I was and which direction I was going. I could even walk into that restaurant and sit down in my old seat, facing north and the front of the restaurant. The motel was about four blocks to our right, east, also on the south side of the main drag—hell, the only major street in Delta in those days—and served the best steaks I've ever eaten.

Bronson was a jewel in the rough, a man's man and a lot of fun when it was play time, a serious and hard worker when it was work time. He was warm, open, gregarious, and a wonderful guy with a plain and even slightly bawdy sense of humor. He

used to tell me all sorts of “unapproved” Mormon stories about how things had “really” been—such as Porter Rockwell, sometimes known as Brigham Young’s “enforcer,” who was even said to have killed some of Brigham’s enemies for him, as well as about the “Mountain Meadows Massacre,” not spoken about openly at that time. He gave me my first college job as his lab instructor, too, which taught me more than it did any of my students—probably his intention, I realized later.

Then the world tilted upon its axis and I spent the second half of the summer doing geologic work in Utah’s Uinta Mountains, the highest range in the U.S. running east-west. Its high point, King’s Peak, reaches 13,528 feet—I’ve been there. If you looked at the official State of Utah geologic map today, the sedimentary contact at the base of the Uintas all the way around was mapped by yours truly. I was assisting the Mineralogy Department’s only other professor, Max Erickson, although very likely only he got the credit. I’ve never looked to see, but that was the way things were normally done in those days and I hadn’t even graduated yet.

Max was a serious practicing Mormon who didn’t even drink tea. I don’t think I ever heard him say a bad word or even hint at an off-color joke and he was probably the nicest—and quietest—person I have ever met in my life. By that time I was more than happy to embrace Max’s quiet ways and hope that my liver would recover. We were also away all week long, and on these trips occasionally had to camp out in the wild—whereas Bronson *always* found a motel.

Our typical day consisted of driving to the mouth of the next river/stream coming out of the mountains and then drive as far up-canyon as our four-wheel drive would go. Then we would hike uphill until we came across the geologic contact, mark it on our air photos, and start heading back downhill again. On good days we found the truck again before dark.

Max was quite the opposite of Bronson, but with a subtle sense of often silly humor

that was endearing. Our job was working in the mountainous Uintas. Western Utah—where I’d worked with Bronson—is open, hot, and mostly desert with lots of sagebrush and only a few short junipers here and there. You can see for even hundreds of miles in all directions most of the time. But the Uintas below the tree line are heavily forested, and sometimes navigation consists of knowing only whether you are heading uphill or downhill, especially when the sun is close to being overhead.

One afternoon when we were hiking Max stopped, looked around and then down at his map, and said gravely, “Ugh, Injun lost!” We were in “Injun Country” literally, since a lot of the southern slopes of the Uintas and vicinity were reservation land. Since we didn’t drink, our evening’s recreation when we weren’t camping was going to the small movie house in town. One night a shoot-‘em-up western was playing and Max, looking around the audience which was almost completely Indian in make-up, wryly suggested to me that he thought it would be prudent if we rooted for the Indians. So we did. If the Indians approved our cheering for their side it was hard to tell, but at least we didn’t get scalped on our way out.

After that he said that “Injun talk” made more sense because it didn’t waste a lot of words, and Max was not into conversation.. “Look, me findum contact here, you markum air photo, we go back” and things like that. We talked to each other in “Injun talk” a lot the rest of the summer, but I remember him as being naturally a quiet soft-spoken man, anyhow. He smiled and chuckled more than actually laughing aloud and he loved every second we spent in the high Uintas, way up above the tree-line. Some afternoons got hairy, literally, as the clouds started building up for stormy weather, and at close to 11,000 feet you can reach out and touch them. Sometimes the electric potential was enough to actually raise the fine hair on the back of your neck, at which point even Max would be per-

suaded to head downhill and cease being the highest points of elevation when standing. I kid you not, I was ready to get down on my stomach more than once and let a particularly ominous cloud pass over.

We worked our way all around the Uintas, day by day. The northern slope is even more sparsely populated than the southern side so many times there was no motel within daily reach and we camped out and ate over a campfire. It was late summer, weather as good as the Uintas get since they often have snow through July.

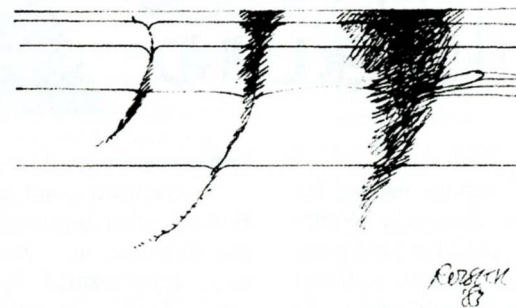
It was a summer to remember and often causes me to think about what might have been if I had taken Bronson up on his teaching offer. But mineralogy was too specialized for me by that time and I wanted something more exciting and challenging. I had attended college five and a half quarters by the time I joined the Marine Corps, and when I came back with four years due on the GI Bill I decided to essentially start all over again. With most of my required courses already taken, that left me with a lot more room for electives. Since math inter-

ested me I took several advanced math classes along with a freshman ancient history class, and mythology and Greek-and-Latin roots, things which weren’t required for my major, so this left the way open for me to get into geophysics and that’s what I did next.

In a perfect world I’d still be going to college there, never graduating and always studying something new and interesting. There are a zillion things I’d still like to know more about. Of course, I think that’s the basic reason why most of us are science fiction fans in the first place...we want to know the answers to questions that a number of people haven’t even considered asking yet. Why isn’t faster-than-light travel impossible, for instance? I read just the other day about the results from some new scientific experiment which mentioned the fact that at a certain point in the early Big Bang history of the cosmos that faster-than-light travel had to be necessary.

Knew it all along, didn’t we?

—Gregg Calkins



#### *Baxter, continued:*

Before the net, scarcity conferred value. Once the book-dealing Web sites showed a buyer how many other copies existed, that disappeared. Rarity became the new currency. Collectors wanted signatures, inscriptions, manuscripts—not simply the uncommon, but the unique. It turned on the lights, dispelled the shadows, blew out the dust, but in the process took away what

most attracted me, the thrill of discovery; the hunt. These days, Martin handles nothing that costs less than \$5,000, and sells to actors and rock stars. I still have my collection and add to it, but not with the same enthusiasm. I was happier with the Wendigo, in the dark.

—John Baxter



# SECOND TRIP

## GORDON EKLUND

### I

Pretty much every serious fanzine fan must know *The Harp Stateside*, Walter Willis's account of his 1952 fan fund sponsored trip to the Chicago Worldcon of that year. Ever since its initial publication *The Harp* has loomed as a monument of sorts against which all future con/trip reports could be measured and judged. Its rather daunting example may well have dissuaded more than a few writers from giving the genre a shot on their own. I know I've never written an actual con report, have no intention or urge to try. Competing with Willis's *Harp* isn't the only reason or excuse but it will surely do. I've never tried an epic poem in classical Greek about the

Trojan War either. After Homer, why bother?

Less known—and less influential—was Willis's other big trip-and-con report, the one detailing his second (tenth anniversary—accompanied by wife Madeleine) trip to America in 1962 to attend ChiCon III. This report initially appeared in scattered installments first in Noreen and Larry Shaw's *Axe* (originally a weekly newszine launched in support the special Willis fund and afterward, briefly, a monthly genzine); Willis's own zine *Hyphen* (the long portions dealing with the Chicago con itself); Bruce Pelz's FAPazine *Ankus*; and a last chapter in *Les Spinge 13* published by Ken Cheslin. These various installments were eventually collected into a whole by

Richard Bergeron for his giant Willis anthology *Warhoon 28* under the rather confusing title *Two for the Road*: "Twice Upon a Time." Interestingly, Madeleine wrote her own separate account of the trip serialized in another Pelz zine, *Speleobem*, though so far as I know her version—which, relying on my forty-year-old memories, tended to be more open and candid in its assessments of the ongoing events and fan personalities of the time than Walt's own more diplomatic observations—has never been reprinted.

### II

The collected version of Walt's report in *Warhoon 28* runs to some sixty-eight crowded pages in twenty chapters, still barely three-quarters the length of *The Harp Stateside*. It ends with Walt and Madeleine ensconced among Berkeley's tumultuously swirling fandom following a long day's tour of San Francisco's sights in the company of Bill Donaho and Jerry and Miriam Knight. Willis liked the City and praises it as showing the best of America:

"There was, above all, a general impression that people liked one another and liked living in San Francisco. I was beginning to understand why, and how this city had redeemed America in the eyes of the world at the time of the Khrushchev visit, and for all we know saved mankind. This was what America could become."

This was 1962, a year of cultural transition (I'll get to that part shortly) and long before the term "San Francisco values" become a pejorative howl among the hard Right. The reference to Khrushchev escapes me, I'm afraid. I know he toured the U.S. in 1959—the first Soviet leader ever to do so—and apparently San Francisco was among his stops. As I recall, he also visited a farm in Iowa to see the tall corn grow and was denied a sought after visit to Disneyland for supposed security reasons. He was also interviewed at great length on David Susskind's late-night talk program and most memorably raved and ranted about the

injustice of the Allied occupation of Russian ports following the 1917 Bolshevik coup, leaving his audience of history-deprived Americans reeling in bewilderment. How any of this may or may not have "saved" mankind is now lost to the swirling currents of time. Only a few weeks after the Willises returned home, the Cuban Missile Crisis broke out and mankind—in spite of San Francisco, Khrushchev, and John Kennedy, whom Willis elsewhere in the report hails as Ireland's gift to America—came dangerously close to obliterating itself and everything else besides.

As for Walt and Madeleine, my assumption is their trip proceeded on past San Francisco and its attractions and that eventually they returned to New York—site of the opening chapters—and then on to a waiting jet plane and back home to Belfast again. Why Willis concluded his narrative where he did I don't know, though others may. Perhaps the available fanzine publishers dried up, maybe his own inspiration flagged, or maybe he simply ran out of time to turn his presumably copiously detailed notes into prose narrative. Maybe writing about the end of the trip and the Greyhound bus company's loss of much of the Willis luggage was more unpleasant than he cared to revisit. Whatever the motive or cause, the report was apparently never completed.

### III

The fandom of 1962 was not the same fandom as the one that had bonded together and brought Willis to America a decade earlier. Fandom '62 was larger, older, certainly wealthier, and both more diverse and more splintered. Willis never addresses any of this directly in the course of the report but it nevertheless hangs over the trip (and report) like a chilly mist over an Irish bog. (Yes, I know: block that metaphor.) Here, again in San Francisco writing of his delight when some fans hesitate to cross a union picket line, he treads as close to the fannish cultural divide as he elects to get:

"Curiously this little episode made me feel ever more at home in San Francisco. Up to now most of our

hosts in America had been Republicans, who would regard our Conservative Party as a bunch of dangerous radicals. They were very nice people and I thought none the less of them for that. But it did feel good to be back among people who thought like Europeans and whom you didn't have to be afraid of offending."

Another year afterward and these fan-nish fault lines would rupture under the strain of the Walter Breen revelations. Willis (typically) stayed clear of that vast horror. But *Hyphen* ceased publication with its February 1965 issue and the 1962 report remained, as mentioned, unfinished.

#### IV

It wasn't as if Willis was oblivious to the changes American fandom had undergone during the ten years between trips and at times he seems almost prescient about other changes yet to come. Here, in one of my favorite passages from the report while musing on Robert Heinlein's "surprise" appearance at the ChiCon convention banquet just as his Hugo Award for *A Stranger in a Strange Land* is announced, he ponders some possibilities for conventions of the future:

"These appearances of Heinlein are becoming one of the most charming traditions of fandom. They remind me of a series of faan-fiction stories I once started based on the theory that conventions are becoming more and more stylized, and will eventually develop into something like a carnival, or circus, or the British Christmas Pantomime. The Heinlein manifestation would make a fine conclusion to any such performance. The distribution to the audience of favors and gaily coloured but inedible food symbols would be the prelude to a series of ritual incantations before a number of silver spaceship shaped objects, which would culminate in a blinding flash and the miraculous apparition of the Heinlein in a Technicolor tuxedo."

Anybody who's dropped by a recent sf con will experience a tickle of recognition reading the above. My own personal last worldcon attendance was way more years ago than I care to remember. I recall hearing tales (I wasn't there, no) of how Heinlein at the 1976 convention in Kansas City was occasionally heckled and booed during his Guest of Honor speech, a vast sea change from the awed reception he'd received with his 1961 GoH speech in Seattle (I was there that time) when he'd given an amazingly prescient impression of Glenn Beck. ("We're all going to die!!!") By '76 he wasn't winning Hugo awards any more either. But even as the identities of the gods fluctuate, the incantations to keep them appeased rarely vary.

#### V

And not just fandom of course. What of the outside world—the "mundane" as we fans back in the day (derisively) referred to it? Well, as mentioned before, to wax pedantic, 1962 was a moment of cultural transition, the year the fifties wrapped up pretty much for good and the sixties, if haltingly, kicked off. The Beatles made their first recordings, Bob Dylan wrote his early protest songs, Nixon got his ass kicked on the California ballot, supposedly never to rise again. (That would come with the regrettable seventies.) And the aforementioned Cuban Missile Crisis featuring its close brush with nuclear Armageddon spooked holy hell out of pretty much everybody except Air Force General Curtis LeMay who counseled hitting the Reds with everything we had even if it entailed getting our hair mussed in retaliation. Early, vague traces of coming days alight with guilt-free sex, potent dope and brain-bursting rock 'n' roll speckled the air like fireflies on a white port binge, especially on the two coasts. (Yes, it's indeed hard writing this kind of stuff without sounding idiotic—so why try?) A nervous, spavined Zeitgeist stood poised tottering on the brink while rampant schizophrenia madly fluttered in wait. (Something like that anyhow.)

Me, I was a senior in high school with a

crewcut and horn-rimmed glasses and due to graduate the following June with little or no concept of what ought to transpire next except that I definitely wanted to continue to faan. I recall becoming aware around that time of the existence of non-English speaking films playing at odd venues downtown. I was already reading Kerouac and soon moved on to Henry Miller and D.H. Lawrence. Burroughs too—though for me largely just the Edgar Rice variety. Movies released that year included "Jules and Jim" and "Last Year at Marienbad" but also "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance" and "Hatari". (Classics all but as if from different time streams.) The Yankees won the World Series but wouldn't again until 1978, by which time everything was pretty well finished and done. I was number 53 on the FAPA wait list, a member of both SAPS and the Cult, and had published two issues of a largely self-written general fanzine called *Bramble*. (There would never be a third ish.) I didn't attend the Chicago worldcon, but I did meet Walt and Madeleine when they stopped in Seattle on their way down the West Coast. (Four chapters in the report are devoted to this.) Here Willis summarizes the Nameless Ones meeting at Wally Weber's house where he and I met:

"...and then everyone sat around in the big low living room and talked. In format it was rather like a meeting of Irish Fandom, but more fragmentary: there had been some talk of me writing up the minutes instead of Wally, but I was glad to see he didn't take it seriously. Later Wally showed slides of the Convention, and Wally Gonser cut Paul Stanbery's hair in the kitchen."

Nope, I'm not mentioned. Nothing surprising in that, as I was a very quiet teenage boy (especially around adults), though I can still remember most of what conversation Walt and I shared. I asked at one point what he did for a living back home (a "civil servant", he replied—not a term in common usage in America—here we're all "government workers") and he told me he'd

enjoyed my fanzine. I thanked him for using a quote of mine on the back cover of a recent *Hyphen* ("Don't repeat yourself too often I always say") and he said he'd gotten it from Walter Breen. (Someone else barely mentioned in the Willis report despite his presence in Chicago.) Later in their Seattle stay the Willises toured the Century 21 World's Fair, climbed a mountain with Toskey and the Busbys, and attended a party at Otto Pfeiffer's home. I missed all that. (Must have been a school night.) Here's a quick highlight:

"There was a waffle party that evening at the Pfeiffers. There we had our first waffle and second meeting with Seattle fandom. First impressions confirmed that they were a very likeable lot, but very heterogeneous. So this, I thought, is what Irish fandom might have been like in another probability world in which we had constituted ourselves as an open club. There was a strange variety of conversations going on, from light banter to intellectual battle. Pourmelle and Tapscott, for instance, were arguing about politics, and putting each other down with an admirable kind of cold politeness unknown in Ireland."

#### VI

One of the many joys of *The Harp State-side* is the myriad characters who abound throughout the narrative from Hoffman, Keasler and Vick on through Forry Ackerman, Raymond A. Palmer and Richard Sharpe Shaver. Willis is a master of the capsule portrait. The second report largely lacks this feature. Hoffman makes only a few quick if appreciative appearances, Max Keasler and Shelby Vick not at all. (They were both out of fandom in '62) Tucker swings by, says hello at the con, and then apparently vanishes. Ackerman is glimpsed too but only as a figure in the landscape. (Palmer and Shaver are thankfully glimpsed not at all.) Even the people we see the most of, the ones who hosted the Willises during their journey—the Dean

Grennells in Wisconsin, the Prices in Chicago, Donaho and the Knights in Berkeley, never quite come into clear focus.

The reason, I think, may be the presence on this second trip of Madeleine. In 1952 Willis came here on his own. Being a self-described introvert, he depended upon the counterpoint presence of other fans to make his narrative function. This time he has Madeleine along and she handles that role most adeptly all by herself, serving as sidekick, foil, and sharp outside observer. If now and then she says the wrong thing at the wrong place and time, it's never a significant failing. Much of the time, in fact, her comparative ignorance of fandom's complex byways affords her a comparative freedom. When two competing (and likely feuding) welcoming parties show up at the airport in New York City it's Madeleine who solves the dilemma in a quick Gordian whisk:

"By the time I had appraised this problem...really, I just couldn't believe it at first...Madeleine had solved it by volunteering to travel in Ted White's car while I went in Dick Eney's. With mingled horror, amusement, and delight I found myself separated from my wife after five minutes in New York, a living example of the schismatic influence of that city."

Potential antagonists are dealt with more swiftly this time too. In the original *Harp* Willis devotes considerable space to eviscerating a brashly youthful Jim Webbert, famously comparing him (not favorably) with one of the hotel bellboys. The nearest he comes to anything like this in the second report is with an obscure fan named Mike McQuown. I'd remembered this as something way more substantial but in actuality it turns out to entail a mere two brisk sentences:

"Outside again, Bloch invited us to lunch and en route to the dining room we were joined by Mike McQuown, an unexpected privilege. One had to admire the authoritative way he said 'Four, please' to the

head waitress, and he was a great help in filling up the embarrassing pauses which tend to occur when you are trying to make conversation with a man as dull as Bloch."

## VII

Willis comes across as someone not so much obsessed by the trivia and flotsam of life as one constantly attracted and bemused by it. He devotes many more words to mulling over the travails of bus station storage lockers than he does to describing the Statue of Liberty. (But then he'd seen the Statue before, back in '52, and it likely hadn't changed.) With much of the transcontinental trip conducted via Greyhound bus he found ample range for his bemusements. Here during a West Coast layover the Willises are drawn to a sign down the street in a sleepy town promising quick eats and sudden service.

"Sudden? I had a momentary vision of walking into the place and being served instantly with a custard pie, in the face. However, we braved the prospect...after all, we had already survived a buffet in Oregon, the slap on the face we got in Eugene...and were rewarded with nothing worse than a slightly greasy hamburger on the hand. Afterwards, we walked in the thin drizzle in a semi-circle around the bus, looking for wildlife. But there was nothing to be seen any wilder than a middle-aged lady passenger complaining to the driver about the scenery."

But when called upon as when approaching Mount Shasta in northern California to confront something on a vaster scale, Willis's powers of observation extend well beyond the trivial:

"Minute by minute as we sped toward it the mass shrank, boiling off into space, becoming a fleecy cap, a plume, a wisp, until Mount Shasta itself shone proudly in a clear sky, majestic in black and white over the pale green and brown of

California. Like all solitary mountains, it gives the impression of being in a valley. The ground seems to slope down to it, a wilderness of trees and scrub becoming vaguer in the distance, until, with a perfunctory flourish of foothills, the great black mountain thrusts proudly into the blue air. It seems to be all black rock, with great expanses of snow clinging to the slopes, until they fall away in defeat."

## VIII

Not long ago I sat nestled among some older Seattle fans who batted around the question of who was the best fan writer, *ever*. Various names were tossed out and I could add a few of my own favorites: Burbee, Boggs, Terry Carr, Calvin W. Demmon. But Walt Willis remains for me—and for pretty much everyone else too, I'm fairly sure—quite clearly the best of the best. In fact, nobody comes close. Immediately following the paragraph above on Mount Shasta is another example of why:

"We lost sight of it on entering the town of Weed. There cannot be a place in the world more aptly named, consisting as it does of a pretentious and tasteless triumphal arch heralding as miserable a collection of hovels as you could hope to avoid in a day's journey. It occurred to me there were unexpected advantages in having scenery on the lavish American scale. Anywhere else a place like this so near to a beautiful mountain would have been an intolerable eyesore. But here nature was so vast that nothing man could do seemed to matter much. America can absorb a lot of ugliness."

Willis never made a professional success. As a writer, that is. (I believe he did quite well in his mundane career, about which he rarely wrote.) His one published book, a commentary on Ireland and Irishness called *the Improbable Irish*, is fine, if a bit conventional. Two of his Belfast con-

temporaries, James White and Bob Shaw made good careers out of traditional science fiction but Willis apparently never tried. He was tempted, however:

"In the course of what seemed an inconsequential chat, (he) quietly dropped a depth charge in my life. He was, I realized, quite seriously suggesting I write a book...for which he would pay money. I was so taken aback as to be quite unable to face the idea at the time, so I just said I'd think about it and changed the subject. People had suggested professional writing to me before but I'd always dismissed it as persiflage. But now someone, and a real live publisher at that, had actually invested real money, to wit the cost of two excellent lunches, thereby raising the concept to an entirely new level of reality."

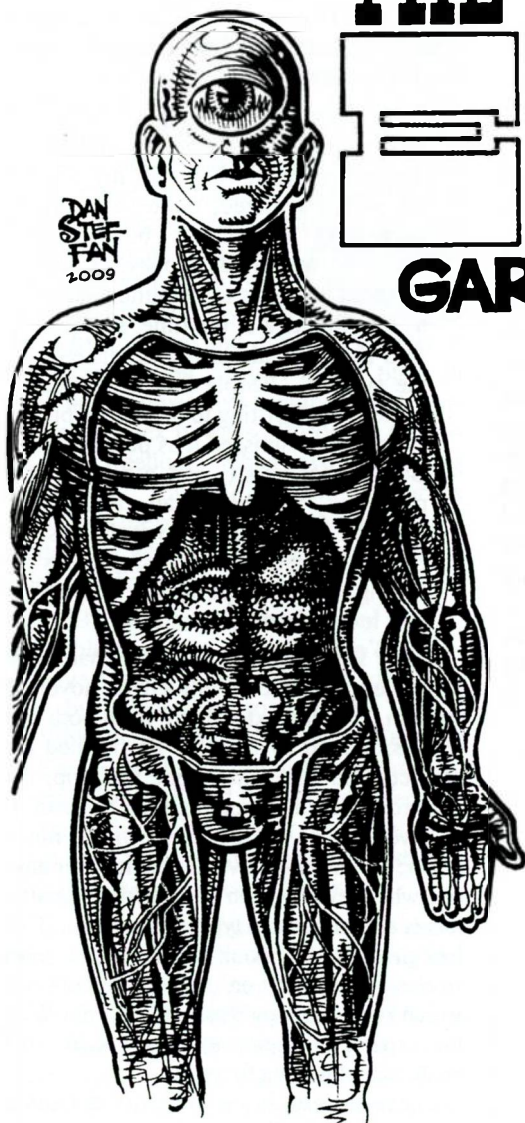
This, I believe, was the offer that eventually led to write a full-length novel of fandom, drawing extensively from both trip reports, though by the time he finished the projected publisher had gone belly up, the deal collapsed, and nothing then came of it. (I have no idea what became of the novel either; I'd certainly love to read it.) For anyone who's ever written much professionally, this is not an unusual type of situation. (I've had at least one book—and several short stories—published on two continents for which I was never paid a dime.) But for Walt the experience seems to have put him off professional writing for good.

Nevertheless, in the words of the song, so what, folks? The fan writing abides and if this second report with its confusing double-edged title lacks the purity and essence of *The Harp Stateside* it remains a fascinating look back at a singular point in (not just fannish) time.

And it's also a damn fine read. Who could ask for anything more?

—Gordon Eklund

# THE CRACKED EYE GARY HUBBARD



It started—ominously enough—at night.

A long time ago, I read *Pickman's Model*, H. P. Lovecraft's classic tale of ghouls and modern art. Unfortunately, I was at a fairly impressionable age at the time, and the story had a lasting effect on my mental health. If you've ever read it, you may remember that the ghouls can come out of the walls at night and eat you. After that, I no longer felt comfortable about sleeping in the dark, and to this day I still use a night light as a sort of anti-ghoul bug coil. Ironically enough, I was, uncharacteristically, sleeping in the dark when it happened. I felt this pain. A sharp pain... *as if some eldritch beast from Beyond were digging its gore-slimed claws into my living flesh*. For a moment, I thought that the ghouls had finally come for me.

After that initial spasm of pain, I lay there in the dark listening to my heart beat. It was pounding away like crazy, and it made my chest hurt.

I vaguely realized that something was wrong, but it was a cold winter's night, I was half asleep, and didn't feel like getting up. So I just lay there and debated with myself whether I

should do something about this or not. Eventually the pain went away, so I just rolled over and went back to sleep.

In the morning I woke up feeling much better, and decided that maybe it hadn't really been a heart attack after all. And, anyway, sometimes things happen in the night that have no relevance at all to what goes on during the day. I decided to put the whole incident behind me and get ready for work.

Every morning I walk to work. In fact, throughout history, I have always walked to my jobs, rather than drive a car. I also read David H. Keller's *Revolt of the Pedestrians* at an impressionable age, which left me with a deep mistrust of automobiles. I can drive a car, to be sure, I just prefer not to. Besides, walking is supposed to be good for your heart.

The next night I slept with the light on, and nothing happened. Nor did that strange paroxysm in my chest repeat itself the night after that or the night after that and so on. Winter gave way to spring and spring to summer. By this time, the memory of my little nocturnal cardiac event had pretty much disappeared over the horizon.

Then I started having chest pains during my morning walk. Not really bad pains, mind you—not at all like that first one. Just a little bit of congestion, and they passed pretty quickly, and would always be gone by the time I got to work. Still, I was a little bit distressed, because it was like being visited by a relative you didn't like and had forgotten all about. I probably should have done something about it, I suppose, because it wasn't going away—and it wasn't happening at night, so I couldn't blame it on the ghouls. Things that happen during the day *do* have relevance. But I don't like to take the vehicle into the shop for just any old thing, you know. Besides, I had a physical coming up at the end of the year, so I decided to tough it out until then. In retrospect, I'll admit that was the wrong thing to do.

Fall came and it was time for the Japan Club's annual movie night.

I work for Western Michigan University here in Kalamazoo, and the University

has an organization for students of Japanese, anime fans, and outright otakus called the Japan Club, which hosts various events throughout the school year. One of these events is their annual movie night. In years past they've presented films such as Kurosawa's *Dreams*, *Princess Mononoke*, *Hidden Fortress*, and *Yojimbo*. This year, the movie was *Gojira*, the original, non-Raymond Burr cut of *Godzilla*, *King of the Monsters*. Well, you know, I'm a big fan of *Godzilla* and I'd seen practically every *Godzilla* movie there was. But I hadn't seen this one, so I was pretty excited about it.

Of course, I decided to walk over to the university. I didn't anticipate any trouble, because I never got any chest pains in the evening, just the mornings. I just assumed that whatever was going on in there was a morning thing. This time, however, it was different. I hadn't gone very far down the road at all before the familiar pain started up. I was surprised, but I figured it would pass, just like always.

Only thing was, it didn't. In fact, it got worse. I mean really worse. It hurt like the devil. I had to stop and lean up against a tree until it passed. I also seemed to be breathing heavily. After a while, I started walking again and so the pain started right back up. *This* wasn't usual. Something evil was definitely going on in my chest. I felt like an extra in an *Alien* movie.

But speaking of movies, if I didn't get a move on I was going to miss the opening of *Gojira*, and I'd rather have a heart attack than have that happen. So I stepped up the pace, and the chest pain increased to match. By the time I got to the auditorium where the movie was being shown, I wasn't feeling good at all. I plopped myself down into a seat, grateful to be off my feet and hoping that I could keep it together for the duration of the movie. I started to wonder if this was it for me, if I was going to expire right there in the auditorium. That would be a sad ending for me, but on the other hand, to die in the middle of a Japanese monster movie would be a good death, wouldn't it?

Fortunately, I did not die, and the movie

was pretty good. Compared to this version of Godzilla, it was plain to see that the Raymond Burr one was clearly a travesty. But, had it not been for the world-wide popularity of that travesty, this original Gojira might have remained an obscure early '50s Japanese film that no one had ever heard of. And I wouldn't be sitting in a university auditorium having a heart attack; it's a funny world.

After that, I just couldn't put it off any longer. At long last it was time to see the doctor. Even my great powers of denial have their limits. I told her about my chest pains and she examined me, but couldn't see that there was anything wrong with my heart. So she scheduled me for some tests at the end of the week to see just what was what. I would just have to try not to have cardiac arrest until then.

Friday came, and I reported to the local hospital for my first test, which was going to be a stress test. If you've never had one, this is what it is: they shave off your chest hair and stick electrodes to you. Then they put you on a tread mill. The purpose of a stress test is to give you a heart attack right there in the hospital, thus taking all of the guesswork out of medicine.

"Okay, we're going to start out slow," said the medical technician, or whatever he was (a hippie-ish looking guy in blue PJs). "Tell me when it starts to hurt."

He started up the treadmill, and I almost fell on my ass.

"Use the handrail," he said.

After a short while I started to get my sea legs and was striding along on the treadmill at a comfortable pace. Right in front of me was a machine that had a whole bunch of flashing lights and colored numbers on it that kept changing. I didn't know what they meant, but the intern's lovely young assistant (who had shaved my chest) apparently did. She kept saying things like: "Oh, that's interesting," and "is that normal?"

The technician gradually increased the speed of the treadmill and the thing in my chest began to stir.

"Okay, it hurts now," I said.

"Can you describe your pain on a scale from one to ten?" the technician asked.

Is that a philosophical question? How in the hell do you rate pain? Pain is pain, that's all. If you hit your thumb with a hammer, do you say: "Nine Nine! "Ow, ow?" No, you don't. You're more likely to call out a string of expletives, like: "goddamn motherfucking bullshit piss and screw." So wouldn't it be more logical to use, say, an expletive scale, like from a mere *goddamn* to *motherfucking bullshit* to *piss and screw*? But, since this is a Methodist hospital, I guess we have to keep it polite.

"About a four, I guess," I replied.

"No, it can't be that much," said the lovely assistant, pointing to the flashing lights. *Wrong answer? There are wrong answers to this test?* Apparently, I was hooked up to some kind of pain lie detector.

Well, it went on and on like this, and I was getting pretty tired and starting to feel pains in my legs and back as well as my chest. All the while, they kept asking me to rate my pain. When I got up to the number eight, the lovely assistant and I finally agreed on something, so they turned off the treadmill and pulled off all my electrodes.

Next, I was ushered into another room and handed over to a couple of white-coated individuals (whom I supposed were doctors) and made to lie down on a metal table that was suspended in the middle of some kind of ring-shaped machine. I felt like poor Maria in the clutches of the evil Rotwang.

When I finished my tests, they made an appointment for me with Doctor W., the heart specialist, who would tell me how I did.

My appointment with Doctor W. was at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday. His office was in the hospital, which was downtown. It wasn't that far away, really. I could have walked there, but by this time my wife Bess had gotten wise to the fact that something was up and wasn't going to let me. She insisted on driving me; the only problem was with scheduling. She had to work that day until 3:00 and wouldn't get home in time to get me to the hospital. So we decided that the best thing to do was for her

to drop me off somewhere close to the hospital on her way to work. She decided to park me at the public library, which was just around the block from the hospital. Then when it came time for my appointment, I could walk over to the hospital, and she would catch up with me later on.

Since I had a little time on my hands and was stranded in a library, I decided to find something to read. That proved to be a little bit of a challenge, since the Kalamazoo Public Library was recently remodeled around a central core of computer stations with the book stacks pushed out to the sides where nobody goes. However, I did finally manage to stumble across the science fiction section, where I found a copy of *Mission to the Stars* by A.E. van Vogt.

I'm a big fan of van Vogt. In fact, I think he was the perfect science fiction writer. Not a perfect *writer*, to be sure; just the perfect science fiction writer, in that his stories were perfectly science fictional, if you take my meaning. It's kind of hard to explain. I thought I'd read all his works, but I guess I was wrong—I'd never read this book. It was Gojira all over again and a treat to discover it. So I took it from the shelf, found a comfortable place to sit next to some homeless guy who was reading a newspaper with his eyes closed, and began to read myself.

It starts off pretty well with a space battle and a hot female spaceship captain. Then van Vogt introduces us to the hero, who is a member of the "Mixed Men." I'm not going to go into the whole story right here. I'll just say this about it: the Mixed Men (Mixed Persons, in modern English) are a band of fugitive mutants who are on the run from the Terran Empire. This is pretty familiar territory for van Vogt, to be sure, but the thing that makes the Mixed Men different from your garden variety slant was the method of their creation. (It's kind of complicated). They resulted from the cross-breeding of ordinary humans with a race of genetically created super-humans called "Delian robots." You see, the Delians were superior to ordinary

humans, but the Mixed Men were even more superior than that. This sort of horticultural experimentation was a dicey business, since ordinarily humans and robots don't usually interbreed.

The book says that it was accomplished by "*subjecting the germ plasm to a combination of cold and pressure.*" I had to think about that one for awhile. What exactly is "germ plasm?" It's not a term that comes up in conversation very much. Is it the same as sperm? And how do you get babies out of this cold and pressure business? Do you have to put pregnant women in girdles and feed them lots of ice cream or something?

I noticed it was getting late, so I left my companion to his newspaper and quickly headed over to the hospital. On the way over, I wondered if my friend had been a Delian robot or something, because I, as an ordinary human, certainly could not read a newspaper with my eyes closed.

The heart specialist, Doctor W., was the tallest and thinnest man I've ever met, and he had some good news and some bad news:

"There's nothing wrong with your heart," he said, "but there are a lot of cholesterol deposits in the arteries that supply blood to your heart. Most of the smaller ones are completely blocked, and the three main ones are nearly so."

Cholesterol? That's all? And here I thought it was something serious.

"Our concern," Doctor W. went on—he had a habit of referring to himself in the third person, as if he had an imaginary playmate there in the room that he was conferring with—"is that the restricted supply of blood to your heart could cause it to degenerate or a piece of cholesterol could break off and get stuck in a heart valve or cause a stroke."

"Anything you can do about it?" I asked

"Well, there's this teeny tiny submarine..." said Bess, who had showed up at some point and was sitting in a corner of the room, taking it all in.

Doctor W., who was considerably younger than either of us, didn't get it and just stared blankly at both of us. On the

other hand, I thought that it was pretty funny. Unfortunately, a lot of people don't "get" Hubbard Family humor.

"Actually, medical science has moved on since then," Doctor W. said at last. "What we'd like to do is use stentization to unblock those arteries."

Here's what *stentization* is: It involves opening up the blocked arteries with a gadget called a *stent*, which looks just like those Chinese finger puzzles I used to employ to torture my younger brothers with (*you trick them into putting their hands behind their backs, you see*), only these puzzles are made from some kind of special alloy. They stick them into your body using a kind of rotorooter gadget with a camera on the end, so they can watch the whole procedure on television. It's all rather science fictional, really.

"Would you like us to use this procedure on you?" Dr. W asked.

"Sure," I replied. So cholesterol landed me in the hospital, and I had absolutely no idea of what I was letting myself in for.

I'd never been in a hospital before, so I had a few misconceptions about what it was like. I'd always thought they gave you a room with a nice bed and a Naughty Nurse in a tight white uniform that barely covered her ass. That's how it is on TV, anyway. (Well, late night cable.) But when I checked in for my procedure, a guy in PJs took me to a cubicle made of shower curtains, where he handed me a paper nightgown and told me to undress and get into bed. The place did at least have a nice bed.

So I changed my clothes and got into bed. I had a bit of a struggle with that nightgown, however. It had these strings in the back that you're supposed to tie up, but I couldn't get the business right and ended up with my front covered but my ass exposed. When I finished struggling with my nightgown and tucked myself into bed, the PJ guy hooked me up to one of those IV things and left. Meanwhile, Bess, who'd come with me, had gone out in the hallway to find a chair she could sit in. She placed her chair near the head of the bed and sat

down on it. There we were—me laying in bed and staring up at the ceiling, she sitting in her chair with her hands folded in her lap. Neither of us said anything for a long while, but then she blurted out:

"Good luck, Perkins!"

"Dominoes, old chum," I replied.

Just then, a bunch of folks in pajamas burst in on us. Among them was a woman who looked a little like the '70s pornstar and disco deva Andrea True, whose (one) hit song, "More, More, More," can still occasionally be heard on the PA systems of retail stores and fast food restaurants. She wore the reddest lipstick I have ever seen on a mouth. So was this my Naughty Nurse, after all? She bent over me until those red, red lips filled my whole field of view, which was a little embarrassing, since Bess was sitting right over there.

"We're going to take you to the procedure room, now," she said as her friends grabbed the sides of the bed. "Ready?"

"I guess."

"Perkins!" Bess said as they hauled me away.

"Dominoes."

The procedure room looked like I was back in the clutches of Rotwang. It was a big, gloomy room full of machinery. I didn't actually get a good look at the place, because I was flat on my back and my field of vision was restricted. But I did notice that it was really cold in there as my friends lifted me out of bed and placed me onto a metal table. It was hard and flat and cold, especially on my bare tush. I started shivering uncontrollably. The Naughty Nurse noticed this and asked me if she could give me something to make me feel more comfortable.

(*Hotcha!*)

"That would be jolly," I replied.

But all she did was put something into my IV. I don't know what it was, but it was good. I started to mellow out almost immediately; no more cold, no more discomfort. Then I felt a hard pressure in my groin area. (*Wait! What's this? Cold? Pressure? Holy cow, I hope I don't get pregnant!*)

While I'm succumbing to the drugs,

let's take an imaginary journey back to my home where I'll explain what they're doing to me. Here we go! We're drifting over the rooftops and entering my house through an open window like Peter Pan.

Now we're in my den.

See the nice knotty pine paneling? See my writing desk with my pipe rack and a duck decoy on it? How about this bearskin rug? And over there in the corner is the mini-bar and on the wall behind it, a picture of some dogs playing poker. Wait! My den doesn't look anything like that: none of this is real. It must be the drugs.

But here's something that is real: my Revell Visible Man—probably the most iconic plastic model kit in history. Let me just take it down from this bookcase, because I want to use it to explain something to you. Notice that there are two large arteries on either side of Visible's discretely molded gonads, right in front of the pelvic bone. At this very moment, my friends back at the hospital are pushing a wire into the artery on my left side. At the end of the wire is my stent, which will be pushed all the way up my plumbing until they find the right spot to put it. This stent is sort of folded up right now, but when they find the right place, it'll expand and hold open the artery so the blood can flow through more freely. Additionally, it's impregnated with some chemical that dissolves cholesterol, so that I don't get gunked up again. That's all they are going to do for right now. Later on, they will go in through my right artery and place two other stents in me. But first I have to recover from this initial procedure.

Recover? Hah!

After the procedure, they wheeled me back to where Bess was waiting for me.

"How'd it go, Perkins?" she asked.

"Crackers, old chum, we showed those Heinies."

I was still pretty chipper at this point, because I was still under the influence of the drugs. But it didn't take long for them to wear off, and I started to feel pain. Lots of pain. *Pain, pain, pain, pain, pain.* My whole

midsection ached like a son of a bitch, and I had to ask myself: *What the fuck have they done to me?* Later on, when the Naughty Nurse came by to change my dressing, I bled like a stuck pig. Really! The stuff was spurt-ing out like a blood orgasm. The Naughty Nurse was a little perturbed by that. Later on, I got a case of dry heaves, which of course boosted my pain level from *goddamn* all the way up to *goddamn motherfucking bullshit piss and screw*.

They sent me home the next day. There was nothing for me to do now but to wait until my next procedure in two weeks. There was nothing I could do. My groin ached constantly, and I seemed to have no strength in that area, at all. Even trying to poop was a difficult and mostly unsuccessful enterprise.

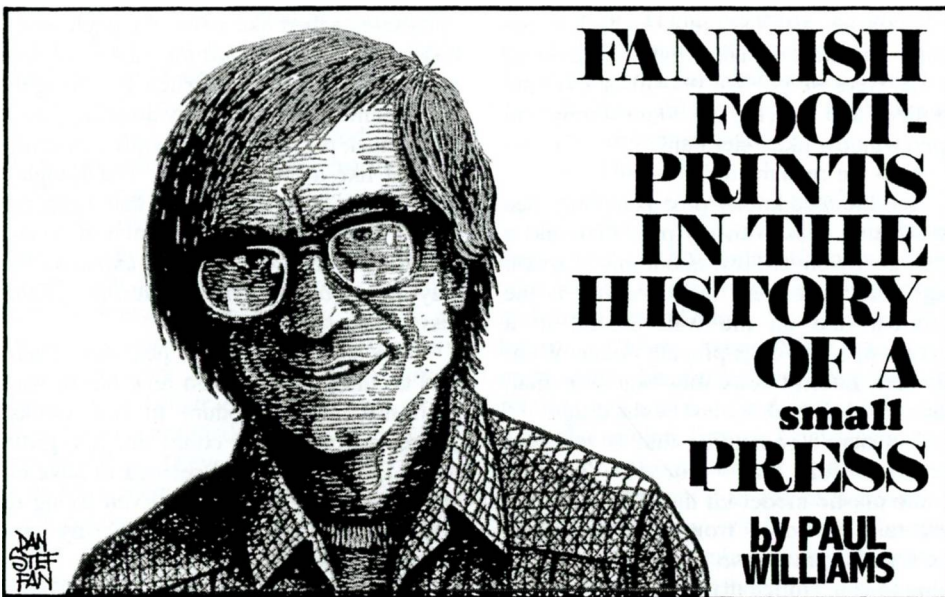
One night we were watching *Young Frankenstein* on DVD. While I like Mel Brooks movies, I don't usually find them all that laugh out loud funny. Plus, I'd seen this one so many times, that I pretty much knew every gag by heart. But this time ...remember the scene where the Monster, played by Peter Boyle, has been befriended by the blind Hermit, played by Gene Hackman? Remember how the Hermit spills hot soup all over the Monster's lap and he lets out an anguished howl? Well, this time I found that *sooo* funny. I started to laugh. But for a man in my condition, laughing was a dangerous business. Each giggle sent waves of pain surging up from my midsection. But I couldn't stop laughing. I had to make Bess turn off the TV until I settled down.

At length I stabilized, and we turned the set back on. Now the Hermit offers the Monster a toast and breaks his mug, spilling wine all over his lap. I burst out laughing again, but this time the pain was so intense that I almost passed out. We had to turn off the TV set again. It took me a lot longer to settle down this time.

"Should we stop it?" Bess suggested.

"No, no," I said. "I've got it under control now. Turn it back on."

(continued at the end of the letter column)



Entwhistle Books was founded in 1968 by Chester Anderson, Joel Hack, David Hartwell and me. I came up with the name and the intention, but Joel and Chester were the first to actually produce a book that summer in Santa Barbara, California, *How to Commit Revolution in Corporate America* by G. William Domhoff, financed by the money the publisher of the *Berkeley Barb* paid them for typesetting and designing a book called *Che Lives*.

I'd been a fanzine fan since May 1962, when I put out the first issue of *Within* with the help of the Browne and Nichols Science Fiction Society (me and a few other 8th-graders). The influence of my fanzine-publishing experience was evident when I had the chutzpah to start my own rock and roll magazine, *Crawdaddy!*, in early '66 at age seventeen, especially since the first issue was mimeographed in Brooklyn by Ted White. But now that I think of it, the only model I had for the notion that anyone who wanted to could just declare he or she was a book publishing company was a science fiction fan I'd met when I started searching for genuine fanzine fans in the Boston area, where I grew up.

Larry Stark worked at the Paperback Booksmith in Harvard Square, and at the beginning of 1964 The Larry Stark Press published its first book, a terrific collection of stories by a kid who also went to Browne and Nichols, *Almost Grown* by Peter Guralnick (yes, the author of the great two-part biography of Elvis Presley, *Last Train to Memphis* and *Careless Love*). The first edition of *Almost Grown* was mimeographed; it sold out quickly and was replaced by an enlarged photo-offset edition. It was obvious from the title story that Peter was a few years older than me and my friends, because he was the only person I knew who said he liked Elvis.

So thanks, Larry, for setting such a good example. And thanks, fandom, for introducing me to the guy. (I used to go over to Larry's apartment to read Jean Young's FAPA mailings and Larry's old Cultzines, and it was through Larry that I met Dave English and got new "de" art to run in *Within*.)

In 1968 and '69 I had some terrific handshake agreements for books that Entwhistle was going to publish if I'd got my act together sooner: Charles Bukowski's *Notes of a Dirty Old Man*, a book of Jim

Morrison's poetry, David Henderson's collected poems, and Samuel R. Delany's first short story collection, along with Philip K. Dick's first-published mainstream novel, which we did eventually get around to. But it was four years later that the second Entwhistle book appeared: my *Time Between*, published by David and me in New York City. In 1975, David and I produced the third and most noteworthy Entwhistle book, *Confessions of a Crap Artist* by Philip K. Dick.

In 1977, with the publication of my book *Coming* in Glen Ellen, California, Entwhistle took on its present form: a sole proprietorship run by me. In 2000, Entwhistle has 25 books in print, including the only book edition in English of *The International Bill of Human Rights*, which was typeset by Dick Ellington in 1981. Which brings us to the subject of this little essay: a catalog of science fiction fanzine fans who have in any way been a part of the history of this particular small and eccentric book publishing company.

What really turned my mind toward writing this present piece was the very helpful role Jeff Schalles has played in the recent revival of Entwhistle Books as an active publisher. Jeff and I know each other mostly from having been in Apathy (a defunct fannish apa) together. With impeccable timing, Jeff wrote me a note last summer to offer to do some book design work for Entwhistle for free, because he needed to build up his portfolio as he embarked on a free-lance career after years of in-house experience in the printing trade.

This unexpected letter arrived just after my return from Book Expo America (formerly the American Booksellers Convention), where I'd been dragged to the Lightning Print demonstration by an SF fan, Jack Rems, when we encountered each other wandering the floor of the trade show. So thanks to Jack I watched this new IBM equipment scan and print and gather and bind reprints of paperback books while you wait. And found out that Lightning Print, hungry for more content for their "Books on Demand" service,

was offering Entwhistle Books (and any other publisher with at least ten titles they wanted to reprint) the opportunity to get books scanned and printed by this new technology with no up-front costs. This is a revolution: inexpensive good-quality short-run book printing and no need to maintain big inventories.

I was sold. But in addition to a dozen books I'd always wanted (but couldn't afford) to reprint, I had two new titles that I wanted to publish and print using this no-money-down opportunity. But for that I needed someone who could prepare digital files for book printing. (Reprints are easy; Lightning Print scans the cover and the inside pages and you just tell them the new ISBN and cover price etc.) Enter Jeff Schalles, at precisely the right moment, and like LPI, offering his services at the only feasible price for this venerable but undercapitalized publishing house. Hell, I didn't even have any experience hiring this kind of assistance, it had been so long since I put a new book into production. So as booksellers glance at the new Entwhistle titles at my table at this year's BEA, they'll see Jeff Schalles credited with "electronic publishing and design assistance" in *How to Become Fabulously Wealthy at Home in 30 Minutes* (by Paul Williams) and "book design and cover design" in *Memoirs of a Female Messiah* (a novel by Cindy Lee Berryhill). He also was helpful in preparing the new pages in the reprint of *Outlaw Blues* and invaluable in providing "digital remastering" for the first paperback edition of *Time Between*. Thanks, Jeff (and Apathy!).

Then of course there's this fellow Robert Lichtman, who started corresponding with me in 1963 after he read the second issue of *Within*. In 1980 it came to pass that my old friend Robert, who'd been a traveling salesman and jack-of-all-publishing-services at The Farm's Book Publishing Company, was looking for a new opportunity just when Entwhistle Books and I were in great need of a compatible and competent full-time employee and brother-in-arms. So Robert moved to Glen Ellen and worked for Entwhistle for as long as it remained almost solvent, close to

two more years.

The Lichtman connection was responsible for the fact that a 1980 Entwhistle title, *The Book of Houses*, was typeset (in Point Reyes, California) by Bill Meyers, a fan I first knew of as creator of a rider zine (*Ego*) sent out with Ted White's and Les Gerber's *Minac*. But even before Robert's arrival Entwhistle books were sometimes typeset by the inimitable Dick Ellington, raconteur and Wobbly organizer and fanzine publisher since before Robert or I ever ran a mimeograph. And longtime fan Miriam Knight (now Miriam Lloyd and once Miri Carr) was co-publisher and underwriter of two Entwhistle Books written by Entwhistle veteran Chester Anderson, *Puppies* (under the pseudonym John Valentine) and *Fox & Hare*.

*Fox & Hare*, sort of the non-SF version of Anderson's Hugo-nominated novel *The Butterfly Kid*, is a portrait of a Friday night in Greenwich Village in 1962. In 1978 Chester and his artist friend Charles Stevenson talked Knight and Williams and Entwhistle into sponsoring a reenactment of the entire novel, on location in the Village, so Stevenson could direct still photography of every scene in the story and then take the resultant slides with him to Italy and use them as the models for the illustrations he would draw for the book over the course of the next year. Several fanzine fans were among the nineteen volunteers cast in this reenactment: Miriam Knight as Harriet Pulaski, Lou Stathis (once an Apathy member) as Rexall the sleazy dope dealer, and Brad Balfour in the starring role of Steve Warren, Anderson's barely-fictionalized portrait of Steve Weber of the Holy Modal Rounders. Though they aren't fanzine fans, it's worth noting that SF author Norman Spinrad and SF editor John Silber-sack also acted in the Entwhistle reenactment of *Fox & Hare*.

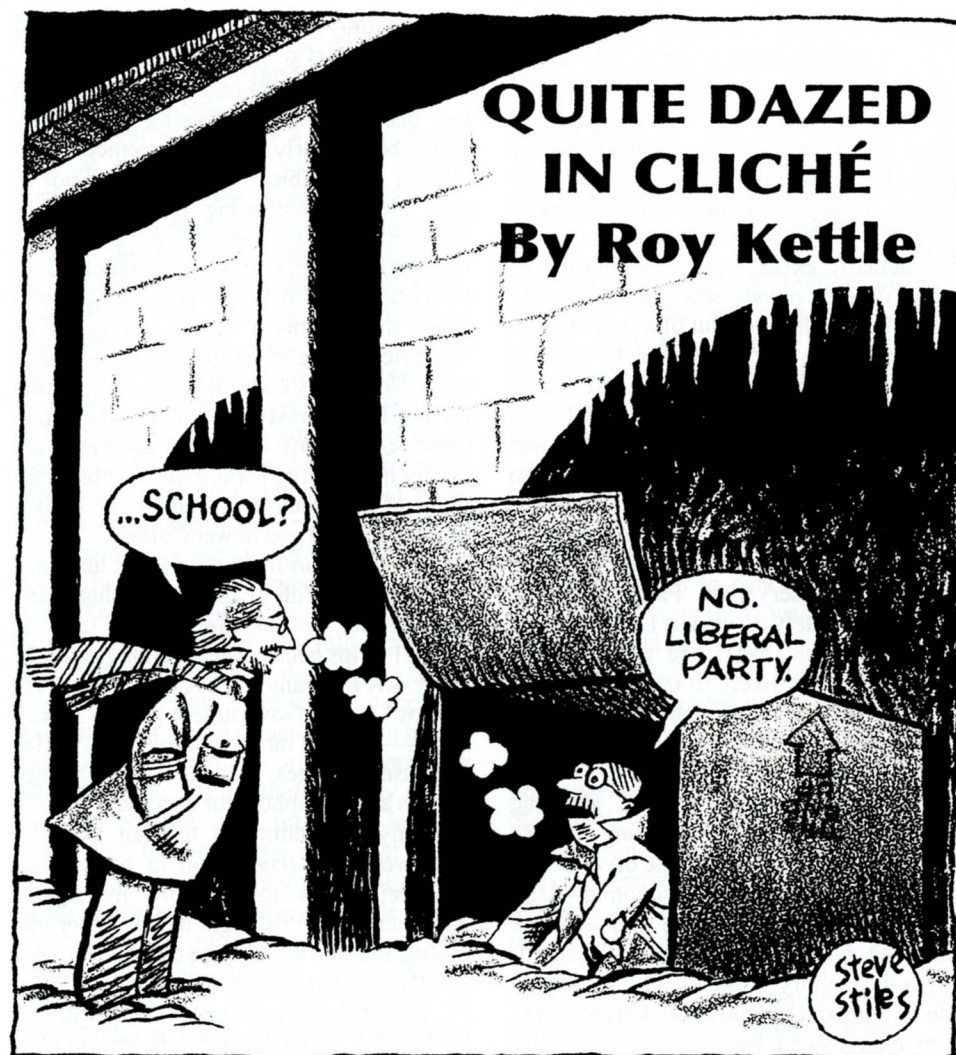
What else? Well, now that *Outlaw Blues* is an Entwhistle book, it's worth mentioning that it's dedicated to two fanzine fans, Larry Stark and Larry McCombs (Stark because he let me and *Crawdaddy!* magazine crash

in his one-room apartment in the summer of '66, and McCombs because he first published me as a music writer in his folk music zine *Folkin' Around* in summer '65), and includes a drawing by Trina Robbins, known first as Trina Pelsen and later Trina Castillo in her fanzine days.

Also I wanna mention that though Entwhistle stalwart Chester Anderson was never really a fanzine fan, he did have some contact with Trina P. and Dick Ellington and Bill Donaho in the Fanarchist days in New York City. Chester was the subject of a long article or two by Greg Shaw (another fanzine fan who started his own rock and roll magazine, *Mojo Navigator R&R News*, and who I believe is historically responsible for the wide usage of the word "fanzine" today) in the Luttrells' *Starling*, which so enraged Redd Boggs that, if I remember right, he put out a one-shot just to vilify the Shaw article and its subject. Anderson's Haight-Ashbury communication company broadsides were the most fannish activity of the Underground Press era; SF fan D. S. Black, a curator at U.C. Berkeley's rare book library, Bancroft, acquired a set of the rare comco handouts on behalf the library, along with the manuscript of *Fox & Hare*.

Finally, on page 35 of Entwhistle book *Time Between* (dedicated to Miriam Knight and to fringe-Fanarchist Alan Graham—and Robert Lichtman can also be found in *Time Between*, of course), we find: "The truth is: I love fanzines. When I was 14 and no one would talk to me I discovered this whole world of people who read as much damn science fiction as me and who were more than willing to talk with me about it, to interact with me and accept me as an equal regardless of age.... But the capper was, these people published magazines! For each other, for me. And anybody could play. All you needed was a pen or a typewriter; and if you could add to that a mimeograph or access to one you were off and running."

—Paul Williams (2000)



As I dribbled wine into my beard in the pub while trying not to laugh at his socks, I watched Shambling snigger with good-natured hatred as he said, "There's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip, you bastard."

The fact that Shambling rarely says something so original made me think about what it could possibly mean. First impressions were that it was unutterably stupid as (1) there was only a single slip, (2) I was actually drinking out of a wine glass, (3) it was a two-lip problem, and (4) I was born in the Outer Hebrides and not, Mr.

Shambling, the Outer Wedlocks.

However, looking at it from the point of view of Zeno, warrior philosopher, the cup (or glass) would never actually reach my lip (or lips) because it would always have half the distance left to travel. Therefore, it must take at least an infinite amount of time to have even one sip of coffee and in that time an infinite number of slips could happen—even such unlikely ones as religion, sea cucumbers or George Bush. Many a slip indeed.

But was the saying really accurate, or

had my first impression been right?

I had once been attracted by the radical zeal of the New Labour Government—rightly unaffected after thirteen years in office by trivial concerns such as rapidly increasing unpopularity, widespread dishonesty, policy implementation failures of huge magnitude, losses of more private data than actually exists, vast accumulation of public debt as money was given freely to the banks to help them out of a little bit of a tight spot that they could hardly be held responsible for poor dears, and badly designed Ministerial ties. In fact, not even the loss of both a self-righteous leader, and an election to a right-wing party, seemed to have influenced their sense that they had indeed been right all along. But now we had a coalition Government. combining the dominant Conservative Party and the smaller, once left of center Liberal Party. As a wiser man than I had said, the new coalition seemed likely to take its name in part from each—probably the word Conservative from the former and the word Party from the latter.

But amidst all the cutting, slashing, hacking, ripping and shredding of the public sector, together with the drive to turn Britain into the social and economic wasteland that always makes the Conservative Party the number one choice of bastards across the country, I spotted an opportunity. The farming out of education delivery away from experienced local public authorities and into the hands of the people (i.e., any crazy busybody with a few quid as yet unspent on drink, some time on their hands because they were unemployable, and a strong desire to build a school in a tumble-down shed in their back garden) meant that a person like me with progressive ideas about the need for accuracy in teaching must surely be able to find someone somewhere who would underwrite them. There must be a school being established in a disused toilet or a waterlogged cardboard box underneath a railway arch which would want to ensure that what was being put before impressionable young people was

true, or otherwise prevent the teaching of things that were as yet unproven.

Banning history books until time travel had been invented, following which they could be properly verified, seemed to be quite a reasonable step for any school to take, as was outlawing the teaching of quantum physics, which has always had its uncertainties, and stopping French from being taught as if it was something useful rather than simply a way of asking for an overpriced wine in an underused language or passing snotty cultural asides. Reflecting the level of interest that was being shown in these suggestions to ensure accuracy and clarity in teaching, I was given a substantial grant to undertake research by St. Farty's Unused Cesspit and Sewer College.

Following on from my earlier insight, I was funded—with my assistant, Shambling (though this was not the name he used on official forms because he had things to hide, especially his many works of fiction, or “tax returns” as the Government prefers to call them)—to test a range of familiar proverbs, aphorisms, adages, epithets, saws, sayings, clichés and metaphors for accuracy. If there was any uncertainty as to their veracity, they would be flagged up in books with cross-references inserted to my report. Arguments that this might be boring, or off-putting in other ways, were cast aside. After all, it's better to be safe than sorry.

This saying can be readily demonstrated by looking at a randomly chosen married man who wrongly chooses between the pleasure of protected sex with Mrs. Hiswife followed by a politely shared cup each of naturally decaffeinated tea and part 4 of the current Book at Bedtime; or the anguish of a humiliating apology to Mrs. Hiswife and God followed by the lonely and joyless trudge to the venereal clinic accompanied by his ex-mistress with the only things to look forward to afterwards being a lengthy series of unpleasant antibiotic treatments, a thorough laundering of the sheets and towels, and a chance to make the acquaintance of a large number of lawyers who both laugh and charge at his expense. (This part

of my report was eventually helpfully summarized in the *Sun* newspaper under the headline “What happened after he metaphor a quickie.”)

To begin with, I took a number of sayings at random. For example, “crime doesn't pay” is quite straightforward. If crime actually paid then you wouldn't need to break the law to get money. You'd just apply online, take your standard assessment tests, fill in your diversity form, have an interview and, if you were the best person for the job, you'd be offered a career as a criminal. Once you'd set up a username and password and given your bank account details so that you could be paid from the headquarters in Nigeria, that would be it. For heaven's sake, it's not racket science.

Of course, some sayings are not so self-evidently true. Take “every dog has his day.” As it happens, there are 1.2 billion dogs in the world but generally only 365 days each year. Each dog clearly can't have its own day. However, once you factor in other planets, each of which has its own number of days but probably very few dogs, then you can see that not only would there be enough days for each dog but plenty left for any new dogs that came along. So this saying is true, albeit a truth which has to be universally acknowledged.

“A miss is as good as a mile” is one saying that I decided to test out. This is meant to suggest that if you *just* miss out on something you might as well have missed out hugely. I purchased a large carving knife (keeping the receipt for expenses purposes), sharpened it, used my well-spoken satnav (Trevor Howard in *Brief Encounter*) to travel exactly a mile away from our research laboratory—which doubles as The Kings Head pub—then threw the knife at Shambling. As he was still in the laboratory I obviously didn't hit him. I missed by *over* a mile, in fact, as I threw it west when the way back was east. When I returned to the laboratory, I found Shambling having what seemed to be a nice glass of apparently Greek tea—Aegean tea, I think he said it was. I immediately threw

the knife at him, deliberately aiming so as just to miss. The knife embedded itself deeply into the table. I'd obviously done a good job of sharpening it. He screamed, rushed from the pub and, about an hour later, I was arrested. Outside of working hours, I have been doing a spot of community service and an anger management course, none of which would have happened had I left my knife-throwing at the stage of missing by a mile—so that would clearly have been the better outcome. I think we can safely consign *that* saying to the dustbin of history and ensure that all books containing it are suitably annotated.

Here's another one: breaking a mirror brings seven years bad luck. I don't know about you, but I'd need a much bigger Government grant than I actually received to wait seven years to conclude the research. The obvious thing to do was to increase the amount of bad luck by breaking many more mirrors in a much shorter time so that a significant amount of things would go wrong fairly quickly if they were going to go wrong at all. Using his eBay musical equipment and used-porn account, Shambling bought several disco balls, each covered with hundreds of mirrors—obviously he already had his own balls for personal use when dancing wildly to Mariah Carey records but he didn't want to use them for the experiment. I set about smashing them by sitting on one heavily while I threw stones at the others. Shambling helped by flinging empty bottles at one.

The splinters blinded me in one eye and lacerated my scrotum. I considered this to be bad enough luck to end the experiment and my assistant obviously agreed as he had covered his face and his shoulders were heaving with what could only have been uncontainable distress. This saying is clearly one that the Government can allow to continue, though we might need to amend it in works of literature to “Breaking a mirror when not abiding with Health and Safety procedures brings bad luck lasting anything up to seven years or even beyond, depending on factors which have not yet been fully tested (see Chapter 6, paras 6.17 - 6.93 and

Appendix XIV of the attached report)."

Next to be selected was "a stitch in time saves nine." I think there is general public acceptance this means that putting something right without delay saves considerable time and effort compared with attempting to correct it once it has got worse. The first hypothesis I tested was that you don't actually save nine times the assumed delay that the saying implies. Suffice it to say that you don't. Stitching either becomes more efficient as you do more, with the first stitch taking more time than the average for the others, or less efficient if the needle frequently ends up under your nail or embedded in one of the surprisingly many fleshy parts of your fingers. In my case, efficiency did not improve. Shambling kept nudging my elbow to remind me to be careful but oddly that made matters worse.

The other hypothesis was that you actually save a further eight events or recurrences by stitching something early. This was actually quite difficult to prove. While it was easy to repair a tiny hole with one stitch, it seemed to take an inordinate amount of time for the tiny hole to get bigger. Shambling would hit me on the leg (the hole was in my trousers) with a carpet beater and then a large plank of wood when the carpet beater broke, and strike me with what he assured me was necessary ferocity using quite a sizeable bunch of thistles to try to enlarge the hole, but each time I found the pain became unbearable long before the garment became unwearable. I felt he could have beaten the trousers while I wasn't wearing them but he put forward a strong intellectual argument as to why that wasn't so which, now that I look back, largely seemed to consist of him laughing at me without my trousers on. I could only conclude that in all likelihood a stitch in time might save nine but, equally, it could save two or seven hundred and sixty eight.

In any event, as we all know, these days we buy cheap clothes from third world countries for our loved ones, then throw the clothes away either before they need repair-

ing or as soon as they do. Today, love still means never having to sew your sari. I have prepared a lengthy footnote "repairing" the meaning of the saying in a jocular fashion which will be added to all appropriate books and web-pages. (Shambling has asked for his view to be noted that this is not as amusing as I seem to think whereas I think it is even more amusing than he thinks I think.)

Working as best I could between spells cleaning the local dog-waste disposal receptacles as part of my community service and with only one useful eye, a painful scrotum, elastoplast over my fingers from mishandling so many needles, and badly bruised legs, I found my random-saying identifier was picking multiples—e.g., don't put all your eggs in one basket and you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs. I discovered quite quickly that if you have a lot of eggs, you can't actually put all of them in one basket without breaking some—or at least Shambling can't. And you wouldn't then want to make omelettes out of them because there are bits of shell in the whites and some of the yolks are on the floor and the cat's been sick over others and it's all a bit of a mess actually. However, I persevered. Though the salmonella poisoning I got as a result was not pleasant, Shambling visited me in hospital and kindly poked me with a stick to help take my mind off the pain. He also pointed out that you could probably make an omelette without breaking eggs if you had a mini-teleportation device for transporting the yolk and white through the shell and into the pan. He himself didn't have such a device but he felt confident that one could be purchased on eBay if I could advance him £1,000. What a nice assistant. And he helpfully pointed out that I couldn't count my chickens before they were hatched because now they never could be.

Shambling then asked me if he himself could test out the saying "There's more than one way to skin a cat." I let him and he did. He discovered that there is, in fact, only one way to skin a cat and that's to take its skin off. I think we might draw a veil over that experiment, other than to say that the laboratory is

now based in The Coach and Horses and we are no longer welcome at The Kings Head. However, on the plus side, it *was* curiosity—Shambling's, admittedly—that killed the cat (well, several cats actually, not just mine, as well as a little urban fox that he quite understandably mistook for a large feline and also a small woman wearing a fake fur coat who seemed to be someone Shambling had once not had an affair with) so we can tick up an unintended success with that additional saying. And, when I returned home I discovered that while the cat's away, the mice do play. And eat my food. And crap copiously on the kitchen floor. And as the cat will now never return, the mice will continue to crap in great quantities which, rather disturbingly, I sometimes find difficult to distinguish from Grape Nuts first thing in the morning which has left me with rather unpleasant stomach cramps. On top of all this, I now had no means of testing whether there was room to swing a cat in any part of my home.

Thoughts of food, especially thoughts of unpleasant food, brought Shambling's culinary skills to mind and, as I lay on my sickbed, I instructed him to devise a means of testing "too many cooks spoil the broth." Partly due to his not paying sufficient attention he had an unfortunate, but perfectly understandable, experience which culminated in him being chased along the street by half-naked women. "Too many cocks despoil the brothel" could be a well-known saying somewhere but apparently not in East Purley.

So we pondered together for a while about what "broth" might actually mean. Wasn't there a movie called "A Broth of a Boy" with Barry Fitzgerald? That didn't help. Shambling had the bright idea of looking "broth" up on Google rather than try to work it out empirically, and it turns out to be some sort of unpleasant-sounding soup. Who'd have thought it? A Barry Fitzgerald movie about cannibalism. But did it indicate that a lot of chefs ruin the soup, or a lot of chefs pamper the soup and thus perhaps make it nicer? Or did it just mean, as I think it might, that too many

leaders are unnecessary.

Shambling took some more of the grant money and, after several days, returned somewhat the worse for having spent it but at least accompanied by several men wearing aprons which certainly looked promising. Unfortunately, their trouser legs were rolled up and they wanted to shake my hand in a way that made me take Shambling aside and ask him if he might possibly have made a slight mistake. He assured me that they were all close friends of his and would have to be paid for their services—not that I had actually seen them deliver any. Having cleared that one up, we decided to do the cooking ourselves with both of us equally burdened by adopting the authority of a master cook and neither being prepared to be the sous chef. It might have been the fights and arguments we had as we struggled to cook the recipes in the way each of us thought best. Or it might have been my pustules suppurating in the supper or Shambling's general lack of, well, most attributes that would be useful for the purpose of working productively anywhere, but the food tasted decidedly nasty and didn't improve my internal workings. Indeed, it seemed to make some of them external.

On the other hand, as Shambling pointed, many hands are supposed to make light work. This was probably more about the usefulness of cooperation and not about the joys of having an abundance of bosses. Taking things pedantically, though, we had four hands—or, given the pain in my fingers, probably more like three and a half. But enough anyway to conclude that our many hands had not achieved much, though I think we can safely say that had we cooperated instead of Shambling accidentally intruding into my personal space with a fish slice and a pair of pizza shears, we would definitely have achieved a better outcome and I might well have retained more of my hair and both testicles.

At this point, I was beginning to lose track of what the conclusions might be from this particular set of tests so I thought we might try a simpler saying.

"Where there's muck there's brass" is a

familiar saying in the Northern parts of Britain which education has yet to reach fully and which might particularly benefit from having a school set up in, say, a well-appointed gutter or somewhere equally luxurious. To the best of my knowledge, the saying is generally understood to mean that if you're prepared to do a dirty job, then you'll find that there is money to be made. This seemed to be out with the experience of immigrants who had found work as cleaners under any of the last several Governments. But obviously people who got involved at the high end of the dirt business—as CEO of Cheapo Toilets plc or running DialABottom-Wiper—might well be coining it. However, probably the richest muck-pedlars are people in the porn industry. Sadly, my lawyer says that I had better say no more about my subsequent experiences, though the spell in prison has not improved my health. My lawyer now also has a lot more brass so maybe there's something in the saying.

Shambling did visit me once and I asked him, not without some trepidation, to investigate the sense or otherwise of the saying "where's there's smoke, there's fire." I was not too happy to find that where there's smoke there is no longer any apartment (which was also doubling, for financial and legal reasons, as my laboratory as well). I had to move into a rather appalling doss house which at least took my mind off the continual pain and distress and I made a mental note that there was probably enough room in one of the larger rubbish bins for a new school. I was beginning to doubt Shambling's commitment to the project though he did offer to sort out my insurance claim if I gave him a letter of authority, which was kind.

I thought I might have one last chance which could help get me out of this situation as well as actually forming part of my research. I would get to bed early in the evening and get up early in the morning, and see if that did something to get rid of my illnesses, enlarge my fortune and, though this was obviously not necessary, enhance my sagacity. Perhaps foolishly, I told

Shambling of my plan. He was still my assistant after all, even if I no longer had any money to pay him. Though I have no firm evidence of this, I did wonder whether the loud guitar music being played outside my window late into the night, with rather rude lyrics accompanying it, which prevented sleep and obviously any possibility of enhanced health, wealth or wisdom, might not be of Shamblingish origin.

After some days of this, I was asked to leave the dosshouse. I snuck out in the middle of the day—theorizing that if Shambling was responsible, he would be sleeping at that time. However, I heard a horn honking and turned to see a rather splendid car being driven past by Shambling. "A fool and his money are soon parted," he shouted, though of course that wasn't true at all as it had taken some time.

As he continued looking at me, waving cheerily but maliciously, he failed to notice the milk float being driven rather haphazardly at the end of its round by a tired delivery man and he himself seemed bleary-eyed. He crashed into it and was killed, though fortunately the delivery man escaped (it later developed) with only mild lactose poisoning.

There were tears in Shambling's eyes immediately after the crash but I noted with interest that that had had no effect. Rather as I would have expected. And, as I saw Shambling writhing in his death throes, I muttered, "Look before you leap, mate."

But of course, that wasn't right as he'd been driving not leaping. Still, there might yet be a footnote in it for my report and I saw that the twisted wreckage of his car could well be the makings of a small primary school—I'd mention it to the Head Bastard of St. Farty's. I coughed up some blood and limped away to see if I could find a public library still in existence where I could sit and finish my genius report in peace. I felt I'd easily done my 99 percent perspiration and I would like a quiet time to see if there really was one percent inspiration to come. If what they say is true, of course.

—Roy Kettle



#### ROY KETTLE

Thank you so much for *Trap Door* 26. First, I must apologize for not writing letters in response to *Trap Doors* 1-25. I didn't receive issues 1-23 and consequently had got into a bit of a rut of not sending you locs. It was just something I never quite managed to do, what with this and that and other things. By the time issues 24 and 25 arrived, my inertia had gathered such momentum that I didn't get round to writing about those either. Then, when I eventually started jotting down the various jobs I had to do such as writing locs, I mislaid the bit of paper with them on which left me feeling even more listless.

However, the arrival of *Trap Door* 26 rekindled my enthusiasm. But what to write about? Obviously one doesn't wish to make an unfavorable impression by having unwelcome views, or even welcome views if they have to knock loudly to make their presence known at some ungodly hour. Strong views might possibly lead to people thinking one is a little uppity though I'm in two minds about that. On the other hand, I feel strongly that not having a view at all might be seen as insipid. The best course of action seemed to me to have balanced and acceptable opinions of the sort that had already passed muster with the well-respected *Trap Door* editorial team.

An example might be the artwork of Harry Bell such as appeared on the front of issue 25. One of your correspondents was unfamiliar with his name but felt his cover hinted at good material within. Another thought it was interesting but baffling. And so on. Averaging out these views led me to write the following loc:

Dear Robert,

Thank you for issue 25. Harry Bell (of whom I have never heard but obviously know well) has produced a stunning and appropriate cover that must surely bewilder everyone given the bizarre subject matter that makes it such an incomprehensible masterpiece of clarity and wit.

Regards

Roy Kettle

I could see immediately that this was the way forward. The slight stumbling block was that I would only ever be writing to you with a built-in delay of one issue. Would anyone on your team notice? It seemed possible that some overworked *Trap Door* intern, struggling in an unpaid role and third world working conditions as he or she sought to learn the basics of fanac, might actually spot this point. To test it out I thought I would sneak the loc in under cover of an assortment of such firmly held clueless views as follows.

I thought I'd picked the stand-out item in issue 26 straight off. It was obviously Gordon Eklund's "The Great Gafia of 1967," which was a terrific piece of fan fiction, clever, inventive and funny. But Dave Langford's "South Wales Alphabet" was also wonderful—a typically great Langford read, sadly for my powers of description also clever, inventive and funny. It had the additional benefit of getting from Dan Steffan some really high-class artwork in his (aaagh) clever, inventive and funny alphabet drawings. It was a collection that I would love to see Dan make available as a set which could be downloaded for printing out.

Carol's description of her accident and recuperation was hugely more entertaining to read than it must have been for her to live through. Yes, I could tell that. But, hey, these things are sent to write about even if we have to suffer a bit first. She seems to have had excellent care and support at home and medically. And, quite apart from being able to write about it jokingly, she manages to be very matter-of-fact about the whole process, despite how horrible a lot of it must have been and the lingering aftereffects. My thanks and best wishes to her.

I really enjoyed the extracts from Ron Bennett's letters. A lot of fascinating detail about his book and magazine dealing. They brought back great memories because I used to buy pulps from Ron in Singapore in the late 60s before, and while, I was at university. I looked forward to getting his lists and then to receiving parcels of 1940s and 1950s *Astoundings* and larger ones of *Thrilling Wonders* and *Starlings*. He once sent some 1940's *Astoundings* to me by mistake though they were intended for Rob Holdstock. Fortunately, though oddly, he'd put Rob's address on the back of the parcel (instead of his own I think) and so I sent them on to him. When I later told Rob that, as an impoverished student with barely enough money for essentials like SF and beer, I'd had to do quite a bit of soul-searching before actually deciding to post them to him, he said that, similarly impoverished, he'd have done the same. Luckily, I already had most of those issues anyway... We were friends for the next forty odd years, thanks to Ron. He was very amused when I told him about the mistake at a convention and I was pleased to be able to tell him how much I'd enjoyed a story he'd had in *New Worlds* in 1966 called "What Passing Bells?".

And I also liked William Brieding's "The Larry Chronicles" a lot, moving and well-written. And a very entertaining letter column.

I haven't mentioned Graham Charnock's verse "About Gout." I was a bit disappointed because, though it explained very well—and in what we Brits call "quite a humorous fashion"—the problems with the English and French pronunciations of gout, it wasn't exactly much use to someone traveling in France who actually developed the condition. This could be a bit of a set-back to anyone who decided to visit mainland Europe while relying largely on *Trap Door* 26 in an emergency. I thought it might be helpful, therefore, to extend the advice a bit.

If, in France, you get the gout  
Which you must tell the doc about  
Don't forget to call it goutte  
Which roughly rhymes with toot and poot.  
For, if you should pronounce it goo  
The medic will then think that you  
Are claiming not to have bad feet  
But to be a vexed aesthete.  
And instead he'll recommend you see  
A doctor of philosophy.

A really good issue all round, Robert. I guess you'll be aiming for issue 27 next, maybe some time in the future. If so, a sensible choice. (34 *The Avenue, Hitchin, Herts. SG4 9RJ, U.K.*)

#### LENNY KAYE

Thanks for sending the latest *Trap Door*, a welcome read for many reasons. First of course, is the remembrances of Paul Williams, whose great mind has been spun askew, and more the tragedy for all of us. I can think of no other writer who kept alight the vision of what rock and roll (or, yes, science fiction, and the twinning of those two) could ever be, and attempted to capture its lightning-in-a-bottle in words. For me, he was an essential part of my evolution from fandom to fandom; there was something so familiar about seeing that first issue of *Crawdaddy!* in a head shop in N.Y.'s East Village in 1967, a fanzine, amazingly enough, that discussed the music I loved and played with so much passion and insight. By the following summer I had written my own first tentative "piece" (a review of the Fugs at the Player's Theater) for my college paper, and was on my way to becoming that which I have been

privileged to be, a celebrant of the music.

I also well know Paul's wife, Cindy Lee Berryhill, and their union was always a joy to me, since she is a grand and perceptive artist whose sense of integrity is unflagging. In the late eighties, as a record producer, I had a meeting with her (she was signed to Rhino at the time) about working on her second album. We sat at a cafe and talked of what might be—I had no desire to do a folk-rock record, or even, from her perspective, an anti-folk-rock record. But as we talked, a jazz quartet came over the sound system, and we thought that perhaps approaching her songs more spontaneously and with an emphasis on performance instead of layered parts would be a creative hook for the album. Accordingly, I gathered some players—drummer Charli Persip, keyboardist Bob Lenox, bassist Paul Dugan—and we essentially recorded live, with a minimum of overdubs. The album, *Naked Movie Star*, is one of my favorite works, capturing a band in process. I played on the record under the name of Jones Beach, and on a longish cut improvised between her and myself, the tape ran out after seven or so minutes. My playing was kind of freeform, i.e. more abstract and expressionist than figurative, and when we spliced on another five or so minutes of tape, we started from the front. Since we were only using a couple of tracks, we could run the performances in parallel, and playing the two takes side by side, we marveled at the random synching of the parts, resulting in the eleven-minute spectacular of "Yipee."

It is also somewhat bittersweet and nostalgic to read of the passing of Calvin Demmon (his nickname "Biff" came to mind immediately; amazing how the mind's file cabinet can make such a distant connection) and to see in your pages (sixth?) (seventh?) fandom names like Mike Deckinger (one of my first correspondents 'way back when), Gordon Eklund, Carol Carr, Ray Nelson, et al. My faanish memories are somewhat preserved in amber, and in Calvin's case, sometimes the people seem perpetually just out of adolescence or early adulthood. It's hard to imagine anyone growing older from the Neverland that is s-f fandom. But of course we do, and every once in a while, when I'm moving things in the basement from one side to another (part of my twenty-year plan to return all the "stuff" back to whence it came, though the

"stuff" hardly moves, and the twenty years keeps moving forward), I come upon my boxes of ancient fanzines, and leaf through them, and look at the fourth dimension of time ever unreeling. Congratulations on *Trap Door* moving into its second quarter of century, and here's to the future! (216 *Braeside Avenue, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301-2901*)

#### JERRY KAUFMAN

Thanks for the always welcome *Trap Door*, even if it caused me a moment of vertigo when I looked at the front cover. Steve's crew-cut character is popping up other places, too, like the cover of the most recent *Chunga*. Steve's doing a great job of confounding space and time with this guy.

I'm glad that there are no tributes to dead fans, but very sorry that you had to write the tribute to still-living but gone Paul Williams. Paul was one of my culture heroes in college, thanks to *Crawdaddy!* and *Outlaw Blues*, a collection of Paul's articles and reviews from *CI*. He gave me a whole different way of listening and thinking about rock and pop music. I was thrilled further when I found out he was also a fan and I was able to meet him at conventions. Later, when I lived in New York, I went to a few rock shows with him, and apartment sat for a month or so while he, Sachiko and the kids spent time in Massachusetts.

After I moved here, I still saw him at cons and on his visits to Seattle, where his father taught at University of Washington. One time he came up to be a speaker at a Bob Dylan convention. As much as I love Dylan's material and think his voice is well-suited to perform his own stuff, I never thought he was as superb a performer as Paul did.

Gordon Eklund's story is amusing and made me think of the Bloch story, "A Way of Life," about fans saving the world after some widespread disaster (nuclear war, perhaps) because they had the means of communication in their basements.

We're planning to visit Wales after Corflu, so I could claim that Dave Langford (can that be right?) has given us many useful travel tips. I'd be lying, though. His article did give me laughter. And if I ever do go to see Jon when he's in Seattle (touring behind his latest music, or his art, or even this book Dave talks about),

I'll have more ammunition for that moment when I go up to him and say, "Aren't you the brother of that great writer David Langford?" I've wanted to do this for years.

What an ordeal, Carol. I'm glad you up and about. By now you're probably back to your old pastimes of running the 100 meter and climbing the Seven Sisters. Or was it tennis? Skiing? Well, whatever you did before.

I found William Breiding's article about his hikes with Larry interesting, but have to admit that something uncomfortable comes across in his portrait of Larry the man. Doesn't sound like someone I would want to know, but I can't put my finger on why.

In the letter column I was surprised by Fred Lerner's mention of "my trio." I don't remember knowing that Fred plays an instrument or once had his own band. Tell us more, Fred. *{You have no memory loss here; that letter was actually from Fred \*Smith\*—my grievous error.}* (3522 NE 123rd St., Seattle, WA 98125)

#### PETER WESTON

I didn't know Paul Williams, although back in 1997 his name came up quite unexpectedly in conversation. Eileen and I had attended the San Antonio worldcon and had taken the opportunity of signing up for a holiday afterwards with Tauck Tours. Titled "Canyonlands," it was an incredible week during which we saw the Red Rock country of Sedona and "Montezuma's Castle," Zion Canyon, Bryce Canyon and Monument Valley, but the climax of course was our 36 hours at the Grand Canyon historic village (well, it was nearly a hundred years old so I suppose that's "historic" by your standards!).

The idea was that we'd stop at a different resort each night and everyone would change around for dinner companions, thus getting to talk to each other. At Lake Powell we arrived in the restaurant late and found the only remaining table was the one with the two little old ladies that no one wanted to sit with. So we joined them—and were the last ones to leave the restaurant, long after everyone else had gone to bed. One lady was the widow of a Nobel Prize-winner in chemistry, the other was involved in all sorts of interesting things, and when Eileen mentioned my interest in SF she asked if I'd heard of her nephew, Paul Williams. Small

world! *{Out of the blue! But I do wonder if her nephew was Paul O. Williams, the SF writer...}*

Dave Langford's "Alphabet" was a fun read, clever in that deadpan way he manages so well. Only he could solemnly write; "A carefully planned experiment determined beyond reasonable doubt that if a scientific investigator drops carbide into all the inkwells and fills his classroom with a terrible stench, he gets caned." I wish I could get him to write articles like that for me.

I don't know what to make of "The Larry Chronicles." It's unusual, at the very least, for two mature men to have these sort of adventures together without anything untoward going on. Or am I being old-fashioned? I'm all in favor of spending time in male company now and again; for instance, I hung out with Tom Shippey for hours on end at this year's Boskone and we had a great time, but I can't see either of us wanting to go into the mountains together and take turns lying in a pile of dead leaves. Is there something William Breiding isn't telling us? And—this is old-fashioned—shouldn't there be some vague connection with science fiction fandom in there somewhere? *{Um, no. You've read Trap Door long enough that you should know it's not, strictly speaking, a science fiction fanzine. Have a close look at your back issues if there's any doubt.}*

I enjoyed Ron Bennett's piece, but even at the time I thought he was doomed in attempting to run a bookselling business from such a remote location, and his account pretty much proves it. I knew Ron from 1964 onwards and always considered him primarily as a fan, with a very minor role as a dealer. In recent years having read his fanzine, *Ploy*, I realize that right from the start he was determined to become a dealer; he used to offer his fanzine in return for copies of "US prozines," which was a useful way of building up stock. Poor old Ron, he died far too young and we do miss him very much. *{Indeed so!}* (53 Wyvern Road, Sutton Coldfield, W. Midlands B74 2PS, U.K.)

#### GARY MATTINGLY

I found your editorial very interesting and enjoyed reading the history of *Trap Door* and your interaction with Paul Williams. We met Paul at a few parties in the Bay area and he was always pleasant, friendly and interesting. He even gave us a cassette tape of interesting

music, including some Japanese pop stuff.

I found "South Wales Alphabet" by Dave Langford interesting and amusing. I was thinking about something as entertaining about growing up in Kansas. I just don't think I could come up with a full alphabet list. Hm, P probably would be "Purple People Eater" by Sheb Wooley. I won a talent contest when I was under ten years old. I'm trying to remember if that was in Moran, Kansas. W - Whispering Hope. I played that on piano at the Baptist Church, if I remember correctly, or did I sing it? I think I also sang "He" (Words & Music by Richard Mullen & Jack Richards). All of my public singing took place while I was under ten. A woman in the audience told my mother she really appreciated it (It being either Whispering Hope or was it He—hard to remember exact details on some of those pre-age ten things) and it made her feel better about her husband who had recently died. Keep in mind this was probably over forty, oops, almost fifty years ago so memories are hazy. I could say "Witch Doctor" by Ross Bagdasarian, Sr., and released in 1958 by Liberty Records under the name David Seville. I'm trying to remember if I sang "Purple People Eater" or "Witch Doctor" at one of my mother's Eastern Star meetings. B would have to be Bronson where my earliest memories, for the most part, really started. Marvelous place for a kid, sort of. One building held all twelve grades, two grades per room. Now it is just a bunch of bricks. Another B is Beto Junction, where my family usually stopped when driving between Kansas City and Eureka. Bronson plays a bigger role though. I could probably go on but have my doubts about X's and Z's in Kansas, Q's would be hard too. I should include Teri Mix and Sharon Thompson. I'm amazed. I just found Teri Mix's name through Google. Her name appeared in the Ft. Scott *Tribune*. I remember being in the hospital in grade school and she drew a get well card for me. It had a horse on it. The mention of Teri appears in notes from the Bronson area. She married Al Lovelace. I haven't a clue who he is. Small town news is so entertaining. It includes things like so-and-so were supper guests of so-and-so. Really small town. One of these days in my copious spare time I'll have to leaf through Bronson Area News in the Ft. Scott *Tribune*. When we first moved to Bronson our house had

an outhouse in the garage. We did get indoor plumbing. Our house was on one corner and the Methodist church was on the opposite corner. Across the street was the town park with a bandstand. On the other corner was someone's house and it eventually actually housed the town phone switchboard. I remember we had a party line but I don't think I was really allowed to answer the phone.

Ooh, more entertaining news, it seems my mother occasionally wrote "Bronson Area News" for the Ft. Scott *Tribune*. I see I sang a solo at the Methodist Church in July 1960.

Carol Carr's "Thanksgiving is the Cruellest Month" was quite a tale. I have never gone through anything close to that and I truly hope I never do. That sounds like absolutely no fun. Much congratulations on getting through it, for the most part, and being able to no longer have to use the walker and the cane only a little. It would seem to be a very good thing to have a Robert around to help.

"The Larry Chronicles" by William Breiding caught my attention fairly quickly. I think it would be very interesting to witness Wm. in an LDS Church Social. Please I must read on, ever hopeful that this wondrous occurrence, uh, occurs. His description of the mountain walks sounds quite idyllic. I would like to take a hike up there sometime. It seems amusing that Wm. described himself as closed off. If he's closed off I must be a locked safe in a dead end tunnel in a mine shaft that had been closed for years. Okay, maybe not quite that extreme but...Larry probably would have overwhelmed me in minutes and I would have made my excuses and been long gone. The description of Wm's fear of heights brought back my reluctance to go near any edge with a steep drop beyond. I'm not exactly afraid of the heights. I'm afraid of jumping. It seems so tempting. It isn't really a suicide type of thing. I don't think, just a desire to let go, to be free. Unfortunately I have no desire to encounter that last inch or two reaching the ground or water or whatever below. This was a very enjoyable article. I really must try being a hermit for 3+ years. It sounds most enjoyable.

My eyes proceed on to "The Ether Still Vibrates." With respect to Milt Stevens's note that churches make him nervous, I thought for a moment about my own experience. I don't

think they've ever made me nervous. Definitely when younger it was deadly boring sitting for the length of time the sermons took. My earliest memories were going to the Methodist church across the street. We were regular attendees—well, except for my father, who made my sister and I go with our mother. It was a small town. We knew most of the people. Occasionally my questioning of some point in Sunday school wasn't particularly appreciated but usually I think they just thought I was bright and maybe a bit too precocious for my own good at times. I sang solos in church, attended Bible School in the summer. They split ages between the Baptist Church and the Methodist Church. There really weren't enough kids to not combine them. The Baptist Church building was farther away but I remember enjoying roaming the hallways there. I think it is now closed although I believe the Methodist church is still used. Occasionally we went to one-room churches out in the country for cake walks and small social gatherings. It was something to do. Nowadays I participate in smaller religious gatherings on full and dark moons...with some solstices, equinoxes and such thrown in.

On Gary Hubbard's comment on math, I've always liked math. I took calculus in high school and quite a few semesters of math in college, particularly for my degree in Electrical Engineering. I mean, how can you not get excited about Laplace and Fourier transforms? Ah, communication theory. Differential Equations was a marvelous semester. Advanced engineering mathematics was fun. (hm, was that the name of it?). I wasn't quite so enthused about the "story" problems I had to deal with in my EE classes. When the whole test is only two or three problems and everyone has a tough time getting through those. I didn't take the higher theoretical math courses, I guess, that mathematicians take but I probably would have enjoyed those too.

On Joseph Nicholas' comments on online shopping and your remarks in response, I've been doing it for years and only had one problem that comes to mind. Fortunately that was resolved quickly. I use Paypal also and have never had a problem with it, other than I buy too much.

The artwork throughout is quite enjoyable. I'll leave more elaborate critiques to others

although I was amused by Craig Smith's illo for Wm. Breiding's piece. (7501 Honey Court, Dublin, CA 94568-1911)

## JOSEPH MAJOR

Now we see the downside of "live fast die young stay pretty". Paul's ailments are in some ways worse than death, because the body still functions, while the personality is dying—as I found out going to see a cousin who is in a special facility here in Louisville for people with Alzheimer's.

"A for Adders": There is always Frederick Forsyth's story "There Are No Snakes In Ireland" about a harassed Hindu who imports one to give a harasser a certain final reply. A krait (any of several species of *Bungarus*) can be called the "Indian Two-Step" because that's how far you can walk after being bit by one. And the last scene, where the krait is laying her eggs

"L for Langford": Amateur genealogist—try tracing someone named "Campbell." I have a couple in my ancestry and no way to find out who their parents are.

Looking the issue over, I am left with the feeling of a look back at a time and place when and where everybody knew everybody and did everything. Now, the village has been demolished for a giant suburb with all sorts of diverse people, each in its own little or not-so-little enclave with prodigies of performances that they can watch with utter rapt absorption. The survivors sit amid the ruins, all the more demolished because they can only be seen in the mind's eye. (1409 Christy Avenue, Louisville, KY 40204-2040)

## JIM LINWOOD

Your recollections of Paul Williams were moving. I knew of Paul mostly through the Philip K. Dick Society and Dylan fandom; it was through the latter that I heard of his accident in 1995. I wrote him a "get well soon" letter and was surprised to get a reply as he didn't know me. He said he seemed to have completely recovered from the accident and looked forward to writing reviews of tapes and videos of recent Dylan concerts.

Paul's accident, together with Carol's account of her fracture, and the recent death of Rob Holdstock are tragic reminders of how healthy people are only micro-seconds away

from illness or worse.

It was nice to see Ron Bennett as a post-humous contributor—he was one of my favorite people in Anglofandom and I was glad to have met him again before he died. I hope you have more of his stuff stashed away. {*Alas, no. I missed meeting Ron when he was TAFF delegate at Solacon in 1958 because I was new to fandom and too shy to attend even though it was in the city where I then lived. We corresponded for many years but didn't manage to meet until the 2002 worldcon in San Jose—and a few times after that when he came to see his son Andrew here in the Bay Area.*} (125 Twickenham Road, Isleworth TW7 6AW, U.K.)

## SHELBY VICK

It was real interesting to get all that back story about Paul Williams and you in your editorial, and I say that even though I had probably heard much of it before. At 81, you can't expect my memory to be *that* great. One thing you said—where you were talking about becoming well-acquainted with someone just by letters—brought up a story from my own life. My wife, Suzanne, and I got to know each other through letters. I had been carrying on a correspondence with Felice Perew from St. Pete for years and when she went to college our correspondence continued. One day I received a letter written on one of those red'n'black ribbons, a para or two in black, more in red, etc. Felice's roommate was a girl named Suzanne Ross, and they were answering together. When they left college, I continued correspondence with both, separately. Sometimes Suzy and I would exchange single-spaced, typewritten letters of fifteen to twenty pages! I swear we learned more about each other that way than we would have if we grew up together. Eventually, we met and got married. The rest—and the children who followed—is history.

"The Great Gafia of 1967" was exquisite. Digging into my nearly seventy years of fandom, I tried to come up with an interpretation of *Porcupine*. I read between the lines—I felt certain it was a takeoff on some famous actual zine—but failed!

Commenting on Dave Langford's article, all I could come up with was: 'A' is for Awesome. 'B' is for Bravo! 'C' is for Creative. 'D' is for Delightful. 'E' is for Enchanting. 'F' is for

Fannish. And, last—"G" is for Genealogy, which is the closest to a hook I could find. I'm an amateur genealogist myself, and have found that the Shelby side of my clan were Welsh! I found an Evan Dhu Shelby from Way Way Back. Somewhere someone told me 'Dhu' was for 'Black'—Black Irish predecessor, perhaps?

Now, as to Carol Carr's piece about her disastrous Thanksgiving. This is one with a major hook for me, as I recall my months after my auto accident. She had none of my really terrific hallucinations, but I do remember trying to get back on my feet. In the Recovery Center, I went thru the wheelchair-to-walker routine until—voila!—I could walk with a cane. I'd set myself a *goal—that door* and back, the end of the hall and back, and—at last—to the cupola in the garden, where I could sit and smoke. FREEDOM! Ah, it was wonderful.

"The Larry Chronicles" by William Breiding was a beautiful love story—the love of nature and the love of one man for another, with no sex involved, something we see too little of these days. Refreshing.

Now to "The Ether Still Vibrates," starting with Chris Nelson's comment about needing Calvin Demmon's sense of humor. While I seldom reach anywhere near Calvin's fun, I *do* believe that my sense of humor is primarily responsible for my living to reach age 81. People have sometimes commented on how much I laugh, and I respond, "It's either that or cry, and I prefer laughing." Or to put it another way, "Attitude is everything."

Tim Marion made a serious mistake (or at least pulled a boo-boo) when discussing Robert Bloch. Rim referred to "postcards." WRONG! In the case of Bloch, they are pocsarcds! Traces way back to Lee Hoffman. And I wish I had all that Bloch sent me. They were gems of real humor and wisdom. Quite often he would end one with something like, "Today's movies make me sick. Hoping you are the same, Bob." {*Yes, Bloch was superb. As for "pocsarcd," it was Walt Willis who made the typo, but Lee ran with it.*} (P. O. Box 9824, Panama City, FL 32417)

## LLOYD PENNEY

Wonderful starter to the zine with your essay on Paul Williams. That's a name I've heard in the background with this zine and a couple of others, and now I know a lot more.

Many thanks for that. (1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, Ont. M9C 2B2, Canada)

#### MIKE MEARA

Who's Paul Williams? I thought while reading your editorial—then as I read on I found that he was the one I had to thank for the five-volume Dick collection, which I have. I also remember drooling over some volumes of the Sturgeon collection in *Forbidden Planet* some years back—I hope no one noticed—but there were just too many, it was too expensive, and there was non-sf material in there too, all of which put me off buying them. If anyone was to do a cut-down, sf-only edition in paperback, now... {If I'd encountered them in a great heap like you did, I'd probably have sticker shock, too; fortunately I've been buying them as they came out, and just recently completed the set with the 13th and final volume. I'll confess, though, that for the most part I've only read Paul's bits throughout.}

The Langford piece is not one of his best, though maybe he was aiming for a different style. Whatever, it still made enjoyable reading. I used to make nitrogen tri-iodide by soaking iodine crystals in concentrated (what they used to call 0.880) ammonia when I were a foolish lad; as Dave says, it's safe to handle if you keep it wet enough. That's the key word—enough. One day I didn't, and a batch went off in my face. I don't recommend inhaling iodine vapor. I also remember Vesta readymeals: my favorite was a Chinese one—I use the word loosely—with noodles which had to be fried in hot oil, whereupon they writhed and wriggled in an eldritch manner and expanded to many times their original volume, sometimes overflowing the ill-chosen frying pan and onto the kitchen floor—just like something out of H.P. Lovecraft's little-known cookbook, "Cooking With Cthulhu."

Carol's wonderful piece about her accident is an extreme example of the principle known as At Least I Can Get A Fanzine Article Out Of It. Seriously though, it's quite sobering—which takes some doing in my case—to think what weeks and months of painful reflection can come from one teensy little lapse in concentration. Even if you take care 99.9% of the time,

the other 0.1% I'll get ya, without fail. It's a good job she had you, but I don't need to tell either of you that.

I love reading hucksters' tales, and there's plenty of enjoyment to be had in Ron Bennett's piece, but as would be expected considering the source, it doesn't hang together very well as a coherent article. Well worth it, though, for the memories of Ron that it invokes.

It's a rare skill indeed to be able to write so well that the incidents and personalities described appear clear, bright and colorful in the mind's eye, and William Breiding has that skill. This is not the kind of piece I would normally look forward to in a fanzine, but I enjoyed every word of it.

I'm sure I'm not alone in holding the view that the quality of a fanzine can be judged by the quality of its lettercol; look at *Banana Wings*, and whatever Peter Weston calls his these Days—*Repro Lapse*, is it? Here I find one that is fully the equal of those. Lots of stuff I could pick up on here, but I'll limit myself to just a few. Pamela Boal got drunk from driving behind a wagonful of grape skins? I should be so lucky! The eminent wine writer Robert Parker should have been there to do her a tasting note: "Plenty of new oak here, in fact a tree's worth has just jumped out in front of my car." And Hope Leibowitz wants to sit on eggs? How, exactly? To hatch them out, mother-hen style? To see if it can be done without breaking them? Or to break them and make a horrible mess? If the latter, she should meet up with one of those people who sit in bathtubs full of baked beans for charity; they could get a year's worth of breakfasts out of it. (meara810@btinternet.com)

#### ALEXANDER YUDENITSCH

*Trap Door* 26 struck me as being a "classic" sort of fanzine, since most of it was about people and things which didn't have anything to do with SF/F, directly (besides their involving SF fans), and I remembered reading a comment recently that, 'back in the Good Old Days', many fanzines used to be that way—although "Gordon Eklund"'s lead story/article was firmly in the SF corner.

I didn't know about Paul Williams' role in the history of *Trap Door*, down (or up) to suggesting the title. I only recently read about the

unfortunate state of his health, but I've been peripherally aware of his work for a long time—and am well aware of his role in getting Ted Sturgeon's short works collected and published (I've got them all, so far). He really deserves to be remembered and honored.

Besides being interesting in itself, Ron Bennett's "My Life as a Singapore Huckster" serves as a contrast to the state of book-(and magazine-)selling, then and now. The internet, especially eBay, has changed things so much that the life of those sellers who don't use it is now much harder than the one he described (although I think it's become much better, specially for fans who don't live in large cities of North America or Europe).

I noticed several people discussing e-zines and, particularly, when (and if) they should be printed out. My take on this is that e-zines (as opposed to blogs) should be "issues in a series," just like the paper versions, but they can either be made so they're printable (meaning, no moving images or sounds, and a fixed layout which lends itself to printing on "normal" printers), or just "viewable"; if the former, then posting them online gives us the best of both worlds: Those who prefer to read them online, can do so; and those who like to read them on paper, can print them out, or just read them online as if they were printed on paper. Chris Garcia's statistics about "hits" on eZines is interesting, and shows that, like radio remained alive as a 'niche' after TV, zines continue to be a viable medium. (Caixa Postal 613, S. Paolo, SP 01031-970, Brazil)

#### GARY HUBBARD

I was saddened to hear about Paul Williams. Bess and I had dinner with him and Cindy Lee at Corflu Wave, and we talked about his accident. It seemed like just an amusing war story at the time. How ironic. In the intervening years I kept seeing his name pop up here and there, and I would turn to someone and say, "Hey, I know this guy," with just a bit of sycophancy, of course. But, wow, dementia. That's really so sad.

The entry in "South Wales Alphabet" by Dave Langford on Arthur Machen caught my eye, because I had recently read "The Novel of the White Powder" in an anthology of old stories that was made to look as if it was edited by H. P. Lovecraft, but really wasn't (H. P.

Lovecraft *Book of the Supernatural*, edited by Stephen Jones, 2006). After reading Langford's comments, I got interested in reading some more Machen and went on a Machen spree and read several other stories of his that I was lucky enough to find here at the library. His style is a bit challenging, you know, being a combination of very old-fashioned and veddy veddy English, but he held my attention, nonetheless, and I zipped through three of his novels pretty fast. The best of the lot was *The Great God Pan*, a tale of science gone mad combined with the revival of ancient horrors. Specifically, it deals with this *femme fatale* who goes around destroying men's lives and it reminded me a little of Stanley G. Weinbaum's "The Adaptive Ultimate," a tale of science gone mad with a *femme fatale* who goes around destroying men's lives. It was adapted as a radio play in the '40s and as an episode of *Science Fiction Theater* in the '50s. In 1957, it was turned into a movie called *She Devil*. I only mention all of this because *She Devil* was showing on TV the night my brother and I rolled into Cleveland for the 1966 Worldcon. And that's about all I remember about that Worldcon (well, there was that *Star Trek* pilot, of course). It was my first con, and you think I remember more about it, wouldn't you? But I didn't get laid, so what's to remember?

There's a sort of a sequel to my article about my own medical problems a while back (*the one in this issue, held over from the last one for "balance"*) which I'm going to tell you right here:

Early April. We have a raised garden bed in the back yard. I was standing on the edge of it, turning over the soil, when I fell off, injuring my back. It hurt, but I thought I would be okay with a little rest. However, the next morning I couldn't get up out of bed. Even shifting from side to side had to be handled with the utmost care in order to avoid the most exquisite pain. That went on for days, but it gradually got better—although not too much better. But by the following Monday, I felt well enough to go back to work, so I did. By that evening, though, I was feeling pretty putrid and had a hard night of it. By four in the morning I somehow knew I was probably having a heart attack and asked Bess to drive me to the hospital, where—sure as shootin'—it turned out I was having a heart attack!

It turned out that one of my stents had clogged up and was killing me. They had to go in and replace it, so I was back on the slab in the cold room again. And while I was in the hospital, I got some kind of bad infection on my leg that was so painful I couldn't stand on it—not that I could stand up, anyway, because of my back. After a while, though, my leg got better and I went home, where I tried to recover. My back started getting a little better, but I started having more problems. Whenever I stood up, I would get dizzy and nauseous—and then I started pooping blood. So the following week I was back in the hospital, where they took lots of tests and discovered that my hemoglobin count and blood pressure were both at an all-time low. That night, they gave me two units of blood. It took around eight hours, but the next morning I felt really great. So I can understand now what it is about vampires.

That afternoon, I was introduced to a gastroenterologist, who wanted to put a tube down my mouth because he suspected I might have a bleeding ulcer that was being activated by my heart medicine. Well, he found three of those little devils down there, and they were happily pumping away my life blood. Fortunately, they fixed that up by altering my meds and prescribing a very strict diet for me (no caffeine, chocolate, tomatoes, and a lot of other things that make life worthwhile), so I'm much doing better now. But I had a rough April, and it looks like the ghouls had the last laugh on me, after all. (2203 Amherst Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49008-3969)

## STEVE GREEN

Another striking cover illustration by Steve Stiles. Mixing straight pen & ink with grainy photos reminds me of the montages Jack Kirby used to produce for The Fantastic Four and a few of his DC titles: very pop-art.

Nice editorial, built as it is around a gentle memoir of your friendship with Paul Williams. Whilst my interest in writing about music is slight (although I get regular insights into the creative process and individual inspiration from my friend Joel Lane), I'm aware of Paul's reputation in the field. Ted White's commendation is certainly good enough for me.

One of the highlights of my TAFF trip was meeting you and Carol in California, so reading

her surgical diary was all the more harrowing for the added personal dimension. At least when I broke my left wrist in the late 1990s, the worst moment was seeing the A&E doctor cut my wedding ring free. Ann, however, had a metal plate bolted to her left ankle and it caused her sporadic discomfort for most of the next two decades. It's good to read Carol's recovering, but I'm sorry to learn she's still finding the leg painful to use; I really hope her recovery continues on an upward curve.

Having grown up in South Wales, Dave Langford's scrapbook would have had a special resonance for Ann. Although her physics teacher displayed a rather chauvinist attitude towards his charges—mixing chemicals which went bang was clearly a job for the boys—he did call it quits one afternoon and screened the 1950s movie adaptation of Wells' *War of the Worlds* instead, boosting Ann's interest in sf and propelling her a little further along the path by which we'd eventually meet.

Ann and I drove past her old school a couple of years ago, and by the housing estate where she'd lived in her early teens. The latter had long since been demolished and the site was overgrown, allowing a rare reverse on an old boast: "I can remember when all these fields were only houses." (33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull, W. Midlands B92 7LQ, U.K.)

## CHRIS NELSON

Thank you for another entertaining *Trap Door*. Steve Stiles' cover is eye-catching, as always. The chap emerging from the door has pretty much the expression I had upon realizing that only the first page of each article is honored with a page number. A novel, parsimonious approach which I guess preserves most numbers for use in later issues, though it does tend to reduce the utility of the table of contents on page 2. I solved this dilemma by reading the issue from cover to cover (several times, now, given interruptions in responding).

26 issues in 26 years, eh? Slow and steady wins the race! I'm not far ahead of you with *Mumblings* (28 in 21 years so far). All of mine have been produced on computers, though in high school I did use an electric typewriter to type up assignments. I thought it was pretty swish at the time and rejoiced at how much time the correcting tape saved me. If only I'd used it

instead of that damned Microbee and dot-matrix printer to produce my first issue. As I've discovered by digitizing my zine for efan-zines.com, scanned dot-matrix characters cannot be deciphered by OCR software, so I'll have to retype the first *Mumblings* entirely.

It was good to learn a little more about your involvement in fandom over the years as well as Paul Williams' various contributions. I was aware of *Crawdaddy!* and Entwhistle Books and have a set of the 5-volume PKD collection, but never appreciated that these were all linked by a single person. And these are clearly just a fraction of his accomplishments. (The rabid exploitation of Dick's works by Hollywood makes me think that his heightened profile was something of a mixed blessing, but Paul's intentions were noble.) Sad indeed to hear of his decline due to dementia.

The piece appearing under Gordon Eklund's name was good fun, even for someone like me with no connection to fandom in the sixties. A letter from anyone in the June 1926 *Amazing Stories* would be something—discussions wasn't introduced until 1927. But if *Spacewarp* could create an alternate universe where *Hyphen* is still published and Willis is our World Leader (a nice thought; he'd probably be better than most of the lot we're stuck with in this reality) than I'm sure Burton Arbogast could have written to an alternate *Amazing*. I'd love to get hold of some issues of *Porcupine*, albeit perhaps not #13.

Langford's alphabetic reminiscences demonstrated his wonderful self-deprecating humor well. Several struck chords with me. A: They must breed kids tougher here in Oz than in 1960s Wales. Slow-worms? Legless lizards? Ha! My nephew up in tropical Darwin has two pet snakes, both varieties of python over two meters in length. Believe it or not, they have delicate constitutions. He has to feed them frozen mice from the pet shop as the live mice they could be snacking on around the property carry diseases which might kill them.

D for Denis: I know one with this spelling, too. A lovely fellow and fellow librarian, whose wife was another. They retired together after long and successful careers and began making plans to travel when they were hit by another car in an horrific accident. She did not survive and Denis suffers still, from injury and mourning.

Makes you wonder.

E for Experiments: It's nice to know that someone with the young Langford's track record on responsible laboratory experimentation was employed by the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment. Not that surprising, given the UK government's own track record of testing most of their nuclear bombs in outback or offshore Australia.

G and M: Our girls go to Miles Franklin Primary School, named after one of the Canberra region's favorite literary daughters. Best known for her autobiographical novel *My Brilliant Career* (1901), which was filmed with a young Judy Davis in the title role (1979). Curiously, the sequel, *My Career Goes Bung* (1946) has never been filmed. And I travel along a John Cleland Drive almost every day, wondering how many Canberrans know that his most famous character was Fanny Hill.

L: At least Dave's family name is derived from a useful topographical feature. Most of the Nelsons in the world are simply, sadly, just literal descendants of Nel's male offspring. And the best anagram we can make is NO LENS. In my case this is a cautionary reminder—one of my optometrists told me cheerfully years ago that without spectacles I would qualify as legally blind. At university years ago a group of us in the back row had a great time making up anagrams of each others' names. One apt example for William Grayson has stuck in my mind ever since: I AM A GROWN SILLY.

W: We don't have O levels in Australia but I would never have gained one in woodwork at high school. I would have given Langford a run for his money as worst craftsman. The most embarrassing incident demonstrating my (lack of) skills was my attempt in Year 6 to create a teapot stand with fashionably beveled sides. My mind has erased the details of this fiasco, but the result was an object with all of the wrong bits beveled, capable of supporting nothing. My shame was compounded by the high expectations of my classmates, for our teacher was my father.

A colleague of mine would sympathize deeply with Carol. She walks to work and earlier this year, taking the same route she has for years, stepped off a curb whilst glancing around to ensure there was no oncoming traffic. She fell, coming down so heavily on one leg that

she fractured her kneecap. She couldn't get up, but thankfully had her mobile and rang her husband to come to her aid. She was in a padded splint for eight weeks and in physiotherapy almost as long afterwards as she relearned how to bend her knee. She still walks with a limp. Of course, we ribbed her mercilessly about the whole incident.

I admire Ron Bennett's tenacity in trying to compete with UK booksellers from the far side of the globe. I doubt it could be done at all these days, given international postal rates now.

Leigh Edmonds wrote "I no longer even feel a twinge of guilt if I don't respond to a fanzine." I can't say the same, but have great trouble after work and family commitments to find time for fanac of any nature. On the same theme, the quote from Calvin Demmon in Tim Marion's letter was an appropriate and lovely postscript to his writings in the previous issue. (25 Fuhrman Street, Evatt, ACT 2617, Australia)

## MILT STEVENS

In *Trap Door* #26, you mention having had 26 issues in 26 years. Producing an annual fanzine these days is more the rule than the exception. Joseph Major and Henry Welch manage bi-monthly fanzines, and Chris Garcia is a category onto himself. Producing fanzines is much easier than it was years ago. It would seem we should be producing more fanzines. Of course, the people who produce fanzines are also much older than they were years ago. If technology hadn't improved, we might not be producing any fanzines at all.

Gordon Eklund contributes a quite good fan fiction story. He always does really good fan fiction. In this story, when you take a particular substance you are transported to a world of your liking. I guess you might call it the score of heart's desire.

Dave Langford's "South Wales Alphabet" is. I don't think I've read anything like it before. I have this vague feeling that it may contain arcane significance. Arcane significance is popular these days. If something doesn't have arcane significance, there are always people who will think that it does. It all has something to do with the Templars, the holy grail, and the second coming of Claude Degler.

As Carol Carr points out, breaking a leg isn't any fun at all. I sort of realized that even before

reading this article. Staying in the hospital isn't any fun either. I've never broken a leg, but I have stayed in a hospital. I've sometimes wondered how they manage to make hospital beds so uncomfortable. In my experience, the most comfortable hospital bed was less comfortable than the least comfortable hotel bed. Then again, I suppose you aren't supposed to like going to the hospital under any circumstances. (6325 Keystone Street, Simi Valley, CA 93063)

## TARAL WAYNE

That's a very Dan Steffanish cover by Steve Stiles.

A surprising number of typos for *Trap Door* this time. I particularly liked the creative touch to "far-oof exotic Belmont." It suggests a quality of surprise and discomfort to unexpectedly finding yourself in that particular scenic portion of Massachusetts. *{It's not a typo—rather, it's an elderly bit of the same school of creative faanish misspelling that brought us such gems as "pocstarcld." Must be from before your time, or you were dosing during that particular fan history class.}*

You were fafiated for a decade on the farm. I spent ten years in the wilderness in furry fandom. I don't know how to compare the two experiences. Were *you* the lucky one, or I? I never got to meet anyone like Timothy Leary or Robert Crumb. I did meet the guy who used to draw for Richie Rich comics, and one of the directors of Tiny Toons for Warner Brothers. You smoked a lot of dope, but I drew a lot of porn. I think we must have both realized what a good thing we'd had in fandom when we "returned."

It's interesting to see a piece of genuine fan-fiction again. If you disregard the amateurish efforts you see from time to time, fiction about fandom seems to be an art form long neglected. The last example I can think of was "A World-con in Brownsville"—Tim Marion's parody of Isaac Beshevis Singer's "A Wedding in Brownsville."

The reader is probably more than adequately aware that I've written a fair amount of similar nonsense myself. (A recent example was roundly ignored in Sandra Bond's last issue of *Quasiquote*.)

"The Great Gafia of 1967" was interesting in that it worked on a recurrent fear of mine. I

wonder how many other fans have also been unable to shake the delusion that there is a secret, *better* fandom that they aren't part of. You read your friends' names in print in enviable places, notice them as guests of honor at popular cons, watch them win TAFF or DUFF, while you settle for a letter of comment every other issue from Lloyd Penney. You wait for the secret handshake or mysterious invitation that never arrives, and, in the meantime, all you can do is control your jealousy and vote for somebody else on the Hugo ballot.

I think that's more Langford than I've read in the past five years. But it's in the classic mold and *almost* worth waiting such a terribly long time for it.

I also found another creative typo, on page 26, where Dave says, "if tourists want to go native and take a leek." I presume he meant "leak," but as the Welsh national weed *is* the leek, it works well the way it was typed. A late thought... perhaps it was intentional. I once wrote something about "rolling them in the isles" intentionally and it was so superbly subtle that even my proofreader didn't get it. *{The author confirms your late thought.}*

Why is it everywhere is more interesting than Toronto? Langford is so lucky to live next to fascinating local color such as iron age forts, and to go to a school just like Hogwarts (except for the magic part). When I grew up, I served my time in a perfectly normal car-and-date culture high school like everyone else in North America. We had no inedible sausages to make fun of, only vinegary "Sloppy Joes" and hot dogs with Kraft cheese slices. The nearest thing to a Celtic hill fort is old Fort York, about a mile away from me. But it was only built sometime around 1810, not 1810 BC. We have no cable cars to cross the humble Humber River in Toronto, only a couple of rather ordinary bridges. Of course, you can wade across most of the Humber, so why waste ingenuity on the matter? We have bilingual road signs, but only French and English, nothing as exotic as Welsh and English. French is spelled better, making it still *less* interesting. No famous and beloved writers like Arthur Machen ever lived here—only Margaret Atwood, whose earnest novels satisfy the same spiritual purpose as people who habitually straighten pictures. This is why I have to lie as much as I do in my writing

about the dear old place where I was born.

I have to admit that I was uncomfortable reading "The Larry Chronicles." Much as I have always enjoyed my rare experiences in places of great natural beauty, I tend to think in term of tectonic upheavals, epic volcanism, eras of desiccation and windblown erosion, of fossils quietly slumbering for millions of years in their rocky beds, of pioneer trains, of Indian raids, of prospectors turning over likely rocks in the search for gold. Breiding's writing, though, seems less in awe of nature as it is *deeply in love* with it. He writes like a lover. "The Larry Chronicles" reads like a romance story. It wasn't long before I began to yearn for a bit of cynicism, a note of humor, a wry observation, or sudden incongruity. I just couldn't take all the sweetness and light. Perhaps that's more a commentary on me, though, than one on the writer. (245 Dunn Avenue #2111, Toronto, Ont. M6K 1S6, Canada)

## JOHN BAXTER

It was good to see so many references (Ron Bennett, Mike Deckinger, George Locke) to my avocation, book dealing. Understandable, I guess, since, as one gets older, selling replaces buying in our experience of literature; either selling our products to a publisher, or disposing of our collections to vendors. As—I think—Anthony Burgess remarked, "when great figures of literature get together, what they mostly talk about is the best place to sell review copies."

My "papers" have just been acquired by the National Film and Sound Archive in Canberra, Australia. For the last week, I've been working with two colleagues from the University of Queensland, plus Ben, our local heavy lifter, to transfer them from shelves, cartons and filing cabinets into something more durable for shipping. The first selection—correspondence, research materials accumulated for various books, manuscripts, plus proofs, galleys etc., (known in the trade as "foul matter," apparently)—filled nineteen large cartons, and almost as many garbage bags. Next will come a couple of filing cabinets of movie stills and a film reference library running into hundreds of volumes, now mostly redundant with the transfer of so much to the internet (not to mention my dwindling interest in writing about cinema.)

Seeing my personal papers sent off to the

Archive didn't disturb me as much as I expected. The illusion of keeping such things is that you "might need to refer to that some time." But watching decades of anodyne correspondence, agents' statements, etc being piled into boxes made me realize that I'd never referred to any of it. On the other hand, Bill, who was helping with the packing, would occasionally stop to make a remark like, "This is interesting. It's a letter from John Brosnan describing how his novel *Carnosaur* anticipated everything in *Jurassic Park* by two years." It made me realize that the real value of such stuff—if there is any—is to other people. We lived it. This is just the residue.

The more poignant moments came when one of the helpers held up an enigmatic document and asked, "Is this to go, too?" In one case, it was a sheaf of Rotsler drawings, sent as a memento by Bill Warren when he cleaned out his rat's nest of a house. How to explain Rotsler? I put those aside.

Once all this is gone, I'll be able to concentrate on my personal collection: the rare and valuable stuff which, as Mike Deckinger remarks of Sam Moskowitz's library, is retained and maintained mainly for our families to sell off when we are, in the nature of things, ourselves Remaindered. Like Mike, I prefer to think of the books being dispersed among other collectors, rather than entombed in a library. There's a sort of immortality in that. And, after all, that's where most of them came from originally.

I don't know what to make of "The Larry Chronicles." It reads like one of those covertly homo-erotic Edwardian chronicles of Kindred Souls Romping in the Glade. Echoes of Swinburne, Ruskin, and in particular Lawrence. I would not have been surprised if the two had stripped off and indulged in a little free-style wrestling, a la *Women In Love*. Larry appeared so obviously gay that the reference to wives and girlfriends came as a surprise. But, to pursue the *Women In Love* parallel, Rupert and Gerald in that novel aren't lovers either; just very close friends, looking to widen their friendship as far as possible, short of physical sex. So any imputations of homosexuality are presumably down to me.

Incidentally, speaking of "short", while writing the biography of Ken Russell, who directed the film of *Women In Love*, I spent

some time researching that scene. It's carefully shot so that, while Oliver Reed's genitals are flagrantly displayed, Alan Bates's appendages, presumably out of politeness, are never seen. Reed, in fact, confessed that he slipped into the toilet before each take to pump himself up with "a quick Jodrell" (Cockney rhyming slang: Jodrell Bank = wank; Jodrell Bank being the site of the largest UK radio telescope). In many places, the wrestling itself was cut, leaving only the subsequent shot of the two men lying panting and naked on the floor. In Spain and Portugal, everyone wanted details of "the buggery scene." As is often the case, the truth came as a grave disappointment. (18 rue de l'Odeon, 75006 Paris, France)

### PAMELA BOAL

Thank you so much for another feast of good writing, art work and layout. I only started to put my toes into fannish waters in 1971 so missed most of the references in "The Great Gafia of 1967." Even so it stands up as a very smile-worthy piece.

What can one say about David Langford? So much erudition and wit wrapped up in one writer, as ever producing a readable and enjoyable item.

I sincerely hope that Carol Carr continued to make the recovery her article implied and that she is now fully fit. Her article rang so many bells for me. I applaud her expertise with her reacher-stick-thingy (mine's called a Handy Andy) to pick up a pillow and pull on her pants. Wow! After years of acquaintance with mine, anything heavier than a small magazine just falls to the floor. As for pulling on pants, everything is somehow at the wrong angle, I'd probably do myself a mischief. Scooch is a word I've never come across before but I know exactly what she means; that is how I got up and down stairs before the advent of my chair lift. There are still situations where I have to scooch. Thank you, Carol, for that word.

Ron Bennett's article brought back memories. We came back from Singapore in 1963. We know that there were at least two other SF readers on the island as we scavenged for their books at every two-for-one secondhand book stall. Buying new on a corporal's pay was prohibitive but when you are starving... That is where we started our *Analog* collection, which

was of course the American version. We were rather dismayed on our return to the UK to find out how much more expensive *Analog* was here. Once you had purchased those editions which carried the stories you were in the midst of when leaving Singapore—well, the habit was established.

Thank you, William Breiding, for the wonderful description of your hiking countryside. I hope life has provided other soul mates. (4 Westfield Way, Wantage, Oxon. OX12 7EW, U.K.)

### JAY KINNEY

I felt that Carol's diary write-up of her injury and recovery in the last *Trap Door* was possibly the most deeply affecting fan article I've read in ages. I was only vaguely (very vaguely) aware of the accident and subsequent recovery prior to this. I'm glad to belatedly hear that she's walking under her own power again. (3165-A 16th Street, San Francisco, CA 94103)

### FRED SMITH

I take it that's an upside down San Francisco on the cover what with the pyramid and all? {Yes, good catch!}

Gordon Eklund's piece of faan fiction is the right stuff, of course, and much enjoyed. To my way of thinking it's what faan fiction should be. Long may you continue printing it, provided, of course, that the good writers continue writing it!

Your letterhacks are all very interesting but I must ask Gary Mattingly to name some of the "marvelous music" that he talks about that I "have to look for, listen for and be available for." The last I'm prepared to do but not the first two if I have to suffer the crap that's churned out on radio and TV for the sake of the odd gem that might turn up. So if Gary will kindly name a few pieces of popular music that he considers likely to be around twenty or thirty years from now then I'll give a listen. {Over to you, Gary.} (10 Braidholm Crescent, Giffnock, Glasgow G46 6HQ, Scotland)

{This would be an appropriate place to apologize for attributing Fred's letter in #26 to Fred Lerner, as mentioned above in commenting on Jerry Kaufman's letter.. My bad in screwing up the name, which I've corrected in the PDF version on efanazines.}

### HOPE LEIBOWITZ

The first article I was drawn to was Carol's. Wow. I had no idea! I live in fear of falling, especially in the winter. Recently, an old chair broke that I got at an office furniture sale where I worked, many years ago. It was a catastrophic failure of a leg falling off, and I ended up on the floor. Luckily, I was able to get over to the couch from the kitchen on my rear end, and put pillows under my knees to get up. It took what seemed like an eternity—maybe ten minutes. It is very painful to put any weight on my knees, as in kneeling.

What a horrific thing to happen to anyone. I'm so glad she is recovering so well. The line "Good to live to dust again" was very funny.

Doorway: Wow, you met great people through Paul Williams. Crumb, Kantner, Leary. It is so sad that he has dementia. I met both of them at a con, and heard Cindy perform. She was great. Of all the awful ways to go, that might be one of the worst, right up there with a massive stroke that doesn't kill you.

Being on The Farm meant you were away from fandom for ten years? Was there no time for it? {Mostly not, and even if there had been there was no money.}

Great gout poem by Graham—my guy has gout, and just cutting out almost all red meat has eliminated it, no medication. He used to eat a smoked meat sandwich every weekday for lunch, now he has turkey.

"The Larry Chronicles": Interesting and a bit sad. I never became friends with a neighbor until someone stopped to talk to me while bicycling home. She doesn't live in my building; she has a house on a nearby street. So strange—she said she'd seen me a few times and I looked interesting, and she wanted to meet me. How does a huge woman with a cane look interesting? But she has no disposable income due to the house so she doesn't eat out or go anywhere at all! We met for coffee once, and I just ran into her again on the street. Not really much of a friendship (grin). (105 Harrison Garden Blvd., Apt. 206, Toronto, Ont. M2N 0C3, Canada)

### GREG BENFORD

Great issue! I liked it all, especially Eklund's effective 1960s fiction. I liked the multiverse slant—almost an SF story (if that's a compliment). He appropriately calls forth the

wonder and strange idealism of the '60s, and the slouching toward a future when Berkeley, known as "The Jewel of the Bay," became our present worker's paradise of eroded housing, the brisk Telegraph Avenue now a panhandlers' paradise, and no Cody's to browse in, alas. {"Eroded housing"? If anything, the housing stock is in much better shape than back in the '60s. If you doubt me, drive by Donaho's old Eighth Street digs in what used to be called the "Berkeley slums." Or Phil Dick's house on Francisco Street.}

Surely the most engrossing of all is Carol's mesmerizing account of her injury. I've broken maybe a dozen bones and none provoked mirth in me. Lord, hope nothing worse happens to the wracked bones. The pain problem is beyond description, but she tried.

The lettercol is endlessly interesting, but do you hear from Jean Young anymore? I always wanted to meet her and Andy. {Sadly, Jean passed away in 2007. I never met her, either, although we spoke on the phone a few times after Redd Boggs's death in '96. For an interesting memorial of her life that doesn't mention her fannish involvement, please see <http://finearts.luther.edu/artists/young.html>.} (84 Harvey Court, Irvine, CA 92612-4070)

## DAVID REDD

Thank you for *Trap Door* 26, which continues the nostalgic/elegiac tone of recent issues in a smooth and varied set of articles. Something for everyone, surely. Although I suppose Leigh Edmonds is right and this could be an old person's zine, since those youngsters over on digital genuinely think and write differently.

Carol's piece was the most vivid and immediate of course, inevitably colored for me by thoughts of how Meriel had been pulling herself out of a different problem until something totally unrelated suddenly hit her. And if we'd got her to hospital in time, how would she have coped with the aftermath, colostomy bag and wheelchair and the rest with no possibility of any slow-but-steady fight back from that? Hope all goes well from here on.

Nice to see Ron's words in print, and with Steve's so-appropriate heading. Thank you yet again to all concerned—I've sent a small donation to Candlelighters as per Andrew's wishes. Ron's hope of seeing his other Alan

Chance books appear obviously won't happen now. Neither, for similar Cosmos reasons, will my hope of getting Sean Wallace's signature to add to my copy of *Fantasy Annual 5*, signed by nearly everybody, Ron of course and even a tipped-in John Russell Fearn. Another signature-treasure involving Ron was my "Greetings from Con Jose 2002" signed by him, yourself, Billy Pettit and a quartet of other Truly Big BNFs. Those were the days.

The highlight of this issue for me as a part-valleys boy was naturally enough Dave Langford's "South Wales Alphabet." Now this I am qualified to LoC.

F for Fizz-Buzz: It was only Buzz in my day. Escalation into higher mathematics didn't happen at Glamorgan Polytechnic.

H for Headmaster: Yes, can confirm wearing of black academic gowns by staff at my own old school—my Dad was a chemistry master there until 1973. Wonder when the fashion died out?

M for Machen: Oh no, his "The Shining Pyramid" isn't a nasty story at all. Compared to modern thrillers/horror it's really rather sweet.

R for Rationing: You can't blame rationing for everything? Pre-war there were times when people put the old apple cores into the stew, because it was all food. Not quite Jack London's *People of the Abyss*, but similar situations. I have friends still appalled by others who throw away food nowadays. In fact given the awfulness of pre-1950 food (cf family warnings of green bacon at a certain Co-op) true Valleys hospitality was to open a fresh tin of Spam. (And not only is Vesta Beef Curry still on sale, so are its remarkably similar siblings Vesta Risotto, Vesta Paella and Vesta Chow Mein. Preparation of that last requires extra resources, i.e. chip oil for the crispy noodles, so counts as haute cuisine.)

S for Sheep: At Glamorgan Polytechnic, our sheep were cleverer than Merthyr's. Ours simply trod carefully across the grids, then wandered into the classrooms. (Which in those days included tin barns on the hillside; no doubt the sheep felt at home there even if two-legged students didn't.)

From all this, you see that in David Langford's account there is not a single word of humorous exaggeration; it's all simple straightforward reporting. Honest. I was there.

(30 Bulford Road, Johnston, Haverfordwest, Pembrookshire, Wales SA62 3EU, U.K.)

## JOHN PURCELL

Dave Langford's "South Wales Alphabet" was delightful, and the Dan Steffan title illo is choice, to say nothing of Dan's lettering. It takes a talented writer to create something like this that readers who know little about Dave, Wales, or fannish lore can enjoy. I have always been impressed by his ability to make me laugh with a funny comment about something I know nothing.

William Breiding's "The Larry Chronicles" is quite moving. This really shows up the need for why even men need a good close friend. Our society instills in us the need for a man to be self-sufficient and independent, having that macho "I'm good by myself" kind of attitude. There are certainly times I wish I had a close male friend in town to hang out with and do stuff. But my family and career take up most of my time; if I was on my own things would be very different, kind of like Larry's situation. It certainly sounds like William's "Larry" came out positive by the end, and so did William. This was a good, thoughtful article, Robert, and balanced out the other material in this issue. (3744 Marielene Circle, College Station, TX 77845)

## DAVE LANGFORD

Please convey to Carol that simply by =communicating= the word "scootch" she provided the key insight of which I made grateful use in my hour of need. Like a primitive native of planet Tharg to whom Terran space explorers—probably in violation of the Prime Directive—have slipped the secret of gunpowder, or Newton's Laws, or how to make soufflé. [\*]

[\*] H'mm. Is this a LoC? {Apparently so—here it is smack in the middle of the lettercol.} (94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 5AU, U.K.)

## BRAD FOSTER

What a nice and hefty package this new issue of *Trap Door* is. Certainly makes it worth the wait for each issue when there is so much to get into when it arrives. That's one of the things about most blogs, and several multiple-issue

fanzines on efanzines: it's easy to put out a "lot" of "issues" when you can do just a couple of pages. When someone says they've done over a hundred "issues" these days, they will often have actually put together far less material than you have in just your last couple of outings.

I liked your comment in your opening editorial about how using a Selectric can be considered old school this day. Got a Christmas letter from a cartoonist friend who said he felt like a historical re-enactor showing up at comic conventions with his small handmade mini-comics, setting up next to people with thick glossy POD pubs of their huge web-based color comics. (P. O. Box 165246, Irving, TX 75016)

## JOHN NIELSEN HALL

It's very hard to loc a fanzine that is so good, you can't think of an intelligent word to say. The quality of the writing through most of the ish is so fine that I can only gasp, gibbering in wonder, wishing mightily that I could have published just one of these fine articles. Now, don't ask me to choose which of them was the best—it could have been Carol Carr's, it could have been Dave Langford's, it could have been William Breiding. I just don't know.

William Breiding's story was particularly compelling. It's rare to read about friendships in this way, and I found it quite moving. I would have thought that so compartmentalized a relationship would of necessity been rather superficial, but this tale dispenses with such preconceptions and makes you realize that you can never predict how people will interact or how important the most chance encounter might be.

Dave's excellent piece made me laugh out loud. I particularly enjoyed the reminiscence concerning the Alcan plant. How seventies was it that not even an arrest by the bomb squad could ameliorate managerial suspicion that unauthorized time off had been arranged? (Coachman's Cottage, Marridge Hill, Ramsbury, Wilts. SN8 2HG, U.K.)

## MIKE GLICKSOHN

I read all but the lettercol of *Trap Door* #26 quite some time ago and (as Ted White used to do while mowing his lawn) I composed a brilliant insightful loc. Then, somehow, Plans A, B and C derailed me. So this isn't that loc but it is my way of telling you how honoured (keep

the "u"!)) I always feel when one of your splendid fanzines shows up in my mailbox. I was just sitting on my front porch waiting for Susan to come home from art supplies shopping so we could head downtown for my radiation and as I sipped my scotch (so it's 10 a.m. but who knows how many sips I might still have?) it crossed my mind that I was Best Man at Bob Shaw's wedding, Walt Willis called me "my friend," I spent two amazing afternoons at the house of the Hermit of Hagerstown, Bob Tucker acknowledged I was the first male he'd ever kissed, Bob Bloch was my friend, I've politely declined to get mellow with Ted White, Forry has/had every issue I ever published and welcomed me to his mansion three times, and the list could go on and on. So I realized the only prominent fan who is still with us that I've never met but would truly like to meet is you. So I thought I'd tell you that. *{Thanks, the feeling is 100% mutual.}* (508 Windermere Avenue, Toronto, Ont. M6S 3L6, Canada)

#### GREGG CALKINS

I think I told you this story before—you are old, father William—so quit reading now if you've heard it before. *{You haven't, and I raptly read on.}* It was spring on the Utah campus and a late and very wet snowfall had covered the lawns with six inches of snow. The warmer sidewalks were an inch or two deep in running water, the snow melting as fast as it landed. I didn't care because I always wore well-oiled engineer boots for just that reason, and with Levis which fit tightly around their tops to foil cold drafts up my legs, so the water could get ten inches deep before I worried. I went on my superior way, watching less-well-prepared mere mortals struggling helplessly with their problems, feeling well satisfied with myself.

I was headed for the parking lot and my Jeep, carrying my extremely heavy leather briefcase crammed full of books and papers and just about everything else I owned. I was all alone as I turned onto a flooded sidewalk headed into the parking lot, striding like a Colossus over the snowy landscape.

It wasn't a sidewalk, though, but a trench full of water, dug for some reason I know not. I stepped into it at full stride and one leg went into the frigid water all the way to my balls, the other

crumpled beneath me in the snow in impossible fashion. As I threw myself backwards to safety my arms swung up for counter balance and my briefcase went soaring into the air.

Stunned, still unsure as to what exactly had happened, I looked up just in time to see my briefcase now on a downward course...straight at my head!

I got my head turned to the side just barely far enough as the meteor became a meteorite and crashed to the snow against my right ear. Silence reigned, and there we were.

I was flat on my back in the wet snow, one leg and balls in freezing water and the other...well, who could feel it? I rolled my head to both sides, looking around, and there wasn't a soul in sight...nobody got to even witness my performance. I started thinking about how their faces would have looked and it was too much...I started laughing just at the thought and I was honestly amused, too. Could I but help but think of Shelley?

Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless  
things,  
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed.  
And on the pedestal these words appear:  
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:  
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"  
Nothing beside remains.

In my case it was a legless trunk half sunk and the sands were snow, but I couldn't help but reflect on how the mighty fallen. My incomparable 7-league engineer boots, once invincible as they carried me unthinking through the sodden mire, were now...well, one was fine, impenetrable, but the other held seemingly gallons of ice water and my sodden Levis were now glued tightly to it.

Somehow I got to my feet, recovered my briefcase, and staggered to my Jeep. Behind remained in the snow the marks of the mighty struggle of man versus nature, but not for long as the spring warmth carried even that much away. Nothing beside remains.

This was also brought to mind reading *Trap*

*Door #26* and Carol Carr's terrible aftermath of a relatively simple misstep. She writes entertainingly about an event which was not at all entertaining, but as Mencken pointed out you have to be able to laugh somehow at even seeming tragedies if you are going to survive without being miserable.

I thought it was kind of interesting how politics and Mencken and Shelley and falls and avoiding being miserable all sort of came together at the same time here, blending into a seamless whole.

I've been incredibly lucky—knock on wood, *hard!*—in my falls, the worst being down two flights of concrete steps here at home, sixteen steps, half of them airborne before I landed on the lower flight, then rolled head over heels to the bottom. I got up and climbed back up and went to bed. I fell three more times between then and morning, which got me sent to the hospital for observation for ten days, and I hurt like the dickens from where I had landed on the steps (some other nerves there are still numb), but the fact is that the hospital stay actually accomplished nothing except ruling out a head injury.

The cardiologist said I had a heart arrhythmia, Carol said I had too much to drink, and I don't agree with either one of them...but there you are, just the same. (He has an MD, at least.)

My worst injury was rupturing a disc in my lower back while playing softball. Yeah, isn't that classic? Me, the worst jock in the world, having an athletic injury? I mean, really, carpal tunnel and RMI are almost a given, but a softball injury? Come on.

That led to an operation and a steel back brace the doctor said I might have to wear the rest of my life. Not so, and a few years later I was skiing with a girlfriend who was far superior to me in ability...let's make that FAR superior...and I was trying to keep up with her while at the same time she was trying to avoid being seen by her friends even skiing with me. Charlotte simply floated effortlessly down the slopes, every move poised and in control, well aware that all her friends from her ex-husband's ski instructor days were watching her critically from the lodge, whereas my technique could better be described as a moderately-controlled avalanche.

As a result of skiing slopes which I had no

business even being on I took some truly impressive falls...it was normal for strangers to ski over to my body and ask me if they should call the Ski Patrol for help. No, I would tell them, but if you have any idea where my skis wound up I'd appreciate knowing.

Particularly vulnerable for lodge-viewer appreciation was the final slopes approaching the run-in to the lodge. Everyone funneled into those final areas so the snow was harder-packed and icier than out on the runs. I was wearing my new nylon ski outfit when I fell at the very top of the hill, a careless fall of no great importance, but I landed on my back, head downhill, sliding uncontrollably down the steep slope in my slick new outfit, like Teflon on the hard-packed snow. Totally unable to help myself I slid downhill several hundred feet until finally I dropped headfirst into the empty cone the wind often develops around the base of the trees, like a cue ball going willy-nilly into a pocket you didn't want.

The fall had been easy, so I didn't lose my skis...they were there, stuck tail-first into the snow at the top of the cone, about five feet above my head, which was lodged firmly against the trunk of the tree at the bottom. My bindings, naturally, had failed to release and reaching them would require a sit-up quite beyond my capabilities. Did you ever see a turtle, or maybe even a big beetle, lying helplessly on its back waving its limbs futilely in the air as it tried to turn over? There have to be people out there somewhere still laughing about seeing that, as hundreds of skiers passed me on their way to the lodge.

I sympathize with Carol because one of my worst injuries, for pain, involved the fall of only a couple of feet. I had unwisely positioned a ladder over a concrete floor figuring that I was working only a few steps up, no big deal, when it slid out from under me and my feet slipped through the rungs. I didn't even fall down...but it happened so quickly that I had no chance to flex my legs and landed hard on my heels, stiff-legged. I stood there, dazed, and my wife told me that she thought I ought to sit down for a few moments before I fell down. I broke one heel but there's not much you can do for that, only limp, and that's all that came of that except for a whole lot of discomfort.

The oddest fall I ever took in my life was

likewise unwitnessed. We were grubbing gooseberries in the hills near Sequoyah (or Sequoia) National Park when I was descending a road cut-bank with my mattock in my hand and suddenly caught a heel near the top of the slope. It launched me out into space about twelve feet above the hard gravel road, arms and legs spread like a flying squirrel. I vividly remember looking down and saying oh shit, now what do I do? Fortunately for me my automatic system took over. I flung the mattock off to one side and tucked and rolled as I hit, coming to my feet at the end of only one roll.

Again, stunned at what had happened so quickly—had it really?—I looked around for confirmation, but not a soul in sight. It wasn't until later when I reached for the aluminum canteen on my hip and discovered it had been flattened that I actually had any proof, even if only for myself, that it had not been imaginary. But I went in an instant from a really serious injury to something that left not a mark and nobody really even believed.

Fear of falling leads me to Hal Clement's wonderful *Mission of Gravity* but I'll have to leave that for your own discovery trip. (Apdo 97-4417, *La Fortuna de San Carlos, Alajuela, Costa Rica*)

## WILLIAM BREIDING

The other morning I was reading through *Fanthology '91* and noted that Bob Shaw's piece, "Play Mystic For Me," was reprinted from *Trap Door* #10. Going on the Bowers Theory of Loccing—that it's never too late—I'd like to share a few comments about his piece published nineteen years ago.

Even though I didn't know it at the time, Bob Shaw was sparking with synchronicity. At about the same time Bob was writing about his precognitive dreaming over the course of many years, I was having one after another of them from about 1989 to 1995. It all started with a dream in which Danielle—from whom I'd been separated for at least two years at the time—was getting married. A couple of days later Tina, then still a mutual friend, called to tell me that Danielle was getting married. After that I continued to have many precognitive dreams. Almost all of them were of little importance, just little scenarios from life. Like Bob, I was never able to share any of these in advance with

anyone. When I would exclaim in astonishment, "I had a dream about this!" whoever I was with might either nod and smile in a patronizing manner that indicated, "You're nuts!" or they would say, "Oh, do you have those, too? What exactly was it you dreamed?"

These dreams came to a climax when, one night, I dreamed vividly about a woman who I met at a party that I did not know: how she dressed (even her socks!), her hair color and style, and her manner. The next night I went to a party at my friend Peter's apartment, and as soon as I walked in I saw this woman I had dreamed about the night before, dressed exactly as I had seen her in my dream—and I just about fainted. The only problem was that in the dream this woman and I had immediately bonded and spent the entire dream talking and flirting. In real life she had just met and was getting to know another of Peter's friends. They skipped out of the party early. I couldn't help but wonder if I had gotten there a bit sooner it mightn't have been me she'd left with.

This incident threw me into a great turmoil. I didn't understand how precognitive dreams could exist. I ended up writing a long piece for my Apa-50 zine called "Psychic Or Just Plain Psycho?" where I chronicled my many instances of precognitive dreaming. And guess what? Very few members chose to comment about that zine.

Like Bob Shaw I am a complete atheist, have been since I was ten. I believe in nothing. No god, no life after death, no reincarnation, no ghosts, nothing. I also don't believe in time travel, which is sort of what precognitive dreaming is.

Although I'm disinclined to give credence to the supernatural, I have had experiences that have rattled me, been entirely unexplainable. I am not superstitious. I have moved into several apartments in which the previous tenants have died, with no problems. In one of my apartments in Tucson, a man had died of old age. A few months after I moved in, I was having an early morning shave, looking into the mirror as one does. The mirror was situated so you could see down the hall while shaving. I looked to the sink to rinse the razor of beard scrapings. When I looked back up into the mirror, I saw an old man looking back at me (no, it wasn't me!) from down the hallways. I looked at him for a second or two while he seemed to be backing away

down the hall. Startled, I turned around to ask who he was and why he was in my apartment. Of course, he wasn't there. I so firmly believed in what I saw that I searched the apartment and then went outside and looked around the apartment complex, but to no avail. This is just one incident among many similar to this that I've experienced throughout my life. While I don't believe in anything, I've had to wonder what these occurrences mean and why they happen, including precognitive dreaming. Do I have some strange slannish powers, tendrils waving, or am I just plain psycho? I fear I shall never know.

So much for a 19-year old loc! Thanks for listening. Perhaps Bob Shaw is even now setting out to play a trick upon me. I can feel him near. Death Shall Not Release Him! (P.O. Box 961, Dellslow, WV 26531)

## WE ALSO HEARD FROM:

**SHERYL BIRKHEAD, SOCORRO BURBEE, MELISSA CONWAY and RUTH JACKSON** (acknowledging my sending the issue to the Eaton Collection at UC Riverside), **RICHARD DENGROVE** ("I agree with your

comment to Randy Byer's letter that even though fanzine editors might want to save on printing, we shouldn't. Not if we want to give their zines a good reading. And our sensibilities a relaxed reading."), **ALISTAIR DURIE, KEN FAIG** ("I really enjoyed the Machen references in Dave Langford's South Wales alphabet. It was the highlight of the issue for me. I have that critical book on Machen by the schoolmaster that he references."), **MARLIN FRENZEL** (CoA: P.O. Box 122856, San Diego, CA 92112), **JOHN HERTZ, TIM MARION** ("I wanted to say how much I admired the artistic brilliance of your two main artists, Steve Stiles and Dan Steffan. However they don't really need me to tell them what great artists they are; they already know."), **BOB SILVERBERG** ("Carol's account of her tsuris manages a nice balance between funny and appalling"), **BRUCE TOWNLEY and HENRY WELCH** ("Langford's 'E for Experiments' was interesting. I still have some calcium carbide from my old-school caving days. Just add water and you get acetylene gas. It still works in my brass miner's lamp, but I generally use electric light these days.").



## Hubbard, continued:

Now the Hermit is offering the Monster an after-dinner cigar. Smoking is something new to the Monster. When the Hermit lights a match, the Monster recoils in fear: "No, no," the Hermit says, "fire is our friend," as he proceeds to set fire to the Monster's thumb: "Now don't inhale until the tip glows red."

The Monster: "Arrrrgh!"

Me: "Arrrrgh!"

Well, there's nothing much more to say. All my stents are firmly in place, and my chest pain is gone. I have to take Lipitor all the time now to keep my cholesterol level down and I carry nitroglycerin around with me just in case. I still walk a lot, but not for health reasons, because the damage has already been

done. One problem that I have to look out for, though, is something called *re-stentization*. That means that despite everything, the cholesterol could grow back over my stents, and then I'll be in even worse shape than before.

But looking back on it, I realize that what happened to me is nothing, nothing at all—just a bump in the road to Oblivion. Probably most of you reading this have had worse. I still sleep with a light on to keep away the ghouls, but they don't really bother me that much anymore. I guess my little brush with mortality has taken away some of their power.

—Gary Hubbard

# TRAPDOOR

