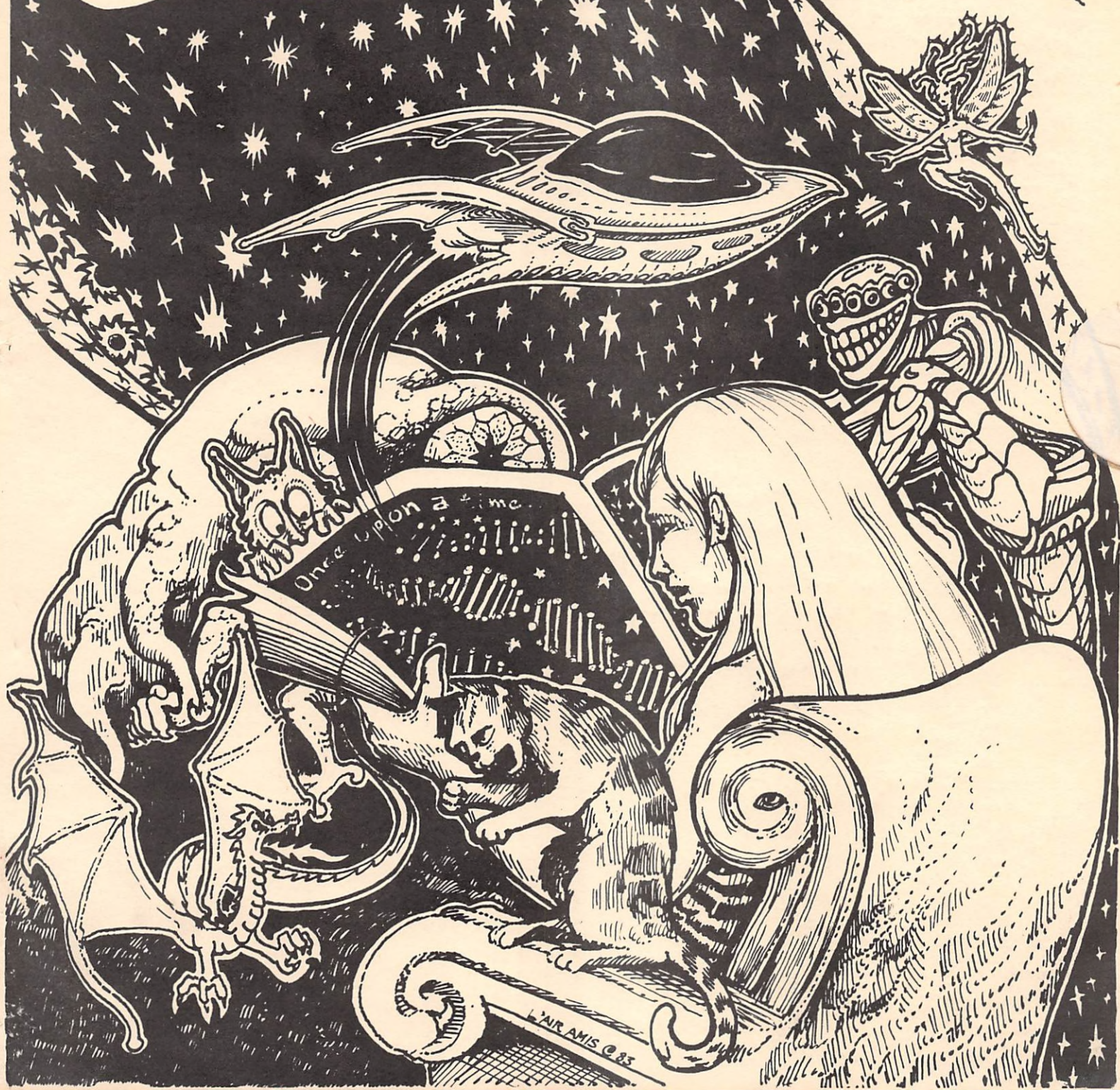


35



WAIT A MINUTE!

I'VE READ THE BOOK
THAT THIS REVIEWER
IS TALKING ABOUT...

I DON'T REMEMBER
THERE BEING ANY SEX-
CRAZED ASTEROID PIRATES?
OR KILLER SPONGES OR
ANY OF THIS STUFF?

WHICH REVIEWER?

OH... HIM. HE'S
THE ONE GOT A
JOB WRITING
COVER BLURBS.

IS HE
CRAZY?



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Fog

this is
TWILIGHT ZINE 35

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The Star Chamber

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Editorial
by L. Shawn Gramates

This is Twilight Zine number 35.

When I began to think about this editorial I was enraged by Constellation's publication of "Rotsler's Rules for Masquerades" ("... at the suggestion of too many people to mention.") Many of these rules are admittedly very reasonable, but four of the first eight make unkind reference to the concept of the physique (and not the costumes) of contestants. To wit:

1. There should be a weight limit for the purchase of leotards.
2. Every contestant should first see himself/herself from the rear.
4. Select costumes and characters suited to your personality and/or body type.
8. Consider carefully before going nude or seminude. What looks good in the bedroom or bath may not be spectacular on stage.

It sounds like fandom is trying to follow the lead of society at large. Beautiful people only need apply.

Several of these rules clearly suggest that fat people are unattractive and should be ashamed to show their bodies. It seems odd to me that the same fans who eagerly follow plump, scantily dressed ladies up and down the hotel corridors at cons are suddenly repelled by their appearance on stage. The anorexic standard of beauty has only been popular for about twenty years, you know. Do we really need to help promote it?

Besides, bare fat may be highly appropriate to a costume, as in, for example, a re-creation of the fat women in "Quest for Fire", the enormous exotic dancer in "Return of the Jedi", or mythological figures too numerous to mention. Have you noticed, in fact, that fat is only horrible to look at when it has been uncomfortably bound or restricted? I know it can be designed around; many of you have seen my famous "how-does-it-stay-on?" white toga. I made that when I weighed 165 pounds — and it looked great!

Then there was all the furor over "media costumes".

I've heard people proclaim the need for these rules.

"The Worldcons are too big! Too many people want to be in the masquerade! We have to set limits somewhere!"

I realized the true nature of the problem.

We're taking ourselves too seriously.

The Masquerade is turning into a fashion show. Why, it doesn't even need an audience, just judges and contestants.

The solution is obvious. Abolish the Masquerade. No, not the event where everyone shows up in costume, just the formal competition. Bring back that tradition of the early Worldcons, the Masquerade Ball! If wanted, wandering judges could award prizes. A central pedestal could be provided for those who want to offer a better view of their glorious work. The band argument (for dancing) can be sidestepped. Avoid bands, offer recorded music, with styles changing frequently. First Fandom can foxtrot if they want, and younger fans can indulge in odd motions to decadent noise. Perhaps those of us who have forgotten what despised, unattractive nerds we all were in high school will have the good taste to refrain from mouthing off to those of us with unfashionable builds. And if half the participants show up dressed as members of Starfleet Command, or the Rebel Alliance, well, who'll care?

After all, we're just fans.

EDITORIAL

or

Lock Up the Kids, Mabel-Here They Come Again!

by Janice Eisen

I suppose you're wondering why I've called you all here...Actually, I've been wondering that myself. What is the purpose of this publication? Well, according to Ken Johnson, it exists to print our Want List. The Skinner considers it a home for book reviews that can get us (or keep us) on publishers' review copy lists. It's billed as a club journal, but the only Society business we print is the Minutes, which are utterly incomprehensible even to most members (MITSFS meetings were once described by someone as "the world's longest continuously-running in-group joke"). Hugo Gernsback, who proposed the idea of publishing back in 1960 (I'm sure he's in Hell for that) intended it to be an outlet for teaching science through science fiction, but somehow I doubt we're doing too good a job of propagandizing these days.

Well, then, if I can't explain why this zine is here, maybe I can explain why I'm here. That's an easy one. I'm stupid. I should have quit way back in June when the Skinner grabbed me and said: "I want TZ ready for the beginning of September, so talk to Shawn and get going on it." Silly me, I said sure, no problem. Maybe I wanted the egoboo (what egoboo?). Or something. No, I'm just stupid.

To keep up a bit of the pretense that this is a clubzine, I'll report a few of the actions taken by MITSFS recently. We voted to send Reagan a letter about something or other, argued strenuously over which letter to send him, and finally decided to send him four "Q"s. We accepted many donations, the most important of which were two bananas (one reserve, one circulating). We condemned the weather. We trashed "V". We argued over whether to sue the makers of "The Star Chamber" for copyright infringement. We joined the Campus Crusade for Cthulhu. We engaged (are still engaging) in a death-struggle with the Dean for Student Affairs (boo-hiss) and the Student Art Association (@c\$\$\$&#&c**&&c#@°+!!) over more Library space. (We need it; they don't want to give it to us.) We had two Meetings and a party at Boskone which went so well we plan to do it again (especially since we sold copies of TZ34 to so many suckers). We made t-shirts (see ad later on). We ate a lot of Chinese food. We battled with lightsabers and Wiffle bats. And, as usual, we flamed. About Heinlein, about Ellison, about Society policy, about Reagan, about libertarianism, about feminism, about John Norman, about the Hugos, about morals, about Teddy Kennedy ("If he'd been driving a Volkswagen, he'd be President now..."), about Nixon (still), about...well, put it this way: if you walked in the Library and announced that the sky was blue, you could find yourself involved in a three-hour argument about defining your terms and the nature of reality.

And speaking of flames, the room for mine is almost at an end. There's a lot of ~~excellent good mediocr~~ well-typed stuff in this issue, so share and enjoy. (And thanks go the Department of Defense, one of the sources of funding of the computer on which some of this zine was text-edited. Thanks, generals!)

THE MEETING

Minutes of 6/24/83

(Taken and annotated by Janice Eisen, with apologies to E.A. Poe)

Once upon a Friday dreary, while we pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of John Norman's Gor--
While we nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of someone loudly rapping Gavel of titanium ore.
"Tis our Skinner," we all muttered, "starting meeting as before--
Only this and nothing more."

Minutes read by pseudo-Onseck--last week's flaming, all of that dreck--
Were accepted as well-read upon Ken's¹ motion from the floor.
There were several other motions, but they all were silly notions,
And they died, these stupid motions, since them all we did ignore.
"Modern record," noted Vice², "--six pages read, no less, no more--"
Filed here for evermore.

And the Onseck showed a letter written saying that they'd better
Give out barf bags if on Star Trek Club³ cartoons they showed once more.
Jourcomm said, "TZ Real Soon Now" and explained to all the room how
Book reviews and art are needed for a zine we can adore.
Apathycomm reported, "Yawn." By Ghu, this meeting is a bore--
Yes it is, and nothing more.

Gemcomm said we must be fated to forever be elated--
Winning prizes of Black Stars of India to rest in a drawer.⁴
An attempt was made by Skinner to skip Old Business and hurry to dinner,
But the Onseck was the winner and Old Business was once more.
Mr. Ebrom, an ex-Skinner, bowed 'midst apathy from the floor
--That was it and nothing more.

1. Kenneth R. Johnson, our very useful Librarian.

2. Vice = pseudo-Onseck

3. A program on WSBK (Channel 38) hosted by Trekkies.

4. We have twice received mail from some organization which seems to be running an elaborate promotional scam. They keep telling us we'll win \$10,000 in gold or a worthless stone. Guess what we keep winning.

Starr's⁵ business from last week was heard: a third-rate burglary occurred
Eleven years ago last week (remember the tape on the door?).
Some discussion, much applause, and it almost gave us pause.
Then glob⁶ transcript of JFK tapes (see attached)⁷ was really poor--
Every word was garbled and the speakers nameless evermore--
Merely this and nothing more.

Said Sitcomm: Channel 38, in order to commemorate
The movie Twilight Zone tonight is showing episodes, three or four.
Old Business Algol, all that guff, and all the usual stuff,
Till we thought we'd had enough of motions from the days of yore--
A.R. Lewis, Wisowaty, I. Lapeer, and many more--
Remembered are for evermore.

Kathy,⁸ purring like a kitten, showed a Star Trek story written
By a young man named Dave Broadbent who was 14 then, no more.
David⁹ by this was quite flustered--ran away, the silly bustard--
But a posse soon was mustered, dragged him back in through the door.
He agreed to autograph it, though he was embarrassed sore--
Sat, and blushed, and nothing more.

Sally Ride on Earth has landed, and some repartee was bandied
Over whether shuttle hosted feelthy acts while it did soar.
When 'twas said that NASA did to fly with husband her forbid,
We condemned them, yes we did, for keeping us in suspense sore.
"What's it like in free fall?" One of the great questions, to be sure--
We shall wonder evermore.

5. Bill Starr, son of a famous sf author of the same name.

6. A Boston "newspaper" which long ago had its name truncated and was banished to lower case.

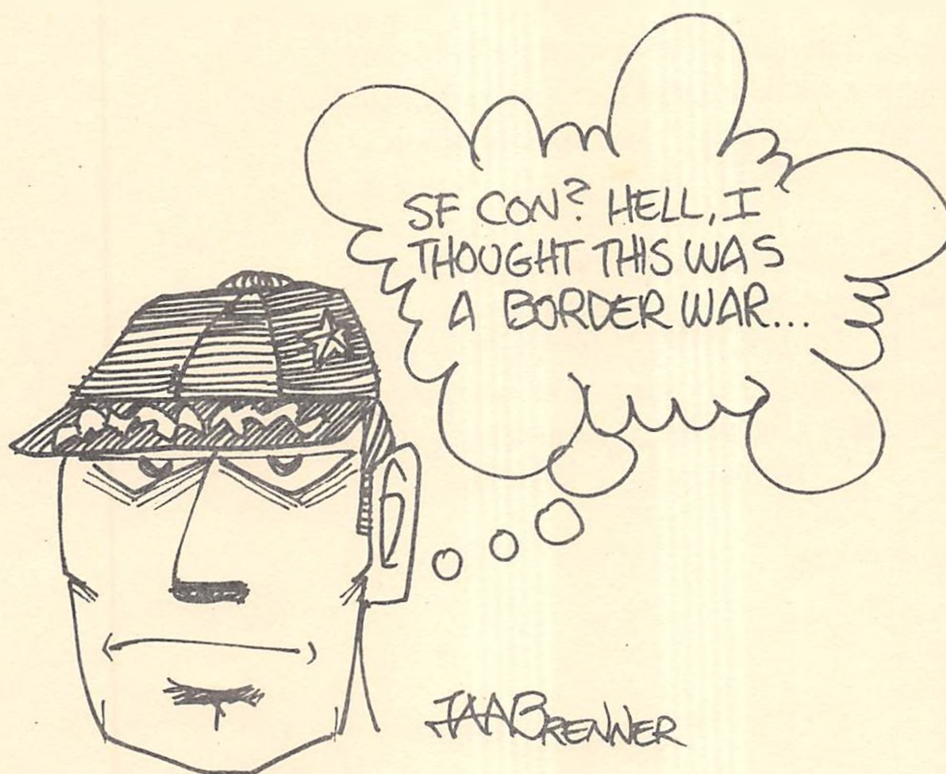
7. You can't, because the clipping is attached to the original minutes.

8. Kathy Godfrey, an inveterate collector of awful fanzines.

9. He's 20 now.

MBTA this week stated: "Rear wheels wrong shape." A bit belated.¹⁰
Note that when the Shuttle landed out on California's shore,
Good news: "Beer's cold! Hip-hip-hooray!" Bad news: "It's 3K miles away!"
Skinner gave some Minicults but we had heard them both before--
Souls got weight and trees can talk--yeah, yeah, why don't you tell me more?
Quoth the members: "What a bore."

Meeting started to get slower as our energy got lower.
We discussed some film cassettes that we'd vote on in one week more.
Motion to commend the MITSFS for being banana republic--by Janice--¹¹
And we passed it in some manner as we voted from the floor.
Meeting adjourned--17:something SST, I am not sure.
Quoth the Skinner, "Nevermore."



10. That is, the rear wheels on some subway cars that have been in use for several years.

11. Me.

In this issue of Twilight Zine, we are pleased to introduce a new continuing feature, Science on the March. In it, new and exciting advances in the world of science will be revealed and discussed by world famous scientist and author Professor Hound Huckelstein.

SCIENCE ON THE MARCH:

The Gavel Phenomenon

Some of the most widely misunderstood objects in the world today are the "gavels": several large pieces of metal shaped somewhat like huge wrenches which have been brought to light only in this century. While many now know them to be devices of awesome power, few actually know the extent to which they have played a role in history. To learn more about them I journeyed to Cambridge, Massachusetts, to the MIT Science Fiction Society, where all three of the world's known gavels reside (the Soviet Academy of Sciences claims not only that they have several, but that they invented gavels; however, they refuse to show any to the outside world).

The results of extensive testing of the gavels disclosed many interesting facts. Chemical and spectroscopic testing has revealed that they are made of a substance (dubbed gavellite) which is closely related to kryptonite. Indeed, it appears that the two are different forms of the same material, which has been called gavellium; kryptonite is the crystalline form, while gavellite is the metallic form. While no samples of gavellium exist, it has been theorized that it is a superdense material, with a great deal of latent energy trapped in it. It must have been formed soon after the Big Bang, that being the only time when the conditions were right, and then exploded, spreading debris throughout the universe. This theory agrees with the radioactive dating of the gavels, of around 4.6 billion years. Krypton appears to have been formed around a core of gavellium and kryptonite fragments, Kryptonians having gained a special immunity to the deadly kryptonite radiations with the aid of their red sun. When their planet exploded, however, the kryptonite was altered and now affects only those who had gained the immunity but are without the special red sun radiations. Many of the fragments of the original gavellium explosion have made their way to Earth, mostly in the form of gavellite. The concentration of gavellium on this planet was increased by all the pieces of Krypton which fell here (originally they were in the crystalline kryptonite form, but were converted to the metallic gavellite form which was mistaken for iron at the time, 1970).

The fact that the concentration of gavellium on Earth is much higher than can be naturally accounted for has been remarked on; indeed, it seems that it is gravitating to our planet, and in particular to one point in Cambridge, where the highest known concentration of gavellium exists in the form of the three gavels. They appear to have been carved several thousand years ago, but no exact date can be assigned as they conform to no known prehistoric civilization: they lack the grace of typical works of the Old Elvish Empires; their metallic state rules out Mu and Atlantis, which never worked with metals, as it does the Druidic Priests, who only used stone; and none of the Barbarian Civilizations had the skill or power to fashion them. No exact records exist as to how the MITSFS gained possession of them, only vague recollections of strange compulsions that led certain people (all of whom later went on to become Skinner, or leader, of the Society) to odd places where they found a gavel waiting for them. There does indeed seem to be a connection between the organization and these powerful objects.

But what are the powers of the gavels? Gavellium itself has widely unpredictable powers. A meteorite composed of grayish-colored kryptonite which fell to Earth in 1795 in Wold Newton, a small village in England, caused genetic mutations in those nearby which later led to the birth of such heroes as Doc Savage and Tarzan (see the works on the subject by P.J. Farmer for further information). It is theorized that the power rings and batteries of Oa are made out of a unique blend of gavellium, with the metallic form of gavellite and the greenish hue and energy-radiating qualities of kryptonite (the Guardians have refused to comment on this, as did Thor as to the exact composition of his hammer). The latent energies are multiplied

many times when the gavellite form is put into the "gavel" shape (so called because they are used as such at meetings of the Society). Each of the gavels, when wielded by the Skinner, can be used to bring about localized continua shifts, such as time and space displacements. Natural constants can be temporarily re-defined, again on a localized basis, and rays of substantial force can be emitted; it also has served as a tracking device and a can-opener.

The question of exactly how many of these gavels exist had also been unanswered, up until a few weeks ago. In a fascinating experiment, which I was fortunate enough to observe, one of the gavels was bombarded with a variety of radiations. Nothing happened. Then the Skinner picked the gavel up, thinking the experiment was over, and strange writing appeared on the hilt, which faded away in minutes, but not before it had been carefully photographed. Under close examination it turned out to be English, and is as follows:

3 Gavels for the dolphins, under the sea,
7 for the avians, at home in the air,
9 for the humans, dumb as can be,
One for the MITSFS Skinner, so there!
In the Land of Cambridge, home to you and me.
One Gavel to rule them all, One Gavel to need them;
One Gavel to come before all, and in the confusion lead them.
In the land of Cambridge, home to you and me.

Thus a great many things were learned about the gavels and their makers, not the least of which is that they were bad poets.

(In the second half of this article, I will discuss more fully the relationship between the gavels and MITSFS, and Skinners in particular. I will reveal the incredible breeding project which has produced the Skinners, who alone can use the gavels properly, and have many other powers as well, it turns out, and the quest for the One True Skinner, who will wield the Final Gavel in the "Time of Confusion", when the time streams from all the ages will converge on us. Be sure to read it all in the next issue of Twilight Zine.)



Rock and Roll Refrigerator
by
John Juliano

It was a weekday night early in January, and the Celtics were on television. This meant that if you wanted to find Monty Beckett, all you had to do was visit the den of the small brown house with the black trim at the end of Penny Lane. As usual, the only light in the room came from the screen of a small black-and-white Sony tuned to the station carrying the game. Monty had come home from work, wolfed down his dinner, and flipped on the "tube" at precisely 7:30m, just like he had for years. He had been stretched out on the decaying yellow sofa now for an hour and a half, and the game was drawing to a close.

With less than a minute left, Danny Ainge hit a three-point shot to put the Celtics up by seven and essentially wrap up the game. Monty bolted up from his inclined position, shouted, "Oh yeah" and clapped his hands together. He called for his wife. "Ethel! You gotta see this shot! C'mere! On your way in, too, can you bring me a beer?"

He heard no reply, and shrugged his shoulders. After watching the last few seconds of the game, he tried again. "Ethel, can you get a beer for me out of the refrigerator and bring it in here?"

Monty heard nothing for a moment, then the sound of the bedroom door opening. "Monty, honey, I'm in the middle of my Spiro Agnew book. Can't you get it yourself?"

"Yeah, yeah," he grumbled. Monty was getting old and fat, and didn't really like to move unless it was a life-or-death matter. His post-game beer indeed fell under this category, so he creaked into an upright position and stumbled out of the den into the darkened kitchen. He fumbled momentarily for the light, found it, flipped it on and shuffled to the old Norge he had bought for himself and Ethel on their tenth wedding anniversary.

Yawning, he opened it. Instead of finding his trusty six-pack of Bud sitting on the bottom shelf, the poor startled man was greeted with

SHE LOVES YOU, YA YA YA
SHE LOVES YOU, YA YA YA
WITH A LOVE LIKE THAT YOU KNOW YOU SHOULD BE GLAD

He shut the door. Taken aback, he yelled down the hall. "Ethel? Ethel, honey?"

Exasperated, his wife yelled back, "What is it this time, Monty?"

"The Beatles are in our refrigerator, Ethel."

"That's nice, dear. I hope they didn't eat my lemon meringue pie."

Monty just stood there, puzzled. He scratched his head, nervously tapped his feet a couple of times, and then reluctantly reached for the door handle. Cautiously, he pulled the door open once more.

IT'S BEEN A HARD DAY'S NIGHT

AND I'VE BEEN WORKING LIKE A DOG

IT'S BEEN A HAR-

"Ethel, I'm dead serious! Honest to God, the Beatles are in here!"

"Honey, you've been working too hard. Maybe you should take a week off. Honestly, sometimes you worry me..."

"Dammit, Ethel, listen for yourself!" Monty ripped open the door with all the force a two hundred and twenty pound man can, nearly removing it from its hinges.

I WANNA HOLD YOUR HA-A-ND

I WANNA HOLD YOUR HAND

He closed the door triumphantly. "Did you hear that, Ethel? Huh? HUH??"

"It's only the radio, dear. You know, those 'Stars on 45' or whatever they call themselves. Heavens, kids these days will listen to anything..."

By now, Monty was furious. He had reached the breaking point. "Only the radio, my ass! Those stars aren't on forty-five, they're in the fuckin' refrigerator! Dammit, Ethel, I'll show you..." he stormed into the hall and threw open the door. His wife was sitting on the bed reading her book, naked. "Ethel, you get out here right now. You're going to see this with your own eyes."

Ethel gasped and pulled the covers over her body. Indignantly, she said, "Well, let me at least get some clothes on. We couldn't have Pau McCartney see me naked, now, could we?" She smirked at him sarcastically.

Monty pointed his finger at her and started to yell, but just then the Becketts' fourteen-year-old daughter walked into the parents' bedroom. "Mom? Is Daddy taking Valerum, or whatever it is again?"

Monty whirled around. "IT'S VALIUM, AND NO, I AM NOT TAKING IT! GET TO BED RIGHT NOW!" the man bellowed at his daughter.

"Geez, be a bitch much?" she pouted, and left the room. By then, Ethel had slipped on a night gown and was standing by the door. "Did you have to snap at her like that? Now come on, let's go see this... this...whatever it is."

Monty dragged her into the kitchen. "Ethel, open the door."

"To the refrigerator?"

"OPEN IT!"

Ethel glanced curiously at her husband, shrugged her shoulders, and pulled it open.

EIGHT DAYS A WEEK, I LO-O-OVE YOU

EIGHT DAYS A WEEK IS NOT ENOUGH TO SHOW I CARE

"Monty, the Beatles are in our refrigerator."

"No shit, Sherlock. Whaddaya think I've been telling you for the last ten..."

"Ethel frowned. "Monty, those poor boys! They must be cold in there! Here, dear, let's let them out..."

"The hell!" exclaimed Monty. "They're going to stay in there until we can figure out just what the hell is going on here!"

"Now, now, Monty," scolded Ethel. She opened the door again to find the four English musicians relaxing and sipping Buds. "Come on out, boys! My, you must be cold. Come, come, I'll put on some soup..."

"Ethel, stop them! they're drinking my beer!" Monty stopped and covered his face with his hands. "What am I talking about? I don't even know if they exist! How can they be...but..."

"Oh dear, do be hospitable."

Before he could argue, the first one stepped out. "Hello, Mr. Beckett. My name's Paul- Paul McCartney."

Monty eyed the young man suspiciously. "Kinda figured you'd say that. Who are your- ahem- friends?"

"Let me introduce you then. Mr. Beckett, meet John Lennon, and George Harrison, and Ri-"

"Let me guess," said Monty, tongue in cheek. "Your name must be Ringo Starr."

The four young men looked at each other, confused, and then started giggling. "No sir, that's not me name," said the one that

had been addressed by the question. "Me name's Richard Starkey." He smiled, and then looked thoughtful for a moment. "Ringo Starr... Ringo...Starr...You know, boys, I kinda like that name. What do you say I use it?"

"God, no, it's silly," spurted the one claiming to be John Lennon, despite his apparent death two years earlier.

"I don't know, I think it's cute," said Paul. "Yes, go with it ...Ringo!" The four burst into laughter.

Monty, on the other hand, had had it. "How'd you get in ~~there~~? How'd you know my name? What the Christ is going on here? ETHELLLLL!!!"

"Soup's almost on, boys. Bowls~~are~~ in ~~the~~ cabinet above the dishwasher; spoons are in here, third drawer on the right. Help yourself."

"Why, thank you, ma'am!" George exclaimed, and the four Beatles grabbed bowls and spoons and sat down at the table. Monty, meanwhile, paled and leaned on a nearby countertop for support to watch something he could not believe was happening. George looked up at him, smiled, and admitted that it was quite cramped in the Norge.

"Yes, quite," continued John, in agreement. "That's why we were sort of...you know...you could...er...put us up for the night?"

"Why of course!" replied the genial woman, as Monty nearly fainted from shock. "I wouldn't think of forcing you to sleep in the Norge again! Two of you can sleep in my son Frank's room, ant the other two can sleep in the den."

"You sure Frank won't mind?" asked Rich-er, Ringo.

"No, no, of course not. My kids were brought up to be hospitable to guests. He'll be glad to have you for the night."

"Ethel, get your ass into the bedroom, pronto!" screamed Monty, storming down the hall.

Ethel gave a disgusted skyward glance and sighed, "Oh, now, boys, don't you mind Monty. He's been a bit cranky since they cancelled Lou Grant on him. He really loved that show. I'll put fresh sheets on the cot in Frank's room. I'll see you boys in a little while!"

Ethel happily strolled down the hall, her mood a direct contrast to Monty's. At that same time, he was angrily drumming his fingers on the windowsill waiting for his wife and staring blankly out the

window. She reached the bedroom and tapped lightly on the door, and Monty turned to confront her.

He lifted his finger and opened his mouth to speak, but before he could utter a word, Ethel was joyously gushing about their new guests. "Oh, Monty, isn't this great? We've got guests for the night! The last guest we had was...oh, it's been so long...it must have been your Uncle Ezekiel three years ago..."

"Please, Ethel, don't bring up Uncle Zeke again..."

"That's right--he died the morning after he stayed here, didn't he? Anyway, don't you think it's wonderful, having these young stay the night?"

Although Monty was furious, he was holding it all in admirably. He grabbed his wife by the shoulders and shook her sternly. "Ethel. Calm down. Think about this now. See that calender? It says November 15, 1982. Now, think, dear. First of all, they're the fucking Beatles, one of whom has been dead almost two years now. They haven't been seen together for twelve years. Secondly, they came out of the refrigerator. Not the front door, mind you--I might have been to handle that, just maybe--no, they strpped out of our refrigerator, Ethel. Finally, they seem to think it's 1964 or 1964. They have no concept of where they are or when this is. Now they---whatever they are--are not going to stay in this house tonight, or any night, for that matter. Do you understand?" By now, his face was red and he was outof breath. he collapsed in a nearby chair.

Ethel was not fazed by the tirade in the least. "Oh, dear, you're such a grump sometimes. Let me go make their beds for the night." She frowned and turned stern for a moment "You--be nice to them. They must have had a rough day, spending all of it in the old Norge. If you're mean to them, I wouldn't blame them if they spread the word all over town about how inhospitable you are. Then," she said with a shudder, "we might never have guests again."

"I refuse to believe this, Ethel! They absolutely, positively cannot stay--"

Just then, their son walked in. "Dad? Mom?" He rubbed his eyes and approached the two apprehensively.

"What is it, Frankie?" Ethel replied with a smile and a wink, fully aware of what he was going to ask.

"Paul McCartney and George Harrison just put all their stuff in my room. They said you said they could sleep in there tonight."

"Stick up for me kid," Monty muttered under his breath.

Ethel instinctively patted him on the head. "That's right dear. Now you be nice to them. Remember what I taught you kids about how to treat guests."

"Aw, Mom..."

"Now, I don't want to hear any argument from you," she scolded. "Promise you'll be a good boy?"

Frank stuck his bottom lip out and blew air over the top of his face, sending his bangs out to either side. "Ph, I guess," he said disgustedly. "As long as they don't use my Electronic Football Game..."

"Frankie!" cried his mother.

"OK, OK, OK, If they want to, I'll let them. Geez, Mom, why can't you get Olivia Newton-John? Her I'd sleep with..."

Ethel sighed and looked at Monty, who by now had nearly passed out on the floor after listening to the conversation. "Oh, dear, our little boy is growing up. Well, maybe some day we'll get her to visit --if and only if you're nice to these boys. Come now, be a good boy and help me make the beds.

Frank began to follow his mother out of the room, but his father grabbed him by the arm before he could get out the door. "Frank," asked Monty, desperately hoping for someone to see things his way, "don't you ~~shan~~ anything weird about this whole thing?"

The boy paused for a moment, then nodded. "Yeah, I guess it is weird," he conceded.

"Thank God!" exulted the joyous father.

"Yeah, the Beatles never came to Vermont before. I wonder why all of a sudden they've decided to come?"

Monty stood up and roared. He was mad as hell and even more confused than ~~he~~ was mad. "GO! GO HELP YOUR MOTHER! JUST GET OUT OF HERE!"

Frank ran out of the room, and Monty sat down again by the window sill and put his head in his hands. "I don't fucking believe this," he repeated over and over to himself. He looked up out the window after a couple of minutes and rested his chin in his hands. "My whole family's gone off the deep end."

He shook the cobwebs out of his head and dejectedly walked out the room. Strolling by his daughter Kim's room, he saw Paul McCartney tenderly kissing her. "So my daughter is making out with Paul McCartney. So what else is new around here?"

Shaking his head, he walked into the living room and flipped on Quincy. He flopped into his armchair, and turned his head toward the dining room. "Incredible," he mumbled to himself. Turning around to face the dining room table, the baffled man said, "The whole thing is so weird. I mean, first you guys show up in my refrigerator, then sta--"

He stopped speaking abruptly, realizing there was no one at the table. Not only were there no Beatles, there were no spoons, no napkins, no nothing. Now Monty was truly frustrated. Was he just imagining things, or were the Beatles just very neat people by nature? Was it he who was losing his marbles, or was his family as a whole headed for the big brick house on the hill? His head was spinning.

"Man, I gotta get myself a beer," he softly said, not knowing who might be listening to his ramblings. He stood up, stretched, and headed for the refrigerator. Just before he reached his destination, though, he stopped and froze. He just eyed the fridge and started laughing. "No way. No way in hell am I opening that door! God knows who it might be this time." He hit himself on the head. "What difference does it make, anyway? The Beatles drank my beer!" Maniacally laughing, he grabbed his coat. "Ethel?" he yelled down the hallway. "I'm going over to MacTavishes."

"Oh, Monty!" shouted Ethel. "You always go over to that damn bar and get drunk when people come to visit. Good, go then! See if I care! I can handle this myself."

Monty let out another crazed burst of laughter, and stepped out the door. It seemed unusually cold and dark outside. He closed the door gently behind him, and turned around to walk down the steps.

But he couldn't move.

He tried to move to his right, then to his left, then straight ahead, but it was to no avail. It was as if someone had built a wall around his porch. He frantically tried to go down the stairs again, but it was useless. It was also getting noticeably colder.

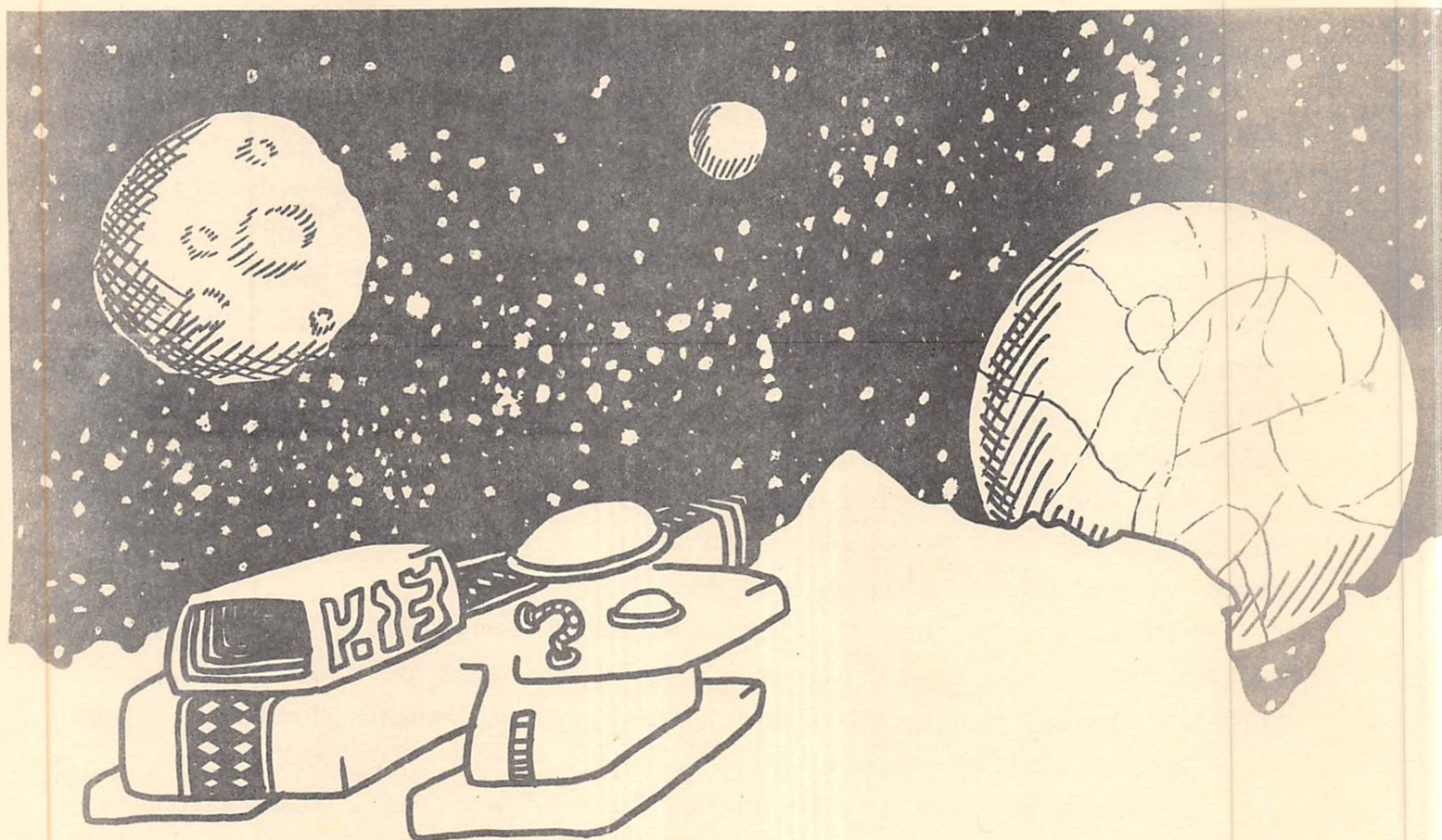
Petrified, he whirled around to find the door to get back into

the house. As he shuffled around groping for the doorknob, he felt himself kick something. Curious, he carefully squatted down and placed his hand on the object he had kicked. His sense of touch failed to recognize the object, so he picked it up and brought close to his eyes. Still unable to make it out, he struck a match to give him some light.

"No," Monty gasped as the glowing flame revealed to him the identity of the object in his right hand.

It was a half-empty gallon container of fresh, cold milk.

"Ethel! Frank! Kimberly!" he yelled, pounding on the walls around him. "Please, please come here!"



DISCLAVE:
The Illustrated Con Report

One fine Thursday morning, 5 people (myself included) piled their stuff into a huge U-Haul car-top carrier, and themselves into the teeny little car it was on top of. (fig. 1) Endeavoring not to tip over going around corners, or bottom out on any potholes, we departed scenic Cambridge and headed towards Washington D.C., and the Marriott Twin Bridges.

Our leaders have, on occasion, done some very clever things in their never ending efforts to defend these United States.

They reasoned that, if the Russians ever invade, they will wish to set up an occupation government, and therefore will wish to capture the Pentagon rather than destroy it, so that they can make use of all that prime office space (not to mention any bureaucrats who can be persuaded to stick around), and that transporting enough troops to capture such a huge building will have to be done by land, in armored troop carriers. Therefore the Pentagon has been surrounded by a network of highways that will keep anyone unfamiliar with it circling for hours, until they suddenly find themselves headed off in a direction they did not wish to go in, with no way to turn around. (fig. 2) Unfortunately, the Marriott Twin Bridges is rather near the Pentagon....

That it was the only one of the 23 Marriotts in Arlington without a 200 foot flashing red neon **MARRIOTT** sign did no help. It did not have such a sign because if it had had such a sign it would not have had such a sign for long. (fig. 3) I had never before noticed what a clever collection of rods and linkages and such comprise the landing gear of a Boeing 747.

As a result of height restrictions, the place was laid out like a motel. A quad was two double beds stuffed into a standard (small) motel room, leaving little room for the three extra people on the floor. The con committee defended their choice of hotel on the grounds that it had a large convention center, which we never used more than half of.



fig 1 Too many people in a VW Rabbit



Fig 2: How the Pentagon is protected against Russian invasion.



Fig 3: Airplane taking off from Washington National Airport.

Friday morning we saw the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum, which in addition to all the real spacecraft has the Enterprise model from the T.V. show hanging up over the entrance to the cafeteria. It's very small and phoney looking in person, and seems to have been scuffed in handling.

Friday evening the con really started with the costume party. It was your average con costume party (as opposed to the costume contests with stage appearances that they have at Boskones). They did have prizes, including one for best chains and leather. The couple who won that prize had definitely earned it.

The hotel did have a nice hot whirlpool bath, and a cold outdoor swimming pool, so one could go running out of the one and jumping into the other. (fig. 4) Apparently only those with Viking blood find this activity truly enjoyable.

Thursday night we put six people into the Rabbit, and went to a midnight show of ~~Revenge~~ Return of the Jedi. This was fun because when someone at the con would say "Please don't talk about Jedi, I haven't seen it yet." we could reply with "You lightweight, we've already seen it twice."

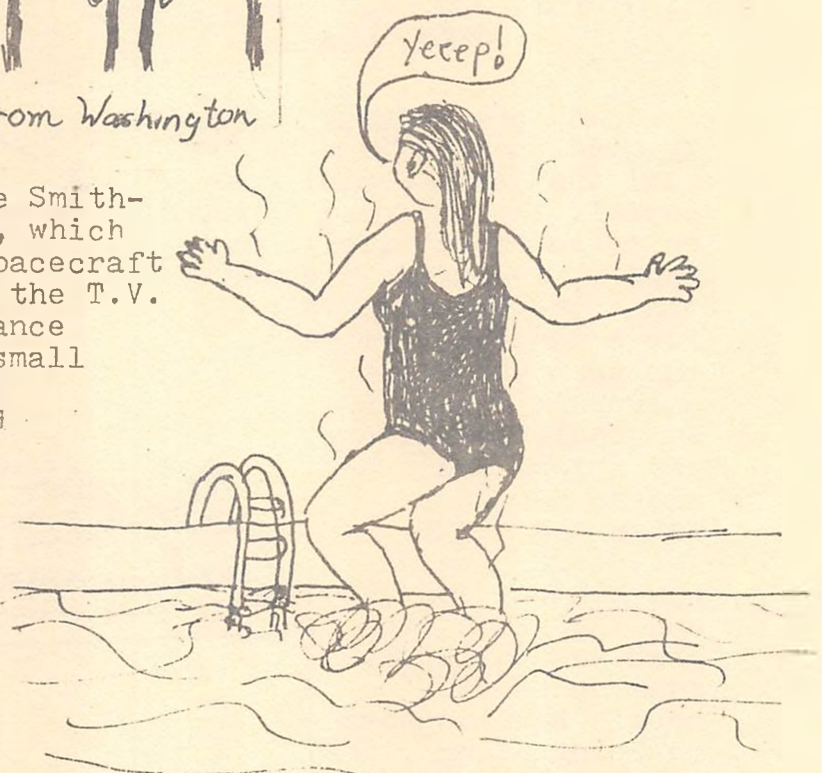


Fig 4: Learning how to levitate by jumping from a hot whirlpool tub into a cold pool.

For a "Guest
Martin
standing
ely.
with
who
he

of Honor", George R.R.
spent a lot of time
around looking lon-
We got to talking
Joe Haldeman,
mentioned that
would be teaching
M.I.T.'s S.F.
writing course
in the fall.
One of the
people talk-
ing with him
was Merryl
Gross, an
M.I.T. stu-
dent who had
signed up
for the
course
without
knowing who
would be
teaching
it. She
seemed
pleased.
(fig. 5)

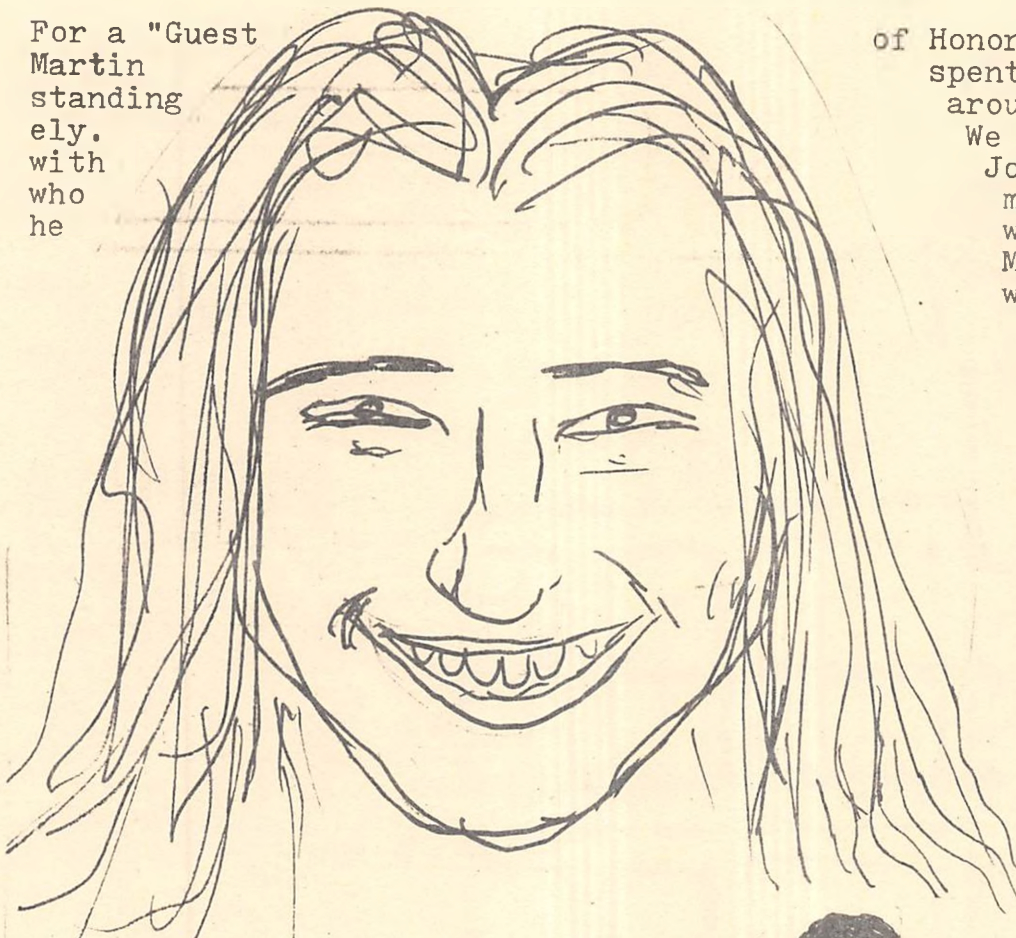


Fig 5: Merryl gets some
good news.

The programming was pret-
ty good, better (and better
run) than some recent Bos-
kones'. It included a panel
on space based missile de-
fenses, featuring a gen-
uine fire-breathing Air
Force General (retired),
the sort who thinks
universities are run
by commies, traitors
and spies, and con-
siders Reagan a
dangerous pinko.
The movie program
was kind of sparse,
and the video pro-
gram was obviously
made up of stuff
people had happened
to bring along (like
lots of Starblazers)

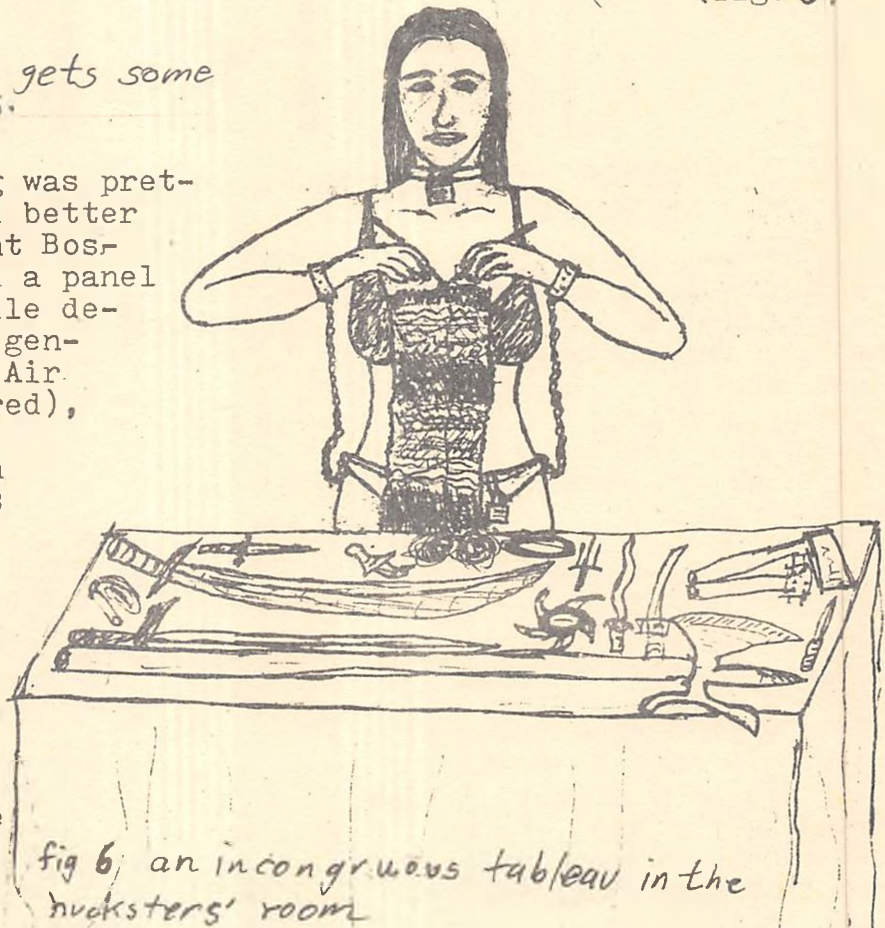


fig 6, an incongruous tableau in the
hucksters' room

but did have some nifty things, like an old Avengers episode. The hucksters' room was very impressive. It actually had more people selling books than junk. I found the first book of the Illuminatus trilogy, and several other people I knew found books they had been looking for. Of course, there were enough weapons dealers and costumed people to give an overall impression rather like the Sanctuary bazaar. Normally unexceptional activities (like knitting) can look bizarre and anachronistic under such circumstances. (fig. 6) There was someone there selling canes and staffs and such, which turned out to be a Good Thing.

There were pleasantly few obnoxious urchin types, at most a dozen or two. One of them, who claimed to be a gymnast, started playing Luke Skywalker, doing flips from the second floor balcony to the flower beds below. He did it twice successfully on Saturday. On Sunday he tried it again, but the Force was not with him. (fig. 7)



Fig 7 Someone thought he was Luke Skywalker, but he wasn't.

He spent the rest of the con hobbling about with a cane he had bought in the Hucksters' room (And I bet you thought the last sentence of the previous paragraph was totally pointless.), saying he thought he'd broken his heel, and would have it X-rayed after the con was over.



a. before



b. after

fig 8. NESFA stickers

There is less life in a NESFA con suite than there was in the hallway outside of DiClave's. The bheer and ice cream helped attract the crowd. The lobby of the convention center had crowds until 3:00 A.M. playing with a 30 foot boa constrictor. All the usual bid parties were there. It's hard to say very much about a whole lot of good parties, except that some of our group never got up before 5:00 P.M., and

one of them remains convinced to this day that Saturday must have been stolen because he doesn't remember it happening. MITSFS' long and honored (this time made twice) tradition of throwing dead dog parties was upheld. We got a bunch of NESFA's green "3" stickers and put circle-and-slashes on them with red magic markers. (fig 8.) We handed them out at our "anywhere but Boston in '89" party, which was a huge success. We even sold a few T.Z.s.

And Now a Word from our Skinner...

Skinner here, folks. And have I got some deals for you! First off, there's the fabulous 1983 MITSFS T-Shirt, each and every one bearing the Great Seal of the MITSFS. The cloth comes pre-soaked in 45 essential vitamins and minerals, and when immersed in water becomes fully fire-resistant. Dipped in liquid metal and shaped carefully the shirts make great cooking pots; roll them up and you've got a nifty headrest. Cut into shreds they can serve as noodles, and by raising the sleeves and twisting the tag you can pick up conversations on the Hot Line. And you can wear them, too. All for only \$5.00!!

And yes, even you can donate to The World's Largest Circulating SF Collection. We will accept any donation to this, our tax-exempt organization — books, mags, anything. You can even give us money (our preferred donation), in two different ways: (1) you can donate to the MITSFS Endowment Fund, c/o the MIT Alumni Association (an especially good way if you are an MIT grad), or (3) just send us the money directly (small, unmarked bills preferred).

Also available from MITSFS, Inc., are back issues of Twilight Zine, including the incredible Twenty Years in the Twilight Zine, the best of the first 33 issues, for only \$1.75!

And in December, it's MITSFS- The Motion Picture, starring Harrison Ford as The Skinner, Victoria Principal as The Vice, Lee Majors as The Lord High Embezzler, Harlan Ellison as The Onseck, and Jerry Mathers as The Beaver. Novelization by Alan Dean "Mr. Originality" Foster, directed by George and Steve, The \$\$-Duo, soundtrack by John (who else) Williams. Theme song "We're Not Fans, Dammit" sung by Carly Simon.

MORE TALES OF THE MITSFS: The Revenge...er, Return of the Star Chamber

The Case of the Pseudo-Skinner

by Janice M. Eisen

(Author's Note: Those devoted readers of Twilight Zine [all two of you] who read the last Tale of the MITSFS may note that the dramatis personae have changed completely, seemingly in the space of several months. Actually, the Star Chamber as represented lastish was that of two years earlier, made to appear current by the time and space warping capabilities of the One True Gavel and Jourcomm. [The one in this story is that of last fall.] The point is that the change of characters makes no difference at all, since the Society is actually run by a group of shadowy investors headed by the infamous Irwin T. Lapeer.)

It was a perfectly ordinary Friday afternoon in the Library as 1700 SST approached. Flames raged on all sides, sundry Downtrodden Members were being abused by the Keyholder on duty, passes were being made and repulsed, and randoms kept stopping by to ask the way to the Outing Club. All in all, an average Friday. Little did we suspect that unspeakable horrors were soon to ensue.

The natives began getting restless as 5 PM EST came and went. All were waiting for the appearance of the Skinner. As the minutes ticked by in the outside world, but stasis continued at the Center of the Universe, vague murmurs of a coup began to be heard. (Those who so murmured disintegrated immediately, of course, into small piles of grayish dust. Such is the power of the Skinner.)

The Vice, heaving a sigh and the Gavel, prepared to call the meeting to order herself. She was halted in mid-swing by a familiar voice (pretty strong voice, too, to halt a Gavel in flight) crying, "Hold it! I'm here."

Adina swung around, narrowly missing bashing in the head of a confused freshling, and, in a voice filled with relief, said, "Judy, am I glad to see you!" (A Keyholder was heard to mutter that he would have been gladder to see Judy if she had appeared in her black fishnet stockings, but he was silenced by the Skinner's glare, which wrapped a scarf around his head.)

"Hurry up and start the meeting," I said, "I want to make an Albanian motion."

Judy reached for the Gavel. The moment she touched it, it emitted a piercing screech and began to smoke. Then sparks started flying from it. The shock flung Judy across the desk and into the Zero Gravity Toilet.

As the smoke cleared, the Society stared in wonder. The Gavel had shut up as soon as Judy dropped it and was now lying smugly on the floor. The Lord High Embezzler and I looked at each other, then turned to the desk, where the Vice was helping a pale and shaken Skinner to a chair.

"There's only one possible cause for the Gavel's behavior," whispered Tim.

"I agree. But what do we do about it?"

"First of all," Tim said, raising his voice, "Adina, get away from her." An Embezzler can have a very commanding tone. Adina backed away.

Tim stood on a chair and spoke above the rising babble (which had by then reached a height of 2.4 meters). "O, ye Honorable Members of ye Glorious and Ineffable MITSFS!" he declaimed. "The being you see before you is not our Most Noble and Well-Beloved Skinner, but an incredible simulation!"

"What is all this bullshit?" someone asked.

Adina answered, her voice revealing the horror of her realization. "This Skinner is an impostor!"

Chaos was engendered. And Chaos Died, quelled by the confidence-inspiring presence of 75% of the Star Chamber (liberal use of the Gavel on some heads also helped). In an incredibly threatening flying wedge formation, the Society advanced on the now-quivering pseudo-Skinner.

"I won't tell you anything," she declared bravely.

"You won't, eh?" replied Adina. "Perhaps *this* will convince you otherwise." She thrust the Gavel forward. It began to make anticipatory lip-smacking sounds. The pseudo-Judy reacted as would a Klingon to a tribble.

"All right, all right, but take that thing away!"

We smiled at each other and I prepared to take notes on the simulacrum's confession. Rather than speak, however, the impostor began to hum weirdly, then exploded, scattering resistors and IC's all over the Library.

We stood stunned under the shower of electronic components. Taking command, the Vice began to organize the Society against the forces of darkness that had hijacked our Skinner. She arranged for some gnurds to take the scattered pieces to 6.111 lab in hopes of getting some useful information, and possibly providing them with a thesis topic. She convened the War Council. And she sent someone out for pizza.

As we all stood around waiting for something interesting to happen, the phone rang, sparing me the trouble of inventing something. I picked it up.

"Tech Sci-Fi."

"Greetings," responded a sinister, oily voice.

"Who is this, please?" I asked, in as dexter a manner as possible. I knew that voice meant trouble, with a capital T, and that rhymes with P, and that...Excuse me.

"Why, this is the plot complication you wanted. Expecting someone else?"

"Uh, no, not at all. In fact, I was just about to invent you." I picked up a tissue to wipe the oil off the phone.

"No one invented me, I'm a self-made man," he crowed. "And I've got your Skinner."

I turned around to confer with the Society. One member was playing with a yo-yo, several were arguing about Heinlein, and the rest had started an orgy on the waterbed. Eventually, I got their attention (by means that even I am ashamed to reveal) and explained the conversation so far.

"Well, find out what he wants from us," said the Vice. "If we don't start some action soon, this plot will never get going."

"But I'm having so much fun doing the exposition...Oh, all right."

The foul fiend (no, not Chuckles, but the one on the other end of the phone) stated his demands, laughed evilly (how cliché, I thought), then hung up. I turned around, shocked. "He wants our entire Perry Rhodan collection." There was a mass sigh of relief as Libcomm went to get them. I stopped him. "And the porno books."

"Never!" came the cry, as if from one voice, which was not surprising, since it was that of the LHE. "Never!" cried the others, several micro-seconds too late.

"Nice try, folks," said Adina. "Well, obviously our only recourse is to track down the bad guys, free the Skinner, and preserve truth, justice, and the American Way, or portions thereof. I only wish that I could go on this fascinating and probably extremely hazardous and life-threatening mission myself, but in the Skinner's absence I must assume her duties and guard the Library." She lifted the Gavel and began to glow with some sort of inner light, rather like Moses coming down from Mount Sinai, only without the beard. "In the name of the One True Skinner, I appoint the Lord High Embezzler and the Onseck to Rescuecomm."

"Me?" Tim and I cried simultaneously. Tim began to mutter about Junior Lab while I looked around for an alternate exit.

"Yes, you, of course. Only true members of the Star Chamber may use the powers of the MITSFS relics. I don't trust either of you alone not to screw it up, but together, you cannot fail!"

Adina's voice became more and more regal as the power of the Gavel flowed through her. "I hereby entrust you with the renowned Vice-Gavel." She struck it against the Gavel Block and handed it to Tim. "It served our forebears in time of need; may it serve you as well. Now go forth and conquer. And try to be back soon so we can make the LSC movie."

Tim looked at me and shrugged. Then he waved the Vice-Gavel. A strange feeling, as though I'd just eaten in Lobdell, washed over me, and purple lights began to whirl about in my head. Suddenly, I heard a faint, far voice that sounded eerily like our beloved Judy's crying, most pitifully, "Help! Help!" Just as suddenly, it faded, and Tim and I were alone in the bowels of the Institute.

"Did you hear that?" I asked.

"A faint, far voice that sounded eerily like our beloved Judy's crying, most pitifully, 'Help! Help!'"

"Yes."

"No."

"Then how did you know what I heard?"

"I've been reading over your shoulder. Personally, I think your prose is wordy and affected."

I sighed. Everyone's a critic. "Okay, Panshin, what do you suggest that we do?"

"First," he answered, "let's see if the Vice-Gavel gives us any indication of Judy's whereabouts." He lifted it. It remained obstinately gray and silent. "No humming, no glowing, no quivering...I don't understand it, it worked for Cheryl."

"Something must be blocking Judy's emanations," I said. "Only one thing can do that. They must have locked her in the same room with..."

"Not..."

"Yes. A banana."

"The fiends!" Tim cried. "I was hoping this story would be short. Janice, we've got to get her out of there!"

"That *is* the general idea," I replied. "But since our not-so-trusty Vice-Gavel can't help us, I don't know what we can do."

Tim slammed his forehead as though he had a craving for a V-8. "Of course! My utility belt!"

"Utility belt? What the hell are you talking about?"

He opened his coat and showed me. It was a vintage Batman utility belt. "What does it say on the buckle?...Made in Hong Kong by Deus Ex Machina, Ltd. I should have guessed."

Tim rummaged through the belt's pouches, discarding Bat-Rope, Bat-Kerchief, Bat-Turds, and other miscellany. "Eureka!" he cried at last, pulling out an electronic device labeled "Bat-Skiner-Finder."

He turned it on and the box began to hum softly. Then a large arrow lit up in the air, bearing the words, "This Way, Twits!" We hurried in the indicated direction, and the arrow remained always just ahead of us.

"Great invention, that utility belt," I panted. "No third-rate author should be without one."

"I got mine free when I ordered a Ginsu knife. And make that fifth-rate."

I don't get no respect.

Suddenly, in the manner in which so many events in bad fiction seem to occur, the glowing arrow disappeared. "What the hell..." I got out, when my unfinished question was answered. A tremendous, black, slaving, red-eyed orc, dripping ichor, was coming at us down the corridor. This just wasn't our day.

"Oh, shit."

"Any other helpful advice?" Tim asked. "Don't worry, I've got the Vice-Gavel." He aimed it at the orc, and a beam of light leapt out and hit the monster's chest. The orc didn't even pause.

A sepulchral voice, origin unknown, announced, "Sorry, bad roll. Orc still attacking."

Then I understood the orc's presence. "Tim," I whispered, "we must be beneath the Strategic

Games Society!"

Tim looked around frantically. "How nightmarish--trapped in a Rona Jaffe novel. What do we do now?"

"Well, try the Vice-Gavel again. Maybe your luck will be better this time."

The Vice-Gavel, though, just lay there impotently. (I didn't think foreplay would help, either.) The invisible DM announced, "That weapon may be used only once."

Your Faithful Chronicler now found herself in quite a quandary. Having backed her characters into a completely untenable position, she was at a loss as to how to rescue them. What she needed was a *deus ex machina*...

"Tim! The utility belt!"

"Huh?...Oh, yeah." He searched frantically until he found a can of Bat-Orc-Repellent. I grabbed it and sprayed the entire contents at the horrible creature, who turned and ran down a side corridor squeaking, "Yipe, yipe, yipe!"

I exhaled. I inhaled. I exhaled again. (Well, I have a limited imagination.) "I should pay more attention to those late-night commercials," I finally said. "Come on, let's get out of here before something else attacks us. I doubt we have very many hit points."

We ran for what seemed like several miles, then stopped, gasping for air. "I'd better try to get the arrow back," said Tim, once more activating his Bat-Skinner-Finder. The glowing arrow reappeared. It was snickering. I wanted to sock it one, but it was, after all, our only lead to Judy. Besides, the way things had been going, my fist was all too likely to wind up slamming into a wall.

Our trail began leading downward. As we descended, the air grew rank, the atmosphere oppressive. The smell was rather like that of the Student Center Library right before finals. Cobwebs brushed our faces. Greenish, phosphorescent mold hung from the walls and ceiling. There were strange, chittering noises, as of some grotesque creatures moving underfoot.

"We'd better get out of here before this turns into a bad Poe imitation," I said.

Tim shushed me and pointed to one of the rotting wooden doors. A sign, barely legible in the light from one bare bulb dangling several yards away, read, "Future Site of MITSFS Library."

"So that's their plan!" I exclaimed.

"Right. They figure that without our Skinner, we will be helpless to resist."

"I somehow had a feeling the Student Art Association was behind this," (I knew I'd find some way to work them in.) I ripped down the sign. "We'll let them know we're not to be trifled with!"

We hurried off down the corridor with renewed vigor. The arrow was flashing urgently. We hoped that meant we were getting close. (Either that, or that it had to go to the bathroom.) Because if it was a warning of some sort, we'd had it; my bag of tricks was fast emptying.

Finally, the arrow paused outside a weathered door marked, "Alchemy Lab." "Wow," Tim said, "this section of the Institute is even older than I thought."

The arrow was still flashing on and off rapidly and now read, "In Here, Dummies!"

"Do you think this is it?" I asked. Tim gave me a look. He raised the Vice-Gavel and the door swung open. "Aha!" we screamed as we jumped into the room.

A white-haired old gentleman looked up at us, bewildered. "Can I do something for you young folks?" he asked.

"Well...um..." I began to stammer. I looked around. No sign of Judy. But there were strange-looking leather objects, and the man had a bat in one hand and a knife in the other and..."Nooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!" I cried. "That's too bad a joke even for me! You can't be a Bat-Skinner!"

"But of course I am, my dear girl. Would you like to see some of my leather goods?"

The room spun around me and I fainted. I woke up to Tim slapping my face. "No...no..." I mumbled.

"Janice!" he said sharply. "Get a grip on yourself."

"I always knew I'd be fated to end as the punch line of a bad joke."

"Janice!" he shouted, exasperated, "smell!"

I sniffed the air, then turned to Tim in shock. "I smell...banana!"

"Exactly," he answered. "Which means that our white-haired friend is no Bat-Skinner, but a Skinner-Napper!"

We turned to look at him. The kindly appearance had vanished. He now looked like someone even Conan wouldn't want to meet in a dark alley. He cackled evilly (how else does a villain ever cackle?) and pressed a button. A stone wall slid aside, revealing an immense inner chamber. Tied to an upright stone block was the Skinner!

"Monster!" I cried. "What do you want with her?"

He didn't answer, merely cackled some more and moved into the other room, where he began setting up his equipment. Judy looked at us, imploring our aid. The man started adjusting a strobe light. I had a horrifying suspicion which was confirmed when I saw the cannon aimed at Judy's side.

"Tim," I whispered, "this is the infamous Doc Allanpoeton. He's going to use Judy for a photographic experiment!"

"Quite right, dear," Allanpoeton sneered. I started. "I have very good ears," he explained. "This will be my greatest photographic work ever: Cannonball Slicing a Skinner. You should both be proud to be witnesses to this historic event. Which should sell several thousand postcards."

I realized that Tim hadn't said anything for five paragraphs, so I turned to look at him. He wasn't there.

"Drop that strobe!" came a shout, and there was Tim, perched on the ceiling, pointing the Vice-Gavel at The Evil Doctor.

"You'll never take me alive," snarled he, and jumped for the release button. A blinding laser beam leapt from the Vice-Gavel's prongs and hit Allanpoeton in the stomach. He doubled over, groaning.

"Janice," Tim called, "the water!"

"Huh? Oh." I grabbed a handy nearby oaken bucket and doused the Mad Scientist.

"Noooooooooooooooooooo!" he shrieked. "I'm melting..." Soon there was merely a viscous puddle on the floor.

"Wow, deja vu," I said. To the ceiling, "Tim, how in hell did you get up there?"

"With my Bat-Rope and Bat-Suction-Cups, of course."

Of course. "But how do you get down from the ceiling?"

"You don't," he said, "you get down from a..."

Judy interrupted with a shriek of anguish. "Will you two please cut the ancient jokes and get me the hell out of this mess?"

"Just a minute," Tim snapped. I noticed that while my attention had been on Judy, he had gotten down from the ceiling. (In fact, he was covered with it.) "How do we know you're the One True Skinner? Maybe you're just another robot."

"I assure you that I am as human as you are."

"It's not that easy," I said. "Prove it."

"What can I say?" the alleged Judy asked. "How's: We're Not Fans, We Just Read The Stuff?"

"Too well known," Tim replied. "Even a robot wouldn't be unfamiliar with the Motto."

I tried to be helpful. "Tell us something that only a True Star Chamber Member would know. Like, oh, the motions in the Old Business Algol."

The apparent Skinner collapsed, defeated. "But I don't *know* the motions in the Old Business Algol."

"Proof enough for me," I said. "I don't know any humans who do."

"Yup," said the Embezzler. "Okay, we'll let you out." He waved the Vice-Gavel, and Judy was free.

She heaved a sigh of relief while rubbing her wrists. "I guess sometimes it pays to be ignorant." She looked about the room, sniffing. "I feel terribly weak. Could someone get rid of that...that banana?"

Tim located the foul fruit and threw a lead shield around it, to Judy's great relief. Meanwhile, I was inspecting the fiendish equipment. "Acme Strobe Lights, Ltd....Tim, Judy, look at this!" There was a red sticker on the strobe, reading, "Funding for this item was provided by the ~~Peoples~~ ~~Committee on Art~~ Student Art Association, Inc."

"I knew they were behind this."

"Yes," Judy said, "they were using that poor, deluded old man for purposes of their own. Some of their representatives, I mean commissars, came in to gloat. They told me they'd make sure they were never threatened by us running-dog hegemonists again."

I always suspected the SAA was made up of Commie Mutants from Outer Space.

"Well," said Tim, proudly, "we certainly foiled their scheme. Maybe now they'll learn that You Don't Mess Around With Tim."

Judy fixed him with a withering stare as her Skinner Powers began to return, freed from the banana's malign influence. Hoping to head off a murder (and any further obscure puns), I grabbed the Vice-Gavel from Tim and shoved it into Judy's hands. "Come on, everybody, the Escape Clause!"

We clicked our heels together three times and chanted: "There's no place like home, there's no place like home,..." All right, so we didn't. I shouldn't try to use literary license in such an obviously non-literate effort. What we really chanted, of course, was the Motto.

I felt that Lobdellish feeling once more, and the purple lights returned. We reappeared in the Library in a puff of smoke. Our entrance would have been a great deal more impressive, however, if we hadn't materialized three feet off the ground and proceeded to land flat on our *glutei maximi*.

"Took you long enough," the Vice said. "Another ten minutes, and we'd have missed the Coming Attractions." She handed the Gavel to the Skinner, who embraced it as though it were a long-lost friend. I thought I heard it coo softly.

"I think we'd better leave them alone," I whispered. We began to exit on tiptoe.

"Hold it!" yelled the Chief Hairsplitter. Mass groaning. "I take it you have confirmed the humanity of this so-called Skinner?"

"Of course we have," Tim answered, offended.

"Hmph," Chuckles responded. "But how do we know that you other three are not also robotic simulacra? I move that the entire Star Chamber be expelled from office on suspicion of inhumanity and furthermore that..."

He never finished. Judy leveled the Gavel at him, and he exploded, scattering resistors and IC's all over the Library.

I was awestruck. "Allanpoeton's mind was even more warped than we thought! But where's the real Chuckles?"

"I forgot all about him in the excitement of being rescued," Judy said. "Never would have remembered if he'd kept his mouth shut. It seems the SAA goons showed up at the Library while he was here, and he gave them the impression that he was in charge, so they grabbed him. Of course, they soon realized their mistake, but they couldn't return him without giving things away, so they sent this robot back in his place. Within a few hours, though, they realized that they couldn't stand having him around as a prisoner."

"They didn't..."

"Oh, no, nothing like that. They just released him below the Strategic Games Society. He's involved in a Runequest. With his charisma, he should be there several months at least."

On that note, we all headed off to the movie, secure in the knowledge that the Society, the Library, Truth, Justice, The American Way, and our collective sanity (what little there is of it) were all safe for at least another semester. And that this story was finally over.

God Stalk

By P.C. Hodgell. Atheneum.

271 pp, \$13.95

By Dan Breslau

When I first picked up this book, my reaction was something like, "Not another book about...". I wasn't sure just what "... " was, but I have grown tired of books about a person on a Quest. I also get suspicious when perusing a book and finding a map, or worse yet a list of *dramatis personae*, in the front. I believe that a good story speaks for itself, and does not require any supporting imagery. Furthermore, for reasons I'll discuss later, I found the first twenty pages or so to be rather uninteresting. So imagine, if you will, my surprise when I found myself enjoying this book.

The Quest in this case starts out as the search by Jame, the protagonist, for her past. She has little memory of anything earlier than the previous two weeks, other than that her family is dead (except perhaps her brother, for whom she is searching), and that something is chasing her. Seeking refuge, she comes to the city of Tai-tastigon (a name which seems at least as appropriate for a dessert as for a city); and it is here that the story picks up. The city is virtually infested with gods. To a monotheist like Jame (she remembers her culture well enough), this can pose a major philosophical dilemma. Jame postpones her search for her brother and tries to reassemble her memories there in the city. While there, she attempts also to find a way to reconcile both the local surplus of gods with her own monotheism, and the inherent sense of honor shared by all of her people with her apprenticeship to the greatest thief in the city's thieves guild.

All of which is much too dry for a fair synopsis of the book. P.C Hodgell does an excellent job of bringing the characters to life. While the book is hardly a comedy, there are some wonderfully funny scenes ranging in style from the Pythonesque to the punny. The city of Tai-tastigon is vividly real -- anyone who has ever tried to navigate the mazes of the Boston area can appreciate the problems of getting around in a strange city built by people whose highest form of art was the labyrinth. It is as if we are given a rich drama, but told to sit back, relax, and not take it too seriously.

This is Hodgell's first novel, however, and it does show some flaws. The pacing is uneven; instead of building to one climax we get several small ones at various places towards the end. I had the feeling that at some points, too much information is presented to be easily digested; and at other times I was being left too much in the dark. For example, giving a character some revelation of knowledge, not given to the reader until later, is a literary device which should be used sparingly, if ever; for my own taste, Hodgell overindulged in this regard. This is the main reason I found it hard at first to get involved in the book; the opening left me rather confused about what was going on. Fortunately, this was not a fatal flaw (after all, I *did* keep reading).

In summary, I found **God Stalk** to be an excellent first novel, and a good one by any standards. The book jacket declares that this is the first of several books, and I only hope that the sequels can maintain the standard set by the first one.

Life Probe by Michael McCollum Del Rey SF, 295 pages, \$2.95

Eridahn by Robert F. Young Del Rey SF, 146 pages, \$1.95

I suppose Del Rey sends us books to review in the hope that they'll get favorable quotes for the later printings. I started these books with an open mind, realizing that not all authors can write like Ellison or LeGuin. Alas, when I'd finished Sturgeon's *Law* had been confirmed for me yet again. I can only conclude that either the editors at Del Rey have no ability to separate wheat from chaff, or they're counting on reviewers making up nice things to say in order to get their reviews (and names) on a jacket.

Life Probe looked hopeful. I noted that it was 295 pages, and I decided to use the criterion "is it worth a penny a page?" The book started well, and it looked for a while like it would pass the test. Unfortunately, not only did it end badly--it left a sour taste in my mouth and made me feel I'd wasted my time.

A brief synopsis: An automated alien probe enters the Solar System in 2065, offering knowledge if Earth will repair and refuel it. It's actually looking for an FTL civilization, and shortly after it arrives it detects evidence that an FTL ship passed through the Procyon system. It's first sighted by Brea Gallagher and Don Bailey, who are prospecting asteroids in the Belt. Shortly thereafter, astronomers for the UN on Earth discover it and the UN keeps it secret until they can decide what to do with it. In the meantime the Pan-African Federation is secretly getting ready for sabotage, rebellion, and other nasty stuff. They're the bad guys, it turns out. Brea and Bailey are losing money and have had nothing but bad luck since Brea's husband was killed in an accident. They agree to smuggle a mini-black hole from the Belt back to near Earth where it seems Pan-Africa will use it for unpleasant purposes.

Meanwhile, Major Eric Stassel is part of the UN team that has to figure out what to do with the probe. When Brea and Don arrive back on Earth, he interviews Brea and they hit it off very nicely.

Communication has been established with the probe, via a simulated human personality, called SURROGATE, that the probe's computer has created for the purpose. The UN eventually votes to help the probe in return for knowledge, over Pan-Africa's objections. Pan-Africa plans a sneak and almost destroys the probe, but although the main computer is killed SURROGATE survives. The villains are killed, the rebellion is crushed, Brea and Eric get married, and in an epi-

logue, thirty years later, we see the just-completed starship about to be launched to Procyon.

Unfortunately, that's about all there is to the book. There are no particularly exciting scenes. The characters are, to put it very kindly, not terribly interesting. The villains are unintentionally sympathetic--they're the most interesting people in the book, and it's apparent that Pan-Africa has real reasons to rebel against the UN. This is not resolved, so presumably at the end Pan-Africa, its rebellion shattered, will sink back into poverty and exploitation. The book is full of stock speeches, cliches, and annoying foreshadowings. The few original ideas are never developed, and the author falls back on obvious devices whenever possible. The epilogue is poorly written and contains gaping holes, and the passages about the fate of the characters are sickeningly pat. The final quote, from Major Stassel, is typical: "We're going to the stars! We haven't finished our life's work. Far from it. We've only just begun!"

On that thrilling note the book ends. Final recommendation: Don't buy the book. Read the first 50 pages and complete it yourself. At worst you'd just duplicate the rest of the book, and you'd probably think of something more interesting.

Eridahn was originally a 38-page novelette in the Dec. '64 issue of If, where it was entitled "When Time Was New". I can't imagine why it was expanded to a barely book-length novel, as it was not a great story to begin with and is much worse as a full novel.

In the bio at the back of the book, it says the author "enjoys writing science fiction because of the complete freedom it gives to the imagination". He doesn't seem to understand that a minimal amount of internal consistency is required. I won't bother detailing all the illogical things in the book, but I should remark that it's clear that it is a padded short story. The padding shows, and the plot is ridiculous. The characters are at least human and interesting, and the prose is pretty good. The short story is probably worth reading, but there's no good reason for the publisher to have resurrected it as the novel is not worth buying.

--- Joe Shipman.



The
Tavern
Wrench

Ref

April 15, 1983

Dear Emmy T:

The 34th Twilight Zine is sort of nostalgic. No photo offset, only one type style to the page, arrival without an envelope: it's enough to make me feel middle-aged again, when most fanzines looked more or less the same way. Yes, yes, I know some of the pages have their right margins justified by typewriters with a high IQ and it looks as if you reproduced everything by electrostencils rather than typing directly onto acoustic stencils.

These explorations into the ethics, the physics and the quantum mechanics of how books are returned to library shelves prove that this is the far distant future, though. I find it hard to conceive a society so far advanced that its members are even expected to be able to put books where they belong. The Hagerstown library's shelving problems are the ones I'm most familiar with. If you don't find a book you wanted in the non-fiction stacks under 926, where it should be, you will probably locate it with the 826, 726, or some other x26 books, because the stacks are open to the public and many persons who take out books to read in the reading room assume getting two out of three numbers correct is sufficient. Local sources of second-hand books like Goodwill Industries and the Rescue Mission require a special technique for anyone who wants to buy books. There is little or no effort to shelve books for sale by subject matter or alphabetically by authors' names, but the problem is the inability of customers to put books back on the shelves after picking them up and deciding not to purchase them. I don't know how many fine bargains I've found inside ovens of second-hand stoves, behind radiators, or tucked into ladies' unmentionables. Moreover, the few customers who do return a book they've examined to the shelves invariably put the spine against the wall so the next person must pick it up to ascertain the title and author.

Sarah's Story is fairly good. I've never been particularly fond of this type of semi-fantasy, semi-science fiction story. It bothers me that anything can happen next and this takes away some of the suspense for me, something like the inability of some modern movies in which everyone is anxious to jump into bed with anyone else to cause me to wonder if boy will get girl. But of its kind, it's a decent story. I wish you would adopt some sort of label or trademark for the things in Twilight Zine which are in-group-based, because I kept wondering if this story is supposed to be inspired by MITSFS members like The Return of the Gavel Block.

Speaking of which, I thought it was better than most fan romances a clef. It has the pacing and the action of many modern movies and television dramas. If they plan to produce a sequel to the recent Man from U.N.C.L.E. feature film, they could do worse than purchase this as a basis for the script.

The Munching Goblin also has its moments. As I lamented in my previous letter, I am too ignorant of Doc Savage to appreciate it properly. I know vaguely that Doc Salvage's sidekicks in this parody are based on the ones whom Dent created for his hero. By that isn't like a background of having re-read a half-dozen times every novel in the Doc Savage canon.

The movie reviews held my interest, even though I haven't seen any of the films reviewed. I'm particularly happy to find complaints that the motion picture industry has overdone the violence thing so badly that even reviewers welcome a movie that is somewhat less explicitly bloody than they had expected. Maybe the success of E.T. will prove that science fiction and fantasy aren't required to be mated to bodies torn apart, rape and detonations.

I'm not sure I can answer adequately all the questions in the editorial, for lack

of knowledge about the identity and nature of Octavia Butler. On the question of porcupines mating, I've heard that the boy porcupine needles the girl porcupine about her unmated condition until she finally gets the point. However, I suspect porcupines are reluctant to indulge in one form of sex which used to be considered unnatural when enjoyed between men and women. The trouble with equal time for evolution in the pulpit is the disparity between the number of years evolution has had available in places other than pulpits and the couple of thousand years pulpits have existed. To provide equal time, the legislators would be forced to declare out of existence everything on the planet except the pulpits, the law would need to remain in effect for at least a couple of billion years, and evolutionary conditions would be cramped for humans and most other medium-sized mammals, virtually impossible for elephants and rhinoceroses unless the size of pulpits were simultaneously increased by legislative fiat.

It was nice to see Bernie Morris pop up in the letter column. I am properly impressed by his achievements with integrated circuits. But I keep wondering why so much technology is being devoted to make the things smaller and smaller. I suppose it's valuable for the most complicated computers and for space vehicles. But the bulk of uses for integrated circuits nowadays must represent devices which have already reached a minimum size due to the size of human fingers and the resolving power of human eyes and so on. A wristwatch or a high quality audio receiver needs to have enough bulk to permit studs or buttons or dials to be manipulated and numerals or words or other symbols to be seen without a magnifying glass.

Yrs., &c.,
Harry Warner, Jr.
Hagerstown, Maryland

[And as for small wristwatches, does anyone know why ladies' watches are so much more expensive than men's? Surely the chips aren't that much smaller!]

26 April 1983

Dear Jourcomm:

Many felicitations on getting an issue of TZ to me just in time for my birthday. A nicer gift I could not have thought of. Not only is TZ itself appreciated, but this seems to indicate that I am not totally forgotten in the hallowed (and hollowed) halls of SFdom. Truly, I would have mentioned the MITSFS in my letter to F&SF, but I didn't know if anybody there read the thing anymore.

A decent ish, but let's get the next one out before Christmas, huh? Not too much sooner, though. We wouldn't want to tarnish our images, rust our icons, and break our record.

All rambling aside: am I still a member of Ye Olde Science Fiction Library? I specifically directed the MIT Alumni Association to split a portion off of a recent check and route it to the MITSFS. I would appreciate knowing if they did this. (If not someone is due for a scathing letter.)

For all those who give a damn, I am still pursuing a Thrilling Career in Systems Analysis with a multinational soap manufacturer in the Great White North. However things are due for a change. Some time this autumn I expect to move

back east. When, where, why, and how are questions which you can answer as well as I. Perhaps better — you've got the Gavel. Judy: I recall that your ambitions had you moving to the north eventually. Is this still true? Should I hang out the "Welcome" signs and extend the lease on my apartment? Enough idle chatter. I feel an urgent craving for alcohol. Don't let it hang so long next time.

Still reading the stuff.....
Michael Taviss
Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada

21 March 1983

Multivarious Humanoids, Greetings:

It is now about a month, give or take a bit, past Boskone, and I've finally gotten around to reading TZ34. A few comments on this...

In answer to Yet Another Editorial, VERY CAREFULLY!!

Order and Meaning etc. A very interesting concept. Unless I missed it somewhere (meaning I'll find it the day after this is mailed), the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle is not invoked. Basically, we can never really be sure of where any given book belongs, only where we think it should be. I'm not quite sure how the MITSFS library is arranged but most are put together in alphabetical-by-author order. But take a book like Mote in God's Eye. This book has two authors, and such, will not always fit the Chaos Index. Also, books like the Lucky Starr series were written under pen names. Where will you file them? During my brief tenure as librarian of the Stony Brook Science Fiction Forum, books were constantly misplaced, especially the old double novels. Thus we need a new index. I propose the Anarchy Index, starting with the original Chaos Index, and adding factors for authors, pseudonyms, and the amount of time the book is off the shelf (see below).

To get off that, the rest of TZ34 was interesting. "Sarah's Story" was somewhat confusing. I assume there was a previous one that I missed. L. Shawn Gramates' movie reviews were rather well done, and the Doc Salvage story was wonderful. Hopefully there will be more of these.

Keep up the good work, all.

F.T.S.
Dave Weingart
Syosset, NY

P.S. "We don't go diving into stars more than two trips out of three..."

Anarchy Index Calculations

$$A = C (t / t_t) (N) (F_p)$$

where

C = original Chaos index
t = time book is off shelf

t_t = total time library has owned book

N = number of authors

F_p = a variable function, it equals .5 if no pseudonym is used
and 1 if a pseudonym is used.

Thus, the higher the value of A, the more chance there is that the book is out of place. Error analysis is left as an exercise for the utter masochist. — DW

[Hey! I'm serious on the porcupine question! Now, if anyone out there would like to hear the details on Galapagos tortoises...]

4 - 7 - 1983

Dear Shawn —

Sorry to be so late with this LOC on "Twilight Zine" 34. I'm running about 4 months behind time with my LOC writing (about 1 month with my ordinary correspondence) and gradually slipping further and further behind.

I liked William T. Park's vaguely symbolic cover (deer instead of unicorns).

How do porcupines mate, you ask? The answer is, With Great Difficulty.

StarTrek the Motionless Picture — apparently a good deal of both special effects scenes and "character" scenes (where the characters inter-reacted and expressed themselves) were shot. All the special effects scenes were used in the final film — but half of the character scenes — the acting — were cut. Result: boredom, wooden-ness and a robot-like film that actually proves its message — i.e. that machinery however pretty usually isn't enough — you have to have feeling as well.

Irwin T. Lapeer's "Sarah's Story" at first seemed to be a faannish tale — however, after the first paragraph or so I realized it wasn't. Is it part of a serial? It can stand on its own but I wanted to know more about what happened to the characters. At first this story seemed rather slight but it was a rather attention-holding and thought-provoking tale, and despite the humour here and there, rather sad!

Guy Consolmagno's comments on SF bookshelves, the different shelving patterns for the groups that prefer particular authors etc, was amusing and entertaining. I wonder if the science of bookshelfology could ever develop (a side branch of literature and psychology). Diana Worthy's comments were most apt. Interestingly, a comment in a recent book I read had to do with the differing ways in which men and women co-operate — the conclusion was that women are rather more "lawful" than men, or rather, tend more to co-operate.

The Tale of the Return of the Gavel Block was fun — I didn't get many of the allusions of course. However "I Just Read the Stuff" had me giggling, it is one of John's favourite catch-cries.

"Quest for Fire" — I saw this a while ago, and while it wasn't one of my all-time favourites, it made a fairly good impression. So I'd better comment on the points that you raise.

One — I thought Naoh's tribe were either Neanderthals or part-Neanderthals (I don't think cross-breeding was possible but I'm not sure about what the film-makers thought on the subject.)

The Cannibal tribe didn't seem like Neanderthals to me — they seemed more like the boogey-man of childhood nightmares or ogres. I always thought Neanderthals

were shorter than H. Sapiens, whereas the cannibals were taller and bigger (bulkier) than Naoh's people.

Racism — the cannibals didn't seem especially dark to me, some had red or fair hair if I remember rightly.

The girl's tribe, on the other hand, I thought of as non-whites — black or Asian! (Of course, they wore grey paint so the skin-colour didn't show — but somehow this impression came across.) They were the most "civilised" and technologically advanced race in the film.

I think that the film was meant to show primitive tribes fairly realistically, not as "noble savages". They tended to look after their own tribes and didn't put themselves out helping non-tribe members (that's why they didn't rescue the girl — she rescued herself).

The cannibal tribe's custom of eating captives piece by piece was definitely Texas Chain Saw Massacre material, but it was true-to-life — they were a very brutal group, and practicalities (like keeping the meat fresh) would be important. (They didn't seem to have discovered the art of smoking or drying meat.) Actually, logically they should have cut off their victims' legs instead — lessening the likelihood of escape. It wasn't just put in for shock effect anyway.

The "breeding-stock" scene seemed to indicate that the fat girl was fairly important in the tribe — the "top rankers" got the first go. The grey-paint tribe themselves seemed to find sexual shenanigans hilarious — presumably it was a great event and a break in the routine of their lives.

Actually the sex scene between Naoh and Ika was not "missionary position" but face-to-face in a sitting position. (Naoh's mates grumbled at being kept awake by the noise — a nice realistic touch.)

The spear throwers were a technique learned from Ika's tribe (the grey-painters).

The mammoth scene worked for me — I've heard stories of hunter-gatherer tribes communicating with animals (there was one Aborigine tribe for example that used to co-operate with a herd of dolphins in order to catch fish — this isn't a particularly startling example either). The modern-day elephants despite their not-too-convincing makeup looked very ancient and wise and this made the scene believable.

Oddly, my reaction to "Conan the Barbarian" was similar to your reaction to "Quest for Fire". I consider it the silliest film ever made, and will explain why.

I saw "Conan" on my own while John was away (he wasn't too interested in it and didn't get to see it). When John came back we went out and saw "Apocalypse Now" together. John had seen it once before, I hadn't seen it. I'd expected to be depressed by "Apocalypse Now", instead I loved it. A magnificent film, at once war adventure, horror story, classic tragedy, political film, and even black comedy in the "Strangelove" style.

Well, I thought about the Conan film afterwards and realized that "Conan" was a point-by-point ripoff of the plot and scenes of "Apocalypse Now"! There's the attack by a vastly more powerful army on a small village — while heroic martial classical-type music is played. There's the brooding, powerful villain who captures and tortures the hero, and yet more or less seems to let him get away. There's the scene where the villain indicates to the hero that he considers him a kind of heir or possible heir. (Yes I know that this was also used in "The Empire Strikes Back" but done in a different style and with a different approach.) There's the surly, violent hero whose brutal streak makes the villain's comments semi-acceptable. Finally there's the death scene of the villain — the hero chops him up, throws away the weapon, and walks away through the crowd of the villain's followers, who don't show any sign of avenging their fallen leader. The random

brutality of the villain and his followers, the scene where the hero and his friends use body paint as camouflage, the scene where one of the hero's friends dies and is mourned — all show strong similarities.

None of this would offend me if it were done well. Alas, in "Conan" it isn't. The decapitation of the villain Thulsa Doom I especially disliked. In "Apocalypse Now", Kurtz wanted the Captain to kill him, and everyone knew this. Kurtz's followers expected the Captain to take Kurtz's place as their leader. The tortures beforehand were to test the new leader's will and to motivate him to perform the killing. It was almost a ritual (underlined by the ghostly sacrifice of an ox).

Thulsa Doom on the other hand was on top of the world. His suggestion that Conan was his "son" came across as just a bit of doubletalk. Conan was not seen as an heir by the cult. The Conan of Robert E. Howard would never have thrown away his sword. The reaction of the followers simply didn't make sense. And it could so easily have been made to make sense. Earlier there was a scene where Thulsa Doom changed into a snake. If he had done this after being killed, there could have been a brief scene of his erstwhile followers cringing in horror — "You mean he was a snake all along?" and realising how they'd been manipulated. The snake-people who can mimic the appearance of humans in order to cause trouble are a frequent and interesting set of villains in Howard's tales. This simple and cinematic scene was not used. (In L. Sprague de Camp's novelization it is used. The book is logical, and breaths an air of credibility lacking in the film.)

The good actors, elegant special effects, attractive appearance and few good touches (the bits of humour, equality of the sexes, and the self-contradictory qualities of "trust only your sword" / "you can trust your friends") only made the film more disappointing. If a piece of trash doesn't make sense who cares. But if something well-made is spoiled by sheer stupidity and woolly-mindedness it makes one weep.

However, I agree with you about "Star Trek: The Wrath of Khan", "Blade Runner", and "Tron". (Yes, "Amazing Grace" sounded a bit bathetic at Spock's funeral. But I'm not sure what his religious preferences were. He could have converted to Christianity or some similar religion after his rejection of the extremes of the Vulcan philosophy in "Star Trek The Motionless Picture".)

John is a computer person, I'm not, yet I enjoyed "Tron" more than John did! There could have been a bit more done with the religious question raised by the film — they sounded rather intriguing.

The review of "Suffer the Children" was fascinating. The comment that they didn't ever bother to do animal experiments was particularly interesting. There's been a lot of controversy about animal experiments — yet in one case where they might have done more good..... Probably this underlines the comment that these experiments are not really done for scientific or medical reasons but simply to get funds or gratify less-than-altruistic emotions. Chemie Grünenthal reinforces prejudices about German medical scientists aroused by the activities of certain of same during WW II. ("How would you like your little boy to have blue eyes instead of brown?")

Robert van der Heide's two reviews were enjoyable. The idea of a no-frills SF book is basically self-contradictory for basically a work of fiction is frills and little else. The frills are the rationale. A no-frills book is as illogical as selling dehydrated water.

"Pride of Chanur" is one that I haven't yet read but it is on my list — the review made it all the more interesting and attractive-sounding.

Will Murray's parody of "Doc Savage" was fun — I enjoyed it mostly by the rich situations and awful boorish puns. (It would have been even funnier if it had been a bit more "straight faced".)

Well, that's all for now. Hope you haven't been bored to tears by these ravings.

All the best to you from

Diane Fox
Lakemba, NSW, Australia

[There are prequels to "Sarah's Story" in the last several TZ's, available on request.

As to the identification of the various peoples in "Quest for Fire", I stand by my statements: I saw the official promotional material issued by the studio. Crossbreeding between Neanderthals and Cro-Magnons likely occurred; most paleoanthropologists now feel that the Neanderthals composed a race, not a species. I remember the cannibals as dark, and definitely as flat-faced. I also perceived Ika's people as non-white, but with the mud, who can tell? I think the impression comes from the fact that Europeans in historical times have not used such decorations. I think that eating live victims piecemeal would be a poor solution to the problem of spoilage. People bleed to death in minutes from the amputation of a limb. Besides, many "primitive" peoples deliberately age their meat. It also seems that several bundles of roasts would be easier to transport than a maimed, living victim.

I don't the fat women scene showed any reverence for these women. For one, surely the audience would watch in awe, not in hilarity. Secondly, does a group really offer its finest women to a stranger dumb enough to get mired in a swamp?

However, I've realized the movie is not abysmal as I had believed. I found the book it was based on. An early chapter features two large herbivorous animals of different species battling to the death over the right to have first drink at a water-hole. When Naoh returns with fire, the chief of his people gives him his daughter, telling Naoh to use her as he pleases, and to feel free to kill her if she isn't adequate.

Actually, I think one of the reasons I enjoyed "Conan" so much was that I saw it very soon after "Quest for Fire".

Glad you enjoyed the "Suffer the Children" review. Watch for the sequel, as the people who brought you Thalidomide and DES bring you Depo-Provera!]



BEWARE, BEARS!
© 1982 William Ware

BLACK BEARS EAT ANYTHING YOU EAT

Carelessness with food leads to Problem Bears.
Improper food storage results in:

Property damage — A safety threat — A dead bear

Don't be responsible for the Park having to
kill a bear . . . Remember:

Carelessness with food = Dead bears

National Park Service
United States
Department of the Interior

12 August 1982

Robert Farnsworth
Regional Chairman
Tulane County Forest Service
U. S. Department of Agriculture
Tulane, CA 91246

Buck,

It's them goddamn bears again. They're scraping obscene pictures on the bark of trees. Mostly they sneak down below the conifer line at night and scratch up oaks and maples, but they're not dumb and any day now they'll figure out that pines are softer. Course you know what that means. Nobody's gonna be taking pictures of a Sequoia if it's covered with graphic depictions of bears doing what bears like to do best, aside of stealing food. A few of them are sneaking into the cans and studying the graffiti, so you can imagine the colorful vocabulary that accompanies some of the pictures. So far I've had my boys tell the campers this stuff is Indian carvings. I had some anthropology guy come in and tell me the Rangers are obviously lying and that Indian culture would never produce such drawings and other cultural crap I didn't care to worry about. But still, it's a problem.

Then Hank over at the concession tells me about how last Thursday this big fella with one hell of a big nose and a lot of facial hair tried to buy five sixpacks of Michelob. When Hank asked him for his money this fella just grunted, and Hank couldn't tell if maybe it wasn't growling instead. Then this guy bites the top off one of the bottles and Hank gets a look at his teeth. Sure enough, either this guy's got an epileptic orthodontist, or it's a damn bear! Turns out this bear stole some jeans and sunglasses and a flannel shirt from some turkey out on the trail,

and came into the store to buy beer.

In the course of investigating this incident I found that bears had pressured one camper into buying beer and liquor for them, and this had been going on for about five weeks till the bears figured they could buy their own beer, since the camper was charging them a 15% commission.

I turned the camper over to the Porterville cops, but they couldn't get a conviction on him without a verbal testimony by the bears in question, none of whom were available for comment. The cops said that without a testimony there wouldn't be any proof that the bears were or weren't of legal drinking age.

Well, I tell you, this bear thing's got me stumped. You got any suggestions? Any strings you can pull to help me out? I'd appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Jack Simpson
Chief Ranger
Sequoia National Park
Three Rivers, CA 92687

23 August 1982

Jack Simpson
Chief Ranger
Sequoia National Park
Three Rivers, CA 92687

Dear Mr. Simpson:

Robert Farnsworth, your Regional Chairman, referred to this office your complaints regarding the misbehavior of the bears under your command. This department has had quite a bit of experience with this type of problem in the past. Soldiers and bears, Mr. Simpson, are a lot alike. Either, properly trained and disciplined, can provide indispensable aid to his commanding officer, his country, and his fellow man. But if that discipline should flag even momentarily, the man or bear can become a burden to those around him.

For many years, the Army Department of Psychology has dealt with exactly the type of problem that you are facing now. With all due respect, Mr. Simpson, I'm afraid that your inattention has allowed your bears to become worthless punks. I've been in this business fifteen years, watching their kind come and go. Of course I've been working with men, not bears, but when I read the copy of your letter Mr. Farnsworth sent along, I saw all the signs.

I'm taking the liberty of sending one of my assistants, Dan Palmer, to visit you at Sequoia. Let him spend a few months working with your bears. He'll teach them the kind of honor and discipline that makes a bear a genuine asset to any National Park.

Respectfully,

Lt. Col. Arthur M. Manchester
Commanding Office
Army Department of Psychology

MacLean, VA 02438

3 October 1982

Lt. Col. Arthur M. Manchester
Commanding Office
Army Department of Psychology
MacLean, VA 02438

Sir:

When we last spoke you gave me your evaluation of the bears of Sequoia National Park, and at that time I was inclined to agree with you. But having worked with these bears for the past four weeks, having observed them hunting, gathering food, caring for their young, buying alcoholic beverages, ordering erotic devices through the mail, and preparing for the coming winter season, I have perceived a sense of pride and purpose that Mr. Simpson and Mr. Farnsworth failed to convey. These bears have inhabited these mountains for some sixty thousand years or more, and the shortcomings of their attempts to compile an oral history of their stay should not blind us to the fact that they were here long before the Aztecs envisioned their now-ancient pyramids.

To the casual observer, these seem to be bored and restless creatures, seeking kicks in a forest where kicks are few. But these are not simply bears out for kicks, sir. These bears are searching for their cultural identity. They are disoriented by the rapid growth of the Park, the recent influx of visitors and campers, the intricacies of a simple picnic cooler. The environment in which they evolved and thrived has been swept aside by the advance of human civilization. The modern bear who cannot operate an SX-70 camera, for example, is rapidly becoming a social misfit.

Young bears have trouble remembering a time when pilfering from campers would not supply their needs more conveniently than the nuts, roots, berries and Indians their great-grandfathers ate. To the young, their parents' stories of glaciers and Ice Ages are meaningless. They lose touch with their past, and wander through the forests confused and alone, asserting their bearhood in the only way they can understand, by crushing beer cans against their heads.

The bear of the Eighties is no longer at a crossroads, sir. The time when the bears could have chosen to leave Sequoia and continue their simple natural life elsewhere is long past. The modern bear is committed to coping in a world where he is at a cultural and biological disadvantage. Nobody hires bears for executive or secretarial positions, sir. They'll be sweeping floors and pumping gas at the Park for some time to come, unless we help.

Sir, I'd like to request that you send me three or four more psychologists to help. The problem of bear alcoholism is still under control, but without help I can't make any promises. Time is essential, sir.

Respectfully,

Lt. Daniel Palmer
Resident Bear Psychologist
Sequoia National Park
Three Rivers, CA 92687

WANT-LIST

The following magazines are needed by MITSFS to complete our collection of SF magazines. We are interested in acquiring copies by any legal means. Please keep in mind that we do have copies of many of these issues, particularly the recent ones. What we need is very good copies for binding purposes.

AMERICAN MAGAZINES:

AMAZING STORIES: 1927: Jan 1978: Jan, May
AMAZING STORIES ANNUAL: 1927
ANALOG: 1970: Apr, Jun 1973: Sep 1975: May 1976: Jan, Apr, May
1977: Jan, Mar, Apr, May, Jul 1978: Jan, Feb, Jun, Oct, Nov
DOCTOR DEATH: all
DUSTY AYRES & HIS BATTLE BIRDS: 1934: all 1935: Feb through Jul/Aug
FANTASTIC: 1972: Jun 1975: Oct 1976: Feb, Aug, Nov
1977: Feb, Sep, Dec 1978: Apr, Jul
FANTASTIC ADVENTURES: 1939: May
GALAXY: 1969: Jul, Aug 1972: Jan/Feb 1973: Nov 1974: Jun, Nov, Dec
1975: Jan, Jun, Sep 1976: Oct 1978: Jan, Apr, May, Jun
GHOST STORIES: 1926: all 1927: all 1928: Jan, Feb, Apr, July to Dec
1929: all 1930: Jan to Jul, Sep, Oct 1931: all
IF: 1969: Sep 1970: Apr, Jul/Aug 1972: Jan/Feb
1973: Jan/Feb, Jul/Aug, Nov/Dec 1974: Jan/Feb, May/Jun
ISAAC ASIMOV'S SF MAG: 1978: Jan/Feb through Sep/Oct 1979: Jun
MAG OF F&SF: 1973: Mar, Dec 1974: Jan, Apr, Jun, Jul, Sep 1975: Feb, Nov
1976: Jun 1977: Feb, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec
1978: Feb, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov 1979: Feb
OTHER WORLDS: 1957: May
SCIENTIFIC DETECTIVE MONTHLY: 1930: Feb, Mar, Apr, May
AMAZING DETECTIVE TALES: 1930: all
SKY WORLDS: 1978: Aug
STARTLING MYSTERY STORIES: 1967: Win(#7)
STRANGE STORIES: 1939: Feb, Jun 1940: Feb
STRANGE TALES: 1933: Jan
WEIRD TALES: 1923: Apr to Nov 1924: all 1925: Jan to Oct, Dec
1926: Jan, Mar, Apr, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Dec
THE WITCH'S TALES: 1936: Dec
WONDER STORIES: 1930: Aug 1931: Jul, Oct 1933: Dec

BRITISH MAGAZINES:

AMAZING SCIENCE STORIES: #1
FANTASY: 1939: #2
FUTURISTIC SCIENCE STORIES: #11, 14, 15
MAG OF F & SF: 1954: Apr
NEW WORLDS: 1960: Jul(#96)
OUT OF THIS WORLD: #2
PHANTOM: #1 to 5, 7, 9 to 14, 16
SCIENCE FANTASY: 1964: Feb(#63), Apr(#64)
SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES: 1958: Jul(#3)
SCOOPS: 1934: # 2 through 20
SUPERNATURAL STORIES: #5 to 12, 16, 20, 21, 24,
30, 31, 33, 34, 37, 38, 39, 41, 45, 101
OUT OF THIS WORLD: # 13, 15, 17
TALES OF TOMORROW: # 8, 9, 10
TALES OF WONDER: # 1, 3, 13
VARGO STATTEN SF MAG: Vol 1 #5
BRITISH SPACE SF MAG: Vol 2 # 1, 3, 4
VORTEX: 1977: all

WONDERS OF THE SPACEWAYS: #8
WONDERS OF THE UNIVERSE: #1
WORLDS OF FANTASY: # 11, 12

AUSTRALIAN MAGAZINES:

FUTURISTIC STORIES: all
THRILLS, INC.: # 3, 11, 14, 22

CANADIAN MAGAZINES:

ASTONISHING STORIES: 1942: Jan, May
SUPER SCIENCE STORIES: 1945: Apr, Jun
UNCANNY TALES: all

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 - ___ You have such nice fuzzy tentacles.
 - ___ You are a high muck-a-muck.
 - ___ You are a low muck-a-muck.
 - ___ The Revolution is coming, and you're going to be a pet.
 - ___ You're the only person in the world hasn't seen Return of the Jedi.
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 - ___ We want you for our porn collection.
 - ___ We found your name in a fortune cookie.
 - ___ We found your name in the Phoenix personals.
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