

VANDY #18

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Tucker.

AIGS AND MARROWBONE.

EPIMETHEUS (Speer) Our Television
offers quite a bit of competition
to the theater (laughingly I so
refer---one downtown and one
drive-in). Without a rotat-
ing antenna (but with both
types) they can pull four
stations well and two more
somewhat. With a good tower
and a rotating antenna they
can pick up Chicago stations
with fair frequency.

Indiana couldn't decide whether
to raise the long-in-existence gross income tax or to inaugurate a new
sales tax....so they did both...and took a special extra session to make
this popular decision.

I have no objection to federal control to education....I think a
federal standards commission would be a fine idea.

Your remarks make me think you're one of these people who thinks a
nice neat fence divides "liberal" from "conservative".

FRINGE (Ashworth) Airguns are all right, I guess--I've fired one once
...it belonged to a British-oriented type.....I gather they're popular
for indoor type plinking. But you get lots more fresh air when you
have to go outside to shoot. And besides, burnt powder smells so "fron-
tiersy".

PSI-PHI (Lichtman) Some chunks of this issue left a rather ugh taste
in my mouth, notably the item by "Dean Ford", which seemed unfunny and
unnecessary.....and I must say yelling at slow poke drivers strikes
me as particularly juvenile. But then....oh well. The best ploy I've
seen on getting a left-lane cruiser to move over occurred on the Tri-
State Tollway (no place to goof off)....this character wouldn't get over
and wouldn't get over....he was rolling pretty good, but with a 70 top
speed, he was holding things up. Then a real black knight of the road
with the loudest diesel horn I've ever heard goosed the guy good from
behind and revved right at his rear....never saw anyone get over so
fast in my life.....right in front of us, at course, but at least he
moved.

BURBLINGS (Burbee) More airguns, sympathy. But I can't dig anyone who can't shoot a sparrow. I mean, humanitarian, yes--but there are limits.

NULL-F (White) Although I'm talking to Breen, about Beauvoir. Why do you think she got the vaginal versus clitoral from Freud exclusively? She is in a position to know, and so far as I know, men can only theorize. I did not get the impression that she considered the transference to be complete...only that settling for just one is sort of silly..... "double your pleasure..double your...." etc. Nerve endings and anatomy to the contrary, there are a number of women who never heard of the idea in psychological literature who would know exactly what Simone was talking about, and agree. It takes experience and practise, though.

DAY*STAR (Bradley) Some years back bev DeWeese was teaching at this school outside Kokomo, Indiana. It was recently consolidated, meaning in this case located rurally but having a fair-sized faculty, plant and operating area. At that time the big struggle for the teachers, even in this agricultural area, was to keep kids in school till graduation, and not just keep them, but teach them something. But even the teachable ones wanted to quit--"Ah, you don't need a diploma to get on the assembly line". The better teachers tried to convince these kids, show them the writing on the wall.....but no. The problem is going to get worse, and I quite agree with you, Marrion, that trade schools are not the answer.... but I don't know what is....and I suspect we have lots of company. It's perhaps too soon to say THE MARCHING MORONS are with us, but it's beginning to look that way. The economy is changing so rapidly that it's a crime a profession responsible for training the future isn't racing like mad to research, hunt, plead, dig, solve....do something.....Of course, what can they do? And where does the authority come from? Your educational commission, theorize a really good, unbiased one, digs in and comes up with some very solid, important revisions that call for some quite major changes in our educational system. Someone, the courts or the legislatures, give them a free hand. What would happen? Bloody murder, screams of anguish, parents' marches and taxpayers' riots. The entire U.S. educational structure, like anything else in a large society, resembles a Rube Goldberg house of cards.

I have worked with the smaller children, the beginning problems, and all the questions are there in embryo form. My special interests were the very bright and the very dull, though I incline to the first. But even educated parents quake when you suggest enrichment courses or special treatment for a truly brilliant child....."It will make him different!" "We want him to learn to get along with normal kids." My personal feeling is there has to be a middle ground between pure oddballism and crushing conformity, but these parents usually seem to prefer the latter. "Different" is a dirty word....for anyone....child, parent, or teacher. And yet, they want improvement...."Why can't our kids read, or write, or spell...better?" And at the same time they bitch about the prayer decision and complain when a teachers' union strikes because of ridiculous paperwork, selling tickets to ball games, and referring prize fights between nine-year-olds: "We pay them teachers plenty--they better do what we tell 'em." Sigh.

And the worst offenders are the teachers who could sneak in some solid teaching when the parents aren't looking, and are afraid to, because "it isn't in the manual". I mean, after all, if a child has problems in a particular skill, isn't that a job for "a specialist"?

The teacher, of course, isn't a specialist, or at least a surprising, and disgusting, number aren't if they can help it.

first fandom is not dead
part nine (B T) his page
only tottering, granddaughter

LAS VEGAS FANTASY, Part Two:

...is not playing here today. At the close of the first installment I rashly promised "The concluding installment next issue. Will them dames from L.A. arrive on time? Will our hero go home broke? Will Rotsler grow a new beard? Will fandom ever hold a convention in Vegas?" Now I find myself unable to deliver and unable to answer all those tantalizing questions. There have been so many unexpected and time-consuming elements (and surprises) in the household these past few months that practically nothing fannish has been done. Fanac simply had to wait because it wasn't that important. Some of you will understand that statement; others will expect me to turn in my beanie.

I was invited to stand for TAFF and found it necessary to decline; I went fishing for a fat state job at the University of Illinois and blew it (or had it blown) by university politics; my number two son came down with a case of nephritis and even the Blue Cross people must have blanched when they saw the hospital bill -- the boy is still confined to home, a month later, and my wife and I are discovering why schoolteachers believe they are overworked and underpaid; one of the local theaters caught fire and partially burned, putting it out of business for at least two months; the three remaining theaters are now undergoing that infamous "agonizing reappraisal" and the resultant manpower cuts will cost from 3 to 5 jobs in the next few weeks.

I should spend my evenings fanning?

Upshot of all this, plus certain personal factors, is that Fern and I are seriously considering selling the house and drifting toward California. (No, no, Ellik -- take down that "Yankee Go Home" sign; I said we were seriously considering it. We haven't yet made the decision, and don't expect to do so before summer.) So this is brief.

MEMO TO "the dear, sweet thoughtful couple":

Thank you, dear ones. I was touched. But you will be saddened to learn that Rosebud, New Mexico, no longer exists. The letter was mailed instead from Hayden, and the postmaster at that place wrote an apologetic note on the back, explaining the historic loss.

THE BOGGS SYNDROME:

When in Rome, roam. When in Yonkers, yonk. When in Bloomington, bloom. When in Blanchard, blanch. When in Wabash, bash. When in Galway, gal. When in Parry Sound, parry. When in Sheboygan, she. When in Berkeley, burke. When in Wooky Hole, wooky. (All this was started by Redd, wondering out loud about the Isle of Lesbos.)

- Bob Tucker

A DISCOVERY OF CLAY

"Hey, you guys, wait up!" Jenny ran over the gravel of the playground, struggling into her coat. The stones turned beneath her scuffed patent leather shoes and the merchurochrome on her left knee bobbed like an orange beacon.

"Keep you in again?" Jackie laughed.

Jenny shook her head vigorously, gulping. "I had to collect papers today. Donny here yet?"

"There."

A well-dressed blond boy hurried through the leaves littering the sidewalk. Slightly behind him was another boy, very pale and thin, and at least a head shorter than any of the others. More children collected around these four and created a jumble of high-pitched sounds.

"Look here! Hey you guys!" cried Donny, holding up his hands.

"Listen to him!" thundered Jenny, drowning out the others. They quieted and waited patiently, occasionally glancing at Jenny as he spoke.

"Now Nancy Harper says they chased her brother home last night..."

"Y - yeah, an'...an'...he said if they'da caught him...."

"We gotta get even for that," Jenny interjected. "He's always picking on us--him and his whole gang." She pouted and tried to jam her hands through her coat pockets.

"There goes one of 'em!" shrieked a boy on the rim of the circle, gesturing to a fleeing figure far down the street.

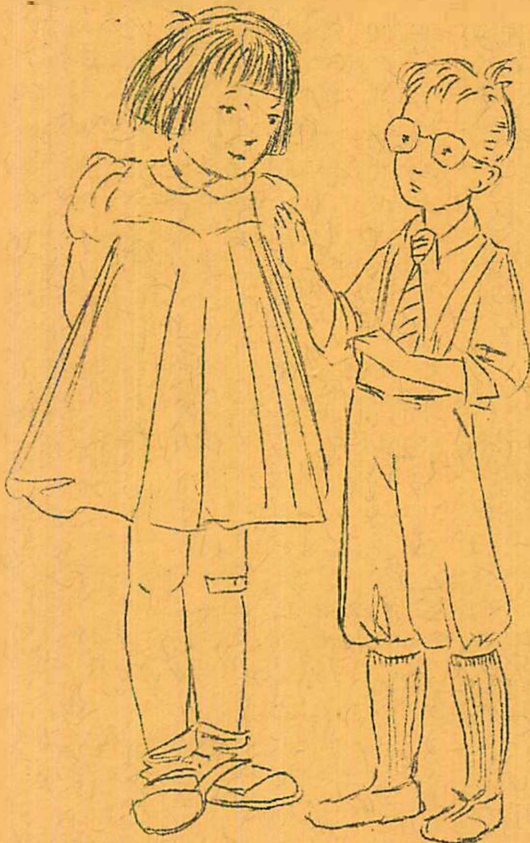
"One of their spies!" Jackie shouted, her plump figure bouncing up and down. "Let's go, let's go!"

Jenny began running, rattling through leaves and scattered gravel, her speed threatening to make her slip and skin the right knee to match her left. She felt the flapping of her coat behind her. I'm a good runner, she decided, always out in front of everyone, but Donny.

"There he goes!" She saw a tall boy wading across the vacant lot on the other side of the street. "Shrimp," she gestured to the pale, thin boy, "you come with me."

As the others moved off, she cupped her hands to call. "We'll try to head them off--you take the others that way, Chief. We'll corner them."

She and Shrimp ran across the street and began speeding over the cinders in an alley. Jenny jumped over a fallen branch, feeling that peculiar, thrilling sensation of falling--as if one could fall forever and never land. Then suddenly they burst into another street. No sign of the member of the other gang. Jenny felt cheated. It always happened this way--they never caught one of them. What would it be like? What would they do to him if they did catch him? And then what would happen, in return, to them? The boys in the other gang were all so much older and bigger.



"Hey, you guys!" Jackie appeared out of the grass of the vacant lot to their left. "Come here, look what we found." Jenny and Shrimp ran up through the grass and found the rest of the group clustered around a flimsy structure built of orange crates and loose wood. "Their club house," Jackie announced, grinning.

They tore it down, hitting it with their shoulders and pushing it until there was room to put in eager hands and rip at the splintery wood. Shrimp, the best climber, shinnied up the tree which had served as the central column and tore down the last boards. Jenny examined her hands for splinters. She glanced up at Shrimp, who was now tearing the last piece of orange crate from the tree trunk. A strange, happy feeling welled within her and she turned away from the scene with a smile.

Then suddenly she saw another member of the opposing gang, far down the street. "Hey!" she shouted, and gestured. The group obediently followed her directions and took off like a flock of colorful birds, trailing chatter and shrieks. They sped through an alley to the sound of clattering tin cans, excited dogs, and the shouts of an angry woman. Then they fell over the back lawn of an old estate, slowed to crawl through a torn wire fence, and spilled down a small hill into another street. They could see other boys running, less than half a block away.

They galloped down the middle of the street, strange sounds coming from their lips. Jenny felt surrounded by power--her eyes glowed and a warm excitement swelled up from her throat and spread to her ears and temples. The other gang was stopping and turning, like a many-headed animal at bay. She felt the other noises around her draw up to a stop, names being shouted derisively, her own voice hurting her throat with its scream. Her hand was empty--and then like all the others, it held a rock. That made a big difference. Jenny had very bad aim, but she put a good deal of energy into her throw. The rock failed to hit a moving target, but crashed into a pile of trash cans behind a house. The air was filled with rocks, and some of the group picked up handfuls of gravel from the gutter and rained it out with enthusiasm that hit more of themselves than anything else.

Some of the opposing side fled, and Jenny moved forward, yelling exultantly. A rock struck a porch and an angry woman came out the door. They retreated hastily and formed a small group a block away, laughing, praising themselves.

Suddenly one child ran up and shoved into the circle before Donny. "Somebody broke a church window!" They quieted and stared at the newcomer. "They say we done it."

"What church?"

"I don't know. Over on Crawford, I think," he replied uneasily, shifting his gaze between Jenny and Donny.

The group disintegrated. Jenny moved toward him reluctantly, trying to convince herself this hadn't happened. They weren't even near a church! It was after five when she got home. She avoided her mother's questions, brushed over the complaints about the state of her



clothes and tried to eat her supper with her usual relish. Somehow the meal was tasteless, and as she helped dry the knives and forks, there was a peculiar feeling in her stomach. That night her dreams were bad.

Next morning at school she buried herself in her books, feeling guilty, and angry because she did. Why should she feel guilty? After all, they were only defending their rights--the older boys were the bullies. Jenny stared out the window. Did she really believe that? Whenever anyone talked about the gang, they talked about "getting even" with the older boys. But who started saying that?

"Jenny Lang, Jackie Shell, Donald Phillips, Miss Tarbell would like to see you." Jenny stared at Mrs. Keys blankly, trying to make sense of the order. Miss Tarbell--the principal. Not just her, but Jackie and Donny too. That meant the gang.

The three of them got up and went to the hall. Others were there--Shrimp, the girl with the buck teeth, the dark-haired boy with glasses, nearly all of them. Miss Hawkins was there, too. Jenny eyed the woman suspiciously. She was supposed to be mean, and none of these were her kids. Why was she here?

Miss Tarbell looked very serious, yet kindly. "I guess you children know there's been quite a bit of trouble. We know some of you are mixed up in it. Now, who are the leaders?"

Jenny looked at some of the others, and they looked back, eyes wide. "I guess.....Donny and me," she admitted. Donny drew himself up proudly and pouted at Miss Tarbell; then he blushed and looked down, moving his shoe back and forth along the oily boards.

"How did this all start?" Miss Tarbell asked quietly.

"Tommy Clover bullies us!" Donny burst out. Jenny stared at him. "He has a gang, the Red Clovers, and they pick on us little kids...."

"You have a gang too," Miss Hawkins cut in. She made it sound nasty. Jenny knew if she tried to disagree the woman would get mad. She always did when one of the kids disagreed with her. Donny didn't say anything, only nodded.

"The Pirates," Jenny added.

"I hate the sound of 'gang'," Miss Hawkins said sharply. "It sounds like 'gangster'. You know what happens to little children who run around in gangs, don't you? They grow up and become thieves and crooks. You know that, don't you?"

Jenny stared at the floor and muttered something that might be taken as "Yes'm." It was stupid--silly. They were just having fun. Last year she used to think teachers knew everything. How silly! She would laugh if she wasn't so afraid of Miss Hawkins.

"What about this church window?" Miss Tarbell asked, her voice a welcome relief.

"We didn't do it," Jenny said quickly. Then suddenly all the kids were talking, defending themselves, sweeping Jenny along with them, corroborating statements, exonerating themselves.

"Well, possibly you weren't responsible for the church, but I want you to promise me there'll be no more of this 'gang' business and rock throwing. Will you promise?" After a series of childish "yesses", she dismissed them.

At recess, Jenny got her coat and stood in the doorway, watching the kids running out onto the playground. Jackie came up beside her. "I hate her!" Jackie snarled.

Jenny thought about Miss Hawkins for a moment, and a strange, warm feeling flowed through her. She smiled and shrugged. "It doesn't really matter. Let's go."