

triode quarterly

No. 23 Summer '76



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MONEY-SPINNER

Before buying LITTLE WILLY we had always been desperately poor, but three days after WILLY arrived, my husband was run over by an Austin 7 and I collected over £28 in life insurance. God Bless You, WILLY! - (Mrs.) Sue Uprising, Lionel Hampton, Bucks.

MIRACLE WORKER

The day WILLY arrived I started to turn a strange green colour, and last week I was signed up for an important part in a new Hammer picture. All I can say is, it's a miracle!
- (Rev.) Theobald Strangeways, Hume Cronyn, Herts.

MATCHMAKER

Yesterday, while leaping to my death from the 17th storey of the Shell-Mex Building, I thought with bitter irony of the Little Willy I always carry in my right garter. My next impression was of a resounding crash - I'd torn through the canopy of a 4.5 litre Mercedes convertible, and found myself sitting next to a visiting Iraqi oil-magnate. My dramatic arrival made him hastily apply his brakes, thus saving him from a probably fatal collision with a runaway road-roller. We started chatting, and I learned that he, too, is the proud possessor of a LITTLE WILLY. Well, you can guess the rest! - (Miss.) Sheila Blige, Basra.

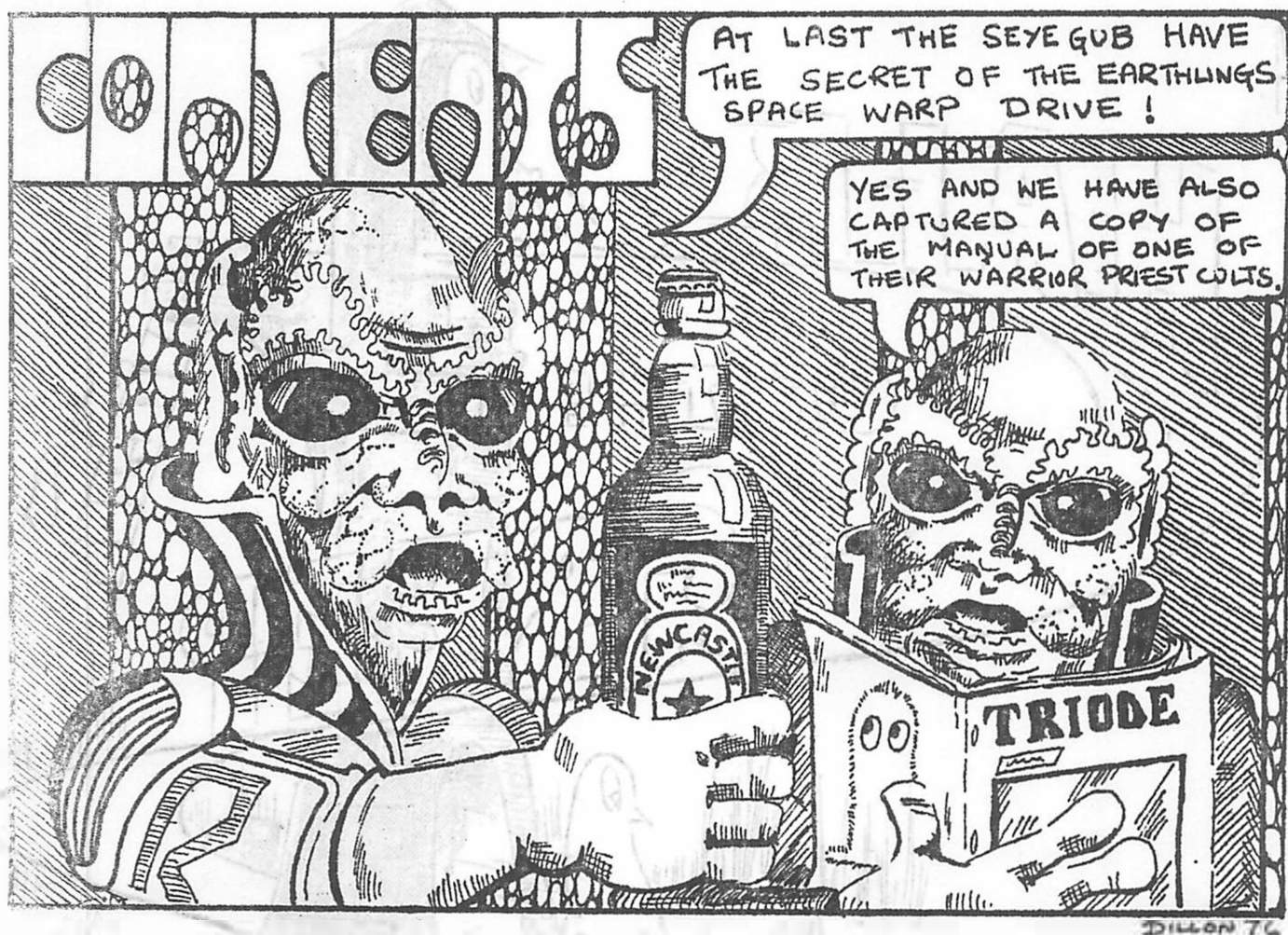
JOB-FINDER

Among the contents of a safe I cracked recently there happened to be a LITTLE WILLY. Although nicked and sent down for seven years, I have now been given a really smashing job in the prison library. It can't be just coincidence! - 587142, Parkhurst, I.o.W.

LITTLE WILLY - from Fine Covens and Herbalists Everywhere

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TRIODE is available for goodly letters-of-comment, Fine Fanzines, and money (50p or \$1.00 per issue) which should be sent to ERIC BENTCLIFFE, as should all material and artwork. Monies may also be handed (carefully) to our Canadian Rep: Mike Glicksohn (141 High Park Ave, Toronto, Ont. M6P 2S3.) or our American Rep: Terry Hughes (4739 Washington Blvd, Arlington, Va 22205.) either of whom will thereupon sing you the TRIODE THEME SONG IN WHICH YOU WILL JOIN.... Sorry, but Dancing Girls only come with subscriptions to these posh litho' fnz like PLAYBOY, MAYA, and OUTWORLDS!

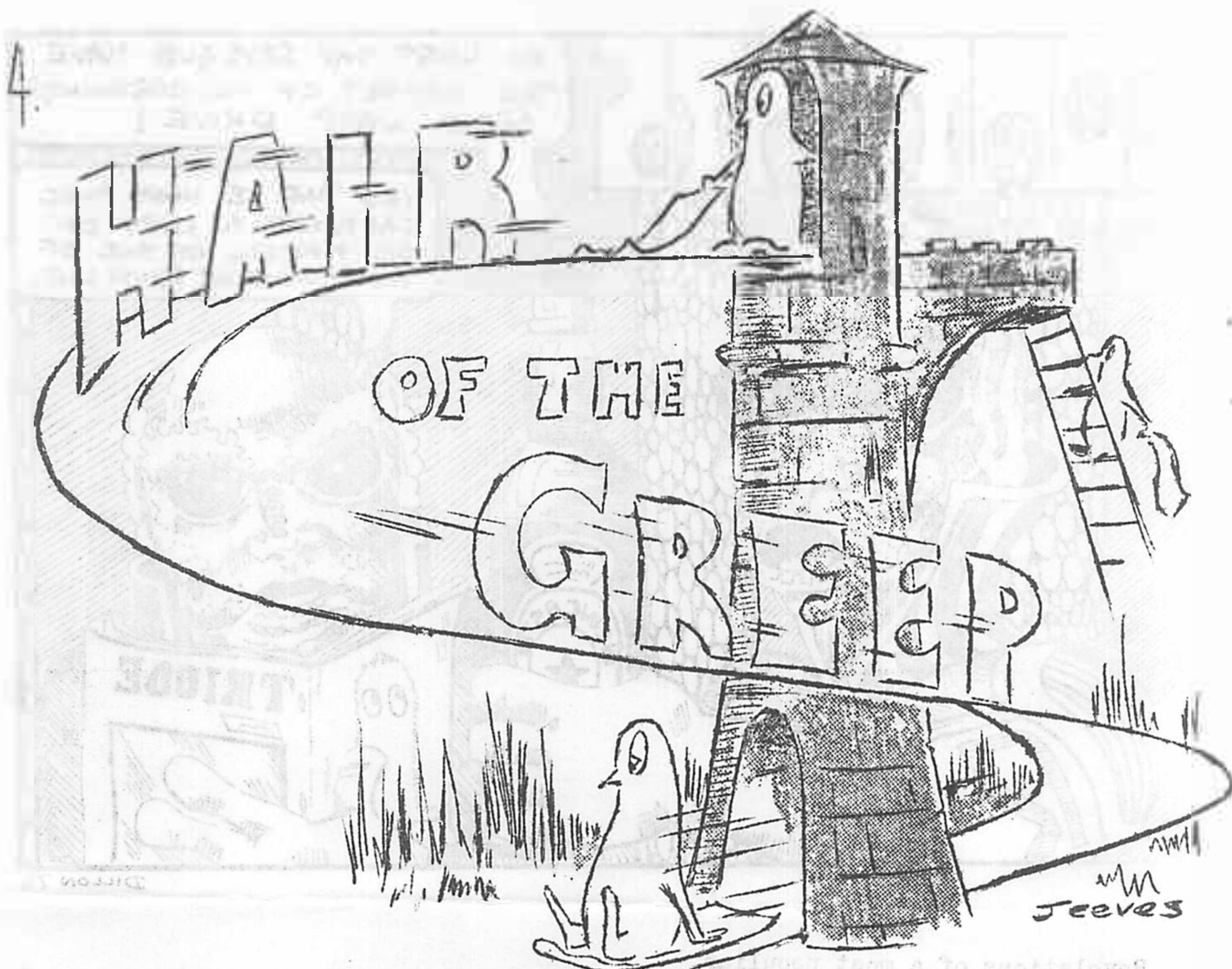


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Paul Dillon and Terry Jeeves.



IT MAKES YOU GO DEAF, you know.....

Well, it makes me go deaf, anyway...

Putting out a fanzine, I mean.....

I'd suffered from periodic bouts of left-ear slurry for some years until I realised the true cause of it. Before that, I thought it was the same thing you immediately thought of when you read that first line up there.....

It was whilst stencilling a John Berry article that realisation struck. NO John Berry doesn't cause deafness.... I'd been using a copious amount of corflu that night, due to imbibing a copious amount of alcohol the previous night; and the stereo suddenly went mono. So did the cat next door.

I thought back in time to previous attacks of similar nature. What had I been doing? Yes, that's right, using corflu on stencils. Corflu has a poignant bouquet which insinuates itself right up your nostrils, through the nasal passage and into the inner-ear stirring up dormant deposits of catarrh en route. It can cause deafness.

I'm sure its a valid theorem because not only do I suffer from periodic deafness, but so do other fen. Terry Jeeves, Norman Shorrocks, Don Malcolm, James White...and they've all been Corflu users.

Heavy conflu users. So was George (All the Way) Charters, and you've all seen those Atom cartoons of him and his car-trumpet.

Can this be, I wonder, why Dr. Rob Jackson went litho when he took over MAYA..... ?

THE SUPERBLOOPERMANCON.

I'm grateful to the committee of the 1976 Eastercon for being kind and thoughtful enough to hold the MANCON within easy driving distance of Holmes Chapel. It isn't often (due to the traditional Easter rush for Ivory) that I get to attend a convention in near-entirety. My cons, alas, are usually rushed one-day Sunday visits; and I'm not always in a fine tru-fannish mood when I make them after steaming down some Motor-way or other.

Yes, I'm grateful to the committee for holding the convention in a city easily accessible to Bentcliffe. But, I'm not too grateful about the way they managed to foul up (I've a gift for understatement) the Bentcliffe participation in that strange and esoteric thing called The Programme - a participation they'd requested.

Several weeks before the convention I had a 'phone call from someone purporting to be Peter Presford. " Hi, Eric," I quasiquote. " We are thinking of having a TAFF Panel at the Mancon, and we'd like you to be on it." ' Surely,' I replied, as long as it isn't on a Saturday when I won't be thereor too early on a Friday or Sunday, when the likewise applies.'

" No problem," said the voice above the roar of Manchester's ebb tide, " We haven't fixed any program timings yet."

Next day while selling a customer some LOC-IT (a newly marketed adhesive, would you believe!), a thought struck me. I hadn't done anything for TAFF for a long while; I'd write old disembodied Presford and tell him I'd even chair the panel, and organise it as well; should he so wish. So I wrote him and offered, and mentioned also that I'd had an idea for providing a little extra entertainment which would require a reel-to-reel tape recorder being present. And, that Sunday seemed like a Good Day, and was this okay ?

I got two affirmative replies. That old disembodied Chairman phoned again. " Yes, fine, I've seen Chuck and we've fixed it for Sunday at 3p.m." Followed by further amicable chatter. And I got a letter from Chuck Partington; I think I'll quote from it:-

"....I'm answering your letter instead of Peter, hope its ok. the reel-to-reel taper is laid on. No problem there. The Liverpool Tape sounds a good idea and should go over well. I know we can safely leave the TAFF Panel in your hands.

Now, the real reason for my replying to your letter. Would you be willing to perform the functions of Master of Ceremonies at a Welcome To Mancon 5 on the Friday night around 8.30 ? You know the type of thing, opening the convention with Pete Presford and introducing the attending pro's and BNF's. One thing that should make it easy, is we're having the event in the main bar so everyone should be present. I hope you'll say yes to this invitation, we would like to have you start the con off for us, Eric. Please say yes."

Somewhat bemused by all this attention, and basking in the glow of being wanted, I wrote back in the affirmative and, also, got off quick letters to possible TAFF Panelists. Seeking their participation. I also wrote myself a script for opening the Mancon in the bar...yes, they would all be there; all the BNF's and pro's, people I'd been wanting to insult for years (insult pleasantly, you understand). -

- No need for ad libs, they would be there. In the bar. Great idea of Chuck's. Peter's. Whoever's.

* * * * *

So I went to the convention....and arrived there about 2.30 on the Friday afternoon, and as I entered the bar-reception area Peter Weston greeted me.

" Hey, Eric, you know that TAFF Panel you asked me to be on; they just held it! And Roy Tackett wasn't here either, and nowone else except me...."

Over the years I've become acclimatised to the erratic behavior of convention committee's, and made due allowances. Few fans are natural born organisers and most cease to be slans when faced with the actual job of day to day convention running. But this was something new in my experience... could it be, I wondered, that this was some sort of initiation-test, and would I be later made a Hon. member of the MAD-Group ?

I sought the company of messrs Presford and Partington (carefully checking that they were the same Presford and Partington who had contacted me), received profuse apologies and vague explanations of how they weren't sure how it happened. " We can re-schedule it, Eric, if you like ?" said one. My initial reaction was to tell them not to bother, but Peter had mentioned that he had quite a lot of TAFF information to impart; so I asked when.

" How about 5 o'clock Sunday?". " Yes, okay," I rejoined. "Incidentally, what about the tape-recorder ?"

" Oh, well...we haven't got one yet, but we'll make sure there's one here for then...."

I made sure of this myself by asking Harry Nadler to bring one along; and started to circulate, relax and enjoy. There were friends old and new around, it was great to see them, drink with them and talk with them. The bar and reception area was well-placed for a fannish convention being sited at the bottom of a flight of stairs leading to the con-hall. It did lack certain civilised amenities...like carpets and comfortable chairs, but there were wall-to-wall fans and that's a quite acceptable substitute as far as I am concerned.

The next few hours passed very pleasantly. I can't recall how many fans I talked with, but among them were Harry & Irene Bell, Rob Jackson, Ian Maule, Peter Roberts, Bob Shaw, Roy Tackett (who looked nothing like Marshal McCloud!), Jan Finder, Sam & Mary Long, Bob and Barby Silverberg (who looked, somehow, even younger than they had in '65), The Mearae, and many others. I spent some of this time lining up a couple more nominaters for JEEVES FOR TAFF.

A few weeks before the convention Ed Connor and Lynn Hickman had written suggesting that it was time Terry stood for TAFF again, and would I sort out the U.K. end ? Write the Platform, proposition proposers ? The latter wasn't difficult at all due to Terry's popularity; Chris Fowler acceded readily, and so did Jan Howard Finder - being highly amused that he could be a European nominater.

Whilst I'd been indulging in traditional fanac certain brave individuals had been indulging in Blood Sports. RatFan Dynamo had challenged the Gannet Flyers to a soccer match; a most unusual occurence for fandom in that its rare for any fan to even go outdoors during a convention let alone disport themselves on any field of play. However, they had Bob Shaw as referee, so perhaps it would be alright... The result of the game (I learned later - I didn't go near the match in case the con-com asked me to play!) was a two-all draw, but since it was later discovered that BoSh thought he was playing centre-forward for the Gannet's -

- and Rob Jackson claimed that the first Ratfan goal was scored before Harry Bell had finished drawing the goal-posts; the scoreline is still in some dispute!

I think it was after I'd been out for a meal with Terry & Valerio Jeeves that Walt Willis arrived. There'd been rumours for some time that he would be coming to the convention, but since I knew that James & Peggy White had been trying to inveigle him back into con-going, unsuccessfully, for quite some time; it was a very pleasant surprise to see him again. We found a quiet corner and talked, quite seriously (for once) about fandom and what it had done for the people who had discovered it. How it had helped many fen of our acquaintance learn to communicate - several of whom would otherwise have led lonely and introverted lives.

Yes, we talked quite seriously, but Walt hadn't changed...later on during the convention I ate the Banquet with him, James, Peggy, Don Malcolm...and the puns started to flow. The starters were some species of seafood, and Walt accused James of being 'A Prawnbroker'. As I remarked at the time, he's beyond redemption!

I think I was chatting with the Gannet's when nemesis struck again. For nemesis, read 'P. Presford'.

"Er, Eric, I think we'll have to do the introductions in the con-hall, there are too many people in the bar."

Momentarily stunned by this strange logical extrapolation, I blenched visibly (so I'm told) and replied to the effect that surely this was the whole idea of having the intro-session in the bar - that everyone would be there....and couldn't a portable mike and amplifier be brought down onto the stair-landing? This was roughly head-high to those at the bar and ideal. Exit, Peter P.

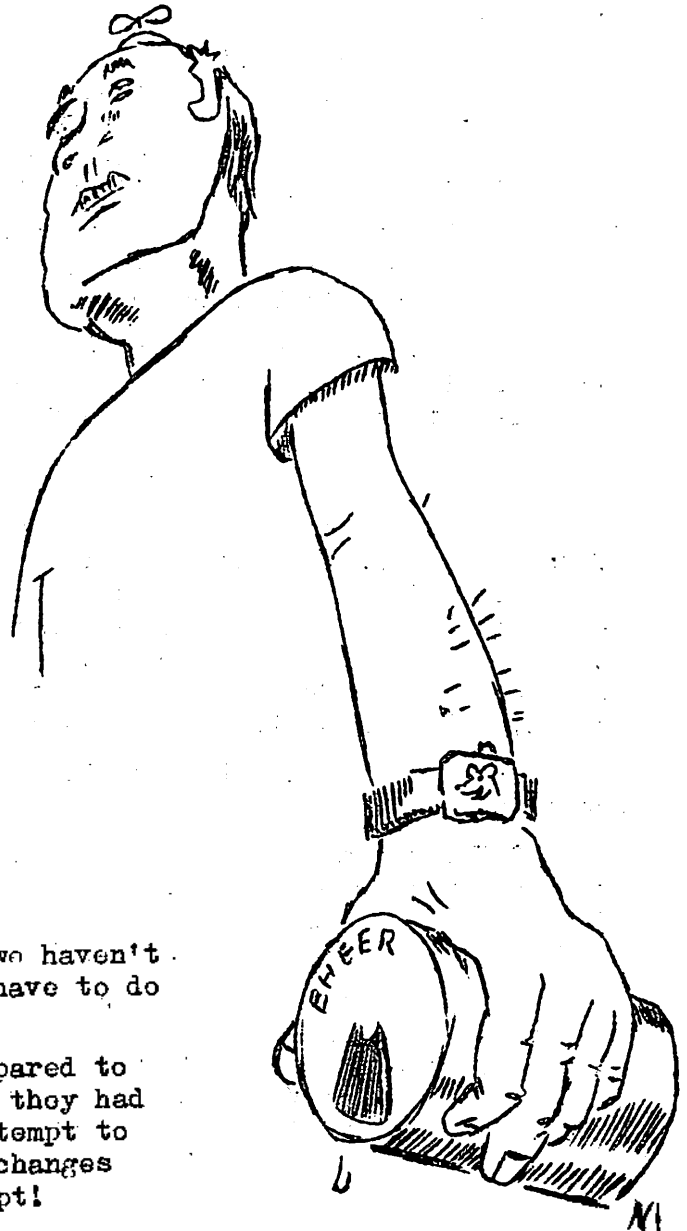
Entrance, Peter P. "Sorry, Eric, we haven't got any portable p.a. equipment. We'll have to do the intro's in the con-hall..."

Ah well, if the committee were prepared to tear up the program and start again (as they had already done several times), and even attempt to tear up the blackboard on which program-changes were noted, who was I to stick to a script!

Which should have gone something like this....

"Good Evening, the Mancon Committee (who wish to remain anonymous) asked me to come up here and introduce a few notables....you know who the notables are, don't you? They are the ones nearest the bar. Hi, Bob."

Over the years I've sat and stood through quite a number of convention intro' sessions....some good, some bad - these were the ones where the con-chairman mouthed unintelligibly into the mike and three people stood up! If you all keep fairly stationery I shouldn't have to use that gambit. Anyway, I thought I'd try something a little different, I don't see why I should do all the work while you lot sit around swilling bheer -



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- bheer and creme de menthe, that is.... Oh yes, someone down there does drink creme de menthe, and he's no less than a Guest of Honour. I asked him why he was drinking the stuff - and he said it was because he was DYING INSIDE!

Fans...meet Robert Silverberg. Writer and Fan.

Right, got the idea? I'm going to give you a few clues as to who is here and when I raise my glass (which, hopefully, the convention committee will keep filling) ((They didn't!)), you call out their names. Naturally, anyone who fails to understand the clues is a fake-fan. Let's start with a nice easy one....

It's only fiction that he has a Slow Glass...yes, Bob Shaw.

And even easier: He didn't bring his island with him! Right, Michael G. Coney.

You know The Committee (Ghod Bless Them - nowone else will...) gave me a list of people I should introduce. Ah yes, here it is (pulls out Manchester bus ticket - pauses hopefully, again, for laughter)....but I think they've made an error or two. I mean, I know its Primary Election time in the USA - and isn't it a strange coincidence that we get more American fans over here in primary-years...but, can this be right? Gerald Ford ???

Let's try a few more clues. I don't personally believe it, but they said she was a Wrinkled Shrew....yes, Pat Charnock.

Ah yes, and someone has just arrived who I'm delighted to introduce... It's said that his father was a printer, and he reverted to type....yes, a real blast from the past from Belfast...Walter A. Willis. "

* * * * *

Okay, I know its corny, but you can't be over subtle when the majority of the people present aren't likely to understand any really wild and wonderfully esoteric faanish references. And I think it would have gone down quite well if the intro's had taken place in the bar. As was, I went and sat on the podium with Pete Presford and tried to introduce a few of the people as they wandered up from the bar. Pete was nervous, and I was put out of my stride, but perhaps it went no worse than most con-intro sessions.

And I did manage to work in one gag I'd been saving for just such an occasion.

" You remember KING KONG? The original King Kong? And the scene where a few intrepid airmen tried to save the Empire State Building from the mighty monster? I'd like to introduce you now to one of those airmen who, trufan, that he is, failed.....will DAVID A. KYLE, please stand up!"

Standing at the bat later in the evening and drinking a medicinal brandy. Rob Jackson remarked that he wished he had the nerve to go and sit in front of a crowd of people and talk at them. Since the remark was made in Rob's best ~~deadpan~~ deadpan manner, I'm not sure if he was serious or not. However, if I'd known of the fact that I'd have to leave the bar (earlier) to do the intro's, I most likely wouldn't have had the nerve either.

Regrettably, I had to leave fairly early on the Friday evening...Saturday was a working day for me. It was damned difficult to tear myself away from the convivial con-atmosphere, but, eventually, I made it.

* * * * *

It was when I returned to the convention, early Saturday evening, that I noticed a unique phenomenon amongst the hardened convention attendees - they were all still in the same positions as they'd been in some eight hours previously. Those at the bar, anyway, -

- and only the fact that the level of their glasses had changed slightly denoted that any time had passed. This led, after a great deal of deep ~~drinking~~ thinking, to my developing the theory of the Owens Park Stasis - naturally, I had to make frequent visits to the area of the bar to check my research, but I'm sure that my theory will be of benefit to future convention organisers and attendees...so it was worth it. The OPS seemed to affect the better half (1) of British Fandom ably assisted by visiting USA fans. The exact cause may never be known, but I suspect that it was due in no small part to the uniquely grotty setting of the affair (we'll take certain legendary thirsts as a causatory factor), and to the wide dispersal of most facilities. It was a long walk to the dorms in which most fans rooms were, it was also upstairs to the con-hall and nowone could be sure what program item could be on even if they made the ascent despite the committee's frantic efforts to update the notice-board - they couldn't even be sure if Sam Moskowitz had finished talking even (it was quite noisy in the bar), in fact several of the fans affected by the stasis were under the impression that his talk started sometime on Friday afternoon and ended the following Tuesday - which illustrates the collapse of linear-time within the Stasis quite admirably, I think.

When I have time, and because I think highly of fandom, I intend to drive down to Owens Park to make sure that nowone is still there, lost in a timeless haze and unaware that the convention is over...

* * * * *

Beryl and I wandered around talking to people we knew, and others we hadn't until it was time for Bob Shaw's speech - the high-spot of all recent British conventions. And Bob didn't let us down; his speech entitled THE RETURN OF THE BACKYARD SPACESHIP was typical BoSh, just great. and I could only bemoan the fact that Rob Jackson had already asked to print it in MAYA, before I asked for TRIODE. Bob developed the theme of a new generation of space-craft powered by the waste products of hardened drinkers - this will mean that fen, at last, can go out into space - each spaceship will contain a public house and a number of toilets....or was it one toilet and a number of Public Houses. I forget, but either way, it was a brilliant idea. However, as I remarked at the time, I'm not sure that it hasn't already been used by some other galactic-minded race for it's the best possible explanation I've come across for The Doppler Effect!

We stayed with the program for the annual presentation of the Delta Film Award to Terry Jeeves - for yet another animated epic of the Spaceways (3001. A Space Oddity.). And then Beryl suggested what I hoped she'd suggest... that I stay on at the con whilst she drove home to look after Lindsey and the tv. With great alacrity I dashed towards reception, met Pete Presford en route and enquired of him if there were any rooms left? There weren't, but he offered to move the Presford Kinder into his and Anita's room if I couldn't find anywhere to sleep...which was nice. However, it seemed that

the Jeeves' and it so happened that I did have a sleeping-bag in the car (never travel without one...honest!), which was fortunate as there was no bed in the room. And, Tom Perry was going home Sunday, and I could then have his room. Fine.

I haven't mentioned Tom before; he's a very pleasant fan from Nebraska working over here for his company, and we'd got in touch through Terry Hughes ~~NOTA~~. You've heard of Terry Hughes, I'm sure -



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- he's the one who has Rent-A-Fan working for him over here, going round door-to-door seeking out old fans who thought they were secure in their gaffiation. (Hi, Walt...Chuck...) Tom and I had been trying to meet since the first day of the convention; but I didn't know what he looked like, and he didn't know what I resembled. A short time before Beryl's Kind Thought, Walt had introduced us. Tom's a welcome addition to British fandom.

* * * * *

By now we'd been invited to several room-parties so pausing only to check the state of the Stasis (no obvious signs of it being affected by any external stimuli, so far), we headed for the Tower Block in which most of the parties were to be held. This was an eighteen story building and parties were scheduled for almost all floors except the very top...which was too vertigo... I think it was the Eighth where we found the Freeman/Kyle Balcony Buffet, and an excellent first choice since we were hungry. Met Joe Green there, author, and host of many Kennedy Launch Parties; and a crowd of other pleasant people. We sat and talked until it was time for Beryl to drive off into the wide black yonder...hopefully...in the direction of Holmes Chapel - hopefully, because whilst she is a good driver she does not have any kind of built-in direction sense.

After Beryl had left, I returned to the Tower Block and enjoyed a very pleasant succession of parties. The Gannet Floor was well attended and I stayed quite a while talking with Harry, Irene, Rob, and Ian Williams - people I'd never really had the chance to talk with before even though I knew them through letter and fnz, due to my lack of con-going time. Harry'd brought along a cover-sketch for a future issue of TRIODE which I'm eager to see in its finished state. Sometime during that same evening I also finally made contact with Paul Dillon who had sent along the artwork you see in this issue. Just prior to the convention I'd written him after seeing his work in VECTOR, and being impressed asked him to illo for Triode. His work reminds me a great deal of that which Eddie Jones used to contribute in days gone by, and I think Paul has a great potential. As, indeed, has Harry Bell.

After a while I went in search of the Shorrocks Brag School, but found Norman indulging in yet another new gambit which involved placing wild-cards in each of the lifts - these would only count when both lifts arrived at the same floor simultaneously as the players. did. Unfortunately, one of the lifts broke down before a game could be completed... Which, perhaps, was a good thing for the Brag-Schools leg muscles. Don't think it will catch on, Norman, Good Try though.

The last abortive attempt to gain a wild-card had got me to the floor where a group of Swedish fans were throwing a swinging, wide-open affair that was very well attended. They had some excellent vodka and a fine conglomeration of fans, and I stayed there until I just had to get some sleep.

* * * * *

The coughing of the Manchester sparrows woke me fairly early on the Sunday morning: I'd only had four hours sleep but I was hungry for food, and for fannish company. A kind green-faced fan had gifted me with his breakfast-voucher the night before so I was able to satisfy the first need quite easily. And I hadn't seen the art-show yet, or the huckster-room....so after a meal of what appeared to be congealed-greeps I sought these places. Some nice artwork on show, but the rooms used for this were small and the art was not displayed to best advantage. The security-team (of Anita Presford and Cas Skelton) though, were the nicest I've yet encountered!

The book-dealers had a better room, and Ken Slater, Rog Peyton, Ron Bennett, and others had a wide and interesting range of merchandise on offer. Whilst I was counting my cheque-stubs I overheard some fan ask Ron if he had a list; he received a typical Bennett reply. "Yes, I always have one after two days at a convention!"

~~Which responses suggested me to hurriedly...~~ Yes, this morning that the 'Star Trek Bloopers' film was to be shown (I'm possibly the only fan who hasn't seen this....the very best...ST Episode), after an introduction by Harry Harrison. There might be a chance that this program item could come off as planned. And, By Ghu, it nearly did; Harry was there in fine voice, discoursing on how he'd been paid to attend a Star Trek convention and he entertained all but a few itinerant ST fans....but, someone had 'lost' the Bloopers film!

The weather during the Eastercon was pleasantly mild and it is quite possible that more fans were exposed to atmosphere during that convention than at any previous U.K. con...apart from those under Stasis, of course. The layout of the university campus entailed anyone not wishing to spend the whole con in either the bar or the con-hall making frequent trips outdoors en route to their accomodation. Some of us discovered the atmosphere was breathable, and lingered on the seats outdoors. I seemed to spend most of Sunday afternoon just sitting and talking to those who passed by, and there was a fairly constant parade of fans as Sam Moskowitz now had his second-wind.

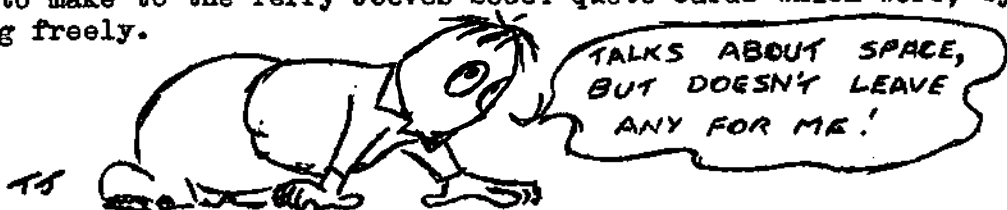
I was also wondering what new surprise the committee had in store for me at TAFF Panel Time. I'd alerted the other members of the panel to the new time; Roy Tackett, Peter Weston, Eddie Jones, Ron Bennett, and Walter Willis - Walt had kindly agreed to sit in Ken Bulmer's seat, Ken being busy moving house and collection that weekend. And Harry Nadler had brought his tape-recorder along. Could anything go wrong?

We were due to go on after the pro' author panel on 'EMERGING THEMES', and did. Unfortunately, though, we lost a large portion of the audience into Stasis as a result of thirsts inspired by mentions of dry and dusty worlds... Which was a pity, I think, for the TAFF Panel could have been quite a fannish high-spot with the talking-talent I'd assembled...if we'd had a bigger audience to play to. The tape I played - one made by the Liverpool Group back in '60 when I had the honour of winning TAFF, and a quite hilarious affair - got a good reception, and the audience we-had did seem to enjoy what we had to say. If the committee had kept the panel at the arranged time of three o' clock it would have been better; for TAFF and for us, the panelists.

Coincidentally, the first fanzine I received aftercon, SWOON from the Katz Kombine, had Harry Warner reminiscing therein on this particular tape. Credited, alas, wrongly to the Cheltenham Group, but since both groups had made tapes to celebrate my leaving the country and I'd later dubbed them both onto a tape for Harry, his error was an easily made one.

With the TAFF Panel over my involvement in anything to do with the program ended (so I thought at the time, anyway), and I spent the rest of the day relaxing and talking. And eating...the Banquet was surprisingly edible, and I had a pleasant suprise when Peter Weston presented the former TAFF Delegates present with an especial certificate he'd had printed up. A nice gesture, and good publicity for TAFF.

My near neighbours at the Banquet were James and Walt, Al Fitzpatrick, and Carel Thole, Dutch-born artist resident in Milan. I hadn't met Carel before, but we made up for this lack by talking lengthily both during and after the meal. A very interesting character, and he had some excellent additions to make to the Terry Jeeves SOGGY quote-cards which were, by now, circulating freely.



After the meal I was talking in the bar with Harry Harrison, Don Malcolm and Dave Kyle when Harry Nadler rushed up. "We want you to come and judge the Fancy Dress....it's mainly naked girls..." he said. I hastened back to the con-hall. I had to hasten otherwise Harry and Dave would have tromped over me... I'd made a mental resolve not to get involved with any more program items, but naked-girls was different!

Guess who the first contestant was? Yeah, Brian Burgess....

The Panel of Judges were those worthies already mentioned plus this years Doc' Weir Award Winner, Ina Shorrock; and we almost outnumbered the competitors. Not the committee's fault this time, I think, they hadn't scheduled a fancy-dress, but someone said there were lots of people who had brought costumes and they bowed to 'popular' demand. The Panel had seven prizes to give, and I think there were nine contestants, so we had to ham it up....Brian Burgess got an award for Perseverance, and the other awards were of a similar nature. And there weren't any naked-girls.

The rest of the convention seems to have passed into memory without causing any serious engrams; I think it was that same evening I whupped Gannet Fandom at Shove-h'apenny, and sometime during it I also got to meet Greg Pickersgill and LeRoy Kettle. I didn't get to talk with them at length, as I would have liked to, but this is a problem at all conventions - you never do get to talk with everyone you intend to.

That was my SuperBlooerManCon.....so how was yours?

* * * * *

This issue hasn't gone quite as planned (do they ever?), there should have been an article by DAVE LOCK herein, and some fine artwork by Alan Hunter; but I overun on my Mancon writings and Tom Perry sent in an excellent topical piece. So, my apologies to Dave and Alan, their items will appear next issue together with an article by Harry Warner entitled THE TALL TALES OF HOFFMAN. What else, remains to be seen, but I do have vague thoughts on publishing a series of pieces on THE WORST IN SF. Good sf isn't always particularly fannish, but the worst surely is....and I'd like material that relates to this idea.

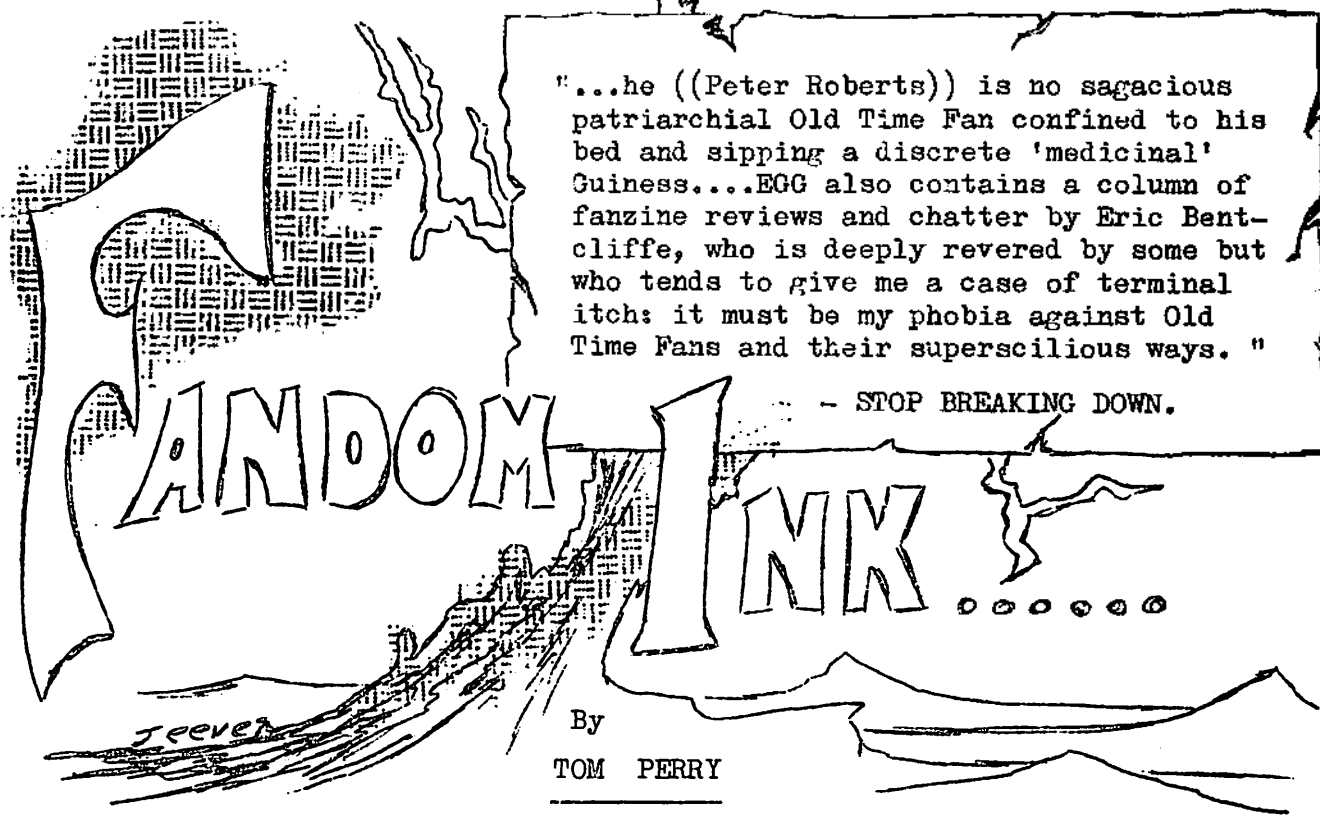
Your nominations for the VARGO award, for the most inept sf of 1975. is also invited. Any volunteers to design the trophy?

Eric Bentcliffe.

GESUNDHEIT

"...Alaric (The Goth) still wanted a recognised position within the (Roman) Empire's borders. As hunger began to assail the besieged city of Rome, he let it be known that a two-hundred-mile stretch of territory between Venetia and the Danube would suit him admirably; and that if the supreme command of the Imperial Army were available he would consider the post favourably. He was asking too much. Neither Honorious in Ravenna nor the Senate in Rome would have it. And, Alaric good-naturedly settled for a substantial amount of money, a quantity of silk and leather, and three-thousand pounds of pepper. Burdened by those goods and sneezing intermittently, the barbarian hordes withdrew towards the north!"

-: From ROMAN GO HOME by Adam Fergusson, a Bentcliffe
Recommended read.



"...he ((Peter Roberts)) is no sagacious patriarchial Old Time Fan confined to his bed and sipping a discrete 'medicinal' Guinness....EGG also contains a column of fanzine reviews and chatter by Eric Bentcliffe, who is deeply revered by some but who tends to give me a case of terminal itch: it must be my phobia against Old Time Fans and their superscilious ways. "

- STOP BREAKING DOWN.

By
TOM PERRY

As if at a secret signal, the oldtime fans left the lounge at Owens Park and disappeared into the night, bound for a top-secret rendezvous. The room of younger fans left behind scarcely noticed their departure, but one continued topic of conversation was speculation as to why so many of their elders had emerged from the woodwork at this particular time. First Fandom was represented as never before, and even the venerable fan master was present.

At their meeting high in the Tower, the traditional rituals were quickly dispensed with so that the business at hand could be settled. With what amounted to mad haste by their elongated time scale, fandom's immortals turned to calm the crisis that had brought them out of the recesses of fanhistory. Owing to the erratic behavior of the senior elder's hearind-aid, this issue - nothing less than the outbreak of fannish epidemic - was given the name of Pickledill's Itch.

I was there only as an observer, of course, being much too young to voice an opinion in such august company. Compared to these, even a mature fan like myself is only an egg. In the event I found myself dozing off as the debate raged around me. From time to time I stirred uneasily as an ear-trumpet crashed resoundingly to the floor or a local dispute was settled with a clash of crutches.

After a long time - how long is impossible to say - I was shaken rudely awake. I found myself confronted by three of the biggest of big name fans. I had thought that two of them were dead, and decided as I spoke with them that they had merely been the victims of fannish death hoaxes. Now...I'm not so sure. I didn't use to believe in ghosts. But how can one deny the evidence of one's eyes?

But never mind that. As I emerged from sleep, the leader intoned: " You have been chosen."

" Chosen ?" I mumbled. " Chosen for what ?"

" To carry the message to fandom. To inform...to warn...to spread the word."

I must have looked sceptical, for one of the oldfan's lieutenants chimed in: " This is of prime importance, you know. All fandom could be plunged into war."

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"It sounds pretty sercon to me," I said. "Besides, I don't want to get into a fued. To me fandom is just a goddam hobby."

I turned back to the elder of the three. I looked him straight in the eye, intending to turn down this unwanted assignment. Instead I found myself staring into eyes whose depths were measured in light-years...eyes like black holes in space...eyes that had seen only Ghu knows what quantity of suffering and agony, fakefans and fanzines, neo's and pro's, fueds and flatbeds. Behind those eyes was a mind that could recall annishes without number, crudzines beyond counting. It remembered the first word on page 28, had read PLOY No.1, had lived through the April 31st OMPA deadline, had known Degler, fought in the 3C's staple wars, battled in the L.A. Fueds. It had watched fandom coalesce from interstellar dust...it went all the way back to the big bang which had resulted in the conception of Hugo Gernsback. Warner himself was young compared with this fannish veteran.

Such eyes do not brook disagreement. My flat refusal died unspoken. Instead I managed to stutter: "Besides, I don't know this story you want me to tell...I am only an egg."

"You shall," intoned the elder. "Sleep."

At once I plunged back into slumber. When I awoke, the sun was shining and the room was empty. I looked around, uncertain of my whereabouts. Had it all been a dream? How many pints of bitter had I downed? Have to lay off the stuff, I thought blearily.

But then, suddenly, I realized that my final, dreamless sleep had not been entirely uneventful. Somehow I had gained the knowledge that the elder had predicted I would. I now knew the story that he had wanted me to tell, the message that I was to carry. Nor was there any question of failing to do it.

The mind implant caused me to stagger straight to a typer....

* * * * *

In California, during the 1950's, it was said there were 500 BNFs. One of these was a clever young extrovert named Remizrov. He discovered fandom in college, and to him it seemed in no way different from other social activities like football or panty raids. He pubbed a bad first issue, a mediocre second, and then a stream of gradually improving issues culminating in his thousand-page annish, which contained a contribution or letter by every fan then active. The name of his fanzine was OBstruct.

Remizrov dropped out of fandom about the same time he graduated from college. Casting about for a way to make money, his eye lit on the oldsters that make California the capital of the shuffleboard world and the mecca of conservative politicians. Others were selling these oldsters high-rise apartments, kitty-cat glasses, and bermuda-shorts, all of which they bought eagerly to quell their loneliness. Remizrov decided to sell them something more basic. Fandom itself.

Very quickly, even for California, he had set up his corporation - Fandom Inc. - and had scores of bright young salesmen combing the high-rises, selling Fanpak.

A Stage One Fanpak consisted of a portable typewriter, 500 sheets of typing paper, ten SF paperbacks, and 20 current fanzines. A form letter of comment was provided, and the prospective purchaser was promised that his or her solitude was at an end. Re-type the form letter of comment, filling in the blanks from a special kit of colour-coded phrases - or make up your own letter if you were the creative type, using the optional Fanlex to look up fannish words. Within weeks you could forget all about that ingrate son who never writes to you - your mailbox would be filled with fanzines and letters. No need to like or even to read science fiction, ma'am.

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- Discuss politics, recipes, current events - that's what everyone else does. Now, if you'll just sign right here.....

As the turnover outgrew Remizrov's supply of fanzines, he set a battery of secretaries to transcribing authentic fanzines to stencil, after which he could produce as many copies as he needed on the corporate Gestetner. One snag was copying the style of fannish artwork prevalent in those bygone days; top artists from Hollywood and New York couldn't manage it. This corporate crisis was overcome when a talent search discovered a kindergarten of retarded spastics in Anaheim, and from then on the Fanzine Repro' Dept. had clear sailing.

In the next phase the sales force of Fandom Inc hit the high-rises with the Stage Two Fanpac. It included all the requirements for pubbing a fanzine - ABDick mimeo, lettering guides, reams of paper, quires of stencils, a mailing list, a book of sure-fire jokes. For an extra outlay of cash, a Rex Rotary or Gestetner could be substituted for the ABDick, and if you could prove you were starving on welfare, the salesman could at his option let you step down to a hekto. The options of going photo-offset or farming out the chore of writing, editing, cranking and collating were reserved for the rich - or (in practice since an oldster that well heeled would have his own retinue of prospective heirs in constant attendance) for those willing to transfer their portfolio or condominium to Fandom Inc.

Fandom was delighted at first at the surge in its ranks, and thoughtful articles were written and published detailing how the atomic-bomb and the V-2 rocket had spurred this increase in fanac. The bumbling efforts of the crops of neo's were regarded with tolerance; in a few months they would find their feet and become an asset to fandom.

But the months passed. The hoards of new fans continued to swell. Misuse of the sacred fannish neologisms continued unabated. The letters of comment from the new wave of fans showed a certain sameness, as did their fnz (which of course were modelled on a form fanzine with colour-coded inserts that was an option with the Stage Two Fanpac). The only spark of originality they possessed seemed to lie in their defense of the rightist politicians and traditional religion. God even found his way into Hyphen before being exorcised after one issue.

Fannish organizations were swamped with new members. When Remizrov's oldsters took over the N3F, no one noticed; but when they attained a majority in LASFS and voted that its SF collection be sold to finance a shuffleboard court, it was clear something was wrong. And when their English counterparts (for Fandom Inc was now International) sold the Shorrock Still to turn LiG into a Croquet Club, it was obvious that action was imperative.

The Grand Council of fandom moved swiftly. Its members travelled incognito to a secret meeting place in upper New York State. The debate was fierce but the outcome was never in doubt. Perhaps the proposed action reeked of something akin to racism or sexism - "ageism," one fannish elder termed it - but there was no choice: the survival of fandom was at stake.

The first stage of the operation went off without a hitch. As usual fandom moved in unison with smooth precision to attain its goal. In concept it was simplicity. Fandom was split horizontally and the members of Remizrov fandom propelled into an alternate universe. To members of that fandom, real fans seemed to go gafia, or die, or retire to that strange twilight area 'The Apa'. (Remizrov had never become a member of FAPA and so this area of fandom was uncharted territory for him and his customers.) COAs were routed into the offices of Fandom Inc by trufannish agents, and the corporation obliged by passing the new addresses on to its clients as part of its monthly fanac service. The new addresses routed the letters and fanzines of Remizrov's customers to abandoned warehouses or vacant lots.

A few Californian real-fans had to be rescued by Operation Hoax. One single copy of a newszine went to the offices of Fandom Inc -

- announcing that each of these prominent fans had been a hoax propagated by some other fan now gafia or deceased. Puzzled oldsters questioned their Fandom Inc salesman on his monthly rounds (for paper, mimeo ink, and staples had now become an essential), only to be assured that such hoaxes were quite a normal part of jolly fannish activity. Thereafter popular demand required Fandom Inc to market a Hoaxpac, and Remizrov, inspired, soon followed it up with a Feudpac.

The second-stage of Operation Eufanasia was the controversial one. Some means had to be found to route neofans to the true fandom and divert them from the commercial one. The means chosen was harsh but successful. The ink of sf magazines and books was impregnated with a little known drug which caused revulsion against the symptoms of age. The ink of fanzines put out by true-fandom was impregnated with the antidote. Fandom Inc ink, lacking this ingredient, resulted in the neofan who made contact with that fandom being propelled away from it at great speed, and coming to rest in Trufandom. The measure was harsh but effective. There were a few unfortunate side-effects - for instance, the numbers of young people who read sf but never found fandom, thus causing the Generation Gap of the 60's - but these were a small price to pay for the preservation of fandom.

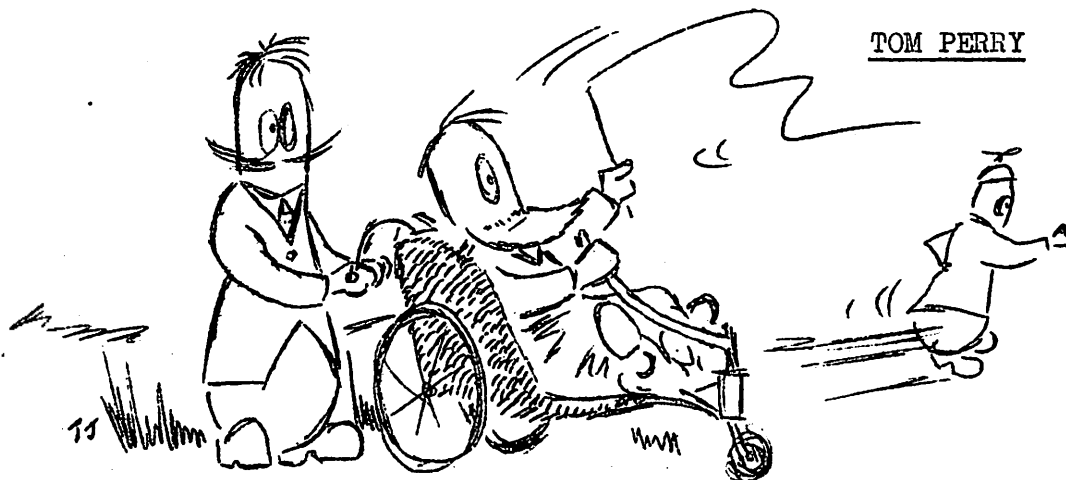
Within a few years the crisis was over. Remizrov fandom still continues to this day, but all connection with science-fiction has long been forgotten and its fanzines are indistinguishable from mimeographed Christmas letters - indeed, they are mimeographed Christmas Letters. Fandom Inc branched out, went public, became an international conglomerate, had its assets stripped after a hard-fought takeover raid, and then was put through Title 13 bankruptcy during the stock market crash of 1970-72. Its shares are now worth more as scratch paper than as stock holdings.

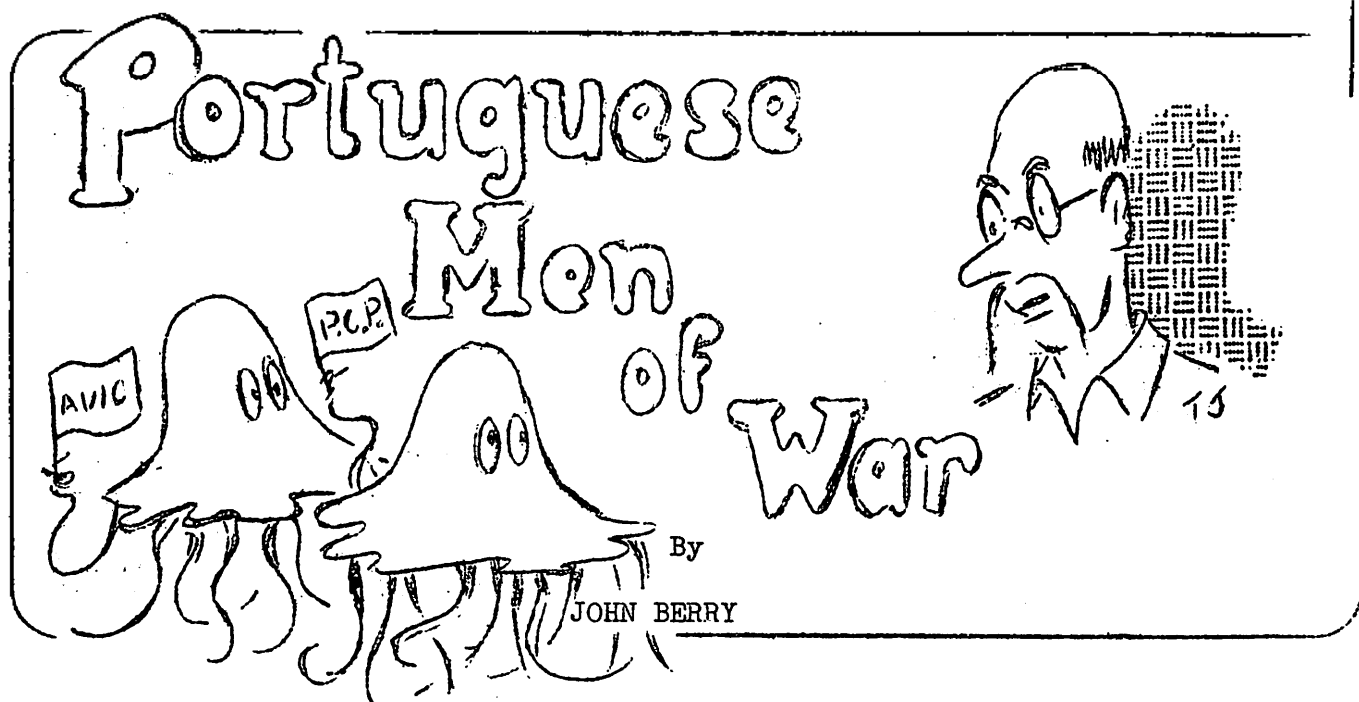
Remizrov himself got out early and when he died in 1969, at the age of 35, his estate was worth a reported 267 million dollars before taxes. Recent Senate hearings have since revealed that his later companies were CIA fronts; one apparently specialized in the creation of false identities for government agents.

In 1970 the secret-masters of fandom agreed that that the drugs in mimeo and printers ink could be withdrawn. The age-repellent drug was scheduled to be phased out first, followed 24 months later by the age-toleration drug in mimeo ink. Thus the antidote would continue to be present while stocks of the age-repellent printers ink were exhausted, and for a margin of six months afterwards, as a safety measure.

Withdrawal of the drug in mimeo ink went without a hitch, but the other assignment was given to a fan with a large backlog of fanac, including the final issues of several monster fanzines he had created and suspended over the previous decade.

He will get round to it in time, though. He will....





THE DECISION TO VISIT PORTUGAL during the last two weeks of July 1975 was considered by some people to be foolhardy. My wife particularly thought so, but our arrangement has always been that we arrange a holiday alternatively every year, and this year it was my pick. Actually, I had very little choice, our daughter's wedding in Belfast had been brought forward because (they said) they had a chance of moving into a house, consequently Portugal was the only place left where a vacation could be spent at such short notice. There was obviously a reason for this, and if you've studied the newspapers you will be aware of certain unrest in that country. This was not frightening to us, after living in Belfast for twenty years, but as my wife said, one has to be prudent...

We landed at Oporto airport, an unsophisticated place without the benefit of radar. And, AVIC, the tourist organisation took us by coach to our hotel at Ofir, some twelve miles away. Very noticeable were the conflicting political slogans on the walls of the little towns we passed through en route to Ofir. The initials PCP seemed to be everywhere, with red hammers and sickles artistically painted in red above or below the initials, which, with my superior inteelect, suggested to me that the initials stood for 'Portugese Communist Party'. There were other posters plastered over walls and doorways with the same motif. On the other hand, isolated little villages proudly bore the insignia of the Socialist Party, and communist handiwork had been crudely obliterated. An informed commentator on the coach opined that the political situation in Portugal was much more complicated than Northern Ireland's, and this shook me because although I'd lived in Ulster for over twenty six years, I never got to the bottom of who was doing what to whom and why.

Our hotel was close to a fishing village which backed the socialists, and we British tourists wrongly considered that we were safe from any inter tribal activities because of this.

Our room lived up to the travel agent's brochure in that, 'the fragrant scent of pine trees is all pervading', simply because our room overlooked a pine forest, with the tops of the trees just level with the balcony. If the trees had been cut down I bet there would have been a beautiful vista of the blue Atlantic spurred by the gulf stream, pounding the seven miles of white sandy beach. However, I believe there is something good in everything, and I am now a leading authority on disea in pine cones.



We soon settled down to the holiday routine, and I took particular interest in the activities in the village. Surely, Northern Portugal should be visited by Women's Lib. I reckon a poor fishing village woman in Portugal has just about the worst deal anyone could possibly have.

For example, every morning the men of the village rowed out in little wooden boats to seek fish. Their catches were never very big, but it was fascinating to see their wives patrolling the beach, waiting for them to return. The boats were pulled onto the sand, and the women piled the fish into baskets which they placed on their heads. The men removed the outboard motors, which the women picked up and cradled, and then the family group strolled to the village past the hotel, the men smoking and chatting and laughing among themselves following the women, straight-backed even though they were carrying the catch and the outboard-motor. Some women carried huge bundles on their heads in addition, and, as soon as they got to their houses, raced down to the river to do their washing on the river-bank. This done, they then marched to the fields to begin their real work at weeding and similar horticultural tasks. When dark came, fairly late, they returned home to make meals for everyone, and of course the men, who had rested all day had other appetites to be seen to as well, and couldn't wait to get their wives to bed for a prolonged session before heading out into the dawn, questing for fish. While the women patrolled the beaches awaiting their return....

My problem began with a typical example of my unselfish behavior. My wife and I were going to dinner one evening in the hotel, and as we came down the stairs from the third floor to the second, where the dining room was, a youngish looking man with a moustache accompanied by a young girl, showed me his room-key tag with number 338 on it. He couldn't speak English, but he signified that he couldn't find his room. This was understandable, because I reckon that two halves of two different hotels somehow got juxtaposed by the builder, and somewhere in Portugal is another hotel of the same nature. I thought his room was in the dining-room half of the hotel in which direction we were heading, so with suitable gestures I indicated that I'd help him look for his room. At the time I didn't think he looked the rich sort of Portuguese who could afford the high prices of the hotel, because he was in his shirt-sleeves, whereas my wife and I were in evening dress. (I wasn't in a dress, stupid, I wore a dark blue coat and trousers, frilly shirt and red-spotted bow tie.)

The resultant search reminded me of when I tried to find the flat of a fan in the outback of Ohio in '59....on that occasion I found the flat before the number of the one I wanted, and next to it was the one after the number... this happened again, somewhere, just where the two plans had been stuck to one another, a couple of rooms were missing, and this young couple had one of them. I apologised after twenty minutes search, and said, "GO BACK TO RECEPTION AND START ALL OVER AGAIN." He nodded, and then he shook my hand. He took my right hand in both of his, and in a strange language, he mumbled on. Presumably how kind of me it was to help him look for his room, even though I couldn't find it. My wife said he had tears in his eyes as he shook her hand warmly.

I dismissed the incident from my mind, and we went in for dinner.

Next morning, we were in the reception area, waiting for the coach to take us on a day-trip to Spain. I was in a group of English people, and they were discussing a pretty nasty state of affairs. They said that a Communist Party Convention was to take place in our hotel for the next three days. I agreed that it was a shocking state of affairs, because the country was tense enough already, without this happening. And then I felt a presence. It was the young man and his female companion whom I'd tried to help the night before. He had a red name-tag on his shirt with a red star rampant above it. "Thank you," he said. He shook my hand warmly, and the girl kissed me on the cheek. Then he crossed to join a group of men all with the same name-tags and red stars, and started ordering them about gruffly. Christ! I went cold all over. The other English people started to edge away from me. "I don't know who he is," I protested, but they didn't seem convinced.

That night, in the dining room, we were late because of our Spanish trip. As we crossed to our table I saw a bottle of wine on it. I picked it up,

heard a shout, and the red-starred young man waved at me. Hell, it was very embarrassing. For the next three days we tried to avoid him, and yet we bumped into him several times, and he was always extremely friendly. My wife reckoned that my spontaneous show of being keen to help had possibly demonstrated to him that alleged capitalists (one or two of them, at least) were human.

On the third night of the convention, just as we were going to bed, we looked out the window at the front of the hotel and saw about three hundred local workers waving their fists and shouting at the tops of their voices. Two of the local Garda Fiscal stood by, but wisely did not intervene. The waiters, acting on instructions, locked the doors. It all looked rather menacing. " Who are they after ?" I panted to an Englishman who was reputed to be knowledgeable. " Your friends," he said.

" As a Portugese friend told me the next day, " We Portugese, we make a lot of noise, but it usually doesn't go any further." And he'd been right, there'd been a lot of shouting and gesticulation with raised fists, but the communist conventioners had played it cool, and kept quiet, and the crowd had eventually dispersed with much revving of motor cycle engines in the early hours of the morning.

On that fourth morning, the day of departure of the communists, I tactfully suggested to my wife that we should retire to a deserted part of the beach, so that we wouldn't have the young man making an ostentatious goodbye. As we were sauntering along the magnificent beach, hand in hand (hell, I'm not that old) a shortish man in blue swimming trunks emerged from the sea and spoke to us in Portugese. Although the locals invariably approached foreigners and introduced themselves reasonably impeccably in the correct language, it was the first time I'd been presumed to be a Portugese...however, I put this down to the fact that I was very brown and had a long moustache, and my wife, in a facetious mood, was walking along with out bag of towels on her head to see how she looked without a kneck.

" What colour is the flag ?" he asked in good English, once he'd discovered his mistake. His eyes were squinting, and as an afterthought said he was short-sighted and hadn't got his glasses with him. I thought he was trying to whip up a conversation, although I thought the location and choice of topic rather bizarre.

" Um...black, red, and yellow," I panted...I couldn't really recall what colours constituted the Portugese flag, but didn't want to appear disinterested.

" No, no," he screamed, " the flag!"

And then I thought I knew what his problem was. The poor devil had been in for a swim and on leaving the sea was dead worried in case there'd been a change of government whilst he'd been in the water. He just wanted to know who to be friendly with. " I've no idea, old chap," I said condescendingly.

He started to jump up and down, his flat feet splashing us as they hammered the surf. " THE FLAG...WHAT COLOUR ??? " he screamed.

" There's a green flag over there," whispered my wife, and he overheard her, said something nasty in Portugese, then swam back out to sea with the speed and wake of a torpedo. I said to myself, as I've said before, I wish people would be more explicit; I wasn't aware that this beach had flags denoting whether it was safe or not to swim.

We sneaked into the hotel by the servants entrance, and a couple of people we knew said that all the communists had left, but the young one with the moustache had been the last to go, and had looked very disapointed. Back home again, I'm keeping a watchful eye for him on TV.

Before we left Portugal we decided to visit the local market at Barcelos; an acre in the town-centre is further sub-divided into four squares every Thursday morning.



Peasants, farmers and local people congregate there to buy and sell. The four sections selling different articles, for example, livestock, vegetable produce, clothes, and utility items are separated, and we walked round each of them.

The local people accept tourists, and don't even look at them. I also found when 'bartering', which is an art in itself, that the sellers did not try to 'do' the tourists, which is normally a national pastime in most countries. Not only were the traders strictly honest, but also extremely polite....to tourists, of course. The one disconcerting feature which I suppose is only to be expected in a backward part of a poor country was the fairly frequent attention being paid to tourists by people with various horrible physical complaints. I felt a tap on my shoulder, turned round and saw an old woman with a black shawl over her head looking at me. She looked like someones kindly old grandmother. Then, when she'd got my attention, she whipped away part of the shawl to reveal the grotesque stump of a hand, all blue and red and green with yellow matter dribbling down it, rather like melting vanilla ice cream.

Her wizened face transformed itself from humility and long-suffering patience, to a hideous gargoyle of twisted frustration, and she tried to jerk the stump almost, but not quite, into my face. I would certainly have given the old crone money, but what I didn't like was the 'Oscar' like performance that went with the mute appeal. It was blatantly acting of the crudest kind. There was no need for her to contort her face, which nature had done its worst to, but the sheer professionalism of her performance made me somewhat annoyed and, whereas my natural reticence to part with money was overcome by the terrible deformity, (my wife said it was made of plastic, but that surely wasn't true ?) I controlled the movement of local low-value currency from me to her with difficulty. However, I was quite liberal with another beggar. This was really frightful, a man with arms and legs all akimbo, pulling at my trousers below the knee. Primitive roller-skates were attached to the various parts of his body which were at ground level; arms and legs all wrapped around each other seemed to be everywhere, and at the most fantastic angles. And, this was all topped by a face that made Boris Karloff look like the male lead in Don Juan. His mouth, a black hole, was pushed around to the left hand side of his face, and he couldn't talk, emitting only a hissing noise like a steam-train losing power. I slipped him all the loose change I had. My wife swears she saw him being driven away in a Mercedes, but she has that perverse sense of humour.

Since we left Portugal, the news media has shown how the political life in the country has deteriorated, and shootings, riots and mob law have become commonplace. It is ironic that the peasants, who are probably the poorest people in Europe, are violently anti-communist, which is the opposite of what one would expect. There is no doubt that they are all fervent Roman Catholics, and Nuns and Priests are prominent in the TV film I've seen urging them on in their fight against communism....which doesn't figure when you consider the situation in Northern Italy.

Did I tell you about my experiences in Northern Italy ?

.....John Berret.



FRONT PAGE

THE
LETTERS

and

((eb.))

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Harry Warner Jr, 423 Summit Ave, Hagerstown, Maryland.

Your travelog had a particular interest for me. About a dozen years ago, I was telling everyone that I was ready to expatriate myself and I think I even believed it. At that time, I was thinking of Yugoslavia as a possible place to live. A former fan who had spent a great deal of time there had told me about the relatively low cost of living which existed at the time, and I fell deeply in love with both the geography and the faces of that nation by watching over and over a film entitled "As The Sea Rages", although I knew even then that the presence of Maria Schell in the movie was probably prejudicing me, and she's from Germany, not Yugoslavia. For one reason or another I never did anything about early retirement and exile from the United States. But lately the urge is beginning to come back, with more reason now that I'm only a few years away from retirement age and this nation's crime rate grows rapidly enough to threaten really awful circumstances by the time I'm in my sixties. Nothing you wrote makes me any less interested in exploring one of the Balkan nations during my final years. I'm quite aware of the government tyrannies there. But there is such a thing as worse tyranny from the people in general than from the government. Knowing that the secret-police might whisk you away from your home in the night for having said or done something which insulted authority might not be as bothering as knowing you might be murdered at any hour of the night and day by criminals whom you'd done nothing to.

The one thing I'd miss severely in Eastern Europe would be baseball. This nation broadcasts overseas major league baseball games regularly to its troops overseas via shortwave transmitters. Maybe I could work out some arrangements with the Comintern or whatever its modern equivalent may be -

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to have my shortwave radio controlled from Party Headquarters, turned on just when a baseball game is beginning and its power cut off after the final out, to keep me happy and non-subversive in Dubrovnik or wherever. ((I tend to agree, Harry, that a certain amount of official suppression is preferable to 'mindless violence'...and for 'official suppression' read, Rule Of Law. There is, possibly, too much 'freedom' in the older democracies these days in this respect. A sad reflection that we are not as adult a civilisation as we like to think we are! However, back to the Balkans - I doubt that anyone would really bother about you listening to baseball in Yugoslavia; but you might get bogged down and banned if you tried to get permission to do so. The mind truly boggles at the thought of having to explain what baseball is to layer after layer of Balkan bureaucrats!))

Overlord Of The Flies was amusing. It wouldn't be too hard to track down its author, I suspect, because he would be the fan who failed to pass the spelling quiz when the word "miniturization" came up. ((But it was a Patented Process, Harry, and had to be spelt differently....)) I assume the events in this John Berry piece really happened more or less as described here. I feel more impressed every time I read a new fanzine contribution by John, at the greater depth he manages to achieve in his writings without total loss of the old wildness and hyperbole.

I have felt as Rick Sneary does about the desirability of making a Hugo winner ineligible, at least for a year or two, to win another in the same category. But when that proposal has come up in fanzines, there have been protests on the grounds that such a regulation would be another example of creeping regimentation in fandom. An alternative method would be voluntary on the part of Hugo Winners; they could ask the next worldcon committee not to tabulate any nominations or votes they may receive the following year. Ted White did this after winning his fan writing Hugo, and I did it after winning both of mine. Maybe it has happened in other instances which I can't remember or didn't hear of. ((That is the best solution, Harry, but unless each recipient has an inbuilt sense of fair-play - nowone, for instance, has won TAFF and allowed their name to be put forward again - or, unless the idea should get really massive publicity, probably still not the solution. The pro' Hugo's are a commercial asset, and there's the main stumbling block.))

Terry Jeeves hurt me deeply with the first sentence in his column, the one about the difficulties of dealing with a gas or electricity authority. My recent experience with my only sewew line is still raw and bleeding. I mean, what do you do when you get a registered letter from the city, notifying you that you have thirty days to rectify a leak which you didn't know about, and then can't find anyone in the sewer department who has time to show you where the leak exists and what should be done? Or how do you cope with the plumbing firm which agreed to make the repairs, and then gets you out of bed three weeks later to notify you that it can't fix it because it can't get a back hoe over the slopes in your back yard? ((Well, Harry, it might help you to know that there are parts of the Balkans that don't have sewers.))

John Owen, Starlite Roof, 35 Croxteth Rd, Liverpool.

The most interesting item for me was your piece on Romania. Our own holiday there was tinged by both sunshine and shadows, and first the shadows:

Chronic incompetence masquerading as feckless charm (just like dear old Ireland); sanitation that would have embarrassed Attila the Hun; restaurants without menu's, bars whose price-lists were tucked, like wartime woodbines, safely underneath the counter; vermouthe-and-ice at £1.30 a go; drunkenness and punch-ups in the city streets, though probably not as a result of the vermouthe-and-ice; a dearth of night-life, and a plethora of totalitarian onwards-and-upwards posters, statues, columns, obelisks and exhortations;

- the mind-numbing dullness of the absolutist materialist society; and on a more intimate (but just as heartfelt) level, a ninety-minute wait for a simple puncture repair, a forty-five minute wait for a car wash, and in Mamia (God rot the place), a consensus of opinion that if you've arrived from the West in a car (even a Fiat 850!) you're a filthy exploiter and deserve to be filthily exploited.

But now the credits, and from our naive, hedonistic viewpoint there were many:

A September climate which was temperate, but still pleasantly sunny; green, pretty, undulating countryside, generally reminiscent of a slightly scruffy Austria; the country people, a friendly lot who seemed genuinely interested in visitors whether from East or West; cheap food and fruit in the shops (roughly averaging one-third of British prices at the official rate of exchange); the splendid institution of the People's Restaurant, rather like a sumptuous NAAFI or PX (if such ever existed), where an excellent four-course dinner, including a litre of beer, cost £1, and a first-class breakfast 30p (official exchange rates); the music in hotel restaurants, supplied by ghastly trios thumping out moth-eaten Waltzes and German marching, beating and vomiting songs (they're here on the credit side because they're so bad they're extremely funny); the marvellous Romanian folk music, available as cabaret in many restaurants, and on LPs at £1 each (beautiful recordings, too); the pleasant city of Brasov, surrounded by some of the finest mountain country I've ever seen; the food, which though never haute cuisine was usually very good; the wine, sometimes a little acid but generally highly drinkable; the swarms of crooks (bless 'em) outside all the tourist hotels, offering a friendly 50-60 Lei to the pound against the official 25-26; and the hotels themselves, with their pompous marble foyers, permanent cold water and instantly disengaging tap-handles, which had all the ramshackle charm that I imagine post-atomic-holocaust Holiday Inns would possess.



On balance, for us, the sunshine outshone the shadow, and by and large we enjoyed the holiday very much, but by God you're right, mate - Romania is DIFFERENT!

John Berry, 119 Garden Ave, Hatfield, Herts.

I note the contest which is emerging between us, regarding the most exotic places we have visited. I have enclosed herewith my latest epistle of my true-life adventures in Portugal last summer. Yesterday I was flipping through the travel brochures to see if I could decide where to go (it's Diane's turn really), and I had provisionally decided on Bulgaria, but having read TRIODE I have now changed my mind, and although I have now made a final decision on a most bizarre place to visit, I am keeping it a secret until I slap you in the face with a detailed documentary late next summer. ((After getting your letter, John, I considered whether or not to send Balkan Tours a copy of the last issue to see if they'd offer anything to suppress it....only the thought that they might offer me a free holiday stopped me! See you in the Aleutians !?!!))

Roy Tackett, 915 Green Valley Rd, NW. Albuquerque, New Mexico.

An interesting bit on Romania on TV a couple of months ago. Among other things, their efforts to build a tourist-trade have come up with the "Dracula Tour" complete with visits to Transylvania and the castle of Vlad The Impaler and an assortment of Dracula pictures, cups, plates, etc. -

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- According to the narrator the Romanians are somewhat bemused by it all... vast herds of tourists on the trail of the vampire...because, apparently, the book has never been published in Romania so all their knowledge of it is second-hand. Nevertheless they know a tourist attraction when they see one. Vlad's castle can be viewed only from the outside at present but the government is repairing it and refurbishing it with all speed. ((Oh yes, they do catch on quite quickly...rumours that the 'locals' never go near the castle were in circulation whilst we were there. Mind you, I'm not quite sure an Impaler of the old-school isn't worse than a Vampire. I can't quite recall what the Romanian for 'Ooh, nasty' is, but I should imagine it was once an oft heard cry!))

It is always interesting to read first-hand reports like this. You mention missing "coachloads of middle-aged matrons from Detroit" and wonder about the difficulty of obtaining visas to communist countries. I really don't know how difficult it would be. I see tours of eastern Europe advertised now and then but I suspect the main reason is that those herds of middle aged matrons have no desire to visit communist countries - they are somewhat fearful of them. The problem lies ((!)) with the news media of course. Reports of what is happening in eastern Europe (or anywhere else for that matter) are scarce unless they indicate some great political upheaval or have some Americans involved. Your report was the first I'd heard, for example, that there are three official political parties in Romania. The official line over here is that no communist country has any political party other than the communists. To learn that Romania has three is somewhat surprising. Bulgaria seems to fit more the conventional U.S.A. picture of a communist state. ((Ah, yes, but they don't have a 'patron saint' who was an impaler....))

Paul Skelton, 25 Bowland Close, Offerton, Stockport, Ches.

It is not only the Bulgarians who have switched to self-service in order to use more staff. Have you ever sat down in a large Wimpy and tried to spot a waitress? Yes, they do have them in the larger Wimpys, or so rumour has it. ((Having waitress service in a Wimpy sounds like a good idea....it would allow you time to consider whether you shouldn't be eating somewhere they serve food....))

'Overlord of the Flies' is the perfect proof that old style faan-writing need not be a thing of the past. However, it was badly mis-titled. It was such a perfect parody of Lindsay Gutteridge's first novel that it should have been called 'Cold War In A Lig Garden', or after the follow up, 'Killer Apple'. If it wasn't meant to be a parody of those novels you are likely soon to be hearing from Mr. Gutteridge's solicitors about things like plagiarisms. ((Must admit, I had read those books, Paul...now ones going to accuse me of 'plagiarism' whatever it means! Had some suggestions at the Mancon on possible sequels to Overlord Of The Flies, and am now trying to write something with the working title of 'Journey To Ian Maule's Kneecap'.))

Chuck Harris, 32 Lake Cres, Daventry, Northants.

I was delighted to hear that Bob Bloch could no longer contain himself. Be very careful when you cut that onto stencil...."rediscover the genius of Harris....originals.....what a talent...." H o yes. My name is Ozmandias, - King of Kings....

Truly, this is the finest thing Bloch has ever written. Such wit; such keen perception; such penetrating insight; such sharp, faultless evaluation of intrinsic worth. Bloch, if I may coin a phrase, Bloch was superb.

And very reasonable. I would have been willing to pay quite a bit more.

Robert Bloch, Los Angeles.

The notion of an article on Chuck Harris is a worthy one, but unfortunately all the fanzines I'd need for reference material have long since been consigned to the University of Wyoming's library, -

- where they may some day baffle future researchers. This is not a put-on: their Special Collections department now has some 38 huge file-boxes of items I've sent them - largely in hopes that the work of people like Chuch Harris will be preserved for posterity. Don't ask me why I've got such a grudge against posterity, either. TRIODE will doubtless be enshrined there too. ((But why Wyoming U., Bob....I can understand why-not California, but what have you got against Wyoming ?))

The John Berry article on finger-printing monkeys was most impressive. It inspired me to lug a 200-pound keg of black powder, twenty feet of acetate sheets and thirty-yards of semi-adhesive tape over to MGM to get the prints of their new model of KING KONG. On second thought, I should have studied the preceding article and used a miniaturization kit on it instead.

Terry Hughes, 4739 Washington Blvd, Arlington. Virginia.

While it is too bad that Jim Cawthorn, Bob Shaw, Mike Moorcock, and Stanley H. Nuttall (hah!) ((No, Terry the 'H' in Nuttall does not stand for Hah!)) could not make the deadline for your quintessential quarterly, I am most delighted that John Berry and yourself were present in such fine form. Y'know Eric, I'm not yet convinced whether you were telling the whole truth about TRIODE's revival or not. It sounds plausible but on the other hand you could just be putting your readership on. ((Now, Terry, I wouldn't dream of doing such a thing.))

"NEW WHORLS" by John Berry was a delightful article. It managed to be both educational and amusing. I for one have never given much thought to the question of whether or not other primates had finger-prints but now that he's brought it up, I find the notion intriguing. Not enough to go around putting ink on an ape's hand the way he did, but enough to want to read about someone else doing it. ((Damn, and we had you down for checking out Spiro Agnew...)) It seems to me that I once read a mystery story where the police were baffled by the lack of finger-prints until it turned out that the murderer was an ape and left none. Now I know that story is as incorrect as the one about the criminal blowing up a balloon with his breath and tying the murder weapon to the balloon and then releasing the balloon in the fireplace so that it and the weapon floated up into the sky and away from the scene of the crime. ((Was that the one where the victim had been hacked with a saber, and then shot three times with a bazooka ??))

Your faan-fiction piece - the one about Shrinking Shorrock and all - got a trifle confused in parts, but overall I thought it worked very well. The whole concept of shrinking a still to make more wine from the same amount of ingredients was a classic notion. It's a thought I'd never seen expressed before but seems more and more plausible with each glass-full I drink. ((Yes, and nowone's seen or heard from Norman Shorrock since I wrote the piece. I expect, daily, to read that the whole Bebington area has been flooded with Dandelion Sauterne!))

* * * * *

" The John Berry article made me realise that you are right when you say that your 'zine is different fromn its more recent competitors. A whole article about Ape's and not one was compared to a BNF. It couldn't happen today!"....Martin Easterbrook.

" I also want to commend John for not once in the entire story stooping to use a variation on " He sure made a monkey out of me." ".....Terry Hughes.



Mike Glicksohn, 141 High Park Ave, Toronto, Ontario.

What, pray tell, does John Berry do that entails his going around fingerprinting primates? I was under the impression he was a policeman in Belfast, or something like that. I know the I.R.A. has some pretty low types in its ranks, but surely they don't suspect that the gorilla warfare has gone as far as that! ((John served with the Royal Ulster Constabulary as a fingerprint expert, but has now 'retired' back to England....where he is also in the 'fingers-trade'.))

I've always been fascinated by the primates, and on one of my visits to the London Zoo when I was over a few years back I spent well over an hour just watching that large outdoor enclosure for the gibbons, who must surely be the world's greatest natural acrobats. The larger primates are inherently fascinating because of their many human characteristics and the natural speculation over origins that they provoke. Somehow, though, while I can stand and watch an orang-utan or a chimp and enjoy myself, I'm always uneasy watching a gorilla. There's such an enormous wealth of sad intelligence in their eyes that I feel that just by being there I'm doing something wrong. The chimps may be more intelligent, but they adjust to captivity better. Gorillas simply look at you with a weary, long-suffering look, and you start to think what your life would be like if someone stuck you in a cold gray concrete cage with a tyre and a pile of fruit to while away the days. I can never watch a Gorilla for very long if he happens to be watching me back.

The debate regarding the lack of feedback for artists rages periodically over here but it's been a year or so since it last made the pages of many fanzines. The same arguments are given here as were offered by many of the people commenting on the topic in your lettercol. Fans are word oriented, artists are too busy drawing to offer criticism themselves, anyone can write (or so most people think) and therefore feel qualified to comment on writing but most fans can't draw and are afraid to comment on artwork for fear of making fools of themselves, I don't know anything about art I just know what I like, etc, etc. Clichéd though these oft heard comments are, they are unfortunately true. I can usually pick out good artwork from bad, but it's all a subjective evaluation. For example, I enjoyed pretty well all of Terry's hand-cut specially-created artwork in this issue. Terry has a fanish style and a degree of expertise that makes his illustrations perfect for the sort of renegade sixth Fandom material you publish. In fact, in most cases except the excellent Hunter illo, the electro-stencilled artwork is less impressive than the hand-cut stuff. This is due either to a poor electro-stencil or an inadequate mimeo, either of which could result in the mottled gray effects that somewhat spoil the cover and the Hunter spaceship. ((A combination of the two, I think, Mike. Terry is trying to locate a good/better second-hand duper, but so far without success.))

The other artistic weakness this issue lies in the tracing of the Rotsler and MacKay illos: both of these gentlemen are talented artists, but their distinctive styles (a word I'll continue to use despite Alan Hunter's comments that what I'm talking about is not style; as far as I am concerned the difference between the simple line drawings of the brilliant Rotsler and the more detailed modified alien animals of Barry MacKay is one of style, not technique) are lost by the tracing job. Having tried once or twice to hand stencil a Rotsler illo, I now realise that my long-held policy of electro-stencilling all artwork is an excellent one for me indeed. (And, no, I'm not one of those filthy rich north american fans, I just happen to have had access to free electrostencils for the last six years.)

I very much enjoyed your bit on travel to exotic far off lands and what you found there. (Although if the Romanians really think Mamia is an anagram of Miami I'm glad they don't try helping me with my crossword puzzles.) When I was a wee tad living in England, unaware of fandom (though not of science-fiction) and yet to discover scotch (thereby drinking beer instead; I never drank anything stronger than beer until I was eleven) -

World of the MUNDANES

By

ERIC MAYER



While attending their first convention and making their initial explorations of those higher levels of reality attainable through judicious doses of esoteric, alcohol-based formulae, two neos became more than normally disassociated from the time-space continuum and started having deep thoughts.

"D'ya shpoz th'baralel whorls really do 'xshist?" mused Oliver, in a fair verbal approximation of his famous PLANETOID editorials.

"Yeszh," replied Franklin, enthusiastically.
"O'coursh, b'Ghu!"

Though artfully coded to prevent its being overheard by mundane ears, the conversation was perfectly lucid to the neos who filled in the gaps by a process akin to telepathy.

"What would a parallel world be like?" Oliver understood Franklin to say. He began to extrapolate and before long had left the world of 1976 far behind. His eyes started to shine.

"I see electric hectos with automatic paper feed," he murmured.
"Atomic powered mimeos - without moving parts!"

"Free postal service," interjected Franklin. "All mail delivered by matter-transmitter. At the speed of light!"

"Corflu that knows how to spell!"

In no time at all, Oliver was totally intoxicated with the heady wine of extrapolation. He couldn't stand up. His feet seemed to be in another dimension. Franklin was still busy with his bottles of unusual chemicals.

Oliver felt a glass being pressed into his hand, which might have been orbiting Neptune so far as his mouth was concerned.

He made complex calculations. The hand with its precious cargo eased out of orbit, following thirst signals that were dim and distorted. "Kinesthetic homing beacons malfunctioning," thought Oliver. "Must be sunspots. Have to bring her in on manual!"

Swivelling the great lenses of his eyes, he saw the hand dropping down towards his mountainous nose. Coming in fast! It was going to be close! He hung on grimly.

He landed with a jolt, just southwest of his left nostril. Priceless liquid cargo spilled down over his upper lip. "Activate tongue!" he ordered, in the nick of time. The liquid was hot. It made him dizzy.

"Hey! Whaddya call thish?" he started to ask. But just then something big and invisible grabbed him by the scruff of the neck, yanked him west-south-east, knocked him off the sidewalk of reality, pulled him through the keyhole of the fourth dimension and slapped him down someplace dark!

* * * * *

Oliver woke to see an alien creature bending over him. It was lucky he was a fan, otherwise he might have been surprised. The creature looked vaguely human but Oliver wasn't fooled. He could tell there was something wrong about the contours of the body under the creature's loose robe.

So, Franklin's chemical experiments had, by some means unknown to modern science, transported Oliver to another world. Just like John Carter! He sat up, easily throwing off the bedsheets he had been confined under. His body was somehow familiar, but much larger and more powerful than the 13 year old body he had left back on earth. It figured. It was all fitting together now. He flexed his muscles with satisfaction. Another month or so and he'd be emperor, or king, or whatever it was that ruled entire planets in this particular place. He looked at the alien creature with new understanding. It belonged to him. Naturally.

"Work," it was gabbling, in English oddly enough. "You'll be late for work."

Oliver pushed the creature away. Its arm was unnaturally soft, revolting.

"Where is my duper?" demanded Oliver, imperiously.

The creature regarded him blankly. Subhuman ignorance glazed its large eyes.

"Mimeo," Oliver said, slowly and distinctly. "Where is my mimeo? I must do my fanac."

"Get dressed," shrilled the creature, throwing a heap of clothes in Oliver's face. "Stop acting like an idiot!"

The creature seemed unaccountably unimpressed by Oliver's superior physical and mental powers. "Probably too stupid to recognise them," thought Oliver. He brushed past it, feeling again the horrid plasticity of its flesh. It smelled faintly sweet, like flowers. Was it some sort of highly advanced vegetable?

He searched the house he found himself in. No fanac was in evidence. There were no dupers, no ink, no stencils. He ended up searching for science-fiction books. The house contained not the slightest trace of fandom.

"Great Ghu! What sort of hellish place have I landed in?"

The creature glided with sinister sinuousity behind him. "Late for work." It kept repeating.

Work? What did it mean by that? Maybe the best course of action would be to go along with the strange creature's wishes, meanwhile investigating this mysterious world.

He dressed. The clothes were a uniform of some sort. Very drab, except for a scrap of wildly-coloured cloth that hung down the front of the shirt. It was like having a bright tail coming out of one's neck. Oliver sighed. He had to keep reminding himself that this was not, after all, the sane faanish world he was familiar with. Customs were bound to differ, in bizarre ways. He'd have to make concessions, until he found out what was going on and how he was going to assume control of the planet. He hoped it wouldn't take long.

* * * * *

Nine hours later, as he stood shaking with exhaustion and horror on the steps of United Products, Oliver decided it had already taken too long.

Following the still functioning neural pathways of his new brain, Oliver had left the house and boarded a bus which took him to 'Work'. None of his faanish misadventures - not even the crushing failure to receive a Harry Warner loc on the gala premiere issue of PLANETOID - had prepared him for the horror that confronted him behind the prison-like walls of UP. 'Work' was nothing less than a fiendish, alien plan of subjugation and slave labour!

There were humans inside those grim walls, but the place swarmed with aliens who made not the slightest effort to disguise their anatomical peculiarities. Oliver's heart sank. That meant they were in total control and had no fear of revealing themselves for what they were!

As the day had gone by the neofan's original estimate of the situation had been born out more and more fully. The aliens scurried back and forth, carrying orders to the humans who toiled behind paper-laden work tables. There were phones, but they were closely guarded and monitored by the aliens. Apparently the humans were not allowed contact with the outside world.

Upon first entering the large 'Workroom' Oliver had felt a spark of hope, for many of the worktables held typewriters - the first sign of any faanish culture he had seen in this world. But, these machines were manned by the aliens. The aliens even controlled the stamp supplies.

Late in the morning, as Oliver had sat in the place that had been designated for him with a small name-bearing sign, as if he were a museum exhibit or a zoo animal, there had come to his ears a familiar sound. He had been sitting listlessly, allowing his mind to carry out the menial tasks assigned to him, but the sound cut through his lethargy like a stylus through a hot stencil. It was the familiar whine of an electric mimeograph!

Cautiously, trying to avoid the notice of the ever vigilant aliens, he had left his place and made his way to the doorway from which the sound seemed to be emanating. Peering through the open door, he saw what he had feared. An alien was operating the machine!

It seemed like an impossible nightmare, but it was all too real. In this world, all faanish technology had fallen into the hands of alien monsters who were employing the sacred tools for their own enigmatic, but no doubt despicable ends! Not a trace of fandom remained.

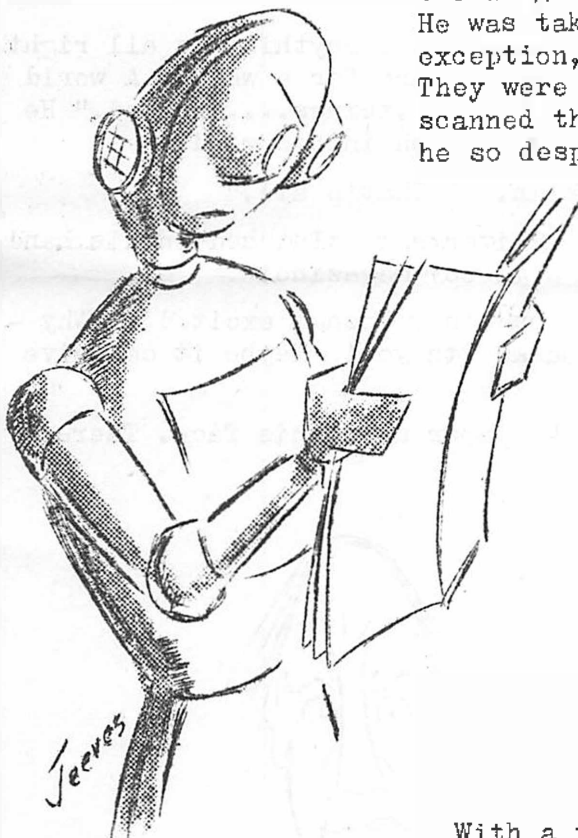
The other humans in the work-house went about their tasks like zombies. They failed to respond to Oliver's cautious probings. Finally, in exasperation, he went up to one of the humans and shouted, right in his slack face. "Yngvi was a louse!" The human just stared, blankly, at Oliver. There was no hope. The race had been reduced to slavery, brainwashed. They even operated under the ridiculous delusion that it was they, and not the aliens, who were running things. It was pathetic. A world of mundanes!

* * * * *

Oliver started to walk home. He was in no hurry to return to his alien warder. The streets were crowded and the haughty creatures were much in evidence, although their surveillance was less noticable. Oliver had the feeling that everything was not quite what it seemed. There was a piece missing. He'd read a story once where everybody in the world woke up and found out that they were really skunk cabbages. He wasn't gullible enough to be taken in by reality.

Still, his problem of taking over the world in a reasonable time was still with him. Faanish technology still existed. So there was hope. But he'd need help. In science-fiction novels, dictatorial societies always had militant undergrounds which rose up to throw off the yoke of their suppressors at the first sign of a Time Traveller, or someone from another world. There was the solution to Oliver's problem! Contact the faanish underground that was sure to exist here.

He was wondering how, when he passed by a drugstore and his eye was caught by racks full of magazines. "Science-fiction zines," he muttered, "Yes, of course!" I can get addresses from the letter-columns. At night I'll break into United Products, liberate the mimeo. A good solid fanzine, published on a regular schedule, will serve as a focal point to unite the scattered faanish forces.



Trembling with suppressed excitement he ran into the drugstore and confronted the magazine racks. He was taken aback. The magazine covers, without exception, featured photographs of the aliens! They were disturbingly humanoid. In vain he scanned the racks for the science-fiction zine he so desperately required. How he longed for a glimpse of a sucker disc or a coy tentacle.

The pulps would be stuck behind the larger magazines, he decided, and began to rummage. One of the glossy magazines fell open. Oliver glanced, staggered back, like he'd been hit with a laser beam.

There, naked, sprawled over two full pages, revealed in all the mind-blasting horror of its awful alienness, was one of the creatures!

For a moment Oliver feared he'd be sick. The hideous protruberances and weird angles of the alien physique were seared into his screaming brain. He felt dizzy. His mind reeled.

With a terrific effort he steadied himself and forced himself to leaf through the magazine. It was all the same. Hideous monsters in grotesque poses, engaging in inhuman, cryptic rituals which no human could ever hope or even wish to understand.

Gradually he became aware that other humans in the store were also looking through these publications. They didn't seem revolted at all, but rather, mesmerized.

"Women." The word sprang into Oliver's mind, a half forgotten memory. "Women." He'd read about them. One had turned out to be a giant insect who laid eggs inside its victims. Two others, survivors of a plane wreck, had flown off in a flying saucer, leaving their human companions behind.

It all made sense now. These aliens, these "women" had exercised some powerful perverse form of mind control on the human race, turning them into mindless worshippers - slaves! Every fan in the world had been sucked dry of wonder and intellectual enthusiasm!

No, not every fan. Somewhere there must be minds strong enough to withstand their unspeakable hypnotism.

Even as Oliver thought this, he felt his eyes being pulled back to the glossy magazine. There was something pleasing about those anatomical irregularities. He thought of the alien he had left behind that morning.

No! I won't give in! They won't get me. He ripped the magazine in half.

"Fandom is a way of life!" he screamed, desperately fighting off the wide beam broadcast mind control saturating the air. He started turning over magazine racks. "A way of life," he shrieked. "A way of life..."

* * * * *

He woke up, Franklin was looking at him curiously. "Nightmare." You must have had too much to drink."

Oliver jumped up, rushed out of the hotel room and down the hall to the top of the stairs from where he could see the foyer. It was filled with fans. Only fans! No aliens were in sight.

Relieved he returned to his room. "Thank God everything is all right," he said. "I - I thought I was in another world there for a while. A world where there was no fandom. Where there were other...things....instead." He shook his head miserably. The horror was still fresh in his mind.

"It was only a dream," soothed Franklin. "That's all."

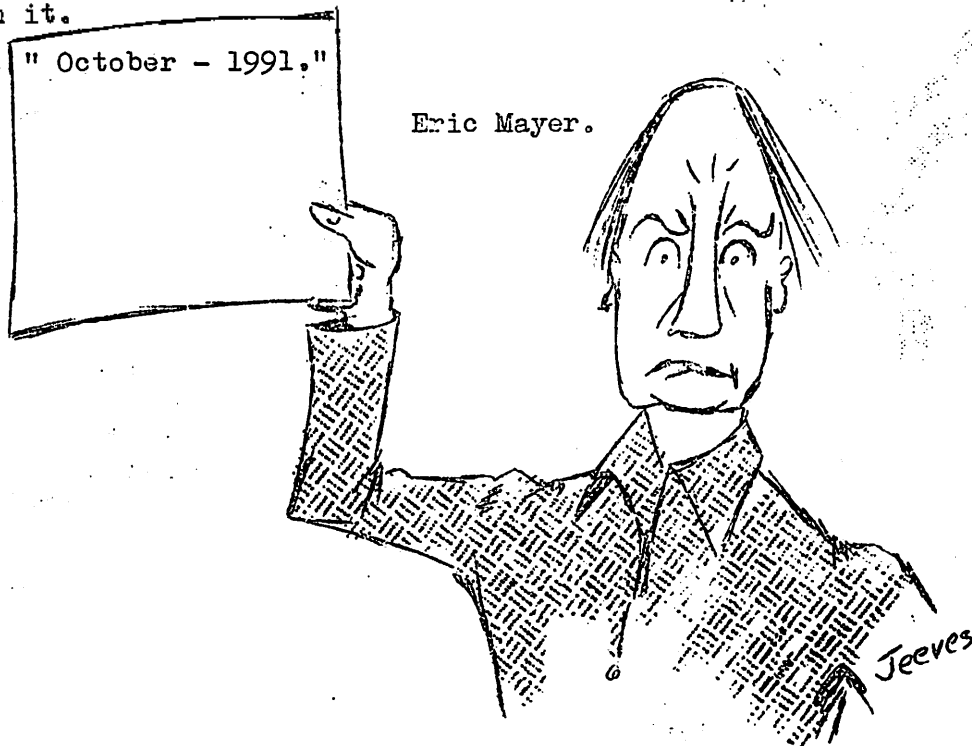
"But it seemed so - " Looking down, Oliver saw, clutched in his hand, a small scrap of paper, like the corner of a glossy magazine!

Franklin, following his friend's gaze, suddenly became excited. "Why - look! What is it? Maybe you brought it back with you! Maybe it can give some clue to where you were!"

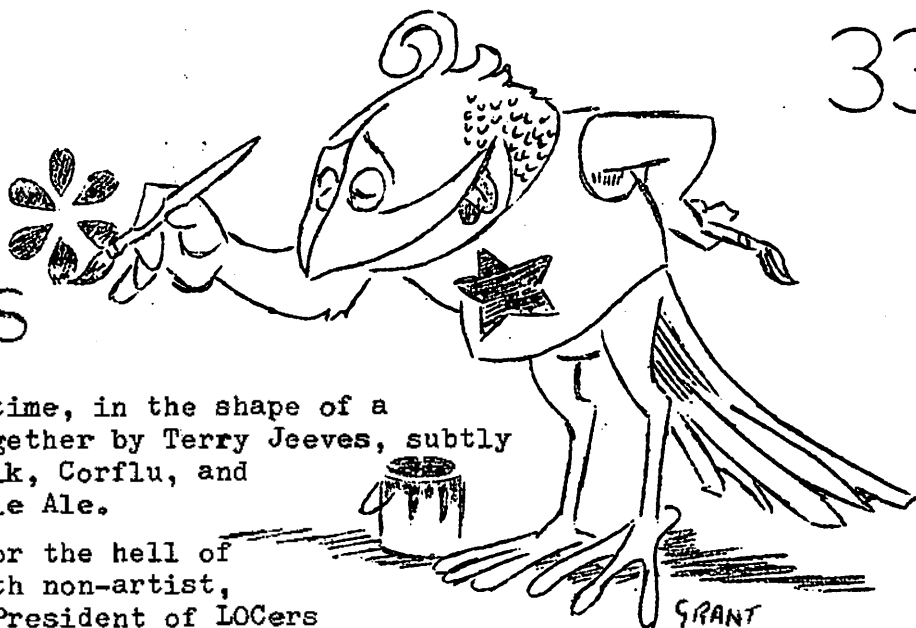
"Yes. Maybe it can!" Oliver drew the paper up to his face. There was writing on it.

It said, "October - 1991."

Eric Mayer.



THE ARTIST WRITES

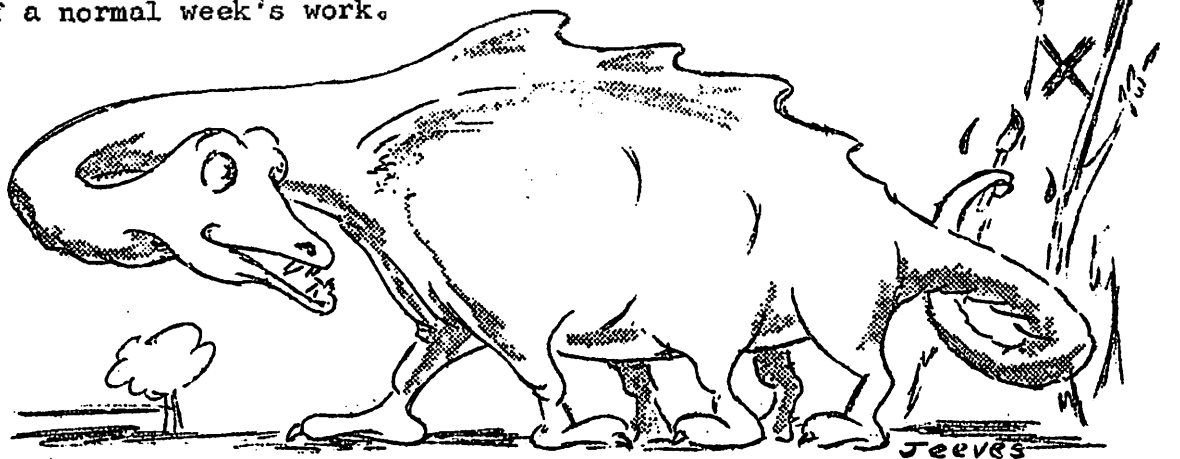


This time, in the shape of a forum glued together by Terry Jeeves, subtly aided by Evostik, Corflu, and Whitbread's Pale Ale.

And for the hell of it, we open with non-artist, Harry Warner, President of LOCers Unanimous

"Alan Hunter sounds very authoritative on a topic which a total non-artist like me cannot understand properly. For instance I find it hard to accept his statements about doing illustrations rapidly, because my total inability to draw makes me consider rapid creation of a picture just as impractical as reaching the moon quickly by running instead of walking. When I was a little boy I used to copy comic strip panels. The difficulty of deciding after I'd finished which comic strip I'd tried to copy left me permanently incapable of condemning an artist for copying another's work. I keep imagining that he deserves several gold stars for achieving a difficult feat even if it was wrong to do it. Maybe the most valuable thing in this article is the explanation of how Alan did the accompanying illustrations. Similar information on fanzine illustrations might help ignorant fen like me to appreciate more properly the achievement of the artists."

Harry covers quite a bit of ground there, so I'll try to take each bit in turn. On drawing speed, I'm inclined to feel that this is rather like comparing reading speeds...a certain amount of one-upmanship is involved. If an artist is competent, his quality lies in his results, not their gestation period - unless of course, you have a snail-like character who takes several years on a commission...and he'll never get enough experience in to upset the argument much. Personally, I have heaved out an illo after spending hours on it...and been highly delighted by a quick doodle, and vice versa. The only thing wrong with speed, is when it is not normal to the artist but is resorted to when he is pressed. The result is shoddy work - but this can happen to a slow artist who tries to cut only a few hours off a normal week's work.





Copying is a more debatable fettle of kish. I would think that if you copy a style because it appeals to you, then you commit no crime, but simply enrich your own technique by adding variations of your own.

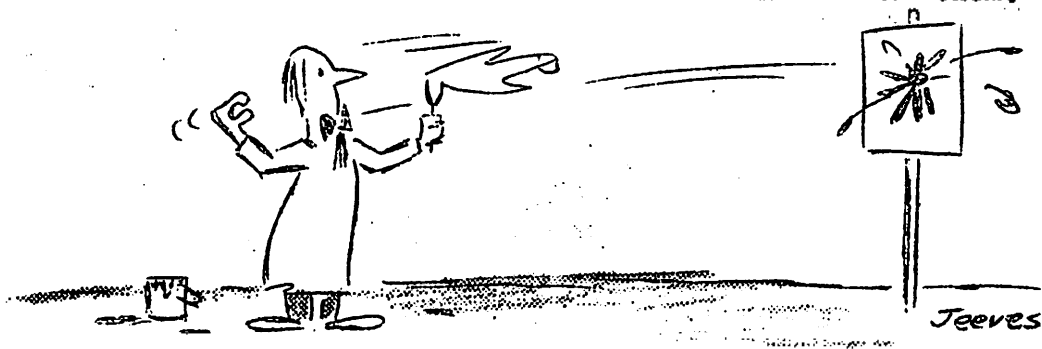
However, copying a specific piece of art and you're on tricky ground. OK for your own personal satisfaction - as for instance, many moons ago, the late Eric Jones asked me to do him a copy of a Bonestell painting...and since I too wanted one (and we couldn't afford the original anyway) I went ahead and did us one each. I won't argue over their quality, but the point is, that by copying, both of us got something we wanted...at no cost to Chesley's piggy bank by lost sales. Had I tried to sell either copy, the ethics would have been very questionable. Recently, I have sold several puzzles to QUIZ DIGEST...and each time, they

have asked for a signed declaration that they were my own work. Publishers don't want law suits. Copy if you wish, but only for your own amusement and edification. Difficulty doesn't come into it. If I were daft enough, I might try engraving, 'Who Goes There?' on the head of a pin. Hellish hard work...my technique might be worthy of unstinted praise, and I could end up in dock if I tried to sell my glorified pool picker.

As to Harry's point about, "How I drew the picture on page....". This is to me, and to many others I hope, a darned good idea. I hope readers of this column will write in with their comments. As a teenager, I haunted the library, reading and re-reading every such 'How to...' art book on the shelves - I still do, I suspect that every artist feels the same. Continual experiment with new ideas and methods....so if you have any...write in quick !

Eric Mayer of Falls, PA, comes in :- "Last year I visited George Schelling who used to draw extensively for the s-f magazines in the mid sixties, and who still appears occasionally in ANALOG. He showed me his art notebooks from those years. They would certainly prove enlightening to someone who considers spontaneity to be the most important asset an artist can have. For each finished cover, there were literally dozens of thumbnail sketches, alternate colour schemes, small drawings of alien features or futuristic machine parts worked out in detail. Even star maps plotted accurately to give a correct view of space from a particular star system !

Schelling's fine covers were certainly not spontaneous. But he was such a skilled artist, so well versed in technique, that the work he put into them didn't show. Spontaneity is utterly useless. A writer can scribble down some incoherent notes. They're spontaneous. So what ? No one but the writer himself can understand them.



An artist can scribble spontaneous drawings. And once again, what difference does it make how spontaneous they are if they fail to communicate?"

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Hard works Eric, but surely this is one of those 'straw men, along with an artist's speed. What counts is the finished work of art (or lack of art) It may take great skill and painstaking effort to acquire the effect of spontaneity ..and king-sized slices of time. Does this make such a picture better..or worse than one a skilful practitioner knocked off in half an hour? The acid test is how the two pictures compare...does the quick one suffer from the speed? Not necessarily. Through sheer practice, I can letter posters free hand and get the wording neatly spaced. I know people who lay such work out in pencil, take ten times as long, and the result is shaky showing how scared they were of drawing a line. Again, star maps may give accuracy...an admirable trait, but they don't enhance a picture artistically all that much...which is precisely why we have 'artistic licence' whereby the artist is allowed to distort the truth in order to create a more harmonious whole. Nevertheless, the details on Schelling interested me immensely, and if you know any other bits of inside information, shoot them along.

Grant Canfield (who did the heading illo) comments,...

"I especially enjoyed Hunter's article as well as his accompanying artwork. I feel that too many fan artists rush into a style with the preconception that they have to have a distinctive style. In their hurry, they may force it rather than evolve it. It is true that distinctive stylistic elements can be an advantage in the market place, but I would hope that 'fan art', per se, would always remain a field where the artist felt free to explore, to stay loose, to develop and experiment with style rather than become a slave to it. In my own case, I have 'used' fan art as a medium to develop and perfect a repertoire of stylistic elements; eyes, body shapes, facial expressions, wrinkles in clothing, patterns, use of solid black etc. Sometimes these experiments are successful, sometimes they aren't. In my case, I think the most successful ones are those which fit my love for cartooning, and so my 'recognisable style' evolves "

You seem to separate 'fan art' from 'pro art' a bit there, Grant. There is certainly more freedom to the fan artist since he is less bound by editorial dictates and can experiment more. This is bound to improve the overall level of fan art...and no worry over losing cash while playing around. I fully agree with letting a style 'evolve' - keep drawing any which way you like, and ker-pow! One fine day, you find style fairly oozing out of your pencil ends.

Grant also mentioned the 'morgue' or reference file of illos which many a pro artist uses when needing to draw some off-trail



illustration. Not copying, Harry...simply 'doing one's homework'. Saves getting too many spikes on Liberty's head gear, or Nelson with the wrong arm and eye up the spout. Personally, rather than clip magazines and file the pieces, I rely on three sets of encyclopedias (which I bought for my kids) when something like this crops up. Much easier to store, already filed, and easier to handle. The idea does show however, the lengths to which professionals need to go to equip themselves over and above the ability to waggle a paint brush.

Another aspect of working on commission comes from Dave Rowe who got the following :- "Perhaps I shouldn't knock a likely market, but in one case they ask for a one-handed barbarian and fail to say which hand. They also fail to state the size. On another request, they give the size as "8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 10", 'drawing will be drawn width across and for a cover '..."preferably a planet being invaded by a flying saucer". Knowing Dave, he'll have struggled manfully to carry out that assignment, but such a request bears out what I said about lack of specification in such cases from many would-be purchasers. Most fan artists try to oblige when asked for artwork...but they do like to know what's happening. If the editor has ideas, let him state 'em as clearly as possible, or leave things entirely up to the artist...but whichever way he cuts it... TELL the artist how he proposes to reproduce his work.

Which brings me with all the finesse of a sledgehammer to another point made by Grant Canfield.

"I guess the thing that bugged me the most were some of the letters asking for fan art, especially for a proposed first issue which was going to be published like right away so they needed the artwork immediately, right? Eleven months later you write to ask, "Where's the ish?" and they say, "Oh, hey, yeah, thanks for the art, we're going to publish real soon." It took me a long time to realise that words like, "immediately," "imminent", and "real soon now" are fannish hyperbole, meaning sometime maybe in the next year. Sometimes the letters were nasty. They assume you're stuck up if you don't send them art, when in fact I (speaking for a select minority of fan artists including only myself) cannot possibly supply artwork or even LOCs to all the editors faunching for them."

I'm with you right along the line Grant. Art costs money to mail...to the US, go over $\frac{1}{2}$ an oz and its 22p for a few illos. Offhand, I only know of DAVE GRIFFIN (Put that name in lights) who has the courtesy to include return postage when asking for material. Then there is one faned...who shall be nameless...who does NOT pay his contributors...but asks for art to be sent to him along with postage for its return. I'd like to send illos to all who ask...finances won't allow it...but I'm danged if I'm going to speculate at my own expense BOTH ways.

Which brings me to what is virtually the end of this column...and the GHASTLY REALISATION THAT I HAVE TYPED EVERY PAGE...to a quarto line length...instead of the new super sized A4 TRIODE. This is called 'dropping a clanger' and therefore I shall tell Eric nothing about it until he gets the issue to collate and finds out for himself. Meanwhile...let's be having your contributions for this section.

Bestest,

Terry Jeeves

F A N S A R D

A D D E N D A

((((()))

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Art, like writing, can be appreciated by anybody with an ounce of sense in their heads. When you read, you ask yourself how well was this done? What devices did the author use to support his subject? Was the style appropriate, or did it impede reading? Was the flow suited to the amount of story, or did it drag or rush you through? How vivid was the imagery? Was there any imagery? Allusions? Pleasing use of language? Most fans feel they are somewhat competent to evaluate written work (whether they are or not) and therefore, however well, use the above sort of scheme in making a judgement.

To judge artwork you do exactly the same sort of thing.

Did the drawing style compliment the idea. How well was expression captured? What artistic conventions did the artist use to exaggerate the impact of the drawing, and how well has he used them? Was the picture confusing or obscure as to meaning? What associations does the artist recall with his imagery? Was he witty, languid, feverish, profound, awed, agonised, or provoking any other mood strongly? Did the objects he drew resemble the object in any concrete or abstract fashion?

If you are still confused, the best thing might be to ask the artist what he thought he was drawing and how he drew it so it would be the best representation of it he thought possible. Most artists will be at least able to begin to tell you, and in time you will catch on. ((Another question to ask could be how well did the fan-editor use the 'ambiguous fillo's' he asked the artist for? eb.))

+++++

I've known Terry Jeeves for more years than either of us care to mention and during that time he has been beating me consistently at Draughts (Checkers), however, I can forgive him this as he's also been responsible for publishing or duplicating 90% of my fannish output - I hope the rest of you can forgive him for that! He's also, over the years provided succour and Soggies worldwide to new fans and old, and put out almost innumerable issues of his own fnz ERG. He must be one of the UK fans best known in America and will prove an excellent ambassador to send. He may even be able to help them recover from the Bi-Centennial celebrations! If chosen, he will write a TAFF REPORT and also hopes to make a filmed-record of his journeyings. I think you should vote for him.....for these reasons, and many others.

Eric Bentcliffe.

AND SO DO....Jan Howard Finder.

Chris Fowler.

Lynn Hickman.

and Ed Connor.

