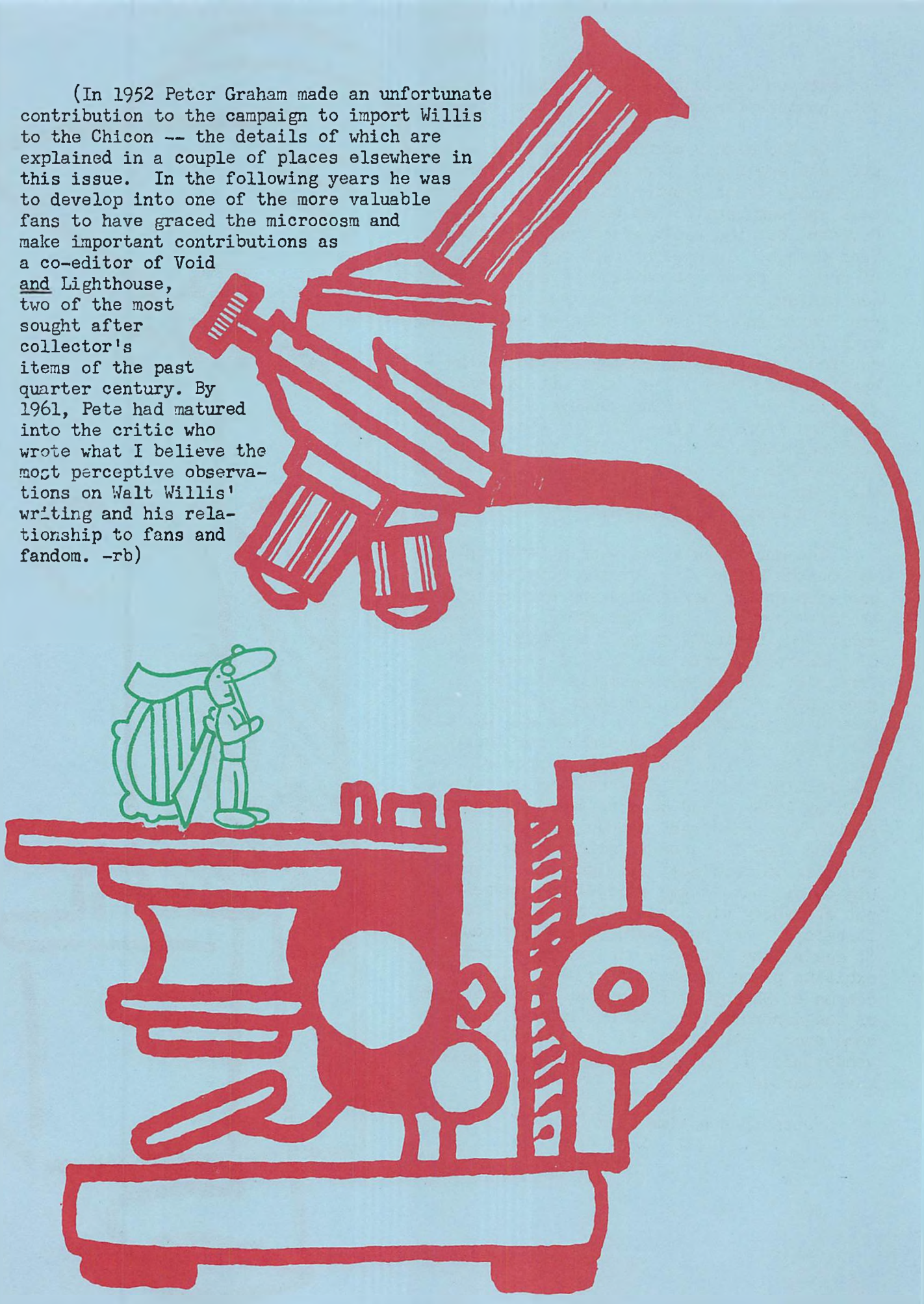
(In 1952 Peter Graham made an unfortunate contribution to the campaign to import Willis to the Chicon -- the details of which are explained in a couple of places elsewhere in this issue. In the following years he was to develop into one of the more valuable fans to have graced the microcosm and make important contributions as a co-editor of Void and Lighthouse, two of the most sought after collector's items of the past quarter century. By 1961, Pete had matured into the critic who wrote what I believe the most perceptive observations on Walt Willis' writing and his relationship to fans and fandom. -rb)



INSIDE THE HARP STATESIDE

Peter Graham, writing.

The argument that has presumably prevailed so long in fandom between the Fandom Is A Way of Life and the Fandom Is Just A Goddam Hobby partisans has actually long been settled in favor of FIJAGH; for one reason, damn few pepple are willing to actually articulate a FIAWOL viewpoint. Virtually everyone says they agree that there is a real world around us, that to one extent or another fandom is a spare-time occupation of the nature that most people are accustomed to calling a hobby, and that to take fandom too seriously is to take oneself too seriously.

Naturally, there are extensive qualitative differences inside all this consensus. At one end of the spectrum can be found Pete Vorzimer or Sam Moskowitz; with totally different approaches each of these have for a period of time totally involved their lives around science-fiction, fandom or ajay. Then there is the largest body of fans who live day-to-day lives of which fandom is a significant part; possibly, excluding their jobs or student lives, the most important part. Often it has had an impact on actually forming the personality of the fan in question -- Berry, FanHill Mob, Whites, Hoffman, and most of the BNFs and near BNFs of the last decade.

Finally, there are a small number of fans for whom, it is clear, fandom is an important but not determining part of their lives. They have not been integrated into fandom, but, rather, they have integrated fandom into their lives. There is a range here, too; at one extreme are those who on casual observation look little different in practice from the second, largest, group -- Carr, Grennell, Busbys, a number of Britifen -- but at the other extreme is a group whose roster is significantly coincident with a list of many of fandom's all-time greats -- Burbee, Laney, Rotsler, Tucker...Willis.

Taking this somewhat sociological classification as a group and looking at it we can see relatively few who have actually articulated FIJAGH to any extent, though all of them express this attitude in one way or another. Burbee seldom writes about fans or fannish events; and even when he did the reader was always aware, as with Laney, of their relationship to their job (there are almost as many machine-shop anecdotes as fannish ones in the Insurgent Mythos) and their primary relationships (each in their own way) to their families and personal lives. Laney, parenthetically, did a good deal of verbalizing on just what fandom is and should be to people, but always with the inescapable air of "protesting too much"; the importance of fandom to him was a contributory factor to his being so concerned with what others should think it was. Bloch and Tucker are interested in and concerned with fandom, and are certainly "fans", but simply by reading what they write one can see how little a part in their lives is the large mass of fandom most of us are accustomed to dealing with.

Of all fans who are not overweeningly immersed in fandom, yet who are well known, who do any writing about fans and fandom as such, Walt Willis stands out as one who virtually epitomizes what fandom ought to be. His "The Harp Stateside" is the best example of this approach. Seven years ago, when "The Enchanted Duplicator" appeared, most fans justifiably gave it rave reviews.

Also, however, most fans claimed that Willis and Shaw had finally pricked the bubble of the serconfan illusion, that Jophan and Trufandom were the once-for-all description of the ideal fan and fandom.

In "The Enchanted Duplicator" Jophan begins by being touched with the spirit of fandom (FANAC, I might add; "the inner essence of fandom"). In order to achieve the true spirit of fandom, in order to publish the Perfect Fanzine and to become a True Fan, Jophan traverses a series of obstacles that all fans encounter -- the Mountains of Intertia, the Jungle of Inexperience, the Desert of Indifference, the Hucksters and the Serconfen, and the Canyon of Criticism. Finally reaching Trufandom, he discovers at the top of the Tower of Trufandom that the Magic Mimeograph -- the Enchanted Duplicator he has been seeking in order to publish the Perfect Fanzine -- "is the one with a True Fan at the handle"...that is, himself.

All allegories, being allegories and not reality, have a flaw in them. "The Enchanted Duplicator's" flaw is perhaps its onesidedness. Jophan travels from Mundane to Trufandom; as far as this goes, the story is entirely satisfactory and excellent allegorically. But what is the real relation of Trufandom to Mundane? Is Trufandom now the be-all and end-all of Jophan's life, as implied in "The Enchanted Duplicator", or does he ever see Mundane again?

Then Jophan came to America, and "The Harp Stateside" completed the allegory by adding the necessary touch of reality.

This article purports to be a review. Now, a review is a sercon sort of thing, and on first glance one might assume that "The Harp Stateside" is not something to be treated in a sercon fashion. However, it is a monumental piece of work: some call it the greatest fannish piece ever written, and there's no question but that it's a contender for that title. Fandom has produced, it is true, somemore simply monumental pieces: the Day Index, "The Immortal Storm", possibly "Who Killed Science Fiction"; but it would be ludicrous to say that any of them could have had the label "fannish" applied to them. The only efforts that could possibly compare are the Fancyclopediae and Warner's "All Our Yesterdays", but generally speaking it doesn't seem to be in the nature of fannish events that Monumental Works are anything but sercon. With some trepidation, however, I hope to tread the thin line of a genuinely sercon approach to "The Harp Stateside" and hope not to fall into the faults of the more familiar fugghead-ed variety.

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At the very beginning and end Willis strongly affirms one point which is more subtly omnipresent through the entire article:

> "...I tried desperately to put over the suggestion that it wasn't me personally that was important so much as the Idea itself. In Shelby's celebration issue of Confusion I ended a message of thanks with '...I happen to have been the accidental focus of the first concerted and successful effort of science fiction fandom. It shows that fandom today is more capable and greater in every way than it has ever been. If it can do so much for one ordinary member of it, what couldn't it do for something really worth while?'"

Throughout, the emphasis is seldom on Walt and seldom on fans as fans. Whenever Walt speaks of himself it is not the usual selfconscious natterings of the con-reporter or the annecdote writer who, for the sake of the article, must create a mood and a self-image to match that mood, but rather Willis continually gives an insight into his own character. The happy fate that gave him a humorous, affable and warm personality means that an insight into this character is a genuinely friendly experience. Too, this style of dealing with other fans as people and not images is counterbalanced by the

totally personal style of writing; you have no doubt that you are reading an article by Willis. This is not some purportedly "objective" con report which excludes the author or makes him match the situational demands. Precisely as Warner said about Speer's and Eney's approach to the Fancyclopediae, "The finest thing that happened to the original Fancyclopedia was Speer's decision to make it a Johnsonian type of reference volume, one that frankly and deliberately sets out to reflect the writer's own outlook on life instead of pretending to be a publication that has just rolled down the mountain after being completed by some impartial deity with his head in the clouds."

After all, to describe Willis' relations with fandom is, essentially, to describe his relations with people. This is true of most fans, naturally, but the question of emphasis in Walt's case is decisively resolved in favor of fandom as a group of individuals <u>with</u> whom he interacts rather than fandom as a collective entity <u>toward</u> which he might act. It's interesting to note a few of his individual personal relationships.

Lee Hoffman is clearly the single American fan most important to Willis. "Later, sitting in Lee's room at 101 Wagner, with evidences of Quandry all around, I heaved a mental sigh of relief and contentment. I was, in a sense, home." Leeh was the fan who got Willis involved in American fandom more than anyone else. Their correspondence, as he indicates, was more than the letter-of-comment, fannish variety, but one of friends conversing with each other; a type of correspondence that couldn't lead to that embarassing situation so familiar to most fans, that of meeting a correspondent at a convention and having really nothing to say. In "The Harp Stateside", however, he doesn't talk about her much except to mention occasional events and things she did and said. Virtually everyone he mentions to any extent is described and evaluated in the report except Leeh; it is as if they were too close for him, a self-described introvert, to want to billboard his friendship for all to see.

Shelby Vick is a different matter to Willis. Here is an ordinary strong friendship, so to speak, though there is almost an air of overcompensation in spots where Walt is making clear his gratitude to Shelby for his founding role in the Crew Fund and Taff creations. Here, as with his descriptions of Max Keasler, Forry Ackerman, Bob Tucker and many others he lets himself go and lets you know in no uncertain terms that they are close and meaningful friends.

All is not rosy, however; there are those who are not quite that close. Take Jim Webbert, for example. He commented on Webbert in some of the more crushing terms I have ever seen used. What Webbert was doing at that convention, it seemed, was making a general pest of himself. He was everpresent with cigarette lighters and was generally an obsequious nuisance. Walt's descriptions of him -- "It was curious that in one hotel there should be a bellhop with the soul of a fan, and a fan with the soul of a bellhop" -- were critical, but they were critical because they were true, and thus all the more crushing.

Much has been made of Willis' ability to be a BNF while being outspoken about people; the essential ingredients of this quality are a perception which pulls out of a person or situation what is true, and then a structure of values which is generally similar to that of most fans or at least appealing to them; opposition to fuggheadedness or serconism, liking of real warmth, a taste for modesty and humility and appreciation of a sense of humor. When Willis measures the true substance of a personality against that scale, he generally comes up with a conclusion about a person that is quite acceptable because, after all, nothing else quite could be.

Webbert is still around fandom today; I doubt that he harbors any grudge against Willis, nor Willis any lasting ill feeling toward Jim. Both of them, and everyone else,knowthat the portrait of Webbert that Willis depicted was one of a young, immature guy; it was not a concept frozen forever and Willis is certainly the last one to look at images in that way.

One other of the important aspects of "The Harp Stateside" is Willis' humor. In considering all the qualities that have made it a classic piece of fan writing the humorous aspect comes close to being top on the list.

Willis is talented both with the single-line and anecdotal forms of humor, often both being wound around together as in the beginning of "The Harp Stateside" where he recounts the tale of The Trip From Cork To Cobh on the first leg of his journey. Ever since I read this in Quandry seven years ago it has been for me one of fandom's pinnacles of written anecdotes.

> I had to report to the shipping agents in Cobh at 6:30...I asked what time was the next train to Cobh. 6:30. ...I could get a bus to a place called Monkstown on the other side of the estuary and take the ferry to Cobh. Would get me to Cobh in half an hour... One hour later...I asked him where the ferry was and he pointed out to sea...a tiny rowing boat manned by two little boys. I looked at it for almost ten minutes..."Is it coming or going?" ... "A bit rough today", I said. "Yes", said the boy, "this will likely be their last trip." I thought so too, but I wouldn't have been so callous about it. "Is that Cobh?" I asked, pointing to the far shore. "No, Cobh is four miles further along. But you can get the train there." I saw it coming, but I let him read his punch line. "What time is the train?" I asked, as if I didn't know. "It leaves Cork at 6:30" he said innocently... It wasn't a very long journey, if you didn't count the distance we went up and down...I'd even managed to keep my head from dipping in the water when the boat rolled. ...I was quite pleased with myself for getting alift from the very first car that passed, until it turned out to be a taxi.

And as a matter of fact, there wasn't a pun in the whole two pages. They are remarkably absent from the work as a whole, too; but they were there, from the chapter headings ("The Route of All Evils", "The Outsider, and Authors", "Heads of Oak Are Our Men") down to the individual lines: "The most unusual thing about Forry's house is a life-size figure of Marlene Dietrich in cardboard propped up in the porch. She was obviously cut out to be a receptionist." (About Ray Palmer's editorial relations with Bea Mahaffey) "The man who pays the paper calls the tune." "I got...my first inkling of the intrigue that was going on behind the scenes. I got a whole bottleful of inkling almost immediately afterwards..." It's a wonder that the LASFS, the Insurgents and the Outlanders do not parade before this restaurant in shifts, or some other striking garment, bearing placards inscribed BEWARE THE HOT FUDGE SUNDAE!"

But his best talent, outside of his penchant for describing numerous anecdotes which he fits into the line of the narrative, is with the single-line bits: "I went up to the sharp end of the boat, as we sailors call it..." "This was one of those gadgets on the dashboard that you press in when you want a cigarette and it pops out again glowing eagerly when you've changed your mind." "The fact that this was no ordinary hot nut fudge sundae but a hot nut fudge sundae of transcendental malevolence was brought home to me when I realised it was making me feel ill even before I saw it. The miasmic aura of the thing (say, this is pretty high class writing, isn't it? First transcendental malevolence and now miasmic aura)..."

There was his description of the first session of the Chicon:

> Korshak got up to introduce the guests. In some says this was the best turn of the convention. Korshak's eyesight is on a par with his knowledge of present-day fandom, and he spent more time apologizing for the first than displaying the second... he had announced first that he was going to "jump from table to table" which delighted those among us who felt that an acrobatic spectacle of this sort was just what the Convention needed and were looking forward to a review of it in the "Burroughs Bulletin." But before he even started beating on his breast and swinging on the

chandelier, Korshak unaccountably turned vicious, threatening to "strike here and there at random" and to "hit as many people at the tables as I possibly can"...and revealed blackly that he was going to "shoot up and down the lists, picking out the highspots".

Or there is this bit of musing:

The question was whether fandom was a constructive force in science fiction, but nobody felt like a constructive force in anything that morning except maybe the people who were trying to prove we weren't. The most interesting part was the question period, when Jim Harmon got up and made a speech the purport of which was that Joe Gibson was an imbecile. As if this were a mere procedural error, Moskowitz told him he must ask a question, not make a speech. Whereupon Jim, logically enough, asked the panel whether or not it agreed that Joe Gibson was an imbecile. It seemed to me at the time that this was a much more interesting topic than the one we had and I'd have liked to ask Jim to state a case. Maybe Joe could have been found and asked to take the negative and we could have had a full dress debate on this controversial question. Unfortunately Sam ruled the matter out of order so I never found out what had made Jim so eager to divulge his revelation to the world.

So "The Harp Stateside" is humor, too. But, again, that is not all it is. In terms of his style of writing, "The Harp Stateside" is once more one of the unique documents of fandom. It is well-written; it is clear, concise and fast-paced. Alternating with passages of his familiar wit are paragraphs and pages of more serious intent, ranging from thoughts on the fans he has met to perceptive comments on the day-to-day aspects of Southern race relations. He discusses the "fan-pro cleavage" ("there seemed very little more of it than there was in England"), travelling ship-board ("just you, alone with the planet...it does something good to the soul"), the Grand Canyon ("It takes a while to realize how fantastic it is, because at first there's nothing to compare it to") and cities he visited en route: "Los Angeles had some fine streets and buildings, but seemed too diffuse to have an integrated personality...Hell is probably a place like Kansas City...standing in a square in Tallahassee at 2AM seemed a wonderful thing, because Tallahassee has always been to me one of those fabulous places like Samarkand or Mandalay". Near the end he tries to figure out where he might want to live in the US -- "What I seem to want turns out to be a small University town in the Rockies on the shore of the Gulf of Mexico, within easy reach of New York. I suspect it may be difficult to find", and mentions Americans: "The place is full of them. ... just ordinary nice people like everywhere else...friendly, unassuming and very nice to know...they didn't even look like the Americans we see over here."

To harp on the main theme, it is in Willis' written style again that the sense of reality in his approach to his hobby comes forward. Too easily this pamphlet could have become a Fan-Baedeker, skipping from one confrontation of fans to another with pauses only for anecdotes on who said what in the car on the way. Walt isn't interested in doing that; a reader could get the impression that what he is writing is no more a mammoth article for fans than it is an impressionistic diary of his travel for his own use in recollection. In the latter way, of course, I suspect it succeeds as well as it does in the former. "The Harp Stateside" reflects quite adequately that a fan's tour from one country to another is not delimited by the personalities he meets and the events he is involved in but it makes plain that, quite literally, the tour opens up a whole new world to the traveller. The art here is that Willis has fed back to his readers the opening of this new world to him. Besides the interest it holds for the many readers in America who have never really travelled far from home, there is a fascination in following Walt as he sorts out his impressions of this strange new land from his removed viewpoint. It is to his credit that he carries it off so well.

--Pete Graham, 1961.

Chapter 1: In Which The Spirit Of Fandom Appears To Jophan

Once upon a time in the village of Prosaic in the Country of Mundane there lived a youth called Jophan. Now this youth was unhappy, because in all the length and breadth of Mundane there was no other person with whom he could talk as he would like, or who shared the strange longings that from time to time perplexed his mind and which none of the pleasures offered by Mundane could wholly satisfy. Each day as Jophan grew nearer to manhood he felt more strongly that life should have more to offer than had been dreamed of in Mundane, and he took to reading strange books that told of far-away places and other times. But the People of Prosaic mocked him, saying that the things described in his books could never come to pass, and that it was as foolish to think of them as to aspire to climb the great mountains that surrounded the Country of Mundane.

The mighty peaks that hemmed in Mundane were ever present in Jophan's thoughts, for since childhood he had loved to look at them and wonder what lay on their other side. At times in the late Summer he had seemed to see a curious luminescence in the sky beyond them and once he had even fancied that he heard the sound of happy voices singing, borne over the vast distance on the still summer breeze. But when he mentioned these things to the people of Prosaic they laughed at him and said his fanciful imagination was playing him tricks. Even if anyone could climb those impassable mountains, they told him, there could be nothing on the other side but howling wastes where

no man could live except perhaps madmen and savages.

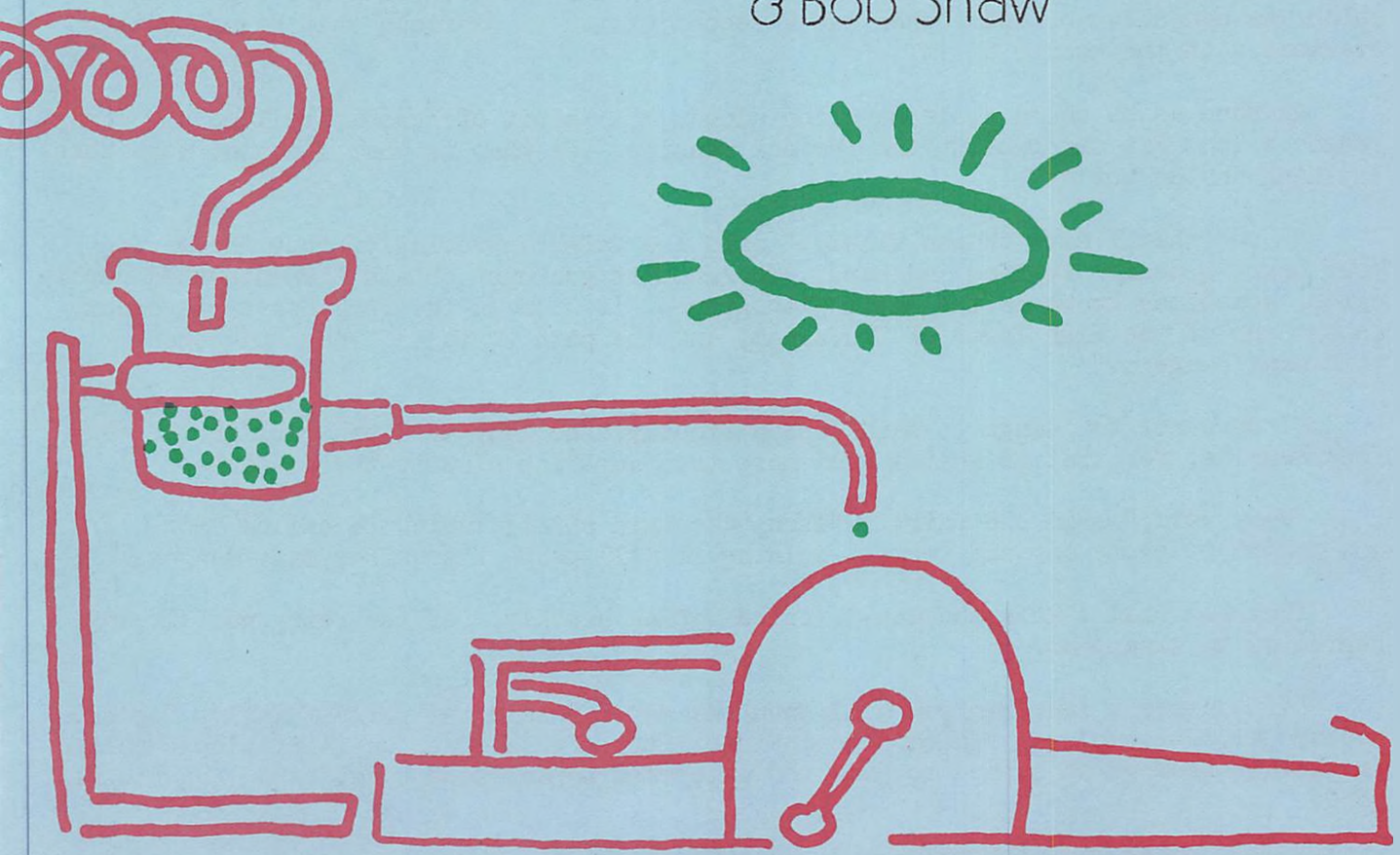
Jophan believed them, for they seemed older and wiser than he, and tried to put the strange thoughts out of his mind. But he still read the strange books that told of faraway places and other times, and in the long evenings of summer he would go away by himself into the fields and read until nightfall.

Now one day while he was reading in a cornfield the drowsy fragrance of the corn lulled him to sleep. In his sleep he dreamed that a fairy came to him, a girl of wondrous beauty and shining with a light brighter than the noonday sun,

THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR

The tale of Jophan's epic odyssey from Mundane to the Tower of Trufandom

by Walt Willis & Bob Shaw



so that Jophan shrank away and hid his eyes. The fairy came nearer and spoke to him.

"Have no fear," she said. "I am your friend."

And now Jophan looked and saw that indeed the fairy gazed on him with kindness and love, and he took courage.

"Who and what are you?" he asked.

"I am the Spirit of Fandom," said the fairy serenely.

"What is Fandom?" asked Jophan wonderingly.

The fairy looked down on him with compassion. "Have you not been searching for it all your life?" she asked. "Watch!" So saying, she touched his forehead with her wand, which was named Contact, and thereupon Jophan saw a vision that filled him with joy.

"This is indeed what I have been searching for without knowing it," he cried. "Oh, Fairy, tell me how I may reach your realm, for I wish to become a Fan more than anything else in the world."

"The way is hard," said the Fairy, "for it lies over the Mountains of Intertia which surround Mundane."

"But those mountains are unclimbable," protested Jophan.

"To a True Fan anything is possible," replied the fairy. "But wait. I have shown you only the superficial aspect of Fandom. Now I will show you something of its inner essence." With these words she touched his forehead with her other wand, which was named Fanac, and Jophan saw a second vision so glorious that he was quite overcome with the wonder of it.

As soon as he could speak he cried aloud, "Oh Spirit of Fandom, tell me how I may become a True Fan and publish the Perfect Fanzine, for that is what I desire more than anything in the world."

"I see that I have chosen wisely," said the fairy approvingly, "but the way to your heart's desire is long and hard. To reach it you must obtain the Enchanted Duplicator, sometimes known as the Magic Mimeograph. It lies in the very heart of Fandom, on the top of the High Tower of Trufandom, and the path to it is long and beset with many dangers."

"I care not for danger," said Jophan stoutly, "so long as I can publish the Perfect Fanzine, for that is what I want more than anything else in the world."

"Very well," said the fairy. "Then take this shield, which is called Umor. If you polish it every day and keep it shining it will protect you from many dangers."

"But how will I know the way?" cried Jophan hastily, for the fairy was already beginning to disappear.

"If you are a True Fan you will know the way..." said the fairy faintly, for she had now almost completely faded into invisibility. For a moment a faint glow remained in the air from which seemed to come the whispered words "Good Luck," and then she was gone.

Jophan awoke from his dream and realized that night was almost upon him, for the

sun was setting behind the Mountains of Intertia and their shadows were advancing swiftly on him across the level plains of Mundane. Behind the mountains there lingered a sea of glorious light, and a sadness overtook Jophan to think that his vision had been but a dream. But as he got to his feet he noticed that on the ground beside him there lay a shield of curious workmanship. Jophan picked it up incredulously and then turned his eyes once again to the mountains, his face transfigured with wonder and resolve.

Chapter 2: In Which Jophan Starts On His Journey

That evening Jophan told his parents of his intention to scale the Mountains of Inertia and enter the Realm of Fandom. His mother pleaded with him in vain, and in a fit of rage his father burned all the books that told of faraway places and other times, but nothing could shake Jophan from his purpose. As dawn broke he set out for the mountains, carrying all his possessions on his back and turning a deaf ear to the protests of his friends, who ran beside him begging him to return.

They soon fell far behind, and by noon Jophan arrived at the borders of Mundane. He found himself at the great arterial road that ran to the capital city. He was confused by the traffic that roared along the road, and stood anxiously looking for an opportunity to cross. As he waited he noticed other travellers boarding luxurious coaches bound for fabulous destinations such as Wealth, Success, Respectability and other places, but none of them seemed to be going in the direction of Fandom. During a momentary lull in the traffic Jophan marched steadfastly across the road. Then he took the narrow path that led through the Forest of Stupidity, which forest grows all round the Country of Mundane and shelters it from the searching winds that blow out of Fandom..

The path was overgrown, and in several places Jophan had to cut his way through brush and thickets, but by mid-afternoon he had made his way to a beautiful clearing where he thought he would rest before continuing his journey. To his surprise he noticed that the clearing was laid out as an aerodrome, and that a beautiful silver flying-machine was even now landing. As he watched, the pilot and a passenger got out. The passenger seemed to fall to the ground and lie there notionless but the pilot came trotting over to Jophan. He was a fat, prosperous-looking man, and he eyed Jophan with calculating cordiality.

"Good afternoon, young man," he said genially. "My name is Swift. May I ask where you are bound for?"

"My name is Jophan," said Jophan, "and I am on my way over the Mountains of Inertia to enter Fandom and produce the Perfect Fanzine, for that is what I want to do more than anything else in the world."

"And so you shall!" said Swift, eyeing Jophan's bundle. "But, my dear young man, surely you are not thinking of climbing those mountains? Why, my beautiful machine will fly you over to Fandom in no time. And as for the Perfect Fanzine, my aeroplanograph will produce that for you too. No trouble at all. All you have to do is give me that bundle of yours."

"The fairy said I must get the Enchanted Duplicator," said Jophan doubtfully.

"That old thing?" jeered Swift. "Why, no one bothers with old-fashioned stuff like that these days. I've some proofs for you."

As he hurried past the aeroplanograph to his office Jophan observed that the passenger was crawling painfully over the grass, calling feebly to Jophan. Jophan hurried over to him and could scarcely restrain his tears as he saw the stranger's


SKIFT PLANOGRAPH CO.

pitiful conditon. The wretch was pale and emaciated, his clothes in rags, and his hair prematurely white. Jophan bent down to hear what he was saying. "Don't trust him," whispered the passenger through is parched lips, "neither him nor his brothers Offset and Litho. They will fly you over the Mountains of Inertia, as they claim, but you won't be able to land anywhere. You will fly around in circles for months looking down on Fandom until all your money is gone and you die of starvation like me. Be warned before it is too late. There is no easy way...."

His voice trailed off into inaudibility, and Jophan realized that he was dead. Solemnly he consigned his soul to Heaven and prayed that the Great BNF above would have pity on him. Then he ran across the aerodrome and resumed his journey through the forest.

Soon the trees began to thin out and the ground to rise, and Jophan knew he had arrived at the foothills of the Mountains of Inertia. As he paused to strap his bundle more tightly about him he was startled to hear what seemed to be a train whistle nearby. He went forward curiously and soon found himself facing a large and imposing notice. In clear and elegant letters it said: TO THE TUNNEL. LETTERPRESS RAILROAD. MUNDANE TO TRUFANDOM TOWER DIRECT VIA TUNNEL. Beyond it Jophan saw a dark tunnel leading into the mountain, and before it a resplendent locomotive with a single tiny carriage behind it.

Had it not been for his encounter with the Passenger, Jophan would have bought a ticket and boarded the train, but instead he stayed where he was and watched the locomotive as it started off. With a deafening blow on its whistle and an impressive clanking of gears it steamed toward the inky blackness of the tunnel, but it had barely reached the entrance before it shuddered to a stop. To his astonishment Jophan saw the driver, fireman and passengers get off and run to the back of the train. With immense labour they lifted the last section of the track and staggered with it into the tunnel. After some minutes they reappeared and boarded the train again. The train moved another few yards into the tunnel, and the process was repeated. Jophan watched them until they finally disappeared into the tunnel, marvelling at their obstinacy and patience. It may be, he thought, a wonderful railroad, but if they have to set every one of the lines by hand it will be years before they even reach Fandom, never mind Trufandom.

He listened for a while to the groanings and clankings still coming from the tunnel and then set off on the steep path up the mountain.

Chapter 3: In Which Jophan Tarries In The Circle Of Lassitude

The path was steep, and by nightfall Jophan was near exhaustion. Worse, he had entered a region of thick fog, and he could no longer see the path in front of him. Afraid lest he would take a false step and fall down the precipitous slope, Jophan stopped helplessly and resolved to wait until the fog cleared. But as the sound of his own breathing subsided he heard voices above him. He felt his way inch by inch along the path and suddenly found himself at the entrance to a brilliantly lit, circular cave. It was full of people of all ages talking and laughing and playing games. As soon as they noticed his presence they hospitably invited him in, gave him something to drink, and then went on with their talking and playing.

After a while one of the youths finished his game and came over to him. "Where are you bound for?" he asked politely.

"I am going to Fandom to publish the Perfect Fanzine," said Jophan, "for that is what I want to do more than anything else in the world."

"But this is Fandom!" exclaimed the youth indignantly.

"Well, not exactly," said an older man who had overheard, "but it's good enough for us. Actually this is only the Circle of Lassitude. We've heard of Fandom, of course, but it's such a lot of trouble getting over those mountains that we don't know much about it. We have all we want here, you see, so we're quite happy. If you want to know something about it, though, I could introduce you to those three old men in the corner. They lived in Fandom for a time long ago, until they came back for a visit to the capital of Mundane. They were never able to tear themselves completely away or to face another journey over the mountains. It's easier to come back, you know. By the way, my name is Leth, Robert George Leth. They call me Leth R.G. for short."

The Circle was so pleasantand hospitable that Jophan decided to spend the night in the cave. But they had so plied him with drink that he slept most of the following day until it seemed too late to start. The same thing happened the next day and the next, and by degrees Jophan sank into a stupor, in which he forgot the object of his quest. Now and then he felt dimly that he had lost some precious thing but whenever he tried to recall what it was oneof the Circle would press a drink into his hand and distract his attention with the latest verses of the wits of Mundane.

One day while Jophan was talking with the others in the cave a great wind blew from Fandom and a sheet of paper was whirled into the cave. Jophan picked it up and examined it curiously. Its appearance stirred half-forgotten memories of the dazzeling vision he had had from the touch of the wand called Fanac. "Why," he gasped, "it's .....it's a Fanzine!"

"So it is," said Leth R.G., idly. "They blow in from Fandom occasionally. We never pay much attention."

Without another word Jophan shouldered his bundle and marched out of the cave. The others watched him in silence, and after he was goneit was a long time before anyone spoke. Then they renewed their talking and playing twice as loudly as before, as if they were trying to convince themselves that they were happy.

Chapter 4: In Which Jophan Meets A Traveller From Fandom

Jophan had been weakened both in mind and body by the drugs he had imbibed in the cave, and he found the going very difficult. The path became steeper and steeper, and one by one he had to abandon all the possessions he had brought with him. Even so, by evening he was so tired that he had to rest on a ledge to regain his strength. Belowhim he could see the path winding down into the Region of Fog, strewn with his cherished possessions. Further down the green Forest of Stupidity was spread out below him, and beyond it the peaceful country of Mundane basking in the light of the setting sun. Shivering with cold as he was, for the Mountains of Intertia screened the sunlight from him, Jophan found the prospect enticing and it came to him how easy it would be to retrace his steps down the path, gather up his possessions, and return to the placid life of Mundane.

While he was musing thus he heard a terrible sound above his head, and cowered into the shelter of the ledge just in time to escape a deadly landslide of rocks and loose stones. Behind them down the path there slithered and stumbled the highest horse Jophan had ever seen, and on his back an angry little man, pulling at the reins and swearing continually. Every now and then the horse dislodged another stone which clattered down the mountainside, awakening a fresh landslide.

"Pardon me," said Jophan, "but you really should be more careful. You might injure some of the other pilgrims on the path."

"Serve them right," snarled the little man, without dismounting from his high

horse. "My name is Disillusion - the Disillusion, y'know. Who are you?"

"My name is Jophan," said Jophan, "and I am on my way to Fandom to produce the Perfect Fanzine, for that is what I want to do more than anything else in the world."

"More fool you," sneered the other. "Only a fool would want to enter that place."

"Why, what's wrong with it?" asked Jophan.

"What's wrong with it?" repeated Disillusion incredulously. "Why, everything's wrong with it! They're either stupid or mad, every one of them. Why, they didn't even come out to greet me when I arrived -- me, mind you! At first they even pretended not to see me until I got down off my horse, and when they did speak to me I couldn't understand a word they were saying. And their customs! I've never seen anything like them."

"Well, after all," said Jophan, "it is a different country. Maybe if you had tried to learn their language..."

"Nonsense!" snapped Disillusion. "They were just trying to keep things from me and laughing behind my back. Well, they can have their secrets. I don't want to have anything to do with them. They were all against me, I tell you. Imagine, not even thanking me for entering Fandom after all I tried to teach them...."

Speechless with indignation, he spurred the horse on again and vanished down the path. Jophan thought he was the most conceited and self-centered person he had ever met, but nevertheless the encounter refreshed him. It seemed to him that the dislike of such a person was a very good recommendation for Fandom. With this new vigour he set off again on his journey and by nightfall he had reached a point from which he thought he should be able to reach the summit tomorrow. Happy in the prospect of seeing Fandom so soon, he curled up in a little cave and went to sleep.

Chapter 5: In Which Jophan Enters Fandom

Next morning Jophan arose with the first rays of the sun and set off towards the now beckoning summit in good heart. He was overjoyed to see that there were no more gloomy people like Disillusion coming galloping by. They are probably very rare in Fandom, he reflected, and the thought put him in such a good humor that he redoubled his efforts to reach the top.

Thus far in his travels Jophan had been journeying alone, but now he began to overtake others on the same path. It pleased him greatly to hear their fannish talk, and by the time he had achieved the peak he had befriended several. The closest of these new-found friends were Mr Plodder and Mr Erratic.

The former was a slow-moving climber, who went straight at every obstacle with grim determination, sometimes losing ground but in the end winning through by the great quantity of his effort. He had no shield of Umor, as most of the other travellers had, but Jophan noticed that his skin was tremendously thick and it looked as though even the fiercest blow would but glance off it.

On the other hand Mr Erratic scorned to take great pains as Mr Plodder was forced to do. His method of progress was to wait for an opportunity to make some great and brilliant leap which enabled him to do in one second that which had taken the other a full minute. At times Jophan was greatly impressed by some unusually clever bit of work by Mr.Erratic, but he noticed that the other seemed to have very little real strength and would rest for so long between leaps that Jophan left him far behind.

In a short time Jophan reached the top and felt compensated many times over for the arduous climb. A smooth green slope ran gently downwards into the most beautiful country Jophan had ever seen -- Fandom.

It was a land of streams and meadows and valleys, over and between which ran meandering roads, dotted here and there with cheerful cottages. Beyond all this, in the mists of distance, he saw yet another peak which was too far away to be clearly seen. Jophan saw with wonderment that it seemed to have a golden radiance about its summit.

With glad cries the band of travellers in which Jophan had found himself ran down the gentle grassy slope. Each and every Neofan felt in his heart that he would soon reach the new peak which was called the Tower of Trufandom, for here they had no Mountains of Inertia to climb, and just the bright inviting land of Fandom to cross.

After a moment's hesitation Jophan ran after them, and so brightly did the sun shine on Fandom that he and the other Neofen (as they now were) were blinded by its light and quite failed to notice the hazards, of which in Fandom there are many.

As Jophan ran he was astonished and horrified to hear the eager cries of those in front turn to screams of fear and consternation. On shielding his eyes from the sun he perceived that some distance ahead the verdant ground had become soft and treacherous underfoot, in the manner of a quicksand. And to his dismay he saw that many unfortunate wretches had broken through the surface and were being sucked down, drawing with them others who had sprung to their aid.

When Jophan saw the horrible purple stains that spread from underneath to clog the victims' mouths and nostrils he realized that they had blundered into the dreaded Hekto Swamp, and that there was no help for them. With a last pitying look he bore to the right onto ground which had at first seemed uninviting because of its slightly stony appearance, but which bore up underfoot, unlike the seductive smoothness of the Hekto Swamp.

Chapter 6: In Which Jophan Ventures Into The Jungle Of Inexperience

Jophan soon found out that the firmness of the ground was due to the presence of mighty trees whose roots spread through the soil, making it a secure if difficult surface to walk on. He learned that these great trees had flourished in Fandom since time immemorial, and were called Abydix, Roneoaks and Ellam trees. There was another lengthy name beginning with 'G' which he was unable to remember.

Jophan had travelled but a short time over this difficult but promising path when to his alarm he found himself confronted with a dense jungle. This, the Jungle of Inexperience, had not been visible from the mountain, but apparently it stretched all round Fandom and there was no alternative but to try to find a way through it. Jophan plunged bravely into the undergrowth, but the numerous pitfalls and creepers so impeded his progress that he was eventually brought to a standstill.

As he paused to regain his strength he was startled to hear a heart-rending scream close by. He forced his way through a dense thicket and found himself on the brink of a mighty torrent which roared through the jungle in the direction of the Hekto Swamp. The waters that leaped and churned along its course were as black as ink, and Jophan realized that this was the notorious Torrent of Overinking. He was horrified to see that some yards downstream a Neofan, doubtless the one that had screamed, was being borne away by the flood.

The unfortunate Neofan's cries for help wrenched Jophan's heart, and he ran as

quickly as he could along the bank in an effort to reach him. It was plain, however, that the waters were too swift-moving, and he soon fell behind. The calamities that Jophan had seen overtake his fellow-travellers began to weigh heavily upon his spirit.

He was, therefore, pleasantly surprised to see on rounding a bend that a number of people were gathered on the bank and had just succeeded in rescuing the Neofan from the clutches of the torrent. On coming closer he saw that there was a huge pile of sheets close to the edge and that the rescuers had knotted these together and lowered them to the drowning Neofan.

He discovered later that the sheets which had been used to rescue the Neofan from the Torrent of Overinking were known as Slip Sheets.

Jophan joined the group and they all set off down the bank, having agreed that it would be better to avoid the Torrent of Overinking altogether rather than depend on Slip Sheets to rescue them. Further along, however, they were overjoyed to discover a bridge across the torrent. Laughing happily they crossed the bridge which bore an inscription proclaiming it to be the Bridge of Moderation, and set foot on the other side in the confident hope that their troubles were now at an end.

However, it seemed that they were not yet at the end of the jungle. Indeed, as they progressed, the path became more and more difficult to follow, as it wound its way among overhanging vines and creepers, all of a sickly light green aspect which reflected itself in the wan faces of the travellers. This unnatural pallor was caused by the fact that it was very rarely indeed that a cheering ray of sunlight ever penetrated the converging vegetation.

It was in these unpleasant surroundings that darkness finally forced the band of Neofen to pitch camp for the night.

Chapter 7: In Which Jophan Encounters The Denizens Of The Jungle

On the next day Jophan observed a phenomenon which had hitherto escaped his notice. Here and there through the jungle were large swathes of flattened vegetation which bore the appearance of having been made by some huge monster which had smashed through the jungle and left a wake of uprooted vines and splintered trees. Alarmed by this ominous sight he warned his companions to keep together and to proceed with caution. But it was without avail, for as the day wore on first oneof them and then another would grow impatient and stride on by himself. Others, again, would be unable to keep up the pace of the rest of the band and would fall discouraged and exhausted by the side of the path. From time to time Jophan tried to encourage these fainthearts, but he was amazed to notice that once they started to retrace their footsteps they seemed to disappear almost instantly from sight. He reflected that if the way into Fandom were as swift and comfortable as the way out, he would feel a great deal happier.

So it was that by the middle of the afternoon Jophan found himself alone on the path. He occasionally caught up with one of those who had rushed on ahead, but each of them had either fallen victim to one of the countless perils of the jungle or had collapsed in a state of complete exhaustion from their reckless expenditure of energy. Several of them he found crushed and bleeding in one of the swathes he had noticed before, and Jophan wondered with trepidation what sort of monster was this which could create such havoc by its mere passing. He kept an anxious watch on the path ahead but it was difficult to see far because of the swirling vapours that constantly rose from the dank vegetation. Jophan marvelled that in his first rapturous view of Fandom he had failed to perceive any sign of this dreadful jungle whose extent seemed to be almost boundless.

This thoughtful state of mind was rudely shattered by a dreadful crushing sound like that of the stampede of a hundred elephants, and the trees further down the path split asunder. Raising his Shield of Umor as bravely as he might, Jophan stared intently into the misty jungle.

A cold shadow of terror fell across him as he failed to see any cause for either the sound or the crushing of the trees. The Thing appeared to be invisible. As the mysterious trampling sound came nearer it took all of Jophan's courage to stand his ground. But then, as he peered ever more intently ahead, he suddenly perceived that it was not one great monster which was advancing on him, but a herd of smaller ones. His difficulty in seeing them at first was, he now realized, due to the fact that their markings and colouring resembled so closely those of their surroundings. They were, he could see now, hideous creatures resembling warthogs, but much heavier, and with dreadful spikes protruding all over their squat bodies.

As they drew near, Jophan's eye was caught by one of the Neofen who had earlier rushed on ahead and now lay by the side of the path recovering his strength. As Jophan watched, the Neofan got to his feet to resume his journey, and, unable to see the monsters, staggered abruptly onto the path without looking where he was going. Jophan shouted a warning, but the creatures had already seen their victim. Their little red eyes gleaming cruelly, they changed direction and bore down mercilessly on the unfortunate Neofan, brushing aside his shield of Umor and crushing his bleeding body into the ground.

When Jophan saw that the Shield of Umor was of no avail against the monsters he was overcome with fear and would have turned to flee had not a wondrous thing occurred. In the distance he heard the sound of golden trumpets, and beside him the voice of the beautiful Spirit of Fandom.

"Stay, Jophan!" she whispered. "Do not run! These beasts you see are called typos and their attention is attracted by sudden movement. If you proceed slowly and with care you will not be troubled by them."

Despite this assurance Jophan was wary of passing the monsters, which were now moving slowly along the side of the trail as if watching for more unsuspecting Neofen. "But," he protested, "what if one of their spikes should accidentally strike me? The trail lies very close to them and they are difficult to detect in the undergrowth."

"If you go carefully enough this will not happen," said the Fairy confidently. "However, to set your mind at rest, here is a bottle of a magic liquid called Correcting Fluid. A touch of this will instantly heal any wound made by a typo." At these words a tiny green bottle appeared in the air before Jophan. Clutching it in his hand, he walked carefully past the herd and resumed his journey.

Chapter 8: In Which Jophan Meets Two Strange Neofen

In the days that followed, Jophan saw and heard many hordes of Typos blundering through the jungle, but, thanks to the Fairy's advice, he came to no harm. One day, however, he came upon a small herd of them on the path in front of him, moving slowly in the same direction as he. He overtook them carefully, meaning to pass them unobserved, when to his horror he noticed that there was a Neofan in their midst. He was about to call out a warning when he perceived that the Neofan was sitting, apparently unharmed, on a crude hurdle which was actually being borne along by the typos. At this sight Jophan cried out in astonishment, upon which the Neofan turned round and greeted him cheerily.

"Good morning, friend," he said. "What is your name and whither are you bound?"

"My name is Jophan," said Jophan, "and I am on my way to Trufandom to obtain the Enchanted Duplicator and produce the Perfect Fanzine."

"I also," said the Neofan. "My name is Kerles. Would you care to ride with me?"

"No, thank you," replied Jophan without hesitation. "To tell the truth I should be afraid of those horrible creatures."

"Horrible?" laughed Kerles. "Everyone fights shy of me on account of these typos, but actually they are quite agreeable fellows. Look, they will even do tricks for me."

So saying, he stretched out his Shield of Umor, which was large and brilliantly polished, and gave a word of command. Instantly several of the typos jumped neatly over the shield, performing somersaults and such other odd antics that Jophan burst out laughing.

"See?" said Kerles. "Quite cheerful fellows, really. I don't understand why people dislike them so much."

Jophan was impressed, but he noticed that while Kerles was admittedly saving energy by this mode of travel, he was not proceeding very quickly. Moreover, every now and then the typos would wander off into the jungle, from which they were brought back with such difficulty that Kerles seemed in constant danger of losing his way altogether. Jophan felt it was impossible to press the beasts into any really useful service, and, reluctant to remain in the presence of the ugly creatures bade Kerles a friendly farewell.

He had not gone very far when he perceived another traveller on the path, and hurried to overtake him. By the speed with which he was able to do so he surmised that the other was standing still, but when he caught up with him he found that such was not the case. The Neofan was in fact moving forwards, but so slowly that quite a considerable time elapsed between steps. This time the Neofan seemed to spend in consulting various books from a pile which he carried under one arm, and in clearing away every tiny frond from the margin of the path before he ventured forward. On the Neofan's back was a huge rucksack which appeared to be crammed full with heavy objects, and a bundle of peculiarly-shaped swords, walking-sticks and umbrellas. Jophan's curiosity was aroused by this extraordinary mass of equipment and he addressed the Neofan politely.

"Good afternoon, friend," he said. "My name is Jophan, and I am on my way to obtain the Magic Mimeograph and publish the Perfect Fanzine. Could you please tell me what are these things you are carrying?"

"Good afternoon," said the Neofan. "These," he said proudly, pointing to the books, "are my guides. These swords and things are for cutting, shading, burnishing, and so on. A large number of all these are absolutely essential if one is to find one's way through this jungle safely. Although," he added mournfully," I didn't want to come this way at all. I would have gone by the Letterpress Railroad if I had had enough money. My name is Perfexion, and I too--"

At this point there was a rustling noise in the undergrowth, and, panicstricken, the Neofan threw all his belongings to the ground. Rummaging in his rucksack he pulled out a peculiar-looking article made of wood and glass. Holding this to his eye, he peered intently into the jungle.

After some minutes he was apparently satisfied, and put the instrument back in his rucksack.

"What was that thing you were looking through?" asked Jophan curiously.

"That was my 'scope," said Perfexion. "I use it to watch out for those...animals."

"You mean the typos?" asked Jophan.

The Neofan seemed terrified by the mere utterance of the word and stared hauntedly into the jungle.

"Yes," he whispered fearfully. "Those dreadful Things. Er...would you like to travel with me? It would be so much safer if we could both watch out for...Them."

Jophan was filled with pity for the timorous Neofan, but he realized he would make very slow progress in his company.

"Thank you," he said kindly, "but I'd rather just take my chance with the typos. I want to get on."

He shook hands with the Neofan and continued on his way. At the next bend in the path he turned round to give a friendly wave, but Perfexion was so busy with his equipment that he did not notice.

Jophan slept fitfully that night, his mind being occupied with the events of the day, and was up and on his way before daylight the next morning. So adept had he become at negotiating the jungle, and so dexterous at avoiding the typos, that he had covered a considerable distance before the sun rose above the horizon. When it did so Jophan saw to his delight that the jungle seemed to be coming to an end. The trees were further apart, the undergrowth less dense, and the path stretched invitingly in front of him, clear and well marked. Jophan broke into an eager run.

Chapter 9: In Which Jophan Encounters The Hucksters

In a few minutes he was standing, breathless with excitement rather than exertion, at the very edge of the jungle. Before him he saw a broad well-surfaced road which ran gently through a fertile plain, towards where in the far distance gleamed the towers and spires of a splendid city. A few yards ahead of the point where he was standing a myriad of tracks such as the one he had travelled converged together to make the road, as countless tiny tributaries form a great river. Along these paths as Jophan watched, other Neofen came running with glad cries, to dash along the road in the direction of the shining city.

Mindful of the unseen perils to which such over-eager Neofen had fallen victims on a previous occasion Jophan resolved to be on his guard, and followed the others more soberly.

It soon became obvious that he was approaching civilization. Although the city itself was still far away there were great hoardings in the fields by the side of the road covered with brightly-coloured advertisements from various establishments in the city. Jophan read each of these, impressed despite himself at the attractions they had to offer.

While he was staring at a particularly large and brilliant hoarding he was startled to hear what sounded like a cry of pain from behind it. Vaulting the low fence by the side of the road, Jophan ran quickly behind the hoarding. There, running around in little circles and uttering heart-rending cries of anguish, was one of the Neofen he had seen that morning. Jophan was horrified to see the change which had come over him. His once ruddy face had taken on a dreadful pallor, and his body was emaciated

almost beyond recognition. Before Jophan could reachhim the Neofan collapsed on the ground and began to moan piteously.

Jophan ran and knelt by his side. The Neofan looked up at him wanly. "Too late..." he murmered, "...dying...beware...don't buy..." His lips continued to move but no sound came forth.

"Don't buy what?" asked Jophan anxiously.

The Neofan summoned up his last reserves of strength. "...tin bug," he whispered. Then his eyes closed and he ceased to breathe. JoPhan saw that he was dead and consigned his soul to the Happy Fanning Ground. Then, tenderly, he commenced to arrange the body in a more seemly position.

No sooner had he raised the Neofan's shoulders from the ground than Jophan started back in horror. There, on the back of the corpse, was clamped a hideous leech-like creature, bloated with the life-blood of its victim. Aghast, Jophan dropped the body and stumbled back to the road.

So stunned was he by the horror of what he had just seen that it was some time before Jophan had recovered himself sufficiently to resume his journey. Even then he was still worried and perplexed as to the meaning of the Neofan's warning, for so far in his travelling along the road he had seen no establishment where anything might be bought.

This last problem was soon solved when in a few moments he rounded a slight bend in the road. He had arrived at a crossroads where, among a small forest of hoardings there clustered a group of hucksters' stalls. They were heaped with gaily coloured and attractive objects, and behind each stall stood a huckster loudly proclaiming the merits of his wares.

As Jophan walked past, one of them accosted him ingratiatingly. "Greetings, young sir," he said, rubbing his hands together. "Might I make so bold as to enquire your name and your destination?"

"My name is Jophan," said Jophan guardedly, "and I am on my way to Trufandom to obtain the Magic Mimeograph and produce the Perfect Fanzine."

"Then I have just the thing for you," exclaimed the huckster. "It is a long journey on which you have embarked, and a lonely one. Why not take one of these adorable little pets to beguile the tedious hours?"

With these words he held up a transparent case in which reposed a captivating jewel-like creature resembling a ladybird, gaily coloured and beautiful to look upon. Its appearance so fascinated Jophan that his hand went involuntarily to his pocket. "What do you call it?" he asked, in a last effort at caution.

"It's a Kolektinbug," said the huckster, holding out his hand for Jophan's money.

With the meaning of the Neofan's warning now made hideously clear to him, Jophan backed away from the deadly little creature and its insidious temptation. "No, thank you," he said, "I...I've changed my mind."

Pursued by the curses and imprecations of the thwarted hucksters, Jophan continued steadfastly on his way to Trufandom, pausing only at one of the less pretentious establishments to replenish his provisions.

Chapter 10: In Which Jophan Comes To The City

It now became obvious that the hucksters' settlement had been merely the outskirts of the great city. The towers and spires which Jophan had seen that morning now loomed directly ahead, and the green fields had completely disappeared behind a great wall of hoardings. Shortly these in turn gave place to a region of large barrack-like buildings, each backed by stretches of bare concrete and separated from one another by barbed wire fences.

As Jophan entered this district a great number of people came running out of the buildings to welcome him, pressing gifts into his hands, clapping him on the back and offering him hospitality. Meanwhile, others shouted greetings from the windows of the buildings and showered him with pieces of paper of varying size and in such profusion that Jophan could scarce see his way in front of him. He caught one of the pieces as it fell and saw that the message emblazoned across it was the same as that which was being shouted by most of the people around him. "WELCOME TO TRUFANDOM," it proclaimed. Jophan turned it over and found that the other side consisted of an advertisement for a club for fans, which was evidently what these buildings were. Curious, he turned his steps towards the nearest one. At once a howl of rage arose from the representatives of other clubs, and they shouted at him and plucked his garments in an attempt to divert his footsteps. However, reinforcements quickly arrived from the club in whose direction he was proceeding and he was hustled inside.

There his new friends welcomed him effusively and asked him his name. "My name is Jophan," said Jophan, "and I am on my way to Trufandom to obtain the Enchanted Duplicator and produce the Perfect Fanzine."

They looked horrified. "Do you mean," asked one of them, "that you were actually going to attempt that journey by yourself?"

"Yes," said Jophan diffidently.

"But, my poor fellow," said the other, "that is quite impossible. You must, absolutely must belong to a club before you can even think about such an undertaking. Here we will train you for the journey, outfit you with all the necessary equipment, and in time send you out as part of a properly organized expedition. That is the way to go about things," he added proudly.

"How long will it take?" asked Jophan.

"Training is going on this very moment in the exercise yard," said the other impressively. "But first let me show you the benefits our club has to offer you."

He smiled kindly to Jophan and turned to speak to one of the other club members. Jophan could not hear what the latter said, but he saw him shake his head and point to another member. He in turn pointed to yet another with a great deal of muttering and whispering, and soon they were all arguing bitterly among themselves. Every now and then one of them would stamp angrily out of the room, slaming the door behind him, but another always seemed to come in to take his place. This went on for a very long time, and they seemed to have forgotten all about Jophan. He rose from his seat, tiptoed quietly out of the other door of the room, and found himself in the exercise yard.

Marching up and down the yard was a line of several dozen Neofen, under the supervision of a drill instructor. When they came to the barbed wire fence at one side the Instructor would shout, "About face," and they would turn round and march to the other side of the yard, where the process was repeated. Jophan watched for some considerable time, but this seemed to form the sole activity. At length one of the Neofen fell out of the line and walked tiredly over to Jophan.

"One gets a little bored with it at times," he said rather shamefacedly.

"I thought you were quite right," said Jophan. "I never saw anything so pointless in my life."

"Oh, I wouldn't say that," replied the other defensively. "You see, there's to be an election shortly, and then it'll be the turn of one of us to give the orders. Why, it might be me." he added eagerly.

"But how will all this help you to get to Trufandom?" asked Jophan.

"Trufandom?" said the other, astonished. "Why, this is Trufandom!...Isn't it?"

"It is not," said Jophan firmly, and proceeded to impart to the Neofan something of the glory of the vision he had experienced from the touch of the wand called Fanac.

The Neofan passed his hand dazedly across his forehead. "Yes..." he said, "I do remember something like that. But I've been here so long I'd quite forgotten it."

"Leave all this marching up and down," urged Jophan. "It will never get you anywhere. Come with me to Trufandom."

"I'm not sure I'm strong enough yet for such a journey," said the Neofan hesitantly. "Maybe I had better let the club help me."

"No," said Jophan. "I am only a Neofan, but I know this: that the journey to Trufandom is one which must be accomplished by a Fan's unaided efforts."

"But," pleaded the Neofan, "couldn't you wait until after this election...or maybe the one after it?"

"No," said Jophan firmly. "I must be on my way. He waited for a moment to see if the Neofan would change his mind, and then left him reluctantly. He slipped back again into the building, through the room where the organizers were still arguing, and back into the street, still unnoticed. Then, brushing aside the crowd of well meaning organizers and welcomers with a friendly but firm arm, he continued on his way towards the center of the city.

The buildings now began to take on a more and more elegant appearance, and became ever higher and more imposing. The streets became broader and more smoothly paved. At each intersection the vistas were more and more beautiful and awe-inspiring, until at last he reached the centre of the city.

Jophan knew this was the center of the city for the simple reason that his instinct told him that there could not be anything more beautiful still in store. He found himself in a broad, gleaming thoroughfare, beautifully paved. On either side there towered shining marble skyscrapers, their pinnacles plunging into the very heavens. It was all so wonderful that Jophan could do nothing but stand there motionless, breathless with admiration. This, he thought to himself, must be Trufandom. True, it was not what the Fairy had led him to expect, but he could not imagine that anything more wonderful could exist.

Chapter 11: In Which Jophan Learns The Truth About The City

As he stood at the entrance to the great avenue, still transfixed with awe, a dapper, bespectacled young man came up to him. He eyed Jophan's tattered garments somewhat askance, but spoke to him civilly enough.

"Good day," he said. "Might I enquire your name?"

"my name is Jophan," said Jophan humbly, "and I was on my way to Trufandom..."

"You need go no further," said the young man. "Perhaps you would like me to show you around the city. My name is Dedwood," he added proudly, "and I am one of the City Planners. I am a Serious Construction Engineer by profession."

Taking Jophan's arm, he led him along the street, pointing out one great building after another. Before they had reached the end of the avenue Jophan was, if possible, even more overcome with admiration, but he began to feel out of place in all this elegance with his dirty clothes and tarnished shield. As Dedwood was pointing out yet another imposing building he took the opportunity to give the shield a surreptitious rub with his handkerchief.

"This," Dedwood was saying, "is the Federation Building..."

He broke off in alarm as a strangled sound came from his listener. In wiping his shield Jophan had caught a glimpse of the reflection of the building on its surface, and had been unable to supress a cry of astonishment. Reflected in the shield was not the imposing edifice of the Federation Building, but a ramshackle affair, in visible danger of falling into the street. Seen in the mirror of the shield, the building was not even soundly constructed, but disfigured by cracks and faulty workmanship. Even so, Jophan would have been half inclined to dismiss the reflection as the result of a distortion on the shield's surface, had not the thought suddenly occurred to him that not once had he been allowed to see inside one of the buildings.

Before Dedwood could stop him, Jophan darted through the door of the Federation Building. As he had by now half suspected, it was not a building at all, but a mere facade. Although it reached high into the air, it was but a few inches thick and obviously unstable. Even as Jophan watched a little gust of wind produced several dangerous-looking cracks in the flimsy structure. At the splintering sound, two harassed Neofen appeared, pushing a tall scaffolding before them on wheels. Stopping close to the wall, they clambered up and hastily filled one of the cracks with cement. Then they pushed the scaffolding along to the next danger point, working more and more feverishly as the cracks seemed to grow in number more rapidly than they could be repaired.

Jophan tore his eyes away from this depressing sight, and went outside again. Dedwood was still standing on the sidewalk, but he now had an almost guilty expression on his face.

Jophan faced him accusingly. "What is the idea of all this?" he demanded brusquely, annoyed at having been taken in by such a senseless deception.

"Well, you see," said Dedwood awkwardly, "it's to impress the Public. They wouldn't be impressed by Trufandom, so some of us thought we'd erect this City of Serious Constructivism to give them a better idea of our importance..."

But surely the Public never come into Fandom?" protested Jophan.

Well, no," admitted Dedwood, "but they sometimes send a representative in, usually a Mr. Press."

He seemed to have difficulty in meeting Jophan's gaze, and the reflection from Jophan's Shield of Umor seemed to be hurting his eyes, so that while he was talking he glanced sideways up and down the street.

Abruptly he broke off with a cry of excitement. "Why, there he is now!" he ex-

claimed. "This is a great day..."

The rest of his words were lost as he ran helter-skeleter down the street to where a little man with a notebook had appeared as if from nowhere, accompanied by another little man with an easel under his arm.

Jophan followed more slowly and found Dedwood already talking volubly to the stranger, while the other little man set up his easel and began to make sketches. At great length Dedwood expatiated on the glories of the City, on the Magnificent Work that was being accomplished there, on the grandeur of its buildings, on the intelligence and forethought of the inhabitants, on their sobriety of deportment and the importance of their work to Humanity, on the various functions and important duties they performed, and on the contributions he himself made to those mighty achievements. Jophan noticed, however, that the little man was writing very little of all this down in his notebook, and as Dedwood drew to the close of his impressive oration he sidled behind Mr Press and looked over his shoulder. The page was perfectly blank except for one cryptic sentence which Jophan could not understand. He knew only that it bore no relationship whatever to what Dedwood had been saying. It read, simply, "Gosh-wow-oh-boy-oh-boy." Puzzled, Jophan moved behind the artist, who had already completed several sketches. Jophan noted that they were all recognizable caricatures of Dedwood, but that for some reason the artist had in each case shown him as wearing a peculiarly shaped headgear which incorporated a small propellor.

Completely baffled by these quite extraordinary phenomena. Jophan withdrew and waited quietly until Dedwood had finished talking. Mr Press and his assistant thanked Dedwood effusively, promised to give the Public a full and accurate report of all that he had told them, and said goodbye. Their shoulders were shaking as they walked off, but Dedwood did not seem to notice. Becoming once more conscious of Jophan's existence, he turned to him with pride. "There!" he said smugly. "I flatter myself that this time the Public will learn the truth about us."

He seemed so pleased with himself that Jophan did not have the heart to tell him what Mr Press had actually written in his notebook. Instead he merely thanked him for his courtesy and left the centre of the city with a last glance of mingled contempt and pity for the preposterous erections.

Chapter 12: In Which Jophan Finds A Friend

It took Jophan a much shorter time to leave the City of Serious Constructivism than it had to enter it, and he was soon in the suburbs again. On this side of the city, however, they were of a very different character. Here there were no advertising hoardings, club buildings, or hucksters' settlements. Instead, the district seemed to be an exclusive residential area, entirely composed of enormous wooded estates surrounded by high walls. There seemed to be a limitless number of them, and as the evening wore on Jophan became very tired. The walls were too high to be climbed, and the gates were all locked, so that try as he might he could find no way to get off the road to make camp for the night.

At last he realized that he could go no further, and that he must spend the night as best he could by the side of the road. Huddling up against the wall near one of the entrance gates, he wrapped his tattered garments about him and made himself as comfortable as the hard surface would allow.

Sometime later he was awakened from a fitful sleep by a great blaze of light in his eyes. In his dazed condition it was a few seconds before he realized that he was staring into the headlamps of a huge motorcar which had evidently approached from the direction of Trufandom, and was now halted before the entrance gates. As Jophan

watched, the driver got out and unlocked the gates. As he was walking back to his car Jophan called weakly to him. The driver looked round, startled, and then, perceiving Jophan lying against the wall, came over to him.

"Hello, young fellow," he said. "Who are you, and what are you doing here?"

So faint was Jophan with exhaustion that he could scarcely speak. "...Jophan" he murmured, "Trufandom...Magic Mimeograph...Perfect Fanzine."

"Ah, yes," said the stranger understandingly. "You have come a long way and you have a long way to go. You will be the better of a good meal and a night's rest."

He picked Jophan up and carried his limp body to the car. Then, stopping only to relock the gates behind him, he drove at high speed up the long entrance drive.

Jophan could not see much of the house in the darkness, but the bedroom to which he was carried was large and luxuriously furnished, and the meal which he was served was tastefully cooked and sumptuously served. Feeling comfortable and safe for the first time since he had embarked on his journey, Jophan fell into a deep sleep.

Next morning he awoke late, and found his way down to the breakfast room. His host had evidently breakfasted, and sat before a cheerful fire with a writing-machine on his knees. As Jophan entered he put the machine down and rose to greet him.

"Good morning, Jophan," he said. "Let me introduce myself. My name is Profan... you may have heard of me?"

"I have, indeed," said Jophan, awed, for before him stood the author of many of the books telling of faraway places and other times which he had read during his life in Mundane -- a life which already seemed unreal to him.

He attempted to express his thanks, but the other would hear none of it. "It is nothing," he said. "I am glad to be able to help any pilgrim on his way to Trufandom.. As long," he added wryly, as they do not descend on me in too great numbers."

This was the first resident of Fandom Jophan had encountered who had really encouraged him in his quest, and it put him in good heart.

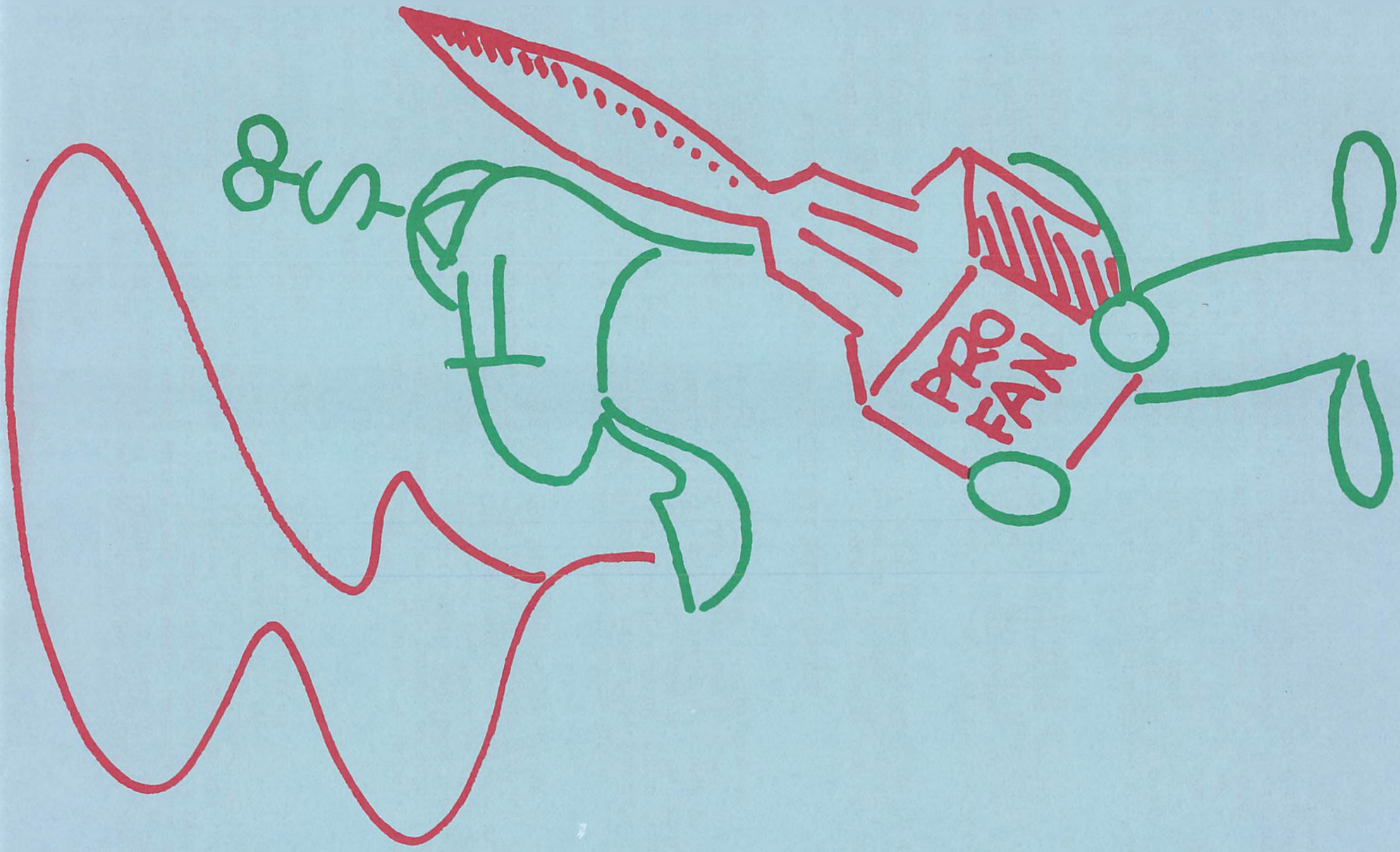
"Am I then," he asked, "getting near to Trufandom?"

"You have done about half the journey," said Profan, "but since you have come this far I have no doubt you will complete it. I wish I could take you there, but as you know, each Neofan must make his way by his own unaided strength."

"But you know the way, then? asked Jophan eagerly.

"Indeed, yes," said Profan. "I go there for a visit at least once a year. This, you must know, is a colony of those who wish, and can afford, to travel frequently to both Trufandom and Mundane, and who have accordingly settled here, midway between the two places. Some of us, indeed, came here from Trufandom, for occasionally it happens that a True Fan will forsake the high and dedicated life of Trufandom for our more worldly community. They make their choice, as it were, between the Sacred and the Profan." He smiled at his little joke, and Jophan laughed politely.

"I will tell you all I can about your route," continued Profan, "but I should first warn you that any advice I can give you will be of no avail unless you continue to exercise the courage and discretion which have brought you so far, and unless you keep your shield bright and shining. For you have many dreadful perils yet to face."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"I shall remember," said Jophan.

"Well," said Profan, "the first of these perils is the Desert of Indifference, which begins at the border of this community and stretches for a great distance, unbroken save by an occasional oasis. To carry enough food and water to cross this vast expanse is beyond the powers of any Neofan, so that you must enlist the aid of native porters from the strange tribe that dwells on the fringe of the desert. On the far side of the desert is a huge rocky defile, known as the Canyon of Criticism, through which lies the only known path to the plateau above where stands the Tower of Trufandom. Further I cannot help you, for the more subtle temptations and perils of the last stage of the journey assume a different form for each Neofan."

"Is that all?" asked Jophan.

"All?" said Profan, amused. "I admire your spirit. But, alas, it is not. On each side of your path, far away but always accessible, are the green, enticing regions known as the Glades of Gafia. Perpetually you will be pursued by the insidious temptation to turn aside and rest awhile there. But, should you do so, there is great danger that you will be unable to face the effort of resuming your journey, or that, roaming forgetfully through the beckoning glades, you will find yourself back in Mundane. Far better to proceed with moderation so that you will not be driven to the glades to recuperate from a too strenuous effort."

Profan went on to give Jophan much other helpful advice, to which Jophan listened respectfully. Then he thanked his host again and prepared to resume his journey. Profan went with him to the gate to wish him luck, and then stood watching Jophan march sturdily down the road. Once Jophan looked back to wave a final goodbye. He fancied that he detected in the other's face an emotion which, in the case of one less fortunately situated, he would have taken to be envy. But this cannot have been so, any more than that the raising of Profan's hand to his eye can have been to wipe away an involuntary tear of regret.

Chapter 13: In which Jophan Recruits Native Bearers

Much refreshed by Profan's hospitality, Jophan stepped out briskly, and by noon had left the region of great estates far behind. He was now in open country again, a region of dry scrubland interspersed with bare sandy patches which became more frequent as he journeyed on.

As the country grew more desolate he kept an anxious eye open for the tribesmen whom Profan had mentioned. Then, as he was on the point of turning back to look more carefully, he espied a faint column of smoke rising into the still air some distance to his left. Threading his way through the scrub in that direction he was greatly relieved to come upon a group of tents which he knew must be a village of the strange natives.

The encampment contained several dozen of the Subrs, as Profan had said they were called, all sitting perfectly still on the ground before their tents and staring blankly into the distance. They seemed to be a sturdy and honest race, but with a strangely impassive cast of countenance, and their faces showed no emotion when Jophan made his appearance. Nevertheless he strode into the center of the village and greeted them cheerily, expecting that they would spring to their feet and cluster round him. But instead they continued to ignore his presence completely. Surprised, Jophan raised his voice and greeted them again, announcing his name and the purpose of his visit. But still the strange people seemed unconscious of his existence. Indeed he would have judged them to be both blind and deaf had he not noticed one of them raise his eyebrows slightly when Jophan had finished speaking. Incensed at their

apathy he lost his temper and flew into a rage, jumping up and down and waving his arms to attract their attention, and then launching into a loud and impassioned discourse, describing in detail the importance of his purpose and the impossibility of fulfilling it without their help. At this a few Subrs turned their eyes curiously in his direction, but none of them showed the slightest sign of answering his call.

In desperation Jophan went up to the native who had appeared to be the first to notice him, and pleaded with him for an explanation of the tribe's reluctance to co-operate.

The Subr looked indifferently at him and spoke.

"Many Neofen come," he grunted. "Many seek help. Many leave us in desert, our help wasted. You show difference."

For a moment Jophan could not understand what he meant, and then he realized he was being called on to demonstrate that he had the necessary stamina and strength of will to cross the desert. Resignedly, he began to run round and round the encampment.

The afternoon wore on, and Jophan continued to run round the encampment, watched impassively by the Subrs. Every now and then he would stop and plead with them again, and each time they evinced a little more interest.

Finally one of them rose and nodded at Jophan. Still without a word he picked up a skin water-bottle, and a package of food and stood waiting. His example was followed by several others until a small group had collected at Jophan's side. He thanked them gratefully, and the small expedition started off into the desert.

Chapter 14: In Which Jophan Starts Across The Desert Of Indifference

As they progressed ever farther into the wilderness the hot sun and scorching sand began to take their toll of Jophan's strength, and he realized more fully the magnitude of the task before him. He also came to appreciate more fully the virtues of the native porters. Although the Subrs preserved their unnatural silence, uttering no word either of praise or condemnation of Jophan's behaviour, whatever it might be, they showed their feelings clearly enough by their actions. Twice when Jophan, unnerved by the hardships of the desert, spoke tactlessly to them or made some error of judgment, some of them quietly left the expedition and were never seen again. But, on the other hand,whenever he exhibited his better qualities, reinforcements appeared to arrive from nowhere. Thus, by studying their reactions carefully, he was able to increase the strength of his party by quite a substantial number.

It would have fared ill with him had he not done so, for as day followed day the strain of the journey began to tell on him. The heat of the sun seemed to dry up the very marrow of his bones, and its setting brought only momentary relief, for with nightfall the air became bitterly cold, and he passed many sleepless hours shivering under the meagre protection of his blanket. The loyal support of the sturdy Subrs was a great comfort to him, but willing as they were they could carry only a certain amount of their dried food and it seemed to accord ill with his constitution. It was of a tasteless and insipid nature, affording only the merest sustenance and gravely deficient in energy-producing qualities. Jophan, though in no danger of actual starvation, began to grow weak and faint of purpose, and at times his eyes strayed longingly to the green Glades of Gafia to be seen clearly in the distance.

So it was when after many days the party came upon the first signs of other life in the desert. It had appeared in the distance to be a small hut, but on approaching more closely Jophan saw that it was actually a species of altar before which crouched a pale and sickly Neofan. He seemed to be in the process of muttering some prayer or

incantation, and Jophan waited patiently until he had finished before addressing him.

"Good day, friend," he said politely, when the Neofan seemed to have completed his mysterious rites. "My name is Jophan, and I am on my way to Trufandom to obtain the Magic Mimeograph,so I that I may publish the Perfect Fanzine."

"Good day, Neofan," said the other, somewhat superciliously. "My name is Sycofan, and I am on a similar errand. I trust you will set up your altar at a reasonable distance from mine."

"Altar?" asked Jophan, surprised. "What for?"

"Why, to invoke the BNFicent spirits," said the other condescendingly. "Surely you don't imagine that you can cross the desert without their help?"

"I did not know it was possible for a mere Neofan to have any intercourse with the BNFs until he reached Trufandom," said Jophan wonderingly.

"Why, of course it is," said the other. "You must--" At this point there came a blinding glow of light above the altar, and Sycofan threw himself on his knees and began beating his head on the ground.

Jophan remained erect and gazed curiously at the phenomenon. In a few moments there was a loud clap of thunder, and a small solid object fell on the altar and rolled off on to the ground.

"There!" said Sycofan smugly, snatching it up and showing it to Jophan. It seemed to be a sort of thin pancake or waffle, rolled up like a scroll of paper.

"What is it?" asked Jophan.

"It's called a manna-script," said Sycofan, devouring it greedily. Jophan watched enviously until the other had swallowed the last succulent morsel.

"I suppose you will be resuming your journey now?" he asked.

An uneasy expression crossed the other's face. "Er...no," he said, rather shamefacedly. "I think I shall wait here until my strength is built up. The manna-scripts need a great deal of praying for, and I haven't enough of them yet."

Jophan looked at Sycofan's weak face and privately decided that it was doubtful if he would ever complete the journey to Trufandom. After pondering the matter for some minutes he came to a conclusion.

"I was told," he said earnestly, "that the journey to Trufandom is one that can be accomplished only by a fan's unaided efforts, and I believe this to be true. I cannot believe that if the BNFicent spirits give aid to one who merely asks it they would withhold it from one who shows that he deserves it. I urge you to leave your altar and come with me."

"Why, you're only a Neofan," sneered the other. "Why should I associate with you when I can have the help of BNFs?"

"Even they were once Neofen like me," said Jophan quietly. "Yet they are wise and will not waste their gifts. You may find," he warned Sycofan gravely, "that they will not continue to feed you indefinitely."

But Sycofan would not abandon his parasitic existence, and instead promptly em-

barked on another session of prayer.

Shaking his head regretfully, Jophan left him and resumed his journey.

Before he had gone much further, Jophan was both delighted and relieved to find that his surmise had been correct. To the accompaniment of a blaze of light and a clap of thunder a bulky manna-script fell beside him; and before disappearing the light moved on towards Trufandom as if in encouragement.

Thereafter the manna-scripts fell with increasing frequency during the remainder of his journey so that he had no longer any cause to worry on the score of food.

Chapter 15: In Which Jophan Enters The Region Of Oases

But Jophan's difficulties were by no means at an end. The scorching heat by day and the bitter cold by night made sleep almost impossible, and as time went on he became more and more exhausted. But he staggered on dauntlessly, searching ceaselessly through red-rimmed eyes for some sign of the end of this terrible desert.

Shortly before nightfall one day they came upon an oasis. Jophan let his feeble limbs carry him into the welcome shade of the trees and lay down to rest for the night, observing as he did so a flock of gaily-plumaged birds flitting to and fro among the trees, to the accompaniment of their sweet song. It sounded like "Bu! Bu!" Idly he asked one of the Subrs what the birds were called. "Bu-birds," replied the Subr laconically. Smiling quietly to himself as the ingenuous reply, Jophan went to sleep.

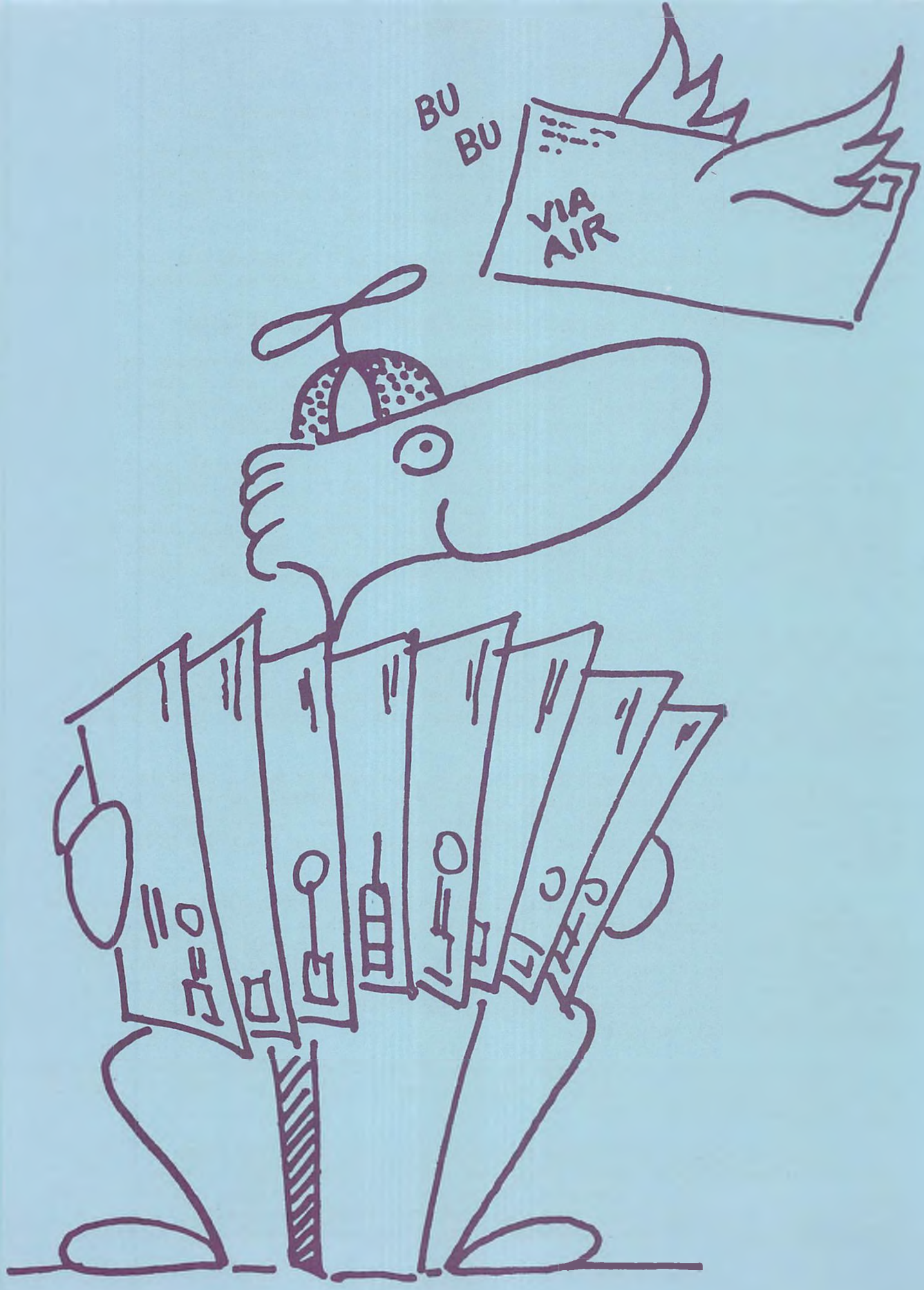
Whether it was the soothing song of the birds, or the fact that the oasis retained its heat longer than the open desert, Jophan slept unusually well. Nevertheless he realized when he awoke next morning that he was in no fit state to resume the march. His limbs were stiff and enfeebled, and it was all he could do to raise his head and look about him. He knew he would have to rest awhile here in the hope of regaining his strength.

As he was about to lie back again, however, he noticed just a few feet away from him a beautiful, translucent egg, which must, he realized, have been laid by one of the Bu-birds during the night. It occurred to him that it would make a welcome addition to his diet, and, reaching out painfully for it, he pierced a hole at each end and raised it to his mouth.

As the first mouthful of the liquid passed his lips Jophan almost choked in his astonishment. This was clearly no ordinary egg. The fluid it contained was cool, refreshing, and intoxicatingly delicious to the taste. With each drop Jophan felt new energy floodlng through his body. When the egg was finished he jumped to his feet and began to run eagerly round the oasis looking for more, so intent on the search that he scarcely noticed how quickly his tiredness had been replaced with boundless energy and enthusiasm.

Soon he had opened all the eggs he could find and poured their contents into one of the empty waterbottles. Then he called his party together and strode confidently into the desert at their head.

During the days which followed he found that when his energy began to flag all that was necessary was to take a draught of the life-giving fluid. Instantly his vigour and enthusiasm were restored. Furthermore he had apparently reached an area of the desert where oases were plentiful, and each morning he usually collected a sufficient quantity of "Egg o' Bu," as he now affectionately called it, to sustain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him for the day's journey. He was now able to dispense almost completely with ordinary food and water, and would indeed have been prepared to do without the help of the Subrs had that been necessary. The only ill-effects he noticed were that over-indulgence in the elixir was inclined to produce a species of intoxication and a painless but unsightly swelling of the head. These he resolved to guard against as carefully as he could.

Jophan now began to make very rapid progress, and with each day the change in the character of the desert became more pronounced. The days were cooler, the nights warmer, and oases increasingly numerous. Mirages began to appear of the high mountains of Trufandom, and though he was disappointed each time on finding they were illusions, he consoled himself with the thought that they indicated he was approaching his goal.

At last his patience was rewarded. One morning he breasted a long, low ridge of sand-dunes, to see before him, far too clear to be a mirage, a stupendous mountain range stretching as far as the eye could see. Beyond those mountains, he knew with a thrill of awe, must lie the Land of Trufandom.

Chapter 16: In Which Jophan Enters The Canyon Of Criticism

Jophan now pressed on with redoubled energy, and by evening he could plainly see a deep rocky cleft leading into the mountains. This, he knew must be the Canyon of Criticism, the only route through the mountains to Trufandom. He resolved to fortify himself with a night's sleep before attempting this new peril, and spent the night at an oasis.

Next morning, having partaken cautiously of the Egg o' Bu lest it should dull his perceptions, Jophan set out for the entrance to the Canyon. As he approached it he noticed other Neofen converging on the point from all directions. They rushed past, wild-eyed and eager, and plunged into the Canyon. They had obviously partaken too freely of Egg o' Bu, for their eyes were glazed, their steps unsteady, their heads unnaturally swollen, and their clothes and shields neglected and dirty. Reluctant as he was to let them overtake him, he took thought of his previous experiences and the warnings he had been given. He polished his Shield of Umor hastily, checked his provisions, and only then set foot cautiously into the Canyon.

The path proved to be along the side of the Canyon rather than at its foot. After he had travelled some distance Jophan noticed that while the ground still fell away sharply to his left, the cliff on his right had gradually merged into a more gentle slope. Along this the path split into several smaller paths which wound their separate ways along the mountainside.

As he picked his way over the rougher ground he heard a clatter of falling rock in front of him, and looked upwards in time to see several small stones bounding towards him over an overhanging boulder. Hastily he brought up his shield and covered himself with it. Most of the stones bounced harmlessly off it, but to his dismay one of them passed through as if the shield were made of vapour, and dealt him a severe blow on the shoulder. Suppressing a cry of pain, Jophan looked closely at his shield. There was, he now noticed, a tarnished patch which had escaped the hasty polishing he had done that morning. Retreating quickly to safety, he polished his shield to a uniform brilliance. Then he ventured again towards the danger area, looking curiously ahead to see how the other Neofen were faring.

It was a dreadful sight that met his eyes. Lying on the paths were the crushed and bleeding bodies of many of the Neofen who had passed him that morning. Among them others staggered about, panic stricken, trying to dodge the hail of stones.

But their minds were so befuddled, and their swollen heads so vulnerable beneath their tiny and tarnished shields, that the efforts of many were in vain. Even as he watched, one of the unfortunate wretches was struck from the path by a particularly heavy stone, and with a heart-rending scream vanished from sight down the rocky slope.

On emerging from the lee of the big boulder which had been affording him some shelter, Jophan shielded his eyes from the sun and peered up the slope to try to discover why the falls of rock were so frequent. To his horror he saw, outlined against the sky, a row of dark, misshapen little men busily engaged in uprooting stones and hurling them at the defenceless Neofen below. He watched them for a while, but they showed no sign of abating their activities. Indeed, they did not even seem to stop for food, for he noticed one dwarf hurling stones with one hand and with the other eating what appeared to be a bunch of small sour grapes.

This last sight caused Jophan to decide that there was no point in delaying further. As he ventured forth a savage howl arose from the dwarfs, and the grape-eater seized a particularly sharp stone and threw it with tremendous speed directly at Jophan. Without flinching Jophan held his shield firmly above his head. The stone bounced harmlessly off the shield and back to the thrower with undiminished force. With grim satisfaction he observed it strike the dwarf with deadly effect, dislodging him from his perch so that he fell screaming down the slope and vanished into the abyss.

Greatly pleased by the excellence of his shield, Jophan proceeded along the path. The dwarfs seemed to have learned a lesson from a taste of their own medicine, and such stones as were thrown in his direction were cast in such a tentative and half-hearted manner that he could almost afford to ignore them. He began to think that the perils of the Canyon were at an end.

This mood of over-confidence was soon rudely shattered. On rounding the next curve in the path he suddenly found himself in semi darkness. Thinking that some cloud had passed over the sun, he looked up casually. His heart almost failed him to see that the shadow was cast by several huge, swarthy giants sitting drowsily among the swarming dwarfs on the crest of the cliff.

Chapter 17: In Which Jophan Continues Through The Canyon

Even as Jophan watched, one of the giants awoke, snorting angrily. With no apparent reason, or even perception of what he was doing, the giant uttered a great bellow of wrath, seized a boulder as large as a house and hurled it down the slope. The huge mass of rock hurtled down into a line of Neofen, smashing several into the ground despite their upraised Shields of Umor, and continued on its way down the mountainside, bounding from path to path, and sometimes carrying away whole fan groups at a time.

When the last despairing cry had died away, Jophan looked back up the slope to see that the giant had settled back down to sleep, a contented, imbecilic smile on his countenance. Shuddering with disgust and fear, Jophan withdrew a few paces and sat down in the entrance to a cave to recover his nerve.

The sound of his own breathing had barely subsided when he was again startled by a clicking noise behind him. He turned round sharply, and, as his eyes became more accustomed to the semi-darkness, he could see that the noise came from a Neofan who was striking at a flat piece of stone with a tiny axe. He was so intent on his work that he did not notice Jophan's presence until the latter spoke to him.

"What are those dreadful beings?" asked Jophan fearfully, speaking the first thought in his mind.

"They belong to a race known as the Magrevoos," said the Neofan knowledgeably. "The dwarfs are called Fanmagrevoos and the giants Promagrevoos. Many of them are not really evil, merely thoughtless and stupid. The giants, for example, have no idea of their own strength, and do not understand half of what is going on down here. In fact they would probably ignore us altogether were it not for the fact that they are continually being prodded into activity by a strange and powerful tribe known as the Headeaters, who live in the mountains." As he spoke, he lifted up the flat stone, which Jophan now saw to be covered with neatly-cut lettering, and carried it to the mouth of the cave. He beckoned Jophan to follow him.

"Moreover," he went on, "there are other Magrevoos who do their best to make up for the harm done by their fellows. They are known as the Fair Ones. Watch!"

Jophan looked again at the scene of carnage on the mountainside. He saw that groups of fair-complexioned and kindly-faced dwarfs were passing among the victims reviving them with draughts of Egg o' Bu, raising them to their feet, and helping them some distance along the path. There was even a beautiful, blonde giantess assisting in the work of mercy. Jophan noticed, however, that while most of the dwarfs carefully selected those among the survivors who seemed most likely to benefit from their help, the giantess showed no such discrimination. Instead, she would sweep up a random heap of Neofen, including some who were obviously already dead, drench them with Egg o' Bu from a large pitcher she carried slung over her shoulders, and with a few mighty strides deposit them far along the path. He saw that many of them merely sat in a daze where she had placed them, quite incapable of taking advantage of their good fortune.

"Who is she?" asked Jophan

"She comes from a now almost extinct tribe known as the Fillips," said the Neofan absently. He had been swinging the stone in his right hand and now flung it with great force towards the crest of the mountains. He and Jophan watched it spin over the heads of the dwarfs and disappear from view.

"You missed," said Jophan.

"It was not a missile," explained the Neofan patiently, "but a missive. It was a message to the Headeaters who control the giants. It is important to propitiate them, for they are by far the most important tribe in Fandom. Indeed, there is a tradition that on their existence depends that of Trufandom itself."

"If that is so," said Jophan, impressed, "your work is obviously of the greatest importance, and I should like to help if I may. My name is Jophan, and I am, of course, on my way to Trufandom to find the Magic Mimeograph and produce the Perfect Fanzine."

"My name is Letteraxe," said the other cordially, "and I am delighted to make your acquaintance." With these words he gave Jophan a small axe, similar to his own, and they composed several messages to the Headeaters.

When the last of these had disappeared into the mountains Jophan spoke reflectively to Letteraxe.

"Since these mountains surround Trufandom on all sides," he pointed out, "it occurs to me that it would be quite as easy to send the messages from Trufandom as from here. Should we not continue our journey?"

Letteraxe looked doubtful. "Do so if you wish," he said, "but I have several more messages I want to write. I shall probably follow you later."

Privately Jophan doubted if the Neofan would ever stir from his peaceful existence in the cave, but expressed the hope of seeing him again in Trufandom and wished him a cordial farewell. Then, having generously replenished Letteraxe's skimpy supply of Egg o'Bu, he started on the last stage of his journey to Trufandom.

Chapter 18: In Which Jophan Reaches The End Of His Journey

By the use of care and discretion, Jophan was able to evade the blind rages of the giants, and he found his shield an infallible protection against the malice of the dwarfs. Thus he emerged from the danger area unscathed, and soon reached the head of the Canyon. He now found himself on a pleasant, flower-decked path leading gently upwards to a pass between the mountains. The sky in that direction was tinged with a warm golden glow, and at the sight he quickened his pace, for he knew that the glow could come only from Trufandom.

However, the path was longer than it had seemed, and the sun had set before he had reached the summit. Regretfully he decided that he had better pass the night where he was. The grass beside the path was soft and the night warm and pleasant, but Jophan found great difficulty in going to sleep. Borne on the mild breeze he heard the faint sound of happy voices coming from Trufandom, and they filled him with impatience to complete his journey.

Next morning he was on his way at the first hint of light in the sky, and as dawn broke he had almost reached the summit of the pass. Gasping, he ran the last few hundred yards and flung himself down on the ground to drink in the beauty of the scene which lay before him.

Bathed in the mysterious, golden light of early dawn lay the fair land of Trufandom. Only its hills and spires were picked out by the questing rays of the sun, for the country was a sunken plateau ringed on all sides by mountains, so that it formed a secluded world of its own. A more wonderful one Jophan could not have imagined. Beautiful as it was, however, his eye was caught and held by the most wonderful thing of all. It was a tall, white tower which rose out of the rolling parkland, and soared into the sky. On the summit something glittered like a tiny sun.

This, he knew, must be the Tower of Trufandom -- and on its top The Enchanted Duplicator!

All eagerness, he started down the grassy slope. He had taken but a few cautious steps when the thought came to him that here his Shield of Umor might have other uses than as a means of defence. Smiling happily to himself, he put the shield on the ground and used it as a toboggan.

Thus Jophan sailed gaily down into Trufandom.

At the foot of the slope he again took up his shield, now shining more brilliantly than ever before, and strode through the leafy lanes in the direction of the Tower. On either side of him were numerous parks and gardens, great and small, and of varying types of beauty, and in them walked shining, godlike figures whom he knew to be the Trufans. Now and again one of them would notice Jophan, and come to greet him and wish him well, and with each encounter his eagerness grew to reach the Tower and become one of their number.

So it was that late in the afternoon Jophan came at last to the Tower. There was a spiral staircase inside, and without hesitation he began to climb it. Up and up he went, round and round, higher and higher, long after he thought he should have reached the top. But the Tower was higher than he had realised, and he was giddy and out

of breath when at last he reached the head of the stairs. Above him now there was only a short ladder leading to a trapdoor.

Jophan sat on the stairway for a while until his dizziness had passed, and he had regained his breath. Then he climbed up the ladder and pushed at the trapdoor. It swung open easily, on a concealed counterbalance. Above him was the blue sky.

Though he had come so far, and braved so many dangers, for this moment, his heart almost failed him now that it was at hand. But at last, pulling himself together, he stepped quickly up the ladder and onto the roof.

He was on the very top of the Tower. Far beneath him was spread out all the Land of Trufandom as far as the now distant mountains. The top of the Tower was a sheet of burnished gold, and in the centre was a cube of solid gold. On the cube there stood a mimeograph.

At the sight of it Jophan felt a sickness in the stomach, and his legs almost failed to support him. Whitefaced, he stared at the mimeograph. He had expected a gleaming jewel-like machine. Instead he saw a rusty, battered hulk. The framework was filthy with ink, the drum was caked, and there was obviously something wrong with the self-feed. It squatted on the gleaming, gold cube, an obscene eye-sore.

Jophan tried to pull himself together, telling himself there must be some mistake. But there was nothing else on the roof, just the trapdoor through which he had come, the gold cube, and the old mimeograph. Dazed by the shock of his disappointment, he wandered aimlessly across the top of the Tower.

As he did so his hand brushed against the handle of the mimeograph, and something like an electric shock coursed through his body. Amazed, he took a firm grip of the handle. A current of some potent force seemed to flow between him and the machine, feeding back and forth from one to the other until Jophan felt every particle of his being suffused with a strange new life. The mimeograph had also changed. There was no difference in its outward appearance, but he knew that the potent force had also taken possession of it. It was subtly changed, as if it had been dead and was now alive. The handle seemed to throb in his hand. Still uncomprehending, Jophan looked down at his own body. His skin was glowing with the same golden radiance he had noticed in the bodies of the Trufans. His limbs were being invented with the same godlike strength.

As the revelation came to him, there was a sound of golden trumpets in the air, and he heard again the voice of the Spirit of Fandom.

"Yes, Jophan," it said, "you are now a True Fan: and it is yourself that has made you so, as it must be. And now you will realise the second great truth -- that this is indeed The Magic Mimeograph, and it will produce The Perfect Fanzine. For -- "and now the song of the trumpets filled the air, ringing out across Trufandom to the far mountains -- "FOR THE MAGIC MIMEOGRAPH IS THE ONE WITH A TRUE FAN AT THE HANDLE."

And Jophan found that it was so....

.....

THE MENACE OF KEHLI

(rb: Among the dangers besetting the population of Trufandom there was one of a peculiarly beastial nature which was not mentioned in "The Enchanted Duplicator" but which in 1953 swept away Lee Hoffman to the sound of galloping hooves and a great "Hi, Ho, Kehli". On Oct. 3, 1953, Leeh turned the stencils for Quandry 30 over to Charles Wells and said goodby to all that. In March, 1954, the Harp had found a new home:)

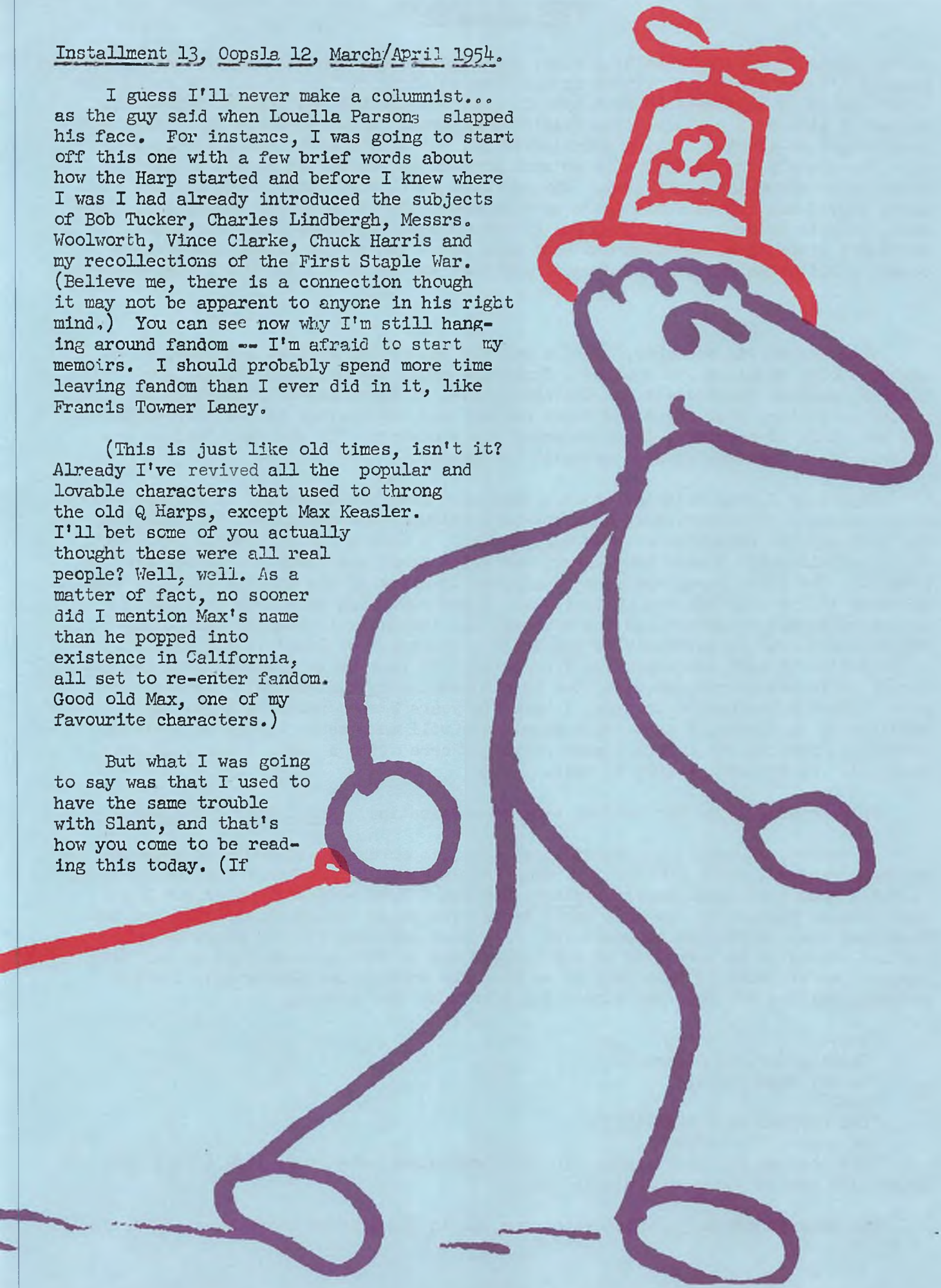
THE HARP IN OOPSLA

Installment 13, Oopsla 12, March/April 1954.

I guess I'll never make a columnist... as the guy said when Louella Parsons slapped his face. For instance, I was going to start off this one with a few brief words about how the Harp started and before I knew where I was I had already introduced the subjects of Bob Tucker, Charles Lindbergh, Messrs. Woolworth, Vince Clarke, Chuck Harris and my recollections of the First Staple War. (Believe me, there is a connection though it may not be apparent to anyone in his right mind.) You can see now why I'm still hanging around fandom -- I'm afraid to start my memoirs. I should probably spend more time leaving fandom than I ever did in it, like Francis Towner Laney.

(This is just like old times, isn't it? Already I've revived all the popular and lovable characters that used to throng the old Q Harps, except Max Keasler. I'll bet some of you actually thought these were all real people? Well, well. As a matter of fact, no sooner did I mention Max's name than he popped into existence in California, all set to re-enter fandom. Good old Max, one of my favourite characters.)

But what I was going to say was that I used to have the same trouble with Slant, and that's how you come to be reading this today. (If



you're actually reading something else, just ignore this remark. You've lost your place.) I'd get the thing printed up and then go along filling in all the holes with stuff specially commissioned from myself. But the trouble was that no matter what subject I picked, I'd always find myself with several thousand words left over. It's hard to get me started writing about anything, but it's almost impossible to stop me. (Fortunately the incentive is so much greater in the latter case.) It used to annoy me to throw the stuff away. Why not send it to some other faned and let it annoy him? I sat around for a while waiting hopefully to be asked. Nobody did. There was a path to my door, all right, but everybody beat it in the other direction. Timidly I wrote three articles and sent them out. Two of the faneds immediately ceased publication and the third cunningly lost the article. But was I discouraged?

Yes.

Then one day in November, 1950, a new fan called Lee Hoffman commented on an exchange copy of Slant I'd sent her. Somewhere among the praise of Slant, Joe Kennedy, amateur theatricals and the antiquities of Savannah, condemnations of racial prejudice, Redd Boggs and Flash Gordon, and expressions of disinterest in the sex life of hamsters, there occurred the sentence: "If you ever feel so inclined, don't hesitate to send material to Quandry."

Naturally I read this letter as a desperate plea for material. I replied by return airmail volunteering to do a one-page column. Lee accepted. (At this time her only regular contributors were R.J. Banks.) I took a lot of trouble over that first installment. I must have re-written it at least six times and it suffered from it. The first paragraph alone contained 13 jokes of one sort or another, some of which I'll bet no one has noticed yet. I was suffering then from an ailment that attacks all conscientious fan writers, the inability to realize that other people don't read as carefully as you write. However, Lee liked it and said so. By this time we were corresponding frequently. In fact we were carrying on two entirely different correspondences, one by air and one by surface mail. And at this point I have a confession to make. I have for years been concealing a ghastly skeleton in my closet. I know this disclosure will make me an object of derision before all fandom, but I feel I must start off here with a clean breast. I shall tell All. My dreadful secret is this.

In February, 1951, Lee Hoffman sent me a Valentine. And I didn't realize.

Of course, it wasn't a romantic type one...it actually, if you must know my intimate secrets, was a picture of a squirrel with the legend "You're nutty but nice" ...but I should at least have suspected. How can I have been so stupid? But I had such a clear picture of Lee as a tubby brown-eyed young fellow that I just put the Valentine down to fannish eccentricity. I'd been infandom for two years by then and had ceased to be surprised by anything. I had to have a house fall on me. This happened -- at least it felt like it -- when she sent me her photograph. I still remember calling Bob Shaw the minute I got to work that morning...

"22674."
"Drawing Office, please."
"Is Mr. Shaw there?"
"Bob?"
"LEE HOFFMAN IS A GIRL!!!!!"
"Of course I'm sure."
"She sent me her photograph. In the first place, she looks like a girl. She looks like one in the second place, too."

But back to the Harp. That first one was in the Quandry dated March 1951. In

the April issue Joe Kennedy and others were very nice about it and I walked on air for days. I noticed one thing, though. No one seemed impressed by the first installment of my brilliant and scholarly analysis of sciencefictional trends, and in the second one Lee had inserted a pointed editorial comment up my most serious passage. I took the hint and never wrote a serious article again. (Except one in the Rhodomagnetic Digest which I still think was the best thing I ever wrote, even if not a single person in fandom has ever mentioned the thing. Curse you all, anyway; one day I shall play Hamlet.)

But meanwhile, on with the motley. The Harp turned out to be a pretty successful column. It may not have been the best body of writing in fandom, but it certainly was the most moving. At any rate it moved me, from Belfast to Chicago. But that's another story. It also made Q the first international fanzine when I started reporting British Conventions in it, and I could write a few thousand words about that, too. But leave us not get nostalgic. Quandry is dead, long live Oopsla! There will never be another fanzine just like Q, nor will there ever be another Harp just like the Q Harps. But there will be fanzines just as good as Q in their own way, and maybe other Harps no worse then the old ones.

But before we put Q reverently away,there's a couple of odds and ends we might lay beside it. For one thing, there is one sentence of the Harp that never got printed. Lee and I had some fun about this in the letter section and there may, Ghod knows, be some fan somewhere still wondering what that famous sentence was. It occurred just after I'd mentioned that Eva Firestone had called me 'an armchair critic' for criticising N3F, and it read: "That's ridiculous, Eva -- I have the highest possible opinion of armchairs." That was all.

As for the other -- well, did you ever wonder just how much Rog Phillips used to read of the fanzines he reviewed in "The Clubhouse"? One thing I can tell you, he didn't read the Quannish very thoroughly. In fact I doubt if he really read it at all, because it's impossible to look at a page containing one's own name without it leaping to the eye, and I had a whole paragraph about Rog:

> "Today's new subber kindly pastes on the back of his letter a copy of Slant's latest review in Amazing. I can hardly believe it, but Phillips has done it again. In the first issue I ever sent him there was a mild little pun about my grandfather having been a printer and I having merely reverted to type. An innocuous thing compared to some of the monsters I have created, but it must have left a lasting impression on Phillips. In every review but one in the last few years he has quoted it. Less and less verbatim each time, but there's no doubt he got the point all right. It registered. I can just imagine Rog that first time, reading solemnly through the heap, restapling tidily the last disintegrating mimeoed crudzine, and going home to a quiet read and a smoke and then to bed. At about four o'clock in the morning it hits him. He awakes, screaming hysterically. "Reverted to type! Ha ha ha. Ho ho ho." Alarmed, the neighbors send for the doctor. He arrives, makes a quick diagnosis. "Nurse, the hypodermic!" At last Rog quiets down, save for an occasional tortured murmur. "Grandfather, printer, type." The neighbors go back to bed. But Rog is never the same again. I can tell you, I'm scared to make another pun in case it kills him."

There is a sequel to this. After the Chicon, Forry Ackerman and I went to Palmer's place for some sleep and then back to Evanston to drive to Los Angeles with Rog and Mari Phillips. I hadn't met Rog at the Convention so he spoke his first words to me as we moved off along Dempster Street. They were: "You know, Walt, I still remember that first issue of yours. It had a darned good pun in it, something about your father being a printer and you having reverted to type."

I looked at him doubtfully, sure he was pulling my leg. But he wasn't, and he

never knew the reason for my getting purple in the face at his innocent remark.

UP THE GARDEN PATHOLOGY

Have you noticed how short-lived BNFs are nowadays? In the old days three years was considered the normal life cycle for a fan, from serious constructivism through BNFdom to permanent gafia, but these Seventh Fandomers seem to have speeded the process up. Nowadays us oldtimers sit back dazed as a bewildering succession of BNFs flash past us like meteors in a "B" movie, vanishing into inactivity almost as suddenly as they appeared. From comet to comatose, you might say.

I have studied this phenomenon and I have come to the conclusion that it's largely the result of a new disease, which I have called annishthesia. I know that Professor Boggs in the Vegannish pointed out that annishes were a plague, but as Dean Grennell is my witness I thought of it first, and as the discoverer of Stigwort's Disease I feel that my researches go more deeply into this vital matter.

Annishthesia attacks fans in the prime of life and is so much more deadly on that account, wreaking as it does such havoc among the very flower of fandom. There are two forms of it, primary annishthesia and secondary annishthesia, but the first symptoms are identical. The young and enthusiastic fan publishes several promising issues of his fanzine and a type of euphoria sets in, indicated by an insatiable thirst for egoboo. This in itself is not a serious complaint, being almost endemic in fandom. But often the young fan neglects the most obvious precautions and with a reckless expenditure of energy begins to produce more and more ambitious issues, like a child throwing stones into a pond to make splashes. This can have only one result -- annishthesia sets in. He decides to publish a hundred-page annish.

In primary annishthesia, which is almost invariably fatal, the effort is too much for him and after a short fever he succombs to permanent gafia. Those with stronger constitutions survive and eventually publish their annish. Haggard, wan, his fingers bleeding from misguided staples, his back stooped from gathering, his pores stopped up with mimeo ink, in advanced malnutrition through poverty brought on by the high cost of paper, the fan stumbles to the mailbox and mails his annish. In his ignorance he thinks his troubles are over. But no, secondary annishthesia has still to strike.

Back at home, the fan eagerly awaits the plaudits of fandom, the prospect which has given him strength to carry on through all those months of toil and strain. He half expects to receive that very same afternoon an enthusiastic telegram from the Postal Inspector. But the days pass and there is utter silence from fandom. But the poor wretch is not dismayed -- rather is he awed at the effect he has produced. Obviously, he thinks, fandom is stunned. All over the world fans are sitting open-mouth, numbed with admiration, refusing meals, neglecting their families and jobs while they gaze and marvel at the wondrous thing he has wrought. It is just a matter of waiting until they recover enough strength to crawl to their typers and air-mail paeon after paeon of praise. But no. The days, weeks go by, and still no paeon. (That's why it's called annishthesia -- there's no paeon.) Finally, just as he has wildly decided that the Postmaster General is in the pay of rival faneds, two letters arrive. One is from Dave Ish, who says it's not a patch on the Quannish. The other is from Redd Boggs, who says it's not as good as the Insurgent issue of Spacewarp. In another week or so he gets a letter from Vince Clarke saying it's not to be compared with the November 1943 issue of Zenith. He refuses to open the letter from Bob Tucker.

This is the crisis. If the fan survives this he will slowly recover. The treatment is complete rest and frequent injections of egoboo. It must also be patiently

explained to him that he has unwittingly run counter to one of the fundamental laws of Fannish Thermodynamics, that comment always flows from a cold fanzine to a hot one. He has made the terrible mistake of publishing something which is too big to be read at one sitting, a zine that fans will tend to put aside to read and comment on adequately later. By which time its priority has been yielded to the latest oneshot.

However recent research has shown that there is new hope for the victim of annishthesia. In the first place, any victim who emerges from the ordeal is the stronger for it. In the second place, it seems clear now that the amount of ego-boo resulting from an annish is not in fact less than it deserves. It may even be greater. What happens is that its impact is temporally rather than spatially dispersed. For one thing, dozens of fans now have guilt complexes about not praising his annish. This, like murder, will out; and over the years these fans will keep alluding to his annish in their articles, columns and editorials. It will become a legend. And in a few years he will have the joy of knowing that at this very moment some poor Neofan is being made wretched by being told that his annish "is quite good, but...."

Installment 14, Oopsla 13, May 1954.

THE FEN COMMANDMENTS

"Don't be surprised," said Anglofan Ted Tubb after he'd read "The Enchanted Duplicator", "if you find yourself being called Missionary Willis." I see what he means, but 'missionary' is not quite the right word. I've no urge to go into the highways and byways trying to convert the neofans. Fans are born not made. (This does not apply to female fans, of course, some of whom are made every Convention.) No, what I feel like at the moment is more like an Old Testament prophet, an aged patriarch descending on his own tribe, tripping over his long white beard in his haste to warn them of the Wrath To Come.

I don't know whether it's just a sign of senility, but it does seem to me that neofans are not what they were in my young days. And that if some of these Neofan of today are doing to be BNFs of tomorrow, either they've got to change their ways or fandom won't be a way of life worth living any more.

For instance it used to be that the average letter asking for material or some other form of help started off politely...too politely...with 'Dear Mr. Willis' and continued with some more or less extravagant compliments before coming to the real point. This was all very right and proper. You discounted the flattery automatically (some time I must draw you a diagram of my Automatic Flattery Discounter, with its built-in grain-of-salt guage) but you recognized it as a sort of necessary ritual politeness.

But this old-fashioned stuff won't do for our modern neofan. Ho ho. He thinks of himself, it would seem, as a dauntless young hero fearlessly confronting the aged BNF and proclaiming his demands with insolent audacity. The idea, I suppose, is that the BNF, weary of adulation and sycophancy, will be so surprised and pleased with the fine independence and manly pride of this upstanding youth that he will clasp him to his bosom, murmuring brokenly "My son! My son!" Whereas, of course, the BNF just says "My Ghod, another of these obnoxious little bastards" and is grateful for the excuse to throw away the letter unanswered.

But here's one I kept to show you what I mean. It's from a young Baltimore fan, one of this Star Rockets crowd who are swarming all over the place organizing one another:

"Dear Five Of You: (you Slantheads) (Walt, George, Bob, James and Madeleine.) (Who's she? The dog? Irish bull?)

I have been meaning to waste a dime on you for about a year.

.....I have a complaint to make. It so happens that I have publishing a fanzine since Christmas, and so far have gotten nothing from you at all...

.....I read my mother (who has rather a good sense of humor) all six pages of Oopsla's Harp, and I got exactly one chuckle out of her. The rest of the time she was hushed, contemplating greener pastures where science fiction and its fen did not reach.

.....You sound like you need one of MY colums in one (or both) of your minor efforts. I think I'll send you an MS.

.....Care to be UK representative for my zine?

.....Chess by mail? Art? A column by one or more of you in my zine?"

Well, of course, it wouldn't be fair to be annoyed at the apparent rudeness of this letter. It's due partly to natural stupidity and partly to a desperate attempt to write what the youngster thinks is fannish humor. What's pathetic about it is that it shows the hopeless ignorance of how to get along in fandom that afflicts many of our neofen. It seems to me that many of these unhappy creatures are going to have a wretched time in fandom unless they understand fandom's moral laws, just like any other society. They've never been set down in print before, but they do exist, and this is what I think they are.

1. Egoboo unto others as you would they should do unto you. This seems pretty obvious, but it's a law that's broken by others than neofen. There are quite a few BNFs who are firmly convinced that theirs is the only fanzine in the universe that calls for comment. You may have come across some of them yourself. You work maybe an entire hour on a long and helpful letter of comment, going to the trouble to reread each item in the mag and comment on it individually. You get an equally long reply. One sentence acknowledges your letter, another acknowledges your fanzine. The rest of it consists of indignant replies to any criticisms you may have made of his fanzine, disquisitions on his future policy and aims, explanations of why he did this and that instead of that and this, news about his activities, complaints about your not having noticed some particular piece of brilliance, and glowing accounts of the ones yet in store for you. These people believe that the world owes them a loving. How many of the faneds to whom Boggs writes those long, detailed, constructive helpful and eminently quotable letters of comment on their zines take the same trouble to write to Redd about Skyhook? Yet if you write to these people next time the way they write to you, you'll get an indignant or pathetic letter asking what's wrong. There is nothing to be done with some of these people -- they suffer from Browne's Disease, an incurable egotism. But it's a plague that seems to be growing among neofen and should be stamped out. Because if people cease to comment on other people's fanzines, fandom will die out. Every neofan should be made aware of the fact that he can't reasonably expect other fans to comment on his zine unless he's willing to comment on theirs and that, for instance, it's as rude to write to another fan without commenting on his fanzine as it would be to pass him on the street without speaking to him.

2. Honour the BNFs, that thy days may be long in thine own BNFdom. My Ghod, some of you will say, dig that crazy Willis -- trying to make sure the flood of egoboo doesn't dry up. Well, honestly, it isn't that at all. It just seems to me that 'fancestor worship' is one of the things that keeps fandom going. Why do so many Neofen work so hard to become BNFs? For prestige of course, the admiration of every other fan. But if the other fans are taught to scorn the BNFs what then? What incentive will there be to become one? One of the mainsprings of fanac will be destroyed. It seems to me a good thing for fandom that every fan should have a certain amount of respect for fans who have done more in fandom than he has. Speer reveres

Ackerman, Boggs revers Speer, Ellison reveres Boggs, Raleigh Evans Multog revers Ellison, and somewhere along the line there is probably some neofan who reveres Multog. All this is just as it should be. I don't mean that neofans should be obsequious to BNFs, or even deferential -- just that in fandom as everywhere else newcomers shouldn't throw their weight around until they have some to throw.

3. Never destroy a fanzine. The history, glories and traditions of fandom consist of a few tons of duplicating paper distributed in odd corners throughout the Anglo-Saxon world. They're very vulnerable to being thrown out as waste paper, because non-fans can't be expected to realize that each sheaf of those dirty mimeographed sheets enshrines not only the precious lifesblood of some distant fans but his hope of immortality...that some time in 187th Fandom somebody will read his zine and think of him with awe and admiration. If you must get rid of your old fanzines, send them to some neofan. Don't destroy even the worst crudzine, because somebody is bound to appreciate it. It seems to be a natural law that for every fanzine there is at least one natural-born subscriber. You've only got to look at the second issue of any crudzine to realize this. I really believe that if you send out half a dozen sheets of used toilet tissue there would be some fan somewhere who would write in and say it was the best fanzine he had ever seen.

(rb: At this point the clay tablets shatter and the remainder of this installment consisted of a section of "The Harp Stateside".

Installment 15, Oopsla 14, September 1954.

PRELUDE TO A CONVENTION

I don't know that I should write for this old magazine any more, after what your editor said about me last issue. It's bad enough having to consort with no-goods like McCain and Bloch without being called names, I don't have to come here to be insulted, you know. I can go anywhere and be insulted. Did you hear what that Calkins said about me? Willis is like cheese." Well! What a thing to say to a poor inoffensive fan writer. I knew I'd never made another Emil Zola, but I never thought I'd be a gorgonzola. I urge all my loyal fans to rise in their thousands...well, hundreds...dozens...all right, both of you then, and innundate Calkins with demands for a public apology. Cable him. Write him. Draw up petitions. Parade in front of his house with placards. Go on hungerstrikes. Shoot congressmen. Jump off high buildings. Any little thing you can do to draw attention to this terrible injustice.

I must state that this campaign has no connection with a similar one inaugurated by the National Cheese Manufacturers Association.

However on second thought I suppose I shall have to forget my own wrongs, overshadowed as they are by the grim events about to take place in England. We are, my friends, about to witness a fannish holocaust of dimensions undreamed of in the history of fandom. In a few days from now I shall set sail for the scene of the drama. In case I do not return I am casting this manuscript adrift in a sealed envelope so that you will know what happened and that I died a martyr to the great traditions of fan conreporting.

It all started with the rise of Northern English fandom a couple of years ago, when the serious and constructive Manchester Group became the strongest fan organization in the country. Like all organisms it carried within itself the seeds of its own destruction -- it began to think of holding Conventions. It did in fact hold a small one in 1953, the "Mancon." In spite of appeals for help at the National London Convention earlier in the year, not a single Londoner turned up. The Northerners' feelings were hurt. They accused the Londoners of being apathetic and

selfish. The Londoners retorted by criticising the Mancon publicity, claiming they'd never heard of the thing. Some even hinted that no convention run by dull-witted Northerners could be worth attending.

Consequently the Northern fans came to last year's London Convention with chips on their shoulders. Some of these were immediately splintered to matchwood by Bert Campbell, editor of the promag Authentic. Observing Bea Mahaffey in conversation with a group of Northerners, he was heard to utter the historic words: "For Ghod's sake somebody rescue Bea from those bloody provincials!"

This seems to have been accepted as a declaration of war. The Northern fans sat sullenly through the proceedings, noting every hitch and mishap in the official programme with a sort of grim satisfaction, and then went home to write bitter scathing convention reports...with titles like "A Bloody Provincial At The Fiascon." These were some of the politer phrases that were used. Others were "shambles... chaos...flop...disgrace." All would be different, they implied, when they ran the National Convention. They had a name all ready for it. 'The Supermancon.'

Seeing that they actually were eager to take over this responsibility, the Londoners gladly surrendered it. They were only too pleased to get rid of the White Horse's burden. For years they'd been running the National Convention, and they'd got neither profit nor thanks for it. They were delighted to have the opportunity to sit back for a change and see what sort of hash their critics would make of the job.

Meanwhile the Northern fanzines kept on publishing their convention reports. All of them hammered away at the inefficiency and muddle of the organizers, and none of them gave the Londoners any credit for the months of work they'd put in nor to the fact that in reality the '53 London Convention had had more bright and original ideas than any convention in the history of fandom. Their smugness began to annoy people; some of them began to think it might be fun to pull the Northerner's serious and constructive legs.

In September '53 the Belfast group invited London fan Vinȼ Clarke to the Oblique House. The affair was treated as a Convention (Robert Bloch, Shelby Vick and others also having been invited but unfortunately unable to attend) and there was an official programme. Item #6 was "In Secret Session: Proposals for brightening up the Supermancon." We found that the idea had already occured to some of the London Circle. We kicked around a lot of wild and hilarious ideas, but when Vinȼ Clarke went home we thought that would be the end of it. It is an axiom in Irish fandom that the London Circle never get anything done unless they have to.

So we were quite surprised when some weeks later we got a London Circle one-shot. With circulation restricted to the London Circle, and Irish fandom as 'neutral observers", it was headed 'Operation Armageddon. Bulletin One. A Plan To Brighten Up The Supermancon Without The Co-operation Of The Manchester Group.' There were two pages of suggestions for doing this, most of them thought up in Belfast, and they included:

1 (c) A fake programme, messily hectographed, to be issued at zero minus four weeks. To be followed by a second fake denouncing the first and offering another and deadly serious programme.
2 (c) Small skull & crossbones stickers for putting on bottles and glasses left unattended.
2 (d) "Reserved" notices for seats.
2 (e) Notices to be hung in the Convention Hall -- GENTLEMEN, LADIES, NO SPITTING EXCEPT AT THE PLATFORM, THE SUPERMANCON COMMITTEE SLEPT HERE, APPLY TO THE

CHAIRMAN FOR YOUR MONEY BACK, etc.

2 (f) Paper bags printed "IN CASE OF SICKNESS...MANCON COMMITTEE" to be pinned on the back of seats.

4 (2) Ron Buckmaster is arriving early and is delegated to try and put another mike in parallel with the public address system.

5 (a) Mancunians have an idea that Convention time-keeping is easy. Suggested that one minute before advertised starting time, Charlie Duncombe, surrounded by us (Note: Charlie Duncombe is the London Circle's loudest answer to Sam Moscowitz) yells "Minus 60" and gives the count of "Minus 50, 40" and so on. The last five seconds to be chanted by all Londoners and on "Zero" a starting pistol to be fired.

5 (b) On the second day, alarm clocks mark zero hour. Suggested everyone bring one, conceals it on self or in bag, pre-sets it accurately.

6 (a) A 'window-smashing' joke can be bought -- a dozen aluminum plates approx 3" by 1½". When dropped in a bunch they make a hell of a clatter, like a large plate-glass window falling in. We emptied them on the tiled floor of the White Horse lavatory and Lew (the bartender) came dashing upstairs two at a time. Suggested sets be bought or made; at intervals a beery voice is heard from the bar singing in a Scotch accent "I belong tae Glasga'" (Peter Hamilton of Glasgow, editor of the promag Nebula and Chairman of the Supermancon, is a teetotaller.)

9 (a) At some dull interval during the programme, London Circlers form chairs in circle, start playing cards.

9 (b) Half-way through sessions, fan at doorway asks in loud whisper "Have I missed anything?" Fan in front row replies "Not a thing."

9 (d) During a selected speech, rows of Londonders sit with blown up balloons in one hand and a large pin in the other. Not doing anything, but the psychological effect should be tremendous.

Well of course most of these ideas are just fanciful creations of a mischievous imagination, not to be taken seriously and highly unlikely to be put into practice. We thought the whole scheme was like that, laughed at it for a bit, and forgot about it. For the first time in our fannish existence, we had underestimated the London Circle. Just the other day we got Operation Armageddon #2 and found out that the London Circle are still on the ball. There are two more pages of suggestions, like:

15 (a) Before the Con opens, London Circleites perform a snake-dance at one end of the Hall, accompanied by tomtoms, (small fire on sheet of corrugated iron?), answer queries by explaining that it is a rite calculated to ensure success of Supermancon.

22 (a) Phase I. Five minutes after beginning of Guest of Honour's speech a live mouse is liberated.
Phase 2. Girlish screams, cries of "Rat," all London Circle women climb on chairs.
Phase 3. Hunt the rat.
Phase 4. Lull. Then Dot and Daphne faint.
Phase 5. Chaos. "Give her air!" Rush to open all windows. "Brandy!" Indignant speech by husband about "verminous hall," wife in delicate condition" (this need not be strictly true.)
Phase 6. Law and order prevail. Guest of Honour carries on with speech.
Phase 7. Release second mouse.

22 (b) The rat could be imaginary...arrange London Circlers in zig-zag pattern through audience, at a signal have them raise excited cries, jump on chairs, etc, to denote passage of rat (might even get a mass hallucination.)

In addition to this, a determined effort is going to be made to get the Convention Committee drunk. Special drinks reinforced with absolute alcohol and with names

like "Martian Dew," "Venusian Swampwater" and "Old Spacedog" are being compounded for this purpose by Ted Tubb, who must now be known as Bathtub Ted. There are 25 Londoners travelling overnight by road. They've booked a suite at the hotel and plan an all-night party, for which they are issuing exclusive passports. The Northerners don't know anything of the London Circle plans, but one group of them, the Liverpool fans, have pulled off quite a coup. They've booked the lounge of the hotel and got the management's permission to hold their all-night party there. I wonder what the chances are that the Londoners will have their party closed down at an early hour and will force their way into the lounge. When you reflect that the last British regional convention, the 1953 Medcon, was by all accounts just one running zapgun fight, you realize that literally anything can happen. In addition, Peter Hamilton, the Convention Chairman, is already at daggers drawn with the London pro editors, the Northern fans have split into two warring factions, and the new editor of their official zine has resigned and thrown in his lot with the Londoners.

I doubt if Northern English fandom will survive this Convention -- I only hope that British fandom will. Irish Fandom will do its best. As soon as the Con starts I intend to put on a badge labelled "Innocent Bystander." On the second day I may change this to "Non-fan." If there is a second day.

And to think I used to complain that British Conventions were dull!

(rb: The installment concludes with another section of "The Harp Stateside.")

Installment 16, Oopsla 15, November 1954.

(rb: Four pages of "The Harp Stateside" began the column which continued with:)

POSTSCRIPT TO A CONVENTION

After that dire build-up I gave the Supermancon last issue I feel like a bit like a fireworks promoter who promises an enormous bang and finds he has delivered a golden spray. It's pretty, but it's not what you were expecting. There was no bloodbath at Manchester after all. True, a professional editor assaulted a fan who squirted him with a zapgun and was himself threatened with violence by an unpaid author, there were fistfights at the entrances to rooms when armed fans tried to raid parties, two fans who ran amok with soda water syphons had to be forcibly restrained, and there were other evidences of over-enthusiasm for science fiction; but on the whole the most notable thing about the Convention was its sheer good nature. The fiendish programme of sabotage worked out by the London Circle was not even started, partly because their mascot Bert Campbell did not arrive (his motorbike having broken down at 4am halfway from London) and partly because of the London Circle's own good nature. It was only too obvious that the official programme didn't need any help from them to collapse. In fact when it did they -- that is principally Ted Tubb -- put on one of their own which was a great deal better.

However, a fair number of phenomena were observed which were new to British Conventions -- which are as you know very sedate affairs. The editor of the Vargo Statten Magazine took part in a race with another professional along the hotel corridor on hands and knees to borrow an aspirin from Ted Carnell's room, the official starter being Fred Robinson with a zapgun. Ted Carnell himself introduced a new element of refinement into zapgun warfare, having filled his with sherry. Two beautiful girl fans from Liverpool attended the Liverpool Group's all-night party in the hotel loung in futuristic bathing costumes, sold kisses for the Transatlantic Fan Fund at 5/- a time, and were even courageous enough to take part in a strip poker game. Fortunately they won consistently -- if they'd lost it would have been very noticeable -- and the unluckiest player seemed to be Terry Jeeves who spent a

large part of the evening stripped to the waist. (I shall never forget the porter's face when he came into the room at 3am and saw that scene.) Brian Lewis of Gillingham went about with his shirt outside his trousers like an American fan and toting a machine zapgun about two feet long. The ultimate weapon. Several fans sallying out with zapguns to raid another party were thrown back into their own party by the hotel staff. (I think this must be quite new.) The police were in the hotel at 1.15am and again at 7am looking for a member of the Convention Committee who had been reported missing by his wife. The management are understood to have complained bitterly that the police had never had occasion to visit their hotel in the 60 years of its existence, and here they were, twice in one night. On the last night there was a new and pleasing type of convention ritual, when empty bottles were disposed of by being thrown into the canal far below from the hotel window, to the accompaniment of immortal remarks like "I NAME THIS CITY -- MANCHESTER!"

The only organized hoax put through by the London Circle was one that hadn't been part of "Operation Armageddon" at all. Stuart Mackenzie's wife, Connie, was not coming up from London until the night of the first day, and they conceived the idea of passing her off as Pat Mahaffey, an unexpected visitor from the States. A pre-arranged telegram was sent from London signed 'Pat', giving the time of her arrival, and throughout the afternoon the London Circle made great play of concealing the news, discussing it just within earshot of Northerners and then looking furtively around and moving away. Later on they 'carelessly' left the telegram laying around where Dave Cohen, Convention Chairman, could find it. Dave indignantly taxed them with it and they made a clean breast of it. Yes, Pat Mahaffey was coming tonight. They'd meant to keep it for a surprise, but now that Dave had been smart enough to find out he was cordially invited to join the welcoming committee. At ten o'clock the welcomers -- Dave Cohen, Stuart Mackenzie, Ted Carnell and me -- went down to the station. Dave took us there by taxi. At the platform barrier Stu nudged me when his wife appeared and I went forward and greeted her, asking after Bea and recalling old times in Chicago. Dave had the taximan drive us a roundabout way back to the hotel so 'Pat' could have a look at England, and Ted and I talked to her about Bob Tucker and Robert Bloch and the rest of our mutual friends. Connie was heavily made up, chewed gum incessantly, had a TWA label on her bag, and handed round a pack of Chesterfields. Her accent was from Brooklyn, if anywhere, rather than Cincinatti, but it was quite good enough for Dave. At the hotel he introduced her to the other Northern fans, some of whom have since written her up in their convention reports. But the most complete victim of the hoax was, curiously enough, a London fan called Ron Deacon. He had never met Stu's wife and fell for the hoax completely. In fact he fell for 'Pat' herself and, perhaps encouraged by the remarkable progress Stuart Mackenzie had seemed to make with her, started a campaign to try and date her. This went on with letters and phone calls and other advances weeks after they all got back to London, while Ron thought 'Pat' was a guest at Stu's house. Finally Stu got tired of seeing Deacon trying to seduce his wife under his nose and broke the news to him as gently as possible. Altogether it was a remarkable hoax, and one that deserves to go down in fannish history.

FOOTNOTE

I had something in this column a couple of issues ago about the way some neofans write phoney, insincere or even rude letters to people they think of as 'BNFs' whom they evidently imagine to be strange, stuffed figures, not ordinary friendly human beings. Unfortunately a couple of people to whom I owe letters seem to have jumped to the extraordinary conclusion that the reason I didn't answer them was that they weren't 'polite' or 'respectful' enough. This is (I hope) a laughable idea to anyone who knows me but all the same I'd like to assure everyone to whom I owe a letter, which unfortunately includes most of fandom, that the reason has been merely shortage of time, not bigness of head. If their letters were friendly and sincere I was very pleased to get them and I hope to reply the same way when I can.

Installment 17, Copsla 16, February 1955.

MORAL CODES AND ETHICS AS PREACHED IN IRELAND

The credit for that snappy little title doesn't belong to me but to Peter Vorzimer. It was the title of an article I was supposed to have written for a fanzine called Proton, which was born in Vorzimer's brain and eked out its brief existence in those cramped surroundings. Apparently Vorzimer had the not entirely original idea of creating an imaginary fanzine, supposed to circulate only among BNFs, and reviewing it regularly in Abstract. The hoax was successful enough, in the sense that a fire-work is successful if it goes off, even if it takes part of your hand with it. All Abstract's readers were annoyed that they weren't getting Proton, I was annoyed because I didn't like people thinking I was writing for a snob fanzine, and some other kindhearted fans were annoyed at the boorish tone of poor Vorzimer's fake reviews. Bob Tucker even went so far as to quote one of them in Le Zombie an awful example of fan's inhumanity to fan. However I wasn't fooled, partly because I'm smart and partly because I knew I hadn't written an article about moral codes and ethics as preached in Ireland. I'd never even thought of trying. However, it is a sort of challenge though...like that imaginary issue of ASF reviewed in Hoen's letter some years ago and which Campbell went to immense trouble to make come true. Anything Campbell can do I can do not nearly so well. Besides I wanted to say something about Abstract's Conish anyway. And now I come to think of it it gives me an opportunity to tell you something about the problem of how to throw away old shoes in Ireland, and this might be very useful if any of you are thinking of coming over here this summer. You might very well bring some old shoes with you, especially if you belong to the upper set, and want to throw them away. The guidebooks will tell you all sorts of things, like what to do if your postillion is struck by lightning, but on a serious practical problem like how to throw away old shoes they preserve a cowardly silence. How fortunate you are to have the advice of an expert on this subject, a person like me of high standing in the old-shoe-throwing-away world.

It was during the war, when clothes were strictly rationed in Northern Ireland. They were supposed to be rationed in Southern Ireland, too, but for some reason rationing never seemed to catch on in that happy-go-lucky county. It was just too rational for them, I suppose. Anyhow, it was the Custom for us Northerners to cross the border wearing old clothes, buy new ones in Eire, and throw the old ones away before we crossed the border again. Generally you could trust the Customs officials to have the inherent decency not to undress you; though on some occasions people have been seen emerging from the Great Northern Station in Belfast with bare feet, an overcoat and a disillusioned expression. This time Madeleine had brought a pair of new shoes in Westport, County Mayo. The old ones were still quite serviceable but we decided to throw them away here, though we were a long way from the border. For one thing we were on a cycling tour and were having enough trouble carrying things...I had a record of part of a Tchaikovsky piano concerto suspended in the frame of my bicycle and had already lost the first four bars near Ballinrobe... and for another Mayo is a poor county and we thought someone might be glad of them. So as soon as we got into the wilds...that doesn't take long there...we left the shoes on a stone bridge. It was at the bottom of a very long and very steep hill and when we'd finally dragged the bicycles to the top we stopped to take in the view and a few litres of oxygen. From far below we began to hear faint cries. We looked down the road we had come and toiling up it there was a small boy, holding something in his hand. When he got nearer we could see it was a pair of shoes. " "You...forgot...your...shoes."he gasped. There was such a glow of satisfaction on his face at having caught us that all we could do was thank him enthusiastically and offer him sixpence. He accepted it after some hesitation and we watched him run happily back down the hill. We tied the shoes onto the bike again and cycled

on a few miles until we came to a really lonely stretch of road. Making quite sure there was no house or human being in sight we left the shoes guiltily in the middle of the road and hurriedly cycled on. We'd got perhaps 15 miles and were struggling into the head wind blowing across the moors when I heard a motor horn behind us. It was a turf lorry, one of a vast fleet of trucks the government used to bring peat to Dublin during the coal famine. We thought it was hooting to get past and pulled onto the grass verge. But no, the driver was leaning out of his cabin waving a pair of shoes. We admitted they were ours and thanked him too, and he let in his clutch and tore off happily in the direction of Dublin. We waited until he was well out of sight. Then we cycled on to the next stone wall and left the shoes again. This time though we left a note tied to them: "PLEASE TAKE THESE SHOES--WE DON'T WANT THEM ANY MORE." We should have thought of that in the first place. We'd still have those shoes if we hadn't realized that our actions needed an explanatory footnote.

I'd forgotten all about this until I was reminded of it by something Madeleine said after she'd finished reading the Abstract Convention issue. She put the magazine down and said reflectively: "America must be a horrible place to live in, mustn't it?" I couldn't agree, but I knew what she meant. To the mental impression of the American Way of Life created by press reports of hurricanes, lynchings, dope addiction, McCarthyism, the Hays Office, gangsterism and graft, recent fanzines had added little mental pictures of people getting beat up for reading science fiction, teenagers getting stupidly drunk at Conventions and bullying younger ones to drink haircream, morons jeering at movies because they didn't understand them, and worst of all one John Fletcher reporting with quiet pride how he stole a manuscript at the Fanvetcon auction, lied when taxed with it, and refused to give it to a crying neofan because he was offered only three dollars instead of five. We've had recently a more prominent fan confessing to having stolen, but that was in penitent sincerity and made no one think the less of him. What's alarming about the Fletcher case is not just that he is, according to his own statement, a despicable little sneak-thief, but that he doesn't seem to see anything wrong with it.

You are tempted to make all sorts of generalizations about things like this, such as that fandom isn't what it was, or that Americans are morally inferior to Europeans, or that the peasants of rural Ireland are more honest then the natives of Belfast, but I doubt if any of them are true. I think it was wrong, for instance, for Madeleine and me to be even mildly surprised at the difficulty we had in getting rid of a pair of shoes. Most people are honest and where there's only one thief in a thousand the odds are against him turning up in a remote spot in the wilds of Ireland, whereas there's quite likely to be one around in a big city. The same applies even more in the States, where in addition you haven't got the same segregation of social classes. As for fandom, we've had a lot of young newcomers lately and it's not surprising if some of them are boorish and stupid, or even that we get an occasional Fletcher.

What does worry me a bit though is what outsiders are going to think if they happen to read a copy of a mag like the Abstract Conish. Even I got the impression that the average modern US Convention was infested by gangs of extremely obnoxious teenagers. The outsider or newcover is going to assume that this <u>is</u> what fandom is like and resolve to have nothing to do with it. It's all very well to report honestly what happens at Conventions but it seems to me there should be some sort of moral judgement shown by the editor or reporter, that he shouldn't present these happenings as normal and acceptable to his readers. I don't mind being thought a bit mad but I should dislike intensely being associated in anyone's mind with Fletcher-type creatures. Irresponsible reporting such as in this issue of Abstract can do all of us a lot of harm.

DEPARTMENT OF BRUTAL FRANKNESS

From the second editorial in Universe, January 1955 (Ray Palmer).

"...authors can't reach us to ask when we are going to pay for their manuscripts published back in 1952. The correct answer, of course (sic), is sometime in 1956."

Can't you just see all those big name authors falling over themselves to write for Universe?

(rb: The above installment also included two pages of "The Harp Stateside.")

Installment 18, Oopsla 17, May 1955.

(rb: First we had four pages of "The Harp Stateside" and then:)

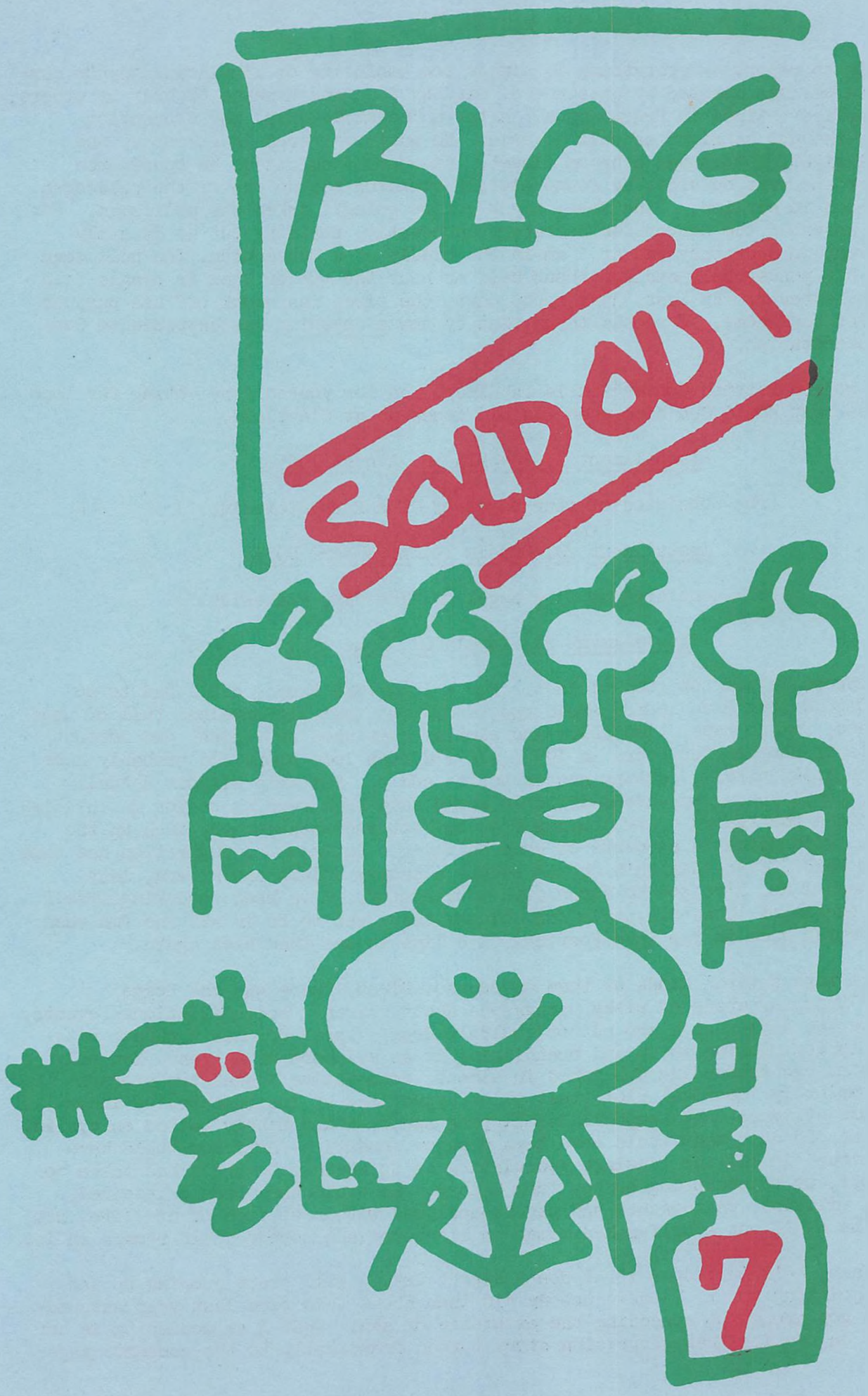
EASTERCON

I notice that in their publicity the Cleveland Convention Committee proudly announce that this is the first time a whole hotel has been taken over for a science fiction Convention. Alas, Cleveland, I have news for you. British Fandom did this for their 1955 Convention at Easter; and a fabulous success it was. In fact in some ways it was the ultimate Convention. Nothing could have been better. It was so successful that the official program lasted only two hours and was hardly heard of again. News of survivors from the wreck, such as the auction and the film show, was spread by word of mouth throughout the bars and lounges so that the official program did flicker back into existence from time to time, but generally people were so happy where they were that they quite forgot it was supposed to exist.

One utterly unique feature about this Convention was the attitude of the hotel staff. The most disobliging person there was the hotel manager, who stipulated -- mildly, I admit -- that the cleaners be allowed into the lounges at 7 am to clean up. Apart from this he said we could make as much noise as we liked. The Night Porter did come in at 4 am the first night, but only to talk about science fiction and take orders for tea. The bartenders wielded zapguns and entered thoroughly into the fannish spirit. There was an advertising campaign started by the Liverpool Group for a beverage called "Blog" and they put one of the posters behind the bar and gravely informed nonfan casual drinkers that they were momentarily out of stock because of the heavy demand. Finally...I know this must sound incredible...the hotel is willing to have us again! Naturally we sent Tucker a postcard advising him to stop collecting bricks -- we had found the perfect Convention Hotel.

Of course this happy state of affairs wasn't attained without a few awkward moments...such as, for example, the police raid. Maybe I should explain that in England the hours for drinking are strictly controlled and any hotel that allows drinking after hours in the public rooms by non-residents is liable to be prosecuted and have its license taken away. But this was a small hotel and about a third of the conventioneers were staying at another one a few hundred yards away. At 4:20 am on Sunday morning there was a nice little party going on in the downstairs lounge when the night porter shambled in, followed by two huge policemen. One of them carried the hotel register and began to ask people their name and room number, while the other just stood there looking ominous, with an arresting sort of expression on his face.

I was going to tell you exactly what happened, naming names, but warning bells have started to ring in my subconscious. I think British Conventions are getting


BLOG
SOLD OUT
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impossible to report -- everything is either too confusing or libellous. Anyhow complete disaster was averted by presence of mind by some and absence of body by others, and the police retired in frustration. After a decent interval the Convention Secretary thought he might as well go home. He was registered in a room at the hotel all right, but it was a broom closet. At about 5 am, then, he opened the hotel door and went outside. He found himself standing beside one of the policemen who had been in earlier. "And where might you be going?" asked the policeman. "For a walk," answered the Convention Secretary innocently, striding out as jauntily as a Convention Secretary can at 5 am in the middle of a Convention. The policeman followed him ponderously and for about half an hour the two of them in single file walked the streets. At last, just about dawn, the tired fan shook off his pursuer and doubled back home. I should think that by now everything has happened to Convention Secretaries.

The modern British Convention is fabulous. See for yourself by voting for London as the next World Con site when its bid comes up at Cleveland.

Installment 19, Oopsla 18, August 1955.

(rb: Consisted of four pages of "The Harp Stateside.")

Installment 20, Oopsla 19, November 1955.

(rb: Consisted of five pages of "The Harp Stateside.")

Installment 21, Oopsla 21, June 1957.

I suppose it was too good to last. For a long time there, all I had to do when an Oopsla deadline loomed ahead was to dig out that big envelope full of used bus tickets, Texaco maps, timetables and similar cherished souvenirs, and recount the events of another few hours in 1952. If I'd been left alone I'd probably have kept it up indefinitely, getting nearer to the end of the trip without actually arriving, until your great-grand-children would have been reading to you in childish piping voices the report of my journey foot by foot and then inch by inch up the gangplank, with dramatic accounts of each splinter. But now the suggestion has come down from Head Office that this should become a proper column again: and, lazy hound though I am, I've got to agree with your editor. I've been wondering myself whatever became of those old style fan columns that used to be in all the fmz when I was a neofan back in the late Forties. I'd like to see them back again.

There were several kinds of them of course. First, there was the Boggs' "File 13" type, a parade of pithy paragraphs about current scientifictional events. Those were the days when a pro editor couldn't drop a serif off his typeface without half fandom picking it up and brandishing it as evidence of A Trend. Yet only a few months ago Astounding published in almost consecutive issues two stories with a completely identical plot (test pilot hypnotized by instruments) -- incontrovertible evidence that Campbell Is Slipping Again -- and nobody batted an eyelid. Why, in the old days that would have been a major sensation. Articles would have been published in all the fanzines speculating as to whether Campbell had taken to drink, dope, or to accepting bribes from Galaxy. He would have been criticized, defended, vilified, whitewashed and psycho-analyzed within an inch of his life. But nowadays he could put a half-naked woman on his cover and nobody would remark on it.

In fact, he's just done it. I don't expect anyone will start jumping up and down and pointing to it, because nobody did when about this time last year Astounding first got around to conceding the existence of sex. What I am wondering is how many fans on reading that surprising story turned frantically to the contents page

and saw with a curious thrill that the usual byline "Assistant Editor: Kay Tarrant" was missing? Why, this was a semi-mythological event worthy to rank with the day Jane of the English Daily Mirror lost all her clothes. This comic strip heroine, as you may know, displays selected portions of her anatomy every day and during the War it became a legend with the troops that on Victory Day she would show All. It was practically one of the Allied War Aims. The story goes that on VE Day she did, and spurred on by this glimpse of what they were fighting for, the Allied Forces went on to beat Japan.

But how many present-day fans know or care about the legend of Catharine Tarrant? The story is that Miss Tarrant is an acidulous spinster whose life is dedicated to keeping Astounding a clean-cut magazine for John's super-scientific Boy Scouts. She might accept bad stories, accept stories full of elementary grammatical errors, even accept stories twice that shouldn't have been written once, but there's one thing you could be sure of: that when John W. Junior looked in from playing with his dianetcs set or Hieronymus Machine or whatever the latest fad was, he would never find that she'd accepted anything that would raise a blush from a pure-minded young lady. (Whether it would arouse any interest at all was of course another question altogether, and one that doesn't seem to have worried either of them.) Miss Tarrant, dedicated from the neck up, fought for Astounding's honor as she would have no doubt fought for her own, if the occasion had ever arised. The legend goes on that in the days when Astounding had its own stable of writers they used to get up to some horseplay, and one of the ways they kicked over the traces was to vie with one another to see who could sneak something dirty past Miss Tarrant. Obscene double meanings and erotic allusions were painstakingly thought up and cunningly inserted in perfectly serious stories, camouflaged with all the literary skill the authors could command. But none of them could get past the faithful guard of Miss Tarrant's shining blue pencil. None, that is, except George O. Smith. He won the contest in a canter by getting into print a story about a man who built a better mousetrap (which I wouldn't be surprised was written especially for the purpose) in which the hero's tomcat was referred to casually as "the original ball-bearing mousetrap."

Now, in the light of all this, wouldn't it be interesting to speculate on what lay behind the omission of Miss Tarrant's name from the issue with the sexy story in it, and its reinstatement the following month? Has Campbell gone in for sex with the same enthusiasm he went in for dianetics and seduced Miss Tarrant? Has an ultimatum come down from old Street & Smith that like King David they need sex to restor their failing circulation and that Miss Tarrant must give in or go? If so, is Miss Tarrant being driven out of her mind by the conflict between her principles and loyalty to good old S&S, so that she's accepting stories twice and so on? Or was it merely that she was on holiday when the offending story was put in, and when she got back there were angry scenes and stamped feet and slammed doors and tearful reconciliations?

Of course one of the reasons we don't have this type of column any more is the same one that explains why I haven't been able to give the dates of any of the issues of Astounding I was thinking about. Generally, fans don't keep their prozines the way they used to, and they don't have them available for reference. As for the current issues, those fans who buy them all don't have time to read them; and those who don't buy them all often find it embarrassing to take their typer down to the newsstand and write their column there. We do have prozine reviews, Ghod help us, but in the nature of things as they are, or as they were until quite recently, they can't be the leisurely conducted tours they used to be. They resemble more the desperate cries of policemen during a riot, directing refugees to places of safety or warning them of particular perils.

There's an even older form of this type of column, the science snippets one.

This has been dying since the days of Will Sykora, and there are plenty of us waiting to dance on its grave. Nowadays you can get the same information, presented quite as inaccuartely, in the newspapers and promags. We also have the flying saucer fringe of fandom, but the less said about that the better. I've nothing against flying saucers personally, you understand -- it's just that I don't like the company they keep. Incidentally, didn't anyone think it was a shocking thing to see a reputable reviewer like Santesson devote a whole page of Fantastic Universe to discussing Adamski, Leslie & Allingham as if they were more than crackpots or swindlers?

Then there's the purely fannish type of column, including Convention Reports and social notes from all over. Usually the trouble with these is that when the events are interesting you don't feel like taking notes, and reports tend to denenerate into lists of people you didn't eat breakfast with and who was under whose bed. Pending the invention of a pocket tape-recorder there's nothing to be done about this, unless like John Berry you just invent everything including the events themselves. But now I come to think of it, there's one fannish occasion I can partly report. Yesterday Irish Fandom had a farewell party for Bob Shaw, who is sailing shortly for Canada. The hosts were James and Peggy White, in the new White house up in the Belfast Mountains, the entire deposit for which was paid by the sale of one story to Astounding. (It's the only one-story house in the world with two floors.) Madeleine is in hospital, so I took some notes so I could tell her about it and thus I happen to have some authentic dialogue. Everyone in Irish Fandom was there -- James and Peggy White, Bob & Sadie Shaw, the venerable George Charters, John Berry, Gerard Quinn (the K. Winn of the Fansmanship Lectures, though he didn't know this himself until last night), and me. When George arrived, James and Peggy called him to the window to admire their front garden, recently reclaimed from the primeval jungle...

James: Look at my new fence posts, George. Observe the symmetry.
George: Call that symmetry? Where's the headstones?
Peggy: Did you see the Sweet William?
George: You mean that stuff you planted the shamrocks beside?
Peggy: I didn't plant those shamrocks; they came up by their own Sweet Will.
James: Don't you like the anenomes?
George: No, I hate those things. They gave me one in hospital before I had my operation.
James: It's a pity they didn't believe in euthanasia there. They might have put you out of our misery.
Bob: What's euthanasia? Siberian Boy Scouts?

Of course this dialogue is condensed...Another time they were talking about clothes and Peggy mentioned seeing in a shop window a pair of knickers with "No, no, a thousand times no!" embroidered round the hem.

George: In Braille?
Bob: Tch tch. You dirty old man.
George: At my age, I have about as much interest in women as I had when I was four.
Bob: What a dirty wee beast you must have been.

Maybe I had better explain that George is the oldest of our group by a few years, though he doesn't look it, and it has become a Berry-inspired tradition that he is in an advanced stage of senile decay.

When the drinks were served I suggested everyone throw their glasses in the fire-place, shouting "Skoal!"

James: Do that and you'll be skoalded.
Peggy: Shall I throw some coal on instead, shouting "'s'coal."?
James: No, if the room gets any warmer we'll all lapse into a coma.
George: Well, if you don't want a coma, just put some semi-colon.
Bob didn't move a muscle of his face. "I think," he said gravely, "I'll save that one up and laugh at it when I get home."

James was showing us some tranparencies of "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea".
"This character was using atomic energy 100 years before it was invented," he said. "His watch was fast."

Later,Peggy was bringing in the supper, and bumped into the tea-trolley on the door tread. "Those trolleys should have caterpillar tracks," suggested someone.
John: For bringing in the grub?
Bob: Yes, especially when it's home coccoon.

Had enough? There's one last type of column I haven't mentioned, the fmz review column. Nowadays there are so many fanzines that trying to review them all is rather like swatting flies. I'd like to see someone attempt a more searching analysis of certain fans and fanzines, the way Laney used to vivisect them in Spacewarp. I'm no Laney, but I'll try to give in each instalment of this column from now on a detailed review of one fanzine, the last to arrive at the time of writing.

This time the victim is Muzzy #8, from Claude Hall, 2214 San Antonio St., Austin 5, Texas. 46 pages. 25¢ or Pay After Reading. Muzzy is rather muddily mimeoed on coarse paper, something like Dimensions. This is probably just as well, because if it had been any more legible it might have been banned by the postal authorities; some of the fillers are jokes of doubtful age but determined indelicacy. The cartoons are not particularly distinguished, ranging from the infantile (Example: man holding dagger, caption "I'm sure you'll get the point") to those doodle-things by Dave English which look as if they were drawn by a pneumatic driller during his lunch hour, but which many people seem to like. Hall is carrying on a one-man crusade for more amateur fiction in fanzines, but the examples here are not a very good advertisement for his cause. There is a rather vapid column by Nancy Share which shows promise of developing into something worth while and another "Whither Science Fiction" article by Wilkie Conner, better than most and prophesying the return of the pulps. But the main interest of the magazine is the personality of Hall himself, which rather resembles that of a disgruntled Max Keasler. Hitherto Hall's main claims to fame that I am aware of have been an account in an early Muzzy of his desperate struggles to produce the magazine while in the Army, which was sincere and quite moving, and a more recent article asserting that some other Texas crudzine was superior to Quandry, which was so absurd that everyone ignored it. Both these Hall-marks are evident in this issue, especially in the fmz review section where, while his judgements are still odd, his writing bears out the decided promise shown in the early Muzzy article and his later reports from Germany in his Apazine. His comments are forceful and pungently expressed. Examples...Psychotic: "I wouldn't recommend this crapzine to a bird dog." ...A La Space: "In the editorial, Kent Corey says 'Im back' and the reader is quickly struck with the associated thought that the air might have remained a little fresher had he remained away." ...Merlin: "It must be interesting to someone, yet you can't thing who." And so on. You might not be able to agree with two out of three of his assessments, but you must admit it's fun to see someone stick out his neck like this, even if it's brass, and it make a nice change from the reciprocal backscratching that fills most fmz review columns. Admittedly Claude lets his own friends down easily, but fortunately for us he doesn't seem to have many friends: and unfortunately faneds being the hypersensitive creatures they are, if he goes on like this he'll have even less. However

that's his worry. Meanwhile the rest of us can sit on the sidelines and enjoy the brawl.

Incidentally, about this sort of thing, I had a pained letter the other day from an English fan because of something I'd said expressing approval of ABas. He felt that the sort of name-calling that goes on there, especially the Ellik-Vorzimer fight, was in poor taste; that fans should't be cruel to one another, even if the victim was a fugghead. Fuggheads have feelings too, he pointed out. Well, that's true, and I admit I wouldn't go in for this sort of thing myself. But there seems to be a type of fan for whom this is a way of life, and presumably they enjoy it. It's like amateur boxing. It's not my idea of fun, but if too men like to go into a ring and try to hurt one another I don't see why I shouldn't watch them with interest without feeling any vicarious guilt on their behalf.

Installment 22, Oopsla 23, December 1957.

1,578,000,000 NEOFEN

Isn't it funny how life always ad libs? You think up all the ways a thing can possibly happen and write them down and classify them and check through them again and again to make sure you've covered ever possible twist...and then the Event comes along and Fate throws away the script and somehow manages to do the unexpected after all. I guess it proves the Universe is a live show, which is a good thing -- I'd hate to be a telerecording -- but it is sort of unsettling, isn't it?

I'm thinking of the beginnings of space flight as we're watching them now...or The Dawn of The Space Age as those neofannish newspapers persist in calling it. For the last thirty years and more all us high power inventive geniuses in science fiction have been working out the various ways in which this situation we have nowadays might have come about. And now here it is and it's happened in a way not one of us foresaw. What's more -- and this is the most surprising thing of all -- we now see quite clearly that it just couldn't have happened any other way.

I don't mean the satellites, of course, I mean something far more astonishing and important -- the acceptance by the public of the sciencefictional creed that man's destiny lies in space. Now that we've won there's no harm in admitting here among ourselves that we hadn't much of a case. There is no economic or military value of traveling to the moon and the planets: nothing we could find there would be worth the cost of fetching it home and colonization is a logistic absurdity. The brutal truth is that we have been goldbricking the world. We have been trying to hoodwink the public into throwing away billions of dollars of their money just so we could check up on Bonestell. It was a con game, the biggest ever, and it hadn't a chance of coming off without a miracle. Well, the miracle came along: the Russians beat America into space. That was the finest thing that ever happened.

It may not have looked that way at the time, but you can imagine what would have happened in the old probability-world where America had the monopoly of big-time scientific progress. In due course a few American basketballs would have been tossed up casually according to plan, there would have been some mild interest and a few more Sunday supplement articles about the International Geophysical Year, the satellites would have come down again, and that would have been that. Finish. Back to intercontinental ballistic missiles and other nice, sensible ways of spending money. But instead we had shock! Mystery! High drama! NEWS! A strange Russian moon bleeping among the stars, sending back uncanny messages. NEWS!

First, the lack of detailed information and human interest angles on the strange satellite forced the journalists to fall back on what they already had on

file about space flight -- mostly starry-eyed propaganda from us faaans -- and on statements from space-happy Russians. That set up the mental climate. Then the reporters started looking around for follow-up material and there it was staring the in the face. One nation playing idly with satellites was nothing; but an international contest -- astronomical basketball with the goal in full view of the biggest crowd ever -- clear the front page! Or, better still, call it a race. There's nothing like a race for news. There's the winning post up there...that big yellow disc.

But you can't come right out and say the nation should squander all that money just to salve its injured pride and make good copy for the press. The goal has to be made to look worth while. So all of a sudden all the newsmen became indistiguishable from science fiction fans. They proclaimed that the start of space flight was comparable to the discovery of fire and the invention of the wheel and it's development the greatest thing in Man's future. The few diehards who dissented were mocked as fuddy-duddies, the way we used to be mocked as crackpots. So now we have the two greatest nations in the world hellbent for the moon and Mars. The race may have started for the wrong reasons but they're rapidly being rationalized into the right ones, borrowed from us, and by the time we get there, with luck everyone will realize that the only race that mattered all along was that of Man.

We're off!

SNUG IN THE FUG

The London Worldcon was comfortable, relaxed, casual, conversational, friendly, informal, unpretentious and epochmaking. I'm not going to write any detailed report about it, partly because I haven't got the necessary notes and partly because it seems to me to have been one of those occasions where what happened wasn't important and so much as how people felt. When you come to think of it, that's true to some extent of most conventions. You can read page after page of conreport full of details about the program or of meals, meetings and movements, and at the end of it you find that all the writer had conveyed of what was the important thing about the convention -- what it felt like to be there -- was half buried in an almost accidental phrase or an unconsciously revealing incident. In your mind your subconscious takes the conreport and shreds it down, throws away all the bones of hard fact except for a few flavoursome events, and boils the rest down until you're left with the pure, rich essence of the convention. This is what you remember, what distinguishes that convention from any other. It should be possible to perform this operation at the plant and supply the finished produce direct to the consumer. I'll try.

Imagine a quiet old part of London just outside the heart of the city, Bayswater. Stately old stone-faced terrace houses with balconies, rusty iron railings and desultory trees. Nobody can afford to live here any more and the main streets are all small shops, offices and restaurants. But in the quieter streets, like Leinster Gardens, the old houses linger on almost unchanged as hotels. Like the Kings Court.

We approached it from the tube station by a curiously circuitous route and the first thing we noticed about it were two tattered doormats wedged against the stone pillars on each side of the door, like hair growing out of nostrils. Directly inside the door was the reception desk with two pretty girls behind it talking to someone with an American accent whom I didn't recognize, an island of order in a sea of chaos. The lounge opposite them was strewn with unassembled electronic equipment, paintpots, junk, shavings, paper and rubbish. Overalled workmen were everywhere; there was a smell of turpentine and a sound of hammering. The carpets were up, of course, but it looked as if they might come down again by Christmas. No such glowing hopes could be held out for the stairs, where work had hardly yet started. Probably the decorators had had a look at the bedroom floors and decided there was no point

in encouraging anyone to go up there. The corridors had a definite air of being reconciled to demolition, being neither straight nor level, so that you found yourself brushing the walls or now and again running downhill...very disturbing in the early hours of the morning. This was because the hotel had been made by knocking three or four houses together and of course they didn't quite fit. Every now and then a flight of steep stone steps led down to a dirty lavotory or bathroom. There was not much the management could have done with the antiquated plumbing at short notice but they might, in deference to the susceptibilities of our refined American friends, have segregated them into male and female.

Downstairs again I found Bobbie Wild and Dave Newman, Convention Secretary and Program Committee stalwart respectively, both talking at once to a dark, plump, disgruntled man of about 35. They introduced him as the manager who had, they enthusiastically affirmed, been "very cooperative." I formed the impression that they were tying to butter him up and tried to do my bit. "Ah, M. Maurigny!" I exclaimed joyfully with my best mixture of French accent and Irish charm. So this was the wonderful M. Maurigny, proud representative of the best of French cuisine and continental gaiety and blood brother of the Convention Committee. Bobbie and Dave looked slightly taken aback and hastily explained that M. Maurigny had just sold out, leaving the sinking ship to this new manager, Mr Wilson, who had had a Raw Deal but was being Very Cooperative. Very Cooperative, they repeated fervently. Apparently the villainous Maurigny had handed over the place in dilapidation and chaos, leaving the cooperative Mr. Wilson to cope with redecoration and a convention simultaneously. But convention or no convention, the redecoration must go on. I also learned that several of the Americans who had come over on the chartered plane had checked out of the hotel in high dudgeon already some without paying their bills, and one of them had felt so deeply about it he had gone to the trouble to telephone a complaint about the hotel to the British Hotel Association. I scanned through the list of their names anxiously and was somewhat relieved to find I didn't recognize any of them except Gray Barker, the flying saucer man. Feeling that my intervention hadn't been too helpful I slunk away to get something to eat. It was only 15 paces from there to the dining room but in that distance three people told me the hotel food was unspeakable so we invited the last of them (Harry Harrison) to eat outside and had a worried curry at an Indian restaurant two blocks away. No matter how you look at it, it wasn't a good start for a Worldcon.

That was Thursday, but by Friday evening things were looking up. There were nice new carpets everywhere downstairs and even some bits on the walls. At least they were covered with an odd, hairy wallpaper, all little patches of short, red fur. I remember asking Moskowitz if it was science fiction plush. I'm sorry to be talking so much about the hotel, but believe me it was important. It set the whole mood of the convention. The lounges were the key. There were five of them, altogether, all quite small, and furnished with comfortable armchairs and coffee tables. Waiters with trays and girls with trollies patrolled them until dawn plying the fans with food and drink. The drinks actually had ice in them. Yes, ICE! (Only those of us who have been to Europe will be properly impressed by this.) It seemed to me it would take an awful lot of dirty bathrooms to outweigh all this. The most important result was that we had lounge parties instead of bedroom parties, a quite different thing...smaller, more intimate, more fluid, little congenial groups constantly forming and reforming. The only interruption we had was when the staff wanted to run a vacum cleaner over the nice new carpets about five o'clock in the morning. I remember one night when we were asked to move twice and Bob Silverberg suggested we have a party in his room. Barbara was tired and said no, let's go to bed. Bob said, all right, we'll have a party of two. The waiter over-heard part of this conversation and said, if you're going to have a party in your bedroom please don't make too much noise. Bob said: "we'll be as quiet as possible in our Barbaric American way."

That was about the most trouble we had with the staff. There was no house detective, of course, and no need of one except when Ray Nelson and his skiffle group started to bring complaints from the people across the street about 4 am one morning. (Didn't I tell you Ray Nelson was there? Yes, Fifth and Sixth Fandomers, THE Ray Nelson! He's living in Paris, had been in London on business, heard about the convention by accident, rolled along and had been there for two days before Chuck Harris saw his name badge and rushed to me to either confirm his identity or expose him as a hoax.) Yes, the staff stuck it well, being kept working all night, banging away in the kitchen which was centrally situated on the ground floor. This fact led to an awe-inspiring convention first. This was the first convention ever where the fans complained about the staff making a noise during the night!

I'll have to cut this short here but I must mention the most important impression of all; that Francis Towner Laney is a fool. The American fans we met were fine people. But more about that next issue.

Installment 23, Oopsla 24, February 1958.

It is Christmas morning and Ireland is covered with a soft mantle of mud as I sit here in the Oblique House attic, shivering over an inadequate electric fire. The quiet morning air is filled with the sound of distant church bells and the smell of singeing trousers. What cruel fate has exiled me to this Siberia, you may well ask. Since you do, I'll tell you.

Naturally, I had intended to pass this holy morning in fasting and meditation -- to be specific, working up an appetite for my Christmas dinner and wondering if the turkey would be tender -- but yesterday a big envelope arrived, covered with so many FIRST CLASS MAIL labels and three cent stamps that for a while I thought it was a patchwork quilt from my old aunt. But when I broke into it I found it was the latest Oopsla from Salt Lake City with a salty laconic note from our ex-Marine Sergeant Calkins. "I'd appreciate your column by Christmas," it said. Just like that. Polite, but firm.

Well, of course, as far as this loyal member of the Oopsla staff was concerned this command was engraved on tablets of stone, even if it might have looked to you to be scrawled on mimeo paper with a ballpoint pen. But it looks as if I'm going to have some difficulty in complying with it, on account of 3000 word cables being so expensive these days. So are phone calls, and besides I don't know Gregg's number. Of course I could always phone Kindly Ol' Walt Bowart and ask him; I don't know Good Ol' Walt but it must be about 5 am over there in Oklahoma and I'm sure he'd be delighted to hear from anyone so far away at that time. But then he might ask me Tucker's address, I thought. I considered asking the BBC to broadcast my column in their North American Service instead of the Queen's speech...but I think they've had a down on fandom ever since the affair of the Wimbledon Tennish Championships last summer. That was Arthur Thomson's fault, of course. Imagine, parading up and down the Centre Court in front of the television cameras with a big placard reading BACK TO YOUR FANAC, WILLIS.

So unless I can borrow one of John Berry's fleet of long-playing intercontinental ballistic budgerigars to dictate this column to Gregg, I'm afraid it's going to be late. However, it gives me time to sort through this little heap of fanzines that have been accumulating in the corner there, all marked "Colm" or some other inscription that must have made sense at the time. You see, it occurred to me a while ago that one of the things that's wrong with fandom nowadays is that nobody pays enough attention to what other people are doing. It's a bit like one of those parties where everyone is either talking or, as Thurber put it once, not so much listening as waiting for an opening. Strange and wonderful things are happening all over the

place, but sometimes you would think there's nobody watching. There are some good fanzine review columns, of course, but that's not quite what I mean. In those columns the fanzines go in at one end and come out quietly at the other all wrapped up in uniform packages like sausages. What we want are some columnists who will Point with Amazement, View With Alarm, Regard As Significant, meanwhile leaping up and down with excitement every now and then and jumping to conclusions. So here I come, tottering into the breach.

For instance, here's a copy of Yandro in which Marion Bradley, who seems to take everything very seriously, including herself, threatens to discontinue her column because "a certain type of fan...considers himself personally insulted by it." She goes on to bemoan the fact that modern fandom isn't interested in science fiction. Far be it from me to suggest anything so indelicate, but I can't help feeling that someone, somewhere, somehow has been pulling Marion's leg. In ten years in fandom I've come across only one fan -- Max Keasler -- who wasn't interested in science fiction...and even he was beginning to like it. I suppose I'm one of the anti-serious constructive fans Marion has in mind, but I read every science fiction magazine I can get and if I could get more I would read more. No doubt it's a bit different in the States where you can look through the field at the newsstand, and probably many fans don't buy so many promags as they used to do. But that's not because they're not interested in good science fiction, it's because the promags arn't printing it. And if some of us don't run much about sf in our fanzines it's because we can find things that are more fun to write about than exactly how one hack differs from another. And even this might be different if the professionals took more interest in fanzines. Unfortunately many of them seem to regard fanzines as a natural phenomenon, like rain, which should continue to arrive at regular intervals without any effort on their part. When I was running damon knight's column in Hyphen I sent copies of the issues to about twenty professionals who weren't on my sub list: I didn't get so much as an acknowledgement from any of them. (Nor, incidentally, from Marion Bradley.) Now I print other material and sell those 20 copies. No doubt Marion would say this proves I've no interest in sf. To me it proves I can't afford to show it.

I admit there was a period when a certain section of fandom jeered at as 'sercon' anything in a fanzine that dealt with sf, and I suppose I must take a certain amount of responsibility for that. But it still seems to me that this was just a healthy swing of the pendulum away from years of turgid and pretentious rubbish, and at the moment it looks to me to have swung back to normality. We have two monthly fanzines at the moment, Cry of the Nameless and Yandro, and both of them deal primarily with sf. It's true that neither of them is yet the 'focal point' of fandom which every monthly fanzine used automatically to become, but both of them are still evolving from club fanzines and may go a long way yet. Not Yandro, perhaps, which though a pleasant and unpretentious fanzine with occasional flashes of brilliance like Stratton's film reviews, has a certain static inbred quality which gives it all the disadvantages of esotericism without any of the rewards, but Cry is definitely going places. Now that Wally Weber has been to the London Worldcon it may continue its advance into fandom even further; what with him and the Busby's and the others on the staff, real and imaginary, there's enough talent in Seattle to liven up fandom and maybe even live down GMCarr.

With South Gate coming up, it's nice to see the sun rising all along the West Coast. With the recent issues of Innuendo, the younger San Francisco fandom seems at last to be realizing its potentialities. The recent Innish (Terry Carr) seems to me the best fanzine of its kind to come out since the Quannish of 1951...maybe even since the Insurgent Spacewarp. Carl Brandon's fannish version of "The Catcher in the Rye" is one of the all-time masterpieces of fannish writing.

The ideal fanzine, of course, would be one with the reliability and solid sfal backbone of Cry plus the fannish genius of Innuendo. Something like that is needed to arrest the drift of the pros away from fanzines which has been taking place these last years. I'm thinking of people like Asimov, Sturgeon, Boucher, etc, who are fannish types but only seem to show it at conventions. The rest of the year they seem to have no time for fandom and I suppose they regard it as fuggheaded.

So it is, part of it; but then so is part of prodom. One example was spotlighted by Jim Broschart in the first issue of his Ballast, with a couple of brutal burlesques of SF Bookclub advertisements -- YOU TRAVELLED THROUGH TIME TO TASTE FORBIDDEN LOVE and WIN A ONE WAY RESERVATION TO THE SUN. One of Broschart's final notes seemed specially appropriate: "A passing grade on this solar quiz will bring you -- absolutely free -- a practising psychiatrist who certifies that you are among the very FIRST to apply for passage to the Sun. This commits you." Yes, this is the sort of thing that has replaced: "RUPTURED? THROW AWAY THAT TRUSS." I don't see any improvement -- quite the reverse, in fact. The old ads assumed merely that you were suffering from athlete's foot, rupture or sex ignorance, misfortunes which could happen to a bishop: these new ones assume that you are mentally deficient.

What sort of fuggheads are these who are convinced, to the point of spending hundreds of dollars of our money, that the average reader of Astounding and Galaxy wants a handy hardback wallet-size certificate that he is among the first to apply for passage to the Moon? Even accompanied by a "Moon Weight Chart and a complete Rocket-ship Flight Schedule for the Moon, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn"? Presumably the Secret Handgrip and Unbreakable Space Patrol Code comes later. Their view is that these documents will be "evidence of your adventurous spirit...your imagination...your interest in the world of tomorrow." To me they're evidence that the SF Bookclub people and the editors which allow these advertisements to disgrace their magazines and the intelligence of the sf field are just not very bright. After years of prodding from fandom they finally put front covers on sf magazines which you weren't ashamed to be seen with in public. Now we have to hide the back covers.

And yet no doubt these professionals regard themselves as the mature intellectual leaders of the sf field, and fans as unbalanced crackpots. The same balanced professionals deplore fandom's "private jokes and curious excesses"...or so it was explained to me once by a professional author as he reeled from the bar to his psychiatrist.

There is one element of truth in the contempt some pros have for fandom, and that is that fandom tends by its very nature to have more young and inexperienced people in it. But taking the established fans as a fair basis of comparison, I'd stack people like Boggs, Burbee, Harris, Clarke, Eney, Grennell and Calkins against any group of professionals by any criterion you care to name. And that's leaving out of account professionals like Bloch and Tucker. The real reason fandom has such a bad name in some quarters is that we wash all our dirty linen in public. No wonder people think we're round the Bendix.

SNUG IN THE FUG (continued)

By now several British Worldcon reporters have broken the startling news that the American contingent at the Worldcon behaved themselves with modesty and discretion. Please don't be offended, American fans, by their undertone of surprise. You must make allowances for the fact that the mental picture which the average British fan has of American fandom is colored by the fulminations of Laney, newspaper reports of American delinquency and personal experience of a certain class of American tourist and GI. He really knows Americans are nice people: it's just that when he confirms it for himself his subconscious can't help giving out a little sigh of relief.

America could be proud of the people it sent to the Worldcon. Since 1952 I've

thought that the average US fan was more sensitive and perceptive than the average man in the American street and now, having seen how they compare with ordinary tourists, I'm sure of it. It was for all the world as if they had carefully studied every characteristic of the American tourist that had ever been criticised and then taken immense pains to guard against them. For instance, not one of them could be induced to make uncomplimentary comparisons about anything they saw in Britain. Even what criticism was made of the amenities of the Convention Hotel -- and there was a lot to criticise, especially from the American point of view -- was made, as it were, from our side, as fellow fans. There was no implication that US sfandom could have done better, or would even have wanted to choose another type of place. They all seemed quite determined to 'do as the Roman's do' and take inconveniences as part of the interest of living in a foreign country...like the wet streets in Venice.

The one thing that really surprised me about them, seeing them side by side with British fandom, was how well they were dressed. We were a shabby-looking lot, I must say. Even James White's sartorial perfection (and he's a professional in the new clothes racket) was dimmed beside the magnificence of Steve Schultheis in his more-than-immaculate blue suit made of a cloth I haven't seen the like of outside the lining of expensive chocolate boxes. I remember Arthur Thomson telling me in awed tones of Steve sorting through his file of trousers. He would take out a pair which looked to Arthur to be practically still in their cellophane, run a finger along the crease and then, it being but the work of a moment to wipe the blood from his hand, drop it on the floor saying "Better have those cleaned and pressed." And then there was Beau Raeburn with his spectrum of sports clothes... I don't know, maybe it's something to do with the fact that I was an adolescent in the Thirties, when the correct dress for the young intellectual was what we thought of as casual, which usually meant baggy flannels and a sportscoat with pockets bulging with books. We would have thought any concern with clothes sissy, if not actually pansy. Obviously times have changed; but of all the habits of modern teenagers, dressing up as Edwardian dandies is the only one I find incomprehensible. Why, when I was that age there were so many things I wanted to buy -- books, records, radio parts, a motor bike (never did get that) -- that I regarded spending money on clothes as just throwing it away. I still do, I suppose, but Boyd Roeburn's clothes shook me. I'd like to wear things like that if I could. Usually good clothes, when I have to wear them, make me feel constrained, but his looked comfortable and casual.

Which reminds me of another thing I noticed about the Americans, how careful they were with money. I don't mean they were mean, just that they seemed to be careful to avoid throwing it around ostentatiously the way some Americans abroad have been criticised for. They positioned themselves on our standard of living, as it were, with the result that going about with them was just like going about with British fans...sort of comfortable. They fitted in.

There were, of course, a lot of individual impressions -- Silverberg's dry sense of humor, so exactly like Bob Shaw's and a perfect foil for James White; Boyd Raeburn's impeccable manners; Wally Weber's unobtrusive wit and likeability; Sam Moskowitz's geniality; Steve Schultheis' flair for fantastic fannish humour; and so on -- but that was the main one. They fitted in. It was as if for all those years there had been gaps in British fandom which we'd never noticed, just the size and shape of each one of them, and at the Worldcon, suddenly...CLICK! There they were in place. We're going to miss them. Roll on. Gay Paris in '63.

Installment 24, Oopsla 25, November 1958.

Friends, have you noticed the strange signs and portents which are appearing everywhere? There are mysterious things happening in fandom. It is as if dark powers from the forgotten past were working balefully among us, their dread influence

threatening our innocent fannish lives. But I'd better stop writing like this or August Derleth will start finishing my old conreports on me and flogging them in limited editions. But do you remember that story a few years back about how the Universe, faced with some cataclysmic event, backed up in alarm and went into reverse? It seems to me something like that must be happening in fandom, and I blame it all on South Gate. We've infringed some basic law of nature. Obviously South Gate in '58 shouldn't have happened -- myths just don't become reality that way. It's too good to be true. We have in some way shocked the mass subconscious of fandom and it has begun to regress, retracing its development, doing its best to curl up in a foetal position.

One of the more obvious examples was Peter Graham's article in the last Innuendo in which he publicly eviscerated the latter-day Washington fans and examined their entrails for signs. At almost the same instant, in genial kindly British fandom, Sandy Sanderson was kicking the mangled corpse of Eric Bentcliffe through four pages of Ploy, trampling on everything from his fanac to his sex life. Now this sort of thing hasn't happened for years. Ever since the Michigan Bomb Plot fandom has been all sweetness and light, except for a few minor incidents like Max Keasler's being denounced by Rog Phillips and the N3F and a couple of minor crackpots like George Wetzel and GMCarr. To find anything like these present attacks by intelligent fans you have to hark back as far as the days of Laney and Yerke and the Detroit Insurgents. What convinced me that there was something strange happening, however, was the news from the British Convention last weekend. You know how British Fandom has been for years -- anarchic, individualistic, mature. Well, last weekend some fifty of them got together at the George Hotel, Kettering, and in cold blood set up a national fan organization! I tell you, we are in the grip of strange forces. None of us is safe. The news from Kettering was frightening enough, but something happened to me today that has me gibbering with terror. I've begged Madeleine to keep an eye on me, but I'm afraid these dark forces may be too much for us. Today I got a letter inviting me to join the N3F. Help!

It all reminds me of a plot Vinǿ Clarke and I were going to write up once, about a very great fan who made a terrible mistake. His name was Hector Q. Drainingboard. You won't remember him, but his name used to be a household word. He was a very important BNF, Hector was, until one day the thought came to him that he was spending too much money on fandom. There must have been a mad mean streak in him, because he let this idea get a hold on him. He used to lie awake thinking about all the money he had put into fandom, all the crudzines he had subscribed to, the paper and postage he had wasted. It got to be an utter obsession with him, and one day he did a very terrible thing. He sat down and wrote to all the editors of the fanzines in his fanzine collection, returning their fanzines and asking for his money back. When he did this Hector must have mortally offended the spirit of fandom or broken some sacred fannish law because something happened to the fabric of fannish existence around Hector, something terrible and inexplicable. He had just mailed the letters and was turning away from the mailbox when out of the slot there spewed a great stream of fanzines, right into his arms. To his alarm he saw that they were the last issue of his own fanzine, which he had mailed only that morning. He staggered home with a doomed feeling in his mind and a horrible, sticky taste in his mouth which he could get rid of only by taking the stamps off of his fanzines and rubbing the stuff off of his tongue with them. Then he found himself compelled to unstaple all the fanzines and straighten out the staples and force them back through the machine and arrange them in neat rows, and do the same for all the individual pages in the fanzine. Then, when he had all the pages neatly stacked on the table, something made him put them on the mimeograph and turn the handle backwards. To his awe all the printing vanished and left the paper clean and new. That part was easy enough, but it was a terrible job scraping the ink off of the mimeograph and squeezing it back into the tube, and it was worse still having to clean the stencils and

repair all the holes in them with little pieces of what he dug out of the typer insides. He realized he would probably be able to sell the paper and stuff to the supply company, but that was no comfort because he realized by now he was in the grip of some great and terrible retributive force. Sure enough, within a few days he began to get replies from the faneds he had written to and he noticed with a sinking feeling that not only were they sending back his money, but they were returning the letters of comment he had written, all dirty and crumpled from their files. Hector found himself under the same insane compulsion, this time to clean and press the letters and then to roll them in his typer and go over them character by character, backwards. He saw with a sick realization that each time he struck a character it disappeared, leaving him eventually with a blank sheet. He spent hour after hour on this hopeless task, but there was even worse to come. Faneds began sending him back the manuscripts of all the articles he had ever had published. This was for Hector the ultimate horror, for he knew as he painfully untyped each manuscript that he was destroying a part of himself. Sure enough, when he came to the end -- or rather the beginning -- of each one he found he had only the vaguest idea of what it had been about, and even that faded shortly to nothing. After a long nightmare of this literally soul-destroying drudgery, broken at intervals by the necessity to unpublish previous issues of his own fanzines, annishes, oneshots, apazines, Hector realized dully that the end was near. He was getting stupider and losing rapidly all of his literary ability and quickness of wit, and fandom was beginning to seem odd and crazy. He started reading science fiction a lot more and skipping the fanzine review columns and letters. Then one day he had a letter returned from his very first fan correspondent and he realized dimly -- though by now he remembered very little about fandom -- that his long ordeal was over. Thankfully he gave up reading science fiction altogether except for a while H.G.Wells and then Edgar Rice Burroughs, and finally he forgot fandom entirely, just as fandom had forgotten him. And that's why you never neard of Hector Q. Drainingboard, BNF, and why you should never complain that fandom costs you too much money.

SAY IT ISN'T SO

The last issue of Crifanac carried a terrible blow for fandom. In cold blood and capital letters editor Tom Reamy proclaims: "YOU HAVE HEARD THE LAST OF MOSHER." I can hardly bear it. For a long time there I had known there was something wrong in fandom, but I just couldn't put my finger on it. It was like one of those background noises you don't notice until it stops, like the engines of a transatlantic liner, leaving you with a sense of loss and insecurity. Then along came the previous issue of Crifanac and I realized what it had been. It had been the sound of Orville W. Mosher organizing! We'd got used to him toiling away there in the background of fandom, issuing his appeals, proclamations, manifestoes, questionaires, policy statements, denials and communiques about Project Fan Club, and it was nice to think of that human dynamo humming away there so happily. You felt that all the work must be doing somebody some good, even if it was only the paper mills. Then all of a sudden Orville disappeared after a desperate attempt to load Project Fan Club, which by then must have weighed at least a ton, on to GMCarr, and we stopped hearing from him. There was a strange unnatural silence.

Then Crifanac 5 came along and Orville was back! Oh Happy Day. And he hadn't changed a bit. Listen to this; roll it lovingly round your tongue:

> "It is doubtful that you have heard the last of Mosher. I will be back from time to time. I am working on plans for the long delayed Fan Service Organization (FSO) which will do things for fandom which no other organization has been able to do (not even the N3F?) even when it makes big claims through its constitution."

There, isn't that our Good Ol' Orville back with us again? You know, I think

he's even gotten better. He's got a new idea. Listen:

> "You will hear more about this organization in the pages of Crifanac. One thing for certain -- if you join, you will have to do some work and cough up $2 for a year and if you run for office and win you will have to donate $5 to the organization."

There, isn't that a wonderful idea. I think Orville has positively transcended himself. Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing for fandom if all the organizing types joined an organization like this and devoted not only their time but their money to it? A sort of reservation like this is just what the rest of fandom needs, a place where the organization-minded types can find a spiritual home...or at least a mental one. Because Orville's plans make it quite clear that there is only one grade of intellect likely to join his organization. Listen to the glowing prospect he offers to those who pay him $2 to join his organization and another $5 to run for "office."

> "In regard to FSO, you will not hear more about it until a full account is given explaining why the organization will be set up in such a way and why its laws are such and such. I will want it fully understood that when you join you know what you are getting into and you have no business joining unless you mean to abide by the regulations. Others who may not like the way I've put this may stay out and are welcome to start their own groups. FSO will be going places. There will be no room for those who want in for the name alone or personal aggrandisement (except where earned). Of course those who join early will have the chance to reach the top of the ladder before others who wait."

Oh, of course. But evidently not as far as the money. Shame on you, Tom Reamy, for sabotaging this wonderful plan. Don't you realize that Orville W. Mosher is a great man? Why I'll bet in years to come his name will be a part of our language. I can just see it in the dictionary. Mr. Webster and Mr. Oxford, get with it...

Mosh (verb transitive) To engage in activity of a bureaucratic or pseudo-organizational nature. Example: "When he was a neofan he did some moshing in the N3F."
Mosh (noun) A state produced by moshing. See mish-mash. Example: "The Committee made a mosh of the programme right from the start."
Moshination (noun) Moshing on a national scale. Example: "The Vanguard Project was delayed by State Department moshinations."
Mosher (noun) One who moshes.

Installment 25, Oopsla 26, May 1959.

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME WOULD SMELL

I'm saddened to see that science fiction is becoming a dirty word again. The prozine editors are hauling down the 'science fiction' masthead hand over fist and scuttling off of the sinking ship in droves. And yet it seems only the other day that they were moving heaven and earth and everything else on their covers to figure those words as prominently as possible: the bare two words science fiction by themselves were even deemed a surefire prozine title and it seemed that at any moment we would have a prozine called The Original Scientifictional Science Fiction Stories of Super Science Fiction.

Now it is of course unreasonable to expect prozine editors to call their magazines science fiction merely because that's what they are; that's the sort of idea that would only occur to us silly fans who are always completely out of touch with reality. But it does seem to me that all this chopping and changing is a bit hard on the innocent cover designers and printers, so I'd like to suggest a little innovation that might help everyone.

It is that there should be a large blank space on all covers on which the appropriate OK word of the day could be inserted at a moment's notice, thereby enabling the editors to keep abreast of the vagaries of the public taste. The magazines could be sent out to the newstands with the space empty and on the day before they're to be put on sale dispatch riders would leave the editorial offices with a supply of rubber stamps with which the newstand owners could stamp their supplies. A year ago, for example, all the titles could have been changed to something on the lines of Infinity Sputnik Stories and a current title might well be Astounding Hula Hoops and Other Psionic Devices. Then if sex ever recovers from Elvis Presley and we go back to the good old traditions of professional sf, we could have nekkid women again and titles like GALaxy or ASStounding Imaginative TAIL or even just The Magazine of F. You can see at once how big a help this would be in promoting sales without departing from the best ethical practices of professional sf publishing.

YES, SON, THERE IS A CARL BRANDON

In its short but vivid lifetime, younger San Francisco fandom has produced two remarkable things, Carl Brandon and a tower to the Moon made out of beer cans, and until a few weeks ago I was quite sure I knew which of them was imaginary. Nowadays I wear a crash helmet every time the Moon is in the east. The creation of Carl Brandon is the most ambitious, most ingenious, most daring, most successful and mostly wholly admirable hoax ever accomplished in fandom. The only comparable achievement was Sandy Sanderson's creation of Joan Carr, the young editor of the 'all-female' fanzine Femizine, who had such alife of her own that many people including myself refused to believe she didn't exist when the truth first came out, so that even now I still find myself filing Sandy's fanzines separately from Joan's and thinking of him as a fan who became active only quite recently. In addition, Joan was a more active and prominent figure than Carl, And yet I still think the San Francisco hoaxters have the edge. Sandy had the advantages of isolation, while the San Francisco people paraded Carl through West Coast fandom without being caught. Also, Sandy kept in the background while manipulating Joan, but Carr and the others were active in their own right contemporaneously with their creation. Finally, and most important, the quality of CarlBrandon's fanactivity not only transcended that of his creators', but was different in character. He was a member of their group in his own right and walked and talked with them as a separate individual, so that we don't only have his fanzine articles to re-allocate but spoken comments and opinions and facets of personality. That's why I think Carl Brandon is too good to lose. This handsome young soft-spoken Negro with his lazily brilliant wit and thoughtful mind was an asset to fandom and I say we should keep him. I say that fandom should rise up from the four corners of the world and tell the Berkeleyits "DON'T LET CARL BRANDON DIE!"

I hope they'll listen to us, but even if they don't we can keep Carl alive by believing in him, as in Barrie's Peter Pan where the child audience keeps Tinkerbell from dying by proclaiming their belief in fairies. I appeal to you all to believe in Carl Brandon. Carl Brandon does not exist: very well, it is necessary to create him. Faneds! When you can't remember the author of a good quotation, credit it to Carl! Let him take the place of those old men Anon and Trad. Fan Authors! When you write an article anonymously and it's good, byline it Brandon! Convention Reporters! When somebody does or says something wonderful and you can't say just who it was, say it was Carl Brandon! And everyone -- when you want to quote something good you say yourself, put it in Brandon's mouth! (A very useful way, I might point out, of avoiding such awkward phrases as "I said a rather brilliant thing the other day...") And of course, when you contribute money anonymously to TAFF or some other good cause, have them publicly thank Brandon.

Between us we will build up Carl Brandon to even greater heights and make him

INFINITY SPUTNIC STORIES

in this issue

"NIGHTMARE PLANET"

by

N.A. LAZENBY

a living symbol of all that is best in fandom. All that is fine and good in us will be personified in Brandon; we will make him our ideal, our idol, our ghod. As we march into fandon's bright future with this living legend at our head, let our cry be "CARL BRANDON LIVES ON!"

CAN THIS MARRIAGE BE SAVED?

I see someone else is wondering why fans don't hardly write to prozines no more. This time it's Marion C. Oaks, formerly Marion Cox (who seems to have gone to a great deal of trouble to find a husband who would make her change her name as little as possible). She suggests it's because we've become self centered. Well, that may be true but it doesn't really answer the question, does it Marion? Now we have to ask, why has fandom got so self centered that it has lost interest in science fiction, or at least doesn't express what interest it has? Well, as you all know, this is a fearless crusading column, partly because of my own noble dedicated character and partly because I live 3000 miles away from anyone likely to come and punch me on the nose, so I'm going to Name Names. Nothing like Naming Names, as that well known friend of Zola's, Jack Hughes used to say. So I name Horace Gold and Bob Silverberg.

Horace, who is a Good Man, is named only because he's the most prominent of those professional editors who believe that the opinions of fans are Unrepresentative. He would I suppose be prepared to admit that we've occasionally been right in the past -- after all his own magazine, with trimmed edges and tasteful covers and everything is just what us fans had been asking for in our impractical way for twenty years -- but he doesn't believe on the evidence available to him that what we say nowadays is of much interest to anyone. That in itself wouldn't matter so much, though personally I feel as unoriented in a magazine without a letter column as I do in a room without a fireplace, but the real trouble is that he has convinced the fans themselves that he's right.

Well, to be more cautious because I don't know how you feel and I'm sure Horace did not mean to discourage us anyway, people like him have convinced me. I hardly ever write to prozine editors these days because I just don't know what to say. Generally it seems to me that much of the contents are garbage, but there's no point in saying so, however cogently, if the editor is going to reply that your opinions are Unrepresentative because he has fifty thousand dedicated subscribers eager to swear affidavits in their own blood that every last word in every story is deathless literature. Reading between the lines you can sometimes see that he privately agrees with you but that he feels as Bernard Shaw once said to a lone heckler after a first night: "Who are we, against so many?" Or as Liberace commented on on his critics, rather more brilliantly than Shaw, I thought: "I cried all the way to the bank." (Incidentally, I'd better make it clear that Gold doesn't reply like that; he discusses your criticism seriously and at your own evaluation level.)

Alternately you can put yourself in the position of a simple minded teenager graduating from Tarzan and try to look at the stories from that angle, but the strain induced by this contortion is excessive...and after all there is no reason why the editor should prefer your guess to his own, or indeed that of an actual simple minded teenager graduating from Tarzan -- who is in this field an expert witness.

The other difficulty for us is that science fiction is getting harder and harder to read and that's where Bob Silverberg comes in. In the old days there used to be good authors and bad authors: you read the former and skipped the latter, and you could get through the entire monthly output of sf in a few hours.But nowadays, when most of it is written by Bob Silverberg, it's a much more tedious and frustrat-

ing operation. You can't get through Bob Silverberg boilerplate that fast.

Boilerplate, I should explain, is the name printers give to slabs of preset type containing little items of "interest" about the Amazon or astronomy or suchlike which editors of small newspapers use to fill up odd spaces. I imagine the average prozine editor faced with a twenty-three page gap in his magazine falls back equally thankfully on a handy Silverberg story, available in all stock sizes. He knows it will be competently written, with an unexceptionable syntax and spelling, it will hold the reader's attention sufficiently to lead him on to the next story, and no one will fling the magazine away in shock or anger. The fact that nobody will remember the story the next day is not important -- most of the contents of the magazine has always been like that. The real trouble is mainly that the editor hasn't made any effort. The use of boilerplate is a dangerous addiction and the better the boilerplate the more dangerous it becomes. If the boilerplate weren't so good the editor might go looking for material from some amateur or crackpot or starving poet or lazy writer and once in a thousand times he might bring back a masterpiece, or at least a story bad in such an original way that it might inspire one from someone else that would be better. (There are more successes inspired by failure than by success.) It could be argued that Bob Silverberg, and to a lesser extent Ken Bulmer, Harlan Ellison, and some others, are menaces to science fiction. They represent a new type of too-competent specialist hack -- exfans who know the whole field of science fiction from the inside and use that knowledge to create a mechanical simulacrum of it for money; a thing that walks and talks and fills up space like science fiction but hasn't got the true flame of life inside it.

Be that as it may, the trouble from the point of us fans is that we know Silverberg and Bulmer and Ellison. To the nonfan aficionado they may be just a couple of dozen names he knows he can skip if he's in a hurry, but we know them to be fans with a genuine love of science fiction and the knowledge of what it can be and, we believe, the ability to write it the way it should be written. So we keep on plugging through the boilerplate, hoping, always hoping. Story after story looms up, is started with hope, read with disappointment, and finished with annoyance for another wasted half hour. For me, it's getting so that I can hardly bring myself to read a sf magazine any more, and yet I'd hate not to be there when they break out of the commercial groove and write the stuff they believe in. Bob, in memory of your fellowship with us fans, won't you help us out? Couldn't you arrange some secret sort of code so that we can recognize The Story when it comes?

But whatever the reason, and there are a lot more than those, the sad truth is that Marion is right -- prodom and fandom are drifting apart. They are like a couple who stuck together through their early struggles, helping one another and together bringing up a lovely but delicate little child called Science Fiction. Now one of them is being wined and dined and flattered by rich strangers and forgets the early struggles and the other feels neglected and doesn't talk any more. There are faults on both sides, however, and no doubt they'll realize this and come to together if the child falls ill again. But, meanwhile, I sometimes wonder which of them is really looking after it better today?

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I'm writing this on the 26th December. I hope it's safe to mention that. Last year I happened to say that I was writing this column on Christmas morning and the entire fan population of an English town rose in righteous indignation. Has Willis nothing better to do on Christmas morning, was the way he put it. I tell you, it's a hard life being a Thinker. There was I, Willis, the dedicated visionary giving up the crass pleasures of the flesh like Albert Schweitzer and retiring to the monastic seclusion of the fan attic to give my Message to an anxious world, and

this sort of thing happens. I tell you, any more of this and Albert and I will retire into SAPS.

Mind you, I can see that English fan's point of view. I can visualize quite clearly the Willis household on Christmas morning as it must appear to him. Aroused from uneasy sleep, Willis the Faaan staggers downstairs to answer the Postman's knock, ignoring the piteous cries of the children as they awake to find nothing in their stockings but piggy banks, mimeo paper price lists and little tracts about filial responsibility. "Bah, humbug," he sneers as the postman gives him a cheery seasonal greeting. He snatches at the mail, throws away the Christmas cards unopened, and devours the rest greedily for egoboo. Pausing only to throw a lump of slate at an old man gathering winter fuel he slams the door on the postman's out-stretched hand and stalks up to the attic, there to compose a nasty mean column poking fun at fan organizations and other manifestations of human goodwill.

Well, all I can say is that it wasn't quite like that. What happened was that round about half eleven that morning the children invented a new game the rules of which were too involved for me to follow. I mean I couldn't figure out when you were supposed to scream and knock the bricks down with the lorry and when you were to crawl round the sofa on your hands and knees growling. I don't know what this game is called -- "WSFS Directors" or something, I think -- but if it ever catches on professionally my children are made. So I sneaked away unnoticed and took my diary and the remaining fragments of my eardrums up to the attic, feeling an old fan and tired.

And now here I am again, 366 days older, with the same eardrums but a different diary. The diary is here because it contains my Notes. Throughout the year every time I think of anything clever I write it down in my little pocket diary with the result that finally the diary is crammed full of brilliant witticisms all the way from January First right through to January Third. Some of them are legible as well and this tiny barrel has already been scraped for the bacovers of Hyphen. There still remain a few dregs which I find myself compelled to transfer from one diary to another, year after year. I'm sick of the sight of them by now so I'm going to unload them onto you. Stand clear.

Here's one that looks like a filler from Confidential: "Astronomer Royal is sex pervert." I hope this won't bring Andy Young down on my head -- I've got quite enough hair there without his beard -- but I'm beginning to take a dim view of professional astronomers. The British Astronomer Royal is a typical example. He came on TV one night and said, as bold as brass right there in my living room, that the money squandered on space flight would be better devoted to building new telescopes, Now, I ask you, what would you call a man who'd rather peer into bedrooms through telescopes than go out with girls himself. That's right, the word is voyeur.

Here's another one: "Carson and the Suffragette". Those earnest people who complain that there's nothing about science fiction in fanzines will be pleased to learn that this hasn't even anything to do with fandom. Lord Edward Carson is principally remembered as the prime agent of the partition of Ireland and in his spare time he prosecuted at the trial of Oscar Wilde, but this little incident I read about in his biography seems to me to give a far more illuminating glimpse of his character than either of those famous achievements. He was a member of the British Conservative Government during the Suffragette agitation in the early years of this century, and one day one of the young ladies chained herself to the railings in front of his house. This was one of their favourite techniques for drawing attention to their campaign for women's rights and it usually meant policemen with hacksaws (she'd have hidden the key), journalists with cameras, a big crowd and a spread in the papers the next day. But not with Carson, though. He merely called

his butler and sent him out with a jug of water and instructions to lay a trail from the girl's feet to the gutter. After a while the jeers of rude passers-by were too much for the young lady and she unchained herself and went home. This confirmed my impression that Carson was a clever but very unpleasant man. What do you think?

The last one simply says: "The Bible". This has been here the longest of all because I was afraid of writing anything about it in case I should give offense to anyone. I wouldn't mean to and I really don't see why it should, but you can't be too careful when people even object to your writing anything for them on Christmas Day. But I'll tell you what the idea was so you can judge for yourself if it would have been all right. Briefly, I was thinking about all those Salvation Army skiffle groups, jazz masses and rock-enroll sessions the Chruches are using to bring young people to religion. This sort of thing seems to have started with modenized versions of the Scripture such as "The Bible Designed To Be Read As Literature" and the praiseworthy idea is to bring religion to the people in their own vernacular. Now there are a lot of godless people in fandom, despite the inspiring example of such fine representatives of organized Christianity as the Rev. Moorehead, Calvin Thomas Beck, and Mrs. Carr, and it seemed to me that in my humble way I might help fandom to see the light too. After all, why should rock and roll fans be invited to jive through the pearly gates and the fine sensitive souls of fans left wailing in the outer darkness? So might I diffidently present "The Bible Designed To Be Read As A Fanzine?"

It is of course only a oneshot so far (though the Moslems have other ideas, I understand, and if there are any reading Oopsla I apologize to them too) but fans should feel quite at home with it once they can be led to realize how closely it resembles the literature with which they are familiar. Like any fanzine, it starts off with an explanation of how everything started (Genesis)...production problems and so on...and then goes on to an account of the history of the fan group principally involved (Exodus, Leviticus, etc). It goes into a lot of very interesting detail about various feuds and other incidents, rather like "The Immortal Storm" but not quite so pompous, and there's some other remarkable material, too; prose, poems, etc, which nowadays could never be mailed out in Portland. Instead of having the interlineations and bacover quotes scattered all over the magazine they're concentrated in one section (Proverbs) which is quite an interesting idea in the way of format. The first part tails off a bit with a lot of columns and articles by various LNFs with funny names like Habbakuk, but the second part starts off again with a bang with a series of something like convention reports. There are four different eye-witness accounts of the same events, by reporters called Mathew, Mark, Luke and John (I know this sounds improbable but I'm almost sure it's not John Berry.)These are followed by a sort of post-con travelogue (Acts) telling what everybody did afterwards. Then there's the usual long letter section, the only difference being that the letters are to the readers (Epistle to the Thessalonians, etc) not from them, and the zine concludes in the usual way with a forecast, a sort of In Times To Come department called Revelations. The format is a bit crowded and there's no artwork, one thing it has in common with New Worlds, F&SF and Galaxy, but there is some very fine writing in it and I strongly recommend you get a copy. I don't know about letters of comment...I suggest you ask your local minister...but I doubt if you have much chance of getting one printed. It's like Galaxy there, too.

Well, that's that, and now I've got a nice clean diary for next year. I notice now though that I don't seem to have said much about science fiction this time. Sorry about that, but I've been reading a lot of prozines lately and they're inclined to put you off a bit, aren't they? For my money, the best science fiction coming out these days is not in magazines or films or even books but on BBC television. The third Quatermass serial, by Nigel Kneale, has just started. You may remember that one of the previous ones was made into an excellent film with Brian Donlevy: though

it was a condensation of a three-hour television production in which not a moment was wasted. This Quatermass series is remarkable for two reasons. First, it true science fiction, with no concessions to morons the film people evidently believe the general public to be. Second, the general public loves it. There is no doubt at all that in these Quatermass serials science fiction has reached the mass audience for the first time in its history. Mightn't it be significant that it is reaching them with stories that are true science fiction? I'll tell you the plot of this one so far so you can see what I mean. Quatermass is struggling against an Army scheme for the Dead Man's Deterrent, a hydrogen bomb launching base on the Moon which will automatically destroy all life on earth if the Western powers are ever attacked. (An interesting extrapolation of current NATO strategy.) Simultaneously his aid is invoked by a palaeontologist friend who is discovering five-million-year-old manlike skeletons in a building excavation in London but is being held up by the discovery of an unexploded bomb. When evacuating the neighbouring houses it's found that one of them has been deserted for years as haunted. Quatermass and his Army rival find that the 'bomb' is actually a five-million-year-old spaceship. There is a sealed bulkhead marked with a pentagram. At the end of the last installment a soldier screams and says he saw a figure walking through a wall. Four more installments to go of "Quatermass And The Pit"!

FANZINE REVIEWS

On hand is Dick Ellington's FIJAGH 2. I am getting tired of clever-obscure fanzine titles so I'll just callously say that this one stands for Fandom Is Just A Goddamn Hobby. It's a good thought and a true one though, and it's very pleasant to see a fanzine from someone in New York with a sense of humor and even a sense of proportion...if those aren't both the same thing. The best thing in this issue is the fillers -- this is not a criticism, there are twelve solid pages of them. They're almost all very good but my favourites are the ones about the Indoor Bird-watchers (sample birds: The Extramarital Lark, The Gimlet-Eyed Titwatcher) and the new Futurian Constitution (sample rule: Expulsion shall not imply loss of any privileges of membership.) There is also some fascinating further information about those big new liners which will take fans across the Atlantic for $50 and which we've been getting tantalizing glimpses of in the mundane press. The only real contribution in the magazine is one of those genuinely factual accounts by John Berry of events in his own life which give the impression that he's getting into training for a report on his trip to Detroit. In the sophisticated environment of Fijagh it stands out like a Boy Scout among Bohemians. No reflections on either, but it will be fascinating to see what John makes of certain segments of US fandom. The other contents of this issue are a reprint from a Little Magazine which is of Little Interest (Dick says he needs material, but we would have taken his word for it), another death kick from the WSFS brawl, and some lively letters. There are no startling Trends in Fijagh and all it shows is that a likeable and interesting fan is likely to produce a likeable and interesting fanzine even without much help from contributors.

The last arrival is an envelope containing both Stellar 21 and Varioso 17. Stellar (Ted White) is a good fanzine but since two thirds of this column was suggested by items in Varioso (John Magnus) I suppose it's only gratitude to give it preference. The Marion Oaks article mentioned above is in this issue and so is an excellently unpompous and interesting long editorial. The cartoons vary from big and bad to small and good, with Lynn Hickman somewhere in the middle. The good ones are excellent little caricatures by Lach, who could do with someone like Grennell to write his captions, and some of those little figures by Rotsler and others with captions that may have been added by the editor. This seems to me to be a new developement in fan humour and one with immense potentialities. Already some of the funniest cartoons I've ever come across in fanzines have been the Bennett captions to Rotsler

fillos in Ploy. I'd like to see the idea extended as a help to editors like me who are completely devoid of artistic ability. Could some kind fan artist supply us with cartoon Do-It-Yourself kits -- little figures in various poses and with various expressions that we could put together over our own captions?

However, the real meat of this issue is Jim Harmon's column. "Harmony" used to be a regular feature in Lee Riddle's ultra-respectable fanzine, Peon, where it shone out like a naughty deed in a good world. I've known Harmon to be lewd, rude and outrageous at times but never dull. Similarly it seems to me that every issue of Magnus' fanzine so far has had something thought-stimulating in it. This time both of them live up to my expectations with a Harmon review of what he calls moral horror stories and a fascinating side reference to 'No Blade of Grass." Harmon suggests that, briefly, morality is simply efficiency and therefore the actions of Youd's characters are logically unsound. But read what he says -- there's enough in these few dozen words to argue about for hours.

The letter section is in small, space-saving type of jewel-like clarity and has plenty of interest. One odd intrcduction caught my eye, though. "Buck Coulson has edited more issues of a fanzine in the past five years than any other fan. Can you make that statement?" Yes, I can. Buck Coulson has edited more issues of a fanzine in the past five years than any other fan. Okay?

DEPARTMENT OF THOSE WHO SHOULD HAVE STOOD IN BED

From Gambit 28. "ERRATTA: Go back to page 2...and...change 'It seemed that humor was appropo' to 'It seemed that humor was not appropo.' There are undoubtedly many other errors in spelling..."

Apropos your errata, Ted, my advice is to quit before you get in too deep.

Installment 26, Oopsla 28/29 (combined issue) October 1959.

FANNING WITHOUT GEARS

"A fanzine," said Redd Boggs, "should be thought of as a delicately adjusted machine." Now I have a respect for Redd Boggs that verges on veneration, so naturally I took this dictum very seriously. I tried, really tried, to think of fanzines as delicately adjusted machines. Most every morning Madeleine would find me standing in the hall in a sort of catatonic trance, surrounded by fallen-off back covers and crinkled staples, clutching battered sheaves of mimeographed blotting paper. She knew I was trying to think of them as delicately adjusted machines and she would lead me gently to the breakfast table and feed me energy-giving toast and marmalade. With her help and encouragement I eventually began to succeed in seeing them as delicately adjusted machines and sometimes my frown of concentration would relax into a weak but appreciative smile. Madeleine would look at me solicitously and I would explain, "It's this delicately adjusted machine from Grennell." Indeed after a while we stopped thinking of them as fanzines at all. "Any DAMs in the mail?" I would call out cheerily on my return from work in the evening, and if there were I would take them into the garage and open them with my screwdriver, which I was now using instead of my nailfile, and examine the works inside.

So all was going quite well until one day the Nameless Ones of Seattle started sending me their fanzine. Now I don't know whether you saw the earlier CRYs, the ones with the long long letter sections from people like Esmond Adams, Rich Brown, Bill Meyers and Les Gerber, but I can tell you it was not easy to think of them as delicately adjusted machines. I knew that according to Boggs I should be able to perceive how all the parts fitted together with jewel-like precision like finely

cut gears, but to me it just looked like a glorious tarnish mesh. But Boggs had spoken, so I tried harder. And harder. The strain began to tell on me. I don't remember much about that time now but they tell me I was found smearing thick grease all over my Quandry file and wiping down the pages of the coming Hyphen with a rag dipped in light engine oil.

Naturally Madeleine was perturbed at this, like the loyal wife she is. Besides, she had had an article in that Hyphen. Of course she is too good a fan to doubt the wisdom of Redd Boggs, but she began to wonder if perhaps I in my simplicity had misunderstood him. Perhaps even taken him too literally, like the character in 'The Wallet of Kai-Lung.' "It is related that a person of limited intelligence on being assured that he would certainly one day enjoy an adequate competence if he closely followed the habits of the thrifty bee, spent the greater part of his life in anointing his thighs with the yellow powder which he laboriously collected from the flowers of the field."

So the dear girl started looking through the old fanzine files for other writings of The Sage of Minnesota which might cast a different light on the problem. Eventually to her joy she came upon the answer. She waved it in front of my staring eyes and almost immediately the light of sanity (comparatively speaking) returned. I made a complete recovery and now I feel it my duty to bring the same message of hope to others who may be similarly afflicted. If any of you feel the urge to think of fanzines as delicately adjusted machines, hurry round to your friendly neighborhood BNF and ask if you can look at his copy of Boggs' Index to Astounding.

This dreadful business was all hushed up at the time, so you innocent young fans won't know about it, but I think the truth should now be revealed. However horrible they are, facts are facts and must be faced. Briefly, about seven years ago Boggs decided that he would publish an index to Astounding. He went painstakingly through every single issue published during the twenty-odd years of the magazine's existence and listed every story under both title and author. Then he rearranged them in alphabetical order and put them onto stencils, checking and double-checking each item with his usual exacting thoroughness. Then he cut a tasteful cover, ran the lot off in his usual pellucid mimeography, which looks more as if it had been impressed on the paper by angels wielding dies of burnished gold than by inky stencils, collated each copy with machine-tool precision, stapled them three times, and mailed them out in envelopes. Three weeks later in far-off Ireland I was looking at one of them in awed admiration. Here was a delicately adjusted machine if ever a fanzine was. The neat columns marched up and down the pages like polished pistons, gleaming mathematically. Shaking my head humbly I closed the noble thing and prepared to place it in some place of honour from which it could be withdrawn at a moment's notice to confound anyone who should suggest that fans were careless slobs. I took a last respectful look at the cover...and exclaimed in horror. "Aargh!" was the way I put it, if I remember. I shook my head and looked again, incredulous. But there it was, stark and unmistakeable, in impeccably cut letters an inch high: "ASTOUDING STORY KEY."

I didn't mention it to anyone at the time because I thought possibly no one else had noticed it, including Boggs, and that if I pointed it out he might commit suicide by falling on the point of his stylus. Later I came to wonder if perhaps I had under-estimated Boggs' sense of humor and if the presence of this monumental typo right in the cornerstone of the work was a subtle allusion to the fact that it was an N3F sponsored project. But it was only after many years experience in fandom that my mind broadened and deepened enough to understand the real message of the Astouding Story Key. It was no coincidence that the only typo Boggs ever made in his life should have been placed on the cover of the one work of his that was most likely to be consulted by each generation of fans as long as science fiction existed.

The sercon fans would keep it and remember it and show it to neofen as, not a sercon project like any other, but as The Zine Where Boggs Made The Typo. And looking at it we would all subconsciously absorb its symbolic significance..,that perfection is impossible for us, as it was for Boggs, and should not be striven after too hard lest in its quest we lose the true purpose of a fanzine, as a hifi addict ceases to enjoy music in his concentration on frequency response. In other words, a fanzine, like a human being, is more than a delicately adjusted machine.

ODD JOHN

I was reading the other day a story in Astounding which is one of the reasons nobody will ever bother to make an index to that magazine again. It was by a man called David Gordon, who I unwillingly remember as the author of another screamingly unfunny novelette the plot of which revolved slowly and tediously around the subject of duck excrement. In his current masterpiece he takes another twenty pages of what used to be the premier sf magazine to relate how a man saved himself from being poisoned by alien foodstuffs by dosing himself with Epsom salts. All the same I think, so beaten down was I by the monstrous mediocrity of modern magazine sf, that I would have endured even this unflinchingly if it hadn't been that the previous five pages had been occupied by another literary genius named Kuykendall recounting in juvenile patois how some small boys flew into space in a homemade spaceship powered by old refrigerator parts and reversed the orbit of a Russian satellite. As it was, at this point there was a loud crack and the room was showered by splinters by camel's vertebrae. The magazine wasn't mine so I didn't throw it across the room: I just sat there clenching it in my trembling fists and wondering 'why do we let Campbell get away with it?'

I have a feeling that unless I digress here several people are going to write in and explain to me that both these stories were meant to be humorous and that the Gordon epic was voted first in the Analytical Laboratory. Well, listen, I don't care. I don't care if it is suddenly revealed that David Gordon is a penname for Theodore Sturgeon writing in collaboration with the ghosts of HGWells and Edgar Allan Poe. It was a lousy story, which any half awake editor would have bounced off his desk if he hadn't kidded himself that the presence of a few paragraphs of chemical gobbledegook gave it some justification to appear in a science fiction magazine. I don't care if Campbell produces signed affidavits from thirty thousand cleared water diviners that a corresponding number of readers had wet themselves while reading it. It was simply not funny. Yes of course I know Campbell must have thought it was funny -- obviously he must have had some reason for printing it instead of some piece of higher literary merit, such as selections from the New Jersey telephone directory -- and those of his readers who also have no sense of humor labored under the same delusion. But the simple truth is that this story, like many of those by Sprague de Camp, belongs to a special class of humor written for people with no sense of humor. It's like robots reading pornography. These people form a major part of the audience of certain tv and radio comedians who perform for their clientele much the same function that seeing-eye dogs perform for the blind. They produce a product clearly labelled 'humor', like a detergent packet, with the instructions for use clearly indicated. At periodic intervals cues for laughter are unmistakeably indicated and the humorless ones recognize them with relief and laugh ritually, looking out of the corner of one eye to make sure they're in step and out of the other to make sure that everybody sees them enjoying the joke. Eventually they laugh at the cue-words whenever they see them, confident that they are intrinsically funny. With John W. Campbell these association symbols evidently include excrement, little boys and dialect, and these are also recognized by many of the solemn technical types who fill his letter column. The sad fact that the only sort of real humor John and these pale imitations of him appreciate are heavy handed burlesques of scientific laws, which are for them a sort of blasphemy. They are taboo-breaking jokes, like sex among schoolboys.

People like these will never dare to criticize anything that looks like humor in case their guilty secret becomes known, but that's no explanation why the rest us continue to worship the JWC idol and ignore the clay feet he keeps putting in his mouth. Yes, I'm thinking of a dirty word called dianetics, which did more to harm science fiction than the Shaver Mystery, but which we all seem to have agreed to tactfully forget. But if we are to be expected to follow Campbell in his latest adventure we are entitled to honesty about the last one. If he is disillusioned with dianetics, why doesn't he admit he was wrong? Or may we expect dowsing rods and sticky machines to disappear just as suddenly from the editorial columns of Astounding, leaving another few thousand trusting readers holding the can?

The truth is that we all still feel so immensely grateful to John for creating the golden age of sf that we feel he can do nothing wrong, but there's even more to it than that. I think we're all very fond of him as a person, even if we don't know him personally, partly because we recognize him as a fannish type like ourselves. Although he wouldn't touch fandom with a longer bargepole than practically any other pro editor, he has all our curiousity and sense of wonder and enthusiasm to the nth degree, and when he goes galloping off on some new hobby-horse we just smile affectionately and continue patiently reading through the unedited crud left on his desk. But ten years is a long time for a science fiction editor to have lost interest in science fiction. Are running a radio station, publicizing Do-It-Yourself psychiatry or combing the nits of truth out of the lunatic fringe proper uses of the time our money pays for?

ERIN GOON BACK

John Berry arrived home safely this evening from America, courteously relinquishing the limelight to Mr. K. He was a little thinner and hairier than when he set out and his wrist was still swollen from a bite he got in Seattle yesterday (no, not from GMCarr -- a mosquito) but he was in his characteristic good spirits and bubbling over with the other highspots of his incident-crammed Odyssey. He wrote 40,000 words of his report in Seattle (taking him almost through the doors of the Convention hotel) and will be going on through as soon as he gets his breath back from the 6000 miles he's flown since his last paragraph. I asked him if he'd any message meanwhile and he asks me to thank everyone for the wonderful time he had and to apologize to those whom, conventions being what they are, he didn't get around to saying goodbye to in Detroit.

FENAISSANCE

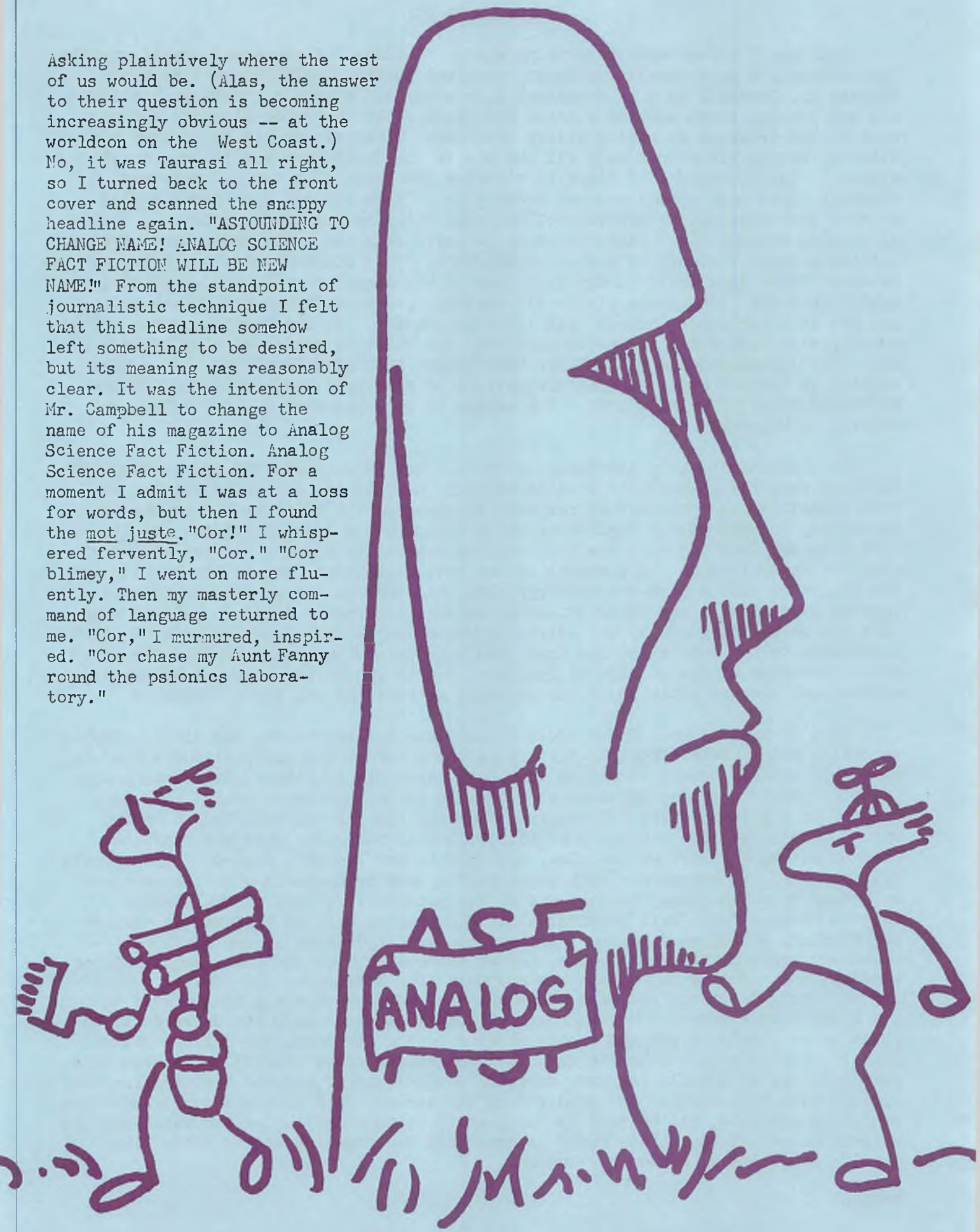
So many fine things are happening in fandom these days that I feel someone should notice them in case they go away again. Not just the lighting of new fires in old greats like Warner and Tucker, and Jim Harmon with his wonderfully outrageous series of fan biographies in JDArgassy, but this wonderful wave of new talent which seems to have started with Bob Leman and the Cry letterhacks. And it's still going on all over -- Nirenberg in Canada, Koogle in Texas, Ferguson and Jefferson in Australia, and now McAulay and Hautz down here in Dublin. Where are they all coming from? Someone should conduct a poll to find out how fandom can get so many recruits at a time when it is ostracized by the promags.

Installment 27, Interim 29/30 (between those issues of Oopsla), February 1959.

DON'T KNOW WHAT TO CALL IT BUT IT'S MIGHTY LIKE A RUSE

One look at the front page of SFTimes 326 and I was scrabbling at the back one to see if it was a hoax by Vinç Clarke. But no, there was the Syracuse postmark and a coffin-like box proclaiming that the editors would be in New York in '54 and

Asking plaintively where the rest of us would be. (Alas, the answer to their question is becoming increasingly obvious -- at the worldcon on the West Coast.) No, it was Taurasi all right, so I turned back to the front cover and scanned the snappy headline again. "ASTOUNDING TO CHANGE NAME! ANALOG SCIENCE FACT FICTION WILL BE NEW NAME!" From the standpoint of journalistic technique I felt that this headline somehow left something to be desired, but its meaning was reasonably clear. It was the intention of Mr. Campbell to change the name of his magazine to Analog Science Fact Fiction. Analog Science Fact Fiction. For a moment I admit I was at a loss for words, but then I found the mot juste. "Cor!" I whispered fervently, "Cor." "Cor blimey," I went on more fluently. Then my masterly command of language returned to me. "Cor," I murmured, inspired. "Cor chase my Aunt Fanny round the psionics laboratory."



But then I forced myself to think again. "Willis," I addressed myself sternly, "you are only a mere uncultured faaan, unversed in the cunning commercial world, whereas Mr. Campbell is a professional literateur and a highly intelligent fellow who saw through Elron Hubbard a scant two years after everyone else and who can find buried treasure by waving sticks over maps. Obviously he has found this new title by waving his sticks over all the A's in the dictionary and it is a surefire winner." Yes of course. I tried to visualize the scene at a typical newstand. A normally timid high school student breezes in. "Have you got the latest Analog Science Fact Fiction, Mr Newsvendor?" he asks with unaccustomed confidence. "Good ol' Analog Science Fact Fiction? Sure, sonny," says the happy newsvendor happily, lifting a copy from off of a sexy pocket book, "just couldn't overlook a snappy eye-catchin' title like that, could you? Been a big demand for it, too -- nothing the public goes for like those little ol' analogs, you know." Meanwhile, back in the big New York publishing houses all is consternation. Mr and Mrs Claire Booth Luce are fighting each other tooth and nail over the relative merits of SIMILARITY PICTURE STORY JOURNALISM and RESEMBLANCE PHOTOGRAPHS ACTUALITY REGARDING. At a mass meeting in Madison Square Garden the editors of Time have just voted for CORRESPONDENCES POLITICS OPINION NEWS. The editor of Look has sent out for a larger edition of Webster.

No...it wasn't quite convincing somehow. But then, why? Why is Mr. Campbell throwing away the goodwill of a title which he himself has manhauled all the way from juvenility to intellectual respect, so changing the connotations of the word Astounding throughout the English-speaking world that a leading British novelist like Kingsley Amis can have his hero reading Astounding Science Fiction and have everyone appreciate he is a member of the intelligentsia? Why is he throwing away the fruits of such a hard-won victory? One wild theory after another flashed through my mind with the speed of accusations in Aporrheta. Could it be that Campbell had been tipped off by the editor of Mademoiselle that there is a new Swedish sex-symbol on the way called Ana Log? Could he be moving his editorial offices to the picturesque little village of Annalong, County Down? Had he received psychiatric advice that the new title would subliminally attract the sex pervert market?

Then it came to me. There could be only one reason for the new title. Campbell is making a desperate effort to justify psionics before his new publishers find out what he's been up to and do to him what Ziff-Davis did to Palmer. His cunning plan is this. With the first appearance of the new title, the cover symbol will be changed to a printed-circuit Hieronymous machine running the full length of the spine. The stickiness generated by this will hold the cover onto the magazine, thereby saving the cost of the glue, but this is not the main reason. The circuit will be tuned, in accordance with observations made by Campbell with the machines he brings to conventions, to resonate at the psionic frequency of the average science fiction fan. This powerful eloptic radiation will be transmitted through the staples, acting as antennae. The staples will therefore become small but immensely powerful divining rods having an irresistable attraction towards science fiction fans. When a fan approaches anywhere near a newstand the copy of Astounding will wriggle itself out from under all the mundane mags and hurl itself into his hands like a demented homing pigeon. This is a fine thing for us readers, because we're likely to get our copies without paying for them. The dealers won't like it, but it's up to them to keep their magazines under control and invest in a butterfly net or a rifle. Anyway, Campbell needn't worry, because the magazine will already have been bought and paid for by the dealer. And when his publishers find out about psionics, all he need do to justify it is point to the new title and the current sales returns. "How could we have sold the magazine with a title like that?" he will ask, reasonably enough.

FOOLIO

In the lastest Camber Alan Dodd makes the first public mention I have seen of the folio of Dave Prosser's artwork that was published in Mammon number three. It's rather more than a mention as a matter of fact, it's more like a hymn of ecstasy. Prosser's art is reminiscent of Goya, says Dodd, who has been to Spain. It is one of the most important contributions to the fanzine art world, continues our cosmopolitan art connoisseur. He goes on to survey the drawings individually, throwing out words like 'compelling' and'masterpiece' at the drop of a hat, and concludes with his considered verdict:"He is an artist fandom should not neglect."

Curiously enough, if the word 'not' had been left out of that last sentence it would have represented exactly my own opinion. Neglect is the best thing that could happen to Prosser, both for ourselves and him, and I was proud of fandom for having quietly ignored him so far, obviously in the hope that he would go away. It is of course inconvenient for some of us to have lurid stuff like this lying about the house, but it's no good protesting because this type of conformist pseudo-Bohemian immediately assumes that he is being 'controversial' and 'challenging.' Actually of course he is just being silly in a harmless but unpleasant way and it's better to ignore him in the hope that he'll grow up.

However Dodd's enthusiasm might possibly induce some of you to try and get this folio and maybe it's only fair to say that at least one other fan thinks they would be wasting their time. Apart from a little puerile pornography there seems to me to be absolutely nothing of interest in any of the drawings. "The power of evil

(Continued on page 338.)

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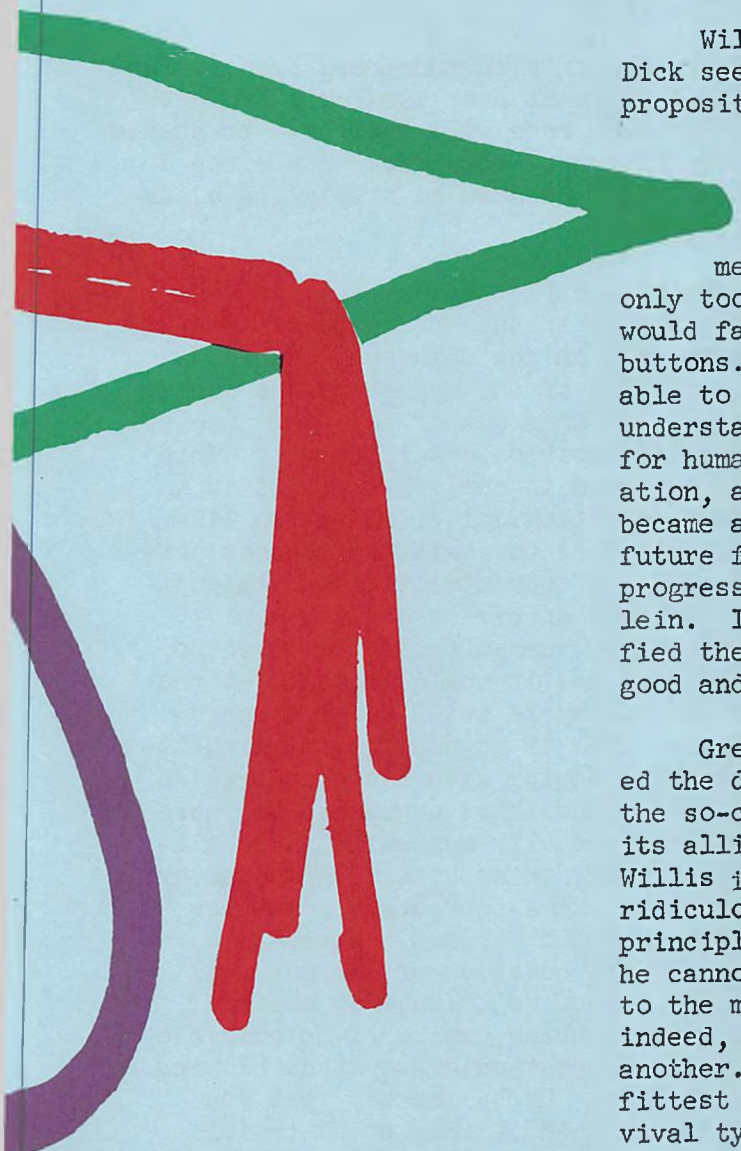
THE TIDES OF FANHISTORY

(rb: Ragnarok was in the wings -- stifling a yawn -- and Gregg Calkins' energies were faltering at the end of 1959. The annals of fandom were to undergo a spastic twitch while unsuspecting fen merely wondered where the blazes the next issue of Oopsla was in January, 1960, when Warhoon 6 cryptically appeared in the Golden Jubilee Mailing of the Spectator Amateur Press Society... (Issue number 5 was dated Summer, 1954, "Third year of publication", and had been published by superfan Redd Boggs' Gafia Press.) Even the Futurians were caught unawares by the surreptitious re-entry of a fanzine named after a dusty old city on Mars and Moskowitz napping in the frozen food locker had no way of knowing international repercussions would Rock the Microcosmos when a fan in Ireland browsing through the revived Wrhn came across a mailing comment admitting "My survival route in the event of atomic attack is a bit more complicated than yours. My schedule includes a trip back to the apartment to pick up my Hyphens". If Harry Warner wanted to select that remark as one of the most effective mailing comments ever written he might do worse. It was so effective that it inspired a whole fanzine by Walt Willis (Gafia Recovery Administration, Emergency Bulletin #3, 1960, 3 3/4"x10", 2pgs, letter substitute) who admitted that he had been

> "stunned by that mention of your atomic attack route. But do you realize that if everyone goes back to pick up their Hyphens fandom might be obliterated and there'll be no one to lead the world back to civilisation? You save yourself, and next Hallow Een I'll get James White, BIS, to design a rocket to fire a file of Hyphen into orbit. I'll put in that Warhoon too, and any more you send. I liked it."

All this atomic foolishness was, of course, too much for Bergeron's feeble mind and it inspired him to try to produce a fanzine worthy of being shot to hell in a rocket. Seemingly Willis was willing to come along for the ride with results which can be observed on some of the following pages:)



THE HARP IN WARHOON

(rb: The first installment of the Harp in Wrhn is a portion of a long discussion revolving around the work of Robert Heinlein and as such seems to require a brief sketch of its context to set in perspective the Harp's most explosive chapter. I had innocently wondered "if anyone has pondered this proposition: a single concerted attack has reduced population areas in the US to rubble, and fallout and drifting radiation are wiping out the rest of the country. The decision facing the survivors is whether the undamaged ICBMs should be activated in retaliation. And why?"

Willis in Fanac commented: "during his gafia Dick seems to have forgotten that this identical proposition was pondered and answered by Theodore Sturgeon as far back as 1947, in his moving and thoughtful "Thunder and Roses". His answers were 'No' and 'In the interests of humanity,' and they seem to me the right ones." Walt added "But it's only too obvious that an equally prominent author would fall over himself to get at those ICBM firing buttons. It's curious that the sf field should be able to produce a writer like Sturgeon with enough understanding to see clearly that the only future for humanity or intelligent life lies in cooperation, as all worthwhile progress has since man became a social animal; and also one who sees no future for us but as anti-social animals and no progress but in more efficient killing, like Heinlein. It's not often one sees so clearly exemplified the dual principles of love and hate...or good and evil."

Gregg Calkins in an article in Wrhn 9 escalated the discussion with such remarks as "I am afraid the so-called free world has more to fear from its allies than its enemies." and thought "Perhaps Willis is being melodramatic rather than merely ridiculous in identifying Heinlein with the principles of hate and evil, but on either course he cannot claim to have given careful consideration to the message inherent in "Starship Troopers" or, indeed, in all of Heinlein's books in one form or another." (rb: ie, "this is a survival of the fittest world" and "man is the highest order survival type yet bred".) Gregg went on: "Perhaps Willis and Sturgeon would prefer to remain social animals and cooperate with aggressors in the name of the future of humanity, and perhaps they would prefer survival under a dictatorship rather than running the risk of non-survival by means of extinction, but as for me I'll stick with Patrick Henry. In case you have forgotten, Henry preferred rather to lose his life than his liberty, and if man isn't willing to die for the things in

which he truly believes, whether the death be that of the individual or that of the race (and isn't the death of the individual as far-reaching and as permanent as the death of the race, at least as far as the dying person is concerned?) then man deserves to be left behind to make room for the next higher type on the evoluticnary scale."

Inspite of the temperature of the following installment the fallout between Gregg and Walt seems to have been all thermonuclear and more apparent than real. Gregg replied in issue #11 with a degree of tact that was unaccountably absent from his article and I poured heavy water on the wild letter column by inviting everyone to change the subject.)

Installment 28, Warhoon 10, January 1961.

Ordinarily I'm not much of a one for serious arguments in fanzines, because fandom is a hobby and a hobby is relaxation, but this argument over "Starship Troopers" raises a question which is the most important the human race will ever have to answer and one which sf fans are in some ways peculiarly fitted to consider. And since I helped to raise it here myself I figure maybe I should put down as simply and clearly as I can what I think the answer should be and why.

I'll start by trying to prove my premises which are (1) that nuclear war can destroy our civilization and (2) that this would not be in the interests of the human race. These postulates seem to be in doubt only in the Chinese Communist Party and certain circles among US ex-marines, but some of the arguments the latter have been using confuse the issue so let's try and get them out of the way. One of them is that people said gunpowder would destroy civilization and it didn't. This analogy is false because the change that has taken place is qualitative. It is a matter of demonstrable fact that a highly complex technological civilization like ours can be reduced to chaos by only a tiny proportion of the existing nuclear pottential. The second argument is that the destruction of our civilization wouldn't really matter because the human race as a species would survive a nuclear war. This is arguable, but leaving aside the small matter of the suffering involved to the insignificant present members of it, like you and me, it would at best set the race back some hundreds of years with the same ghastly cycle still to go through and the same question at the end, still unanswered. Few of us would agree with the anti-scientific Romanticists that we'd all be happier coping with the complexities of the simple life in mud huts and dying of typhoid. The third argument, and here they're really scraping the barrel, is that it doesn't really matter if we're all obliterated because the rest of the Universe would carry on as usual. This was my first intimation that fandom now includes a number of extra-terrestrial entities, and I congratulate Dick on this unprecedented success with Warhoon. However to those of his readers who happen to be human beings, the question of our survival does seem of some importance. If there are really any of us to whom it doesn't, would they mind getting the hell out of this argument, which can be of no possible interest to them, and committing suicide in some less spectacular way than blowing up our planet? Thank you and goodnight, Gregg Calkins. Oh by the way, are you shooting Jo and the baby too, or are you going to ask them if they think their survival is important?

Well all right then, now that Gregg and his extra-terrestrial friends have left the room I think we're probably all agreed that nuclear war can destroy our civilization and that this is to be avoided. The question then becomes how to avoid it, and this is the one which the people who put forward those weird arguments have been trying to evade. Because they haven't got an answer. An answer is not possible to them within the framework of their beliefs.

Basically the trouble is that they think in little mental pictures which have no

relation to reality. I can imagine for example their visualization of the current world scene. It's captioned "Survival Of The Fittest!" and it shows two sabre-toothed tigers battling it out, one labelled "America" and the other labelled "Russia". After a good clean fight the sabre-toothed tiger labelled America wins and, breathing a little heavily, leads a third, female, sabre-toothed tiger labelled "Uncommitted Countries" into a cave marked "Western Civilization" to breed a race of superior sabre-tooth tigers which takes over the planet. The most obvious fallacies in this analogy are that nations are not individuals and that if the sabre-toothed tigers had been armed with nuclear weapons neither of them would have survived. But the most important fallacy is that this does not happen to be the way evolution took place. For, as you may have noticed, the sabre-toothed tigers did not take over the planet. They lost out, not because they did not keep in trim by fighting, but because they didn't have the intelligence to adjust to their environment. The animal that did and took over the planet was far weaker and slower and less ferocious than any sabre-toothed tiger, and you would think these people who keep chanting "survival of the fittest" would tear their eyes away from the fine bloody spectacle of those sabre-toothed tigers for a moment and wonder how he did it. But if they won't, let's tell them. He did it by the use of a new and invincible evolutionary weapon called co-operation. Instead of slugging it out toe to claw with the sabre-toothed tiger, these Men got together in groups and helped one another and protected those who weren't fitted for fighting and who just stayed at home thinking up little things like spears and wheels and bows and arrows. This is the way the human race has survived worse dangers than rival species, and this is the way it will survive in the future if we don't listen to the modern throwbacks to the sabre-toothed tiger.

Perhaps we can now eliminate this "survival of the fittest" claptrap from the discussion. If it means anything at all it means that those who are fitted to survive, do. Surprise, surprise! Actually it is merely a meaningless catchphrase left over from a 19th Century controversy which was settled long ago, but the people who use it in its present context are not just a hundred years out of date -- more like a hundred thousand. Even if we were to admit that animal evolution was mainly through inter-species or inter-individual violence, which is by no means the case, the fact is that the laws of animal evolution which these people so imperfectly comprehend ceased to apply to the human race a very long time ago. When, in fact, he became homo sapiens, the social animal. There have been brief attempts to re-introduce them, like the Spartan custom of exposing babies on Winter hillsides (whatever happened to the Spartans?) and the Eskimo custom of marooning sickly relatives on icefloes (have the Eskimoes taken over Canada yet, Boyd?), but generally we have not killed off those 'unfit' to survive. There are no doubt theoretical objections to letting diseased and defective people like Beethoven, Mozart, Keats, Einstein and other non-Marine types clutter up the place instead of having a population entirely of All-American halfwits and similar fine soldierly types, but any improvement in our stock can only come through voluntary genetic control. Mankind owes its pre-eminence to social co-operation -- brotherly love if you want to use non-technical language -- the strong helping the weak so that their less obvious gifts benefit all: to revert to the animal laws of evolution means to become animals again.

Well now, to get back to the current situation. The means of survival for individual Man in a hostile environment was in co-operation with other men. The means of survival for the tribe was in co-operation with other tribes. What is the means of survival for the Nation? The Hydrogen bomb hasn't posed this problem, it's just made the penalty for the wrong answer more drastic. The answer of the Heinleiners when you pin them down to it is of course that there is no answer, because there have always been wars and there will always be wars and all we can do is destroy other nations while they are destroying us. The fact is that neither of those axioms of theirs is true. There have not always been wars: war is a transitory phenomenon of the last couple of thousand years, unknown to primitive man, mere growing pains

in social organization, like slavery. And there will be no more wars: there will just be a number of explosions. And incidentally they won't be let off by ludicrous leathernecks leaping about from planet to planet lobbing atomic grenades, they'll be let off by bespectacled button-pushing boffins who wouldn't hurt a fly.

The Heinleiners won't admit the possibility of a united mankind now,but in"Starship Trooper"the Leader seems to concede, no doubt reluctantly, that it may happen in the future. But he won't give up his beloved wars so easily. Space, he eagerly declar-es, is chock full of hostile races whom we must organize ourselves to fight. We must train our children to be hard and cruel and vicious so that they may be ready to kill and kill without pity those horrible slugs who are going to breeze in from Antares next Wednesday. (They're bound to be horrible of course, because they're different from us, like N------s and Kikes.) Well, all right, I'm a fan, I'm bound to admit that the Antareans will land next Wednesday, maybe even next Tuesday. I don't know if they look horrible or not, but I know one thing about them that Heinlein doesn't. They'll be civilized. No race can master the technology for interstellar flight without a complex civilization. And no stable and complex civilization is possible without co-operation. In other words the Antarans will have learned what we are learning, that the only way of survival and progress for intelligent creatures is co-operation with other intelligent creatures. If they find us as Heinlein wants us, organizing our whole society for hate and violence, they'll write us off as perverted lunatics and that's what we would be.

A couple of personal footnotes. First, I've been castigated for assuming without proof that Starship Troopers" represents Heinlein's real opinions and is not a mere literary tour de force. A fair charge. I offer in evidence (1) A crackpot manifesto signed by him and circulated by GM Carr urging more H-Bomb testing. (2) The recurrence of sadism and worship of violence in Heinlein's work since 19^9- I remember the first fmz article I ever wrote was a complaint about the Fascist tendencies of "Gulf", with its arguments against democracy, its gloating description of torture and its use by heroes who obviously had the author's blessing. (3) The fact that the vicious philosophy of "Starship Troopers" is put over plausibly and with no indication that the author realized its stupidity. I think we're entitled to assume that the world of "Starship Troopers" is Heinlein's Utopia, God help him.

Secondly, I hope I have'nt offended Gregg Calkins, who has been a good friend of mine for many years: if I have, all I can say in excuse is that it's my life and that of my wife and children, and yours, that he's so bravely declaring his willingless to sacrifice. That's a worrying thing to hear from America, which already sometimes seems to us Europeans to have the most belligerent population in the world. He says that he and Heinlein do not advocate war. I know they don't, not in so many words: they just say it's inevitable. That's all the doctors said about "Childbed Fever" '.lien Simmelweiss tried to make them stop it by washing their hands. This sincere, practical, realist opinion killed thousands of mothers and babies.

Installment 29, Warhoon 11, April 1961.

CHANGE

Er...would you like to buy a gas-operated radio? I know a junk-shop in Belfast where I could get you one, cheap. It's the very latest model, (if you happen to be a student of the circuitry of gas-operated radios, the basis of this one was a row of thermo-couples and a row of gas jets.) No? I was afraid of that. Bang go my hopes of making a fortune by cornering the market in gas-operated radios. I'm afraid the days of the gas-operated radio have dwindled; they can be numbered on the fingers of one foot. They belonged to that brief period between the invention of the the thermionic tube and the spread of mains electricity, and are now irretrievably, lost in the limbo of technological obsolescence.

Like the old radio set I have here in the attic, which must have been a sensation in the Twenties. I bought it for practically nothing just for the screening cans and though the rest of it is completely useless I can't bear to throw it out. It's so beautifully made. The cabinet is polished walnut, the screw terminals on all the components are fashioned like jewels, and the tuning condensers...Ah, those tuning condensers. A symphony in black and yellow, a glory of polished ebonite and brass, with precision air-spaced trimmers consisting of polished brass disks, operated by knurled wheels like golden sovereigns, all so beautifully made as to almost make you weep with the sadness of it. For all that loving craftsmanship is now just junk. I have a private dream in which I check over the old radio, and find old bulbous tubes for it, and connect up batteries and an old horn speaker...and out comes faintly but clearly Amos 'n' Andy or the Savoy Hotel Orpheans. We could hear ragtime, and the first broadcast of Stardust, and the news about Lindbergh and the Graf Zeppelin, and Jim Harmon could listen to "I Love A Mystery" all over again. But for all we would really get, a cheap little mass-produced thing of aluminium and polysterene would be more efficient than those lovely old tuning condensers. There's no help for it, they're just junk. A vintage radio isn't like a vintage car, for what would be the point in dressing up in a raccoon coat to listen to the Everley Brothers? Nevertheless as long as I've got room for it I'll keep that old radio, and every time I have some like-minded visitor I'll open it and show him those tuning condensers and we'll mourn together for useless beauty and wasted craftsmanship.

There was a time when the vanishing craftsmanship of the 19th Century was married to the coming science of the 20th. That was the age when even the most forbidding machine was humanized by some craftsman's touch. Even a steam hammer would have wrought iron curlicues, and the non-functional surfaces of a press would be decorated or polished for no reason but love and pride. The best example most of us are likely to have seen recently was the Time Machine in the movie, a perfect example of late-Victorian craftsmanship right down to the little plaque "Made by Herbert George Wells." In those days you knew it was a man who'd made a machine, not just other machines.

The last vestiges of this tradition today are the polished wood dashboards of high class cars, but occasionally you'll come across some more fascinating survival. I was reminded of one the other day by a charming letter from Noreen Shaw in which she mentioned that her father came from Westport, Co. Mayo. Why I know it well, I told her, a sleepy old town with a little river and treelined roads beside it. That's where we go to buy our Tchaikowsky Piano Concertoes. And then I remembered just how we happened to buy a Tchaikowsky piano concerto in the wilds of Co. Mayo.

Madeleine and I were younger then and on a cycling tour of the West of Ireland, and we pedalled our weary way into Westport about four o'clock on a June afternoon, having just climbed Croagh Patrick. We knew and loved Westport for its peaceful air of genteel decay, so it was a surprise to see a little knot of people in front of a shop window. We'd never seen so many people in Westport before. A new bacon slicer, we thought, knowing what life is like in the West of Ireland. But no. It was, of all things, an enormous magnificent phonograph. That in itself would have been sufficiently astonishing in Westport, but this phonograph would have been a sensation anywhere. It had an automatic record changer, and it was working.

Those words are pitifully inadequate to describe what was going on in that window in front of the dumbfounded peasantry. That automatic changer was designed by a mad genius, and it must have been the first one ever made. For one thing it played <u>both sides</u> of each record in succession, which dates it before the introduction of automatic couplings. Furthermore it was designed with all the lunatic ingenuity of those Victorian clockwork toys or chiming clocks, or those slot machines you find in old railway stations over here where you put in a penny and a light comes on and

some mechanically animated puppets jerk into action and enact a public execution or a grave yard at midnight or whatever edifying spectacle that particular machine is programmed for. We found some of these machines in Portrush last year and it cost me a small fortune in pennies before I could get my children away from them.

But this machine in Westport was more horrifying than any of those. The pile of records was suspended about a foot above the turntable and when the mechanism was started the bottom one fell onto the turntable with a horrible CRASH. You remember how heavy twelve-inch 78's were? Well, they used to be even heavier. So far so good, but it was when the machine had played that side that the real drama began. A big arm whirred out from the side and levered the helpless disc into a vertical position and, while it was still wondering what was happening to it, another arm sneaked out from the other side and caught the feet from under it, sweeping them across to the other side in a sort of football tackle. Then both arms suddenly retracted, leaving the record to collapse back onto the turntable with another horrible CRASH, but this time upside down. While it was still quivering from the shock, the great half-ton pick-up advanced remorselessly onto it with its rusty steel needle ready to give the coup de grace. CRUNCH. Shattered, we waited to see how the body would be finally disposed of. The pick-up heaved itself off the record and the first arm came out again, but this time it didn't stop. It carried the record right off the motor board, where it abruptly disappeared from view. Decent burial, we agreed, was the least it was entitled to. Then we heard a rumbling noise from way down in the foundations of the great mahogony edifice and there in the bottom lefthand corner we now saw a plush-lined compartment into which the record was now tumbling, for all the world like change out of a slot machine.

Were we mistaken, or had the white label on that record before it started its death-ride not originally been red? Anyway we felt it our duty to rescue at least one record from that monster, so I went in and bought the first movement of Tchaikowsky's Piano Concerto in B Flat Minor. Well, I admit I'd been meaning to get it sometime, but I don't think I'd have bought it in Westport if the balance of my mind had not been disturbed. I mean, have you ever tried to carry a twelve-inch phonograph record 300 miles on a pushbike? If you're ever faced with the problem I suggest you bore holes in the corners of the cardboard jacket and suspend it inside the frame. It worked all right with us except that three days later on a mountain road near Ballina a pebble was flung up and chipped a piece out of the first four bars. Ah well, worse would have befallen it in Westport.

But you see what I mean about the poignancy of technological obsolescence? Here was this beautiful piece of mechanical engineering,cabinet making and misplaced ingenuity, which would cost hundreds of pounds to duplicate today, and it isn't worth a penny. Wait a minute...I don't know though, I've just thought of those carnival sideshows where you can work off your frustrations by smashing crockery. And then I thought of Ian McAulay and his lps and the way he handles them with the tips of two fingers, and dusts them with his special anti-static duster, and weighted my pick-up on his specially bought machine, and won't use my changer in case the little perspex arm should brush the face of the record... Why, if all discophiles are like that they must be bursting with inhibitions. Put that old phonograph in the window of a hi-fi shop in New York with a pile of expensive lps and it would attract more people than it did in Westport, all of them rooted to the spot in morbid fascination. It would have all the appeal of a public execution, and I know the modern generation will pay to see that. Any message for your relatives in Westport, Noreen? I'm off to make a fortune by cornering the market in antediluvian automatic changers.

HOME HINTS FROM OBLIQUE HOUSE

One of the perils of living in Oblique House is that you may find butterflies in your bed. "I found a butterfly in my bed last night," announced Ian McAulay at

Irish Fandom's last party. I sprang loyally to the defence of Madeleine's housekeeping. "All I can say," I replied with cold dignity, "is that you must have brought it with you yourself."

"What would Ian want with a butterfly in his bed?" pondered Bob. "It was bad enough when Berry accused Chuck Harris of indecently assaulting his budgerigar but a butterfly! That's stretching things a bit far."

"But the butterfly may have flown into his bed," pointed out Peggy. "Maybe it thought they had something in common."

"They both live on lettuce," I said, "or is that just caterpillars?"

"Ian," pointed out James keenly, "does not look like a butterfly. I don't know what he looks like, but it's definitely not a butterfly."

"No," agreed Peggy, "but neither does a caterpillar. He's just in the chrysalis stage. Any day that mouldering carapace will split open and reveal a handsome intelligent young man."

When order had been restored it emerged that I had been wrong. It was Madeleine who had put the butterfly in Ian's bed, or at least into his room. She had found it frozen stiff in the backyard, having been presumably struck down in mid air by a cold East wind. Having thawed it out on top of the stove she had then put it on top of Ian's wardrobe...his room is on the ground floor and the nearest one with an article of furniture out of reach of the children...to continue its hibernation, with a drop of honey beside it for when it woke up again. The chlorophyll-full atmosphere of Ian's room must have made it think it was Spring and the good Irish heather honey restored its strength for flight. I don't know the reason for what it did next...I hate to think of an innocent butterfly having read John Berry's notorious article about wardrobe-jumping...but the message for conscientious housewives is clear. Never put hibernating butterflies on the wardrobes of lettuce-eating lodgers.

ODDENDA

Your editor was kind enough to copy out for me the comments on the last installment of this column but I don't propose to reply to them now. Partly because of my high standards of ethical integrity -- after all they don't get pre-publication peeps at what I'm going to say -- and partly because I don't seem to be able to find them at the moment. However I would like to admit to F.M.Busby that I was, by implication at least, unfair to Heinlein. Most of his fiction between "Gulf" and "Starship Troopers" has been morally faultless from my point of view. Sorry, but I do like a good argument and am inclined to get carried away: besides I suppose I subconsciously feel that I can't expect to convince anyone more than 75%, so that if I want them to get the picture just right I'd better overstate my case by about 30%.

The discussion in the last Wrhn about the Presidential Election reminds me of one point on which I meant to seek enlightenment. Among the various polls we heard about here was the Popcorn Poll, and one night on tv the results of this were given as Kennedy 49%, Nixon 47%. What I want to know is, what about the other 4%? I take it there wasn't a special popcorn bag for anarchists or people who were going to spoil their votes? I can only assume that this 4% were people who picked up the wrong bag by mistake and hurled the contents in the vendor's face with vile abuse.

Installment 30, Warhoon 12, July 1961.

"Tell me," asked your editor the other day, "is The Harp all first draft material?" I laughed lightly, banging my head nonchalantly againt the nearest wall. I

could see myself as I usually am before a Harp deadline, sitting at one o'clock in the morning before a dying fire, kept alive only by an occasional first draft, and still hammering away at the x key on my typer. (I used to use the m key for x-ing out because it was more effective then the x-key, until Evelyn Smith told me my letters looked as if they were interspersed with lascivious humming. Since then it's looked like that to me too, and those are inconvenient ideas to get at one o'clock in the morning.)

But later it occurred to me that some of you non-writers might be interested to know just how I do write this stuff. It might even be of some help to you if you'd like to write for fanzines. After all most of the advice you see about writing is from writers, and all they're really telling you is how to use a gift you haven't got. What you really want is a fellow non-writer to tell you how to write. Well, I'm a non-writer. I don't get brilliant ideas and dash to my typer in a fury of inspiration. I don't find complete articles and stories writing themselves in my head. If it wasn't for fandom I dare say I wouldn't have written a line since I left school. But, what with publishing a fanzine and making rash promises to other faneds, I find myself periodically driven to try and write something, and this is how I go about it.

To sit before a blank sheet of paper with nothing to say is an experience so dreadful that writers will do anything to postpone it -- change the typer ribbon, clear the desk, tidy the room, fight with their family, go and get drunk, even commit suicide -- anything to evade that terrible endless moment of truth. The trouble, I think, is that they are so appalled at the gap between what they want to produce and the blankness of the paper and of their mind that their subconscious has stalled. So start it off again in low gear by telling it you're not really trying to write just now, you're just making a few notes. Then type out something, anything. Here's where it's a help to have a notebook in which you've jotted down throughout the day anything interesting you've seen or thought of or remembered. It doesn't matter that you can't see any potentialities in it at this stage -- I never do, and usually I finish by trying to cut it down to four pages -- the point is you're breaking the hypnotic spell of that blank paper and releasing your subconscious from its inhibitions. Now let your association centres loose on what you've written. What do you associate with it, what does it remind you of? A context, a similarity, a contrast? Write them down. Each one in turn should remind you of something else and if your association centres are properly free the proliferations are infinite. Don't worry if everything you thought of still seems banal. You're still not writing yet, you are merely freeing your subconscious: some writers can do it all in their head, but if you're a non-writer like me you may need the mechanical process of typing to occupy the front of your mind while your subconconscious makes its associations. I use the typer something like a dowser uses his twig, to roam over the surface of words looking for a lode.

But it's no use roaming about unless you know what you're looking for. Your subconscious will create but your conscious mind must select, and both are equally important. You must have a clear idea of the way the piece you're trying to write should be constructed.

Now there are fundamentally two types of fanzine non-fiction, the article and the essay. Articles include reviews, conreports, attacks, defences, analysis, surveys, histories, reminiscences, and generally everything where you know pretty well what you want to say. This makes them pretty easy from the constructional point of view (though they and fan-fiction present their own problems which I'll talk about next time if you're interested) because all you have to do is say it as clearly and as brightly as you can. Their form is dictated by the subject matter. But an essay, in which you don't know where you're going, must have form imposed on it by you. It must seem complete, not mere aimless maundering. Paradoxically,

the imposition of form on an essay makes it easier to write, not more difficult. One reason is that anything done within a strict artistic discipline has added impact, which is why a thought that sounds trite in prose can seem profound in poetry. Another reason is that the canalisation of your subconscious thought-flow, by the search by your conscious for form, can divert it into channels it might not have found by itself.

The ideal construction for an essay is sonata form. That is where you have two themes, apparently contradictory or at least unrelated, and you finish by combining them. Hegelians and dialectical materialists say that this process -- thesis, antithesis and synthesis -- is the essential nature of all phenomena and there's no doubt it is somehow pleasing to the human mind, even if it's really just a symbolism of sex. An essay in this form, even if entirely frivolous, gives your reader the subconscious feeling that he has witnessed something constructive. Unfortunately true sonata form is not always possible, but you can often counterfeit it so plausibly that your reader won't notice the difference unless he subjects it to careful semantic analysis...and you will have other readers than Redd Boggs. The trick is just to lead back to your opening statement. The development of your opening statement into something else takes the place of the antithesis, and then its conversion in turn into something reminiscent of the opening theme gives your ending the semblance of a synthesis. Your reader, having been led unexpectedly back to the opening theme which he had almost forgotten has that sense of recognition of the similar within the dissimilar and of the dissimilar within the similar which it has been said is the essential nature of all aesthetic enjoyment.

But all this must seem a bit up in the air, so let's take a concrete example, the piece in the last Harp about the automatic changer. Not because it was anything much as an essay, but because it's the one thing of mine I can be sure you've read recently. In one way this is a pretty good example of what I was saying at the beginning because at that time I was absolutely stuck for something to write about. My notebook had been scraped clean for Hyphen baquotes and I was forced to my last resort, writing a letter to somebody congenial and trying to think of something interesting to tell them. This time it was Noreen Shaw, and in the letter I was answering she'd mentioned about her father having come from Westport, and I was reminded of the automatic changer in the shop window. It seemed reasonably interesting but it wouldn't stand by itself even in a column (which is usually just a collection of short essays.) A context perhaps. But I had already written up the only other incident worth recording of that holiday, Madeleine's attempts to throw away a pair of shoes, in an Oopsla Harp. Maybe I could follow up the gramophone record angle, with the peculiar histories of other records in my collection, but then the piece as it stood opened with that Tchaikovsky record and closed with it. It seemed complete as it was, so I thought I'd better look for something else, something similar perhaps. I thought of other obsolete electronic equipment and remembered the old 1928 radio I have with the brass tuning condensers. Good, fans are inclined to be nostalgic about radio, as witness Jim Harmon's articles about "I Love A Mystery", and lots of them are interested in electronics. But there should be a more logical-sounding connection. What had both those items in common besides age? Answer, craftsmanship, so I described the old radio from that angle, led on to general remarks about the gradual decay of 19th Century craftsmanship, instancing the time machine in the film, and thence to the Westport record changer. So far so good: I already had humour, nostalgia and a touch of seriousness, a pretty good basis for an essay as Bob Shaw's work shows, though from the constructional point of view it was a bit jerry-built. Reading the bridge paragraph again, the time machine reference struck me. Fans are interested in time machines as well as electronics and old radios: wouldn't it be wonderful if you could get old programmes on old radios, as you can get old car performances on vintage cars. So I rewrote what I had again adding in that bit, mentioning old radio programmes both British and American. That fitted in nicely with the nostalgic mood of both the holiday reminiscences and the decay of craftsmanship, and tied up the first two paragraphs solidly. Having sufficiently firmly established the theme

I could then "be reminded of" the Westport changer and bring it in apparently spontaneously. (I'm sorry to have to tell you that essayists are seldom really reminded of things when they say they are any more than funny things happen to comedians on their way to the theatre.) While I was at it I rewrote the Westport episode, adding a little local colour and slightly pointing up the nostalgia, expanding the bit about the changer itself which could now stand it since it fitted in with a general theme, and tying it in more closely with the Victorian craftsmanship angle by comparing it to old clocks and toys. That reminded me of the old railway station slot machines that showed public executions and things which had fascinated my children, so I threw those in too figuring they might interest American readers. I now had seven paragraphs but they were still incomplete so I left them for the night. Whenever I'm lazy like that I tell myself I'm just turning the problem over to my subsconscious, and maybe I am, but next night I could still see no solution. So I did what I always do in such a plight, typed the whole thing out over again. One thing that was obvious was that the opening was very pedestrian, nothing to catch the reader's attention. I mentally reviewed other old electronic gear I'd come across and selected the gas radio because it was inherently the most bizarre and might seem even more so to American readers, and because it was the most striking example on the theme of technological obsolescence and yet was closer to the old radio angle than to the craftsmanship theme introduced later, so that the development from it would appear a progression. To establish a personal relationship with the reader right away I put the first sentence in the form of a question; "Would anyone like to buy a gas-operated radio?" Then immediately x-ed it out and substituted; "Er...would you like to buy a gas-operated radio?" to make it more informal and because a writer has only one reader, you. Then through the rest of the thing as before, polishing as I went.

By the time I'd got Madeleine and I out of Westport again it was obvious that the end must be near, because eight paragraphs is quite enough for one item in a column, so I read it through again looking for something I could hark back to to finish it all off. The best theme to re-introduce was the very beginning, which must obviously now become "Would you like to buy an old automatic changer?" But why would you? What did an old automatic changer do that a modern one didn't? Answer: it damaged records and horrified discophiles. What profit could there be in that?

There was no answer, so I got out the carbon paper and started typing the item in final form for sending to Dick. No, I hadn't given up...I'd never really send away an article while I still felt there was something to be done to improve it... it's just that I find that if you write drafts too much you find yourself writing them as drafts, a sort of masturbation which can lead to mental impotence. Whereas the stimulation of actually writing for publication, the renewed sense of being in actual contact with the reader, stimulates the subconscious again. Having got a beginning and a middle which seemed to belong together, I felt that my subconscious would be able to supply the ending now that it knew the sort of thing we were looking for.

I found it in the sixth paragraph, in the bit about the old slot machines. Public executions, that was it. That automatic changer was publicly executing records. People would pay to see public executions, at least my children would, and discophiles might find the same morbid fascination in the public execution of records. So I added in a sentence about my children running to me for pennies to watch the old slot machines, to prepare the ground for this comparison later. Then in a new and final paragraph I reintroduced Ian McAulay representing conveniently both the discophiles and the younger generation (cf. my children), made the suggestion about the New York hi-fi shop, and finished off with a sentence in which I repeated in the new context some of the phrasing from the first paragraph. In fact if you're interested enough to check you'll find I led back, unexpectedly but more

or less logically, to no less than seven earlier references. Like a series of closing parentheses. It isn't just chance that it is sometimes possible to arrange an article in such neatly concentric circles: if your development has been soundly and progressively constructed, your re-introduction of an opening theme tends to involve a sort of recapitulation in reverse of that development: so that last paragraph could be, as it were, composed on stencil.

But no, Dick, the Harp is not all first draft material.

Installment 31, Warhoon 13, October 1961.

BY THE WAY

One day many years ago I was cycling along a mountain road in County Donegal when I passed some road-menders drinking tea out of battered billy-cans. Nothing unusual about that of course: the roads in the West of Ireland are festooned with road-menders drinking tea out of battered billycans. This picturesque addition to the Irish landscape is, I suspect, provided by the Irish Tourist Board. Hidden somewhere in the Great Bog of Allen is a clothing factory turning out their uniform of greasy brown cloth and string, and alittle steel mill fabricating billycans battered into the traditional shape. There must also be a training college where they are inducted into the mysteries of their craft, one that is vital to the tourist industry.

Ireland is a very small country, the Tourist Board have realized and they have to spin it out. Americans trying to "do" the entire West Coast in a fast car between lunch and dinner must be slowed down somehow, and what better way than one which entails their spending several nights in an hotel while a new spring is flown out from Detroit? Hence the Irish road, and the Irish roadmender. His craft consists in preserving the salient features of the typical West of Ireland road, while simultaneously conveying the impression that he is levelling them out. His solution is beautiful in its simplicity: he just reverses them. Where there were potholes he erects little mountains of sharp flints, where the road had sunk he builds a plateau, and the rest he leaves. Yesterdays potholes have become bumps, and there are new potholes where there used to be road. Then he sits by the side of the road ostensibly drinking tea and chipping road metal (when you were a child did you think that road metal was really metal and kept hoping to come across a gleaming alumninum highway?) but really checking the speed of traffic to make sure nothing can safely go faster than 20mph. For all I know those queerly deformed billycans are really portable radar speedmeters, but I doubt it because road-menders as a class are crude uncultured men.

Or at least so I thought until that day in Donegal I was telling you about. I had cycled past these road-menders, paying them no attention except for the ritual greeting of "Fine day". (Actually it was cold, damp and overcast, but as it wasn't actually raining at that very moment it was what we call a fine day. If it is pouring too hard to be ignored the proper greeting is "Soft day". As you can see there is no such thing in Ireland as bad weather. That little old Tourist Board is really in there pitching.) "Fine day," corroborated the road-menders, waving their clay pipes. Then, as I cycled on, I heard them resume their conversation. "Oh aye," said one of them, "but that was after the War of the Austrian Succession."

I nearly fell off my bike. If I hadn't been going downhill I'd have turned and gone back. I mean, very few people you meet know much about the War of the Austrian Succession, and even those who might casually mention it to you when passing the time of day in the street don't date things from it. Even I, who am as cultured as the next man, providing the next man is an ignorant clod, only know anything about it because I have a dirty mind. I know it was started by the Empress Maria Trerese, who had trouble with her sex life and, embittered, made fornication a capital offence,

which wasn't a very popular law because young couples persisted in losing their heads over one another, until eventually the Court Physician gave the Empress's Consort some advice which I could not possibly quote here and she revoked the law and everyone lived happily ever after.

And that, after twelve years of expensive education, is all I know about the War of the Austrian Succession. Yet here were these rude road-menders in the wilds of West Ireland...I ask you. But after many years pondering the problem I think I have the solution. I think those roadmenders were just pulling my leg. I think they got bored with years of sitting by the side of the road chipping flints and drinking tea and they invented this new way of startling travelers, a sort of mental pothole. I believe that through the years they have thought up a whole collection of mysterious remarks like this which they throw out within earshot of passers-by, and if the victim doesn't run into the ditch at least they'll know he'll spend the rest of his life trying to puzzle out the significance of what he overheard.

As I said, that day in Donegal was a long time ago, nearly 25 years, and those were old road-menders who had been plying their craft since the Nineteenth Century. So I would like to bring to Richard Eney's attention a necessary erratum to the next edition of the Fancyclopedia, as follows:

"Interlineation: Invented by Irish road-menders, circa 1890..."

THESE BEATNIKS!

"I see this process working with my sister who washed the kitchen floor daily with the first child..." --Habbakuk #6.

THE NAKED AND THE BED

Kenneth Tynan, reviewing the play "Lady Chatterley" which has recently opened In London, was caustic about the scene where the heroine is seen in bed with the game-keeper. "It was ruined for,me," he complained, "when I perceived that Connie, so far from being naked beneath the sheets, was wearing a flesh-tinted corselet of bullet-proof impregnability." Within a few days the theatre management had called a press conference. The critic was right, they confessed humbly, the scene was not in the spirit of D.H. Lawrence. They had been wrong, terribly terribly wrong. But it was not too late to make amends. The leading lady, they announced proudly, a personable young creature called Jeanne Moody, had nobly volunteered to play the scene without any clothing at all. The leading man, they went on recklessly, would be naked too...though for some reason they didn't seem to think this was so great a sacrifice on his part. Photographs of the scene as published in the less reputable newspapers appeared to bare out their claims. A Member of Parliment then wrote to the Home Secretary suggesting that the theatre be prosecuted under the Vagrancy Act, 1824: not because of any indelicacy on their part, but because by inviting the press they had overstepped their rights as a club theatre. Meanwhile, in response to journalists representing the keen interest of the great British public in questions of artistic integrity, the theatre management made it clear that there was a sheet between the couple at all times: it also appeared that for some reason the leading man was now wearing "a pair of very small knickers."

So D.H. Lawrence has stopped turning in his grave, the theatre and the MP are delighted with the publicity, and Kenneth Tynan must be impressed by the power of his criticism. So as a matter of fact was I.It occurs to me to mention that at the last Chicago Convention I attended I was disappointed in the fancy dress worn by young ladies like Ginny Saari and Bjo Wells. I did not feel they were in accord with the free-ranging spirit of science fiction. It is not going too far to say that the last Chicon dancy-dress ball was ruined for me...

THICKENING PLOTS*

"All right," said Bob Shaw, "we'll take the most basic situation we can think of and develop it."

"Boy meets girl?" suggested James White.

"No," said Bob, "it's been done. Take a man sitting on a rock. That's basic."

While our professional authors trained the batteries of their massive intellects on this little target, watching for a plot to scurry out from behind it, my frivolous fannish mind was examining it for puns. There wasn't much to go on. Types of rock... pleistecene, basalt, no...gneiss, purely visual...Igneous? Igneous is a louse? Hmm, it was a lousy pun so the sooner I got rid of it the better. If you suppress them they sort of fester at the back of your mind. I started to push the conversation round. "Suppose it isn't really a rock at all," I suggested, "but some sort of big hibernating creature, a chrysalis or egg?" "Boy meets rock!" exclaimed James, and before I could head them on to the concept of giant lice he had postulated this planet where the inhabitants turned periodically into rocks. The man was actually sitting on his girl friend waiting for the next spaceship. He wrote it up and sold it to Nebula.

Which just goes to show that one of the ways of thinking up plots is to examine some situation, that any situation will do, and that you never know what you'll end up with. Another example is my "The Spanish Main" in the last Void. But before I go any further I'd better say I'm not presuming to tell anyone how to write fiction... that would indeed be brash from someone whose professional earnings from the sale of fiction have so far amounted to approximately $5.00 (though mind you I have a 100% record of professional acceptances)... just how I try to do it. It's the sort of thing that interests me and I only hope it interests you. I don't know what the reaction to the last installment of this column was like and I would have held this bit over to see only for the fact that "The Spanish Main" was published recently. It may have been no great example of the results of the creative process, but it was a good example of how the technique of free association channeled by logic can produce a reasonably well constructed story.

It started with a copy of SFTimes in which I had ringed an item in pencil. Weeks later I dug it out of the tray where I throw such things until I have to write something, and looked at it again. It was a brief news item to the effect that Fantastic Universe had been sold at an auction and that the new owner had no plans for publication. I'd never heard of a promag being auctioned before, but even more peculiar, now I came to think of it, was why anyone would buy one and not want to do anything with it. Maybe he bought it by mistake? No, not the old gag of someone nodding his head at the wrong time, but suppose he bought it along with some other items, a job lot? OK, what other items then?

Now the office where I work is some five miles outside the city and when anyone is going down town to buy something at lunchtime they ask the other people in the room if they want anything. The ritual reply is, "Yes, thanks. Two bags of cement and a sheet of corrugated iron." The concept of carrying this epitome of awkwardness through the rush hour is a satirical comment on the lack of consideration from which they themselves may have suffered in the past. All right, we'll try that. Someone

(Continued on page 322)

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*(rb: This piece is an explication of "The Spanish Main", a story by Willis which appeared in the June, 1961, issue of Void. In order that the item have full value I've included the story as an appendix on the next few pages.)

"Fantastic Universe was sold at a recent US Tax Auction... the new owner has no immediate plans for publication." --SF Times #352.

THE SPANISH MAIN

"GOING, GOING, GONE," said the auctioneer, hiting his desk a perfunctory blow with his gavel. "Sold to the gentleman at the back. Now, Lot 378, six dozen pairs of Zsa Zsa Gabor's panties, unused..."

Harry Kreutz made his way through the fringes of the crowd to the office. "Lot 377," he said.

"Ah, yes," said the clerk, "that's the miscellaneous lot just sold. Let me see." He ran his pencil down a list. "Here we are," he said, "one zinc bath, two bags of cement, 2000 balloons, 80 sheets of corrugated iron, one fantastic universe. $17.50, including commission. Sign here. Do you want them wrapped?"

"No thanks," said Harry, "I have a car. I only wanted the bath, but I suppose I have to take the lot. What was that last item again? I didn't see anything else."

The clerk consulted his list again. "It's only a science fiction magazine. Look in the bath under the cement."

Eventually Harry arrived at his home in Long Island, with the cement propped up among the balloons in the back seat, the corrugated iron strapped to the roof, the zinc bath wedged in the trunk and a parking ticket tucked under the windshield wiper. His wife Edna rushed out to help him unload.

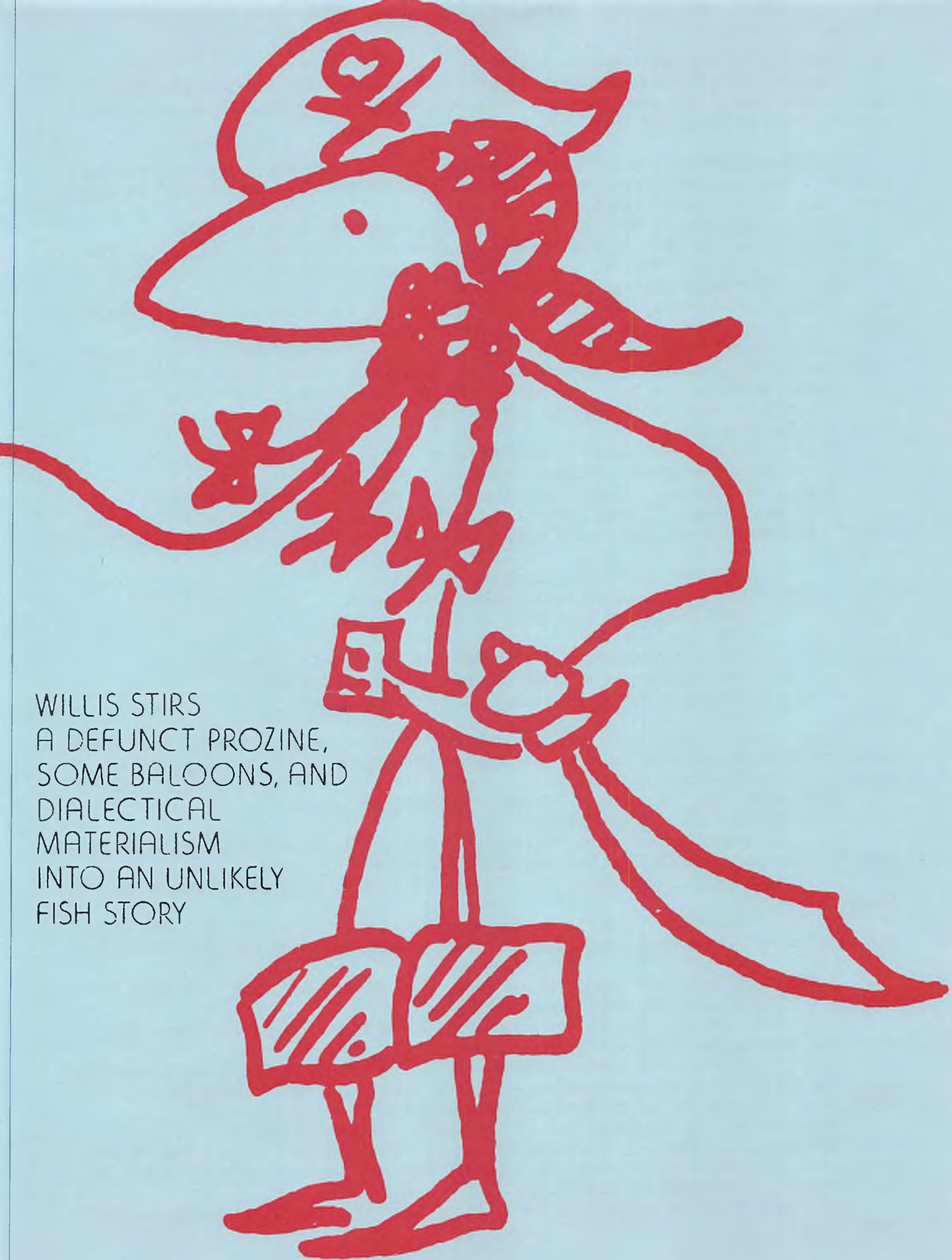
"It's a fine bath, Harry," she said, "and I'm sure Horace will love it. But what's all this other stuff?"

"I had to take it too," said Harry. "It was all in the one lot. But maybe it'll come in useful." They laid the bags of cement and the balloons along the side of the house, with the corrugated iron over them to keep the rain off, and dragged the bath round to the back yard. There Edna swept the loose cement into the garbage can, and Harry filled the bath with water and brought out the goldfish bowl and emptied the contents gently in.

Harry and Edna watched tensely as the goldfish twitched to and fro, bemused by the sudden expansion of the universe. Then it straightened out and with a long graceful undulation of its tail, darted towards the end of the bath. It circumnavigated it in a graceful curve under the faucets and sped back along the long straight. Little bubbles danced in its wake.

Edna sighed happily. "See, he's better already," she said. "The psychiatrist was right. Look at the colour coming back into his scales."

"So that's what he meant by a gilt complex," said Harry. "Well, it sure looks like he knew what he was talking about. It was just that I never heard



WILLIS STIRS
A DEFUNCT PROZINE,
SOME BALOONS, AND
DIALECTICAL
MATERIALISM
INTO AN UNLIKELY
FISH STORY

of a goldfish with claustrophobia before."

"Horace isn't an ordinary fish," said Edna proudly. "He's sensitive. Besides this is New York. But look at the little fellow now." They watched Horace start on another world cruise, and then went in to supper.

ON THE MORNING of the day after next, Harry came down for breakfast, stealing a look at the goldfish through the landing window on the way. "Any mail?" he asked cheerfully as he entered the kitchen.

Edna pointed mutely to a sack propped up against the ironing board.

Harry undid the Post Office seal and pulled out a handful of letters. "They're not for us," he said, "they're all addressed to The Publishers, Fantastic Universe."

What's Fantastic Universe?" asked Edna.

"Dunno," said Harry. "Wait a minute, though. It's a science fiction magazine. There was a copy in the bath. Has the garbage been collected yet?"

He rushed out into the back yard and poked around in the garbage can, eventually unearthing a dirty brown envelope from among the tomato skins. Scraping off the tomato-flavoured concrete, he carried it into the kitchen, and opened it.

"There's no magazine here," he said, "just a lot of papers." He read through them, and began paling.

"What's the matter?" asked Edna anxiously.

"We've bought a science fiction magazine," said Harry.

"That's what you said the first time," said Edna. "So what?"

"No," said Harry. "I mean we've bought the magazine itself, the whole thing. Look." He handed over a sheet of paper. It was headed "List of Assets," and it read:

500,000 copies of Fantastic Universe.
One bundle of rejection slips, unopened.
9900 copies of Fantastic Universe Omnibus.
100 fanzines.
843 photographs of flying saucers and little green men.
One clay image of Isaac Asimov impaled by a bolt.
75¢ in uncancelled stamps torn off envelopes.

Harry didn't hear any comments Edna had to offer on this, for at that moment there was a loud knock on the door. A burly truckdriver stood on the doorstep, holding out a clip-board.

"Sign here, Mac," he said. "Where d'you want the stuff?"

"What stuff?" asked Harry weakly.

The truckdriver stood aside, revealing a ten ton truck and trailer, both laden with brown paper parcels labelled Fantastic Universe.

"Oh," said Harry helplessly. "Oh. In the back yard, I guess. There's no room in the house."

Two hours later his little home was walled in by great stacks of brown paper parcels, except for a small clearing round the garbage can and the goldfish bath.

"I CAN'T STAND IT any more," cried Edna, when Harry came home from work the next day. "I feel just the way Horace felt."

Harry felt his way through the unnatural darkness of the living room. "Why don't you switch the light on?"

"At five o'clock on a summer afternoon?" wept Edna. "Besides I can't stand to see those great walls of brown paper -- I keep thinking they're going to fall on me. I must be going out of my mind...they seem to be closing in on me!"

"We could go and see the psychiatrist again," suggested Harry.

"And buy me a zinc bath?"sneered Edna. "I told you, he's a fish specialist; he doesn't know anything about human beings. Besides, what we want is to get rid of the stuff, blow it up or something."

"The only thing we could blow up would be the balloons," said Harry ruefully. "Hey, there's an idea. Wait."

He grabbed the old goldfish bowl and went outside. Through the kitchen door Edna watched him scoop out Horace carefully and empty the bags of concrete into the bath. Then he cut out a large square of corrugated iron with a hacksaw, put one of the brown paper parcels on it, rolled up the corrugated iron into a cylinder, tied it with string, and rammed wet cement into the ends. This done, he leapt into the car and tore off down the street, returning a few minutes later with a cylinder of compressed gas. He filled one of the balloons and tied it to the string. The bundle rose slowly into the air and began to drift over the roof of the house.

"There," said Harry. "That takes care of it."

"I'm proud of you," said Edna. "Only suppose it falls? What will the police say?"

"Oh," said Harry. "I hadn't thought of that!" He ran upstairs and came down with his son's airgun. On the front porch he took careful aim as the balloon came drifting overhead. His first shot got it. From a height of fifty feet the corrugated iron cylinder plunged to the sidewalk. The string broke, there was an earsplitting twang as the corrugated iron straightened out, and copies of Fantastic Universe were sprayed over a radius of several hundred yards.

"Hm," said Harry. "You're right, it is dangerous. But maybe the wind will carry them out to sea." He wet a finger and held it up. "Yes," he said, "it's blowing from the south west. Once they get past the shore there's no land until Greenland."

"I suppose it's all right," said Edna doubtfully, "but if one of them did happen to get blown into some foreign country, it might cause an international incident."

"It would still be all right," said Harry confidently. "Didn't you notice those balloons were all marked VOTE FOR NIXON? If anything happens Ike will get the blame again and Jack can apologize for him."

Harry and Edna worked all evening and night making up the parcels and blowing up the balloons, and by dawn the yard was cleared. All the corrugated iron, magazines, books, fanzines, photographs, ballons and cement were drifting out into the North Atlantic. Happily, they restored Horace to his bath.

DURING THE NEXT TWO MONTHS the incident faded from their minds, and what with the improvement in Horace's mental health and the recent reductions in taxes, they settled into a life of quiet contentment. Then one evening there was a knock on the door and when Harry opened it he found a small group of men looking at him curiously, all prosperously but conservatively dressed.

"Good evening," said the youngest one, "my name is Dean Rusk, and this is the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. We've come to present you with the Congressional Medal of Honor."

"On condition," added one of the others, "that you don't tell anyone what it's for."

"That's easy," said Harry, dazed, "because I don't even know, myself."

"Well, it was those balloons of yours," said Rusk. "The FBI traced them to you. Most of them drifted right over the Arctic Circle into Russia, where they were shot down by small boys with slingshots. Within a month nearly everyone in Russia had read the stuff you sent with them, passing it from hand to hand. You know they teach English in Russian schools."

"I still don't understand," said Harry helplessly.

"That stuff was dynamite," said Rusk. "They'd never been exposed to anything like it in forty years of dialectical materialism. They've no advertisements or sensational newspapers, so they had no resistance and they fell for it like a ton of bricks. They've been importing hundreds of tons of old science fiction magazines ever since. Half of them have joined the Rosicrucians or the N3F and the rest are studying dianetics or building psionic machines. The entire Politburo is on the FAPA waiting list. Krushchev is coming to the Seattle Convention for a summit talk with Jack Speer. They've dismantled all their missile bases in the Urals, and their submarines are all out looking for Atlantis. The cold war is over!"

The Chairman pinned a medal on Harry's chest while he was still struggling for

breath. "A grateful country would like to accord you some more tangible award," he said. "Is there anything you would like?"

Harry thought for a while. "Well," he finally said, "we're quite happy as we are, but maybe you could do something for Horace. Really, it's all due to him."

"Horace?" asked the Chairman.

"Our goldfish," explained Harry. "We got him a new bath, but he still doesn't seem quite right. I think it must be the chlorine in the water."

The Chairman had a whispered consultation with the Senator from Texas. "We'll have some better water piped in," he promised.

And that's how there happens to be a gold fish that lives in New York but swims all day in the warm clear waters of the Caribbean.

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THE HARP - Continued from page 317: has bought two bags of cement, a sheet of corrugated iron and Fantastic Universe, what now? Well why doesn't he just put Fantastic Universe back into the auction if he doesn't want it? Maybe he doesn't know he's bought it. Let's have him buy something else in which Fantastic Universe might have been concealed, some sort of receptacle. I visualized the bags of cement and the corrugated iron. I saw them amid the other junk of a builder's yard, like old baths. OK, let's have the purchaser buy an old bath too.

Now to think of a reason for him buying this lot. Nobody would go to an auction to buy cement and corrugated iron: the bath seemed more plausible. OK, so he wanted a cheap bath. To keep fish in perhaps. Gold fish. Gold. Horace Gold. Horace Gold's well know agoraphobia. The opposite, claustrophobia, A goldfish with claustrophobia, that was a nice idea, and obviously the poor creature would need a good big bath to swim in. But how would its owners know it had claustrophobia? Who could tell them but a psychiatrist. They had taken it to a specialist in neurotic goldfish, a fish psychiatrist. So now I had my characters. Not rich people, or they would have bought a swimming pool, yet they took their pet to an expensive psychiatrist. I saw them as a quiet middle-aged couple whose uneventful lives centered round their pet goldfish.

So now I had characters and a promising situation, a pair of goldfish lovers who have bought a science fiction magazine and don't know it. But I didn't like that cement and corrugated iron. I would have to either take them out again (though I needed something to cover up Fantastic Universe in the bath) or work them into the plot. I couldn't just leave them lying there like Dumas's umbrella. (Dumas's son wrote a play and his father pointed out he had ruined the whole thing by having a character come in in the first act with an umbrella and lean it in a corner. For the rest of the play, he pointed out, the audience were watching that umbrella suspiciously.)

It would be nice, I thought, if I could use the cement and corrugated iron to resolve the conflict between the goldfish and Fantastic Universe. Sort of economical and well rounded -- thesis, antithesis and synthesis again. But all I could think of was that they might use the building materials to make newsstands to sell Fantastic Universe from and I couldn't see any profit for them in that. I decided to continue the third draft as it was going, get my characters deeper into trouble, and see whether my benevolent instincts could figure a way to get them out of it. (I like happy endings because I always identify.) What trouble would they get into? Well since magazines don't have their own printing presses all they would really buy would be a lot of back issues, and the only trouble with them would be their sheer bulk. I tried exaggerating that to make the problem clearer. I had so many back issues delivered that the house was surrounded with them. I liked this because it repeated the claustrophobia motif and having brought this out and reported the

dialogue of my characters as I imagined it under the strain, I saw them more clearly. These simple people wouldn't want to make money selling those old copies of Fantastic Universe, they'd just want to get rid of them and go back to their quiet contented lives with their goldfish.

Being mildly eccentric they might plausibly do it in some fantastic way. It would be nice too if they got some unexpected good out of it. Where could they get rid of old copies of Fantastic Universe where they might be unexpectedly appreciated? Somewhere the magazine was not obtainable. Behind the iron curtain. But it would cost them money to mail it or ship it. How else were books got into Russia? Propaganda balloons. I started the fourth draft, adding 2000 VOTE FOR NIXON balloons to the auction lot, and took it to the end of the cold war. But it still didn't seem complete. The goldfish wasn't in the synthesis. The plot had really started with him, it should go back to him. I thought about my characters again. I'd wanted something nice to happen to them but I saw now they wouldn't want anything for themselves, they'd want it for their goldfish: so it was a question of making the goldfish happy. Well, what would he want: he had a bath. Water, of course: not chlorinated New York water, but warm fresh water from his native Caribbean flowing through the taps in the old bath which had started the story. The title then supplied itself from a pun I'd made months before in a different connection. So all I had to do now was write out the final version, polishing here and there, clearing up the political angle and introducing a Senator from Texas for the pipeline, and adding faucets to the bath.

Easy, wasn't it. But it didn't seem that way when I started. If you've got the kind of mind I have you've just got to start writing in the faith that something will occur to you, and help it by continually asking yourself questions. If you'd like to try it yourself here's another item from that tray of mine, a copy of the Seacon Progress Report mentioning that closed circuit television is installed in all the hotel rooms. Suppose some mundane hotel guest who doesn't know what's going on turns on the tv to watch his favourite program?

Installment 32, Warhoon 14, January 1962.

THE STRANGER BEING ON THE SHIP MADE GREAT WONDERING OF ALL THINGS

I'm glad that Castillo was amused by something in my artless little column, even if it were a remark with so few obvious boffos as that "Hegelians and dialectical materialists say this process -- thesis, antithesis and synthesis -- is the essential nature of all phenomena and there's no doubt that it is somehow pleasing to the human mind, even if it's just a symbolism of sex." I would hasten to assure him though that my use of the word "just" was not careless, as he suggests, but cautious. I intended no disrespect to Sex, which has made great progress since Burbee invented it in 1926, and which I firmly believe is here to stay. There are, however, more basic phenomena. And as I understand it, the Hegel/Marx theory is supposed to apply to all phenomena, not just those nearest and dearest to Art Castillo.

The question I was touching on was whether particular examples of synthesis are pleasing to us because we subconsciously recognize this underlying unity, or just because we associate them with the pleasure of sex. The same point arises in aesthetics: whether certain curves and forms are pleasing because they enshrine mathematical relationships, or just because they remind one of a woman's body. Possibly Art and the logical positivists would say the question is meaningless, because our criteria for female beauty are based on functional efficiency and anything which is functionally efficient must be mathematically correct, but I would suggest that in one way the question could be very important indeed. What we are discussing is really not whether one particular theory of philosophy is correct or not, but the degree of objectivity of which the human mind is capable.

To tear ourselves away from women, we generally regard other life forms on this planet (tigers, birds etc) as beautiful, presumably because we recognize their functional efficiency. But there are other forms just as functionally efficient but which some of us dislike (spiders, snakes, insects) because they have unpleasant emotional associations. The question arises, what might our reaction be to alien life forms? Any life form that makes it this far must be functionlly efficient and therefore beautiful in itself, but if it happens to resemble a Terran life form we dislike, will we be capable of overcoming our prejudice enough to appreciate that beauty?

To some extent this is a question which sf fans have had to face in advance of the rest of the world, because even authors of the class of Heinlein have tended to make their aliens either furry, cute and friendly, or slimy, insectile and hostile. It would be interesting if they would try us with aliens which are slimy and friendly. And it would be even more interesting if they were to admit that whether they are friendly or not depends as much on us as on them. After all, we are aliens too. Are we friendly?

This question reminds me of the old and simple but very profound story of the woman who came to live in a strange town and asked the woman next door what the neighbours were like. The answer, when you come to think of it, was the only possible one. "What were they like where you came from?"

Man is not friendly or hostile in vacua. The doctrines of original sin and of the noble savage are both rubbish. Mankind is capable of the ultimate in both love and hate, good and evil, depending entirely on the circumstances. Why should it be assumed that the attitudes of aliens are any more pre-set? (To by-pass possible objections here, perhaps I'd better say I'm discounting antlike communities and psychotic societies like Nazi Germany, as being so incapable of progress or inherently unstable as to be unlikely to develop interstellar flight.) Sf authors have generally assumed that aliens are either friendly, in which case we co-operate; or hostile, in which case we fight. But it seems to me that there are two lots of aliens to be considered and that our emotional attitude is just as important as theirs.

Well, are Terrans friendly? Or, as Lowndes put it in his analysis last issue of the themes of "Starship Troopers" and "The Star Dwellers": "What assumptions ought to be made a priori about encounters with other intelligent life forms, and what attitudes and behavior patterns necessarily follow?" Well, of course it is unfortunately impossible to say whether Heinlein or Blish is right without experimental evidence. We would need a documentary record of Man's first encounter with a species as essentially warlike as Heinlein says Man is, and no such records exist.

Or do they? There was one previous occasion when Man discovered a New World full of strange creatures, and the first contact with these aliens is fully reported in Hakluyt's "Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the English Nations (London, 1589)". This contains eye witness accounts of the first encounters between Eskimoes and Elizabethan Englishmen, who were not all that far apart in civilization (despite the desperate hardship of their lives the Eskimoes had a high degree of social organization, a knowledge of their own history and acquaintance with reading and writing) but whose ways of life were as alien to one another as is possible for two races on the same planet.

On the 11th of August, 1576, Captain Marin Frobisher finally forced his one remaining ship through storm and pack ice, and anchored in what is now known as Frobisher Bay, at the South East end of Baffin Island. Shortly there appeared several boats full of natives, making offers of friendship by signs. One of them came on board, while one of the Englishmen went with the Eskimoes as a pledge.

Gifts were exchanged. The two hostages returned safely without incident.

So far so good, one would have thought, but Frobisher apparently had a certain kind of attitude and behaviour pattern. "Perceiving these strange people to be of countenance and conversation proceeding from a nature given to fiereness and rapine" he stood off to prepare his ship for defence, and then anchored again at the other side of the bay. There they took on another hostage and Frobisher himself went ashore. He "was led into their houses and there saw their manner of food and life, which is very strange and beastly."

Frobisher returned to his ship and sent the hostage home, but presently another alien came aboard voluntarily and they agreed with him by signs that he would lead them through the straits in his kayak. Frobisher sent him ashore in the ship's boat to get it. The crisis was approaching.

The boat on which the new pilot was being sent ashore was manned by a crew of five and Frobisher gave them strict instructions that they were not to go out of sight lest they be set upon. But having set down the pilot these five men inexplicably disobeyed their orders, and rowed on round the headland. They were never seen again and what happened to them was to remain a mystery for nearly 300 years.

But it was no mystery to Frobisher. Obviously, his men had been enticed away and captured. He "caused his trumpet to sound and shot a piece of ordnance over the houses." Nothing happened, except that "he heard the people of the land laugh". This produced a fine flowering of military logic. "He swore not to make peace with them but rather to depart to other places, where to try and find some other people of that land to whom these late doings were unknown, and of them to take some prisoners in reprisal for his own men." My underlinings.

Three days later he saw a number of Eskimo boats and got ready to fire his cannon at one of the larger ones, containing some twenty or thirty men, hoping to capture some of the survivors. But seeing what he was up to, the Eskimoes stayed out of range: only one kayak came near, the man in it making signs of friendship. Frobisher returned them and proffered gifts, and when the lone Eskimo ventured near enough to accept a little bell, Frobisher grabbed his hand and pulled him onto the deck, kayak and all. He tried to explain to his captive by signs that he wanted his five men back but the Eskimo didn't seem to understand and all his companions had fled wailing in grief, so Frobisher set sail for England, taking the lone alien home as a souvenir. The "strange man and his boat...was a great wonder unto the whole city and to the rest of the realm that heard of it."

It is eerily poignant to think of the life of this lone Eskimo in Elizabethan London, and we can only hope that the disease which presumably brought it to an end was less painful than homesickness. All we know is that he died within a year, before Frobisher's next voyage.

Yes, next summer Frobisher was back in the Arctic looking for gold, the North-west Passage to the Pacific and his five missing sailors, in that order of importance. On 19th July, 1577, the English landed again and exchanged gifts with a group of Eskimoes, but now neither side would trust the other enough to exchange hostages. Frobisher and his mate tried to capture one by force, but they slipped on the ice and had to run for it, Frobisher in a most undignified fashion, having been "hurt in the buttocks by an arrow." Soldiers from the boats then intervened and captured an Eskimo.

About ten days later the English landed again to look at a couple of Eskimo villages from which the inhabitants had fled. They had brought their captive with

them and noticed when they were leaving that he had left something odd on the ground. It was a circle of five small sticks with a small bone in the middle. It was conjectured that these represented the five Englishmen and himself, and presumably it was intended to convey to his friends that the presence of the five Englishmen on shore was keeping him imprisoned. I must say I admire that unknown Eskimo: that was a pretty fancy piece of symbolic logic for an untutored savage.

On being questioned by signs this Eskimo genius agreed that he knew about the five Englishmen, but he earnestly denied that they had been killed and eaten. They were alive and well, he insisted. But unfortunately his word carried little weight against the evidence the Englishmen found in the next village...some English clothing and "raw and new killed flesh of unknown sort". A punitive expedition set out for vengeance and hunted down a group of Eskimoes, and there followed the first battle of this tiny war. The Eskimoes fought to the death -- and beyond: for when they knew they were dying they threw themselves off the rocks into the icy sea so that the Englishmen could not get at their bodies. Both sides were now firmly convinced that the others were cannibals.

In the battle the English captured a woman with her baby who had been hiding behind some rocks, and who had cried out when her baby was wounded by a bullet. They put her in with the man captive and watched curiously if they would mate, like animals. What actually happened has really nothing to do with our theme, but it's curiously touching...

> At their first encounter they beheld each other for a good time without speech or word uttered, with great change of colour and countenance, as though it seemed the grief of their captivity had taken away their tongues. The woman at the first turned away and began to sing, as though she thought upon some other matter: but being again brought together, the man broke the silence first, and with stern countenance began to tell a long solemn tale to the woman, whereupon she gave a good hearing. Afterward, they being grown into more familiar acquaintance I think the one would hardly have lived without the comfort of the other. Yet, insofar as we could perceive (albeit they lived continually together) yet did they never use each other as man and wife.

A week later the Eskimoes were again seen waving a flag and begging for the woman and child to be released. They assured Frobisher again that his five men were alive and suggested he write a letter to them. This Frobisher did, telling them that the prisoner he had taken last year was dead but he now had three more he would trade for them. But if the Eskimoes didn't give them back he would kill everyone in the country. The Eskimoes promised to come back in three days and they did, three of them coming forward to meet Frobisher. But his soldiers saw others hiding behind rocks and, suspicious, withdrew to their boats. They filled the holds with what they thought to be gold and returned to England, taking three more human souvenirs home with them.

Frobisher made a third and last expedition the following year, but saw nothing of the Eskimoes. But three centuries later, in the winter of 1860/61, a young American called Claude Hall finally solved the mystery of the five missing sailors. The Eskimoes had preserved a most detailed account of those events of 284 years ago. It appeared that the five men had in fact deserted from Frobisher's stern discipline and had lived amicably among the Eskimoes for four years, hiding out from Frobisher's annual searches. It is certain they were alive after he left for the last time, because they had used some wood abandoned by the third expedition to make a boat to sail to England, and Hall actually found traces of the work. But against the advice of their Eskimo friends they had set sail too early in the season and at that point finally disappeared from history.

Now Frobisher was not a bad man, and all his actions were dictated by what he regarded as realism: they were the inevitable result of his attitude and behaviour pattern. Nevertheless they had cost the lives of five of his men apart from those lost in battle. He had also killed a much larger number of Eskimoes, condemned four of them including a woman and child to death in exile, and left an impression of his race which was to last for three hundred years. Even his precious ore turned out to be "Fool's Gold" and was jettisoned in an English harbour. All we can be thankful for is that those Eskimoes did not happen to be an outpost of a civilization armed with nuclear weapons: and all we can hope is that we have enough sense not to let our policies and our attitudes resemble those of that Sixteenth Century Sailing-ship Trooper.

Note: The above account is based on excerpts from Hakluyt in a book called "The Ice Age" by a Canadian called Moffatt, which aroused my sense of wonder more than any recent science fiction. I could have also given an account of another expedition led by an unpractical idealistic Quaker-type Christian who faced a situation similar to Frobisher's but whose very different attitude and behavior patterns not only saved the lives of many Englishmen but brought about the friendly relations between us and the Eskimoes which last to the present day.

Installment 33, Warhoon 15, April 1962.

THE MOST DISTRESSFUL COUNTRY

Since I started reading fanzines I have become so indoctrinated in American politics that every four years, come November, I have to be dragged away screaming from the doors of the U.S. Consulate: but it occurs to me that I've never seen anything in fanzines about Irish politics, though I remember once being asked to explain what it was all about. So as a change from the HUAC, and at the risk of plunging all fandom into war about a subject even more emotional than "Operation Abolition", here goes.

My own first instruction in Irish politics came at the age of three, when my mother would sing me this charming little nursery rhyme:

Tramp tramp tramp the boys are marching
Hear them Fenians at the door.
"If you don't let us in
We will break your door down
And you'll never see your daddy any more."

The Fenians were of course the current Nationalist Party Sinn Fein ("Ourselves Alone") who had started the latest insurrection against the British in 1916, the one about which Yeats wrote "A terrible beauty is born". And while I was listening to that song some seven years later my "Daddy" was lying on the floor of the tram on his way home from work.

It all started in 1154, when Pope Adrian IV "gave" Ireland to Henry II of England, in the airy way Popes had at that time of disposing of territories which did not belong to them. It may of course have had something to do with it that Adrian IV was the only English Pope there has ever been and that there has never been an Irish Pope at all to give the country back to the Irish. At any rate, the history of the country from then until 1921 consisted largely of attempts by England to take and keep possession. One of the most determined was in 1609, when the population of Ulster, the most rebellious of the four provinces, was dispossessed and replaced by loyal Protestants from England.(hence Londonderry). It was the descendants of these settlers, now called Unionists or Orangemen, who in 1914 were ready to fight England

rather than be disowned. After the First World War the hapless British Government offered to partition the country, which resulted in still more fighting, this time between the Nationalists who were willing to accept this solution and those who weren't. The ten years of fighting, known as The Troubles, ended more or less in 1926 when De Valera's extremists entered ordinary politics, leaving behind them a splinter group which still claims to be the lawful Government of Ireland and whose 'armed forces' are the IRA.

Well that's simple enough, you must be thinking -- true Irish in the South, English in the North, a partition between them. But let me take you to one wet July afternoon in 1958 when the Willis family and the visiting Bulmers were watching the World Cup Football semi-final between England and Soviet Russia, televised from Switzerland. It sounds, I admit, an unlikely occasion for a blinding flash of revelation about the Irish Problem -- but halfway through the second half Russia scored and my ten-year old daughter Carol cheered. Startled at this discourtesy to our visitors I enquired into her motives, lest the Brownie Group she had been attending was really a secret Komsomol cell. But the truth was simpler. She just hated England. Why? Because of what they had done to Ireland. Apparently she had just started learning Irish History at school. (In fairness to my daughter I should say that when she heard Ken and Pamela Bulmer were English she was overcome with embarrassment. She'd thought all our fan visitors were American.)

Well here, I said to myself, is an interesting thing. Here is a child of solid Unionist background, taught in a Unionist school from books which represent England as favourably as is reasonably consonant with the facts, and she has become an Irish Nationalist. She knows nothing of the events of the last forty years, falling as they do into that No Man's Land between the history books and the newspapers: all she knows is that she lives in an island called Ireland. The fact is that it is impossible to be born and live in this country without being Irish, and the Orangemen and Unionists who are still willing to lay down their lives for the British Connection are just as Irish as anyone. They are just Irish in a different way.

The Government of the South recognize this, so much so that their national flag is a tricolour of green, white and orange, the white symbolizing the peace that should exist between the two factions; but the true nature of the love-hate relationship between the two parts of Ireland was shown even more clearly by a little known incident that took place twenty-one years ago.

At that time Ireland was partly at war and partly at peace. Southern Ireland was neutral, and Dublin was brilliantly lit, well fed and thronging with Germans. A hundred miles to the North, Belfast was blacked out, rationed and as thoroughly at war as London. Except that she had not yet been bombed. Despite the fact that she has the largest shipyards in the world, the experts figured she was too far away for the Germans to reach and need not be defended. They were wrong. In April 1941 the Luftwaffe unleashed on the helpless city the heaviest concentration of high explosive bombs dropped on any city in the United Kingdom in the whole of the war. Then they dropped ninety thousand incendiaries. The news that Belfast was ablaze reached Dublin in the early hours of the morning, and the authorities there did a remarkable thing. They ordered out the Dublin Fire Brigade. Every fire engine in Dublin raced North and before dawn they were crossing the suddenly meaningless frontier, their headlights blazing through the blacked-out villages of County Down towards the burning capital of their old enemies. Between them Irishmen from both sides of history put out the fires of Belfast, and next afternoon the tired Dubliners went quietly home, unthanked. Unthanked publicly, that is, because Southern Ireland was a neutral country and officially nothing had happened. Something had, though. It may not have been in the newspapers or the mouths of politicians, but the people of Belfast remember.

LURCH TCH

Your editor shocked me twice last issue, once by not printing the letter he got from Jacqueline Kennedy -- you should encourage these neofen: you never know when they might amount to something -- and then by referring to Wrai Ballard and Nan Rapp rolling downhill "in a gaily coloured lurch". Surely, I thought, an educated man like Bergeron should know that a lurch is a deep ditch by the side of a road. I admit that when I looked it up in the dictionary to confirm this I found some silly reference to the game of backgammon, but I've known all my life what a lurch is and no mere lexicographer is going to leave me in one.

LOST HISTORY

The oldest doodle in the world is in a ruined castle called Dunluce on a cliff in County Antrim. It's a crude drawing of a Viking ship, scratched on the stone by a bored sentry, and probably drawn from life. I've seen many relics of the past that are more imposing, but none had got through to me like that doodle. Why, I don't quite know. Perhaps it's the sheer unexpectedness of it, this casual triviality surviving when monuments designed to last a thousand years have perished without trace. But more likely I think it is its informality, this little genuine human thing by-passing the pomposity of recorded history from one ordinary man to another. I remember getting the same feeling of awe from a short story by Eric Linklater, a simple little tale about a man interviewing an old sailor whose ancestors had all been sailors, and listening to the stories they had handed down of their adventures... and suddenly realizing with an eerie shock that one of these sea-faring yarns was an eye-witness account of Jason's voyage in search of the Golden Fleece.

Since then I've been on the lookout for things like that, and I've found a real example that is almost as wonderful as Linklater's imaginary one. You know the little dancing game that very young children play?

Ring a ring of roses,
A pocketful of posies.
Tishoo Tishoo
All fall down!

A pink rash like ringworm was the first symptom of the Great Plague of London in 1665/66. People carried bunches of flowers in the belief that they warded off infection. The onset of death was accompanied by a fit of sneezing. And 'fall down' was what 70,000 people did in that terrible winter which the children remember for us.

But for sheer scope of history the prize must go to the contemporary philologist who has put forward the theory that "aurora" is the oldest word in any language. His reason? In Central Africa there is a tribe of monkeys who at dawn congregate in groups and grunt "Ur-ur."

Installment 34, Warhoon 16, July 1962.

"Depend upon it, Sir," said Dr. Johnston, "there is nothing which concentrates a man's mind so much as the knowledge that he is to be hanged in a fortnight." The good Doctor failed to consider an even starker human extremity, that of a columnist for Warhoon who finds that his deadline was yesterday. Grabbing the tray of notes for this column, I meet this crisis with that quiet desperation which is supposed to be the characteristic mood of Western Man, determined to try and fight my way into what space may remain of this issue. After all, I tell myself, Virginia Blish may not yet have been to see "Last Year At Marienbad."

Acting as superbly efficient paperweights in the tray are a huge anthology of

world poetry and an ordinary issue of Habakkuk. Taking the lighter one first, I would like to quote from page 1154.

Early I rose
In the blue morning;
My love was up before me,
It came running up to me
from the doorways of the dawn.

On Papago Mountain
The dying quarry
Looked at me with my love's eyes.

This is a sample of American Indian poetry, a Papago Lovesong. What I would like to know is this: does it appeal to those of you who do not happen to be Red Indians?

This isn't a frivolous question. What I am wondering about is the extent to which you may have ceased to be Europeans, but may not yet have become Americans.

It has always seemed to me that it must be hard to love part of the alphabet, an agglomeration of initials symbolizing a political abstration, like USSR, the UK or the USA. I am not talking about flag-waving patriotism now, the synthetic perversion foisted on us by the politicians, but the deep and often unexpressed attachment a man feels for his home land. He may be willing to die even for NATO, but only because it includes his basic loyalty to a place and the people who live in it. This is geography rather than politics, because in the last analysis it is geography which gives the people of a region their common characteristics.

Which brings us finally to the question put by John Ottenheimer in Habbakuk 4. Are American schools wrong in teaching the "Western" cultural heritage? There is, he suggests, something basically incongruous about Middle East religions and philosophies on the prairies and in the vast ranges of the Rocky Mountains and along the peaceful shores of the Pacific. But if as John says, a nation's arts are the result of their natural environment, then to some extent at least Amerind culture should by now have an inherent attraction for Americans.

The question of indigenous versus transplanted cultures is a complex one, but the practical issues are simple. Can one love a mountain as it should be loved when you don't know what it's name means? And does the poetic experience of that other American mean anything to you?

TRUMPET INVOLUNTARY

Through the courtesy of Bob Shaw, who in the course of his work in Public Relations reads all the British national newspapers, right down to the Daily Express, I am privileged to bring you this poignant news item from the Times:

> Seldom can a musician have met with such a reception as that accorded on Saturday night to the trumpet player of the Philharmonia Orchestra. As he rose to his feet in the top-most gallery of the Albert Hall to produce his fanfare for Beethoven's Overture Leonora #3, to his surprise, horror and dismay he was seized by a burly steward and hustled towards the nearest exit.
>
> To his credit he remained trumpeting to the last and in fact battled his way back to his position in time for the second fanfare a few moments later.
>
> "It sounded as though it was a complete reverse of what it should have been," said Mr. Kenneth Jones, who was conducting.
>
> "The attendant imagined that it was someone playing a prank and I have sug-

gested that in future all attendants should be required to read carefully each evening's programme."

Mr. Jones explained that normally the fanfare in Leonora is played just off-stage, but to make things more realistic, since the trumpet was supposed to be sounding from a high tower, it had been decided to put the trumpet player in the gallery.

"Next time we shall have armed security guards around our trumpet player. He deserves everyones' sympathy for he had played most beautifully at the rehearsal."

Mr. Michael Maxwell, the orchestral manager, said that he had been waiting particularly for this fanfare. The first few notes had been fine and then they seemed to wobble in the middle and fade out. It sounded as though a door had suddenly closed in front of the player.

The unfortunate man was so upset that he left the Albert Hall immediately and went home to bed. Yesterday, he asked that his name should not be given.

LAPSE OF THE GHODS

As an ordinary simple-minded fan, I am puzzled by something in this discussion the pros are having about letter sections in the promags. Apparently the situation is that the authors want to see reader's letters, but the editors don't want to publish them. That, everyone seems to agree, is that. Too bad. Impasse. Well, I don't get it. Here we have this respected author complaining that he never gets comments on his work. By his side we have this respected editor revealing that he getsas many as 250 letters a month. There must be some reason why the editor does not pass extracts from the letters to the author, as good fan editors do.

Obviously the explanation must lie in the differences between fanzine editing and the lofty mysteries of professional work, so let us in our ignorant fannish way try and see just what these differences are. The pro editor, I understand, does not set his own type or run the printing presses. He does not have to keep subscription records, or even write mailing labels. He has a secretary for routine correspondence. He has even, I am reliably informed, funds available to pay authors for material...though I admit that some of the contents of his magazine make this difficult to believe. He does not have to think up witty interlineations or, usually, write long editorials. (And when he does we usually wish he hadn't.) Finally, he does not have another full-time job. And that survey leaves us with just one little question to ask about the professional editor.

What does he do all day?

IN THE END WAS THE WORD

I don't want to worry you, but I think the world may be coming to an end quite soon, despite the valiant efforts of the Los Angeles Science Fiction Society. Let me adduce some signs and portents.

When Andy Young was in Belfast, in the course of a discussion on the curvature of the space-time continuum with special reference to Marilyn Monroe, he asked John Berry what mathematical constants he was familiar with. "None," said John with manly frankness. "I don't even understand 3.1417."

"Come now, John," I said thoughtlessly, "That's as easy as Pi." Then of course I immediately taxed him with having deliberately supplied the cue. He denied it. That was the way it all started, a cloud no bigger than Berry's mustache.

At the British Convention this Spring, James White and myself were having a conversation with Brian Aldiss and Harry Harrison, and the conversation turned to how sf authors look in photographs. James said to Brian, "The last photograph I

saw of you wasn't so horrible. You were standing outside the Tower of London, holding a kitten."

"Yes," said Aldiss. "I ate it afterwards." (He's like that, you know.)

A little later Harrison commented that sf authors always look as if they were looking for their mother. "It's the eat-a-puss complex," I said, before I could stop myself.

Some few days later, we were lying with Ron Ellik in the grassy grounds of Dunluce Castle when the conversation turned, as is its wont, to the intelligence of vegetable. Someone instanced the ways daisies curl their petals inwards at nighttime, and we wondered if they did this a little when a cloud went across the sun. Ian McAulay, treating this research project with typical scientific thoroughness, shortly announced that he had observed them carefully but could see no sign of this effect. Whereupon Bob Shaw said sagely: "The old saying must be true then. watched petal never coils."

But the most sinister of these events occurred only yesterday, when Sid Coleman dropped in on his way to a summer seminar of theoretical physicists in Istanbul. (Honest.) Naturally the conversation turned to unreal numbers.

I don't know that they're all that unreal," said Bob Shaw. "When I was in an Italian restaurant I found a cubical sort of herb floating in my soup."

"What was it?" we asked guardedly.

"The square root of minestrone," explained Bob.

"You'll just have to keep him away from Italian food, Sadie" said Madeleine. "It has an evil effect on him."

"Yes", I said, "he'd sell his best friend for thirty slivers of pizza."

I expose these grisly skeletons in our closet solely for the mathematicians in the audience, so that they can calculate the odds against those cues arising in the natural course of events. The answer, I'm afraid, is only too obvious. We are being maneuvered by some cosmic Ferdinand Feghoot.

The notion of the Universe having been created to make puns is no more farfetched than that of certain highly respected theologians who claim that the purpose of our existence is to glorify Ghod...or in our terminology, for egoboo. And it is obvious that the dread implications are suspected by our race subconscious. Why else should the pun, like no other form of humour, be greeted with groans of dismay? (Even in the LASFS, by extortion of a fine.) We realize subconsciously that we are all being maneuvered towards the Ultimate Pun. Some day the almost inconceivably unlikely set of circumstances towards which the history of mankind is being directed will arise, and someone who has been bred and trained for this moment will detonate this Ultimate Pun, infinite in its layers of meaning. As in the Clarke story "The Nine Billion Names of Ghod" the purpose of creation will be realized and the world will come to an end.

What is worrying me is this evidence that we in fandom may have been chosen as the unconscious agents of cosmic dissolution. It is as if now that the end is near the alien beings in charge of the detailed arrangements are becoming careless, more daring, less concerned about our suspecting their machinations. That business about a summer seminar of theoretical physicists in Istanbul, for instance, did you ever hear of anything so improbable? (And I know for a fact that Sid got a letter from Turkey accepting his application before he had even heard of it.) Even more worrying is the success of the TAWFund, hitherto inexplicable. Forry Ackerman and Dean Grennell will be there too... Yes, I'm afraid that the world is due to come to an end on Saturday 1st September. It will, I think, be painless and without shock. Just don't look too closely at some of those "disguises" for the Masquerade Ball.

Installment 35, Warhoon 18, January 1963.

I wouldn't say I've quite recovered from The Trip yet, so this installment may be the one John Baxter is dreading, but obviously I must do something to keep this swarm of B's from taking over the magazine entirely. Actually, the way I look at it, Baxter has the wrong end of the stick, or at least of the alphabet. I would point out that the initial of this magazine itself is the same as mine, and obviously therefore it is all these other people who are out of step. It's up to them to change their names. I'm sure I'll have support on this from journalistic circles in Hagerstown and Brooklyn, whatever footling objections may be raised by Waxter, Wreen, Werry, Woggs, Wlish, and Wergeron.*

If you persuade all these people to change their initials, Wick, you can make double use out of them.

If I was in my right mind I'd have hastily struck out that last sentence, but I leave it in to show you the enfeebled state of my intellect. Actually I think I'm suffering form a sort of mental indigestion. Normally I lead quite a humdrum existence, and ten thousand miles of travel in a strange country is another lifetime of impressions to absorb. And did I absorb them. I sped through your country behind a bus window like some great sponge in a travelling aquarium. I had a pocketbook with me which I brought in Shannon Airport, but I didn't open it again until I was back over the Atlantic. I just absorbed the United States. When I got home in 1952 I was shocked to find how little I remembered of the wayside scene, so this time I was determined to miss nothing. I stared out of that window from dawn until the headlights and neon signs and the hiss of tires lulled me to sleep again.

After all that you might well think I could answer a simple question like the one people keep asking me here: what was America like? But the more you have seen of America the harder that question is to answer. It's like being asked what's the world like. Many of the things which Europeans think of as typically American, from super-markets to teabags, are symptomatic merely of higher or different living standards, which you might find in any country, depending on quite adventitious circumstances. They don't really say anything about America. I've been reviewing that long long journey for something intrinsically and uniquely American, the sort of thing that Stephen Daedalus called an epiphany...

I can't even remember where I saw it, because it was on that last long journey from Los Angeles back to New York, when we were tired, and a little dispirited that it was nearly all over, and no longer pointing excitedly and making notes. And indeed it wasn't until later that the full significance of this thing occurred to me. We were coming into some small town, at dusk. On the left, on a small hill, was a long low building. From its roof a mast rose into the night sky, holding aloft a neon sign with just one word on it. Up there among the faint stars in letters of fire this sign said, simply, YES.

The most important single fact about America is that it's big. But, paradoxically enough, this is not an obvious fact. It seems to me, for instance, that the Fitzgerald quotation in John Baxter's letter last issue is merely what Charles Wells describes as art writing. It sounds fine, but it is simply not true. Speaking of how America must have appeared to the early Dutch sailors, Fitzgerald says: "For a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent...face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder." Now that's rubbish, or I'm a Dutch sailor. Those Dutchmen would have had to hold their breaths for months to appreciate the size of

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*(rb: This one I have to explain! All those other B's had columns in Wrhn at the time.)

America. From a ship America looks no bigger than San Salvadore. By sailing along the coast, or crossing the country on a covered wagon, it must have been possible to realize vaguely how big it was, but the realization must have come gradually as day followed day and week followed week and still there was no end to the land. It was a long succession of anticlimaxes, not a transitory enchanted moment. You cannot stand silent on a peak with a wild surmise at not seeing the Pacific.

No, the only way to appreciate the size of America is to cross it by some means of transportation fast enough to enable you to connect in your mind and emotions the beginning of the journey and its end. And not by air, or even by train, because you must see all the people and life on the way,and you must feel the speed of your journey to realize the full significance of the time it is taking. And that means by road. No one ever realized the size of America until the invention of the internal combustion engine.

The second most important fact about America is that it is rich, and it is the combination of these two facts which makes America unique in the history of the world. There have been great countries, and there have been rich countries, and there have even been countries which were rich and great, but there has never been a country which has been so great and so rich, and had the internal combustion engine. For the first time there is a great country with a people who have the means to realize how great it is, and it seems to me this realization is in the back of every American's mind. It leads to the social mobility, both physical and psychological, which I think is the essential American characteristic. They are a semi-nomadic race, with the independence and confidence and pride and generosity and something of the cruelty of the nomad. Even if they never actually move from their home town (but how few don't?), the important thing is that they know they can. They are like a man with a gun in his pocket, who doesn't have to use it as long as everyone knows it's there. If he doesn't like his job, or his neighbours, or the climate, he can get up and go and be a thousand miles away tomorrow. He is free, in a way Europeans have never been.

It was all in that sign. It was of course a motel sign, and it was a kind of motel sign you could find only in a country where motels are so common that everyone knows it means "Yes, there is a vacancy."But up there in the dark it seemed to me to proclaim some more significant message. It was like some great symbol of affirmation. Somehow it reminded me of sculpted mountains in National Parks, picnic tables in unfathomable forests, artificial Matterhorns, thousand-mile motorways, skyscrapers, and unfenced lawns. All these are things to which Europe has said no, because their countries are too small, or the resources too limited, or their traditions too hidebound, or their suspicion of each other too great. But the American word is YES.

DOWN IN THE DUMPS

The other afternoon, as I was throwing a cathode ray tube down a mineshaft, the thought occurred to me that our civilization has one unique distinction. It is the Age of Indestructible Garbage. This old TV picture tube had been cluttering up the house for months simply because I didn't know how to get rid of it. Of course I know the recommended procedure for disposing of old CR tubes, which is disturbingly reminiscent of that laid down for vampires. You bury it in the ground and drive a metal stake through it. But our garden, such as it is, is all lawn or paving, and I hate digging anyway. Besides I haven't even got a spade. And of course I couldn't just throw it out with the ordinary rubbish, because then it would land up in some dump and children might throw stones at it and implode it. So eventually I got out the one inch map of County Down and looked for an abandoned mine. There was one marked near Newtownards, so I took the family out for a drive. As I said to

Madeleine while we were waiting for the traffic lights, I'll bet we were the only family out that afternoon with a cathode ray tube looking for an abandoned lead mine.

Eventually we found it, too old stone towers and an overgrown hole in the ground with a fence round it. When I throw a stone down through the middle of the bushes it went crack, clunk, clank, clank, clank.....splash in a highly satisfactory manner, so I went back to the car for the TV tube.

As I toiled back up the hill with it, ignoring the curious stares of people out walking in their Sunday best, this thought came to me about indestructible garbage. Gipsies had been camping along the path, and the place was still in a mess. But you couldn't tell how long it had been like that. In the old days gipsies left behind them only ashes and rags and other organic residue, but now their garbage was like ours, a lasting memorial. Plastic cartons, polythene bags, plastic tubes and wrappings and containers of all sorts, all as bright and new as the day they were bought and determined to stay that way.

It is as if all the wearing qualities that manufacturers have taken out of their products has found its way into the wrappings. The only obsolescence that is not planned for is that which is going to be desperately needed. For what is going to happen to us after a hundred years accumulation of rust-proof, fire-proof bacteria-proof,rubbish? Shall we be moving about our planet knee-deep in gaily coloured garbage until, desperate for more dumping ground, we make war on one another and leave as our monument for galactic visitors a variegated stratum of plastic, slightly radio-active?

I could see no hope for the race but the evolution of a form of plastic eating bacteria, but meanwhile I had a new thrill to experience, a product of this same decadent civilization. I called the children over and lobbed the tube carefully through the bushes. It was perfectly judged. For a long tense moment there was silence, and then a great reverberating explosion, followed by an echoing tinkle of shards. It was immensely satisfying. Our civilization may be doomed, but I hope it lasts until all the mineshafts are full of cathode ray tubes.

HEAD LINE

I hesitate to quote anything from a newspaper after L.M.Janifer's revelation that even the veracity of the London Times is open to doubt (ordinarily I would trust the Times, but one must attach greater credence to anyone so fearlessly honest as to publicly admit that he is half of Mark Phillips) but I don't think the Belfast Newsletter would have invented all those details about the auction at Drumcairne, Co. Tyrone, which was attended by Lord Caledon. He bought several valuable antiques, including two old-fashioned items of bedroom furniture dating from the days before indoor sanitation, and I think the headline which our local newspaper used for the item had a certain subtle charm...

PEER PAYS £385 FOR TWO COMMODES

Installment 36, Warhoon 19, February 1964.

RANK AND RANCOR

The Eskimoes, it is said, can distinguish fourteen varieties of snow. Certain Polynesian tribes, on the other hand, have only three numerals -- one, two and plenty. All this proves is that the Eskimoes have a lot of snow and the Polynesians a lot of everything else. It would be an arrogant Eskimo who would accuse the Polynesians of being stupid, because if he's so smart why isn't he living on a South Sea island?

So it is with humble perplexity, like a Polynesian in a blizzard, rather than with derision that I point an enquiring finger at the plaque awarded to Fred Pohl at last year's Lunacon. (Fanac 87, which has just made its way to these shores on the back of a sea-going turtle.) It read:

TO FREDERICK POHL
WHOSE RISE FROM THE RANK OF SCIENCE FICTION FAN
TO RENOWNED AUTHOR AND ACCLAIMED ANTHOLOGIST
AND EDITOR OF SCIENCE FICTION, HAS PROVED INSPIRATIONAL
--THE LUNARIANS, LUNACON 1962.

I realize it's quite a new departure in literary criticism to start reviewing inscriptions on plaques, an artform which has unfortunately much in common with epitaphs. But any words etched into metal and nailed to a plaque must be assumed to have been carefully weighed, so I take it that this inscription represents a considered view of fandom.

It's one well worth examining.

Lunarian-type fandom, it would seem, consists of unpublished authors, frustrated prozine editors and unacclaimed anthologists. Desperately we strive, with the meagre talents at our disposal, to make ourselves worthy of higher spheres of activity, and every now and then one of us attains the dizzy heights of the Great Professional World. Immediately he becomes apotheosised, filling the fans still grubbing round his feet with fresh inspiration to continue their struggle.

Well, I'm sure there are at least fourteen varieties of fandom, and that somewhere there is a variety in which the members really regard fandom as a "training ground for the pros" -- that catchphrase used by people trying to justify a hobby which needs justification to people incapable of understanding the truth. The truth, of course, is that we are amateurs. Amateurs, from the Latin amare, to love. We are not frustrated professionals, any more than an affectionate wife is a frustrated gold-digger. We are in fandom for love of science fiction and the friends we have made through it.

In any field of activity the term amateur is as proud a title as professional, or prouder. It is just an unfortunate historical accident, and not the only thing we have Gernsback to blame for, that we happen to be called fans. We are not fans in the popular sense of fawning acolytes, however disappointing this fact may be to Randall Garrett. Moreover any adulation we do show is, I suggest, largely misplaced. It is all right to admire Ted Sturgeon if you like his writing, just as you may admire Dean Grennell for his. But only for the writing itself and to the extent you admire it, not because one gets paid for it and the other doesn't. I would go further and say that of those honored at the last Chicon the best fanzine editor was more to be admired than the best prozine editor, because the former is at least as good at his hobby as the latter at his job.

If it were generally accepted outside our microcosm that it is an admirable thing to give up a successful mundane occupation and an enjoyable hobby to become an underpaid hack, we should see more plaques on the lines of that awarded by the Lunarians. By some sports association, for instance...

TO JOHN KENNEDY
WHOSE RISE FROM THE RANK OF POLITICIAN
TO RENOWNED PROFESSIONAL TOUCH-FOOTBALLER
HAS PROVED INSPIRATIONAL.

BOB'S YOUR CARBUNCLE

Robert Bloch, who plays a role in contemporary fandom strongly reminiscent of that of Yorick in Hamlet, was seen by many at the Chicon last year, and only narrowly avoided by many others. Among the former were Madeleine and myself as you will have noticed from his references to us, complimentary and otherwise in the last Wrhn.

Last issue I wrote about some of the things America can be proud of. To give a balanced picture, perhaps I should now say something about Robert Bloch, as I saw him.

Someone had removed the sharpened popsicle stick I had driven through his heart in 1952, the only stake I could find small enough, but apart from that he hadn't changed. In fact I don't think he had even been to bed. (I hear he is now travelling everywhere by Greyhound, as the only hope of losing the bags under his eyes.) However it wasn't only because of his appearance that he was required by the Convention Committee to do his turn in the dark even to monster fans. The fact is that he is quite proficient at the magic lantern lecture as an art form, having been a lodger in Frieze-Greene's house in London when the latter invented the camera. It was he, in fact, who plunged the Daguerre into his host's back. Leaving Frieze as dead as a dado he absconded to Soho with the housekeeping money and the kitchen knife.

This proficiency later made him eagerly sought after by producers of horror pictures eager to cut expenses. It is not generally realized, for instance, that the film Psycho is not a film at all, but 14,735 magic lantern slides. Bloch and Tucker travel about the country from cinema to cinema changing the slides in the projection booth with a bewildering speed acquired through years of dealing off the bottom of the deck at poker. So much for the clever cutting acclaimed by some critics and unnoticed by others. All that happened was that Bloch or Tucker lost his place.

However those of you who were at Chicago will know Old Lantern Jaw Bloch as he appears at Midwest Conventions, the original Missing Lincoln. What I want to tell you about is Western Bloch, the new slim Fatty Arbuckle, the Idle of the Movie Colony.

California is a very arid State, and it is possible to drive about in it indefinitely without finding the Pacific Ocean. This is because most of it has been cut into little chunks and put in people's back yards. In the movie colony these swimming pools are cut into odd shapes to symbolize how the star in question made his money, Liberace's being in the shape of a grand piano, and so on. Robert Bloch's pool is book shaped.

Not knowing about this pool, it was some time before I realized that the only reason we had been invited to Bloch's house was so that he could see Madeleine in her black bikini. We spent some time in the house itself first, admiring the various objets d'art which littered the place. I would have said they were priceless, if it had not been for the presence of price tages on each one, with sterling equivalents hastily added in pencil. There was also a type-writer, in which was a half page of typing. I was too much of a gentleman to peer at a fellow author's half finished manuscript, though I knew it would probably be published that way, so I tactfully ignored it. Madeleine, however, I am glad to say, is no gentleman, and when after some time she realized the piece of paper was too big for a price tag, she went over and read it. It turned out to be a Hitchcock Murder Drama featuring two characters called Walter Willis and Gertrude Carr. Since I came back home I have been glued to my screen, but it has not so far appeared.

One thing I learned from this script was the reason for Bloch's using those very

long cigarette holders. When he is typing, the burning cigarette end is dragged along the paper, this accounting for his reputation among editors of writing searing prose.

The true personality of Robert Bloch the Man, however, emerged when he offered us a drink. We asked for orange juice, and after an intensive search he produced a can from the refrigerator and opened it with a beer can opener, which he had no difficulty in finding at all. He then produced a jug and inverted the can over it. Nothing happened. Frowning perplexedly, Bloch offered the can rather timorously to a terrifying machine affixed to the wall, which deftly removed the lid to reveal an unbroken surface of yellow ice. Bloch held the can upside down, shook it frantically, slapped it on the bottom, and tried to pry out the contents with a knife. All this was to no avail, and he finally just stood there jabbing plaintively at the solid ice with a tea spoon.

The spectacle was too much for Madeleine's warm heart and dry throat. She took the can from him, held it under the warm water tap for a moment, and inverted it over the jug. A cylinder of orange juice clattered out and we left the laws of thermodynamics to complete the operation.

As we went out to the pool, though, I felt I had been vouchsafed a glimpse of the real Bloch behind that sophisticated exterior, a simple child of nature lost in the complexity of modern civilization. Behind that cigarette holder was still the barefoot backwoods boy from Weyauwega.

The afternoon at the pool was pleasant and uneventful, except that Bloch tried to drown me, and the chemicals he had introduced into the water did not dissolve Madeleine's bikini. Undaunted, he waited until we had dressed again and offered to drive her to dinner in his red convertible. This is a large vulgar vehicle, commonplace among Arabian oil sheiks, but rarely seen in Ireland because of our innate good taste, narrow roads and 700 years of exploitation by foreigners. It was obviously Bloch's hope that this flamboyant automobile would turn the head of a simple Irish girl, and had it not been for the Incident of the Orange Juice I would indeed have been at a loss to cope with the situation. As it was, however, I merely asked him if the hood came up automatically. Drunk with power, Bloch pushed a button and the hood rose over the car in what I had to admit was an eerily impressive manner. However as I had surmised, the resources of Detroit did not extend to automatically fastening it in front, and the attempts of Bloch to cope with the complex arrangement of levers and catches were pitiable in the extreme. Once again the thin veneer of sophistication cracked and fell away, to reveal once more Weyeuwega, Wisconsin. After this it was hopeless for him to try and impress Madeleine with even the most glamourous artifacts of California, such as the Hollywood Bowl and the LASFS Clubroom. We had witnessed the Decline of the West.

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THE HARP IN OOPSLA -(Conclusion)

is in every line of this picture." enthuses Dodd, for one example. Actually the picture in question merely shows two old women in a graveyard being throttled simultaneously by an ambidextrous gorilla. The gorilla has horns and apparently the old ladies are witches and such symbols of childish superstition, together with lots of blood and futs, seem to be the extent of Prosser's visualization of the Power of Evil. He is also, apparently, one of those peculiar people who think there is something terribly Evil and fascinating about cannibalism, a psychological quirk which he shares with some better-known people in the professional side of science fiction. I suppose we must be happy for him that he has led such a sheltered life, but one cannot avoid some irritation at his assumption that the nasty little thoughts we have all had at some time during our development are some epochmaking revelation

peculiar to him. The whole exhibition, with one exception, reminds me of nothing so much as a schoolboy sitting down to write all the forbidden words he can think of, and is about as much a "contribution to art" as that would be to literature. It's only fair to say though that from a technical point of view Prosser seems to have considerable talent and has attempted to surmount the insurmountable limitations of dittography as an art medium with an assiduity worthy of a better cause.

The exception I mentioned was a sort of political cartoon which Dodd calls "superbly topical," but which to me demonstrates a degree of stupidity and ignorance almost inconceivable in a schoolboy who has learned to write. It shows a ruined city with two misshapen figures whose aspect is I take it supposed to make our blood run cold but which look more like plasticene models left too near a fire. The punchy caption runs, "The SUMMIT TALKS were a complete success! Then, everyone destroyed their atomic supply -- WE THOUGHT!" (Capitals, exclamation marks and grammatical errors are all Prosser's.) Prosser makes his point clear, but he would have been well advised to keep his hat on it until he got some inkling of what he was talking about. In the first place it is only too clear that neither of the major powers is going to destroy a single atomic bomb until they are as sure the other side is destroying theirs as that they will see the sun rise tomorrow, if not surer. In the second place, the caption could quite as easily, and a lot more plausibly, have read: "The SUMMIT TALKS were going to be a success! Until Prosser published his POWERFUL CARTOON!"

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AGAIN!

(rb: Ah, yes, the last scene in Warhoon 19: Willis and Bloch in a kitchen wrestling with a can of frozen orange juice and only narrowly saved from amputating each other's fingers by the genius of Madeleine Willis: a scene of domestic delirium which neatly catapults us in at least six temporal directions.

One: Straight ahead into "...Twice Upon A Time" where the context which brought about the above events is given a rather involved explanation though Walt and Madeleine are last seen in San Francisco's Chinatown only to reappear in the swimming pool of the author of "Psycho".

Two: Back to the final sentence of "The Harp Stateside" to a fandom full of a sort of fairyland magic that is also capable of making all kinds of dreams come true even more than once.

Three: To Void 23, January 1961, the persuasive masterpiece concocted by Ted White, Greg Benford, and Peter Graham, which made the dream happen again.

Four: To the time of Axe and the organizational genius of Larry and Noreen Shaw who engineered the actual mechanics of raising a Fund and made it look like a few evenings of deliriously enjoyable crifanac.

Five: To the indeterminate year an unsuspecting wee Ethel Lindsay turned the pages of Nebula and came upon a feature called "Fanorama"; the reading of which would one day cause its author to whisper something beautiful in her ear on the other side of the world.

And six: Back to page 332 of this issue between installments 34 and 35 of "The Harp That Once Or Twice" where the following pages should normally flow in the life of Walt Willis except for the fact that the editor decided a 70 page interruption in the first set of Wrhn Harps was a bit awkward a pause even for people gifted with a sense of timebinding. Ever onward, reader:)


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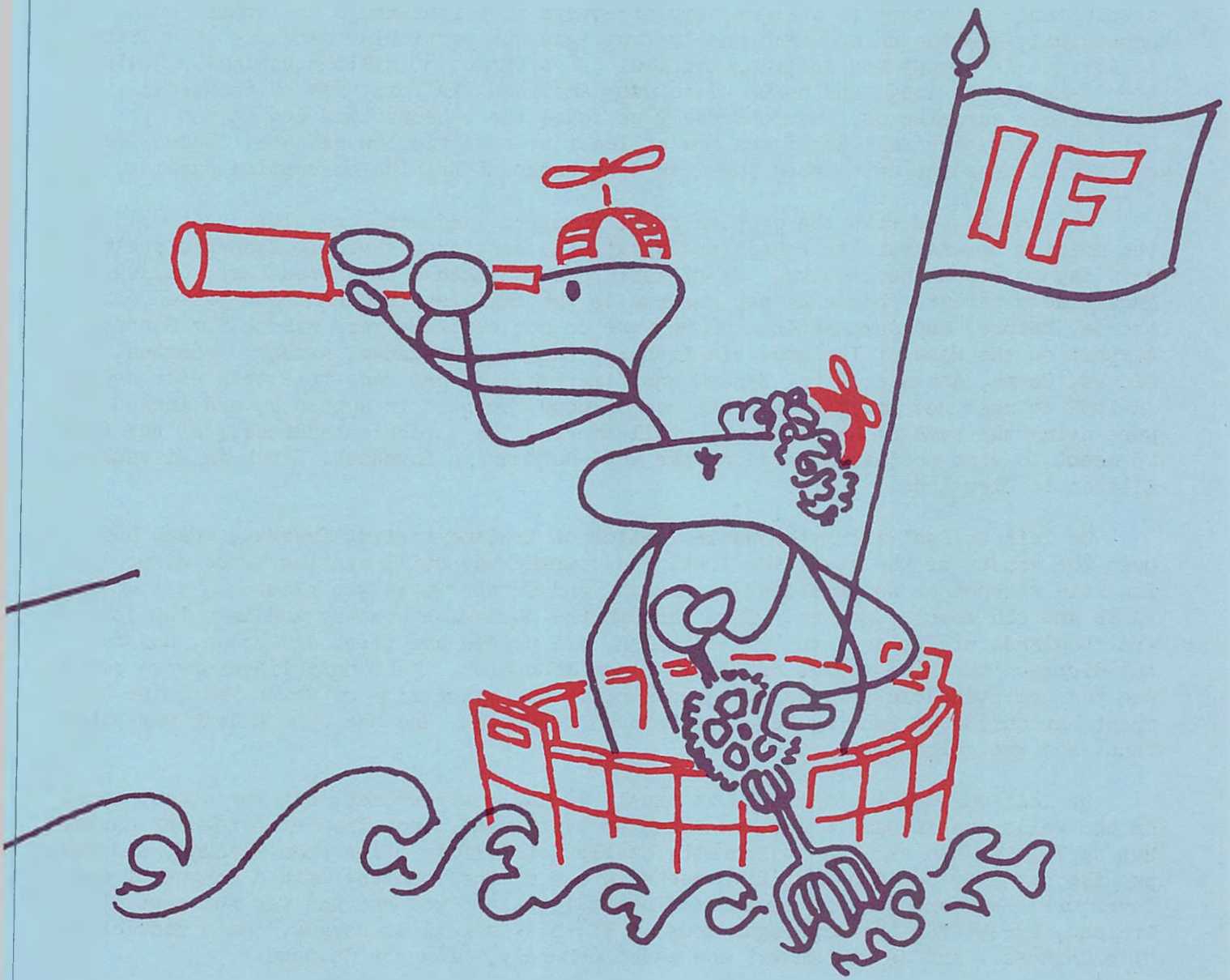


WALT REDISCOVERS AMERICA & CHAPERONES MADELEINE WILLIS ON HER MAIDEN VOYAGE TO THE NEW WORLD.

"What am I going to say to all these people?" pleaded Madeleine, handing me another wet cup. It was about one o'clock in the morning of Sunday, 26th August, 1962, and tomorrow we would be in America. At the moment though we were in the scullery of 170 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, washing dishes. It would save time in the morning and we wouldn't be able to sleep anyway.

Secretly I was almost pleased she was getting a bit panicky at last. It made me feel calm and confident, the authoritative male. I reviewed my vast experience of these matters. "You could try and think up answers to what-do-you-think-of-America," I suggested. "Now's the time for it, cos you won't have time when you get there. America is all space and no time."

"Like what?"

This was a problem which had baffled me ten years ago, and I was still no nearer a solution. "I'm sure it will be very nice when it's finished," was smart, but unoriginal, and the thing which really surprises our particular category of visitor to America is almost too silly to mention. It's those 180 million nonfans. Having been fans for so long, and hosts to so many American visitors, few of the usual differences surprise us: but conversely we share the subconscious conviction of British fandom that all Americans are at least science fiction readers. Hence the occasional presence of bemused American servicemen at British convention parties.

We went to bed with the problem still unsolved, and got some sleep. At 8:15 in the morning it was raining relentlessly out of a dark grey sky. It looked a pretty good day to leave the country. We finished packing, had a late breakfast, called at Madeleine's parents' house to say goodbye to the children, who had been packed off the day before, and soon after noon we were on our way. We were making for Shannon Airport on the West of Ireland, via Lisburn, Lurgan, Portadown, Armagh, Monaghan, Clones, Cavan, Athlone, Birr, Nenagh and Limerick. We had made this trip once before in 1953 to meet Bea Mahaffey for the Beacon tour reported in Hyphen 4, and indeed we were using the same AA Route Chart, still showing the scribbled addresses of the fans we meant to send postcards to along the way--Hoffman in Savannah, Bloch in Milwaukee, Ellison in Cleveland.

We left Belfast along the whole 7 miles of Ireland's first freeway, which had been the wonder of the year: the local bus company was still running tours along it. The rain stopped as we were leaving Armagh, and County Davan was pleasant, all woods, lakes and old country houses. Then through the Goldsmith country and into the central boglands of Ireland, the Bog of Allen, all purple and green and brown, and in the distance the blue ridges of Slieve Bloom Mountains. In County Tipperary we could see the unmistakeable Devil's Bit Mountain, on the other side of which Madeleine had spent her childhood running barefoot through the bogs. She had come a long way since then, and was going further.

We lost our way in Limerick, as usual: we had a street map, but the street names on the walls are in Gaelic letters which we can't read...not from a moving car anyway. But by 7:15 we had arrived at Bunratty Castle Hotel, five miles from Shannon, and had put the car away for the next five weeks in one of the stables, amid a morgue of old furniture. We were just in time for dinner; it wasn't too bad and for the West of Ireland, except for the asparagus soup. "If this is real asparagus," said Madeleine, "I'm Chinese. And as you know," she added demurely, "I'm not Chinese."

Afterwards we looked round the hotel, a long low pink two-storey building full of odd things. Like Norse twin cradles with dolls, a big over-wrought iron room-wide grill across the dining room, long horns, antique ashtrays, and two antique silver bracelets weighing several pounds and fastening like handcuffs.

Next morning was calm and sunny, so we strolled down to have a look at Bunratty Castle. We'd realised this was no ordinary Irish tourist attraction when we saw it floodlit last night, and by daylight the transatlantic influence spreading from Shannon Airport was even more evident. There were signposts, a souvenir shop, admission prices, and a taperecorded account of the castle's history. From this we learned that it had been built about 1251 and its variegated career had included a siege in 1646, when it was defended by an Admiral Penn whose young son, when the siege was raised, went and founded Pennsylvania. It was an interesting thought that if those walls had been a foot less thick Pittsburgh would have been somewhere else.

The receptionist called us a taxi, and by noon we were at the airport, with over two hours to wait. We went to the Duty Free Shopping Centre, a huge room full of beautiful and expensive things from all over the world. I had only thirty shillings left in sterling, to buy petrol on the way home, but I had a tobacco tin full of hard currency accumulated over the last ten years. Ten years of Hyphen subscriptions vanished in as many minutes, as I piled little towers of coins on various counters. Ah well, I thought; easy come, easy go. Then, leaving the commerce of the free port to shudder to a halt, choked by my glutinous mass of sticky nickels, dimes and quarters, we went upstairs to the Observation Lounge. Madeleine had coffee and biscuits while I prowled about restlessly, and at last our flight was called. Quite suddenly, it seemed, we were in the aircraft, surrounded by men with American accents.

One of them sat down beside us, smiled, and held out his hand. "My name is Kennedy," he said. I had heard the new administration was encouraging tourism, but this was ridiculous. However, he turned out to be an employee of the New York City Transit System, as was everyone else on the plane except us, and they'd all been revisiting the Old Country. Most of the men still seemed recognisably Irish, but their womenfol were thoroughly American.

With surprisingly little fuss the great plane, a Boeing 707 called Padraic, rolled across the tarmac, turned and paused, then whuffed determinedly down the runway and took off. We were on our way to America. The children had not fallen ill, neither had their grandparents, neither had we, the office had not cancelled my leave, war had not broken out, the car had not crashed on the way down, the Fund had not turned out to be a hoax, and now the plane had taken off safely. It was extraordinary. I felt I couldn't just sit there, and yet I didn't feel like reading; I didn't want to be a sophisticated world traveller, I wanted to absorb every quantum of sensation that was going. With a keen sense of psychology, the pretty green-clad airhostesses began serving dinner (and very good it was too, a curious mid-Atlantic combination of American and European eating) and handing out Immigration Forms, Baggage Declaration Forms and a Passenger Sample Survey Questionaire designed to find out for the airline's information the sort of people they were carrying. We were pleased to find a question "What magazines do you read regularly?", but felt that the space for the answer was inadequate. We got in all the prozines all right, but had to leave out several quite reputable fanzines.

After a couple of hours our Captain told us over the Public Address System that his name was Quinn and that we were now in the middle of the Atlantic. A hasty glance through the porthole reassured us that we were still a considerable distance above that fate: about six miles in fact, we gathered from the rest of Captain Quinn's schtick. "That's a mile higher than Everest," I pointed out to Madeleine, refuelling my sense of wonder, "and you can't breathe there."

"If there's no air out there," Madeleine asked reasonably, "what's holding the plane up?"

Fortunately a ship appeared below us before this disquieting query could get to

the Captain, and there was great excitement. It may have been the Queen Mary for all we knew, but it looked no bigger than a match. Then Captain Quinn came on again to break the news that because of 70 mph headwinds and heavy traffic at Idlewild we would have to land at Boston to refuel. We would be an hour late in New York. I visualised Larry leaping into one of his hotrods and driving to Boston to meet us there, so I asked Kennedy how far it was from New York: I still had this idea that he knew all about Boston. He said it was 500 miles. It was to avoid this call to Boston that we'd taken this particular flight, but as it turned out it was worth it. Soon there was a spectacular scimitar of land, and then we were flying over the American continent. It was nearly as green as Ireland, and there were a lot more trees, but the most striking sight was the cars, hundreds of them, threading along the roads like hypnotised ants.

At Boston we landed effortlessly, with just that brief moment of fear when the brakes go on so hard and yet the plane seems to go even faster. As we coasted to a stop there was a round of applause from the passengers. As an encore Captain Quinn made an even more stylish landing at New York, and received a positive ovation. I half expected to see him emerge from his cabin with his hands clasped together above his head, or at least bowing modestly.

This applause was a new phenomenon to me, and for a while I thought it was just these connoisseurs of transit recognising a fellow craftsman. But then I thought that I'd often felt like pausing on my way along railway platforms to pat the noble locomotive and say a few words of thanks to the honest figure in the grimy blue overalls looming up there in the steam. Maybe he has always felt that I should too, and maybe these New York City Transit System employees were just behaving the way they would like their own passengers to behave.

The Manhattan skyline is a breath-taking sight even from an aeroplane, and to us it symbolised so much that we were in a daze as we gathered our things together and stumbled out of the plane and down the steps. Madeleine went first and when she got to the ground she turned round and waited for me, holding out her hand and smiling.

"Welcome to America," she said.

Monday 27th August 1962

We followed the other passengers across the tarmac, looking wide-eyed around us. First impressions were chaotic. Open spaces. Noise, Aeroplanes. Cars. Heat. Futuristic buildings. A distant roof crowded with people waving. I waved back at them.

"Who are you waving at? Who do you see?" asked Madeleine, clutching my arm.

I didn't see anyone, I assured her. It was just that if there was anyone up there waving at us, they would think we were waving back. And if there weren't, everyone would assume we were waving at someone else. So both waving enthusiastically but frustratedly at a roof-full of strangers....roof-ful greeting, you might call it...we passed under them into the bureaucratic maze.

It was much better than Hoboken ten years ago, and obviously Mr. Kennedy's new policy of hospitality had percolated right down to the lowest level. The only thing was that by the time it had got there it had somehow become subtly different from what I think the President envisaged. The Immigration Officer, having scanned in a specially provided mimeoscope the X-ray plates of an anxious middle-aged couple...for those of you who like happy endings, they got in...held out his hand silently for our

passport and looked us up in a big black book. There were three Willises in it, I noted, peeking, but none of them was us. Then, still without raising his head, he went riffle stamp riffle stamp hopeyoufolksenjoyyourstaynext. We were five yards away before I realized we had been officially welcomed to the country.

We now found ourselves in a huge room with a glass enclosed balcony all round, rather like something in a very modern zoo, waiting for our baggage to be delivered for inspection. It was a nerve-wracking wait, poised thus on the threshold of the New World. There was nothing for us to do, and for myself I sedulously avoided looking up at the people in the balcony lest we should see someone we recognised... or, worse, thought we should recognise...and then spend an indefinite time either grimacing at them or ignoring them. But at last the baggage came, and was passed, and we lugged it through a double glass door into America.

It is a mental failing of mine that when I am looking for one particular thing I can't see anything else, so while I was still scanning the crowd of people round us for Larry Shaw and Ethel Lindsay, Madeleine was already greeting Dick Eney, Terry Carr and Ted White. Terry incredulously asked Madeleine how she recognised him and Madeleine said from misprepresentations in the fan press. Then Don and Elsie Wollheim appeared and I recognised Don from a 16-year old photograph but Madeleine in her confusion asked him what fanzine he wrote for. I was nearly as bad: starting to explain to her who this was I was for a few desperate seconds completely unable to remember the name of Ace Books. Meanwhile Dick Eney and Ted White were giving me a Fapanthology and a dinner invitation, respectively, and Dick had picked up all our three suitcases and was heading across a road along which huge cars were tearing in the wrong direction. What with one thing and another it was a well filled few minutes, and it wasn't until we got to the car park that I realised that despite the unaccountable absence of Will Sykora and Calvin Thomas Beck I was not going to be deprived of my traditional New York welcome. There seemed to be some delay in getting into the car and it was gradually borne in upon me that there were two cars: indeed there were two separate and rival welcoming parties.

By the time I had appraised this problem....really, I just couldn't believe it at first...Madeleine had solved it by volunteering to travel in Ted White's car while I went in Dick Eney's. With mingled horror, amusement and delight I found myself separated from my wife after five minutes in New York, a living example of the schismatic influence of that city. But it was a tribute to the warmth of our separate but equal welcomes that I wasn't worried by the fact that we were being separately conveyed to unknown destinations in a strange country. After a few minutes I did make a humble enquiry as to Madeleine's possible whereabouts and eventual destination, and learned that we were all to rendezvous at the Wollheim's house in Clyde Street. I was glad to know they had decided to continue living there even after Ackerman's notorious pun about "When Wells Clyde."

Revelling in the unaccustomed luxury of leaning my elbow out of the car window without getting it frozen, I talked to Elsie and Dick with what attention I could wrest from the spectacle of New York. They told me about Bruce Berry's paranoiac autobiography and I said it sounded as if it should have been entitled "Mein Kemp." Dick Eney didn't seem to understand the reference and Elsie and I, as members of the older generation, started to pull his leg about the Thirties, as Bob Tucker used to do with Lee Hoffman about the Twenties. (It was when he said he remembered Lindbergh that she started calling him "Grandfather".) It was good fun and Dick entered into the spirit of it, but I later came to think that he probably knew as much as either of us about "Mein Kampf", if not more, and that his apparent incomprehension was just his usual pause for reflection before answering. He has this habit of first-drafting everything he says, which I should have remembered reading about. But I was composing on stencil myself at the time, and touch typing at that, and besides

I was expecting some difficulty in making myself understood and assumed that any hesitation in answering me was due to that. It wasn't until I had started to slow down my speech deliberately that I was able to get rid of the feeling that there was some sort of wall round Eney, and I was just getting to know and appreciate him when I spoke to him in Chicago for, frustratingly, the last time.

We had barely sat down in the Wollheim's roomy living room when Madeleine and her escorts arrived. I asked her what she thought of America: she said she was sure it would be very nice when it was finished. It was a very pleasant quiet evening and we actually relaxed, but of course I can't remember much of what was said. Wollheim was presented with a copy of Eney's FAPAnthology, which was dedicated to him, and he leafed through it with a sort of rueful pleasure. The black covers and the bulk reminded us of the Bible, which I said I hadn't read since it was serialised in Famous Fantastic Mysteries, and there was some fascinating speculation as to which fan and pro artists would have illustrated the various Books. Ted White said he wasn't worried about Moskowitz attaching his property because six months ago he had made out a formal deed transferring everything he owned to Les Gerber for a dollar. Terry confirmed this, adding confidentially that he had bought it off Les for $1.50. And sold it to SaM for $2.00.

After a very fine dinner and a lot more talk Elsie thoughtfully pointed out that it was now nearly dawn by the time we had started the previous day on and maybe we should get some sleep. We didn't feel tired...or at least we were unable to disentagle this lesser feeling from all the others...but we hadn't even seen Noreen and Larry yet so we tore ourselves away from the Wollheim hospitality and set off with Eney, together this time, for the Staten Island ferry. Once aboard, we got out of the car and looked at the lights. It was hot and humid and dreamlike. Just that afternoon we had been in the cool calm of County Clare: now here we were among the exotic lights of New York, sailing past the Statue of Liberty. It was not believable.

Staten Island was more like home and the Shaws' house even more so, despite the unfamiliar domestic architecture. Larry was an old friend from seven years ago, and so was Noreen after fewer minutes. Her first words were "Madeleine: Why you're pretty!". After which it would have been difficult for her to put a foot wrong. It was a real fans' house, the table in the living room invisible under a pile of mundane magazines, unread while Noreen cut stencils for Axe. Noreen asked us if we'd had a bath at the Wollheim's. We looked a little surprised, and Noreen explained that "The Wollheim's met Ethel and took her home and gave her a bath." Poor Ethel had had a long and wearing journey via Iceland, and apparently this had been her first priority.

Too restless to sit down just yet, we roamed around like cats in a strange place, looking at books, pulling things out of our baggage to show, and absorbing the strangeness of an American home. We had in a way been indoctrinated gradually to the upside-down light switches, because in the Wollheim's house they were mounted sideways; and I think it was there too we first encountered that most alarming of all American artifacts, the concentric bathroom doorlock. The distracted foreigner enters the bathroom, nerved to do battle with exotic plumbing, and immediately comes straight up against a completely unexpected trap. There is no bolt on the door. Can it be, that...? No, that's Japan. There must be some way to obtain privacy. There is a sort of flange thing in the middle of the knob, he observes keenly. It might turn. It does, he notes complacently. These things just need a little intelligence. But better check that the door is really locked. He turns the knob and pulls, and the door opens. Shut it and try again. Shut it and turn the flange further. Shut it and turn it the other way. Shut it and pull. Shut it and push. Shut it and gradually accept the concept that the door is always open from your side, but may be locked from the other. You have to take it on trust, like the light going

out inside the refrigerator when you shut the door. It may be all right for Americans with their faith in technology, but you need look no further than that bathroom door to know why foreigners in America suffer from a deep-seated feeling of insecurity.

It was very late even by local time when we went to bed, but even then we had some difficulty getting to sleep. We hadn't yet adjusted to the 30° difference in temperature. Outside it had started to rain quietly, and nothing we had seen so far was as strange to us as this, that in the darkness and rain the air should still be so hot.

Tuesday 28th August, 1962

Next morning we awoke long after Larry had left for work. We showered, enjoying the unfamiliar luxury of a warm ambient temperature, and had a long talkative breakfast with Noreen. One of the things we learned was that we had been invited to dinner at the Wollheim's that evening, by a cable sent to Dublin Airport. We hadn't received it, not having left from Dublin....a pity in a way, because I've never been invited to dinner by cable before...and I suppose it's still waiting for us there. I had tacitly accepted Ted's invitation at Idlewild. But his hostess was someone called Esther Davis whom I'd never heard of and therefore would scarcely have heard of us, so I called Ted to tell him we were accepting this prior invitation from the Wollheims. But from Ted I learned that in fact this dinner was for us, and that all sorts of good people like Les Gerber and Terry Carr and Walker Breen and Andy Reiss would be looking for us there. I told Ted we'd meet him at Greyhound station at 1 p.m. and hung up, bemused. Both parties had left it squarely up to us, so we talked it over, decided to accept Esther Davis' invitation on grounds of the least unhappiness of the lesser number, and set out to make our own way to West 50th St. in the heart of Manhattan.

Following instructions jotted down in a notebook, we got to the railroad station and onto the right train without difficulty, even making friends with the conductor. He had a son in Australia, which seemed somehow to create a bond. We gloried in the ferry trip on the good ship Cornelius G. Kolff, going straight up to the top deck to goggle at the Manhattan skyline of which this was Madeleine's first view by daylight. I was to see it dozens of times, but I was never able to really believe it. Then, happily unconscious of our doom, at approximately 12:15 p.m. we went underground to proceed to West 50th Street via the strange and intricate formation known as the New York Subway.

After an elapsed time of 45 minutes we shambled into the open air at 42nd St., muttering "An' dark. An' nowhere starlights," and waving feebly for a cab. Since at least the last change of trains we had, I figured, been proceeding steadily in the wrong direction but from the cab I couldn't see how 42nd Street could be so far from 50th St., and round so many corners. The cab sped spasmodically down one street after another, the driver carrying on an intermittent conversation with the driver of another cab about buying a third until I felt like a shareholder. About two dollars later we arrived at the Greyhound Station, twenty minutes late. Good ol' Ted was still waiting, and I left Madeleine talking to him while I went to get our International Mobius Trip Tickets. This turned out to be quite a Project. First I joined one line to find out which other line to join, and then I had to produce our joint passport and sign my name on virtually every document the Greyhound Company could possibly want, except perhaps an undertaking to assassinate the President of Trailways. Then I had to go and get Madeleine to sign another batch of her own. Then I had our tickets validated for Chicago, an awesome moment. Here I was, standing in New York, buying a ticket for Chicago. Again.

Inspired by this climactic moment, I marshalled enough courage to telephone

Elsie Wollheim, and found to my relief that Noreen had already prepared the ground, bless her. With that off our minds, we went out to sight-see, starting off with lunch in an automat. It was an experience of more sociological than gustatory interest. The fruit in the pies tasted as if it were not only cooked by the machine, but grown in it. After this Madeleine was the only one with any clear idea of where she wanted to go so we set off for Macy's.

We eventually arrived there, despite having almost left Madeleine behind countless times as she was attracted to dress shop windows like a starving moth. Ted and I were exhausted by then, though we hadn't walked nearly as far, so we decided to find some place to sit down while Madeleine ran amok. We found a restaurant from the store directory, but it turned out to be one of those turnstile places where you never know what you're letting yourself in for, so we looked around for somewhere else. There was a kitchen department nearby full of dishwashers and air-conditioning equipment and such, and Ted and I sat thankfully down on a couple of Straightbacked chairs at a formica table. I gave Madeleine some money, told her to call back for us, and looked around for some landmark. There it was, just above us, an enormous sign of a quite impossible appropriateness. It said, simply but quite incredibly, FAN CENTER.

I don't expect you to believe that, but I solemnly assure you that every word in this report is true.

When Madeleine has cased Macy's like a comparison shopper from Gimbel's, we went to call on Terry Carr, who had been waiting in all afternoon for a new bookcase to arrive from the self-same store. I was feeling somehow guilty at not having brought it with us, but it had already arrived and been put in position, looking very vacant and self-conscious. Ted and I, electronic wizards that we are, took his hi-fi system apart for him and re-installed it in the bookcase, and to my surprise at least, it still worked. "What hath Ghod wrought?" I murmured. Meanwhile I was mentally adjusting to the style of Void editor fandom chitter-chatter. It is one of the pleasantest things about fandom that you can go anywhere in the world and join immediately in a conversation, but this is a basic degree of comprehension, not a maximum. Each fan group has its own way of thinking and talking, and real assimilation takes some time. It's only partly a matter of such transitory problems as accents and modes of speech. At Oblique House over the years we have noticed that it takes as long as twenty hours total exposure time for the average sharp-minded fan to become wholly integrated, and since we are probably an unusually inbred fan group because of our physical isolation, it was almost as difficult for me in America. Sometimes I felt I was just having to leave a fan group just as I was getting into full rapport.

In New York, for instance, they don't go in much for puns, and I got out of the habit of making them. So much so that when I came up against Dean Grennell I was at first as completely outgunned as a rowing boat against a battleship, and it was only after a couple hours frantic rewarping of my mind that I was able to hold my own. Then I demolished this armoury again way down the West Coast...and arrived naked and defenceless in Los Angeles.

To take a minor example, Ted and Terry were talking about some sexual deviate who got his kicks from breaking windows and I said it was an example of the pleasure-pane principle. This was of course a mere throwaway, and was properly treated as such, but in Belfast, Fond du Lac and Los Angeles its passage on the way to the garbage can would have been noted with at least a raised eyebrow. In those places subconscious warning mechanisms like mine have evolved to detect the pun camouflaged in the conversational structure. Elsewhere, where the pun is not common, it has to be in a sense badly constructed to be noticed. I don't mean crude or unclever, just

noticeable. A good pun lies in ambush, fitting naturally into the context: its secondary level of meaning has then more of the element of surprise which is the essence of this form of humor.

But I was more concerned with adapting myself to the local climate than adapting it to me. Void fandom humor is strongly influenced by Burbeeism, the elements of which are anecdotal rather than conversational, and the techniques of which are shrewd and often cruel character delineation, fake solemnity and significance by repetition. Burbeeism without Burbee has evolved in the absence of Socrates, but probably more successfully. Every man has become his own Burbee to everyone else's Laney.

Eventually Carol came home, admired the bookcase, made us some coffee and we all walked along to Esther Davis's apartment. This was one of the few times I ever walked anywhere in America, but I'm afraid Greenwich Village was rather wasted on me. It's hard to sell quaintness to an Irishman, and the Village looked far more like a normal city to me than the rest of New York. We were evidently early for the party, but the two people already there were doing their best to make the room seem crowded. First impressions were of a Michelin tire advertisement and a pressure gauge screaming at one another, but they turned out to be only Les Gerber and Andy Reiss exchanging birdcalls on plastic whistles to the accompaniment of jazz on the hi-fi. So this is Birdland, I thought. But immediately Les became several years older and Andy several decibels quieter and we talked convivially until dinner.

It was this meal which made me realise that we had made the right decision that morning. It was almost embarrassingly clear that we were the guests of honor. There were toasts yet, and we were enthroned on two high-backed red leather chairs at the head of the table, like royalty. How vacant those chairs would have looked if we hadn't turned up, I thought. Though indeed it wouldn't have been entirely our fault--people who live in glass houses shouldn't stow thrones.

Fortunately for our peace of mind, another guest of honour more accustomed to the role arrived after dinner. This was Paul Krasner, editor of the satirical magazine, The Realist, a small swarthy intense young man with a twisted mouth and sad eyes. He had an ample blonde with him whom he introduced as Miriam, and though I was almost sure this couldn't be Miriam Carr I wasn't able to check this out to any more places of decimals because she didn't say a word all evening.

While Ted White was explaining fandom to Krasner, who reacted with a sort of respectful incredulity ("You mean all you get out of it is satisfaction?") I read through a copy of The Realist and, finding it excellent, passed it to Madeleine. At which point Krasner looked up from his seat on the sofa at the far end of the room and asked her what she thought of it. All Madeleine had seen of it so far was the cover, which featured prominently the legend "US SAILORS STERILISED IN NUCLEAR SUBMARINE Colouring Book". The current "Colouring Book" craze was unfamiliar to Madeleine so the last two words of the headline meant nothing to her and she assumed naturally enough that the magazine was produced by some nutty left-wing equivalent of the John Birch Society. She said something about going too far, as G. M. Carr might say about Hitler, and Krasner, used to this comment from squares, smiled wrily and resumed his conversation. I hastily filled Madeleine in on the Colouring Book angle and she looked stricken. Krasner had, we knew, been commissioned by Playboy to cover the Chicon. Madeleine envisaged herself branded in future Fancyclopoedias as responsible for another write-off of fandom on Goshwowboyohboy lines, or worse. So I looked through The Realist for its sub rates, which were quite realistic---$3.00 a year, bimonthly---insinuated myself beside Krasner, praised his magazine, explained the misunderstanding, told him about his English requivalent, Private Eye, and gave him a five dollar bill and my name and address. I was hoping for two

dollars change, until I found out later five dollars was the cost of a two-year sub. The sort of magazine The Realist is, they probably figure the world won't last another two years.

That off my chest, Terry Carr and Andy Reiss and I collaborated on a Fan Colouring Book ("This is George Willick, in shining armour. Color his mail black, with a yellow streak.") but then everyone was off on the other current kick, the Wind-up Doll. Doing my best to adapt, I contributed the Ted White wind-up doll... you wind it up and it doesn't work...only to realise by the exaggerated reaction that I had struck some sort of exposed nerve. This fact was impressed on me even more in Chicago, when within five minutes of my arrival Ted Johnstone, straight in from LA, told me he'd heard my Ted White joke, but I didn't fully understand the reason until I caught up on my FAPA mailings. However Ted White himself that evening took it so well I wasn't much worried, and had quite an enjoyable evening apart from that damned hi-fi. I find it difficult enough to tune into one of a babble of voices without mechanically generated static.

Between the invention of radio and the development of the tuned circuit radio operators were largely selected on their ability to listen to a Morse message of one particular tonal quality to the exclusion of all the others thronging the atmosphere. For this brief period a talent developed in millions of years of evolution had its brief flowering of usefulness, and then fell back into desuetude. It remains, however, a survival characteristic for large parties. Madeleine has it and I haven't, facts which turned out to have unexpected results. At home the male fans are all naturally quiet speakers and Madeleine, being slightly hard of hearing, sometimes finds it difficult to follow the conversation closely. She has as it were to assemble what people say from partial data. But in America the general level of background noise is so much higher than in Ireland that everyone talks much louder and Madeleine could hear them as well as I could. And having this mysterious ability to separate out voices she was able to join in conversations quite happily, whereas I became the one who was hard of hearing. I could usually strain out what people said, but it took that little extra time that loses conversational opportunities, so the bigger and noisier the party the quieter I tended to become. I still enjoyed myself as much, however, because I like listening to interesting conversation, and it was nice to see Madeleine enjoying herself. This was the girl who had been wondering what she would say to people!

One disappointment was that Walter Breen hadn't arrived as expected, and as the evening wore on Esther Davis became increasingly worried. She telephoned his apartment but there was no answer, and she wanted someone to go round and see if he was all right. When no one did this she seriously suggested telephoning the police and asking them to check: even I, unaccustomed to the local mode of life could see that this suggestion was not greeted with any degree of enthusiasm.

At about ten o'clock Krasner said he had to go and do his radio spot and asked if we would suggest something for him to say. (The casual manners of American radio are almost blasphemous to one accustomed to the BBC.) Someone told him a Harlan Ellison story, and he duly repeated it on the air half an hour later. It seems that Harlan was leaving a couple of girls home from a party at two o'clock in the morning when three men passed them. One of the girls said, "Look, Harlan, there's Richard Nixon." "You're kidding," said Harlan. "No, honest," said the other girl, "It was Nixon." So Harlan turned and shouted "Hi Dick!" The middle one of the three men stopped and, campaign reflexes taking over, shouted back, "Hi." Whereupon Harlan shouted, "You're a crook!"

I mentioned this unusual from of egoboo to Harlan three weeks later in Los Angeles and he was delighted. He told me what had happened afterwards. A big black

car had pulled up beside him and two men got out, pinned him to the wall and questioned him for half an hour about his political affiliations. "I told them," said Harlan plaintively, "I told them I didn't even belong to the Book of the Month Club."

After Krasner had signed off Ted conducted us to the subway, not having his car with him, and gave us instructions so explicit that we arrived at South Ferry as uneventfully as if we had been commuting for years. And still on our own we successfully made our way by train back to Grant City and Grant Place. We felt pleased with ourselves for finding this one street in the whole of America, until we realised we couldn't find Larry and Noreen's house in it. For one thing, the entire district had been rotated round 180° during our absence. For another thing while we knew the address all right, for some nightmare reason the house numbers were not consecutive. For a third, it was dark. It was raining heavily, and we went sneaking up to the doors of likely looking houses, like a drowning man in a Sargasso Sea of straws, striking matches to see the numbers. Finally Madeleine identified the Shaw residence by the station wagon in the driveway next door. We peeped in the window, saw a pile of magazines, knew this was it and tip-toed in the side door as previously instructed...to be greeted by the cheerful face of Larry, staying up late to catch up on his work. After half an hour's intensive talk we all went to bed, motivated by duty rather than inclination.

Wednesday 29th August

It's amazing how quickly you can get used to things. The pattern of the next morning seemed already familiar -- the train to the ferry, the view of Manhattan, getting lost in the subway. I still think we'd have been all right if we hadn't had to make a change in a three-tier station, and that I could have found our way quite competently in a mere hour or two more. But time was already short, so we surfaced resignedly and I waved for a taxi. This was only the second time in my life I had done this, and I felt cosmopolitan and sophisticated. Especially having an address to give as exotic as "52nd and Third", but I still didn't understand the street system well enough to risk being left at the corner of 52nd Avenue and Third St.

But even to a cosmopolitan sophisticate, it was heartwarming to see two familiar and friendly faces suddenly emerge from the anonymity of the New York crowd....two people who lived nine thousand miles apart converging to meet us here. As well as Ethel Lindsay and Ron Ellik there were Pat and Dick Lupoff and Peggy Rae McKnight, and in a few moments we were seven old friends having lunch together. Ron and Dick shared the duties of host so masterfully, calmly collecting our orders and relaying them to the waiter, that I had time to relax and look around at what could be seen of the restaurant. It was a place called Le Cave Henri Quatre, full of expensive-looking darkness, the only illumination in each alcove being a huge candle which the waiters had to reach across. The place was full of the atmosphere of high living, all crepe suzettes and charred armpits. It even had antique book matches, and a menu which looked like the illuminated charter of a mediaeval town.

Having eaten our way through several most delicious clauses, we eventually blinked our way into the daylight again, said a temporary farewell to Ron and Ethel and Peggy, and went along to the Lupoff apartment for a restful afternoon. We talked leisurely about books and fandom, strenuously avoided politics, and wrote a joint letter to Ian MaAulay on the electric typer. Later, Madeleine went to sleep for a while and I went out with Dick, watching wide-eyed at him preparing for the party. Accustomed to the hectic home-cooking of Oblique House festivities, I marvelled at the sophisticated techniques of delicatessens and paper plates. It was, I realized, Instant Hospitality -- just add money. A cup of coffee back at the flat, and suddenly it was time for the party and people were arriving.

In the months before the trip I used quite often to wake up in the middle of the

night with a nightmare. It was always the same nightmare. I was in the States: I had been there two or three weeks and was having a marvelous time...and then I realized I had not taken any notes. The shock was so vivid and the feeling of guilt so acute that I usually had to go downstairs and smoke a pipe before my nerves would recover enough to let me go back to sleep. Now, thinking of that wonderful party, I feel something of the same desperation at being able to remember so little. I made notes before we finally got to bed, but even then it had all gone: all that seven hours of good talk and laughter had vanished, leaving just a warm glow.

But I still have that and always will have, and that's something. But there are some details I dearly wish I could remember, like what Lee Hoffman and I said to one another when she suddenly appeared in the room. For some reason I hadn't been expecting her to be there---it seemed somehow too good to be true---and I said the first thing that came into my head. All I know is it seemed right at the time and what she said was right too, and that I remembered how Lee and I had always known what to say to one another. The years sloughed away from both of us, and we were back in the happy days of 1952. Everything was suddenly so nostalgic we half expected Max to walk in.

There were other pleasant surprises, too many to absorb. Jim Blish, for instance, who I thought was hundreds of miles from New York. We had a long but too short talk, in which I had barely recovered from the surprise and delight of meeting him before I was swept away like a cork in a current. I kept thinking I must get back to him, and then suddenly it was two in the morning and he had gone. Some time during that timeless interval I dimly remember there was food going about, but I didn't recognize it at the time, though I hadn't eaten anything since lunch. I had simply forgotten about eating. If that party had lasted long enough I would have starved to death without noticing it, and died happy.

The reason you don't remember the details of a good party is that you are fully engaged: there is no detached observer in the mind taking notes. But there was one time I was shocked into consciousness. Lee and I were sitting on the floor with five or six others whom I won't specify for fear of inaccuracy, when it suddenly came to me what a congenial homogenous group we were to have come together so improbably out of all the uncomprehending world. I thought to myself, this is one moment I must remember. "This is a nice group, isn't it?" I said in a sudden strange emotion. We smiled at one another, and then we were reminiscing about the life we had so curiously shared the past ten years. Terry Carr mentioned a joke about an ashtray I dimly remembered to have made in Chicago in 1952. I asked him how he'd heard of it and he said it was part of the folk-lore of American fandom but he'd read it in "The Harp Stateside." I was awed at the first but denied the second. Not only had I first, second and thirddrafted the Harp Stateside, stencilled it, run it off and collated it, but I had actually read it just before leaving Ireland again. (I thought it wasn't bad, if you're interested.) So I knew what was in it But nothing would convince Terry. "I'll bet you ...I'll bet you $1,784,66." he said.

"Done," I said, so Terry borrowed Dick's copy of THS and retired from the conversation. Later he emerged, admitting he owed $1,784.66. "Good news for Axe readers," I called to Larry "Refunds after all."

But Terry confessed he didn't happen to have that much money, so I magnanimously said I would take it out in subs to Lighthouse, keeping him publishing till Halley's Comet. But Terry had the last word. "Make a note," he told Peter Graham. "Next issue, another check square on the back cover. "You are Walt Willis and the price of this copy is $1,784.66."

Lots of nice things happened at that party, even pleasanter than winning such

large sums of money. Dave Kyle blew in with Ruth and two huge bouquets for Ethel and Madeleine. It was a lovely and Kyle-like gesture, but between you and me I think Madeleine appreciated even more the corsage of five little roses that Jim Blish gave her.

There were things that were sad too: but only in retrospect, for how was I to know that so soon I was seeing some people for the last time. Jim Blish, for instance, whom I had met long enough to like as a person as much as I admired him as a writer, and Bob Pavlat who had turned out to be so unaccountably different. I had always thought of him as small, pale and quiet, but here he was in the flesh, big, brown and expansive, obliterating in ten minutes the image I had built up in ten years. But I didn't regret its passing: the new Pavlat was even better. Then there were people I didn't even get to talk to properly, like Lin Carter, and people that weren't even there, like Jeff Wanshel. He telephoned me from Larchmont to say hello, and asked me to call him when I got back to New York in the far off unimaginable future. I never did, what with the bother about the luggage and everything.

There was another telephone call, Earl Kemp, all the way from Chicago. It was magical and almost fearfully thrilling to be feeling almost at home in a Manhattan apartment, and then to hear a voice from the dark interior of America and be reminded I was still on the fringe, and how much more was to come.

The Shaws had gone home early, Larry being tired from so much recent overwork, so Ted White drove us to the ferry about two o'clock, with Terry Carr and Peter Graham. It was a long Wagnerian journey through near-deserted streets, with the Void editorial board singing and going through their vaudeville routines in the front seat. We got a taxi to Grant Place from the ferry and tiptoed to bed about four, after scribbling a few hopelessly inadequate notes.

Thursday 30th August

When we awoke we were well into Thursday, the day we were leaving for Chicago. Noreen had her hands full with the two young children, so we thought the best thing we could do would be to go along to Manhattan and have lunch there, leaving our luggage in the bus station and wandering about seeing the sights.

We packed leisurely, leaving behind a few odds and ends not likely to be required between here and the Pacific. But even without the keys of Oblique House the bags were heavy, and got heavier all the way to the station.

When we were about a hundred yards away we saw the train coming, and I broke into a lumbering trot. I had not previously tried running in New York in the summer carrying two heavy suitcases and wearing a tweed jacket, and I did not regret that my life hereto had been deprived of this experience. At the station entrance a thoughtful porter told me not to run, the train would wait for us. I slowed down gratefully, and it did. On board the friendly conductor greeted us as regular customers. I like the Staten Island railroad.

We decided to save 30¢ this time and took a taxi direct to the Greyhound terminal. Directly, that is, via the docks. There the driver pointed out the Mauretania from which, we thought, in another probability world in which we had not been invited to the West Coast, we were just now disembarking. For once we had a communicative driver, the others having been more like Trappist monks than the fictional New York cabbie, and I was naive enought to ask him a question the answer to which even Madeleine knew. What, I asked, was the figure "91" underneath the time in the big signs outside banks? I thought it was the humidity index, or the current value of the dollar or something. My only excuse is that I'm not accustomed to figures like that

being temperatures. The official handbook for Youghal in our sub-tropical south refers, I noticed the other day, to its "high summer temperature, 65 degrees".

At the entrance to the Greyhound depot we stopped, appalled. The place was like a slow-motion stampede in a slaughterhouse. Great lines of people extruded from every departure door and ticket window, merging in a milling mass in the middle of the hall. It was the first time I had come up against the mundane aspects of Labor Day weekend. I left Madeleine to mind the baggage and plunged into the melee to find an empty locker. There were banks of them all over the place, all full. I went back to Madeleine to report lack of progress and made a more extensive foray, finding more lockers, on the bus departure platforms. On the departure platform for Poughkeepsie I found an empty one, returned to base and battering-rammed my way back with the suitcases, only to find that the larger case couldn't go in. There were, I now noticed, two types of lockers, the ones on the bottom rows being larger and 25¢ instead of 20¢. I got Madeleine a glass of orange juice and tried again, concentrating on the bottom rows. It was hopeless. Not only were all the lockers engaged, but there were people lurking in front of them ready to pounce.

I was still regarding all this as part of the adventure, but the temperature and the emotional pressure were getting too much for Madeleine, to whom American bus stations were a new and alarming experience. She said she couldn't sit still any longer, so I took my turn to wait while she cased the women's restrooms. I saw what she meant. When she got back we both felt we had to get out of here, so we went out into the street again to get something to eat. Boyd Raeburn had warned us never to eat even near a bus station, but our baggage outweighed the weightiest advice, and we went into a diner a few doors away. At least it had a huge fan overhead, which must be the biggest in the States outside Berkeley. Feeling as if a helicopter was about to land on us, we had hamburgers and turkey sandwiches and melon.

Refulled if not refreshed, we made our way grimly back to Greyhound. After another vain search for a locker I figured there was no point in both of us being anchored in this Turkish bath, so I sent Madeleine out to buy some underclothes to take our minds off our troubles. Left alone I lugged the cases up to the gallery and sat down to sweat out the rest of the afternoon. I knew it would be just as warm up here, warmer if anything because hot air rises, but there was less noise and turmoil. Psychologically, it was cooler.

After about half an hour some gangster came along to retrieve his sawn-off shot gun, leaving a locker vacant not ten yards away. Slowly and painfully I leapt to my feet, staggered along with the cases, put my foot in the open locker, fished out my quarter and bent down to check the instructions.

It was at once absolutely clear to me that I was the victim of a vast conspiracy, the ramifications of which were far beyond my feeble understanding. In this place, and this place alone, the large lockers on the bottom row were two dimes. I did not happen to have two dimes, having farsightedly traded them in for a quarter.

One thing more was also clear to me, I was not going to take my foot out of that locker. Anyone else wanting to use it was going to have to stow an amputated foot along with his luggage. I was going to keep my foot in that locker until Madeleine came back if necessary. Meanwhile I went through all my pockets three times, and I had ten of them in that suit. Then I made a public appeal to the weary would-be travellers sitting in front of me. "Anybody got two dimes for a quarter?"

I don't know what has happened to American enterprise, for there was a very poor response to this investment bargain. All that happened was that a colored lady a few seats away excavated in her purse, produced a solitary dime and smiled regretfully.

Hopping on my left foot, I swivelled round and brcadcast my appeal in the other direction. At the second transmission, on a tighter beam, a middle-aged white lady about ten seats away also produced a single dime.

As all of you will understand who have stood for any length of time on one leg in a bus station in a heat wave on Labor Day weekend, a mere distribution problem like this is nothing. I hopped back so I could see the colored lady and asked her if she had another ten cents. She had, I introduced her to the other dime owner and supervised by remote control the necessary transaction which left her with two dimes. I gratefully gave her a quarter for them and put the cases away. Turning back to thank her again, I found her fishing in her handbag. She gave me another five cents.

It was curious, but after only three days in America I was already color sensitive. If it had been the white lady I would, I realized, have told her to keep the five cents.

I went downstairs and found Madeleine coming to relieve me, with the secretly self-satisfied look of a woman who has just bought some sexy undies, and we both went out into the streets again feeling as if some great weight had been lifted from us, as indeed it had. I felt some sort of celebration was called for, some symbol of release, so we went into a cocktail bar called Hector's and ordered two Tom Collins. You would have to know me intimately to realize what a daring reckless thing this was for me to do. I'm a very occasional drinker having failed, despite thirty years of endeavour, to acquire a taste for alcohol, and I had never bought a cocktail before nor any drink in the states at all.I ordered a Tom Collins partly because they were the only cocktail I knew, and I knew there was ice in them, and partly because I'd had them on the Neptunia ten years ago and they had a sentimental association.

Hector's version of the drink was far nicer than the Neptunia's and indeed they were the first alcoholic drink I ever really enjoyed, but there was more to it than that. You would have to have shared my humdrum provincial life at home to realize how profound was the sense of wonder I felt to be sitting in a cocktail bar in Manhattan, waiting for a bus to Chicago. It was a sensation worth prolonging, but the bar was filling up and I had an uneasy idea I should have tipped the bartender, so we left.

We turned a corner and found ourselves on Broadway, among the tourists traps. Larry and Noreen had warned us about these shops, but Madeleine saw a necklace she liked at some incredible price. I drifted in after her, irrestibly drawn by the transistor radios. I never could resist well made electronic equipment. (Remind me to tell you about my fabulous collection of Air Ministry surplus .1 mfd. capacitors.) While one salesman was beating himself against the brick wall of Madeleine's sales resistance, the other descended on me like a wolf on a particularly naive sheep. While Madeleine was still refusing fifty cent necklaces I had bought a ten dollar transistor radio and was already regretting it. I had meant to get one for my daughter Carol, but not to carry it to the West Coast and back, and I knew I had been overcharged for the batteries at least. On the other hand maybe I was lucky to get out before I bought an entire hi-fi system, and it was a nice little radio and Carol was delighted with it and the envy of her school.

It was five o'clock by now, one hour to bus time, so we started back in case we lost our way and found ourselves outside Hector's again with still forty minutes to spare and in sight of the bus station. We went in for some more Hector nectar, and it seemed from the way the barman greeted us as as old friends and regular customers that it had been all right not to tip him He even brought us a huge full tray of little things to eat, and Madeleine didn't believe me when I whispered to her that I thought they were free. I didn't really believe it myself. Free food is just not part of our

cosmos.

Back at Greyhound I was even more glad we had already got our tickets. The bedlam was worse than ever, and I was almost sure I recognized some of the people in the ques. I extracted our cases from that hard-won locker and we took our place at the end of the line for Chicago, already alarmingly large. At intervals we peered up and down the line, but saw no other fans. At last the line moved forward and for the first time we used the strategy I had worked out: I gave Madeleine her ticket and she got onto the bus to book a double seat, while I checked the baggage at the side. That done, I struggled on to my first Greyhound bus in ten years.

They had green glass in the windows now I noted, swimming through the submarine depths peering for Madeleine. I was beginning to think we had got onto different buses when I found her on the last seat but one, defending my half with tooth, claw, and a copy of Lighthouse. I showed her how to work the reclining seat and then looked around to see what else was new. There were adjustable headrests and footrests, but it was still Good Old Greyhound. Neither of them worked. Nor did one of the reading lamps, and we were over a wheel arch. And as we whined out of the depot, I realized one thing I had forgotten about Greyhound buses. The engine is at the rear.

But none of this mattered: we were on our way to Chicago.

Thursday/Friday, 30/31 August

As the Scenicruiser threaded its way south-west through New York and its New Jersey environs we saw some fine bridges and terrifyingly complex road formations, but were inspired with awe rather than surprise because these were things we had seen in photographs. Similarly I suppose a first instinctive reaction among fans to live tv pictures of the lunar landscape will probably be how closely it resembles the extrapolations of Bonestell and Pal. What did surprise us was the occasional outcrop of nature and unreconstructed humanity---marshes, dumps, waste ground---which stood out against the metropolitan landscape like a beercan on the Moon.

But soon we were on the turnpike, which is the ultimate so far in man-made environments and seems to bear out the theory that as travel gets faster it gets duller. All you see on turnpike travel, unless the configuration of the countryside is intrinsically interesting, is signs. It's rather like flying by instruments, in that all you know about where you are is the basic data necessary for navigation. Which is as frustrating as making passes at a woman blindfold, knowing only her vital statistics. Similarly two hundred years of American history are inadequately represented by seventeen signs intimating the proximity of Philadelphia, and it's depressing to learn you have missed it altogehter by the mere fact that the signs are now heralding Harrisburg. It was, I thought, rather like space travel. You are transported in a sealed container through vast barren distances at speeds so high that any accident would be fatal, intersecting the orbits of exotic places----SIRIUS PLANETS NEXT SEVEN EXITS, ALDEBARAN 73 LIGHT YEARS----but never actually seeing anything but artificial refuelling satellites, Howard Johnson asteroids.

We were far from losing our sense of wonder, but it was being converted into something more hypnotic than hysterical. The first Howard Johnson, for instance, had been a tremendous thrill. These fabulous diners had been one of my clearest memories of 1952, and I delighted in introducing Madeleine to all their marvels---the chocolate malts and orange juice (though both seemed to have got alarmingly more expensive), the rest of the fabulous menues, the little toy cartoons of cream, the free iced water, maps and matches, the automatic vendors and all the other fascinating things on sale---and she was terribly impressed. But as the night wore on I began to feel like the unfortunate Mr. Gall in Peacock's "Headlong Hall", when he

tried to lay down the law about landscape gardening.

"I distinguish," he said, "the picturesque and the beautiful, and I add to them, in the laying out of grounds, a third and distinct character, which I call "unexpectedness".

"Pray sir," said his enemy Mr. Milestone, "by what name do you distinguish this character, when a person walks round the grounds for a second time?"

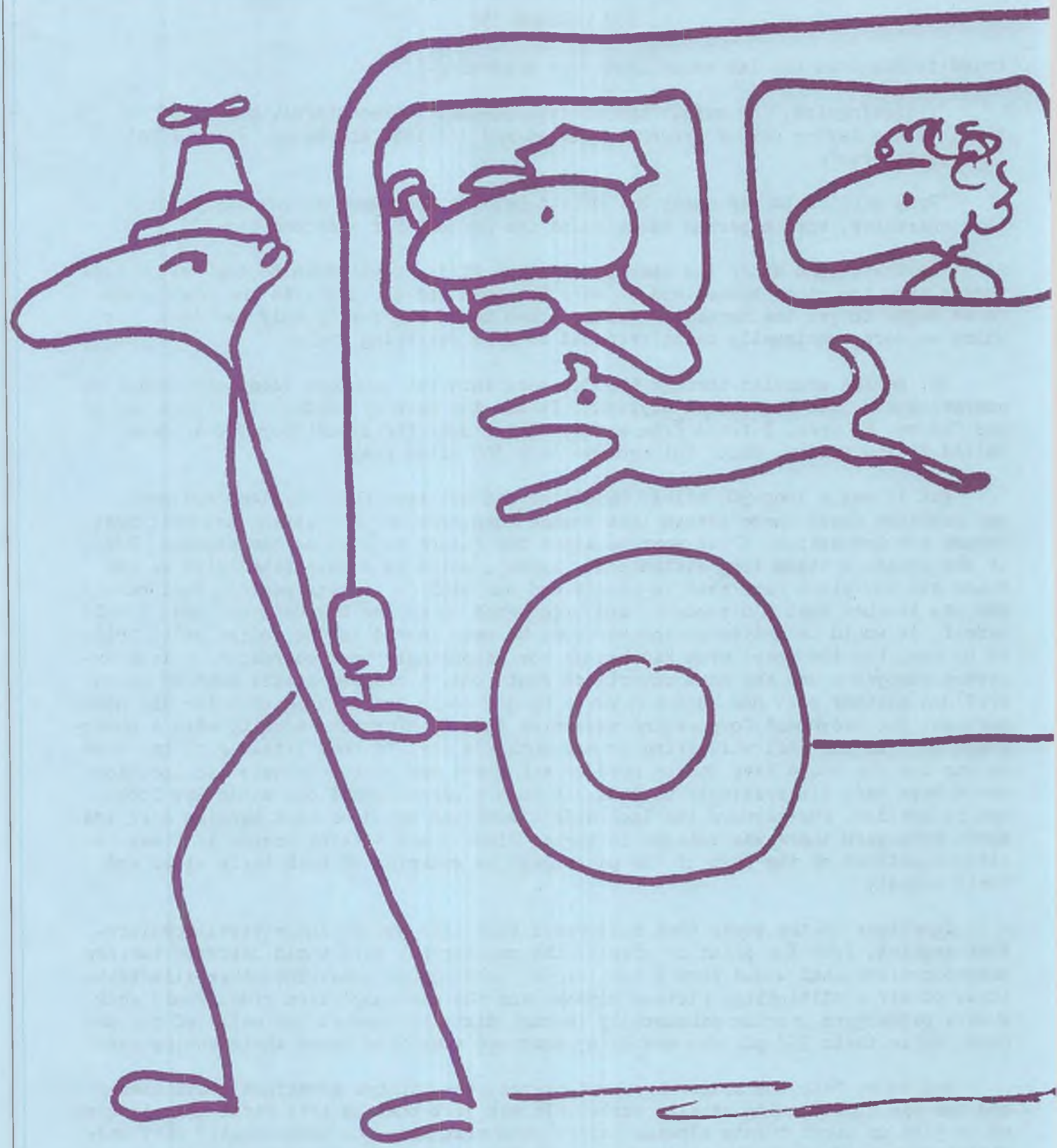
For the second diner was exactly like the first, right down to the fellow customers from the other buses, and so were the next and the next. As the night wore on we began to get the dreamlike feeling that there was really only one diner, to which we were continually being returned in some recurring cycle.

But having stumbled through the darkness into yet another identical diner, we emerged again into unexpected daylight. It was the dawn of Friday, the first day of the Chicon. We were, I found from a tiny notice over the diner door, at a place called Indian Meadow, Ohio. Chicago was only 300 miles away.

But it was a long 300 miles. Madeleine had not been able to sleep and now it was daylight again there seemed less chance than ever of her getting any real rest before the Convention. I was worried about the future as well as the present. For if she couldn't stand long distance bus travel, which as a calculated risk we had taken all our plans were shot to pieces and our $198.00 tickets wasted. Fortunately, she was tougher that I'd thought, and brightened up as the day went on. And, I told myself, it would be better on another bus. We were inured to the engine noise below us by now, but the wheel arch had become correspondingly more obtrusive. A less expected annoyance was the much advertised rest room, a cramped little cubicle which provided neither rest nor room and which by now could scarcely be used for any other purpose. The Greyhound Corporation advertise this Scenicruiser amenity with a photograph of a little girl whispering in her mother's ear. If that little girl had been on our bus she would have had no need to ask where the rest room was: its location would have been distressingly obvious. It hadn't been cleaned out since New York, and it smelled. Furthermore the lock didn't work and the door kept banging open and shut, even when there was someone in there. Since I was sitting beside it I was tacitly appointed by the rest of the passengers as guardian of both their sleep and their modesty.

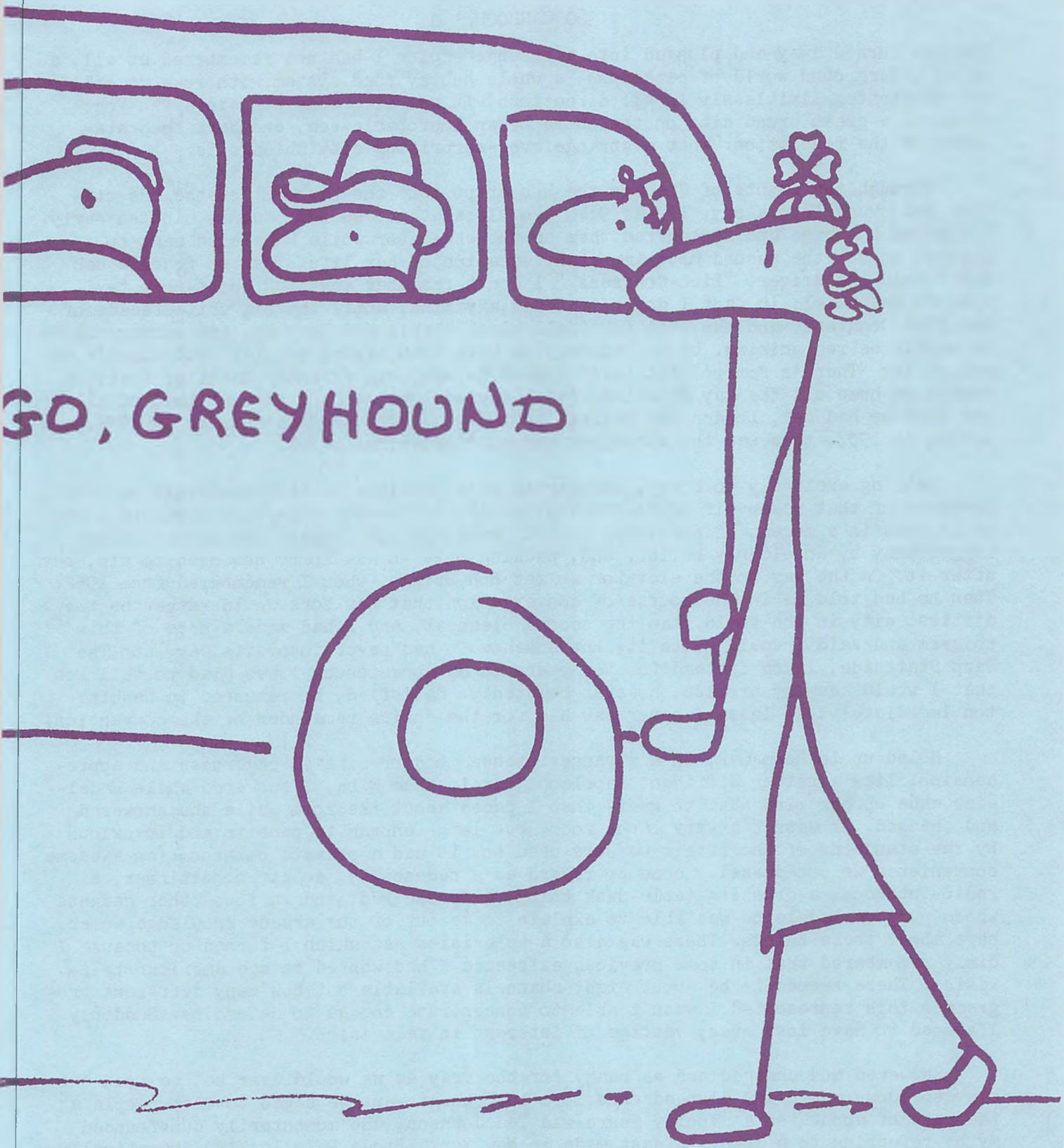
Sometimes in the weeks that followed I felt like publishing a rival Scenicruiser leaflet, from the point of view of the passengers. This would describe the new Obscenicruiser, and would show a little girl holding her nose. The other illustrations, of air conditioning, picture windows and the air-suspension ride, would show sweaty passengers peering exhaustedly through dirty windows at the walls of bus depots, while their 35¢ pillows are being snatched away from below their aching heads.

But to be fair the seats were comfortable, the windows sometimes quite clean and the air conditioning usually worked. It was just that on this first trip it seemed to give up about twenty minutes before each rest stop, so consistently that Madeleine suspected it was by arrangement with Howard Johnson. If so the stratagem certainly worked on me. The first night I had two chocolate malts, four glasses of orange juice, one orange drink and one cup of coffee. As you can deduce from that sequence I was getting worried about the money I was spending, so I finished off defiantly with four glasses of iced water. But as I pointed out to Madeleine at the time I was eating less while I drank more and Howard couldn't rely on making a profit unless he charged for iced water. The reason for the peculiar behavior of the air conditioning system was simply that they took on a load supply. Actually it didn't particularly worry me,because I can stand a lot of heat and I like being made thirsty



as long as there is chocolate malt and orange juice about. In fact these beautiful thirsts are one of the things I love about long distance bus travel in the States, and if Greyhound want to save on their air conditioning and use the money to bring down the price of chocolate malts that would be just fine by me.

Since dawn the big green and white signs had been presaging Chicago, but soon after nine they began to announce routes to various parts of the city itself. We had seen enough of turnpikes by now to realize that this didn't mean the city centre



was yet anywhere near, and the main question in our minds was whether the bus would take the much heralded "Chicago Skyway", listed among the alternatives at each parting of the ways. At fork after fork our driver silently answered yes and at least we saw the road before us rise into the air, soaring gracefully above the early twentieth century's middle of unplanned urbanisation. An impressive but smog-limited view of miles of city and then, sooner that I had expected, we were in the unforgettable Chicago of the lake shore---parks, fountains, great soaring buildings and, as fantastic as ever, the unexpected sea of Lake Michigan dotted with little white ships. Then

the bus turned away and plunged into a strange region I had not remembered at all, a weird underground world of catacombs, a whole subway road system with rows of pillars stretching limitlessly in all directions. It was like something in a Van Vogt novel... a great proud city on the shore of an improbable sea, and here the catacombs of the revolution. What a strange ever-surprising city Chicago is.

Through the crypts of Chicago the bus crept into the basement of the bus station and swung into a bay. It was 9:40 a.m. local time: we were twenty minutes early. I claimed the bags and manoeuvred them up the escalator while Madeleine went to freshen up for the second most important occasion of her life. Then we found a cab and I told the driver, "Pick-Congress." I don't remember anything about that taxi ride to the hotel; in fact I doubt if I saw anything, until the big white facade of the Pick-Congress, and the cool foyer all black marble and leather, and strange faces we should be recognising. Until suddenly we were both trying to grab each other's arm and saying "There's Forry!" And there indeed he was, big friendly familiar Forry, a breath of home all the way from L.A. As he beamed towards us I thought that of all the ways we had met, London and Belfast in 1951, Chicago and Los Angeles in 1952, and London in 1957, this was the strangest and most wonderful of all.

Talking excitedly to Forry, insofar as it's possible to talk excitedly in the presence of that reservoir of relaxation, we drifted to the reception desk and signed in: and in a moment of sobriety, looked round for our luggage. We saw it being lugged away by an elderly bellboy and, pausing only to ask Forry how much to tip, set after it. On the way to the elevator we met Bob Briggs, whom I remembered from 1952. Then he had told me in the course of conversation that New York would rather be the dirtiest city in the world than the second cleanest, and I had made a note of this epigram and said I would quote it. But somehow it had never found its way into The Harp Stateside, lying instead for ten years on my conscience. I was glad to tell Bob that I would keep my promise, however belatedly. Satisfied, he returned to Washington immediately: at least I never saw him for the entire remainder of the convention.

Holed up in Room 642, in a strange intense mood of mingled eagerness and apprehension, like a rather diffident Napoleon just in from Elba, I showered while Madeleine made up her mind what to wear. Then I paced about the room while she showered and changed. It wasn't a very large room, but large enough to pace in and luxurious by the standards of the hotels we were used to. It had a private bathroom (an awesome convenience we could easily come to regard as a necessity), an air conditioner, a radio-intercom, a dressing-table-desk thing, a double bed, and various other gadgets whose purpose Madeleine was able to explain to me out of the arcane knowledge women have about these things. There was also a television set which I turned on because I dimly remembered that in some previous existence I had wanted to see American television. There seemed to be about eight channels available but how many different programmes this represented I wasn't able to concentrate enough to determine. Suddenly I seemed to have lost every vestige of interest in television.

Showered and changed and as ready for the fray as we would ever be, we took the elevator down again and plunged once more into the foyer. We began to meet people at the rate of about ten a minute. There was Ted Johnson, who momentarily dumbfounded my by referring to a joke I'd just made in New York, Bruce Pelz looking dramatically different from everything I had expected, Jack Harness in a shirt dramatically like what I had expected, Bjo whom I would have easily recognized from 1952 as a rather paler Betsy Jo McCarthy....but it would be misleading to give impressions of people now as if I were calm enough to make assessments at the time. Actually to give you the right idea of my state of mind I'd have to employ some sort of action writing technique, like telling you to tear these pages into fragments and throw them into the air like confetti, reading them as they shower round your head.

Besides one's impressions of people may change as one knows them better, so let's wait until we have parted with them and can recollect them in tranquillity. Unfortunately one of the people we were now about to part with was Theodore Sturgeon, and there was no tranquillity in which to remember him for three days. But then there wasn't much to remember. He came up to me and said how glad he was to see me and that we must have a long talk later. He then disappeared, with a characteristic agonized smile, and I never spoke to him again. Nevertheless I felt that my long standing friendship with Sturgeon had ripened since our last meeting in 1952, when he addressed six words and a smile to me without I think knowing who I was. I felt that in another few decades Ted and I would be regular buddies. I was satisfied. I don't mean to sound snide: sincerely, I admire Sturgeon's writing so much I'm quite happy to worship from afar lest any clay become visible on closer inspection of the junction between his legs and the pedestal on which I have placed him.

A seventeen hour bus journey is not the best acclimation for a convention, and after some indefinite time we felt the need of some peace and quiet: yet we hated to miss anything. Forry and food seemed the ideal answer, so we separated ourselves out and strolled along to a shop window restaurant. There we calmed down enough to eat and listen to Forry fill us in on what had been happening in the last few years at the other end of the unbreakable but tenuous line of communication between him and us. This had started when we asked him the time, having remembered the existence of that property of the continuum. He consulted his wrist watches. We asked with interest though without surprise why he wore two, and he explained that he liked watches and since he had plenty of room on his wrist he wore two, one on local time and the other on his publisher's time in New York, usually four hours different. Thus he knew instantly where his publisher was likely to be if he wanted to telephone him. It seemed quite logical to us, and if I had two such nice watches and a publisher in New York I would do the same, but Forry confided that this was one of the things about him which had annoyed Wendayne and led to their divorce. She objected to unconventionalities like this, while he saw no reason to change since he wasn't doing anyone any harm. A woman, he thought, should accept her husband as he was and not try to make him into someone else. They were nice watches, he explained, and indeed he had another dozen strapped to the arm of a statue at home. "I wouldn't wear just any two old watches," he said wryly.

Back at the hotel Forry was instantly apprehended and taken into custody by a movie-house of monster fans. Abandoning him to his fate we turned away and there to our delight was the welcome face of Dick Eney, now ranking as an old friend from back east, and beside him another one from even further east, the tiny but indomitable figure of Ethel Lindsay. That Ethel and I should be together at a Chicago convention was quite incredible, and we both knew it. "You know, Walt," said Ethel, "if I really believed we were here I would just go into that corner and have hysterics. The only thing that saves me is knowing the alarm clock will go off any minute."

"You should worry," I said. "Let me tell you about this recurring dream I seem to have...."

Just then I almost came to believe I really was dreaming, because I noticed some young women wearing strange name-badges and Eney told me with a heroically straight face that they were Catholic girls. Catholic girls again, it was too much. Instantly I thought of the one person in the world with whom I could properly share the wonder of this, and like magic there she was. "lee," I said, "there are Catholic girls again."

"I know," she said simply. "Korshak finally got them out of the Convention Hall."

"Lee," I said wildly, "let's go up on the roof and look for Max. Or go along to Wimpy's and talk to Sam Moskowitz. Nobody else is talking to him these days".

"Walt, you are forgetting something," said Lee. "Rich Elsberry is watching us".

"Well, all right," I agreed "But let's go and have a chocolate malt anyway.I've still got that cow on my shoulder."

"So that's what it is," said Lee, with her uncanny gift for the esoteric allusion, "I thought it was the hamburger you promised to wear in your buttonhole."

I couldn't match that---why I still can't remember the context in which I wrote it eleven years ago---so I just went over and extricated Forry and introduced him to Lee all over again, as I had done in 1952, and took everybody to the hotel drugstore and bought them chocolate malts.

As we sipped them happily I noticed Lee was already wearing the little harp brooch I had bought over for her, after scouring Belfast for one exactly like the one I brought her in 1952. Curiously, I didn't remember having given it to her yet. I felt in my pocket. I hadn't. There was a brooch still in my pocket, accompanied now by a warm glow in my heart. Why, the dear girl had kept that harp brooch all those years and brought it out for this occasion. I took out the new brooch and silently showed it to her and we just smiled at one another: there was nothing we needed to say.

Conventions and life in general being what they are, this idyllic interlude didn't last long. The next thing I remember is being accosted in a corridor with the gleeful news that Jim Webbert was here and looking for me. But apparently a very different Webbert from the brash youth I had pilloried in 1952. He had changed completely. The new Webbert was adult, mature, strong and had studied Judo and Karate, so that he could kill a man with one blow of his cigarette lighter. Terrified, I retreated to the protective darkness of the bar, where I cowered behind Bill Donaho with a loyal bodyguard comprising Lee, Forry, Ted Johnstone, Andy Main, Dick Schultz and reinforcements which arrived from time to time. Actually I did meet Jim and found him indeed a different person, so that I regretted even more blackening his name on the assumption he had left fandom for good.

The bar was a most peculiar place called The Highland Room. The drinks were served by pretty girls in short kilts and charged for by a strange system which must have originated in Aberdonian hostelries frequented by rich and guileless English tourists. Every drink ordered at a table throughout a session was put on a single bill which was presented to the last to leave, so that to buy a single round at a time everyone would have to go out and come in again. I could see that this would make for a quick turnover of clientele but it was singularly unsuitable for conventions.

However on this occasion I was only too happy to play Casabianca. As I left to follow the others to the registration room we were invited to dinner by Jim Warren with Forry, John and Bjo Trimble, Bob Madle and Jock Root. I accepted with pleasure but also with secret relief at the fact that we had to register first. I wasn't hungry, and I knew if I ate now I would regret it. At times like these I'm prone to nervous indigestion, from which the only protection is fasting. So I waited quite happily at the end of a long line talking to Dick Schultz and others, while Forry hovered about impatiently. I think this was almost the last I saw of Dick Schultz. Next morning someone told me he was supposed to have been "monopolising me (maybe Rich Elsberry was there) and though I indignantly denied it I'm afraid someone may have said the same to Dick. It was true he had been with me for some hours, but by no means unwelcomely: indeed I appreciated his sensitive understanding of the most nostalgic mood of that first day, evidenced in his cartoons in the current Bane. The only criticism I could possibly make of him was that he appreciated some of my jokes more than

I did, and that's more an accomplishment than a fault.

It was while standing in this line holding a sort of unofficial audience with various people who came by, that I realized what a boon my special convention-attending suit was turning out to be. As you know, James White works in the tailoring department of a multiple store, and this suit was his own particular contribution to TAWF. It had been specially designed for attending American conventions being of a strong but light-weight Terylene mixture and having no less than ten pockets. Including one for holding American size fanzines, unfolded, one for the programme booklet, one as a sort of quick-draw holster for a notebook, and one in the waistband of the trousers for an American size billfold, so strategically placed that anyone wanting to pick my pocket would have had to seduce me first, and at least I would have got something for my money. This last pocket was quite a contribution to my peace of mind during the trip. In 1952 I had carried all my money in my hip pocket and for years afterwards I found myself in moments of stress tapping my bottom with the knuckle of my thumb to make sure it was there. Which of course it wasn't, and I hate to think of the effect on my subconscious of these multiple shocks.

But the use I was making of the suit now was one neither James nor I had envisaged. When you meet someone you have been looking forward to meeting for years, there is so much to talk about that you sometimes don't know where to start. There can actually be incredible frustrating moments of silence while each searches for some remark not too unworthy of such a climatic occasion. It helps to have something trivial, but immediate and comprehensible, to start things going. I broke a lot of log-jams with that tweed ice-breaker.

After half an hour or so Forry lost patience and following a whispered discussion with members of the Convention Committee at the registration table brought Madeleine and me to the front of the line, and when we had registered started to shepherd us in the direction of the dining room. But there was one little thing I had to do first. I pinned on my name badge, and then took out of my pocket something I had kept for sheer sentiment and could now, incredibly, use again. I pinned on the other lapel my 1952 name badge.

In the dining room I realized worriedly that I still wasn't hungry, though it was now quite late. But I couldn't sit there and fast, with such a congenial host and such pleasant company. And maybe I would be all right by the time the food arrived. So I ordered. But the service was too good, and now I faced an even worse problem. I couldn't leave the food my host was paying for, and it looked so delicious, and maybe I could chance it. So I did, only to realize almost immediately I had made the same mistake I had made with a certain hot nut fudge sundae in Los Angeles ten years ago. I listened dully to the scintillating conversation going on around me, wishing I could join in. But all I could do was sit there like a Buddhist monk contemplating my navel, or what was going on beneath it. John Trimble was wearing a badge saying "Repeal the 19th Amendment", the effect of which would be to strip women of their franchise, and outlining his programme subsequently. Forry advanced a rival slogan, "Repeal the Liberty Bell". It was, he explained innocently, not all it was cracked up to be.

At this point I whispered to Madeleine to apologize for me, and left hurriedly I had of course been exposed to Forry's puns before, so I knew he wouldn't feel guilty. By the time I got to my room the wave of nausea had receded, but I knew it would be back. I tried to make myself sick, but failed miserably, so I lay down to see if I could sleep it off. But neither my stomach nor my mind would settle--- here in Chicago I couldn't just lie there---so after a while I got up again. I had a shower and felt a little better, so I went downstairs again and found the dinner party over but Madeleine still bravely flying the family flag in the corridors. We met the

Busbys, the Grennells and Boyd Raeburn, who had just arrived. That alone seemed achievement enough for one day, and we decided to go to bed and conserve our energy. It was only about half ten, but after yesterday in New York and the night in the bus and the sort of day we'd had since, it seemed to us we must be exhausted if we only had the sense to realize it. So we stole away to our room and found it was so, and drifted off to sleep thinking happily of all those wonderful people around us whom we were to see more of tomorrow.

Saturday 1st September

So we were up bright and early next morning at the crack of 9:15 winding up slowly for the day buying postcards in the hotel drugstore and strange American breakfasts and endless cups of coffee with the few others who were alive at this hour. This peaceful prelude ended when I caught sight of the man whom some of you know as Robert Bloch. I whispered tensely to Madeleine, "There he is." The brave girl tidied her hair, adjusted her clothing and we went to confront him. I must say he rose to the occasion with all the old world gallantry one would expect from a member of an older generation. He gave Madeleine a lecherous look, whispered his room number in his ear and added as a further inducement that he knew what I had done with Max Keasler. "How are you going to ditch your husband?" was the way his suave advances continued.

Fortunately the Programme was now about to start, with the Introduction of Notables. As we passed the sign to the Florentine Room where this was to take place Bloch commented that they musn't know yet what fans were like, or they'd have called it The Quarantine Room. Inside we sat about two thirds of the way up on the right hand side and looked around. We had, I found, Forry Ackerman on one side and Dean Grennell just behind us. It seemed too good to be true, but..."Forry," I whispered, "have you ever met Dean Grennell?" He shook his head and looked around interestedly. "Dean," I said, in quiet triumph, "may I introduce you to Forry Ackerman?".

What greater honour could fall to a fan all the way from Ireland, I thought, than that of introducing Grennell to Ackerman? As if in answer, Doc Smith asked for my autograph, an accolade marred only by my good memory...I knew he collected autographs for his daughters. As I passed the book back I noticed the man directly behind me was wearing a name badge saying he was Harry Stubbs. I introduced myself and told him how James White had regarded it as the ultimate in egoboo when he was recently compared to Hal Clement. On behalf of Clement, Stubbs said he like James' work too, and I fixed the last three events firmly in my mind. All in all it was a couple of minutes guaranteed to impress the striped pants off James.

At 11:50 Dean McLoughlin and Howard Devore began to perform their own introduction of notables, taking the fans and pros neither respectively nor respectfully. Larry Shaw, introduced among the pros, stood up and said simply "I'm a fan," for which I admired him all the more. Many of McLoughlin's more willing candidates for professional honours were not there, including Fred Pohl and Cele Goldsmith. Nor was Vernon Coriell, though I carefully examined the chandeliers.

As the introductions went on and on my hands got too sore to clap any more an uneasy thought struck me. Now that I had introduced Grennell to Ackerman the stage was set for that Ultimate Pun, the one which would bring the world to an end. But I refused to have the world end now: I was enjoying it too much. So after all the notables had been duly introduced to one another we whisked Dean & Jean up to their room, ostensibly to discuss the panel that evening. The centrifugal forces of the convention had swept Forry safely away, so nothing worse occurred that afternoon than a small earthquake in Iran. I tremble to think what might have happened if Forry had been in that room with us. Dean showed us one of his guns and then combined all his various int-

erests by taking a photograph of Madeleine holding it and by saying casually that since this was a Mickey Spillane type shot he would take it with "Mike Hammera". So you can see how narrowly the world escaped extinction. *

We had learned only last evening what the subject of the panel was going to be (The Sense of Wonder) but already Dean had a Chairman's introduction all typed out, and said the rest of us were supposed to make short speeches too. This rather shook me because I had optimistically assumed that all a panel had to do was answer questions, so I borrowed Dean's typer and tried to compose something myself. But I found I couldn't write with other people present (I have these incantations to make, you see, and that cockerel bit makes rather a mess) so I went back to our room while Madeleine went downstairs to see if we could offer any help, material or otherwise, with the arrangements for the reception. She came back to report she'd been told just to run along and get ready, and this she proceeded to do while I finished my speech. (I don't mind writing speeches: maybe Sam Moskowitz and I should go into partnership.) She was pretty nervous, but managed to pull herself together, after which I zipped her up. We arrived at our reception only two minutes late.

I had never been the recipient of a Reception before, but I didn't find it all

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*THE FASTEST PUN IN THE MID-WEST

One of the great shots of the Chicon III probably was stillborn. I had fetched along a little .38 S&W Chiefs Special and snapped a memorable pic of Madeleine squinting across the sights in malevolent splendor.

"That was a Mickey Spillane-type photo, " I explained to Walt. He nodded politely and braced himself for the sting.

"That's why I shot it on mike hammera," I concluded.

Alas, I think that was on the 35mm cartridge that didn't get secured to the takeup reel, so the film never left the canister...

As Walt and Madeleine were leaving our hotel room, Walt tugged politely but futilely at the door, which tended to stick.

"Excuse me," I said, reaching past him to give the knob a savage wrench.

"It takes a strong Yank," I explained, as they made their exit. Walt regarded me with a dreamy smile.

Later, having left the convention, motouring up the tollway toward Fond du Lac (we would have motored, but I put in the extra u out of deference to our British passengers), we stopped off at the Lake Forest oasis for refreshments. The dining area is a large room, with a massive gridwork on the ceiling.

"Everytime I stop here," I remarked, "I get the feeling I'm beneath the plates of a gigantic waffle griddle."

"Walt glanced upward thoughtfully: "Yes, " he agreed, "closing in upon us, syruptitiously."

I recognized it as his revenge for the strong Yank line.

--Dean Grennell, 25 August 77, in a letter to the editor.

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that different from the rest of the convention. The difference was to everyone else. Sometimes the nicest people you could wish to meet don't introduce themselves for fear of pushing themselves forward, and the idea of setting aside a time when they're supposed to push themselves forward is a wonderful one. Whoever conceived it---Larry and Noreen I think---deserves an Award, and already has our undying gratitude. It is not only nice to meet people, but a relief to know you haven't missed anyone who wants to meet you.

Someone had had a little piece printed up about us, which had been issued with the program booklet. I glanced through it then, blushed furiously, and haven't dared to read it since, though I think Madeleine knows it by heart. The Shaws and the Lupoffs were making Pepsi-Cola flow like water. Dean Grennell had made us a little plaque reading "Oblique House: Chicago Wing" which I put on the wall. Robert Bloch made a welcome and typically thoughtful appearance at the beginning and the end to lighten the load. Bob Tucker manifested himself at the Convention for the first time in the middle of it, escorted by Lee Hoffman, and was immediately swallowed up in the throng. But not before he was noticed by Ted Johnstone, to whom I was talking at the time. "Is that Tucker?" he asked wistfully. "I've always wanted to meet him." So I pushed my way through the crowd with Ted, asked Lee "Is this where you get to meet Tucker?" and performed another notable introduction.

Altogether we thought the reception was wonderful, and the only sad memory of it is that it was virtually the last time we talked to Tucker. It's curious how one can regard as an old friend someone one has met only twice in ten years. Curious, that is, to anyone who hasn't met Tucker.

Quite suddenly, it seemed everyone had gone and so had the whole afternoon. Exhausted but happy we went out to dinner with Ethel, the Lupoffs and the Grennells. On the way Dean saw in an art shop window a plaster statuette of the head and the bosom of an Egyptian princess, and said he was going to buy it for the National Fantasy Fan Federation. It was, he understood, a girl named Neffertiti. I agreed this was a good idea; in fact I'd heard they were expecting a bust in the N3F.

While we were away at dinner the venue of the panel discussion was changed, but unfortunately someone told me about it. They rushed up to me in great agitation, apologizing for the fact that the event had had to be moved to a smaller room. I received this blow stoically. The smaller the room the less people would be there, which I considered a trend in the right direction. I'd have been even more pleased with a telephone booth.

So, it turned out, would have been nearly everyone else, and indeed the room we had been moved to did have one of the characteristics of a telephone booth, in that there seemed to be as much electronic gadgetry as people. Initially everyone was quite pleased to see this, because the doors couldn't be closed on account of the crowd and there was quite a lot of noise from outside. But after some inaudible speeches and only too audible interruptions it emerged that the microphones were connected only to tape recorders, so that the only people able to hear everything were Frank Dietz and posterity. It was rather like one of those fake events arranged solely for television, in which the live audience is a mere backdrop. However the confusion over the microphones had one extraordinary result: there was no microphone near me so I didn't rely on it, and was one of the more audible speakers. Altogether I was reasonably satisfied with my little contribution---I even got laughs with both my jokes ---and sat back almost happily to await the questions. And then some loud voiced character got up and said, "I would like to ask Mr. Willis to make another 3 or 4 minute speech." Quite taken aback I just said "Tomorrow", meaning the banquet. I thought the implied criticism or so I considered it at the time, was unfair, because four minute speeches by five panellists were quite enough for a one hour discussion program. And so it turned out, because the panel speeches took so long there was time for only a

few questions from the audience and the event broke up in general frustration. The brightest moment had been when one young fan completely dumbfounded Dick Eney by referring to him as "one of your generation" in the course of some remarks about contemporary sf. Quite apart from the question of the degree of senility of Dick Eney, it still seems extraordinary to me that there could be fans who feel about the science fiction of today as we felt about that of the Fabulous Forties. It is rather like finding your children prefer tinned salmon and powered eggs.

Making a rapid escape from the panel room I went upstairs to shower the sweat off. Then I zipped Madeleine into her blue ball gown and we went downstairs to see the fancy dress. In the big room there was a huge crowd seeming to consist entirely of strangers and photographers, in the middle of which we caught an occasional glimpse of people in fancy dress shuffling around in a solid circle, as if trapped on a congested turntable. It was, apparently, supposed to be a parade, but there was nowhere for them to parade to; all that happened was that more fancy dresses crushed into the circle and none got out. Finally we gave up the chair on which we had been standing to yet another photographer...this seemed to be another fake event staged for posterity...and retreated to the outlying regions. There we met Bob Madle, who abruptly asked me if I ever kept the sf magazines I used to buy in the Thirties. I couldn't honestly say I did, because my mother kept throwing them out under the mistaken impression that they were not great literature, but after more interrogation Bob elicited an admission that I had held onto a couple of science fiction books. He then told me that as an old-time Collector from way back I was qualified to attend the First Fandom Party, and was hereby invited. Proud and kind of humble as I was to receive this fatted calf from ancestral fandom, it was quite a shock to absorb the additional information that I was in fact two years older than father-figure Bob Madle himself.

By now various entrants from the fancy dress parade had been expelled from the melee like pips from an orange and were mutely challenging people to guess who they were...a particularly testing task for us, who had bearly learned to recognize them in their normal guise. The most remarkable transformation was that of Bruce Pelz, who had performed the notable feat of wearing fancy dress throughout the Convention until he looked quite normal in it, and had then changed his clothes, shaved off his beard, had his hair cut and left off his glasses.

The judging apparently over, a very loud dance band started to play and conversation became impossible within the blast area. We stayed for a while watching the twist session in which only about a dozen people were participating, half of whom seemed to be Boyd Raeburn, and then fled to the back of the hall carrying the fragments of our eardrums. Bruce Pelz and Jock Root with great initiative pulled across a folding and partly soundproof partition and we talked with them and various others until nearly 2 a.m. Then we went out with Ted White to eat, roaming the warm and brightly lit streets of Chicago happily until Ted found a place to which he thought he could entrust us.

Back at the hotel Ted went to bed, and we thought that before we went to the First Fandom Party we would take up a couple of other invitations we'd been given the night before, from Marsha Brown and Don Ford. At Marsha's we sat for a while on a bed listening to Jerry Pournelle and H. Beam Piper singing obscure Scottish folksongs at the top of their by no means obscure voices, and to Jerry castigating some other folksinger who had apparently struck it rich and was driving about in foreign cars. "What's so folksy about a Ferrari?" he roared indignantly.

On the way out we were invited to breakfast at the Playboy Club and regretfully declined, on the grounds that we'd just had dinner, or something, and had two more invitations to take up. But on the way to Don Ford's room we met Don himself, with Lou Tabakow and Stan Skirvan, and he told us the First Fandom Party was over. We sat

in Don's room talking quietly and congenially for a while, and then in came the man who had asked me to make another speech. It turned out that his name was Fry, and he was still asking questions. He wanted me to expound further on the Sense of Wonder, and also to explain to him just why I don't want to speak in public. At the time, for some reason, neither of these subjects was irrestibly attractive to me, and anyway it was obvious that Don had intended to go to bed soon, so I side-stepped the argument and we left. We found ourselves in the empty corridor again, with nowhere to go. It seemed all wrong somehow. To be at the Chicon with no one to talk to was not only anti-climatic, but after those two crowded days almost incredible. We realized we had gone to bed early the wrong night, but there was more to it than that. Emotionally of course my subconscious was convinced that people just didn't want ··· to invite me to their parties, but intellectually I surmised the reason was in one important difference from 1952 which I had overlooked. Then I had come to my self, and was always with some in-group or other. But this time Madeleine and I constituted a little ingroup of our own. It had meant we could get away from it all without being accused of being stand-offish or monopolising each other, but it also meant that, as now, we couldn't always get back to it all again.

So, rather mournfully, we just went to our room and to bed.

Sunday 2nd September

At ten next morning, wakened unintentionally by the cleaning woman, we dashed down to the Florentine Room just in time to miss the intentionally scheduled Business Session. However on the way back to coffee we were solemnly assured by Bob Silverberg, one of the early bergs, that nothing sensational had occurred. ...except, of course, that the next Con had been voted to Belfast. For once he was unable to create a willing suspension of disbelief and we continued breakfastwards comparatively unshaken. I had a vague idea there might be some sort of intelligence test going on somewhere about this time, but lacked even the intelligence to find it. In any case I had this deep instinctive feeling that at this time of the morning the most intelligent answer to this test was to be in bed.

I felt better after coffee at the hotel drugstore, with Lee Hoffman, Ruth Kyle & Sid Coleman, a varied but congenial group. I just had coffee, because we had a very important lunch invitation and I wanted my stomach to accept it too. At Madeleine's suggestion, I visited the N3F room after breakfast, but found it apparently not at it's best. There were only two people there, both so uncommunicative as to be obviously members of the Unwelcome Committee. So I rejoined Madeleine at the Art Show and browsed there happily for a while marvelling at what these arty fellows could get up to. Until Bjo came along and started to explain something, so tactfully that at first I didn't realize I was being chucked out. The room was being closed for the judging, she explained charmingly, though of course if we wanted to stay...I didn't want to be in the way, and I had the vague idea that we mightn't be allowed to leave during the judging, like fake cardinals in the Vatican. Rather than be a wet blanket on the smoke signals we left after thanking Bjo sincerely. I tell you, being thrown out of a room by Bjo is an uplifting experience.

At 12:30 our host, Algis Budrys, collected us outside the dining room, brought us to a table and then, in the course of what seemed inconsequental chat, quietly dropped a depth charge in my life. He was, I realized, quite seriously suggesting I write a book for Regency, for which he would pay money. I was so taken aback as to be quite unable to face the idea at the time, so I just said I'd think about it and changed the subject. People had suggested professional writing to me before but I'd always dismissed it as persiflage. But now someone, and a real live publisher at that, had actually invested real money, to wit the cost of two excellent lunches, thereby

raising the concept to an entirely new level of reality. It was like hearing that Imperial Chemicals have bought a Hieronymous Machine.

The next thing I remember after the traumatic experience of being Taken To Lunch By My Publisher is listening to Marvin W. Mindes discoursing on Science Fiction, Mental Illness and the Law. A wide field, as he disarmingly admitted "The nature of ultimate reality," he said cheerfully, "I will take care of in passing." He went on to take care of psionics in what I thought was a less guarded assessment than one would normally expect from a lawyer. The Dean Drive, the Shaver Mystery and Psionics, he affirmed categorically, were all instances of the legitimate science fiction field being taken over by nuts. In answer to sporadic protests he conceded that some subjects like the Rhine experiments might be legitimate fields for speculation, but they had been invaded by nuts. Valid scientific territory was being polluted, and hypotheses being perverted into cults. The job of those of us who could differentiate between science and a lunatic craze was to nail the nuts.

Despite the absence of John W. Campbell and other prominent figures in the unnailed nut world, it was an entertaining three quarters of an hour, and after it even Frank Robinson's talk on science fiction in the men's magazines seemed to lack dramatic impact. Madeleine whispered she had a headache and slipped out, after a few minutes I followed her to see if she was all right. I left by an unused side door near my seat, and found myself in the world of an UNKNOWN story. The little men were not ready for me: today had not been finished here. The marmoreal elegance of the hotel was, I found, a mere facade propped up by scaffolding behind which was a whole strange world of chaos and confusion. Now I knew why this hotel was so hard to find your way about in. It was rebuilt every night in a different way. Picking my way through endless dim regions of protocorridors thronged with planks, plywood and paint pots, I eventually emerged to the surface world and found my way to our room. Madeleine was not there. I thought she had probably gone back to the Convention Hall while I was lost in the labyrinth, so I went back to check. But she still wasn't there, and all I saw was Ted Sturgeon denouncing the common assumption that sexual excitation was somehow wrong. I agreed, but at the time the subject was of merely academic interest to me and I didn't feel like sitting on a hard chair, even listening to Sturgeon. I was worried a little about Madeleine too, so I went upstairs again. Our room was still empty, so I startedto re-write my banquet speech, in which I had by now completely lost confidence. But having started to brood about the banquet...I hadn't had time since the Convention started to get in any serious brooding...I began to feel terrible, so after a while I lay down and tried to sleep it off. Instead I drifted into a sort of nightmare halfworld in which I was swept by a great wave of rage against extroverts. Damn those smiling loudmouthed bastards who force us poor introverts to make speeches, I thought. Damn everyone who has ever put anyone's name on a Convention program without being asked to. Damn everyone who has ever shouted "Speech." They are the sort of fiends who would bury claustrophobes alive for fun. When extroverts visit introverts in our studies, I thought in a fresh access of self pity, do we push them down in front of typers and command them to write columns for our fanzines and jeer at them for not writing enough? We have suffered meekly too long, I thought blackly, it is time for us to rise in our thousands in righteous wrath. At a secret signal let every introvert rise and slit the brazen throat of every insolent extrovert. What a wonderful peace and silence would reign over fandom. After that blessed St. Bartholomew's Day, how much we could enjoy conventions.

A thing which, I realized, I was hardly doing at the moment. I must pull myself together. I got up again, found the tranquilizers Dean Grennel had given us and took one. After a while I fell into a less troubled sleep.

Madeleine woke me at 7:15 to ask me to zip her up. The banquet was only fifteen minutes away. Both of us took another tranquilizer, Madeleine because she had just

been told she would have to"say a few words" too. She kept suggesting little jokes she might say and I kept telling her, out of my vast experience of public speaking, that they wouldn't do. One thing I did know was that, public speaking being a medium of communication so vastly inferior to the printed word, jokes have to be simple. While I was still in the shower Ethel called for us to give and get moral support, and we all went down to our fate together.

We were shown to a table just below the speakers' dais, and found we were sharing it with Mr. & Mrs. Marvin Mindes, Mr. & Mrs. Ed Hamilton and of all people, Bill Hamling. This was his first appearance at the convention, so I hadn't seen him since September 1952, when he gave me a cheque for $50.00 and a frozen daquiri. He remembered me, but evidently not the circumstances of our meeting: nor did he seem to know the circumstances of this one....

"Have you come over specially for the Convention?" he asked friendlily.

"Well, yes...." I said.

"Do you hear that?" he said enthusiastically to Hamilton. "All the way from Ireland to attend our Chicago Convention.And he did the same in 1952. Such loyalty!"

"Well," I said, "it wasn't just...Well, you remember--"

"Say," he said, "didn't you have a beard last time I saw you?"

"No," I said, "it was a frozen daquiri. Don't you remember---?"

But at this moment Bob Tucker came by to tell us to keep our speeches short because Ghod was due to appear unexpectedly at exactly 9:45. in fact we needn't even go up to the dais. While Ethel and I were discussing the implications of these three statements Hamling got involved in conversation with his neighbors across the table and I never did get the chance to tell him how much that $50.00 had meant to me in 1952. I looked for him after the banquet but he had disappeared again.

By the time the food arrived I had assessed what my first tranquilizers had done for me, and was not impressed with this miracle of modern science. True, I wasn't nervous any more, but then neither is a man who knows he is about to be hanged. Nervousness implies some sort of hope. I felt even less fitted to make a speech without my reserves of nervous energy. Maybe the food would help, I thought, if I could trust my stomach. I took out a precautionary Alka-Seltzer and dropped it in the glass of iced water. It fizzed reassuringly round the ice cube. What confidence it inspired, I thought, that powerful chemical reaction. it was doing me good already. "It's a form of fizziotherapy," I confided to Ethel. What is that you're drinking?" asked Mindes. "Iced Alka-Seltzer," I explained, and held up my glass in a toast. "The American Way Of Life."

We had opted for Turkey because it is a luxury at home, and were the only people at the table who had done so. I thought I had made a mistake until I found everyone else thought the same about their beef. "Have some of this red stuff," suggested Madeleine. "Diane says it helps John's appetite. It's called Cram-Berry sauce."

During the meal, Sturgeon announced portentously, we would be privileged to hear a recording of the original Orson Welles broadcast of The War Of The Worlds. But after a few minutes the invading Martians were routed by several hundred hungry conventioneers armed only with knives and forks, and their sponsors conceded defeat. Hush fell only when the banquet was over and the presentation of special awards began. I claim the honour of having lead the standing ovation to Bob Tucker.

When our turn came we decided to go up to the dais so that at least we wouldn't be invisible as well as inaudible. Having arrived at the microphone I made to feel in my pocket for my notes and pulled out a couple of pieces of lettuce I had taken off my plate for the purpose. But this little throwaway gag was half hidden by the high lectern and noticed only by one fan with good eyesight and an even better memory,who giggled perceptively. However the rest of my bit went over quite well, so that I began to think I might get the hang of this speechmaking business if I didn't hate it so much. Then I waited while Madeleine said her few but sincere words of thanks and escorted her back to our table. There we relaxed, ready now to enjoy the best of the banquet, the Sturgeon.

We did, though I thought the business with his wife's book a little chi-chi, and its spontaneity suspect. But it was a remarkable performance, not only in content but in structure. Being of a cynical turn of mind as far as speechmaking pros are concerned, I had conjectured that the imminent Ghod would be Heinlein, and listened attentively from this point of view as the thread of Sturgeon's discourse unrolled. Sure enough, at exactly 9:45 he reached the exact point at which Heinlein's name should occur. It did, and I looked expectantly at the door. But nothing happened. Sturgeon carried on without the slightest hesitation, and half an hour later had again reached a point where Heinlein's name naturally arose. Now to write a good speech is not difficult for a man who can write like Sturgeon. To be able to deliver it so well is an added gift that seems almost unfair. But to be able to take a speech apart in mid-air and reassemble it, and to do it so well that people afterwards who don't even know he did it praise the speech for its structure, is quite awe inspiring.

Heinlein's entrance was certainly dramatic, but I thought his white dinner suit almost too theatrical for a man who had travelled vast distances at breakneck speed to arrive unexpectedly in the nick of time. However fortunately for my peace of mind Steve Schultheis, who is an authority on all satorial matters, explained everything to me later in Santa Barbara. It is of course perfectly true that, as every good little neofan believes, Heinlein struggles each year through sleet, hail, rain, snow and mud in his exquisite evening dress, climbing mountains, fording rivers, scrambling over fences, trudging through fields, hacking his way through undergrowth and fighting his way along alleys, in his desperate efforts to get to the Convention on time And it cannot be denied that in the course of these heroic journeys even a man like Heinlein must occasionally be in danger of getting a speck of dust on his clothing. But what I had not realized is that he is not alone. He is closely followed, Steve revealed, every step of the way by a devoted retainer who used to be a batman on Heinlein's aircraft carrier and thus acquired the ability of intercepting every speck of dirt before it reaches his master's person. He ceases from his dedicated task only at the very door of the Convention Hall, where he waits humbly clutching the well-worn little long leather Hugobag.

These appearances of Heinlein are becoming one of the most charming traditions of fandom. They remind me of a series of faan-fiction stories I once started based on the theory that conventions are becoming more and more stylised, and will eventually develop into something like carnival or circus, or the British Christmas Pantomime. The Heinlein Manifestation would make a fine conclusion to any such performance. The distribution to the audience of favours and of gaily coloured but inedible food symbols would be the prelude to a series of ritual incantations before a number of silver spaceship shaped objects, which would culminate in a blinding flash and the miraculous apparition of The Heinlein in a technicolour tuxedo. After the Bob-Up, as they call it backstage where they operate the trapdoor, there would be a knockabout comedy turn involving other traditional characters like the Doctor and The Surgeon and The Tucker and The Clerk and The Farmer, and then The Heinlein would wrest one or more of the silver objects from them and disappear with demoniacal laughter in another flash and puff of smoke. The children will love it,

and indeed The Heinlein does re-appear for them later in a number of smaller tents simultaneously, like Santa Claus in department stores, where he gives autographs to those who bring serial wrappers.

Next morning over noon coffee I mentioned to Sid Coleman that I'd heard Heinlein was up already receiving visitors again. "He isn't up already," said Sid, "He hasn't been to bed already." We contemplated for a moment in silence the thought of Heinlein after that long journey sitting up all night talking to fans, and still at it. "You know," said Sid, "it's possible that one of the most admirable things about Heinlein is his insincerity." He went on to point out that for years Heinlein had had, literally and metaphorically, no time for fans; and that we have never been informed as to what brought about his sudden conversion. A nasty cynical person might speculate it was because he had suddenly realised that the acclaim of fandom might be of some practical advantage to him. But, Sid pointed out, if this cultivation of fans was coldly deliberate, how much we should respect him for his strength of will, and how much more for the perfection with which he does it?

After this conversation with Sid I decided to go up and judge for myself. I hadn't meant to, because I needed all the time I had and more to see the people I had really come to meet; and I had nothing worth saying to Heinlein that wouldn't involve us in a long argument. But watching him, and then talking to him, I found it was impossible either to dislike the man or fail to admire him. I couldn't detect any phoniness in his friendliness. Even if it did originate as an act of policy, I think he is still a man we can like as well as admire. A great man will first try to change his environment, but if this is impossible he will adapt himself to it. It is possible that Heinlein, having made up his mind to get on with fans, set himself to see what there was in us to like, and succeeded.

But to get back to Sunday night, which is still young. After the banquet I made for the reception desk to send a cable to Brian Aldiss, on whose behalf I had just accepted a Hugo. I had promised Ian McAulay, Ph.D., whose scientific soul had been seared by the concept of interplanetary cobwebs, that I would boo and stamp my feet if the Hothouse series got a Hugo, even in the very act of accepting it, but my own spirit of justice had already been crushed by the award to Analog. (Besides secretly I rather liked Hothouse.) At reception I was told I had to go to my room to send a cable by phone, so I did that taking Ron Ellik with me to act an an interpreter between me and Western Union. As I remember the cable as drafted by me and dictated by Ron Ellik said simply and economically CONGRATULATIONS HUGOWINNER, but that complex English address cost the earth.

That pleasant chore accomplished we came down again and ran into Fritz Leiber in a corridor. He said everyone had been telling him he looked like my father. I told him I appreciated the compliment, without explaining what a compliment it really was---ten years ago everyone had been saying he looked like me. This was a great comfort to a fan who has just found out he is older than Bob Madle, and is beginning to feel it.

Then we went along to Bloch's lantern lecture, which was both the oddest and most successful convention turn I have ever seen. The oddest because it was aimed simultaneously at two entirely different audiences, monster fandom and sf fandom, and the most successful because Bloch scored direct hits with both barrels. Even in the dark you could detect quite clearly the patterns in which the two groups were seated by the scattering of the laughter, like radar echoes.

We stayed for a while to see Emsh's Danse Chromatique, solely on Les Gerber's recommendation, and then went up to the party in the Shaw/Lupoff suite. We were still in time to see part of the recorded panel discussion on tv in which most of the Convention pros seemed to be appearing, but somehow we weren't able to concentrate on

it. There were so many people here I had been wanting to talk to. Boyd Raeburn, for instance, whom I had been almost ignoring up to now for the most peculiar of reasons. There were lots of people I had been ignoring because I would see them after the Convention and I had just realized I'd been subconsciously including Boyd in the same catagory. Not because I had any plans to go to Canada, but because he never seemed to have left Belfast. He had fitted so naturally and congenially into the life of Oblique House that here he seemed a familiar friend from home. Breaking to my subconscious the sad news that Boyd didn't really live in Belfast, I sat down beside him and we had a long discussion about all manner of things,so congenial that we actually not only risked discussing politics but agreed on something.

Then there were Phyllis Economou and Wrai Ballard, a combination of beauty, intelligence and strength that had no difficulty in persuading me to put my name back on the FAPA waiting list. Phyllis was so nice a person she didn't need to be half as pretty to be an exceptional woman. Wrai I thought deserved the sort of adjectives like strong and kindly and good that seemed too corny for anyone with his sense of humor. There was also Marion Bradley, whom I had already met one and a half times. There was the night she arrived, when someone pointed her out to me and I rushed along and introduced myself. She looked through me and walked on. Someone explained she was just tired and I gave this a 55% probability only because I couldn't think of anything Marion could be cross with me about except a little argument we had in FAPA many years ago about tornadoes. I know someone was castigated once for speaking disrespectfully of the Equator, but that was in the narrowminded Nineteenth Century. I worried about it a little, when I had time. Then at our reception Marion came up and said, "Since you're a much nicer person than I am I'm sure you will forgive me for spreading malicious gossip about you." I said sure, sure, feeling rather like someone who has been wakened in the middle of the night and told he has been sentenced to death and unexpectedly reprieved. I hadn't heard any malicious gossip. So when I saw her for the third time sitting on the bed in the other room I thought, oh well, two falls out of three, and went over. And found her a very agreeable and interesting girl. I still don't know what that business was all about because I didn't ask. If Marion was willing to forget it I was happy never to know it. I liked this attractive blonde girl that mature Marion Bradley had turned out to be.

There was also Buck Coulson, who was just as solid and sensible and likeable as I had expected, and Betty Kujawa who was more of everything than I had expected, and many others who even in that long party I didn't get to know as well as I would have liked. I was so engrossed that I only gradually became aware that some of our hosts had gone to bed, that they had been trying to restrict the party and that maybe we should go to bed. So we left, and went down to the main lobby again, which you seemed to have to do to get anywhere in that hotel, and found a sight the like of which for sheer poignancy I had never seen since Lee Jacobs was refused beer in a hotel in London at 10:30 p.m. in 1951.

There on a sofa in the great silent hall sat Don Studebaker and four other young fans, like sparrows in a sepulchre. They were drinking tea. When they saw us they sprang up eagerly and asked us if we knew where there was a party. It was heartbreaking to have to tell them that we didn't, and watch their faces fall, and see them flutter sadly back to their perch. Averting our eyes from the mournful sight we went ourselves to the elevator and pressed the final fatal button to end it all for the day. It was five a.m.

Monday 3rd September

I know we got up next morning at 10:15 because I made a note of it, but what I seem to have forgotten to do is make a note of why I made a note of it. Probably the way I felt it seemed a notably valiant thing to do. But then this was our last

day. Our original well-laid plan had been to stay on in Chicago until everyone had gone, and then stop off at Fond du Lac on our way to Seattle in time to catch Dean Grennell between business trips. But Dean's schedule had been changed, his day off was to be Tuesday, and if we were to visit Fond du Lac post office with him we had to leave today and come back to Chicago Wednesday. The inconsiderate action of that Fond du Lac furnace company was to inconvenience a lot of good people on the West Coast, but at the time it seemed to me the only real waste of time would be the four hour journey back from Fond du Lac. And I was determined to come back, to see more of Chicago than the glimpse I had caught in 1952. I hadn't yet realised that Conventions had got longer at both ends since 1952 and that many people were staying over Monday night.

After a daring breakfast of waffles and syrup with Sid Coleman and Charles Wells, the latter almost unrecognisable from the rather stiff young fan of 1952, we went up with Robert Bloch to see Heinlein in his morning shift. Not that he was actually wearing a shift, but the informality of his habits was reminiscent of those of the French aristocracy who held court in their bathrooms. Bloch was amused."Ghod," he quasi-quoted,"in a clean bathrobe." Maybe, I thought, this was the garment known as a Mother Hubbard. Outside again, Bloch invited us to lunch and en route to the dining room we were joined by Mike McQuown, an unexpected privilege. One had to admire the authoritative way in which he said "Four, please" to the Head Waitress, and he was a great help in filling up the embarrassing pauses which tend to occur when you are trying to make conversation with a man as dull as Bloch.

The rest of the afternoon was all partings, some for days, some for years and some, perhaps, for ever. But we steadfastly refused to acknowledge the existence of this last category, holding pathetically to the belief that the entire Convention membership would be transported bodily to London in 1965. It was sad enough to leave all these old and new friends without feeling the parting might be permanent. And it was only now we realised how many people we had barely met. Our only consolation was that we had tried. Except for the bare minimum of sleep we had spent the entire three days talking to fans, much of the time separately. Every now and then I would look over the heads of a crowd and see Madeleine talking animatedly to a group of people, positively radiating happiness. I felt quietly proud of this girl who hadn't known what she was going to say to all those people. I can't honestly say I enjoyed the Convention so thoroughly myself. Parts of it were ecstatic, parts of it were miserable; in fact it was rather like life. And like life, I wouldn't have missed it for anything. The fact is that I've never wholly enjoyed a convention since I became a celebrity. But even if I'd hated every minute of it I'd still have been glad I came because Madeleine enjoyed it so much.

As for the Convention as a Convention, it was so full of contradictions I found it hard to assess.Finally I came to the conclusion that it was like the old paradox of the irresistible force and the immovable object. Simply, it was the best Convention ever pitted against the worst hotel ever.

The Convention was fabulous not because of the program, though what little I saw of it was excellent, but simply because the people were wonderful, and there were so many of them. Everyone was there. But big conventions are always frustrating because you meet so many people you'd like to know better. I remember in 1952 Vince Clarke used to pull my leg because nearly every time he mentioned the name of an American fan I would say "Oh yes, he/she's nice," and this time I find myself equally limited in describing dozens of people. It would be nice to be able to give penetrating character analyses of half the Convention membership, but the number of thumbnail sketches I could give might be counted, as you might say, on the fingers of one hand. Nor can I express surprise about the characteristics of American fans in general, because I've known since 1952 that they're not Ugly Americans. But there was one thing I noticed more than ever through having Madeleine with me: how very

polite and considerate they were, even the youngest of them. In fact I might even say especially the youngest.

With so many interesting people to meet in so little time, physical obstacles such as the hotel so determinedly interposed became intolerable. It was bad enough that the Convention should be split into two separate buildings: that access from one to the other should then be hindered by defective elevators seemed positively malignant. But even those handicaps could have been overcome if there had been one concourse where you could find people. As it was they could be on one of two or three floors (I never did figure out how many there were), or one of the several widely separated public rooms, or merely just struggling to get from one place to another. In fact you met more people in transit than anywhere else....waiting for the elevators or in them as they ascended sluggishly from the depths like great Mohole borers bearing fossilised samples of life from the strata below.

Shortly before five that last afternoon I felt I couldn't bear to say one more goodbye, and stepped out onto the sidewalk for a last look at the hotel before we left. It looked smug and menacing but I couldn't help feeling love for it too, and a premature twinge of nostalgia. It was in spite of itself a shrine for many happy memories. Like the Morrison in 1952, which we thought dreadful at the time. How we had wronged it, I realised: compared to the Pick-Congress it had been perfection. Looking across Wabash Avenue towards the Morrison I asked mysllf an old question. Why did the Chicon cross the road?

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About five o'clock, after a few farewell photographs, the Grennells and Willises strolled along to the garage where Dean had stored his car. All our baggage had, by some strange and magical means, been already transported there and put in the car. This was a possibility which would not have occurred to me, because in my case it is never possible to store baggage for a trip in the car without deep thought and employing my esoteric knowledge of the more intimate recesses of the Morris Minor. However when I saw Dean's station wagon glide out of the garage like a great glassed-in air craft carrier I realised the problem had been no more difficult than that of getting a pint into a quart pot. Where the ordinary huge American car finally gave up and dwindled away into fins, this one continued steadfastly on into the distance.

Jean & Madeleine & I had been waiting on the narrow sidewalk of the garage entrance while Dean completed his negotiations, and piled hastily in so as not to interrupt the urgent commerce of Chicago. I examined the interior, awestruck. I had never thought it was possible to feel agarophobia inside a car. "Anyone for tennis?" I thought wildly. In a car this size, I realised, one really needed that power-operated rear window: it saved quite a long walk. Naturally I am a sports car fan myself, having been brainwashed by Boyd Raeburn for one thing, and for another, being unable to afford anything more like a Detroit barge than a Morris Minor, a car to which the sports car fraternity accord a patronising approval. But the wealth of gadgetry which Dean demonstrated to our unsophisticated astonishment was as irresistible to a science fiction fan as the interior of a spaceship. It had power-assisted everything, the only such mechanism not strange to us being the power operated rain for cleaning the windscreen.

To be specific, it was a 1962 blue Oldsmobile estate car and, if you promise not to tell Boyd Raeburn, I would rather have had it than a sports car, providing of course a small oil well came with it. To use it in Ireland I would probably have had to have it drawn by a team of bullocks, as in "Things to Come".

Dean threaded his way knowledgeably northwards through a web of freeways and turnpikes (is there not a generic American term for w at we call motorways?) and briefly

reached 100 mph on the Tri-State for our benefit. Here, I noticed, the minimum speed limit was 40 mph. If it hadn't been for the evidence of the speedometer I'd never have known we were doing the ton: on this road in this car the experience was less impressive than doing the 12 cwts in my Minor on an Irish road. It was all rather like that famous opening scene in "The Marching Morons".

After an hour or so we stopped for a meal at a service area called the Lake Forest Oasis, where the restaurant was built on the bridge over the road. It was impressively vast and modern, but it reminded me unexpectedly of the Middle Ages. It hasn't been since then that people habitually built shops and inns on bridges, and it's a style that has been absent far too long. There is something essentially relaxing in the contemplation of activity for which one has no responsibility, whether it be the sea or a river, or merely watching men dig a hole in the road. It doesn't do to underrate the Middle Ages, even in their urban traffic schemes. In towns like Chester, for instance, with their second floor level pedestrian sidewalks and shopping arcades, they attained complete pedestrian/vehicle segregation, a concept originated by Leonardo da Vinci and one to which we are only now haltingly trying to return.

Somewhere near Milwaukee we entered the ordinary road system for the first time. This was more the America I remembered....a bewildering complexity of traffic signs in a conflagration of neon. We called at Dean's brother's house to collect the six Grennell children,after which even the Oldsmobile station wagon seemed to fill up a little, and eventually arrived at Maple Avenue, Fond du Lac, a quiet cul de sac with wooden houses. Ten people got out of the car and the Grennells fed and despatched six of them to bed with a kindly efficiency which was a source of wonder to us mere dilettante parents. It proved that even a man who could offer a suggested Hyphen cover cartoon involving a snake in a cage up a tree and a caption referring to "python pen ladders" could still be a good husband and father.

Tuesday 4th September

In the Willis family I am the early riser, and at the crack of 10am I stole downstairs to prowl about the silent house. Only to find that everyone had been tiptoeing around for hours except Dean, who had been processing Convention photographs in the basement since 7am. He had so many, as he pointed out, that all he needed was to string them together to get a silent movie of the entire convention. In the intervals of giving unskilled help and eating a light but protracted breakfast I roamed the fabulous basement, "OPEN," as a notice proclaimed, "TO THE PUBLIC ONLY". It was the room of a man who does everything well. It was thronged with the appurtenances of three separate interests...."hobbies" seems too dilettante a word... at all of which Dean was better than a professional, and it contained no junk. Even the four refrigerators were in use, if only as storage cabinets, and everything was in shipshape order without being obsessively neat. This was just as well, because the combination of fandom, firearms and photography seemed an explosive one. Fortunately perhaps fireworks are banned in Wisconsin. A propos of which, Dean told me that once when he was blasting away at beercans in the city dump, a police car drew up and two cops raced up to him. Dean showed him his smoking .45 and they said, "Oh all right. We thought you were letting off fireworks."

While the mysterious alchemy of photography was proceeding Dean and I wrote a long joint letter to Chuch Harris, filling him in on the Chicon and reassuring him that the world would probably continue to exist..... "Well, here we are freeloading with the Gunsport BNF. As you will have noticed, the world did not come to an end on Saturday. No blinding flash, except from Dean's electronic nova-producer, followed

the historic meeting----just a sort of warm glow."

Some time during that long quiet morning I went out for a little walk by myself. The air was cool and the grass green and moist, like Ireland. But at the next house, the road and the resemblance ended. There was no fencing between the houses, and no fances between them and the stream which separated them from a playing field. Why, here was valuable land lying around loose, with no indication as to whom it belonged to. It was a sight that was almost shocking to one from a country where every square inch of land has been fought over for hundreds of years and is accounted for meticulously on centuries of musty documents, and where no man can rest easy unless the exact extent of his holding is circumscribed for all to see.

Back at the house for lunch, and for photographs in the garden including one of Madeleine and me reading the Flying Saucer Review with contemptuous expressions while a Grennell-manufactured flying saucer, formerly a Ford hubcap, hovered over our heads....and later as that long lazy morning-after extended imperceptibly into the afternoon, a leisurely visit to a supermarket. This was the first average suburban American supermarket Madeleine had seen and she walked along the endless aisles in a sort of trance. I remember reading that psychiatrists have found that women do in fact sometimes fall into a slight hypnotic daze in these places: maybe they should be called stupormarkets.

Madeleine and I meant to pay the check as a slight gesture of our appreciation to the Grennell hospitality, so we included some ice cream and sherbet for the children. But then we found that Dean was buying the whole month's groceries so we didn't, and felt a little guilty about having been so generous with his money. However, it was now on to the Post Office. I had called in the Fond du Lac Post Office in 1952 to mail a parcel, and when Dean entered fandom he was thrilled to hear of this and created the legend that glowing footprints would appear on the Post Office floor to presage my return. But it was five past five and the Post Office was closed, and when Dean returned from parking the car I had to break the news to him. "They said," I told him gravely, "that I was ten years and five minutes late." There may or may not have been a phosphorescent glow visible beneath the door of the Post Office, but to tell the truth nothing about the facade of the building was in any way familiar to me, and it may be that the place I called at in 1952 was some sub-office elsewhere in the town.

Back home we found Madeleine had taken over cooking dinner, to give Jean a rest. Not just that, but she was making a steak and kidney pie. Now Madeleine is good at steak and kidney pies, in fact she is a steak and kidney pie maker by appointment to no less a gourmet than Boyd Raeburn, but I viewed with awed admiration her courage in trying this exotic dish on an American family not accustomed to snails and kiwi eggs and such. The Grennell parents would I knew eat the pie if it killed them, and being the sort of people they are it would be impossible to distinguish their dying agonies from cries of delight, but the children.... However we left Madeleine hectically assembling familiar ingredients from unfamiliar containers and retired to the living room to make the great Gesundheit picture.

The inspiration for this was an exploded beercan from one of Dean's target practices. This one had exploded in such a weird and spectacular fashion that Dean had brought it home as a curio, and it was now his intention to take a photograph of himself bending over this disintegrated can as if he had been drinking from it, with a handkerchief in the other hand, while I with an aloof and faintly disgusted expression said "Gesundheit." This word Dean had carefully lettered on a cardboard caption-balloon which he now suspended in mid-air. The job of arranging ourselves and the beercan between this and the camera took quite a while because we kept collapsing in hysterical laughter as our simple minds visualised the picture that would

result, but we had several takes made in time for the steak and kidney pie.

This, to Madeleine's intense relief and pleasure, was very well received, even receiving an unsolicited accolade from Patsy Grennell, an outspoken teenager. Afterwards, to return the compliment, we tried an exotic Grennell sweetmeat called "Halvas". They were delicious. Dean admitted modestly that he had made them himself, being an expert in this field. "I'm a rambling wreck from Georgia Tech," was the way he expressed it, "and a Halva Engineer."

Having stuffed ourselves we spent the rest of the evening in a contented torpor, talking desultorily with half an eye on the tv the children were watching, and still unwinding from the convention. It was, it occurred to me, just what we would have been doing at home. In fact we were at home. The Grennell hospitality, like a perfect prose style, was unnoticeable except in its effects: which were that we felt we were with old friends. It seemed impossible that we had met them only a few days ago. It also seemed incredible that Dean and I had ever been worried about not being able to understand one another: why already we intuitively understood one another without speaking. We had the same empathy with Jean and even the children, who were not only the best behaved we had met but individually likeable as people. Altogether our two families seemed such natural neighbours that the distance of 4000 miles between our homes suddenly seemed intolerable. Our mood that evening was such that when we found that the Grennells and ourselves had been married within a day of one another seventeen years ago the coincidence seemed to have some deep significance.

Wednesday 5th September

After our being up so late I didn't for a moment believe Madeleine when she said she'd get up at seven to see Dean off. She does like a nice lie in. But to my utter astonishment she was out of bed before me, at 6:45. This is the most extravagant compliment anyone has ever paid Dean Grennell, though he would have to be married to Madeleine for seventeen years to appreciate it fully.

We sat in the kitchen while Dean finished his breakfast and other preparations, helping by keeping out of the way of the highly efficient progress. Then Dean got into the car and Madeleine went out in her nightie and dressing gown to see him off, and I took a photograph of the scent for DNQAC. With a last wave Dean was gone leaving the house and ourselves suddenly quiet and empty. I don't think I've ever missed so much someone I've known for such a short time.

We did our own packing and said an affectionate goodbye to the children as they left for school---Chuck gave me his favourite conjuring trick for Bryan, another thing Greyhound lost---and then we phoned for a cab to take us to the bus station for the 9.30am bus to Chicago. While we were waiting our next hostess, Rosemary Hickey, called all the way from Chicago to warn us that there was no such bus. She had checked our ETA with Greyhound in Chicago and they'd told her it was no longer running. Having checked in Fond du Lac myself the previous evening, where there was a little notice to the effect that this bus was being kept on because of the rail strike, I told her it was leaving Fond du Lac whether Chicago was ready for it or not. Then the cab came, and we were off again on our travels.

The bus was the familiar unpretentious kind I'd known in 1952, almost like one at home. It was strange to be taking such a short journey, a mere four hours, and somehow we felt almost absorbed, integrated in the American scene; just two normal Americans taking the bus into Chicago like everyone else. We even took the normal road system this time, through Milwaukee. Nothing about the town was recognisable to me from 1952: strange, because the town had character, a sort of semi-rustic Bavarian

look to it. Between there and Chicago there was a lot of housing development and I noticed an advertisement "If you lived here you'd just be starting for work now." Untrue, but striking.

We were about fifteen minutes late arriving in Chicago. I looked carefully round the subterranean concourse for Rosemary and then lugged the cases up to street level. She wasn't there either. After a while I called her apartment, but there was no answer. We reasoned she must still be on her way, so Madeleine had a cup of coffee while I visited the travel agency in the building to enquire about routes to Seattle. We had wanted to visit Yellowstone Park so we could wave to the children from the Yogi Bear cartoons, but they told me Yellowstone was closed now that summer was officially over. I got a timetable for the shortest route to the northwest and went back to Madeleine. Rosemary still hadn't arrived, so I called her again. She was there now; in fact she had just got back from the bus station. She had been there punctually to meet us and, being unable to find our bus listed on the arrivals board, had enquired after it at the information desk. There she had been positively assured there was no such bus. After hanging about for some ten minutes she had gone helplessly home, at just about the same moment as our ghost bus was drawing up below.

Rosemary said she'd pick us up at the Randolph St. entrance, so after venturing out to look at the street names on the lamp posts we waited there another while, numbly resentful at Greyhound for wasting all this precious time. Then Rosemary tore up in a black Volkswagen, stopped in a no-parking area while we piled hurriedly in and took us to a place called Marshall Fields for lunch. It seemed to be a sort of department store. I'd heard the name before, but if I'd been asked what it was I'd have guessed an army training area. However Madeleine seemed to know all about it and was impressed. All I noticed was that the restaurant had some unusual customs, such as a menu designed like an examination paper. Instead of telling the waitress what you wanted, you just checked squares and after a while an invigilator came by and silently collected your work. The concept was sound, but set the restaurant rather uncompromisingly at the middle class level in the social structure. For on the one hand one cannot imagine a millionaire checking squares unless he happens to have his secretary with him, and on the other what about people who cannot read? How terrible it would be to be flunked from Marshall Fields, having failed your entrance examination. Another slight defect was that they didn't provide erasers for the irresolute. I was quite ashamed of my paper when I handed it in, all blotches, and half afraid it would be refused, or that the culinary computer into which they presumably fed the data would be thrown into a nervous breakdown or serve a messy mixture of several meals. However, computer processed or not, the food was quite good, and my only regret was that I hadn't realised there was a fixed charge or I'd have been even greedier. Thanks to Greyhound it had been a long time since breakfast in Fond du Lac. On the way out Rosemary produced a credit card, the first I had seen, and I gazed awestruck at this modern power symbol.

With what I later appreciated as a fine sense of priorities, Rosemary now took us straight to the Prudential Building. Even on the sidewalk below it, I was impressed. More than that, I was humbled. There, standing on the sidewalk of East Randolph, I received a shock to my native self-esteem comparable only to the one I had received nearly thirty years ago when I had found out that Mr. F.W.Woolworth was not a Belfast business man. Not only was it obvious that this was no branch office of a British firm: I even began to have disloyal doubts about the Rock of Gibraltar itself.

I was literally staggered too, for craning my neck to look at the summit I fell back with a sort of vertigo. "The building's falling!" I cried.

"Never mind," said Madeleine kindly, "It's probably insured."

Who with, I wondered, as I followed the ladies into the vast entrance hall and over to a bank of elevators. A smooth surge upwards, two unexpected flights of escalators, like a sort of American equivalent of taking off one's shoes, and we were on the Observation floor. It was full of light, flooding in through great windows looking into space. There were also a souvenir shop, a commentary on the public address system and a turnstile. On the other side, we made straight for the nearest window.

I have climbed quite a few mountains in my time, or what passes for mountains in Ireland, and I know what it's like to be on high places. Or even on steep places, like the 2000 feet cliffs of Slieve League in County Donegal. But none of them was like this. It was more like ascending on a rocket out of Chicago, poised halfway over Lake Michigan, blue in the afternoon sun, stretching out to infinity....or at least Canada. On either side the coasts of Illinois and Indiana disappeared into into the distance over the curvature of the Earth. On the horizon at the right was a long white line like foam on a distant reef. And straight below Chicago sprang up all around in a bewildering confusion of detail. Ships on the river----I'd forgotten there was a Chicago River----piers, low buildings, high buildings, higher buildings, streets, railways, advertisements, and immediately below a fantastically huge car park in which thousands of coloured cars glittered like beads in a box. Through them threaded a tiny bus: could this be, a bus to take people out of a car park? We roamed round the other sides of the Observation Floor, but inland the air was smoky. The Lake drew us back. I invested a dime in one of the automatic telescopes and identified the white line on the horizon as a low sandy shore. Taking bearings on a map, I figured it to be the coast of Michigan, some sixty miles away.

One can only absorb and remember so much, and I hated to think I would forget any of it, so I went to the souvenir shop and bought a set of transparancies of the view. I hadn't a viewer, but I would buy one later. Then we left. But two floors below, just as I was about to step into the elevator, a little old lady caught my arm and offered me a handful of money. It was the clerk from the souvenir shop. She was quite out of breath, and it took me a moment or two to gather that I had given her a twenty-dollar bill and this was my change. I thanked her and tried to give her a bill, but she just smiled and ran back to the escalators without a reward...except, I hope, the knowledge that someone in Ireland thinks well of Chicagoans.

Back at the ground level we ran the Volkswagen to earth in the huge car park and made for the Hickey's flat. It was in an area slightly reminiscent of Dublin, where the same Georgian houses may be either filthy tenements or elegant dwellings. It was interesting to see the process of reclamation that was taking place, as well-to-do families moved into poor areas. The first thing they did, evidently, was to paint the front door blue. We came to the Hickey house from the back, down a narrow alley with garages along it. Rosemary screwed the car forcefully into one of these and we went up some steps past boxed plants and gaily painted garbage cans into the apartment. It was all in a straight line, rather like a very wide railway carriage, and a fascinating place to browse along. The Convention had obviously passed over it like a huge glacier, suspending all normal household life and leaving moraines of fascinating detritus----unread books, unsorted magazines and unassembled equipment of various kinds. I enjoy this sort of decor immensely, as long as I don't have any responsibility for it, and peered about quite happily until Dick came home and I had someone to talk to while the womenfolk were preparing dinner.

Soon after the host the other guests arrived, a couple called Jay and Irene Smith who had just returned from camping in the wilds. There was some playful

badinage about this because it turned out their idea of camping was not the same as ours, its most primitive aspect apparently being that the water closets were not in the same building as the "Camp". They were a nicely contrasting couple, Irene an attractive blonde and Jay very dark. That was all I would have had to say about their appearance, except that just now Madeleine has told me that Jay was a Negro and it seems strange this never occurred to me at the time. I wonder if this does not show that Americans are more foreign to Europeans than either of us realise: that the average European is so bemused by the strange customs and variety of racial types that variations in comparative pigmentation pass unnoticed unless forcibly brought to his attention.

The dinner, which consisted surprisingly of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, was excellent despite the fact that the beef had been cooked in Chablis instead of the sherry suggested by the recipe. I don't know what wine they use in Yorkshire but Rosemary seemed worried and asked us if it was all right. I said that personally I felt we had been Chablis treated, and again felt the need for a little flag to wave with "Pun" on it. Then after dinner the Smiths produced a record they had brought specially for me, made by a very successful folksinging group called the Clancy Brothers.

I listened to it with mingled pleasure and frustration, rather like a oyster-lover finding that people attach value to the little stones he has been spitting out for years. These songs were as familiar to me as nursery rhymes, utterly commonplace. Or were they. Hearing them unexpectedly in a Chicago apartment they sounded strangely different.

After the record we went to visit The Rising Moon, one of the little Bohemian nightclubs that had sprung up in Wells St., the sort of thing that Paris calls a "boite", I think. It was apparently just entering the tourist class, because there was a one-dollar cover charge and it was still crowded. The decor was all hard chairs and huge bizarre antiques, including a deer's head, an improbable leopard skin and a reredos. The act, two men and a pretty girl, sang a wide variety of songs including one of my old Belfast ballads which I'd just heard from the Clancy Brothers and a number which Lonnie Donnegan had had on the British hit parade six months ago. However any patronising complacency I felt about being more hip than these Chicago cognoscenti was swept away by a flood of allusions to local politics which went right over my head. The evening finished with a good old-fashioned sing-song, showing that an intellectual audience can be as corny as any provided there are no Philistines about.

Before going to bed that night I finally got around to checking the new Greyhound timetable for Seattle, and found that the express bus now left at 7am and took two whole days for the journey. But it seemed unthinkable to leave Chicago again so soon, and Rosemary was very pressing in her hospitality, so we decided to defy Greyhound and stay until Friday morning. It was now well into Thursday and, this decided, we made plans to start for Lake Michigan early in the morning. As a necessary first step we went to bed.

Thursday 6th September

I stumbled blearily about the apartment collecting my bathing trunks, camera and senses, and then found myself being driven through Chicago in search of breakfast. Any sort of reality is hard for me to face before coffee and Chicago made me cringe all the way to a place called The Jewel, whether other grimfaced silent people were nerving themselves to face the day. I felt better after breakfast, but I was still reminded of the saying that Americans prefer luxury to comfort: to go out and have other people make your breakfast and wash up afterwards is merely a luxurious form

of the chuckwagon. The proper approach, it seems to me, is indicated by a sort of alarm clock made in a factory in Belfast: before it wakes you up it makes a cup of tea.

Having left Dick off for his work we set off along Lake Shore Drive and the Skyway, admiring en route in the 8-lane highway the power-operated kerbs which rise and set like tides according to the time of day and the exigencies of traffic, and subsequently entered a turnpike system which brazenly recognised the dullness of this form of travel. They let you into the system free, but you had to pay to get out again. In this it resembled no other human institution I can think of, except perhaps marriage.

I would have thought a little Volkswagen to be out of its element in this world of high speeds and long distances, but in fact it buzzed along efficiently like a very determined wasp, and eventually we came out onto an ordinary road heading north west along the shore of Lake Michigan. Rosemary thought we would like to see some of the lakeshore homes, and we plunged into a maze of little winding roads, all pleasant bungalows, post boxes and stop signs: Rosemary eventually lost her way, which didn't surprise me at all---I had lost my own sense of direction about 16 turns ago---but at last we emerged onto the main road again and celebrated with a cup of coffee in a little diner so quiet and refined it might almost have been an English tearoom. I think it actually had table cloths. Then we set off again along a road so close to the shore that we caught occasional tantalising glimpses of white sand and blue water. Rosemary told us this was all private and there was no public access to the beach for miles yet. This was strange to us, for back home a private beach is such a rare phenomenon that people think it is not only immoral but illegal. Actually it isn't the latter anyway, merely impracticable for the reason that land between high tide and low tide belongs to the Crown and nobody can fence it off. I could see the situation would be different though in the case of a lake. I had to keep reminding myself this was just a lake.

We stopped at one of the roadside stalls with displays of large and colourful--and in many cases quite unfamiliar---fruit&vegetables, and bought a bag of peaches. Madeleine was so impressed she had me take several colour photographs, and I think all that wonderful, and cheap, fruit impressed her as much as the Grand Canyon. I must say it was a lot easier to photograph.

Then we entered Warren Dunes State Park and drew up at a deserted wooden building. All I remember about it were notices to the effect that it was against the law to change your clothes in the lavatories, which seemed to me at the time an unwarranted and unAmerican interference with the rights of the individual. The right to change your clothes in the lavatory is the right to be free. Then through some stunted trees and bent grass to the shore.

It was immense...white sand and blue water as far as the eye could see. Nothing else but a few litter baskets and about the same number of people. Apart from the litter baskets the beach population seemed quite normal to me and I didn't appreciate until Rosemary sent us at home a picture postcard of the place in its normal summer state, that it had been by local standards utterly deserted. I found it hard to understand this American convention that summer ends at 12pm on Labour Day. National Parks close, tourist facilities are withdrawn and people stay away from the beaches in droves, while still the sun shines obstinately in a clear sky. I can only imagine that in the States the seasons are so <u>thorough</u> that people get tired of them. After months of unremitting sunshine they positively look forward to fall and as it were meet it halfway. Whereas in Ireland, if we did happen to have a warm day in October the entire population would stampede for the shore like lemmings, tearing off their clothes en route.

Compared to Irish strands Michigan was not sensationally beautiful. I would have given it about six out of ten, ten being to me Tramore Strand in County Donegal, which has firm golden sand, dunes, grass, wild flowers, cliffs, caves, a fantastic island right in the middle of the horizon, and so little frequented we were shattered one year to find another human footprint. The sand here was soft and coarse, with no shells, and dipped steeply into rather opaque water. I walked quite a distance along and there was no change: obviously it went on like this for dozens of miles. However it was very pleasant, the air being warmer than one ever finds it in Ireland more than once in five years, and the water slightly warmer than I'm accustomed to if not as warm as I had hoped. We splashed about happily for a while and then lay and sunbathed and ate peaches and relaxed. After the artificiality of our environment this last while it felt good to get back to nature. Yes, we liked Lake Michigan. It might not be as beautiful as some Irish strands, but to enjoy the latter like this you would have to be staked out beside it for months waiting for a sunny day, and spring on it from ambush. Ireland is a wonderful country to live in, but I'd hate to come here for a visit.

We were a long way from Chicago, somewhere behind that haze to the South west, and Rosemary had to register at the University that evening. So we tore ourselves reluctantly away from Lake Michigan and sped straight back, in and out the turnpike system and over the Skyway for the third and last time, into Chicago. We left Madeleine at a hairdressers and I went with Rosemary to the University, a big modern building all big windows and quiet classical music over the public address system, a sort of intellectual Musak. While I was waiting for Rosemary I met George Price, Convention Treasurer, who seemed none the worse for it. We talked mostly about the Convention, but he did mention a propos of something else that he had been one of the recipients of the 12-page cri de coeur Vince Clarke had published when Joy left him: since he had never been a correspondent of Vince's it seemed that this intimate human document had had a wider circulation than realised at the time.

Apart from this interlude it was a long and uneventful wait, suspended thus in an unfamiliar locale, but boring only in a rather pleasant way. For one thing it was a comfortable place, all deep sofas and air-conditioning, and for another my recent life had been so hectic that boredom was a rare and almost piquant sensation. Before it palled Rosemary appeared, we had a snack in the University canteen and then went to collect Madeleine and her new hair. Then we went back to another University building where Dick was supposed to be registering. We waited outside for some time, Rosemary getting increasingly impatient and beginning to wonder if we had missed him: traffic out of the building was definitely dwindling. Finding myself suddenly in charge of two dependant females, I went into the building to look for him. I nodded in an offhand way at the guardians of the door and strode briskly for several hundreds of yards through a maze of registration tables manned by curious officials. None of them challenged me, proving my theory that you can go anywhere as long as you look as if you knew where you were going, but I didn't find Dick. I reported back to Rosemary, who then rang the apartment and found he had gone home not realising we were meeting him.

Silently we got into the car and made for home, by way of the Prudential Building. Rosemary tucked the car into a corner of the huge carpark we had seen from above yesterday afternoon and at the exit I made a detour to the Greyhound depot to validate our tickets for tomorrow's journey to Seattle. This was the very first time I had ever been on the streets of Chicago by myself and I felt my sense of wonder renewed, with the addition of that sense of power which complete anonymity gives. Why I could get a bus to anywhere and never be heard of again. The feeling made even more enjoyable the experience of not doing so, but of finding my way back to the Prudential Building, and up the lift and escalators back to the Observation Floor, to join Rosemary and Madeleine quietly at the same window we had looked out of before.

It was, I thought to myself, hard to sterilise beauty out of the world. Crush together a million soul-less tons of concrete and steel, light them with garish tungsten and neon, cram the interstices with automobiles and, incredibly, the result is even more beautiful than the daytime landscape it dispossesses. Chicago by night is as breath-taking as the stars, but where in the inanimate universe is a colour like the strange luminescent green of Michigan Boulevard, alive with the light of humanity? While the stars are cold and mysterious, this night city was somehow poignant. While it was vast the lake was vaster, and beside that great darkness, like the edge of space, the lights were brave and human...pulsing through the night creating their accidental by-product of unforgettable beauty.

"Man," said Pascal, "is but a reed, the feeblest thing in nature. But he is a thinking reed. The universe need not exert itself to crush him: a whiff of vapour, a drop of liquid will suffice. But even should the universe crush him, Man will still be nobler than his executioner, for he knows that he dies. The Universe knows nothing." Here by this lake was Pascal's reed.

Friday 7th September

I'm not quite sure what time the bus for Seattle left Chicago, except that it was far too early in the morning: among the items lost with our luggage was one of the world's finest private collections of Greyhound timetables. However, after a terse breakfast Rosemary and Dick Hickey got us to the depot in good time. At least it seemed good time to us for any bus that left before the world was properly assembled, but almost as soon as we arrived we heard it called over the public address system. It was now loading at Gate 3 downstairs, the omniscient voice proclaimed, like Jupiter announcing a departure by Charon.

This bus was going to be our home for two days, so we wanted to make sure of getting seats together. We said hasty goodbyes, too hasty to thank Dick and Rosemary adequately for their hospitality, and fled downstairs. On the way to Gate 3 we passed a bus labelled Seattle and taking on passengers, but continued trustfully on. No doubt it was a non-express service, or an alternative route. But when we got to Gate 3 there was no sign of life, mechanical or otherwise. In desparation I accosted a passing driver. He smiled at the idiosyncrasies of the people upstairs, rather like Moses explaining another minor plague to his Egyptian friends. It used to leave at Gate 3, he explained simply and clearly, but nowadays it left at Gate 6. We rushed back to Gate 6, in time to get two aisle seats several yards apart.

I think it was at this point I realized the far-reaching changes which had taken place in the Greyhound bus service during the ten-year period in which I had, as it were, been out of its clutches. Some of you may remember that in the course of my 1952 report I made passing reference to certain mechanical breakdowns which had occurred from time to time. In 1962 the buses were perfect, but the organization was breaking down. It was obvious that the head of the Greyhound organization, a Mr. Ackerman, had obtained through some relative a copy of my 1952 report and taken a clear-cut executive decision. He had simply switched the staff around. I have to admire the majestic simplicity of this solution, but feel he eventually will be forced to find a home outside the organization for his other relatives.

All through the morning we edged erratically around Madison without ever arriving there. Poring over my inadequate map, I figured that we were by-passing it along the fragments of an uncompleted freeway system. We would speed along one of these stepping stones for a few minutes, and then turn off along a ramp marked "Madison" and wander slowly through a maze of interchanges and ordinary roads until we found another ramp and another stretch of freeway. The changes in direction were quite bewildering, and at times I had the feeling that the driver was hopelessly lost.

By a careful study of the signposts on intersecting routes, however, I realized we were in fact making steady progress northwest. This fact was, however, not so obvious to the lady next to me, who had, I gathered, been travelling on buses for the past six weeks virtually nonstop, but whom even this experience of Greyhound Post Houses had not convinced that it is better to travel hopefully than to arrive. The bus was already a hundred miles past Madison when she began to complain it was an hour overdue. It was obvious no one was getting out at Madison, at least, and I wondered if Madeleine and I would be separated all the way to Seattle.

We rejoined the ordinary road system just past a place with the evocative name of Portage, without having to get out and carry the bus, and shortly found ourselves in a town which seemed to be called Wisconsin Dells. As a town it was undistinguished but the countryside had gradually become more interesting than the flat lands of southwest Wisconsin and northern Illinois. There were wooded hills, grassy slopes, and occasional rock outcrops. And once or twice, glimpses of lakes, so unusual a thing to see from a bus that people pointed excitedly.

Somewhere in the region of Tomah and Black River Falls, which we passed through in the early afternoon, there was a great panoply of signs heralding a major tourist attraction. It was a museum of sea shells from all over the world. I was mildly surprised until I realised that we were just about in the middle of a great continent, and that until recently at least, many of the natives here could have lived their lives without seeing a sea shell in its natural state. Certainly, if you happened to have a collection of sea shells, this was the place to take them. But somehow it seemed strangely sad to think of all those little marine skeletons exiled so far from their natural resting place.

National Interstate Highway US 94 sprang into existence again just in time to by-pass Eau Claire, and we sped towards Minneapolis like an arrow released. Only to thud anticlimactically into St. Paul, through which we threaded a laborious way for more than half an hour. I tried to follow our progress in a street plan in a guide lent me by Rosemary Hickey, but found it impossible to establish frames of reference. By the time I found on the map the street name glimpsed at the last corner, we would have turned another, so that various imposing buildings were only provisionally identified. However, the Twin Cities were strangely and impressively different from anything we had seen so far, their domed buildings and convoluted streets giving them a faintly Eastern European look. The Mississippi on the other hand, or what I took to be the Mississippi, was disappointingly narrow, and, having told Madeleine how impressive it would probably be even this far north, I felt vaguely ashamed on its behalf. However, at the St. Paul depot several people got off, and, having got a seat together, we didn't care if the Mississippi disappeared through a chink in the ground.

At 4:30 pm we finally arrived at the Minneapolis bus station. Outside there was a confusing intersection, and we were afraid to go far in case we got lost. Madeleine reconnoitred nearby restaurants while I called Redd Boggs at a curious sort of open-air phonebooth. I found D.W.Boggs in the phone book, not without a touch of awe, but it was Redd's father who answered, and he claimed Redd was in California. I rejoined Madeleine, and after some hesitation we bought a couple of hamburgers at what looked like an ordinary diner, until it turned out to have no place to sit down, and no plates or cutlery. After the phone booth, I began to speculate wildly that the local inhabitants suffered from endemic claustrophobia, but finally concluded the diner must have been for take-out orders.

Back in the bus again we sped northwest from Minneapolis, spending a forgettable 45 minutes in Fargo, N. Dakota. This was about 10pm, and all I remember about it was that we sent a postcard from there to our ten-year-old son Bryan. He is a


MISSISSIPPI
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follower of Wells Fargo, and we thought he might imagine it had been brought out by stage coach. En route again we found the bus almost too warm for sleeping, and Madeleine asked the driver to turn down the air conditioning.

Saturday 8th September

At 1 a.m. we were awakened from a sound sleep and ejected into Bismarck, N.Dakota. We had missed the Missouri. We spent a frustrated hour hanging round the depot waiting for the bus to be serviced, realising more clearly now that Greyhound gave adequate meal stops only when everything but the Post House was closed.

Back in the rejuvenated bus we fell asleep again quickly, and when I woke again it was dawn at the Montana border. We had slept through the badlands. All I could see in the ghostly light were grey clumps of grass, and between them something lighter which I could not identify. It certainly wasn't ordinary soil, and I thought it must be sand or gravel.

But by the time we arrived at Glendive, Montana, the growing daylight and the waning neons between them revealed the mystery: it was snowing. "Now look what you've done," I reproached Madeleine, who woke up when the bus stopped. "You would complain about the heat."

After pressing on through a snowy wilderness populated only by depressed-looking Christmas trees, we arrived at Miles City at 7:40. We had breakfast there, running through the snow to a drugstore in our light summer clothes. It was very cold, there was a strong wind, and the snow lay half an inch deep on the sidewalk. It was curiously unreal. How could it be snowing when we had been sunbathing only the day before yesterday?

The drugstore was peculiar too. There were several men there who looked so much like real cowboys that I wondered if I'd missed the horses tied to the parking meters. What really disturbed me was what they were reading. I could accept cowboys driving Chevrolets instead of riding horses -- I could visualise them leaping into the driving seat with a cry of "Hi, ho, Chromium" -- and even sitting in drugstores sipping chocolate malts and reading pocketbooks. What did worry me, for some reason, was the fact that all the pocketbooks were Westerns. I felt vaguely that I was faced with some profound philosophical problem, to do with the effect of the observer on the thing observed. When an authentic cowboy thinks of himself as an authentic cowboy, is he still an authentic cowboy?

It was snowing less violently when we got to Billings at 11:15 a.m., with half an hour to spare. Madeleine went back along our route to case a dress shop she had noticed, and I prowled around for a gas station. In 1952, travelling by car, I had rapidly accumulated a sheaf of free gas company maps, but buses never seemed to stop near filling stations. However, I found one now and looted it. With maps covering every mile of the way to Seattle I felt oriented and more secure.

In Livingstone at lunchtime (which could be the title only of a very sick song) it was still snowing out of a leaden sky, and a bank sign admitted that the temperature was 40 degrees. We had a horrid meal in a squalid Greyhound diner, without even pretentions of being anything but the greasiest of spoons. The best that could be said of it was that it was better than the one at Bozeman, where the food was, if possible, even worse, and the only toilet was overflowing on the floor. There, if you were so foolish as to eat the food, you were stuck with it.

But from there on, things began to improve. For one thing, we found that everyone's feet were swollen. For weeks before we came away, Madeleine had some

kidney disorder which caused her ankles to swell, and this swelling had begun to happen again on the bus. But in the universal gossip about the toilet conditions at Bozeman, it emerged that all the women were finding their ankles swollen, and it was just from sitting so long. So that was a serious worry gone. Then, during the afternoon, the snow stopped, and the sky began to clear, revealing ranges of wonderful mountains. Our spirits expanded with the horizons. This was the real West, we thought, our sense of wonder reawakened.

We were climbing steadily now, how steeply I realised only from the way our driver kept changing through a seemingly inexhaustible supply of gears. I counted at least six. In brilliant sunshine we were threading our way upwards through narrower and narrower valleys, all rocks and fir trees. Then, in a particularly tortuous defile, we came unexpectedly upon the most thrilling notice we had ever seen, the most exciting single moment since that first sight of Manhattan from the air. It said, simply, "Continental Divide. 6418 feet." We were on the other side of the American continent, in the watershed of the Pacific. We blessed the people who had put up that sign for the joy they had given us. That stream by the side of the road was on its way to the Pacific, and so were we.

The driver shifted up a couple of gears, and we began a breathtaking descent towards the West Coast. Straight below us, so straight below I could have dropped a stone onto it, was our road, circling its way down among the trees and rocks. The driver hauled us round a sucession of hairpin bends, and soon we were speeding through western Montana, all fertile green plains with snowcapped mountains in the distance.

At 5 p.m. we arrived in Butte, an untidy conglomeration of wooden buildings, with shanty banks, shanty drugstores, and shanty bus station. There seemed to be only one permanent building, probably a saloon. However, quite a few people got out here, probably homesteaders, and we observed with interest the various techniques used by the remainder to settle themselves in for the night. Long distance bus travel, we noticed, had its own expertise. The most obvious examples were two English girls who had been sitting in the seat in front of us, where they could put their feet up on the windowledge. Now, coming back to the bus at Butte, they split up, spreading themselves and their belongings across two seats each, contriving to give their environment such a lived-in look that you would have sworn they had been there since New York. During the day they had been getting friendlier and friendlier at each rest stop with a lone soldier, and he, following after them, hesitently occupied a third double seat. Then the new passengers got on, a positive horde of them. Assessing the new situation with a rapidity which would have delighted his commanding officer, the soldier gallantly surrendered his seat to the first woman who got on, and joined the prettier of the two girls. Soon all the seats were occupied except one, across which sprawled an old lady, obviously fast asleep. The one surplus passenger, a pretty young dark girl who looked vaguely Spanish, stood helplessly in the aisle until the driver came to see what was wrong. Even he hesitated to waken the dear frail old lady, until a more cynical woman passenger behind said, "Give her a shove. She's only pretending." By a curious coincidence, the dear old lady woke up at that moment and moved over, and with a good grace helped the young girl to get settled in. In a few minutes they were chatting away as if they had been friends for years.

We continued steadily westwards, passing, shortly after seven, through a place called Drummond -- so hideous to look at that the sun immediately sank in horror. But here in the north the twilight lingered as it does at home, and for a long time we stayed awake, chasing the sun through the overhanging defile between Bearmouth and Nimrod, beckoned by a single star in the western sky. Tomorrow morning we would be in Seattle.

At 10:50 pm we awoke to find ourselves unexpectedly in Idaho. 'Unexpectedly in Idaho' sounds like a fine musical comedy number, and we have already provided the choreography.

A glance at the map and timetable had told us that not only did Idaho in fact thrust up a finger between Montana and Washington, but that, true to its policy, Greyhound had once again provided an adequate mealstop when only the Post House would be open. After our grim experiences at Livingston and Bozeman, we were determined to foil them, and as soon as the bus had stopped we were out and marching along a cold deserted street to a distant neon sign. Our momentum carried us through a door and along a carpeted corridor into a dimly lit lounge, where we came to a standstill in belated self-doubt. It was only too obvious that we had gatecrashed a private party, either a high-class orgy or the exhausted remnants of a wedding reception. People were lying about on sofas eyeing us bemusedly, and a sophisticated-looking receptionist was bearing down on us with a cold stare. Simultaneously we realized that the door behind us was still open, admitting a blast of cold air and the remainder of the busload of passengers. They had obviously followed us like sheep behind a Judas ram, assuming that anyone who made his way so confidently through nighttime Wallace, Idaho, must "know a place."

I felt quite inept to explain the situation, grabbed Madeleine's arm, and retreated hastily and silently through a door marked "toilets," leaving the rest of the bus to explain itself as best it could. Another corridor and another door let us out into another street, with another distant neon sign, from which came convivial chinking sounds. We went up a flight of stairs and found ourselves in a smoky bowling alley. Peering intently round, we eventually concluded there was nothing to eat here but pretzels, so we left again, passing on the way the vanguard of the busload. Leaving them transfixed on the stairs, we scurried round the next corner, and, to our relief, saw another sign which definitely committed itself to offering food. Quite pleased at this hard-won success, we sat down and ordered, realising only then that we had come in by the back door of the Greyhound Post House from which we had started. However, the food was not too bad, and the service was excellent, possibly accounted for by the fact that the place was virtually deserted except for a puzzled-looking bus driver. We ignored him, and the questioning stares of the remainder of the passengers as they straggled in small harassed-looking groups. I tried to assume a worldly sophisticated air, as of one who had taken a few minutes to revisit old haunts in the underworld of Wallace, Idaho.

Eventually the bus left, somewhat late, and full of passengers clutching half-consumed items of food, but gradually resuming its normal nighttime tranquility as it sped west through the darkness.

Sunday 9th September

Except for one sleepy glance at Spokane, Washington, I slept until sunrise. We were floating through a dreamlike landscape of mist and trees, with golden disembodied mountain tops on either side. I nudged Madeleine awake, a thing I would do only in the rarest of emergencies. "Wake up, dear," I said, "We have come to a pretty pass." It turned out to be Snoqualmie, and it led down to Seattle.

From the map it seemed we might get a glimpse of Mount Rainier, but when I started peering through the opposite window, the lady sitting there explained kindly that this was not so. From this road you couldn't see Mount Reneer, as it was pronounced. She gave such a helpful account of the various other places from which you could see it that when, five minutes later, Mount Rainier hove clearly into view over her head I had to draw Madeleine's attention to it in a furtive manner more appropriate to the display of filthy postcards than snowy mountains.

There was another glimpse of it from the exciting floating bridge across Lake Washington, but this body of water itself was worrying me. The question I had to decide was whether or not Lake Washington counted as the Pacific Ocean. It was, I saw from the map, connected with Puget Sound, and the question seemed to boil down to whether the tide made its way up that far or not. The whole situation seemed to me most unsatisfactory. As I had designed the American continent in my head, the traveller from the East breasted a last ridge of mountains, and saw spread out before him the whole wide expanse of the Pacific, all breakers and coral sands. This present quibbling about Lake Washington wasn't at all the sort of wild surmise Keats had led me to expect, this piecemeal doling out of the Pacific in drips and drops surely not what Cortez had seen. Indeed, from the point of poetic truth even Puget Sound could not count as the Pacific, and I might not see it at all from Seattle. And in fact I didn't. I had to chase after the Pacific Ocean for days yet, and over thousands of miles, before finally hunting it down.

However, I dismissed all this from my mind, for we were now in Seattle, and very exciting it was. About the same size of a city as I had expected, but somehow more casual, informal. The buildings were lower, but built on unexpected hills. The whole place had a vaguely timber camp air about it. It was about half seven in the morning when we ended up in the ultra-modern bus station, half an hour early. We didn't want to phone the Busbys before schedule, so we had cups of coffee from a futuristic machine which gave you every variety of beverage except the one I wanted, coffee with milk and lots of sugar. Then I phoned up Buz, and he said, among other joyful and welcoming words, that they would pick us up at the north entrance to the bus station. I stepped outside to check from the position of the sun which one that was. On the way back I was asked by one lady to work the coffee machine for her and by another to direct her to the north entrance, and when I rejoined Madeleine I found her deep in conversation with a lady who had come from Belfast, so all in all I began to feel quite at home in Seattle. Besides, the air, moist and cool, was very like Ireland, after the dusty aridity of the rest of America.

I took Madeleine and the luggage to the north door, and very shortly Buz and Elinor drove up, with a dachshund. We got in, and I said "Wie geht's?" to the dachshund, addressing it in its own language to ingratiate myself right away with the really important member of the household. I had never studied a dachshund before, and was amazed how well it moved with such inadequate means of propulsion. Only because I know Elinor is a Beatles fan would I dare repeat one of the Beatles' remarks about one of these dogs at a boarding house where they stayed before they became famous: "It had no legs," said Paul flatly, "and every morning the landlady took it out for a slide."

Another dachshund extruded itself from the door of the Busby bungalow when we arrived, and, pausing only to reassure it that they had not in fact deserted it, the Busbys efficiently and with great sensibility installed us on the back lawn with cool drinks. There we passed a very pleasant relaxing morning, getting the Greyhound Bus Company out of our system. Not quite completely, however, because on trying to get back to the garden after lunch, Madeleine tried to open the door by pulling at the chromium towel rail, which unfortunately resembled the bar they have on the glass bus depot doors, and which, not being meant to be attacked by hardened Greyhound travellers, promptly came away in her hand.

After lunch I diffidently suggested I might have a look later on at World Championship Golf on television, which I had noticed from the tv program magazine in the Grennells was on at 3 o'clock that afternoon. Buz pointed out I had better have it on now, on account of the time differential, which I had completely forgotten, and I sat down in front of the tv all agog at finally being able to see this great event. But I had overlooked some important points, the first being the nature of

American television. This was a live transmission of only one match, and most of any golf match is the people walking between the shots. I should have realised it was impossible for commercial tv to waste all this air space, and what we had in fact was interminable commercials, with a few shots of Palmer, Nicklaus and Player swinging clubs. It wasn't my idea of golf at all. The other fact I had overlooked was that golf couldn't compete with the Busbys, live, in the adjoining room. I kept going in there to listen, and finally forgot about the golf altogether. What I say is that conversation is killing the art of watching tv.

When the sun had gone down, we sat in the living room with our swollen feet up, still talking, Buz treating a sore shoulder with an infra red lamp. "He won't go to the doctor with anything," Elinor complained. "He just comes home and curls up like a wild animal." "Like a wild animal with an infra red lamp," I amended.

Mentally we were happy and relaxed, but physically we were exhausted, and scenery still seemed to be flashing past our eyes, so quite early in the evening we retired for a twelve hour rest stop.

Monday 10th September

I awoke at a time conditioned by that of mail deliveries 7000 miles away -- driven, you might say, from pillow to post. From the kitchen came the muffled sounds of Buz being dispatched to work. I have only a few days here with these fine people, I told myself sternly; could I possibly waste any of this precious time in mere torpor? Ignoring the affirmative reply from every fibre of my being, I got out of bed, dressed perfunctorily, and tottered into the kitchen, where I found a slightly out-of-focus Elinor. We carried on a conversation vaguely reminiscent of the attempts of two sailing ships in a dense fog trying to ascertain each other's intentions by indistinct signals. With great subtlety I eventually ascertained what she would normally be doing at this hour "What would you normally be doing at this hour ?" was the way I phrased the key question, and elicited the admission that she might get some more sleep. So I spoke to her as man to woman. "Let's go to bed," I said.

By the time Madeleine and I really got up it was half eleven, and Elinor was apparently out shopping. We made our own breakfast, after a struggle with the toaster which taxed all our feeble intellectual resources. This was the second automatic toaster we had encountered, but at Grennell's the problem had been comparatively simple. All you had to do was wander into the vicinity of the toaster with a piece of bread in your hand; the machine would wrest it from you and return it to human ken only when its transmogrification was complete. Our simple peasant minds accepted this in the same way that tribesmen in Central Asia accept the airplane but are bemused by the bicycle. The Busby toaster required a certain amount of programming, not to mention propitiation by burnt offerings.

It was raining in the afternoon, in a nice homely way, and it seemed as good a time as any to visit the World's Fair. Elinor had a cold, so she drove us to the entrance and deposited us there with her blessing and a sheaf of left-over tickets.

International Exhibitions remind me of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. When Lenin was asked what mandate he had from the Russian people to accept such humiliating terms, he said, wryly, that they had voted for peace with their feet. The bigger the Exhibition, the more varied and irresistible its attractions, the more the feet revolt against it, and at the end they carry the day by refusing to carry you. Even now there is such a cloud of fatigue in that corridor of my memory that I can't believe there would be much of interest in it to you. Except possibly the still-vivid recollection of seeing at the exit from the US Science Pavilion, in

great gold letters on the wall, a quotation from a Hyphen subscriber. Unaccountably they failed to mention this fact,mentioning just the name, Robert Conquest -- presuming no doubt that his chief claim to immortality lies in his poetry and not in his letters of comment on Hyphen. Admittedly he hasn't written many of the latter lately, his subscription having lapsed, but let that be a warning to you. Let your Hyphen sub lapse, and you may find yourself reduced to writing on walls in Washington.

What else can I remember that would be tired and frustrated enough to convey my feetal memories of the World's Fair. Elvis Presley and Arnold Palmer....I mean Arnold Palmer and Elvis Presley....were there somewhere, but we didn't see them. Madeleine was given a demonstration of a voting machine and it didn't work, shaking our faith in the Western Alliance. We didn't climb the Space Needle because you had to stand in line. We saw a fabulous collection of furs, or so Madeleine says. Personally, I hate to contemplate the suffering of the poor dumb creatures who are skinned to provide these luxuries....namely men. And we starved to death in the Food Circus.

This last came about because we had been invited out to dinner by Sandy and Joy Sanderson, who were in Seattle at the time. The tragic circumstances of the break-up in Inchmery Fandom were still fresh in our minds then, and although we liked the Sandersons as much as we always had, we felt sympathetic enough toward Vince Clarke's side of the affair to feel that if the Sandersons wanted to stand us an expensive meal we would jolly well get their money's worth. We must, I told Madeleine, Eat For Vince. Just call us bloody pro-Vincials.

But since we had had nothing to eat since morning, we began to get very hungry, and late afternoon found us drawn to the Food Circus, a huge arena full of stalls selling food from all parts of the world. In our famished state the odours were maddening, and it was agony to choose something that wouldn't spoil our appetites. I hesitated among so many things that I don't remember anything about what I actually had except that I could have eaten lots more of it.

Fortunately the dinner was worth the wait. It was at the Hyatt House, site of the previous year's Convention. The food was good, the company congenial, and the service improbably excellent. Madeleine asked for Sauterne, and the waiter said regretfully that they didn't have any; a few minutes later a plane landed outside and the waiter scurried in with a bottle. Sandy said, "Well, thanks, but you shouldn't have gone to all that trouble."

Back home in the Busby bungalow we talked late again, drinking home brew.

Tuesday 11th September

Next morning we slept even later, and felt even tireder when we got up. Obviously this sleep stuff was an addictive drug, and we were hooked. Elinor and Buz took us to the Volunteer Park, where, in the museum, I saw for the first time the three-dimensional cartoons in ivory called netsukes, and then for a stroll along the shore. It was very nice, even if it wasn't really the Pacific, and familiar yet strange, like the twin brother of an intimate friend. There were big wooden posts lying in the sand which Buz said had been carried there for some reason, and I said maybe they were tote 'em poles. Then we went along to the harbour where they had porpoises in small tanks, which we hated, and where they advertised oysters and clam chowder in earthy terms -- "Only one to a customer without your wife's written permission." We bought fish and chips and ate them at a wooden table in the open. It was all very pleasant, and like a glimpse into the almost unknown America of the last century, before the car homogenized it.

Next item in our leisurely agenda was a cruise round Puget Sound, but it was off or something, so we settled for a short trip round the harbour, with a guide explaining where all the ships were from and us looking for ones made by Harland and Wolff at home. He also explained very carefully to his passengers what tides were and how they behaved, which amused us islanders no end. At home children hear of the tide before they hear of the sea -- at least when I was young people in Northern Ireland called the edge of the sea the tide.

Somehow the whole day had drifted pleasantly away, and it was time to go to the Nameless meeting. It was at Wally's house, in a maze of dirt roads. We were taken to marvel at the stump in the basement and the antique Thatcher furnace, which had something wrong with its pipes....ducts disease, I suggested...and then everyone sat round in the big low livingroom and talked. In format it was rather like a meeting of Irish Fandom, but more fragmentary: there had been some talk of me writing up the minutes instead of Wally, and I was glad to see he didn't take it seriously. Later Wally showed slides of the Convention, and Wally Gonser cut Paul Stanbery's hair in the kitchen. We gave the shorn Paul a lift home at the end. He seemed a very likeable young man, reminiscent of the best products of the English public school system without the arrogance, and without the slightest real evidence I was quite prepared to accept that he might turn out to be a genius.

Wednesday 12th September

We were up at the crack of 9:40, very drowsy and in desparate need of a cup of tea. Madeleine stumbled into the kitchen, the kettle beckoning her like a Holy Grail, and inaugurated the life-giving ritual. Eventually the kettle boiled, and with shaking hands she infused the magic potion. She had just finished pouring in the boiling water and was bearing the teapot in triumph to the table when it disintegrated in her hand and shattered on the floor. She stood among the shards with a dazed expression on her face, in a little cloud of steam.

Buz had just appeared, making a bee-line for the pot Elinor had left on the stove, and leaving no doubt as to his intentions ("If that isn't coffee I'll kill myself.") He explained it was all his fault: the handle of that teapot had come off before, and he had stuck it on again, with epoxy resin glue. It must be no good. "The great Teapot Doom Scandal," I said, with a grasp of lesser known American history which even at the time I felt to be remarkable in the circumstances. Elinor, examining her kitchen floor, pointed out we could tell all our fortunes at once. When Madeleine pointed out that all the catastrophes, like the towel rail incident and being bitten by a mosquito yesterday and now this, were happening to her this time instead of me, Buz said it must have been epoxy resin glue he mended the teapot with. Feeling somewhat weak at this point for some reason, I suggested Madeleine find another teapot and try again. "That's right," said Buz, "send 'em up again right away."

This was the day of theGreat Mountain Hike, and soon our native guide Burnett Toskey arrived, and we were bowling along the road by which we had first come to Seattle, towards the Snoqualmie Pass. Having parked the car, we distributed the loads of food and cameras and plunged into the primaeval wilderness. There was a very well defined path through it, with every now and then little direction signs and notices identifying types of trees. The combination of wildness and civilisation seemed very strange to us. The path, or trail as it was called, led up the slope in long zig-zags. After the fourth or fifth abrupt change of direction I realised with a blinding flash of illumination the real meaning of the word "switchback." The trek was curiously tiring, and I think one reason for this may have been the fact that there was nothing to see but the dense trees, so that there was no distraction from one's physical sensations, and no excuse to stop every now and

then to admire the view. It was like being in a very healthy subway.

But after a few hundred feet we arrived at the clearing for the railway line, and I thought maybe the American style had its points. All the stored-up impact of the last half-hour burst on one at once -- the huge mountains across the valley, and countless more beyond them, everything on a tremendous scale.

After some redistribution of loads, we entered the subway again and toiled back and forth for a long time, but eventually the trail levelled out, and it became just a pleasant walk. And at last we came out from the trees to find a little jewel of a lake, blue and calm among wooded slopes, as silent as if its beauty had been untouched since the creation of the world. My feeling that we were really the first human beings to see it was not entirely dispelled by the presence of public toilets, picnic tables, and discarded beercans. American scenery can take a lot of punishment.

It was called Lake Annette, Toskey said. We thanked him for it and strolled about for a while in admiration, then, humanity being what it is, began to feel hungry. While we were eating, Madeleine saw a chipmunk, which would have made everyone's day if it hadn't been made already. It seemed nearly as interested in her as she in it, and ate some of her sandwich. There was plenty for it, despite the gloomy prognostications of the women that they hadn't brought enough. There is always too much food at picnics. I think it must be some sort of strange Law of Nature, because it happens to everyone. Why, I remember reading of a picnic given by a very famous person indeed. There were five thousand guests and he only brought five loaves and two fishes, and still there was stuff left over.

We stayed at the lake as long as we could, and then started the trek down. I found it harder than going up, but Madeleine ran ahead as she always does going down mountains. She thinks of herself as a mountain goat, but I always feel more like one of the Gaderene swine.

There was a waffle party that evening at the Pfeiffers. There we had our first waffle and our second meeting with Seattle Fandom. First impressions confirmed were that they were a very likeable lot, but very heterogenous. So this, I thought, is what Irish Fandom might have been like in another probability world in which we had constituted ourselves as an open club. There was a strange variety of conversations going on, from light banter to intellectual battle. Pournelle and Tapscott, for instance, were arguing about politics, and putting each other down with an admirable kind of cold politeness unknown in Ireland, of which I can remember only one example. Pournelle had offered some instance which he regarded as relevant to his argument but which Tapscott had ignored. Pressed, he said disdainfully, "I was wondering if you were making a value judgement or merely offering an odd piece of information."

In another corner Stanbery was being asked how he felt about Coventry now, on the lines of "Apart from that, Baron Frankenstein...." He did not actually say that he felt that it had got out of hand; rather he conveyed the impression that all that had happened was that somebody had come up to him one day and asked for an imaginary world, and he had given him one he just happened to have lying around.

The sands of our stay in Seattle were rapidly running out, because we had to catch the bus south at 2am. Buz and Elinor took us home for a last meal and our baggage, and then they both came down to the bus station and saw us off. It seemed very sad and sudden, more like a bereavement than a scheduled departure. Fandom was wonderful that it should have brought us together, but there was something basically wrong with a mundane world in which natural next-door neighbours should have to live 7000 miles apart. In a Utopia we would live between the Busbys and the Grennells.

Among the nice things you could say about the Busbys, the most comprehensive was that they deserved one another. They complemented one another miraculously, and I thought what a wonderful thing sex was and how grateful we must be to Burbee for having invented it in 1926. The way Buz's forceful frankness was balanced by Elinor's deep empathy reminded me vaguely of the old definition of a lady as one who never showed her underwear unintentionally. Elinor, I thought, would never insult anyone unintentionally.

Leaving these two life-long friends on a Seattle sidewalk, we felt the American continent to be a vast wasteland lit by two warm home-like glows. Fortunately we were to find more.

Thursday 13th September

Obviously it was sensible to try and get some sleep before dawn, so we told ourselves there was nothing all that exciting about setting out for San Francisco along a thousand miles of the Pacific Coast. We found this difficult to believe, but our bodies accepted it willingly, and after a couple of hours I awoke to find it was true. We were becalmed in a depot somewhere, about six inches from a high featureless concrete wall. There was no sound of movement anywhere, as if we had drifted into some backwater and been forgotten. It was like being in the Marie Celeste. All the other passengers were asleep -- or dead. I had the impression we had been here for a very long time.

I drifted uneasily back to sleep, and when I awoke again it was broad daylight and we were bowling past signs for Vancouver. Vancouver? How did we get here? Of course, I thought, it was while we were asleep at that sinister depot. The other passengers had been transferred to a southbound bus and we had been transported unconscious to Canada. But I had scarcely adjusted to this concept when the signs began to proclaim Portland. Looking blearily at the map I found there was indeed a place called Vancouver near Portland. But it was 7am and we should have passed Portland long ago. I fumbled for the time table in the rack above. Yes, Portland, Ore. ar. 5.35. I had found that most of the riddles of the universe that present themselves during bus travel have their answers somewhere in the timetable's cryptic footnotes, but there were no notes for this timetable at all. I ran them to earth at the feet of another timetable altogether, and was rewarded with a new and strange shaft of illumination: "All service operates on Local Time; except in the state of Oregon where all times are shown in Pacific Standard Time."

So we were in the right place after all, but an hour backwards in time. To be abruptly transported 300 miles in minus one hour is a harrowing experience at the best of times, and unbearable before breakfast. I lit a cigarette. With uncanny timing the driver made his first announcement of the day: We were now entering Portland, Oregon. Because of the delay in the depot at Olympia only fifteen minutes would be allowed for breakfast. Smoking was not permitted on buses passing through Oregon and all cigarettes should be immediately extinguished.

I was even more put out than my cigarette. Consulting the timetable again, I found the next stop was Eugene, Oregon, two hours and ten minutes from Portland. Over two hours without a cigarette. I realised I was faced with a crisis that would call on all my resources of will power, and that I had an immediate and vital decision to make. Should I face thisgreat trial physically weakened by lack of food, or psychologically handicapped by being dirty and unshaved? I decided to use the fifteen minutes to wash and shave. The sort of breakfast I wanted I couldn't get in that time, and I would have to have a cigarette afterwards, should the entire state of Oregon vanish in a cloud of flame. Besides, I could shave around a cigarette.

It was a long dismal journey from Portland to Eugene, and I began to dislike

the state of Oregon. It had started to rain, and there was nothing to be seen but a vast number of wet trees, obviously invulnerable to a flame thrower, let alone a cigarette smoked in a sealed bus. There was one bright moment, a sign outside a tailor's shop reading "LOW PRICES. TIMID SALESMEN," but apart from that the state seemed to consist entirely of coniferous trees and no-smoking signs. On this interminable journey to the next cigarette I realized fully for the first time the significance of the phrase "the Oregon pine."

At Eugene we made straight for the Posthouse, where I assembled a breakfast of scrambled egg, toast, hash brown potatoes and coffee. Madeleine had the same, but with orange juice instead of potatoes. The egg proved to be rubbery, the toast leathery, and the potatoes even colder than the coffee. Examining my change, I found I had been charged $2.90 for these bounteous repasts. I am normally a mild-mannered person, but suffering had made me all bitter and twisted inside. Breathing cigarette smoke like a diffident dragon, I looked for someone to complain to. For the first time, but not the last, it was impressed on me how cunningly bus stations are designed: they are more like packing and grading depots for vegetables, processing passengers rather than attending to them, and the process is self-automated, controlled by a row of push buttons in Chicago. The posthouse, for instance, was run on a cafeteria system, rather like a soup kitchen without the sympathy, and there was nobody in charge.

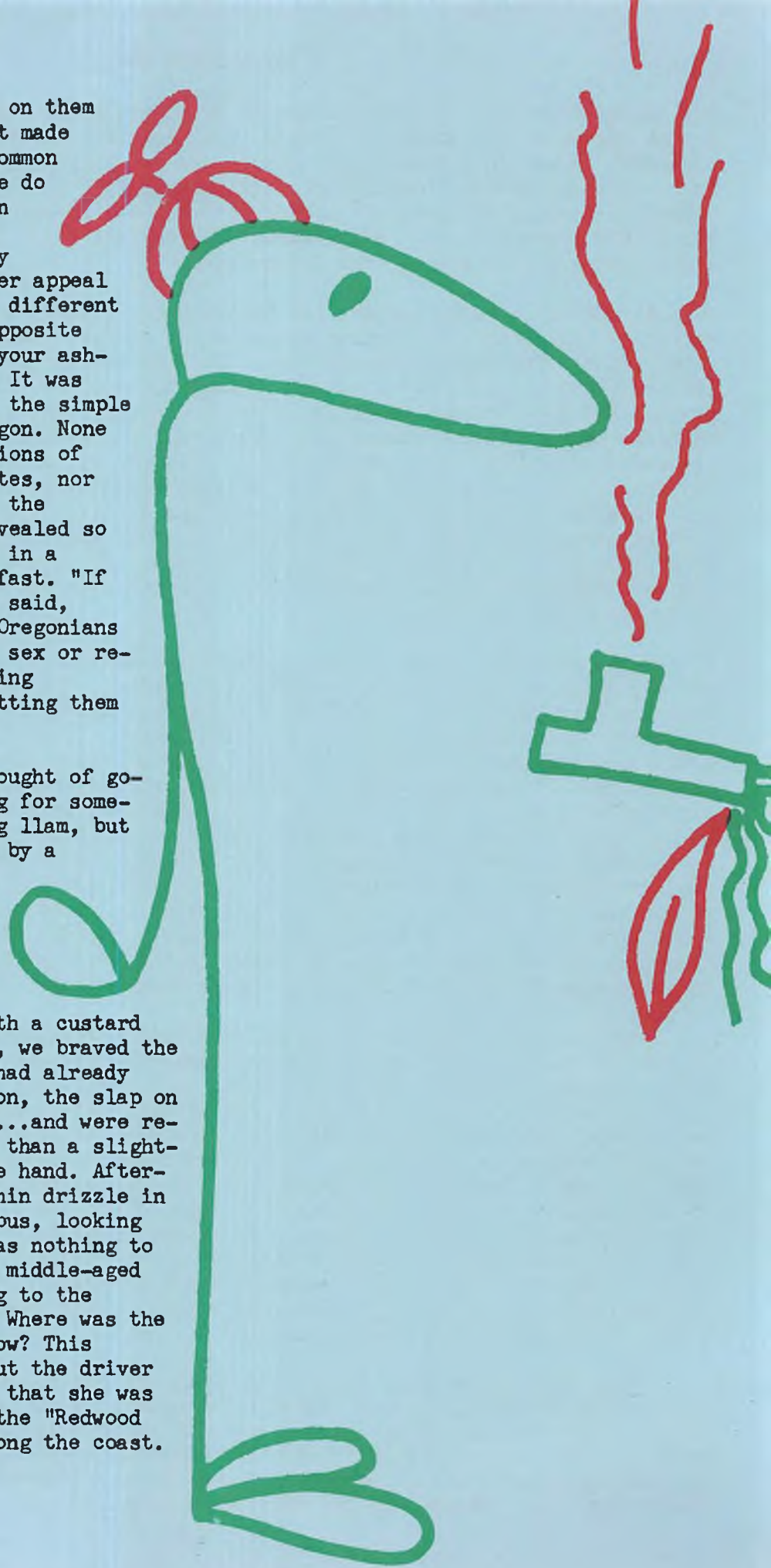
Well, at least I could check my facts. I went back to the cashier and asked her the price of eggs, toast, potatoes and coffee. She said $1.45, studiously refraining from asking why. But I told her anyway, figuring that if anyone had any authority it would be the one who took the money. "I just wanted to check how much I had paid for the worst meal I've had in the United States," I said experimentally. She bridled. I had never really understood until then what bridling was exactly, but I knew it when I saw it. I realised I had been bridled at by a professional. It was truly a virtuoso performance, and if there is ever a bridling event introduced in the Olympic Games, the Greyhound team will win hands down. Hands down and shoulders hunched, the cashier said simply, "It's nothing to do with me." I looked around the rest of the bus station for someone it would have something to do with, apart from me, but the only vestige of higher authority was a notice on the Posthouse door proclaiming it to be a member of the National Restaurant Association. And even this fitted perfectly into the Posthouse pattern: it was for last year.

Anyhow, now it was time to leave, and with a great grinding of gears by the driver and gnashing of teeth by the passengers we set off again. It was southwest we were heading now, for the Pengra Pass, 5128 feet. The rain was still pouring down, but what we could still see of the scenery was becoming more interesting. There were steep, tree-clad slopes, the pines remaining obstinately perpendicular at fantastic angles to the ground, digging their heels in to stop themselves sliding onto the road. They were getting sparser, and between them were occasional patches of bare sandy soil. It looked eerie country, where one might die in exhaustion and terror a mile from the highway. And maybe there were some worse things in this place than loneliness. Looking at the map I saw with a faint <u>frisson</u> that we were close to "Windigo Pass," and I remembered the Algernon Blackwood story about the fearful elemental of the North American forests which moves through the trees like a whirlwind. It is called the Wendigo.

After the Pengra Pass, from which there was frustratingly nothing to be seen but a slightly wider vista of cloud, we stopped at a place called The Halfway House. It was in a clearing in the forest, and nothing much had been done with the felled trees but nail them together to make this rustic diner. Everything about it was of an engagingly rustic simplicity, right down to the inscriptions on the walls of the men's rest room. These were strongly reminiscent of those I had seen a long time

ago in Europe, and coming on them again here in the Far West made me quietly proud of our common cultural heritage. "Please do not put cigarette butts in the urinal," said one notice, "It makes them soggy and hard to light." Another appeal for fair play on slightly different grounds was made on the opposite wall: "We do not piss in your ashtray." And that was all. It was enough, though, to convey the simple homespun character of Oregon. None of the perverted assignations of the East Coast sophisticates, nor the tortured mysticism of the Irish which I saw once revealed so starkly in an inscription in a public convenience in Belfast. "If you want real relief," it said, "Come to Jesus." No, the Oregonians were not frustrated about sex or religion. It was those smoking restrictions that were getting them down.

Outside again, we thought of going into the main building for something to eat, it now being llam, but were momentarily deterred by a striking advertisement we had not noticed before. "SUDDEN SERVICE," it proclaimed. Sudden? I had a momentary vision of walking into the place and being served instantly with a custard pie, in the face. However, we braved the prospect...after all, we had already survived a buffet in Oregon, the slap on the face we got in Eugene...and were rewarded with nothing worse than a slightly greasy hamburger on the hand. Afterwards, we walked in the thin drizzle in a semi-circle around the bus, looking for wildlife. But there was nothing to be seen any wilder than a middle-aged lady passenger complaining to the driver about the scenery. Where was the Pacific, she wanted to know? This seemed a little unjust, but the driver explained quite patiently that she was on the wrong bus. It was the "Redwood Empire Route" that ran along the coast.



OF COURSE IT'S A PEACE PIPE.
WHAT DID YOU THINK IT WAS?

She accepted this resentfully, for some reason failing to ask the obvious question as to why this was called the Pacific Highway Route when it was over 100 miles from the sea.

By the time we reached Chemult, the rain had stopped, but the clouds were still low, and all we could see of the Oregon scenery was direction signs to National Parks and a tantalizing glimpse of Klamath Lake through the trees. We were getting tired of trees. They were still getting sparser, and the sandy patches more frequent, but the change was very gradual, and as a spectacle had about the same dramatic impact as grass growing. To anyone from Ireland, the most striking single feature of American scenery is the way it keeps going on and on after it has made its point.

But on thinking it over, I began to realize that this is a peculiarity of Ireland rather than of America. The European continent is a wedge projecting into the Atlantic, and the apex of the wedge is Ireland. Everything in Europe focuses on this little island. In North Donegal, in the latitude of Labrador, you can stand on the shore of a fjord at midnight and still see clearly the breakers roll in from the Arctic. While in Kerry, only 300 miles to the south, palms wave in the tropical air of the Gulf Stream. In between are recapitulated in miniature nearly all the European landscapes. The Sierras of Spain in the Galtee Mountains; the central European plains in the Great Bog of Allen; the Massif Central in the granite Mournes; the alluvial lands of the Rhine Valley in Meath and Down; and the Scandinavian Highlands in Antrim and Donegal. Ethnically, too, we have people from all these places -- Norsemen, Saxons, Normans, Flemish, and the Milesians from Spain. Our Celtic language is half-brother to both the Teutonic and Romantic tongues. Our religions range from Calvinism to Catholocism. We are the outpost of the Old World, its standard-bearer in the Atlantic, and we hold the essence of Europe. We kept its learning alive once as the land of saints and scholars, and we may do the same again, if the Old World cannot be saved by the President we gave the New.

All this in the space between two Greyhound rest stops. So maybe it's not surprising if American scenery seemed at times somewhat persistent. What we really wanted to see was mountains. Our own are only about 3000 feet high, and we had already climbed to nearly twice that height in the bus. We were now only 100 miles from Mount Shasta, all of 14,162 feet, a great mountain by any standards, a fantastic one by ours, and the reason we had come by this route instead of the coastal one. We have the Atlantic at home, and while it may not be as large as the Pacific, there's not all that much difference from our front door.

We spent a meal stop at Klamath Falls without seeing anything more reminiscent of waterfalls than a soda fountain, but when we came out again eating an exotic form of ice cream, the sun had come out. The mountains shone all around, and the prospect looked brighter. But these mountains were only about 8000 feet; would the clouds lift another 6000 feet in 100 miles?

Twenty minutes out of Klamath Falls there was a further lightening of the atmosphere as we entered the free air of California and I lit a cigarette. The feeling of daring which accompanied this act was accentuated by the fact that we were now boarded by some sort of customs Inspector. He made some unintelligible announcement, walked smartly to the rear of the bus and back again, and retired into his shed. It looked like the sort of job that would suit me down to the ground. I don't know what he was looking for, but I could have had a ton of it. Maybe he was just making sure that everyone was smoking.

One of the items it was forbidden to import into California must have been clouds, for now the sky was clear. We stared due south eagerly. The road turned.

A new vista opened up. And I remembered ruefully an old saying: mountains make their own weather. Far in front and slightly to the left a huge column of cloud piled into the air. Into it rose a great mass that could only be the base of Mount Shasta.

We watched it despairingly, and then with renewed hope. The cloud was rising and thinning. Minute by minute as we sped towards it the mass shrank, boiling off into space, becoming a fleecy cap, a plume, a wisp, until Mount Shasta itself shone proudly in a clear sky, majestic in black and white over the pale green and brown of California.

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

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

The signs of desert were now becoming more obvious. There were great patches of bare earth, an extraordinary phenomenon to one from a country where it requires constant and unremitting effort to stop things from growing. Already we felt the need of this land for water. Dried creeks and riverbeds lay pleading mutely for rain. In this country any lake would have been a fine sight, but what we came to was more than that. It was Lake Shasta, the most beautiful piece of landscaping man has ever done. It has a beautiful situation among mountains and trees, but for some reason the trees do not come down to the water...there is this broad golden belt around it, like sand. But it can't be sand, because the slope is too steep. Nor can it be ordinary earth, or plants would have grown on it. Presumably it's clay or some specially treated border to preserve the purity of the water. But whatever it is, it looks wonderful, like a band of gold round a great sapphire.

Now we were in the Shasta Lake recreation area, steep-sided wooded valleys in which perched vacation villages. Little winding sideroads turned off at unexpected angles to find their devious way down to luxurious homes. It looked like Utopia.

We were beginning to fall in love with California, and even the Posthouse at Redding failed to disenchant us. Madeleine had seen an interesting shop on the way through the town to the bus station, and daringly gone to look for it, with the result that she had no time left to eat anything. So she bought some fish "to go," as they say in the States. Unfortunately it was so far gone already she had to throw it away at the next stop.

This was a place called Orland, where we had ten minutes and two hamburgers. The scenery was still pleasant, but more muted -- great brown vistas with distant purple mountain ranges. Getting back in the bus we overheard another conversation between the driver and the middle-aged lady who had been complaining at the Half-way House about the absence of the Pacific from the middle of Oregon. She was now apologising, and congratulating him on the mountains. She may have been unreasonable

but you couldn't say she was unfair.

At Corning we saw for the first time the things we thought of as really Californian -- Spanish architecture and palm trees. I think these impressed Madeleine more than anything she had seen so far, but outside the town the yellow grass appalled her. Grass should not be yellow, it was wrong. It had, of course, been getting less green for hundreds of miles, but south of Corning it seemed suddenly to have given up trying.

Madeleine kept eagerly pointing out palm trees and exotic architecture and identifying olive groves for me until darkness fell with sub-tropical suddenness. There were no more rest stops, and incredibly we dozed off. Just after ten we awoke to find ourselves on a great bridge, and almost before I could work out that it couldn't be the Golden Gate, we were in San Francisco bus station, ten minutes early. I went to get cups of coffee, leaving Madeleine to guard the luggage, and came back to find her surrounded by people, all talking excitedly. There was Bill Donaho, beaming good will like some great welcoming lighthouse on a strange shore. And, why, who was this but Ethel, delighted to be surprising us. How nice to come all that distance in a strange country and find ourselves among not only new friends but old ones. I had a sudden vision of fandom stretching across the Northern Hemisphere like a lifeline.

There were two other friendly people, but since I hadn't been there when they were introduced I didn't know who they were and I didn't like to ask. Bill said we were staying with Jerry and Miriam and for a while I thought this must be them. Miriam Dyches-Carr, I supposed, but it looked even less like her than Krasner's silent blonde. How many Miriams was I going to have to sort through, I wondered? And who was this little girl who seemed to be accompanying us? But as we started for the car someone called her Poopsie and everything fell into place. Of course: Dick and Pat Ellington. I felt like saying hello all over again.

Bill led the way to a low-slung blue car, one of our heavy suitcases hanging from each hand as if he'd forgotten he'd picked them up. He put one down and pulled up on the handle of the trunk. Nothing happened, except that the wheels left the ground. So we piled into the car, suitcases and all. This uncouth invasion was superciliously witnessed by a self-posessed white cat which had come along for the ride, having been kitnapped on the way. All in all it was a very Berkeley welcome.

I had half expected to be taken to some Bohemian basement, but if this was a pad it was one straight out of Good Padkeeping. It was a pleasant little semi-detached house in a sort of mews, very European, and inside it was full of books and drinks and unfussy thoughtfulness. Somewhere, sometime that evening, we must have had a meal, but I was so exhilerated and there was so much to take in that I can't remember a thing about it....and indeed can quite believe I didn't even notice it at the time. All I remember is that we talked until everyone had left but us and Jerry and Miriam. We were at home. Eventually, to everyone's reluctance, Jerry and Miriam did something telekinetic to convert the sofa into a bed....a clear case of mind over mattress....and left us to get some sleep, very happy to be in San Francisco.

Friday 14th September

We awoke in the middle of the living room to find that living had started without us. It now included Cal Demmon, who had been sound asleep (we could hear the sound from outside his door) when we arrived late the previous night off the bus from Seattle. In the subhuman life form I assume before breakfast I was in no condition to divine where in this calm giant could be hiding the mercurial Cal I knew from

his writing, and shortly both of them left for work. I dressed in the bathroom while Jerry Knight made the mystic passes which transformed our double bed into an ordinary settee, and then he and Miriam and we had a leisurely talkative breakfast of toast and coffee. American bread tastes rather lifeless raw, but regenerates itself when toasted, like a phoenix. Then Madeleine devoted herself to the difficult problem of the appropriate costume for sight-seeing in San Francisco in an open Volkswagen, and I strolled outside feeling a catlike need to familiarise myself with my immediate environment.

We were, I found, living in a tiny two-storey red brick house rather reminiscent of a mews cottage. It was in the corner of a little courtyard, off a wide main road which stretched limitlessly into the haze. The day was warm and sunny, a strange meteorological phenomenon which even we from Ireland were begining to accept as commonplace. So adaptable were we indeed that I gave my sense of wonder a mental pinch to try and waken it up. We're in San Francisco, I pointed out to it. But it just lay there, unimpressed. Strolling along happily in the morning sunshine it was certainly difficult to work up any tension, and there was nothing very startling to be seen. A commonplace motel, an ordinary gas station, the usual advertising signs. There was a small store subtitling itself "The Sincere Grocers" and I made a mental note to suggest, when passing it in fannish company, that it must specialise in frankfurters. It's hard to sustain a reputation for native wit while coping with a foreign country.

American streets are so monotonously straight and long that there never seems any point in walking unless you are making for some definite destination, so after a few hundred yards I turned back, carrying out a post mortem on my sense of wonder. I just didn't feel I was in a foreign country, I realised: I felt quite at home. I could walk back into 947 University Avenue, Berkeley, California, with no more tension than into 170 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast. Was it possible I had met Miriam and Jerry only last night?

If walking alone along a street in California wasn't enough to waken my sense of wonder, it obviously needed something out of this world. Back in the courtyard outside the house I found it. When everything is alien a familiar sight can awaken wonder, like a castaway on Mars finding a primrose among the lichen. Or maybe I should say a sprig of heather, for anything as staunch and resilient as this Scottish flower blooming under an alien sky. There in the sunbaked Californian courtyard was Ethel Lindsay, a little more sunburned than when I had last seen her in Chicago, but as cheerful and happy as ever. It was a wonderful surprise to find her here in Berkeley. We had been travelling in different directions ever since the Convention, but here our paths had crossed, for Ethel's last day in San Francisco and our first.

I don't know how much later it was that we started. It was one of the nice things about Berkeley fandom, and one of the things that made it like Ireland, that time didn't seem to matter. There were a number of pleasant things that could be done if we felt like it, but there was no hurry. The day was open-ended. But it must have been about noon when we all piled into Jerry's Volkswagen convertible and he whisked us off to the Golden Gate.

Whisked was the word. We started off with the top down, but the wind soon blew that idea out of our heads. We stopped and Jerry put the top up while the girls had still some hair style left. It was as well we did because the day got misty and cool as we drove further into the Pacific. By the time we got out to the Golden Gate it was quite chilly and the bridge, one of the few contemporary structures to figure in a science fiction story, could only be extrapolated. However we were the people to do it, and besides I bought a very nice picture post-card of it when we stopped for a cup of coffee at the far end. After all, as I

pointed out philosophically to Madeleine, we had been on the bridge and we had seen what it was like. What more could we ask?

Then we went to the museum, where there was some Rodin sculpture. We visited the Chinese room too, our appetite for sculpture being still as it were unjaded, and then on to Miriam's favourite modern ruin. This was a wonderful fairylike castle made out of canvas and plaster for some exhibition and now rapidly disintegrating, but of such charm that not only had it been left undemolished, but a fund had been started to reconstruct it of permanent materials. As we admired it across its moat, moving from time to time to dodge the wind-borne fallout from a massive stone fountain -- these Americans have some fancy lawn sprinklers, I murmured -- the highly original thought struck me that San Francisco was a very different city from Los Angeles. There they specialised in lath and plaster reconstructions of masonry: here they made masonry reconstructions of lath and plaster.

I had been coming to like San Francisco anyway, having seen enough despite the mist at the Golden Gate to know it was probably the most beautiful city in the Northern Hemisphere (sorry, Berkeley fandom, but I have this notion about Rio de Janeiro) and now this crazy idea made me suspect I was going to love it. In most places it's hard enough to get people to pay for the preservation of ruins of genuine historic interest. Of course it's probably accounted for by the well known breeding habits of familiarity. The Egyptians, for instance, seem quite content to make reservoirs round their antiquities and dam the consequences. Only the foreigners worry. And in Ireland only a few years ago Killymoon Castle was sold for £100 to a farmer who put pigs in it. But in San Francisco, Miriam told me, there was great indignation when it was found that a new five million dollar elevated motorway obstructed the view of the Ferry Building, which although of no particular architectural interest had been a historic San Francisco landmark for all of two generations. So it was decided to pull it down and rebuild it somewhere else. No, not the Ferry Building, silly. The motorway.

We continued further into downtown San Francisco, looking for that contemporary chimera, parking space. It sometimes seems to me that half the population of the world is at present devoting its life to getting a motor car and the other half to getting rid of it. San Francisco has this latter problem in a particularly acute form, being a European-style city with an American - style traffic problem. In his search for a distantly glimpsed multi-storey carpark Jerry was entrapped in a relentless spiral of one-way streets, borne steadily further and further from his objective as by some sort of inverted whirlpool, until it was obvious even to me that he was lost. I felt quietly happy about this. It always happens to me when I take visitors to tourist attractions.

However Jerry eventually evaded the cordon of signs, homed in on the car park and whizzed up a series of spiral ramps, which it would be fun to roller skate down, until he found a vacant space on the umpteeth floor. After admiring the view we took the lift again and found ourselves thronging the streets.

It reminded me of Paris. Not that I've ever been to Paris, but that's what it reminded me of. It was stylish, elegant, sophisticated, cosmopolitan. After the aggressive Americanism of every other city I had seen in the States it was like a breath of European air. The advertisements seemed less blatant, the shop window displays subtler, the buildings more permanent, even the traffic less hectic. The men seemed more quietly dressed, more polite and more relaxed. The girls were tastefully dressed and pretty in every conceivable racial and multi-racial way. There was, above all, a general impression that people liked one another and liked living in San Francisco. I was begining to understand why, and how this city had redeemed America in the eyes of the world at the time of the Kruschev visit, and

for all we know saved mankind. This was what America could become.

It was a revelation. It seemed to me that everyone at home who is inclined to resent the creeping tide of Americanism in our cities should come and look at San Francisco, and see for themselves that Americanism...which is just the term these people use for a society based on mass production, high consumption and the automobile...can be integrated with traditional European values. People who run screaming from the concrete desert of Los Angeles should pause for breath in San Francisco and see that there is another answer. A city which is the hope of the world.

But after crossing a few intersections we found ourselves in another city altogether, an Oriental one. We were in Chinatown, where everything was Chinese except the price tags, and even the telephone kiosks were little pagodas. Hundreds of little shops offered strange and fascinating things for sale. Miriam and Jerry were looking for a Mexican restaurant, of all things. Madeleine was looking for a cheap cheongsam, a garment which has done more than Mao Tse Tsung to unsettle Western Mankind, and Ethel, who had had an early breakfast, was looking for food. I didn't mind one way or another because though I liked cheongsams and food, I thought the situation of three Celts, a Slav and an Anglo-Saxon looking for a Mexican restaurant in the Chinese quarter of an American city founded by Spain was the last word in exoticism. However Ethel's was the most basic need, transcending the instincts of sex and even the craving for enchiladas, and since the place was fairly crottling with Chinese restaurants we finished up eating a typical fannish meal of four dinners among five people.

Outside again we went to catch a cable car. San Francisco is built upon what appears to be a miniature mountain range, and only sheer determination prevents the entire population from slithering down to the waterfront. Those who have ended up there are periodically dredged up again by cable cars, for redistribution about the peaks of the city. The cable cars are engagingly antiquated contraptions. Emmet-ations of ordinary single-deck trams, driven by a clutch engaging a moving cable through a slot in the ground. This device permits the most dramatic effects of acceleration and braking, and what with this and the clattering and grinding and lurching they seem to go at crazy speed through the more respectable traffic. They are more like something in a funfair than a means of public transport, and everyone seemed to enjoy them as much as we tourists. You feel somehow that San Francisco has a holiday running down the middle of its streets.

A cable car finally ground to a halt on level ground at the waterfront and everyone reluctantly got out. It was now positioned at a sort of turntable, and to my delight I found all the passengers were helping to push it round ready for the journey up again. Yes, I liked San Francisco.

The reason we had come down to Fisherman's Wharf, apart from riding the cable cars, was to visit a famous store called COST PLUS where there are all sort of exotic imports at bargain prices. But Miriam, who was leading the way, slowed down and stopped and looked worried. I realised at once what was wrong, having seen this sort of thing on the newsreels. Men were walking up and down in front of the store carrying placards. We stopped in a group on the pavement, irresolute. "I've never crossed a picket line in my life," said Miriam, "but Madeleine coming all this way...."

"I'll tell you what," said Madeleine cheerfully, "we could go in and <u>steal</u> something."

"Well, let's case the joint anyway," I said bilingually, so we went over to

look at the windows The first thing we saw was a big notice saying OUR EMPLOYEES ARE NOT ON STRIKE. It went on to give a long involved explanation full of technical terms from American Labour relations, the gist of which was that the employees were getting what they wanted. Miriam was nonplussed, so I suggested we go and see what the pickets had to say. We went over to the nearest one and, nodding to him politely, studied his placard. He stopped walking and held it steady for us, averting his gaze as if he merely paused for a rest. Having digested his message we coughed apologetically to attract his attention and asked him about the notice in the window. Whereupon he launched into another equally involved explanation, the gist of which was that this employer couldn't be trusted and that they were picketing him until he kept his promise. After ten minutes or so of hearing evidence and cross examination we adjourned our little industrial court and, thanking the picket, retired further down the sidewalk for consultation. Miriam and Jerry said whatever we decided would be fine by them, Madeleine said firmly that she'd just as soon not go in, and we all retired from the arena feeling quite happy at having struck a blow for downtrodden labour.

Curiously this little episode made me feel even more at home in San Francisco. Up to now most of our hosts in America had been Republicans, who would regard our Conservative Party as a bunch of dangerous radicals They were very nice people and I thought none the less of them for that. Of course I am very broad-minded about these things. I would even be prepared to make Republicanism legal between consenting adults. But it did feel good to be back among people who thought like Europeans and whom you didn't have to be afraid of offending.

So we happily wandered along the waterfront for a while looking at baby alligators and other strange things, including the little seahorses they offered to mail live anywhere for a dollar. I don't know what Her Majesty's Post Office would think of this...the only sea creature I've ever heard of them delivering by post is COD. Then we took the cable car again for another cheerful jangling ride back up into the city. Half way it stopped dead and stood there for some time without any apparent reason. Nobody seemed to be at all concerned. A passer-by called out something and the driver shouted "Coffee break at the power station," and everybody laughed. It didn't seem the sort of thing that would happen in New York, or even London.

I can't remember if we ever found out the reason for the stoppage -- maybe it was the coffee break -- but eventually we jangled off again, and hopped off in the middle of the city and went to collect the Volkswagen.

We shot down the spiral ramp into the streets like a ball on a pintable, only to be caught in a huge traffic jam on the approaches to the Bay Bridge. While thus becalmed in a Sargasso Sea of cars I heard from Miriam and Jerry of the first murmurings of San Francisco's Revolt Against The Freeways. It was becoming clear that every city motorway built to solve the problem of too much traffic carries the seed of another problem, the traffic it creates. Which necessitates another motorway and so on until the city itself is obliterated by concrete, dispersed into crevices between roads and car parks. Los Angeles has yielded to the automobile, but not San Francisco. Even then there were plans for a modern commuter railway system, and recently I saw on television a San Franciscan who threatened to blow up a projected new freeway. I nodded approvingly: that was my San Francisco.

Back in Berkely we met Bill Donaho and Dick and Pat Ellington and their little daughter Poopsie, a farewell gathering to see Ethel off on her long journey back home. We all went for dinner to a big eating place called Brennans, which unaccountably was owned by a German and employed Chinese waiters. The food was very good and there were the usual lavish helpings, which no one was able to finish except Bill Donaho. Little Poopsie was hardly able to make any inroad at all into her dinner, and I was delighted to see Bill relieve her of her almost untouched plate and finish it off It's great comfort for a visitor to the States to have Bill Donaho around.

Not only does his vast size give you a sense of security, amply justified by his less obvious character and intelligence, but he relieves you of the nagging guilt you feel in restaurants at the waste of all that good food. With Bill around this problem is drastically reduced. On this occasion he polished off a couple of side dishes for me as well, enabling me to concentrate my flagging forces on my huge hunk of strawberry shortcake. It had turned out to be a very pleasant surprise. I have been ordering this dish with unquenchable optimism for the past thirty years at various places in the world, and this was the first time I had ever found it made with fresh strawberries and real, fresh cream. Ethel had it too, and I don't think she could have wished for anything better for her last meal in California.

As usual unquestionedly assuming command, Bill made sure we arrived at Oakland's bus station in good time. Bill checked in Ethel's luggage, I found out which gate the bus would be at, and then there was nothing to do but wait for the bus to come in from San Francisco on its way to Salt Lake City and New York. It was, of course, late. We stood in a little group round Ethel, talking nervously and desultorily. The Berkeley fans couldn't be their usual bright and cheerful selves, because this was a sad occasion, and they couldn't just keep saying sad farewells, and they all knew that when the bus did come in there would be a rush to get on and we couldn't hold Ethel back. So the conversation was spasmodic and interspersed with the usual objurgations to take care of herself and give their love to so and so in England and try to persuade Atom to stand for Taff and so on. For myself I just kept thinking, I'm responsible for all this. I wrote the article in Nebula which brought this little Scottish girl into fandom, and I started this TAFF thing, and now here she is in a California bus station among friends she had made across six thousand miles. Now she looked a little sad, and I could understand it. Her great holiday all over, she was leaving the sun and warmth of California for the long anti-climatic journey back to winter in grimy London, no doubt worrying all the way as to whether she had made a good impression. The bus swept suddenly in and the queue pushed forward and the Berkeley fans said their hurried last goodbyes and I knew there was only one thing for me to say. So as she was swept past me in the queue I bent down and whispered "I'm proud of you Ethel." And I was, though it wasn't until I saw the genuine sorrow and affection on faces around me as that brave little figure disappeared in the crowd that I realised just how much.

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CAUGHT IN A FIRST DRAFT

I made a bit of a Daphne out of the first issue of this sterling publication by composing on the stencil, but if you'll bare with me (as the Liverpool Poker School say to one another) I'll persevere. I think it is good for me. You see I've always been an inveterate reviser. I don't think I've ever sent out an article that hasn't been re-written at least three times. Apart from the time this takes, I think it's bad for one's writing. You find yourself unconsciously <u>writing first drafts</u>. That is, you write with the knowledge in the forefront of your mind that what you are writing will have to be done all over again...that is you are writing for yourself, and you lose the sense of communion with your readers. This mightn't be of much importance in mundane writing, but the essence of fan writing is the personal relationship between the writer and his readers, the realisation of friendship and community of interests. One has a mental picture of the people one is writing for and the thought of their reactions, individual reactions, to each sentence suggests and determines what you will say in the next. This is why most fans write better letters than they do articles; they are daunted by the anonymity of their audience, in much the same way I suppose that stage artists are daunted by the impersonality of cameras and microphones.

Walt Willis in Woz 2, February, 1955.

THE HARP IN QUARK

Installment 37, Quark 7, 1964.

It's always as difficult, I find, to write the first installment of a transplanted column as of a new one, even a column which has survived as many uprootings as this one. The Harp is now in its fourth fanzine and fourteenth year, and yet I feel as diffident about starting this installment as I did about that first one in Quandry. The new editor is an old friend, and the names in his letter column equally congenial, but every fanzine is a different gestalt and I'm still feeling for my place in this one. It wouldn't matter so much if I were the sort of writer who knows what he's going to say before he starts writing, but I never do. All I have at the moment for instance is a page of a notebook with cryptic scribbles on it reading "Bomber pilots", "slugs" and "Blish", an ill-assorted lot. I wonder if the turnover in fandom has been complete enough for me to get away with a column starting "Romantic Ireland is covered with a soft mantle of slush as I sit here wondering what I can say that would be suitable for a magazine published in Omaha, Nebraska"? If so, I can see my fanwriting problems are over for another fourteen years.

No, I was afraid of that. Despite all Ed Wood has told us about the ephemeral nature of our fannish chit-chat, I thought there just might be an odd copy of Quandry lurking in your fanzine collections behind those imposing bound volumes of The Journal of Science Fiction. Oh well, when I'm stuck for inspiration I find one way out is to take you the reader into my confidence and let both of us face the situation together. Then if the worst comes to the worst we can talk about writing itself and its problems. Not that it's likely to be much of a help to you, because there seem to be as many problems as there are writers. My own is quite a simple one, though serious enough in its way for a writer. Namely, I hate writing. Writing to me is something like regurgitating that "little book" which St. John in Revelations was required to take from the angel and eat. "It shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth as sweet as honey". In other words, I hate writing but I love to have written.

I know I have that little book in my belly all right. Not from sitting cross-legged contemplating my novel, but from lying down and dreaming it. While I'm asleep I can write like anything. Entire full-length novels, complete to the last period, form themselves in my mind with utter clarity. I think I would probably be a very famous author indeed if it wasn't for slugs. The way I figure it is I have this mental bloc which prevents my creative subconscious from coming out into the open and doing its stuff. The only way I can write is to maneuver myself into the desperate situation of a promise made and a deadline to meet, and then sit and type more or less at random until the mechanical act of typing lulls my subconscious into a false sense of security. Whereas if it wasn't for those slugs I might have been able to trap my subconscious simply by remembering what it dreams up in my sleep.

You might be asking where the slugs come in. Far be it from me to embed unscrupulous fish-hooks like that in my innocent narrative, so I'll tell you right away without any further mystification. They come in under the scullery door. This is an old house we live in and it has had about as hard a life as a house can have, subjected to all sorts of semi-detached villainy. Like being bombed during the war, and occupied by the British Army for an office. I'm not sure which side did the most damage, but the doors no longer fit properly and at night slugs get in from the yard. While this is happening I am upstairs asleep, writing the Great Ulster Novel. Suddenly I wake up, overwhelmed with awe and admiration at my own genius, and shamble downstairs with the idea of getting a glass of water before writing the whole thing down. Then I see the slugs. Somehow they always come as a surprise to me. Now I hate slugs, and at the sight of the hideous slimy creatures I go berserk with rage. Seizing the kitchen shovel I scoop them up one by one, storm into the yard and, with a powerful slinging motion of muscles strengthened by years of tennis , golf

and nocturnal slug-slinging, propel the slugs one by one with tremendous velocity over the yard wall into the outer darkness. I'm really quite good at it: I'm sure that if there is ever an amateur slug-slinging event introduced into the Olympic Games I shall get at least a bronze medal for Ireland.

Though I must admit the sport could be a dangerous one if practised more widely. Occasionally it has occurred to me that even so early in the morning there might be someone walking along the street, and I used to wonder what he said to his wife when he got home that evening...

"You know, dear, a funny thing happened to me on my way to work this morning. Just as I was turning into Upper Newtownards Road, a live slug whizzed past my ear!"
"Tch tch," she sympathises. "Why, we might as well be living in Chicago!"

Now as you can well imagine, after standing out in the cool night air bombarding the neighbourhood with slugs (thank goodness there are no Forteans in our district) I am thoroughly wakened up, and every vestige of the Great Ulster Novel has disappeared. Something similar happened to Coleridge, you remember, though the person from Porlock didn't call until he was halfway through Kubla Khan. Which may be significant. When you come to think of it Porlock sounds just the sort of place for slugs to live in. Maybe it's a base for Things from Outer Space engaged in a diabolical plot to block the march of humanity towards the stars by foiling its finest minds, like Coleridge and me, and they're getting better at it. Anyone who wants to write up for F&SF the story of how the hero Saved the World with the Kitchen Shovel has my permission for ten percent of what he gets, in the original bagels.

About the only thing left from the destruction of my literary career is a deep feeling of comradeship for James Blish, acquired after reading the Discon reports. No, it's nothing to do with his literary reputation which couldn't be higher as far as I'm concerned. I can't have described the scene in our scullery vividly enough, or you would already be trembling with horror. Picture it again. Those slimy slugs on the tiled floor. A shambling pajama-clad figure, bleary-eyed with sleep, his mind full of great literature. He might step on a slug with his bare foot.

Unspeakable, isn't it. The very thought used to make me go quite faint in the very act of slug-slinging, taking at least fifty yards off my range. And yet one night it happened, and you know it wasn't so bad. Horrible of course, but I didn't go mad or anything. In fact I took it fairly calmly at the time and, now that the worst has happened, I don't dread it so much any more. Much the same sort of experience, I imagine, befell James Blish when he took sick halfway through his speech at the Discon and had to retire.

This is the worst thing that could happen to anyone in speechmaking, the sort nightmare from which shy people like Blish and myself awake screaming. And yet, now that it has happened, so what? I think no less of Blish. In fact I like him rather the more for it, if possible. And so I'm graftful to him too, for making me realize that if it happens to me it won't really matter either. I'm sure he isn't keen on making more speeches now, any more than I want to spend the rest of my life walking barefoot through slugs, but neither of us will ever be so afraid again.

Of course we all worry too much about little things, perhaps because the big things are too big for worry. A thing can be wrong on such an enormous scale as to numb the intellect. For a while there for instance I had nearly stopped worrying about The Bomb. I hadn't learned to live it, but I had got used to it. I had even got to the stage where I accepted the rightwing view as reasonable. Misguided of course, but reasonable. Even on the question of atmosphere testing. Here on this unimportant island, I told myself, I had not got the big picture available to think-

ers like Heinlein and Pournelle. I was, I conceded, like a bit player in Romeo and Juliet, ignorant of the lofty motives of the great protagonists in the drama. I was prepared to admit that, however it may have looked to the insignificant citizens of Verona, it was quite reasonable for the Montagues and Capulets to poison the town's water supply. In other words I was happily adjusting to reality.

Of course, as Freud said, the ultimate adjustment to reality is death.

But it wasn't Freud who started me worrying again, it was one of those little things again. Quite accidentally I acquired some information about the uniform worn by the pilots who circle about carrying H-bombs.

The first item was that they wear eye-patches. The idea of course is that if they happen to be looking that way when the enemy bomb goes off they will lose the sight of only one eye: whereupon they will move the patch smartly to the other side in a soldierly manner and proceed one-eyed in the direction of Moscow or Washington as the case may be. Well it was a bit of a struggle but I eventually accepted that. The picture of the world being destroyed by men wearing piratical eye-patches was unfortunately just a little comic, but some smart public-relations work could adjust their image easily enough. War Criminals of Distinction. No, it was the second item of information that really bothered me. I was assured by a friend in the aircraft industry that since these pilots have to stay aloft for long periods and cannot just land on the nearest aerodrome when they want to go to the restroom, like Betty Kujawa, and since space in the cockpit is severely limited, they wear nappies.

Well somehow I just cannot accept that. I cannot reconcile myself to the concept that human history with all its love and intellect and beauty should be terminated by anything as ridiculous as a man in a black eye-patch and a wet nappy. It just ain't fitting. This little thing has wakened me from this nightmare we accept as reality, and I see the minds of the men who have created it for what they are, slugs on our scullery floor. Over the yard wall with them, and all their stupid rationalizations of selfish conceit like "My country right or wrong", and their juvenile notions of states rights and national sovereignty and racial superiority. These are the thoughts of madmen with the minds of little boys. Why, they've put their symbol up in the air there for us all to see and for the Universe to judge us by...a one-eyed man suffering from nappy-rash.

After you with the kitchen shovel.

Installment 38, Quark 8, 1964.

The first worldcon ever to be held in Ireland was in the International Hotel, Belfast, a huge white building rather like the office block where I work. In fact it was the office block where I work. I thought how convenient this was: I wouldn't have to book a room in the hotel, I could merely steal away to my office when I wanted a little peace and quiet. But when I did this late the first night I found it all changed. My desk, my chair, the rug, the brown linoleum, all these familiar things had disappeared and in their place was hotel furniture. Nothing was left of my office but the number on the door. I wondered what they had done with all my files. I didn't look round because the room seemed to be occupied, but closed the door again quietly wondering where to go now. My mother's room was on the same floor so I went along there. She said I could take a nap on one of the beds, but I couldn't get to sleep because fans kept coming in and annoying me. There was one girl in particular, a tall blonde called Sally Smith. I got up to push her away, but Madeleine called, "Don't hit her, she's a subscriber." Then Bruce Burn, looking very like Bruce Kidd, started pushing at me, and I hit him, so that he fell by the side of the bed. I was furious, the way you're angrier with a person after you've hit him

than you were before, because you have to justify yourself. I bent over him and hissed: "Leave me alone, or I'll write about you in my con report. I tell you, Jim Webbert will come up to me with tears in his eyes and say thank you, Walt, thank you. Thank you for not saying about me the things you said about Bruce Burn."

There was a shocked murmur at this -- the room was full of fans now -- and I felt I had to defend myself. I staggered to my feet, dazed with tiredness, and began to mumble incoherently about just wanting to be left alone. Then I burst into tears. "I know you all think I'm cold and stand-offish, but I'm willing to be friends." I could have stopped myself crying if I'd tried, but I was thinking there was no harm showing how sincere I was. Then I began to realize what a contemptible figure I must look, standing there crying in my pyjamas, the trousers of which are always too short for me. How would it look in the con reports? The horror of this thought woke me up, but I had to go down-stairs and sit for a while before I was entirely convinced that nothing like that had happened.

Or had it. Obviously something pretty traumatic must have happened at the British convention last Easter to give me a nightmare like that. I think I'd better lie down on this couch here and tell you all about it. That is, unless you are already at the handle of your ditto telling everyone I should be run out of fandom as a victim of Oedipus complex, inferiority complex and guilt complexes about not writing more for fanzines, not publishing Hyphen more often, not having put on a convention in Belfast, and Jim Webbert. I know I'm a goldmine for any psychiatrist, a sort of guilt-hedged security, but I'm not a case for the drastic current technique of what you might call surgical imputation.

This is what happened. Something like it might happen to you if you come to London next year, because strange processes have occurred in English fandom.

I was standing in the corridor of the Bull Hotel in Peterborough about 1 a.m. on Easter Sunday, trying to listen to five interesting conversations, when some young men came along and started to sell copies of the sixth issue of a monthly fanzine called Alien which I had never seen before. Madeleine, eager neofan that she is, counter-attacked by producing a copy of Hyphen 34 and trying to sell them a subscription.

"What is it?" asked one of them.

"It's called Hyphen," said the other. "You remember, that green thing we saw downstairs. See?"

"But it's dated September. Is it still being published? Why isn't she selling the current issue?"

"This is the current issue," said Madeleine weakly.

"Huh, That's not very good, is it."

Slowly and painfully I leaped to her defence. "Maybe after you've published 34 issues you won't be monthly either?" I suggested.

"Maybe not" -- the young faned shrugged -- "but we're doing all right."

Other reinforcements arrived, in the shape of Bob Shaw.

"Anything in it?" he asked, watching me leaf through Alien.

"There is some amateur science fiction," I said, trying to keep all trace of emotion from my voice, "and a page of cartoons called 'Laffs'."

Bob shuddered. But quite unconscious of this damning indictment, the neofan nodded and turned away. It was abruptly clear to me that he was not a neofan at all, he was a BNF in another fandom. What did that make me and my friends? What had we done?

Next morning it was quite clear what we had done, at the annual general meeting of the BSFA. After the folding of Nebula, British fandom had been worried at the

complete absence of channels of recruitment into fandom. Deliberately and in cold blood they had started a sercon organization called the British Science Fiction Association. They had sacrificed valuable fanning time to publish a sercon official organ, full of reviews of science fiction: in this bait was embedded a hook consisting of reviews of and reprints from fanzines. They had spent money advertising in prozines. The policy had been spectacularly successful, because the membership of the BSFA was now in the hundreds, and scores of them were here at Peterborough. The only trouble was that while they seemed to have eaten the bait and grown fat on it, they had ignored the hook. Some of them seemed to spend the days sneering at us for not being serious and constructive like them, and the nights running up and down the corridors drunk, shouting and banging at our doors. I always think the worst sort of hooligan is the serious constructive one.

The situation was starkly illuminated at that BSFA meeting, after one of the founder members had remarked casually and unguardedly that the purpose of the BSFA was to recruit new members to fandom. A storm of protest made it clear that this was not the purpose of the BSFA at all. Fandom as we knew it was to them a useless excrescence, our fanzines incomprehensible and irrelevant. They were fandom.

And so they were. Somehow I felt there was something sciencefictional about the whole situation, and suddenly I realized what it was. We were in the presence of Basic SF Plot No. 8, the Pygmalion/Frankenstein Group, the variation in which a scientist creates an intelligent race in the laboratory and finds it evolve beyond his comprehension and create a cosmology in which he has no part. There is of course no reason why it should end as it usually does in science fiction, in the destruction of either side: in fact assimilation is rapidly proceeding. But meanwhile I thought you deserved this devious explanation of a phenomenon so fantastic as that of somebody called Phil Rogers getting only four less votes from England as a TAFF candidate than Arthur Thomson.

SKATE-KEY

Some fannish genius whose identity I have forgotten instanced that word as one which conjures up all by itself a whole forgotten set of nostalgic memories. The other day, reading a spy thriller set in modern India, I came upon another one. Deodar. It is the name of an Indian tree, and the only other time I had heard it was in an Edwardian lovesong,"Down by the Deodars". Suddenly I was swept by an intense wave of feeling for Edwardian England. It was all there in 'deodar'. A prosperous and secure Imperial civilization, in which people sat in plush sitting rooms and sang of lover's meetings under familiar Asiatic trees: when you could take a train to anywhere in Europe without a passport. And when people were so insulated from reality that they could joyfully, carelessly, enter a war in which a whole generation would die for nothing.

That same day I noticed my young son Bryan was looking worried. I asked him what was swrong. "There's a man called Goldwater who's going to be President," he said. "He wants to start a war." I didn't know how to reassure him because he seemed to have only too firm a grasp of political reality for a child of eight. It seemed quite possible that Goldwater would become President. Even his candidacy made war nearer and if it resulted as well it might in increasing the influence of his equivalents in the Communist world, war would then be quite likely. Is it, I wondered, mere coincidence that the most prosperous country in the world is that whose population is apparently least repelled by the prospect of war, or is it that a prosperous civilization is inherently self-destructive? I wondered if anyone would be left alive this time to remember its lovesongs.

THE MARCHING MORONS

Talking of Goldwater I make no apology for. The President of the United States is the President of the world, as you would have realized if you had stood beside me among those thousands of Belfast people queuing outside the American consulate to sign the book of condolences for Jacqueline Kennedy. I used to think that the only plausible explanation for Goldwater was that he was a paid agent of the Chinese Communists, but lately I have come to the conclusion that we have entered a new era in politics, that of government by advertising.

There has been no shortage of crackpots in the past, but they have always been choked off by the professional politicians, who have some idea of the score. In every election the voters have been presented with two alternative sets of programmes prepared by professional politicians, one of which may be better than the other, but both of which are rational. But now Goldwater has broken through where Townsend failed. We are going to have government by the simpleminded for the simpleminded.

How did it happen? By, I think, pressure groups appealing straight to voters through paid advertising and publications like the Readers Digest: and by those voters, unlike simpletons in the past, having enough money and time to enter political activity. Millions of people are, apparently, seized of such fantasies as that certain economic systems are inherently immoral and that taking care of old and poor people will land them in forced labour camps in the Tennessee Valley.

Installment 39, Quark 9, Feb. 1965.

Tuesday 3rd November. Diary today says "Harp deadline. Conference 10.30am. M.T. 9.15pm." The conference was about how to get the hard filling to the shore motorway construction. I said the existing roads were already overcrowded, else why the motorway, and they agreed to do it by rail. The rest of the meeting didn't concern me, so I went home early to work on the car before lunch. I am the owner of probably the most modern vintage car in Ireland. It's an MG Magnette ZB, produced in January 1959. In February 1959 the model was discontinued, and I like to think mine was the last of this honorable line. It's a sleek black pantherish saloon, slightly reminiscent of a rather delinquent Rolls Royce. It was replaced by a boxy modern family saloon which looks just like any other modern car, and the owners of the last of the "true MGs" regard this illbred parvenu with utter contempt. They constitute a sort of unorganized fandom, comparing notes eagerly when they meet in car dismantling yards looking for cheap spares and body parts. It was an expensive car. Unfortunately none of them ever seem to land in dismantling yards unless they have been crashed.

Fortunately my own is in pretty good shape, running nice and quietly except for the ticking of that damned electric clock. I finished replacing the felt window strips, rustproofed the door interior, had my lunch, and went back to the office to clear up some of the morning's work. Then home for tea and finished off the door, crouching in the wet yard under a lamp run out from the kitchen. Then at eight o'clock I got the car out again and set off for Aldergrove Airport. The airport was moved there only recently and I lost my way once, but I still arrived far too early as I always do. I roamed about the airport looking for the baggage we lost in America (I am an incurable optimist) and at the advertisements. There was a big display by a firm of Belfast real estate agents and in it, to my vast astonishment, was a big glossy photograph of Oblique House. True, I had consulted them about selling the house, but I hadn't told them to advertise it or even photograph it. Oh well, I thought, maybe some wealthy American tourist will want to buy it and ship it brick by brick to the West Coast. I'll be quite happy to supervise the operation for him.

At 9.18 the London plane arrived and I looked out for three conservatively

dressed gentlemen travelling together, the Ministry of Transport officials I was here to meet. I held my official briefcase in front of me, thinking of happier occasions when I had flaunted a copy of ASF for similar reasons, and we made contact. I drove them to their hotel, politely refused the offer of a drink and hurried home to catch the election programme.

It was too early for any results, but they had some interesting people talking. One was Gore Vidal, a very impressive man who reminded me a little of Bob Silverberg. He said Europeans shouldn't be so surprised about a man like Goldwater being nominated. By European standards there were no liberals in the United States; the country was almost equally divided into conservatives and reactionaries. Among all the commentators there was a single Goldwater supporter, a strange twisted looking man called Reid Buckley who looked and talked like a cornered animal. After everything he said there was a politely incredulous pause. The same slightly stunned effect was produced by the sample Johnson and Goldwater commercials, a phenomenon new to this country.

By 2am it was clear that the world, while not as safe as it had been before the Goldwater nomination, had some chance of surviving for another four years. The BBC closed down with a sigh of relief and I went to bed.

Wednesday 4th November. Up at 6.30 to make sure. The commentators were talking "gleefully about a landslide, and it was quite a while before I could find the popular vote percentages. Buckley was still there, as if the button in Arizona which operated him had jammed. (What I say is that a man who can't be bothered to get up and hoist The Flag himself at sun-up is no true American.) Enraged by the repeated references to Goldwater extremism he launched into what he regarded as a scathing attack on Humphrey, whom he referred to as the one-man Ku Klux Klan of the Democratic Party. In corroboration of this statement he produced dramatically a sheaf of index cards from which he proceeded to read a selection of Humphrey's most far-out utterances. The only trouble was that while he was reading out these shocking blasphemies, everyone else in the studio was nodding approvingly at these sensible and statesmanlike pronouncements. At last someone asked Buckley diffidently just which of these remarks he regarded as extreme, at which Buckley threw down his cards in disgust and was finally silent.

At 9.30 left to pick up the Ministry of Transport people at their hotel. They said wasn't it good news about the American election result. I said it was, if you were satisfied that the most powerful country in the world should be only 61% sane: personally I looked for a higher index of mental stability in people I entrusted with my life. They were shocked at the popular vote percentages: from the press and radio you would have thought that the only person who voted for Goldwater was his mother, and she lived in Mississippi.

All day with the Ministry of Transport officials and in the evening to Bob Shaw's house for the weekly fan meeting. Some little gloating about the election result, though Bob said Johnson seemed a terrible bore. I said they were both boring, but Johnson was the lesser of two weevils.

As you must have gathered from the unjustified immortality conferred on that last remark, I was now taking notes. I decided I would never have time these crowded days to sit down and write a proper Harp, and that I would send an alibi instead.

The rest of the evening was memorable to me for two such eerily improbable pun opportunities that I almost began to believe that piece I wrote some time ago about the Ultimate Pun. I hate quoting myself because it looks conceited and despite all my modest disavowals on that last occasion someone wrote in and said so, but after

all this is a personal diary and I do say something occasionally. Apparently Bob had got George Charters some dwarf chestnut trees and he asked how they were getting on. George said they were just up to his niece's knees, and bent down to illustrate. "You mean," I said, "she stoops to conker?" I know you will hardly appreciate this as a pun, because the use of conker for chestnut is British slang, but think of the odds against that set of circumstances. The other one was more complex. Bob was describing with disgust the antics of an English amateur bullfighting group he had seen on tv. Apparently these idiots practised bullfighting by having someone run at them with a lawnmower to which was tied a pair of horns. Bob said he'd like to be the man pushing the lawnmower: he'd make sure he got one of them in the groin. It would be a fittingly ridiculous death, he said, to be gored by a lawnmower.

"The coup de grace," I said.

After a moment's contemplation of this, Bob pointed out I should have said it in a Scottish accent to make it mindshatteringly complete. I agreed, and made a mental note of the fact for the next time that the possibility of a bullfighter being gored by a lawnmower came up in conversation with someone familiar with Scots dialect.

5th to 8th November. Many things happened those hectic days, but I doubt if my everyday life would be as interesting to you as William Rotsler's. Then I went to England on business. Since many of you will, I hope, be going there for the Worldcon, the impressions of another stranger might have some interest.

Monday 9th November. Foggy. After breakfast I went down to the garden path and looked along the Upper Newtownards Road. Visibility was down to about twenty yards, so I walked over to the Belmont road and took the bus to work. The Parliament Buildings where my office is are on a hill outside the town about 500 feet above sea level. There the sky was clear, the mountains and hilltops floating above the fog like sunny islands.

At the airport that afternoon it was announced that because of the fog the plane to London would be an hour late, so to pass the time I asked the way to the Import Cargo office. It turned out to be on the far side of the tarmac so I strolled along the perimeter road, past various notices saying No Admittance, and into a huge shed full of crates and parcels. I didn't make any enquiries in case they thought I was mad, but by walking about briskly as if I had business there I was able to assure myself that whatever Greyhound had done with our baggage it hadn't ended up here. (Well you never know, do you?)

Then back for an uneventful flight to London. There was not much to be seen through the fog patches, and even in bright sunshine England tends to look a little grimy after Ireland. I think what would be most likely to surprise an American would be the great amount of open space there is, even in that crowded little island. The journey from London Airport by road gives a first impression of growth and prosperity similar to most of America, but of a subtly different kind. The colour and extravagance of America is lacking, no doubt partly on account of the climate, giving the impression of a sort of expensive drabness. On the other hand there is everywhere a great feeling of solidity and permanence, bringing home to you that this is a great imperial capital. There is a strong sense of continuity with the past, from the centuries old buildings lovingly preserved to the domestic housing rather forlornly ranged along the new freeway. The whole country has that lived-in look.

The second most impressive thing about London is its public transport system, which I often wonder is not cited more often as a successful example of public enterprise. I came to it fresh -- somehow I feel that isn't the right word -- from

the New York subway, and marvelled again at the cleanliness and efficiency of it, as I had done when I first came to London in 1950 to visit Ken Bulmer and Vince Clarke. Ever since then I've been a London Underground fan. Though that indeed was the merest chance. Vince Clarke was an Underground fan and Ken Bulmer was an omnibus fan, and for all us new fans visiting London in those days which we became depended on which of them met us when we arrived. The only snag about being an Underground fan is that your knowledge is limited to the areas around the stations and you have no idea of their geographical relationship to one another. This is inclined to lead you into such gaffes as taking a train journey to get to the other side of the street.

I emerged into the unknown regions of north-west London at the centre of the Queens Park Station oasis. It's a seedy near-slum area from which great blocks of modern flats erected by the London County Council rise like concrete phoenixes, re-housing Ella Parker and providing her with spectacular views.

Arthur Thomson was there to tell me about his trip to America, while Ella and I listened smugly pleased with ourselves for having helped to bring all that about. Then after he had gone home Ella and I talked into the night.

Tuesday 10th November. At one second after 8.30am the "Royal Duchy"express pulled out of Paddington station with its precious human freight, namely me. British Railways have improved tremendously in the past few years, I thought, but they are still the worst way to see urban England. The basic difference between American and British railroads is that in America the towns were built after the railroads, but in England they were already there. So in England their tracks lie through the poor and squalid areas. And the view from the average British train is of a never-ending Victorian slum seen from the back -- mean dirty red-brick houses, all dirty net curtains, dustbins and pigeon lofts, in long blocks separated by garbage dumps and soggy waste land.

It wasn't until after about three hours that we emerged into what I thought of as real country, near Taunton in Somerset, a region of green hills and wooded valleys, and very soon after the train turned sharply south for Exeter and the Devon coast. We reached the open sea at Exmouth, and then threaded lazily between low red cliffs and golden sands through various small seaside stations. This was still Victorian England, but the silver lining of that dark cloud of cruel complacency. This was the middle class holiday world of seaside boarding-houses, high tea with silver napkin rings, promenades and piers, buckets and spades, sand between your toes and the endless summer days of childhood. It was my childhood too, because I grew up in a society in which the motor car had not yet made the seaside just a place you might go any afternoon. We always went by train for our annual two weeks holiday, in Portrush in North Antrim, and in those days the train went first to Larne on the east coast, and then reversed onto another track for the north. Our parents used to say when the train started to go backwards that they had changed their mind, we weren't going on holidays after all: they knew we knew it wasn't true, but I still wished they wouldn't say it, it was so terrible. Then after the long journey there was that marvellous moment, that first ecstatic glimpse of the sea, even more blue and wonderful than you dimly remembered it. It was strange, I used to think, it had been there all the time, waiting for me all through the winter. Children today are luckier, I thought, but it's a pity they can't have also that single unforgettable moment of joy. I wondered how many hundreds of children, now grown up or dead in wars, had leaped from this very seat at the sight of the sea.

At Newtown Abbot one of the other two passengers in my compartment got out. This seems a simple enough event, but I have been thinking about it ever since. The man sitting opposite me was a tweedy Englishman who started reading The Times at Paddington and was still working on the crossword puzzle. The one who got out

had been reading The Manchester Guardian and dozing. Other differences were that he was better dressed than either of us and was a Negro. The only thing we had in common was that none of us had said a single word the entire four hours of the journey.

I hadn't taken the initiative because in the case of the Englishman I respected the traditional English upperclass reserve, and in the case of the Negro I had read about the pitfalls of Crow Jimism. If I were another English gentleman (and this being an official journey I was disguised as one) I figured -- I hoped -- the Negro would regard this as normal behaviour. But nevertheless when he got up to leave I felt uncomfortable, and half caught his eye. He made no sign at the time but on his way out he paused at the door, smiled happily, and said "Bye bye, gentlemen."

Startled, the Englishman said "Goodbye" and I repeated inanely "Bye bye" and he was gone, leaving me with a sudden flurry of thoughts. My principal feeling was of relief, closely followed by admiration. How exactly right that was, I thought. If he had said nothing he would have left a feeling of discomfort behind him. If he had said "Goodbye, gentlemen," it couldn't help but have undertones of sarcasm... or possibly, with that smile, of ingratiation. But "bye bye", with its less formal, almost childlike and therefore self-satirical connotations, denoted with utter clarity that he not only fully understood the situation but humourously dismissed it. It was perfect.

I wondered how many white people I knew of such sensitivity. It is I think endemic in Ireland, where even the most ordinary people have an innate tact, a feeling for the subtle nuances of conversation, which in its more obvious form of telling people what they want to hear is dismissed by the English as 'blarney'. In England itself I have met only one person who has it. In America I met several, such as Elinor Busby. I know this is inadequate data on which to base a theory, but I wonder if this sensitivity we are discussing is a survival characteristic of oppressed peoples.

(Probably not to be continued.)

Installment 40, Quark 10, 1965.

CASE REPORT

Having your luggage lost by the Greyhound Bus Company and then stolen by one of its employees is not an experience which any right-thinking fan can be expected to regard with equanimity. Furthermore I had before me the inspiring example of Vince Clarke, who took on the whole might of British Railways over a far less serious matter and with one vitriolic letter secured not only complete satisfaction and abject apology, but a refund of his twopence-halfpenny stamp. Great public corporations, I thought, might well be impervious to the inarticulate murmurs of the man in the street: but they could be vulnerable to the deadly weapons of the combat-hardened fan, trained by years of feuding.

So when I got home in the autumn of 1962 I wrote quite a number of letters, only to find I was up against a more modern and sophisticated opponent than honest old British Railways. Greyhound had perfected the cockroach technique, invented by a famous airline. The man who exposed it had found a cockroach in his soup and written a letter of complaint about it. He had a reply about two pages long signed by the President of the Company, full of profuse and abject apology. A full investigation had been carried out. It was incredible that this unheard-of misfortune had indeed taken place and they were deeply grateful to him for bringing it to their attention. Three employees of the airline had been dismissed and the entire catering arrangements completely overhauled so that such a dreadful thing could not possibly

recur. They hoped he would accept their apology and not withhold his patronage in the future. The recipient of this letter was pleased and flattered, until he noticed that the envelope also contained his own letter, inadvertently returned. And that on it someone had scrawled: "Send this drip the cockroach letter."

Eventually a point of law cropped up, and I sent all the papers to an American fan with legal connections who volunteered to pursue the question from that angle. But because of private difficulties of his own the matter languished for nearly a year. Last February I decided I was damned if I was going to let Greyhound have victory by default, and that it was time to seek the aid of the worldwide organization of trained correspondence commandoes to which we all belong. I hadn't done this before out of a feeling that fandom had done enough for me already, and even now the appeal took only the form of a mimeoed statement of the situation enclosed with Hyphen, which any reader could pass along to someone who might be interested, or simply ignore.

But it was enough. I felt like someone tied to a stake in an Indian encampment hearing the bugles of the United States Cavalry. Tom Perry had written to the Interstate Commerce Commission and the Chamber of Commerce: Dave Kyle had written to Joe Hensley and the law firm of Metford and Hensley had written to Greyhound's General Baggage Agent: Joy Sanderson had written to her Senator, the Attorney General, and to the Cleveland Better Business Bureau. And this was only what I knew about in the first few days. I was awed anew at the energy and ingenuity of fans.

Why hadn't I done that before, I thought, reading Tom Perry's letter to the Interstate Commerce Commission and their interim reply. Why, even the paragraph dealing with the purely legal question of their powers opened up a whole new vista of possibilities. For all its dry legal style it was haunting, evocative, full of sense of wonder...

> Insofar as the merits of claims for loss or damage to property are concerned, you are advised as a matter of information that this Commission is without jurisdiction. When a carrier denies its liability in whole or in part, the shipper's remedy is by a suit in a court of competent jurisdiction. The Commission has expressed this lack of authority on various occasions; for example, as to claims for loss or damage to property, see Blume & Co. v. Wells, Fargo & Co., 15 ICC 53, 55, and Jumbo Pizzas Inc. v. General Expressways, Inc., 314 ICC 467,468. It follows that a complaint to this agency would not toll the operation of any statute of limitations.

I was not alone, I realized, neither in space nor time. I had by my side not only fannish friends, but such ghostly allies as gallant old V. Blume, a refugee from persecution in mid-nineteenth century Europe, whose tailoring equipment along with all his other few pitiful belongings had been lost off a stagecoach somewhere West of the Pecos. In my mind I saluted the grave of this old comrade in arms, where he lay forgotten by the side of some new freeway, and swore that we who survived would carry on his struggle. On the way back from the past, momentarily disoriented, I somehow found myself in another probability world...

Tom Perry's letter had come in the morning post, and by 11am I had conceived the Great Plan. Calculating the time on the West Coast to be 3 am, I picked up the telephone and asked for a Los Angeles number. It was only a matter of a few months to the Pacificon and there was no time to lose. This was a time for swift positive action, a time to call on the aid of a master in another field of fan communication. After a brief delay while the operator broke into a local call I was connected. "Harlan?" I said....

In Washington Square, Ted White, moving quietly among the checker boards,

approached the seventeenth name on his list of internationally recognised pizza connoisseurs. It was Homespun Hank Hogcaller, folksinger. "Jumbo?" mused Hank, lighting his corncob pipe with the automatic corn cob pipe lighter on the dashboard of his custom-built Ferrari, "Haven't tasted one in years. Remember I had one lunch, but the eggplant...Yup, that's right, eggplant. It was a Greek made them. Guy named Lephantiasis. Eggplant Lephantiasis, they called him. Never cared for the eggplant movement myself..."

But Ted was already on his way to the nearest drugstore. Minor disagreements forgotten, he called Sam Moskowitz. From the records of Sam's frozen foods company it took only a few minutes to turn up the particulars of former client E. Lephantiasis, creator of Jumbo Pizzas. Starting in a modest diner on Sixth Avenue he had risen in the pizza world like a meteor. The crash had come when he tried to open a pizza factory on the West Coast. A suitcase containing his secret pizza formulae had been lost in transit: an inexperienced factory supervisor had improvised to meet an urgent order: a terrible mistake had been made. Unable to meet the damages awarded to the widows. Lephantiasis had fled the country and was now living in retirement in Ensenada, Mexico. Picking up the Company phone, Moskowitz dialed a Berkeley number.

At an emergency meeting of the Pacificon Committee the following evening, minor outstanding business was adjourned indefinitely, including some proposal about banning a fan from the convention. Bill Donaho reported that special emissary Bjo Trimble was expected to telephone any moment, and a supply of ditto masters was available for briefing fandom. Dead on time, Bjo called.

The Committee did its work well, and by the end of the Convention Phase 1 was complete. Charmed by Bjo, Mr. Lephantiasis had parted with the keys of his enormous disused pizza factory in Fresno and his secret recipes. Under Bjo's supervision, a working party from Los Angeles had put the factory back in working order, machinery overhaul being looked after by Elmer Perdue and a team from Burbee's machine shop. Inside the factory was stacked ready a vast supply of foodstuffs brought by Convention members from all over the United States, stored neatly under the supervision of Wrai Ballard. The ovens, serviced by Dean Grennell, stood ready.

On the Tuesday after Labour Day the entire convention adjourned to Fresno and worked for 24 hours. When they were finished they had raised to the sky a delectable mountain. Carefully stacked by Terry Carr and Ron Ellik, there rose towards the stars a veritable leaning tower of pizza. Phase 2 was finished.

Phase 3 had originated in the devious mind of Bob Shaw, from a memory of his own experiences when he left Canada for Ireland in 1958. They were going to the South Gate convention en route and Bob had bought Greyhound tickets to Los Angeles and checked the family's luggage on ahead. But at the last moment they decided to fly instead. Bob collected a full refund on his tickets from Greyhound, but retained his baggage checks and used them to collect his baggage in Los Angeles, brought there by Greyhound for nothing.

It was this chink in the defences of Greyhound's unwieldy organization that we relied upon to bring about its downfall. Once we saw that Greyhound could be made to carry baggage for nothing, we realized they were defenceless against our diabolical scheme.

Five hundred fans had brought old suitcases full of foodstuffs to Fresno. A blitz on West Coast junk shops and family closets produced 1500 more. Into each suitcase went one Jumbo pizza. The remaining thousand were made into parcels, padded by crudzines into various shapes. Throughout the rest of the week there fanned

out across the country a horde of ruthless and determined warriors, armed with their deadly pizzas.

The procedure was simplicity itself. At random points fans would break their journey at a Greyhound depot and buy a ticket to a random destination. They would check in a concealed pizza, apply for a refund on their ticket, and go on their way chuckling evilly. By the middle of next week they had all arrived home and mailed their baggage checks to fan headquarters in Chicago. A code message appeared in all fanzines: Phase 3 was complete. All fandom waited expectantly.

It was only a few days before Greyhound headquarters in Chicago began to realise that something had hit them: subtly at first but unmistakably, the entire Greyhound organization was being pervaded by the smell of decaying cheese. By the end of the second week the situation was becoming catastrophic. From coast to coast Greyhound posthouses were deserted: even the staff were eating out. Passengers were refusing to wait for buses inside the depots, and drivers were losing more in parking tickets than they were collecting in fares. Booking clerks in 37 depots had gone on strike and hundreds of others were reporting sick. It was rumored that Trailways were taking them on.

In the Greyhound presidential suite the emergency conference of senior executives dragged into its tenth hour. Haggard face stared hopelessly into haggard face. Police guarded the windows to prevent more of the suicides that had been disrupting traffic on Dearborn. In the wretched silence the phone rang startlingly. The President picked it up listlessly. "Good evening," said the pleasant voice of Earl Kemp. "This is the Cheese Odour Eradication Company, Inc. I understand you have a little problem over at Greyhound?"

Soothing the pitiful appeals of the Greyhound President, Kemp suavely explained. His company had wide experience of this sort of problem, with a staff of skilled operators throughout the world. For a fee of a mere $50,000 they could guarantee a virtually complete solution to the immediate crisis, but to prevent its recurrence the entire Greyhound system would have to be kept under expert surveillance indefinitely, at an annual retaining fee of ten thousand dollars. He would supply a list of operators to be provided with free passes. They would include technical consultants from Europe, whose names he would supply from time to time, and whose fares across the Atlantic would of course be paid by Greyhound. No, of course his company's methods were a trade secret, but they would take effect within four days.

This was all the time it took for Kemp and his committee to send the baggage checks to fans in the towns of the destinations shown on them and for the deadly pizzas to be withdrawn inconspicuously from the hundreds of baggage offices. At the end of that time Greyhound was able to breathe again -- literally -- and fandom entered on a new era.

There was, however, one further strange development that came as a surprise to Greyhound, to the fans, and to the whole world. Seventeen fans reported that the baggage they had tried to claim was missing. And, almost simultaneously, public health inspectors broke into a mysterious warehouse in Hoboken. Later, some mathematicians at Harvard advanced the theory that the infinite convolution of worldwide transportation systems had set up a sort of topological whirlpool, a sort of Sargasso Sea of lost property. Among the strange items found in that Hoboken warehouse, in addition to seventeen enormous decaying pizzas, were a portrait of the Duke of Wellington by Goya, the skeleton of Ambrose Bierce, two arms from the statue of a nude female, a battered chalice, a portable tailor's shop, and a blue suitcase and a brown duffel bag belonging to an unknown couple from Ireland.

SHAM SHAMROCK

Joy Sanderson said she wrote to Robert Kennedy on St. Patrick's Day, and wondered if that would help. I don't know...St. Patrick's Day isn't what it was. This year, according to the local press, the shamrock crop failed and supplies had to be imported. From behind the iron curtain. From Czechoslovakia. I must say there is something about the thought of Irishmen wearing Czechoslovakian shamrocks that disturbs me. Oh well, I suppose it's still a sort of shamrock. There's no point in worrying over trefoils.

STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS

(copy)

Eastern Greyhound Lines
1400 West Third Street
Cleveland, Ohio, 44113

March 25, 1965
File # J 6722

AIR MAIL

Mr. Walter Willis
170 Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast 4, North Ireland

Dear Mr. Willis:

I have just had the opportunity to read our file on the unfortunate loss of your baggage.

I am sincerely sorry that you had this bad experience with our service and have enclosed our draft number E67528 in the amount of $225.00 in settlement. This represents the maximum liability on any single piece of baggage transported by the company.

Please accept our sincere apologies for this unfortunate circumstance.

Very truly yours,
R.J. O'Connor
Vice President-Marketing

Thanks, friends. Lay that pizza down.

.....

FOOTNOTE TO A PIECE OF CHEWING GUM

"...There was a terrible tragedy here about a year ago, so dreadful that I hardly dare tell you about it. But brace yourself, these things must be faced. Carol ate the piece of chewing gum you bought me in Fort Mudge! I have almost forgiven her now and I think I might let her out of the cellar one of these days. If you happen to be shopping in Fort Mudge though maybe you'd buy me another piece: I think it's about time that place had another customer. See if you can get that same taxi driver -- he knows the way. When and if I get the chewing gum I'll put it in the museum of fantiquities here. Do you know Jack Speer sent me the key of FooFoo? Well, he sent me a car key and I'm telling everyone that's what it is. Why else would he send me a car key? Unless of course he sent a car too and it fell out of the envelope."

--Walt Willis, S.C., to Lee Hoffman in "...forty four forty or fight", September, 1955.

THE HARP IN WARHOON (Again)

Installment 41, Warhoon 23, May 1968.

In my previous incarnation as a fanzine writer -- come on, you must remember me: I replaced R.J. Banks in Quandry -- I succumbed to the same ailment that afflicted my career as a fanzine editor. (Oh now, you must remember. I'm the one who when Damon Knight complained I had mispelled the name of a firm of publishers in his column as Funk and Wagballs, airily pointed out how much worse it could have been.)

The name of the affliction is Creeping Perfectionism, and I think it was visited on me as a punishment for destroying old fanzines. The symptom is a vainglorious determination that everything you write or publish must be as good as if not better than the one before; the prognosis is of course progressive paralysis of fanac, and the terminal condition is one in which the victim produces only a perfectly formed exquisitely articulated silence. There is an alternative condition in which the victim resorts to publishing checklists and anthologies of his own work, but this is known as berry-berry.

I remember quite well the onset of the disease. It was while I was tearing up a copy of Star Rockets, the precious lifesblood of that master spirit Raleigh Evans Multog. I had almost rent it in twain when I noticed the name of Bob Shaw. At that time, and indeed to some extent during his entire career, Bob had been under what amounted to exclusive contract to me. It was not so much that I jealously hid his light under my bushel, though I admit I did not go about proclaiming his availability, so much that everything he wrote he showed to me first and I promptly published it: and since he seldom engaged in correspondence other fanzine editors sensibly and ethically assumed he was a Slant/Hyphen property. The exceptions were those too naive to know better, and when one of these stupidly asked for material, Bob innocently and helpfully complied. The result was that the work of one who many people including myself consider to be the greatest fan writer of all time appeared not only in fanzines like Star Rockets the illiteracy of which was alleviated to some exyent by its almost complete illegibility, but in fanzines which were never really published at all, like Ken Potter's first efforts which were handwritten and intended to be passed from hand to hand.

Sitting there with the half dismembered copy of Star Rockets in my hand, I thought how enviable it would be to have such a reputation that no one would ever destroy anything you wrote. I visualized dozens of future fans engaged in the inevitably necessary chore of weeding out their collections, and progressing through weariness to an insensate orgy of destruction. I wanted them to pause when they came to a fanzine, any fanzine, with my byline in it, and say to themselves "Willis's stuff was always good", and lay it reverently on one side. The result would be that in time the corpus of fan writing would consist almost entirely of fanzines with articles by me, and I would have achieved immortality.

A period of gafia, however, has shown me that immortality isn't all it's cracked up to be. I'm reminded of the time when Bill Rotsler used to write and ask for Baquotes and Interlineations, and sell them to Pageant, promising immortality on their account. We thought the originators of the sayings should get at least a couple of cents a word as well, and when I sent the last batch I scrawled on the sheet; "After immortality, what?". I now feel that if the price of immortality is death, that is if perfectionism means losing touch with one's friends, I don't want it any more.

All of which is a roundabout way of saying that this first instalment of the revived Harp is not all I would like it to be, but that I've decided that from my point of view at least it's better than nothing. To do the job I would really like

to do I would have to read or re-read some at least of the fanzines and books I've received in the past few months, in an effort to get back into the swim. I think that if I tried that I would miss this deadline, and probably the next. Instead, I shall try and write myself back into fandom.

Retracing my steps, I come to the period when I was writing myself out of fandom. At Chicon III, Algis Budrys took Madeleine and me to lunch and invited me to write a book for Regency. When I got home I thought there might be a book to be made out of fandom, being strongly influenced by Nevil Shute's "Trustee From The Toolroom". This was a very readable and successful novel which was essentially about model engineering fandom, which has its own fanzines and BNFs. The hero, an ordinary middle-class hobbyist,finds himself with the problem of making his way from his London suburb to an obscure Pacific island and does it through his contacts with world-wide model engineering fandom. I thought I would try a true account on those lines, combining the first and second Harps Stateside with an explanation of science fiction fandom... which still seems to me an interesting phenomenon.

Budry's didn't agree however, or perhaps thought I hadn't done it well enough, I sent him about the first quarter of a book on those lines and he said he didn't think it was commercial: I should rewrite it without the references to fandom. I did this and he accepted it informally, saying he was passing it to Larry Shaw for the issue of a contract and an advance of $1000. I heard nothing from Larry for months and months, and then suddenly both he and Budrys left Regency, Larry taking my book with him. At the time I thought Larry had been sore with me on account of the fact that Madeleine had been, perhaps, embarrassingly frank about the mix-up which surrounded our arrival in America.It seemed to me that even if Larry didn't care all that much himself for my book, he was covered by the fact that his boss had accepted it and all he had to do was, with a clear conscience, send me the contract and cheque. He said he'd been too busy to get round to it, but it seemed to me it was a thing that wouldn't take all that much time and that you would go out of your way to do for a friend. In an effort to clear the air I wrote and asked Larry point blank if he'd been sitting on my book because he was sore with me. I got my manuscript back with a cold letter to the effect that he'd tried to sell it to some other publishers without success. Looking back on the episode I think I was wrong: partly because I didn't know Larry well enough, partly because I was suffering from an almost neurotic sense of indebtedness to the Shaws for bringing me to America and over-compensating, and partly because I was emotionally involved in my book, on which I'd spent considerable time. And I badly needed the money. Later I came to think that Larry simply had not thought my book would sell and was too conscientious a person to spend his firm's money on it, even with his boss's authority. Faced with any problem, I believe it is Larry's instinct to do nothing at all, even communicate. Whereas my instinct when faced with an unresolved problem is to resolve it at all costs, even wrongly. Which is what I did. I lost both my book and Larry's friendship, which I valued even higher in the long run, and the whole episode cast a retrospective shadow over the 1962 trip and did much to weaken my attachment to fandom.

This second manuscript ended up back with Budrys, on whose conscience I'm afraid it still lies though I have long since written it off, but I still have the first one, the one which brings in fandom. I thought you might be interested in an attempt to explain fandom to the mundane world, and perhaps quoting it will help me to re-orientate myself.

The book started off baldly with a re-written account of my journey to Cobh in 1952, taken from the first Harp Stateside. I thought I would wait until people began to wonder what I was making the trip for, before I introduced the subject of fandom. As a fish-hook I expanded on my relationships with my mundane shipboard companions....

They asked me what I did and why I was going to America, and in a reckless moment I told them I was a pulp author going to the States on my dollar earnings, which was the nearest I could get to the truth without explaining the strange world of Shelby Vick. I affected to regard my alleged profession with contempt, but they had such awed respect for anyone who had actually had something published and got paid for it that they clustered around asking humbly about my "work" and how I thought up plots and so on. And I in turn would give them cynical dissertations about agents and markets and word rates.

Actually of course I'm not a professional writer -- I just work in an office and I'm nobody in particular -- but I do as it happens know something about these peculiar subjects. One of my friends in Belfast writes professionally. His name is James White, but you've probably never heard of him because he only writes science fiction, and then only in his spare time from serving in a department store.

And so on to a story about James re-written from part of a column in Nebula. I used quite a lot of odd bits of fannish writing as digressions in the narrative. The time for the Moment of Truth seemed to be the arrival in America. The ship is at anchor in New York harbour....

About one o'clock in the morning, hoarse but happy, people began to drift back up on deck. It was incredibly hot and humid, with not a breath of wind on the oily water. We couldn't face going down to our stuffy cabins. We thought of sleeping on deck, but everything you touched was as damp as if it had been raining, and nobody felt like going to sleep anyway. Gloria and I stayed up all night, leaning on the ship's rail and talking.

"Is anyone meeting you?" asked Gloria.

I thought for a moment. "Just a few fans," I said.

She nodded. Of course, a successful pulp author would be met by admiring adolescents with autograph books. She was satisfied.

But I wasn't. The answer was completely true, but completely misleading. I looked sideways at Gloria. I liked her, I would never see her again and we had plenty of time. I decided to tell her the truth.

"I'm not really a professional author," I confesssed, "and they're not my fans who are meeting me. They're just some friends."

"I thought this was your first trip to America."

"It is," I said, "I've never met these people before."

"How can you have friends you never met?"

How indeed? And yet I knew these people I had come to meet better than people I saw eight hours a day.

In a way it had all started twenty years ago on a boat like this. Before the war ships used to sail back from America in ballast, and one of the forms the ballast took was pulp magazines, returned unsold from newstands. They were put on sale in great jumbled heaps in Woolworths at the equivalent of five cents, at which price they were the cheapest form of reading matter ever sold in the history of the world. Being an impoverished schoolboy and an insatiable reader -- it was a bitter grievance of mine that the public library wouldn't allow you to take out two sets of books on the same day -- I used to spend all my pocket money on these pulps. Often I spent my lunch money and tram fare too, and walked home hungry. They had titles like Western Story and Air Wonder Stories and Astounding Science Fiction, and it was the science fiction ones I went for. I had already devoured all of H.G. Wells's scientific romances and was vainly scouring the library for more stories of the same type -- hence my intimate knowledge of English literature by authors whose names begin with T,U,V and Y. Before I worked

up to S I had found the pulp science fiction magazines, and I read them eagerly from the front cover to the truss advertisements. Even the microscopic print of the readers' section, though it seemed to be populated by people with peculiar names like Ackerman and Tucker who didn't always seem to be taking science fiction with the seriousness it deserved. Apparently these creatures were called "fans".

But as I got older the pulps seemed to lose their appeal. The fiction they printed was a bastard artform, the immature result of a mating of poor writing and undigested science, not properly married to one another despite the efforts of well-meaning editors. One of these efforts was to pepper the pages with footnotes, from a shotgun loaded with hard little pellets of learning, like....

> NOTE: The reason Jan Bronson's blood ran cold at the sight of the hideous monster from the Asteroid Belt was probably that the waving of the creature tentacles agitated the molecules of the air in the room which in accordance with the Second Law of Thermodynamics (p.145) thereby in turn reduced the temperature of the corpuscles in Jan's bloodstream, increasing their viscosity and slowing down their rate of flow in accordance with Bode's Law(p.78). Actually, of course, the intrepid space explorers of the future will guard against this contingency by the use of miniature immersion heaters in the main arteries, as predicted in the last issue of THE ELECTRICAL EXPERIMENTER (monthly, 15¢) in my articles "I Made People's Blood Boil". --Hugo Comeback.

At the time this was known as "the educative value of science fiction," though it is now dismissed in science fiction circles as "turgid crud". So when the supply of pulps dried up at the beginning of the War in 1939 I scarcely noticed. Then, long after it was all over, I came across an Astounding again in a second hand bookshop and bought it for old times sake. But heavens how it had changed. It was digest size and on good paper with trimmed edges, and there was a photogravure section with astronomical photographs and mathematical formulae. Normally mathematical formulae have the effect of sending me into some sort of hypnotic trance, from which I awake to find myself reading some other magazine, but the stories had the same fascination for me as an adult as the old ones had had for me as a boy. They too had grown up. I searched Belfast's secondhand bookshops for more back issues and gradually pieced together what had been happening. It seemed that during the War the present editor, a physicist called John Campbell, had taken hold of this pulp magazine and, singlehanded, jacked it, and with it the entire intellectual level of science fiction, up to maturity.

My search for war-time Astoundings widened to the mail order dealers, and through them I learned of an organization called the British Fantasy Library. With one of their catalogues I received an amateur magazine produced by what seemed to be a fellow-collector in England. So I was not alone; but it was so messily mimeographed I regarded it with contempt. It contained reviews, an allegedly humourous article about science fiction, and an advertisement for back issues of magazines the editor wanted, which I desperately wanted too.

"We could do better than that," said James White, who at that time thought considerably more about flying to the Moon than of writing professionally. The thought had also occurred to me, but more important that this was a way I could get hold of those missing magazines. I unearthed from a friend's garage a weird contraption called a Standard Oliver Visible Writer, poured a quart of kerosene over it and decided it might work. James and I carried it home, still dripping, latched to a broom handle.

These were the decisive steps which led to my at last getting in touch with the world wide group united by a common interest in science fiction and amateur

journalism, who started as the "fans" of the Thirties. This little world is a curious phenomenon, because you don't find readers of detective stories corresponding with one another and publishing amateur magazines and travelling thousands of miles to meet. I suppose part of the reason is that for a long time science fiction aficionados were in a way a persecuted minority, misunderstood by a public whose knowledge of science fiction was limited to juvenile magazines and to science fiction films which are at the same stage of development as the pulps of the Thirties. Nobody sneers at one for reading detective stories, because as everyone knows reading about people being tortured and killed in complicated ways is a healthy relaxation, whereas reading about atomic energy and space travel and their possible effect on mankind is mere morbid escapism.

Be that as it may I found these so-called science fiction fans a highly congenial assortment of people, and I made many friends among them. So many that last year one Shelby Vick had organized a collection to bring me to America to their convention and incredibly it had succeeded, and here I was in New York Harbour.

Installment 42, Warhoon 24, August 1968.

THE STRANGE WORLD OF FLANN O'BRIEN

It is curious that the mountainous labours our science fiction authors have devoted to speculation on the unknown should have produced such small mice of original thought. The most honourable exception, Van Vogt, is looked down on nowadays because his writing and characterization are not up to the standards of mainstream fiction: a criticism which seems to me rather like Schopenhauer's dismissal of the female figure as round shouldered and knockkneed. It is true that Van Vogt was no Marcel Proust but his stories were full of the creative imagination which gives life to the genre. Compared to him later authors, with the exception of a few like Blish and Sturgeon, seem epicene creatures expressing themselves in stories which are largely extrapolatory or derivative, the literary equivalent of self-abuse.

The modern author, noting that postage stamps keep getting bigger, postualates the obliteration of New York in the year 2000 by a monstrous first day cover delivered from an Eastern dictatorship. Adding some fashionable sadism, social criticism and stylistic tricks left over from last year's avant garde, he has no difficulty in selling "The Mailed Fist" and it is immediately hailed as a significant contribution to the longed-for integration of science fiction with the mainstream by those who have already taken the plunge and proclaim, between chattering teeth, that the water is lovely. The native denizens of the mainstream quite rightly ignore it as being neither fish nor fowl, but pure red herring. It is only too obvious it is neither good science fiction nor good mainstream literature, and has no relevance to either.

It is also humiliatingly obvious at times that the mainstream writers can out-class us in our own element, as we see when one of them unexpectedly ventures into the field...most recently in "The Revolving Boy" and most remarkably in the writings of the South American Borges. Another notable example of the type of mind that should be in science fiction but isn't, is the Dublin writer Flann O'Brien.

Irish literature died in 1835 with Raftery the blind poet, "my face to the wall, playing music to empty pockets". The oldest spoken language in Europe, which the English had failed to kill, was being abandoned by its own people in face of the greater need for food, just as millions abandoned Ireland herself. What the world knows as Irish literature has been Anglo-Irish literature,

written by people nurtured on English thought and trying with varying success to put down roots in their own country. For the well-spring of native Irish thought we have to go back to the literature in Gaelic the origins of which were preserved for hundreds of years by the bards, like the book people in "Fahrenheit 451", until the monks wrote it down.

Its characteristics included a certain hardness of thought, which we would now call realism: a fascination by the difference between appearance and reality: a belief in the intrinsic power of words: and a fondness for inventiveness of thought accompanied by ambiguity of expression. (St. Columcille of Derry was probably the only bishop to put a pun in a protest to the Pope.) It seems obvious that many of these characteristics have re-emerged in Anglo-Irish writers such as Joyce, but it is only now that English influence has been removed from the country for a generation that we can be reasonably sure that this is really a new shoot from the old buried root.

Flann O'Brien has written four books so far and I have just read the last three. From our point of view I probably have not missed much in the first, because even the second is a fairly mundane story set in modern middle class Dublin. Its characters are an eccentric called Collopy who has dedicated himself to the provision in Dublin of public restrooms for women and a Jesuit priest with whom he argues interminably about this and religion. Collopy contracts rheumatoid arthritis through overwork and exposure, and the Jesuit arranges a visit to the vatican in the hope of a miracle. The scene in which, through an interpreter, the Pope asks after Collopy's health and finds he is really being asked to use his influence with Dublin Corporation for an unspeakable purpose, is one of the great comic episodes in literature, but the book is of no importance from our point of view other than as indicating the author's inventiveness.

With the third, however, "The Dalkey Archive", we are transported half way to another plane. It is one dominated by a mad scientist and by a policeman obsessed by bicycles. I might draw analogies with Alfred Jarry and Franz Kafka but I don't think this is nesessary or perhaps even relevant, even if I knew enough about either. It is I think sufficient to point out that the bicycle plays quite as important a role in the life of the impecunious young Dubliner as the horse did in the American West, and that it is the main front on which he comes into contact with authority. The eccentric scientist, De Selby, who is a sort of humourless Charles Fort, believes that time is an illusion caused by the presence of oxygen in the atmosphere and has proved it by maturing the best Irish whiskey overnight. Unfortunately he also believes that God lost his battle with Lucifer, current thought on this subject being the result of a false communique issued by the latter, and proposes to remedy the present deplorable state of affairs by annihilating time and with it the world Lucifer has mischievously created.

The book deals mainly with the efforts of the hero to avert this catastrophe. He is aided by Sergeant Fottrell of the Dublin Police who goes everywhere wheeling a bicycle which he never rides. This is because of what he called the Mollycule Theory. When a hammer strikes repeatedly on an anvil, mollycules of the anvil will enter into the hammer, and vice versa. It stands to reason, the Sergeant points out, that the same thing will happen to human beings riding bicycles on bumpy roads, and many unfortunate people in Ireland have by now become more than half bicycle. Conversely of course many bicycles have become part human, making for great danger to the public and great difficulties for the police. He touches on the immorality involved by men riding girl's bicycles and vice versa, and on the element of treason involved by the fact that all bicycles are made in England, but the most serious case was one of murder. The suspect, a man called McDadd, rode a bicycle with solid tyres, and his condition was so obvious that an enemy

attacked his bicycle with a crowbar. McDadd slew him for it and Sergeant Fottrell had a very difficult choice to make, but finally he hanged the bicycle. "Did you ever see a bicycle-shaped coffin?" he enquires. "...a very convoluted item of woodworking."

The eccentric De Selby makes no personal appearance in the most recent book, "The Third Policeman", but dominates it from footnotes explaining his ideas. These sometimes run to several pages and create another imaginary world of commentators and critics which is even funnier than the narrative itself. The narrator is a young man who kills a miser to get the money to publish an exegesis on De Selby. While searching the house he is confronted by the ghost of the murdered man and a long conversation ensues in which the concept emerges that the winds have colours. "People in the old days had the power of perceiving these colours and could spend a day sitting quietly on a hillside watching the beauty of the winds, their fall and rise and changing hues, the magic of neighbouring winds when they are interweaved like ribbons at a wedding. It was a better occupation than gazing at newspapers." This harks back to a 10th Century Gaelic poem which asserted "The east wind is purple, the south white, the north black and the west dun" (the colours ascribed by O'Brien are almost identical but it would be too much to hope that he arrived at them independently) and even to the belief of the pre-Christian Irish the Sky Boar which controlled the elements. In rural Ireland the belief is still prevalent that pigs can see the wind.

The miser says that this faculty is still possessed by the policemen at the local station, who possess other strange powers; the narrator, having now lost all memory of his crime, goes to them for help in finding the miser's money. This has all the authentic quality of half-waking nightmare, the type in which through absent-minded monomania one inexorably brings about one's own destruction, anguishedly witnessed by a more conscious self. The remainder of the book, apart from the footnotes, deals with the narrator's relationships with these mysterious policemen. They too are obsessed by bicycles, and indeed the author has succeeded in the remarkable feat of re-selling vertually verbatim several pages of his previous book, and to the same publisher.

But while the official time of the policemen is taken up with bicycles, their off-duty hours are spent in eternity, literally. They have discovered that for some strange reason the cracks in the ceiling of one of the rooms in the police station form a map of the district, with the addition of one road unknown to them. They found this road, the entrance to which had been overgrown, and at the end of it an elevator which takes them down to a vast region of machinery-filled rooms, a sort of planetary basement. They call this eternity because time does not pass there, and spend most of their off-duty hours in it, mainly to save themselves the trouble of shaving. Its character and real nature are too complex to describe here, except to say that it is really under the control of the mysterious third policeman who makes his appearance towards the end of the book.

The activities of the second policeman, Constable Pluck are however more intelligible. He is simply a spare-time hobbyist, working with wood and metal, but what O'Brien makes of these simple activities is something almost frightening. Constable Pluck has, for example, made a little spear so sharp that it will cut you before it touches you, the last few inches being quite invisible, and whether or not the last inch exists at all a subject for philosophical conjecture. He has also made a little wood and brass box so beautiful that there is simply nothing worthy to be kept in it. He solves the problem by making another box even smaller and even more beautiful, which the narrator describes as "so faultless and delightful that it reminded me forcibly, strange and foolish as it may seem, of something I did not understand and had never even heard of." Constable Pluck pursues the inexorable logic of his solution to the point of invisibility and beyond, in a scene which to me has the

mind-stretching quality to be found nowhere in science fiction but in Van Vogt and the later chapters of Stapeldon's "The Starmaker", and O'Brien's description of the narrator's reaction seems to me of the sense of wonder which we look for in modern science fiction so vainly.

The scientific ideas which coruscate from the footnotes have all the period charm of the Phlogiston Theory, or of those brass and ebonite machines in films of stories by Verne and Wells. De Selby's ideas about the atmosphere are expanded with an engaging semblance of plausibility. He believes, for example, that night is an illusion created by insanitary accretions of black air caused by fine volcanic dust, sleep simply a succession of fainting fits brought on by semi-asphyxiation, and death the eventual consequence of these. However occasionally there is an idea which is almost valid as a science-fictional concept, in particular one involving mirrors in which O'Brien independently arrives at something very like the postulate advanced in Bob Shaw's Slow Glass stories. O'Brien points out that the reflection a man sees of himself in a mirror is not of himself as he is, but as he was a small but calculable fraction of time in the past. The ineffable De Selby, by constructing an arrangement of infinitely reflecting mirrors, claims to be able to detect a growing youthfulness in his receding images, finally discerning with the aid of a telescope the countenance of a young boy "of singular beauty and nobility."

O'Brien is of course thought of as primarily a humorous writer, and since he is very funny indeed I suppose that assessment is fair enough... Though I might add that he writes like a dream and that in particular his dialogue seems to me to do for the speech of the people of Dublin what Synge did for the dialect of the West of Ireland, that is to create a new and beautifully expressive literary language. However from the science-fictional point of view our interest must be in him as an isolated outpost of the literature of ideas. I say isolated with however some of the smugness of the English newspaper headline which after a storm announced CONTINENT CUT OFF FROM ENGLAND. It semms clear that O'Brien has little knowledge of the science fiction field -- in an appendix to "The Third Policeman" he makes it clear that he regards as novel an idea, that of the narrator being dead, which is all too familiar to us -- but one must wonder whether he or our average contemporary author most nearly follows Ouspensky's recipe for original thought, to "think in other categories". When one considers the marvellous fecundity of ideas he has been able to generate out of a background which apparently consists primarily of Roman Catholic philosophy and the Victorian science taught by the educational system of that Church, one wonders what advances such a mind might make on the wild frontiers of modern science. And one also asks oneself, rather sadly, why the activity of our own troops on that front has been so pedestrian.

Installment 43, Warhoon 25, November 1968.

THE RATS THAT ATE THE RAILROAD

Subjectively, Ireland is bigger than the United States. Whatever geographers may say, the effective size of a country is measured in the time it takes to get from one end of it to the other, and in those terms Cork is further from Belfast than Los Angeles is from New York. However desperate your urgency, you simply cannot get from one of these provincial capitals to the other in less than six hours, and you can only manage that if you are able to use both the express train services that run between them and Dublin. The journey across the country in the diagonally opposite direction is more dauntingly complex than the one from Seattle to Miami, and would take more than a day by any combination of public transport. Ireland has no internal air services because the population is too few, too dispersed and not rich enough to support them: handicaps which have plagued all modern forms of transport in the country.

In 1787 there were 257 private sedan chairs in Dublin, a statement I offer for the delection of connoisseurs of utterly useless information. However it is illuminating to know that they were still in use as late as 1840, as evidenced by a popular joke of that period which will now be told for probably the last time. A countryman visiting Dublin expressed wonderment at the sedan chairs and his Dublin friends offered him a trip in one of them, from which they had first removed the floor. After trotting him up and down several dirty streets they asked him what he thought of this mode of travel. "Well," he said, "only for the honour and glory of the thing, it was mighty like walking." In fact transport was unknown to most of the population: they walked where they wanted to go. Every winter farm labourers walked from Connaught to Dublin to find work, a distance of well over 200 miles. By contrast Ted White another connoisseur of useless information who is also a light railroad enthusiast, told me that at one time in the early 20th Century it was possible to travel all the way from New York to Chicago in three days using only urban trolley car systems.

The first and probably the only man to have run a really successful transport undertaking in Ireland was an Italian called Bianconi, who introduced the first "long car" stage coach. Even he had some difficulty at first in persuading the natives to make use of his newfangled contraption, until he hit on the bright idea of buying another coach under another name and racing against it. The excitement of a breakneck race was more appealing to the Irish than the mere saving of time, but having experienced both, the middle classes gleefully accepted the new tempo of life and soon a profitable Bianconi service covered the whole country: demonstrating that only the brave deserve the fare.

When the railways came Bianconi bought shares and, with the sound commercial instinct which had marked his entire career, died while they were still rising in value. The promoters who followed him suffered from the disadvantage that many of their potential passengers were now clambering onto trolley cars in America, and the Irish railway bandwagon ground to a shuddering halt.

However it was exciting while it lasted, particularly in the narrow gauge country of the West. The West Clare Railroad, the one that used to carry Kate O'Brien to Kilkee, had started off with the distinction of being one of the few railroads to have one of its locomotives sunk. During trials it fell off the track into a bog and was never seen again. The railroad itself died only a few years ago, with a song in its heart. In its heyday it had carried many stage personalities to entertain the holiday crowds at Kilkee, and one of them was the comedian and song writer Percy French, who wrote "The Mountains of Mourne" and other stage Irish songs. He wrote one about the West Clare railroad, called "Are Ye Right There Michael", which alleged that among other unbusinesslike practices the company required its passengers to get out and gather fuel. Highly indignant, the Company sued him for libel. Unfortunately for them their witnesses did not turn up for the hearing in time, the train having been delayed. Rather than proffer this ignominious explanation, the company hastily settled out of court.

Even more unfortunate was another company in Galway who lost their whole railroad overnight. Their line was to run from Shannon Harbour to Portumna, but had reached only halfway when the money ran out. For some years the track and stations and equipment lay there untouched, and then a vagrant was arrested by the police for stealing a lantern. The local population showed a peculiar interest in the case. At the trial nobody appeared on behalf of the company to prove ownership of the lantern, possibly because it owed money in the district. Next morning the entire railroad had vanished off the face of the earth, and to this day tactless visitors are prone to remark on the unusual solidity of the farm outbuildings and fences in the area.

Which reminds me of a man in Belfast who worked for the city trolley car company and was not averse to bringing home for domestic use any item of equipment or furniture for which his employers did not seem to have any immediate use. Bob Shaw said of him that if you were to ring a bell in the street his whole house would move off.

And even more shattering misfortune happened to a canal company. Canals were a great way to travel in those days, in luxurious barges with dining accommodation, and one thriving company decided to expand its operations into the limestone region north of Clare. They hewed the new canal out of the rock and a beautiful job it was, all clean and neat for the opening ceremony. After much speechmaking and mutual congratulation the water was let in, foamed along the canal for a few yards, and disappeared from view. No doubt it reappeared again somewhere else after traversing some subterranean channel, but it left the canal as high and dry as the company.

But possibly the most poignant of all was the fate of the Atmospheric Railway, invented in 1840 by Samuel Clegg and Joseph Sands. Irish adaptation to the Industrial Revolution tended to be erratic, since machines do not respond readily to eloquence, nor are they easily moved by flattery: so with the exception of the pneumatic tyre, invented by John Dunlop of Belfast, the contributions of the native Irish have tended to be impractical, or as they would prefer to put it, in advance of their time. So certainly it was with the Atmospheric Railway.

The motive power for the ingenious contrivance was supplied by two pumps, one at each end of a long metal tube about fifteen inches in diameter, running the whole length of the track between the rails. A pump at one terminus sucked air out of the tube, the other one at the other terminus pumped air in, and between them they propelled along the tube a piston to which the train was attached. To permit the coupling between the train and the piston, a slot ran the whole length of the tube, sealed with strips of metal and heavily waxed leather rather like a zip fastener. On the underside of the train there was fixed a fork to prise the zip open: immediately after that rollers for closing the tube up again: and finally, just to make sure, a little coal furnace to melt the wax and ensure an airtight seal.

The model worked beautifully and everyone was tremendously impressed. Speeds up to eighty miles per hour were said to be theoretically possible. The great railway engineer Brunel recommended this new type of railroad for the line between Croydon and London. The English Board of Trade, more cautious but still enthusiastic, gave twenty-five thousand pounds for the construction of a track between Kingstown and Dalkey, near Dublin. This was duly built, and was opened on March 29th, 1844.

It was "a triumphant success", climbing the 1 3/4 miles of sharp curves and steep hills up to Dalkey in 3½ minutes, and coasting back to Kingstown in 4 minutes by gravity. Dr. Kane, in his Industrial Resources of Ireland, published in 1845, acclaimed it as a "remarkable mechanism of locomotion. The more intimate connection with the line by the pipe and piston gives steadiness to the atmospheric train, enabling it to traverse curves too steep for the safe passage of an ordinary train. Besides that the absence of the locomotive, from which in most cases of accident the injury is sustained, presents an additional source of safety." Two hardheaded Belfast businessmen floated a company for the construction of a similar line from Belfast to Holywood, Co. Down.

Fortunately for them, they took a close look at the maintenance problems of the Kingstown-Dalkey line before actually spending any money of their own. There was already visible a cloud no bigger than a man's hand. No doubt to us the Atmospheric Railway seems a harebrained scheme, but it did work, and I wonder how many of us sophisticates could have anticipated that rats would take a fancy to the wax that sealed the tube. The Belfast businessmen guessed what was going to happen and

hastily sold out to the Belfast and County Down Railway Company. Sure enough word got around among the rat population that there was a one and three quarter mile long banqueting table spread with food all the way from Kingstown to Dalkey, and soon the leather flaps were being gnawed away faster than they could be replaced. The railroad profits were being eaten up, closely followed by the railway itself, and now all that is left of it is a street sign in Dalkey reading mysteriously "Atmospheric Road".

It is tempting to think that if in those days synthetic materials had been available the Atmospheric Railway might have become as important as steam, but the speculation is impractical because all the components of a technology march together. That was not the time for plastics and prosperity, but for rats and disaster.

Or was it. Only a few miles from the rapacious rats an Irishman had just accomplished what a modern astronomer refers to as "a scientific miracle". Completely unaided he had built the largest telescope in the world and was making discoveries fundamental to modern astrophysics.

This contemporary Mount Palomar was at Birr Castle, County Offaly, and was the work of the Earl of Rosse. Hitherto the largest telescope in the world had been the 49 inch reflector made by the great Sir William Herschel in England. The Earl of Rosse determined to make one of 72 inches. In those days it was not possible to use glass for such a huge mirror, so the Earl cast one of metal, in a specially designed forge. It was nearly six inches thick, weighed four tons and took four months to cool down. Then it had to be ground down and polished, and this the Earl did singlehanded. Simultaneously he supervised the construction of the tube in which it was to be mounted, 54 feet long and so wide that a man could walk through it carrying an open umbrella. We know this because in fact the local Dean did just that at the opening ceremony.

Photographs could not be taken through the telescope, but the Earl's drawings of what he saw excited astronomers. He had discovered the spiral nebulae, a vital clue to the nature of the universe. Scientists came to Birr from all over the world. The telescope remained the largest in the world until near the end of the Century, and was still in use until 1908: having been used among other things to measure the heat radiated by the surface of the Moon. The great metal mirror is now in the Science Museum in South Kensington, London, but the rest of the telescope and the massive walls that support it can still be seen in the grounds of Birr Castle, a memorial to the fact that Irishmen can sometimes make their impractical dreams come true.

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Mentioning that I now have the distinction of being the first fan to have the composition of his biography disrupted by the departure of a spaceship for the Moon -- and incidentally drawing attention to the remarkable fact that the most momentous noise in the history of mankind was one that was not heard, namely the lengthening silence between message and reply in communications with Earth -- Harry Warner sent me the third instalment of "A Wealth of Fable" so that I could correct any factual inaccuracies, an unlikely contingency in view of the fact that he seems to know more about me than I can remember, and no doubt also to give me an opportunity to comment on any of the observations he has made about my style of writing, such as the tendency I have to use short sentences. Actually the knowledge that an analysis of my style will appear in the same issue of Warhoon as this instalment of The Harp has made me as self conscious as the man in the old story who, asked if he slept with his beard over or under the clothes, was unable to answer then or

sleep that night until he removed the source of his puzzlement with a pair of scissors.

So instead of having you all hanging round like vultures waiting for me to produce the familiar features Harry has spotlighted, I thought that this time I would cut them all out and concentrate on what he says I usually omit, that is my fundamental philosophy. When Madeleine read that particular comment of Harry's, her immediate reaction was, hah you and your old watertight compartments, by which she meant the penchant I have for keeping my various interests separate from one another, for very much the same reason ships have waterproof doors. I accept that my wife understands me only too well, but this time I think there's more to it than that. I have said exactly what I believe about certain serious subjects when writing about those subjects: what I have tried to avoid is referring to those opinions in other contexts. This is because I don't see any point in arguing seriously with anyone unless you are genuinely trying to persuade them to your point of view, and the only way to do that is to establish first an area of agreement out of which you can advance together. To take an extreme example, if somebody comes up to you in a bar and asks don't you agree niggers are sub-human, you will only widen the gap by pointing out he is an ignorant dupe of the Judaeo-Christian capitalist power structure. No salesman ever sold a Hoover by introducing his spiel with "no wonder your house is so filthy if you're stupid enough to use an Electrolux". If your concern is more about racial harmony than your own vanity you must de-escalate the conflict with something like, "Yes, a lot of them turn me off too, especially the Black Muslims. Why do you suppose they've got so bitter?" With luck and sufficient humility you might get him on to explaining to you the injustices suffered by coloured people and thence to appreciate his own guilt.

This you will accomplish only through love: love enough to understand the human yearnings and fears of even the most bestial-seeming racist, and love enough of your fellow-men to resist the insidious temptation to use argument to assert your own intellectual and moral superiority, to prove only that White is White. That we must love one another or die does not I admit seem a very profound or original philosophy to end up with after thirty years of intensive thought, but the fact that even Lyndon Johnson says it does not invalidate it. One night many years ago I dreamed I had discovered the Ultimate Truth, a revelation so worldshaking that I must get out of bed and write it down. Still half asleep I did so, and went back to bed happy in the conviction that all the troubles of mankind were over. In the morning I found that what I had written was: "The obvious is not necessarily untrue". What had come to me in the dream was that certain sayings, like the one I quoted and others about love, or "Honesty is the best policy", have become so trite that they have ceased to mean anything at all. Much as for example the name of the New York Herald Tribune has ceased to evoke any image of an English Cathedral town, or a messenger running ahead with momentous tidings or three wise men sitting in judgment on matters of great importance.

It is not just a question of these truisms being common ground with everyone and meaningless on that account, like the clergymen who fearlessly declared he was against sin. There is a very large body of opinion in modern Western civilization which rejects them, as evidenced by the use of terms like "nigger-lover", "bleedling hearts" and "do-gooders" as abuse, and Ayn Rand has even erected a system of philosophy which rehabilitates Cain. Next, presumably, Judas Iscariot, Adolf Hitler and Lee Harvey Oswald. Indeed our whole modern economic system gives the impression of being based on evil, in that prestige and material reward accure to the selfish and unscrupulous. Yet even so the precepts I have quoted are so profoundly meaningful that every now and then some business man like Marks and Spencer in Great Britain is able to outclass all his cunning competitors by simply acting on the fantastically impractical assumption that honesty actually <u>is</u> the best policy.

If it is necessary to defend the thesis that love is good, and apparently it is

necessary, I would use the arguments I advanced in the first Warhoon Harp against Heinlein's philosophy; briefly, that man's evolutionary progress so far, and any hope of its continuation, depend on co-operation between men rather than on conflict. I used to think that socialism itself was enough to ensure the survival and progress of Man. It seemed to me in my innocence that since all men had potentialities for love, all that was needed was to develop an economic system which would encourage those potentialities to realize themselves. I still believe that could be done and the principle is one I follow in my day-to-day work as a senior civil servant concerned with the problem of making people behave better. Privately I think of it as Nudgism, the theory that people can be induced voluntarily to do things you couldn't force them to do. The simplest example I can think of offhand is the problem of a patch of parkland in an urban area. The libertarian solution is to let everyone trample it into dust. The Authoritarian solution is to put up notices "KEEP OFF" and punish anyone who disobeys them. The Nudgist solution would be to put a convenient path through it, with garden seats, and offer prizes to any group of neighbourhood children who plant and protect a tree. The Nudgist solution was employed the other day by a building contractor in Northern Ireland who had found it was impossible to keep children off areas in front of buildings where he had sown grass seed. This time he gave a grass-sowing party for all the local children, entrusted the infant lawn to them, and promised another party when the grass was three inches high. At the grass-mowing party there was not a single footprint on the lawn, and the cost of the two parties was far less than the cost of a fence.

Where Nudgism fails is where the neighborhood is too large for anyone to feel any personal interest in or responsibility for a project, and it seems to be that is why socialism has not fulfilled its expectations. Moreover the constructive development of a modern state is such a large and complex problem as to lead to authoritarianism and bureaucracy which, although motivated by alturism, are indistinguishable in their impact on the average person from the authoritarianism and bureaucracy of monopoly capitalism motivated by self-interest. This has led me to deduce that the only hope for humanity is in the reconstruction of civilization in administrative units small enough for each person to feel that his participation is vital. If I had to label this system of beliefs, I suppose I would have to call it anarcho-syndicalism.

Various science fiction authors have shown how a society along these lines could develop through technological advances like nuclear power stations, but it seems to me it would also require a reduction in population, and this presents me with a moral problem I have not yet been able to solve to my satisfaction: that is the value of an unborn baby. Or, expressed more philosophically, is existence better than non-existence? I feel that contraception is not wrong because no one is harmed by it, but in saying that am I not saying also that there would be no loss if the entire human race were annihilated in one painless flash, because there would be no one to feel the loss?

To rescue myself from this dilemma I am forced to postulate the existence of extra-terrestrial creatures to whom the human race has value, even if they don't know about us yet, and in this peculiar way science fiction has supplied me with a substitute for religion. The theology of the standard religions I feel to be silly and their practice inimical to morality. Each of them relies on an arbitrary authority, either a book or a person or some unverifiable revelation, and on a reward in afterlife for obeying that authority. Once this irrational premise is accepted every conceivable cruelty can be justified as being in the interests of that author and for the ultimate benefit of the victims, or at least the survivors. The only reason this does not happen so often nowadays is that people don't believe so sincerely in religion, having largely transferred their allegiance to other arbitrary authorities like economic theories, which are susceptible ultimately at least to some sort of experimental verification.

some sort of experimental verification.

Such a transfer is now taking place in Northern Ireland, belatedly and rapidly, and in a very dramatic way. The degree of personal involvement is intense because Northern Ireland is just about the size of the ideal administrative unit I envisage for my Utopia, belonging as it does to what I think of as the Second Magnitude of population areas. This is a criterion determined not just by the number of people but by the size of the area and the amount of social mobility within it. The First Magnitude is the integrated small town, where everyone knows everyone else. In Second Magnitude areas everyone is known to somebody you know. The whole world is I think a Sixth Magnitude area, but you can form your own opinion by working out the least number of people you would have to approach, in succession, to secure a personal introduction to a particular Australian aborigine.

In Second Magnitude areas people are more likely to re-assess their own fundamental philosophy when the community is in trouble, and in Northern Ireland this re-assessment has been influenced by the world ideological revolution described by Terry Carr in his remarkably perceptive article elsewhere in this issue. In Northern Ireland at this very moment the past and the future of Ireland, and perhaps in miniature of the whole world, are locked together in struggle in an arena so small that every ideological concept is personified. The conflict involves religion and politics, racial prejudice and patriotism, love and hatred, and I hope in the next Warhoon to indicate how the fundamental philosophy I've outlined stands up to such a test, if it does.

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HOW NOT TO SURVIVE WOMEN'S LIBERATION

Your editorial was fascinating with its True Confessions, but on behalf of the male sex I'd like to protest against this projected series of exposures of male fans by their wives. I think its unfair, because you know we'd never dare to retaliate, and besides think of all the marriages you might break up. Of course I admit it might be the other way about because even the most happily married couples have misunderstandings that might never be cleared up until one of them does the sort of article you suggest Elinor Busby should write. For instance in our case there's the affair of the toothpaste. On our wedding night when I went to the bathroom I found Madeleine had not replaced the cap on the tube. I clutched the towel rail and tried to be calm. Walter I told myself try and forget all the books you've read about marriages that founder on this rock. Be tolerant, broadminded, forgiving: she is a nice girl and may make a good wife and mother even if she doesn't replace the cap on the toothpaste. Try and see it from her point of view. I did, and began to adjust myself to it rationally. After all, I reasoned why replace the cap? It only has to be taken off again, a double useless expenditure of energy hastening the final extinction of the universe through entrophy by probably as much as a couple of seconds. If the tube isn't used often enough the toothpaste doesn't harden anyway. I argued so well that in a few minutes I had completely convinced myself that Madeleine's attitude was logical and right, so I left off the cap myself. So it went on for fourteen years until one evening I picked up the Ladies Home Journal (I always read the article "Can This Marriage Be Saved" because it reminds me of the London Circle) and found a questionaire Madeleine had filled up about marital difficulties. She had answered yes to the question do you replace the cap on the toothpaste. I taxed her with it. You don't, I pointed out reasonably. "Well I would", she said, "only you always come to the bathroom after me, so I leave it off for you. You should talk anyway, I've never known you to replace it yet, you slob."

Walt Willis in a letter of comment in Femizine, Spring, 1960.