

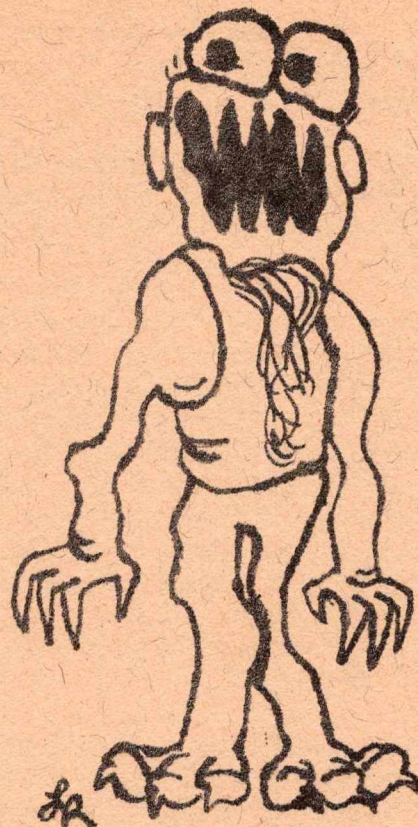
WHATHELL #4

OCTOBER

1981

FLAP 12

from Dave Locke, 4215 Romaine Drive #22, Cincinnati, Ohio 45209. Mimeo courtesy of Jackie, for whom thanx and much love. As usual, the front section is the last one done which, if you bear this fact in mind, may explain much. Then again, it may explain squat. Hi to all of you. Have you had enough of this colophon? Wait just a moment while I get down even with the bottom of this Lea Reed illo.



Hi there. Welcome to this humble fanzine.

This is the 19th of September (no, don't look at your calendar; I mean now, as I type this stencil). What are you doing today? Really? Uh huh. Oh yeah? Hmm. Seriously? No kidding?

Jackie is making foodstuff, the cat is sleeping on our bed (or was until I looked at her; at which point her eyelids popped up and she stared at me), and Sandy is off looking for an apartment (good luck, Sandy!). You know what I'm doing.

The last time I hunted-and-pecked on this fanzine I was agonizing over accepting or rejecting a promotion that was offered to me. This was a case where I had convinced the Powers That Be that they needed to create a new job which utilized my 13 years of experience in materials management. Having convinced them of this they then offered the position to me and, true to form, I turned it down. It is now a couple or three months later and strangely enough I now find myself out of a job, new or old. The details are uninspiring, so I'll let the subject go with the comment that I have mixed emotions over the fact that I'm no longer working there. The good part is that I'm no longer working there. The bad part is that I'm unemployed. Mixed blessings, indeed.

The world is just full of mixed blessings. Sort of like a "I have good news and I have bad news" joke. Perhaps this is the time to open that bordello in Nevada that I was thinking of. Or go across the Ohio River, closer to home, and open a bottomless place in Kentucky (can't do it in Cincinnati; for that matter it may even be illegal to think about it in Cincinnati). I'd call it The Bottomless Pit. We could hold Cincy Fan Group meetings there.

Time to change the stencil. EdCo, where are you?

I miss those oneshots with Edco. Always used to be able to get him to change the stencil (after the first time, when he showed me how to do that). Never used to work more than half the time with David or Lon, though...

Where was I? Oh yes, moving forward. My son, Brian, came out for a two week and three weekend visit. I enjoyed the hell out of it, despite having to work excessive overtime during that period and despite what seemed to be a highly active social calendar.

Things we did. Well, we attended the finals of the ATP tennis tournament, which was the first tournament any of us watched other than on television. It was enjoyed. Yes, the finals of the singles and doubles matches were a rout, and that talented but young punk McEnroe walked away with both titles without too much competition (you have to admire his skill. Given his personality and his skill, you have to admire his skill). It would have been a blah viewing on television, but as our first live tournament it was quite interesting. We drank much purchased beer and I took many nips from a flask which we had brought, and as a consequence I probably would have enjoyed watching the cat shit in her litterbox. It was okay.

Movies. We saw many movies. I can't recall any which I would recommend to you. Hell of a note.

We went to something called Seven Caves. This was interesting, but not in the way the owners intended it to be. Academically speaking, there was a lot of good hiking ground there for the general non-hiking populace. And the self-guided cave tours were based on a clever idea: push-button lighting to illuminate various cave formations. The amusement came from the printed descriptions of what some of these cave formations were called or what they looked like. Some of them, shall we say, reached a bit far. It became something to parody. "And here is where Snoopy threw up. Push this button."

The CFG, the local fan group, had a picnic in a local park one Sunday. It came off extremely well, much better than a meeting in fact, and neither of us would be averse to having picnics instead of meetings instead of in addition to them. We ate, we drank, we bullshitted, we threw a frisbee, we played a little softball, played a little Othello, and in general had a good time. If only the meetings were a tenth as amusing. No doubt this is a byproduct of the picnic being something new, and the meetings being too old hat.

What else is new? Well, Steve Leigh, local fan and neo pro, and I seem to have hit it off for a weekly Sunday morning game of tennis. We're equally bad, neither of us can stand the traditional 'warm-up' exercises, and we both like to drink beer afterward. Hard to beat that kind of like-mindedness. After the match we somehow manage to find our way back to this apartment, scratch on the door to be let in, and drink beer (alternately furnished by one or the other of us) while assaying the damages to our hands and feet and bodies in general. We smell, we ache, and we rejoice in the exercise of running around and swatting a little yellow ball. Isn't it great?

It was discovered that Steve Leigh and Mike Resnick and I are 'somewhat' fight fans, so the three of us assembled at Mike & Carol Resnick's place to watch the 'ON TV' presentation of the Leonard/Hearn title match. There was no betting, as all three of us chose the wrong fighter to win (and were disconcerted). In fact, the only point of disagreement (me vs. them) was over the TKO; I agreed the fight should have been stopped when Hearn showed himself to be totally defenseless, and they believed that for \$13 million the public was entitled to see a duel to the death. A wide philosophical gap there. However, we didn't come to blows over it, and have agreed to reconvene at the Resnick's the next time there's a match of note.

POPCORN DIALOG

"My problem is that I'm too often the captive of my moods and not frequently enough the captive of my intellect."

"Is that bad, Hernando?"

"Damn right. I wish to be more consciously selective of where I go to hang."

-- from "Guns on the Rio Grande," Warner Bros., 1958

"General, think of something positive! The enemy has us totally surrounded!"

"Well, by damn, they won't get away this time!"

-- from "Gundown at Sundown," 20th Cen. Fox, 1961

"Do you think this means there are some things that Man was not meant to know?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Because look at all the trouble I got into with this universal solvent."

-- from "King of the Mad Scientists," Columbia, 1956

I'm working on another issue of THE WORKS. Actually, 90% of it is written, maybe more. I've had fun with ^{it} which hopefully will somehow show. One of the items I'm running is that erstwhile Windycon trip report (hi, Becky), which is something I'd written, and rewritten, and had been unsatisfied with. I showed it to Ed Cagle, and he convinced me I should run it. What's more interesting is that he did it in a letter that apparently got lost in the mail. Sue Cagle turned up a carbon copy, and sent it to me. (I never said I didn't write con reports, I just said I didn't particularly care to read them...)

It isn't my intention to run THE WORKS through FLAP (I may mail it with FLAP, to those who are on the mailing list). There's a lot of overlap in mailing lists, but not quite enough, and I'd prefer to receive letters of comment on it than to receive mailing comments on it. So it won't get run through here, but if you're interested in a copy and don't already know you're going to receive one, drop me a line (as opposed to a mailing comment). I'd be pleased to send it to anyone in here.

Saw a movie last night. Joel Zakem, local fan and not the name of the movie, called and asked us if we wanted to catch a sneak preview of a movie starring some of the Monty Python group and Sean Connery. TIME BANDITS was the name of it. We'd seen the ad in yesterday's paper, Joel had read good reviews in the British music magazines, and it seemed like a good idea at the time so we went and did it. Joel and Jackie enjoyed it much more than I did, but if you like children's fantasy you might go for this one. It has a few slightly-off-stage things that some people might not want to take their kids to -- munching on a rat, violence for the sake of violence, and Ralph Richardson playing a rendition of God that not everyone might approve of -- but it is amusing for a children's film. It's both science fiction and fantasy mixed together with a band of dwarves trying to loot various periods in history, and the main character is a boy from the future who somehow gets taken along for the ride. The plot is strictly odyssey, and some of the adventures are much better than others. The effects are good. Acting, when called for, is good to adequate. The costuming, from what little knowledge I possess, was very well done. The ending is a puzzle apparently without purpose, though I presume there's a meaning there which just doesn't get across. It's a different movie than what you've likely been seeing, and it is entertaining.

Good morning. This is Tuesday, the 22nd of September. Actually it's a quarter past noon, but that's close enough to morning for government work.

Speaking of work, I'm still looking for it. This morning I made my usual round of 'touch-base' calls with the headhunters and agencies. One of them said she had something "right up my alley" (I beg your pardon...): from all appearances it was a sales rep job in electronic computer parts, in a territory with an 80-mile radius. Was I potentially interested? Well, yes, potentially. Call back at 5:30 if I don't hear from her, she said. Okay. Being a sales rep is sitting on the other side of the desk from a purchasing agent, which means I have a basic familiarity with what they do. Which, as far as I can see, usually isn't much. Okay, potentially.

Last week I was offered a job by a management recruiter, as a management recruiter. This sounded more interesting. I've dealt a lot with the headhunters, both recruiting and trying to be recruited, but this offer was a little strange. I was talking with this fellow on the phone, and when he ran dry on the one purchasing lead he had he suddenly came up with: "you've got a good operations background and you speak well on the phone; have you ever thought of being a recruiter?" So I went down to interview.

After interviewing with the recruiter, who told me most people don't make it through lunch on their first day (they leave and just don't come back), I interviewed with the department head.

I should state that the working atmosphere was bull-pen. Perhaps 20 recruiters in one big room, with desks clumped together in batches of 4. Me, with bad ears, interviewing for a primarily telephone job in a noisy bull-pen. Inauspicious start. From there it went downhill.

This place played hardball. The department head was, for want of a better word, and there probably isn't any, a prick. He reiterated that it would be easier to teach me the sales techniques than to give me the operations background that I already had. Their problem was that they didn't really know enough about operations to be good at making placements in that area (I'd noticed).

What they would teach me would be things like how to convince a company to hire someone when they had no openings ("I didn't ask if you had any openings. This guy is good. Fire someone"); and how to convince a company to give you a shot at filling their openings ("Listen, we have two kinds of companies. Those we make placements at, and those we rob people from. Which kind do you want to be?"). After a half-hour of trying to convince me what a hard-ass he was, with little give-and-take in the discussion except when he'd take a wild-ass shot at trying to intimidate me, he finally stated that I looked like a good prospect and if I'd shave off my beard he'd hire me. Apparently he thought it might muffle my telephone voice, I don't know (he said he was from Nyok City, and learned early that CinCity was an overly conservative place).

And so, I'm not a management recruiter. Merely bearded, and unemployed.

Later, if I get hungry, I may regret this. Right now I don't.

Right now, however, or as soon as I hit the bottom of the page, it wouldn't be a bad idea to trundle forth the mailing comments. They're waiting in the wings, you see. Pages and pages of them. See what happens when I'm out of work -- my apazines get bigger.

And so, onward to the mailing comments. TataTataTa.

ACTUALLY THIS PAGE RIGHT HERE

Actually the August title for the Official Organ (remember the official organ, Joni, and how much fun we had with it?), and what I want to do here is comment upon it. Yes, I know I wrote it.

I'm going to miss Joan Bangsund.

Welcome, welcome, to Bill Bowers and Dave Langford. A disclaimer upon this sentence if you don't show up. Bill has been known to be late to his own funeral (no, Bill isn't dead; he just looks cadaverous and people keep holding wakes for him; he drinks as much as any of them). Dave, of course, is a prompt individual, but the quality of his hearing is somewhere between mine and Dean's (between bad and worse), and he might not have heard us correctly when we told him to send something for this mailing.

And if a third invitee shows up (it's August 10th right now, and too early to know) then welcome to them, too. Them? Him or her. Him, if the first invitee accepts.

Comment hook: If everyone shows who has been invited, the male/female ratio will stand at 71%/29%. Does this have any meaning (it's the way it has worked out, but does it have any meaning...?)? The next two names on our prospective invite list happen to belong to males. Let me toss out an idle question: If you had your druthers, pick an arbitrary ratio that you would prefer. (David Hulan likes APANAGE the best of the apas he's in; what's the ratio there, David...?)

Wixon, you blew it on making the last mailing a 100% show for all members. This is disgraceful. We're all ashamed of you. To segue 180°, I'm sorry I missed you at Rivercon. Last year's Rivercon was, well, okay but kind of boring. That's why I didn't go this year. I have no mercy: one boring convention and it gets scratched off the list. Unkind of me. Of course, I scratched CONFUSION off the list, too, and that was anything but boring. But it's also another story. We won't get into that right now. I just wanted to tell you that you missed the last mailing and you should feel terrible about it. No, I don't want to hear it. Put away the excuses. Don't let this happen again. Be more careful in the future. Shape up, Wixon.

I don't have any other comments on the official organ. Well, we'll move along then, and talk to --

BRUCE ARTHURS

Hello, B.D. You're a chuckler, I can tell. We should have given you an extra page of credit for the wit that was displayed on the back of your postcard. I know: the devil made you do it.

Your comment to Joe: he quit and didn't see your words. If you stop and think about it, that's better than you might have expected.

I don't want to hear about joggers. I tried jogging once, for three sessions, and couldn't see boring myself for that many hours per day unless someone paid me for it (like they do now, in my present job). Unfortunately it's been a long time since I got any exercise at all, and I've gone to seed. Fortunately, it looks like Steve Leigh and I are going to hit it off on a weekly tennis game, and if we don't drink too much beer afterward it should be beneficial to us.

I don't believe your story about the golfer who lost eight strokes because he used a heavy iron to bludgeon a rattlesnake to death.

Arthur, we're still talking to Bruce.

You know, I didn't read CATCH-22. Well, that's not quite true. I read some of it. Until the humor turned into acid. There's a fine line between black humor and acid, and I didn't find Heller treading it very well. So I gave up on the novel. Saw the movie very recently on television. Strange. But I was able to watch it all the way through, though for the life of me now I can't remember all that much of what it was about. Didn't seem to hang together too well. Maybe that's why I can't remember all the bits and pieces.

There were at least two Captain Midnights. I only remember one Captain Marvel. Why am I talking about this?

Good luck with the parochial school. We sent Brian there one year. It was tough for him to switch to a better school, partly because it was better and hard to get in the groove and partly because of the religious courses that he was required to take.

I didn't hear about the APA-45 incident where Meltzer tried to distribute samples of his sperm and pubic hair. How did I miss hearing that? For that matter, I didn't hear of you sending fingernail and toenail clippings through AZAPA. If you ever have a prefrontal lobotomy (perhaps to make life simpler), don't forget to ask the surgeon to cut the outtake into 21 pieces. Better tell him in advance.

I don't know why, but sloe gin and Vernors doesn't sound bad at all. I can't believe I just said that.

Okay, what's the recipe for Bourbon Jelly?

Right, SPACE WILLIES and WASP are two different books. The same exact story, but the former was done for humor and the latter was done straight. I enjoyed them both, but liked SPACE WILLIES better by a country mile.

I've made careful note of your book recommendation. I read Buckley's column which is run in the Cincinnati Enquirer, and enjoy the hell out of it, and I enjoy watching the occasional FIRING LINE. The idea of a collection of his more pithy and trenchant lines is almost irresistible. He's sharp.

Well, subsequent to watching Steve Martin's Emmy-winning television special, and becoming incredulous, I watched him host a Saturday Night Live episode. He was better. Not good, but better. At least he was understandable as a comic.

I've never thrown-up on a potential date, in an airplane or otherwise, but one time I did overindulge in liquor before going out on a date. I picked her up and we were driving along, engaging in terminal idle chitchat, when I stopped the car, said "excuse me a moment," opened my door, threw up, closed the door, and drove off. I threw-up quickly in those days. It didn't take much more time than spitting.

Tell your cartoonist that corflu is not sold by the quart. If it was, Ed Cox and Becky Cartwright would buy it.

Well, yes, the baseball cap was okay, but I really wish you'd get that postage waiver for fanzines. Do your homework for the next contract negotiation, and get this done for us. We will worship you as a Ghod. Harry Warner will mention you in his fanhistory of the eighties. Singlehandedly you will revitalize fanzine fandom. Entire forests will be demolished in your name. Sturgeon's Law will generate 25 unreadable fanzines per day arriving in your mailbox.

JONI STOPA

Hi ya. Off gallivanting about the countryside again, I see. You know the Pacific Northwest is the one major section of the country I haven't seen yet. Never got further north toward it than halfway between LA and Frisco, and no further west toward it than Yellowstone (but, oh, Yellowstone... I didn't want to leave. I wanted to find a way to live there). I still think I'll make it there. One of the things I want to see, besides the coastline and the parks, is the underground city of Seattle. I even had the offer of a native guide one time: Loren MacGregor volunteered Frank Denton.

I was talking with Denny Lien over the t-phone and tried pumping him on what Joe Nicholas was like in person, when he and Joyce met Joe at the convention in Australia. I didn't get a good picture from Denny. He wanted to swap funnies with me. Mike Glicksohn has met Joe a couple of times, but despite numerous encounters with Mike I have always failed to ask him about that subject. Next time, since I can't ask him about it here.

I did a little skit in AWRY one time about a Russian coworker who had been in the country many years, knew very little English, read a Russian newspaper and had only Russian Friends. He was a character. At an office Christmas party he picked up, in a gift exchange, a wine bottle which someone had filled with grape juice. He hung onto the bottle for years, because he didn't drink but liked the idea of having a bottle of wine to crank open on special occasions. He and his wife each had a small glass of it for their 30th wedding anniversary, and to celebrate the first night in their new house, and to honor the memory of her father when he passed away "in the old country." At the time he mentioned these uses he also noted that he still had an inch or two of it left in the bottle for some future occasion.

Let me ask you a twee question. Overall, which do you like better: having your home invaded for a convention weekend, or toodling off to a convention hotel? Obviously each has several points to recommend itself to you, so I'm looking for an on-the-balance type of judgement.

I like the idea of a con in somebody's home to the extent that I would prefer skipping Midwestcon and enjoying Wilcon this next year (it's just a part of my basic makeup that two cons on successive weekends would overlap my reservoir, meager as it is, of sociability), if it can be worked out from standpoints like getting enough travel time on each side of the weekend. Definitely I would like to do that.

I think most of my problems with a convention are that they're in a hotel and run on too long. To twaddle along for a moment on this digressive theme, for some reason the idea of a party (which I like, and partly because they're short) which runs on for a weekend has no appeal to my taste buds, but the idea of a convention (which I like much less than I like a party) which runs the usual weekend but does so in a home rather than a hotel is appealing. Don't ask me why this is so, as the situation is too close to why I like mince pie and don't like okra.

DAVID GRANT HULAN

Hello, there. Fancy meeting you here. Don't I remember you from the days when I held your wife on my lap and drank your likker? You were the fellow with the velour shirt and the baronial demeanor. So how are you? How's Marcia? How much have your likker bills gone down since I moved?

I enjoyed Solvang the time Jackie and I went there. A pleasant tourist trap, as you say. A good place to wander the shops and then take in something to eat.

I wish you'd stop dropping hints about how good a relationship you and Marcia have. I don't care if it is true. Yes, I know it's true. That's no excuse. No, I don't know of any two people who deserve to be happier about such a state of affairs. That's no excuse, either. What am I talking about? I've lost track of the shtick. Well, onwards to other things.

I don't think I've read quite that many books in the last two years, let alone between issues of your fanzine. One factor is that I don't spend as much time at it. Another is that I read extremely slow, although I usually avoid moving my lips as I do it. What's your reading speed?

You know, if you'd incorporate as a church you'd have even more money to go around. You could use the hot tub to fulfill the requirement of holding services. I wonder if I still have that article on how to go about doing this. I remember we almost came close to giving it consideration.

God only knows what has happened to that potential trip to California. Things have shifted somewhat, and if I get out there it may have to be totally on my own nickle and using planned vacation time. Long term, that would be no drawback. I'll drink your likker and Marcia can sit in my lap again. Just like old times. Ah, the simple pleasures of life.

LON ATKINS

Well now, you do know how to review a book, don't you. After reading your SFPA review of King's *THE STAND* I had to go read it, and wound up agreeing with you for the most part. Now I'll have to find and read the Wolfe novel. I've read Wolfe stories, but never a novel, and as you definitely have his style pegged with this review I look forward to reading the book on the basis of the many positive attributes which you covered. So far I haven't quite pegged your usefulness as a reviewer to me personally (I haven't read enough of the books I've seen you review to be able to develop a conversion factor between our tastes), but so far the only setback was your favorable review of *GARP* (touches of brilliance, but the book kept moving forward only to cover a lot of the same ground, over and over until I gave up on it). It must be the sign of a good reviewer, though, when you enjoy the review for its own sake.

By the way, you weren't snappish like you indicated you might be when you wrote the colophon. Ah, the joys of first draft.

JACKIE CAUSGROVE

Hey, I remember you. You're the one who refreshed my drink just a minute ago. Made it just a little on the light side, too, just to give a boost to the quality of the writing in this apa. Maybe if I wrote slower and drank faster... Yes, I know that isn't possible.

I like your format change. I think the whole idea of changing your approach to the preparation of an apazine (commenting as you go along, writing to a shtick, going back to respond to checkmarks, starting early or pushing the deadline, taking natter breaks, etc.) provides an extra edge which boosts things along. Works for me, anyway. This time I'm commenting as I read along, a tactic which always promotes longer apazines. It just means that I spend more time in this straight-back chair, and my ass gets sore as a consequence.

But your natter-break format works well for you.

"Dave--who commuted to the con for Saturday and was too pooped to show up Friday or Sunday--" Well, yes, I was that, but if I were describing it in one word I'd drop "pooped" and substitute "sick" to give a better handle to the situation.

And the last half of the quoted sentence gets a mailing comment all it's own! "--will almost certainly prefer to travel to and fro rather than take a room. It's only 3 miles or so from this apartment, after all." I don't know how, but I sense a difference in viewpoint... Adding to these suspicions is my notice of the fact that you stay at the convention hotel during occasions where I'm willing to drive the five to fifteen minutes back to the castle. These little clues add up, you know. You also know that my reason for commuting to a nearby con (fifteen minutes maximum is nearby to me) is that overnight I am able to enjoy the comfort of my own bed and the conveniences of our kitchen and living area. I don't get to do this at conventions held outside the area, and so am subject to serendipity on the sleeping accommodations, the shave-shower-get dressed routine before morning coffee, and eating breakfast alone and usually without benefit of newspaper (or with one I have no interest in) in the morning because no one else usually gets up before afternoon. Also I avoid \$40 or so a night to rent a hotel room, and get to pet the cat at the same time. Sounds good to me, which is why I commute to local affairs. And also why I am more apt to go to them.

There's nothing wrong with the curly short hair style. Nothing wrong with an ivy league, either, or a crewcut. Short hair is short hair, and is convenient any whichaway.

"Ass over teakettle" was a common expression in upstate NYok, too. I'd be curious to know the origination of that one, though I suspect it might not be illuminating.

Well, I used to like poker much more than I do now after having gone through a period where I played it every month for something like 10 years. I won every damn time, varying amounts, for the first seven years, against some good to fair competition. But that much exposure had the consequence of dulling my interest, and my remaining in that monthly game was more a reflection of my interest in the group (many of whom I would no longer get to see otherwise) than the power of my declining interest in a game that I had overindulged in. Hell, I've even talked to Dean Grennell about photography and Becky Cartwright about okra...

"I hate pressure, but I actually do better work when feeling pushed." I hate pressure, and do better work when not required to rush (I don't do bad work when rushed, well not usually, but the more time I spend on something the better it usually turns out).

The "hard core" of FLAP. There's something ... vaguely ... obscene about the concept of our having a "hard core." As we all detest vagueness, I don't know what to make of it. Let's go back to the concept of FLAP as a party where people come and go. I can feel free to drink in a party atmosphere. Somehow it doesn't seem the thing to do when in the presence of a "hard core." So, foop on the hard core. Onward and upward with the party. Bartender, another round please. Bring my friends one, too. Send me a bill in the morning.

Over the years I have tended to develop a view of Republicans and Democrats which isn't anywhere near as interesting as the one RoyTac published a few mailings ago. Mine categorizes them by their rigid extremes. Too many Republicans are hidebound and tend to the view that your life should be more controlled. Too many Democrats are cherry and allow us the privilege of helping to support too many people who don't really need help.

SUZI STEFL

You know, I read through these two zines here and didn't stop for a comment hook anyplace. Well, that's not true. Yes I did too. I stopped on the matter of the "adults only" party. This has nothing whatever to do with your particular situation which, as I like both you and Leah, is probably nothing more than an adrenalin miscommunication. What I stopped for was the thought that I really like adults-only parties, and I somewhat interpreted that you might possibly be against them because they obviously do exclude people. But I might have misread that. Obviously anything other than an open party is going to exclude people, which is a hell of a lousy reason to avoid invitational parties (I'm speaking in general, and not to any situation). My own interest leans to the adults-only party, and beyond that I consider relatively few people an adult until they blow past thirty. I have very little to communicate with anyone under twenty, and not a hell of a lot with most people under thirty. This doesn't mean that I dislike open parties, or invitational parties with people of all ages. It's just that most of the people I enjoy partying with are over thirty, and an invitational gathering of them provides me with the best partying. Of course, I did once state in print my belief that children should be kept mute until about the age of thirty, but...

But then, as David Hulan will tell you, I was born old. Lloyd Biggle is wrong in what he told you: I was never a teenage rebel. Merely a wiseass. Well, there is some truth in what he said, but don't tell him that...

By the way, Lloyd and I have briefly dwelled upon the subject of Suzi in our last few letters. No, I won't tell you in what manner. You'll have to wheedle it out of Lloyd. That'll teach him to call me a teenage rebel...

And that'll teach you to tell people that I'm 58 instead of 37... By the way, I've cancelled our reservations for that log-rolling contest, and instead have entered us in the grudge-match competition of the three-legged sack race. Don't forget to bring your rubbers. Three will do.

Well, a second pass did produce mailing comments, of a sort. You don't mind second passes, do you? Good.

Ta, Suzi.

JUDY STEVENS

Damn, I'll have to make a second pass here, too. My comment-hook finder had to be fine-tuned (ie: start over again, sober).

You could execute my suggestion for an Intila strip without making it soft-core porn (hmmm, that didn't come out well on first-draft...). Certainly to do it in porn would be easier, but sa'truth that isn't what I had in mind. Borderline maybe, but...

I had the same reaction to OUTLAND that you did. Of course, without Connery it just wouldn't have been as good by half, but that still would have been quite good for a sci-fi flick. I especially liked the way they handled the male/female lead relationship. Refreshing. Nobody screwed, even. For the last decade, as a consequence of the pendulum swing, it has been virtually impossible to go see a film where a man and a woman can be friendly without hopping in the sack, or at least maneuvering around with that in mind. Let us say that the preponderance of film would suggest that screwing is imperative in all male/female relationships; a distortion of reality. But then, marketing fantasy has long been profitable in the entertainment industry, so it's refreshing to encounter a film which tries to face a projected reality without dropping in all the standard cliches.

I enjoyed just being a kid. Of course, as I didn't have the chance to do so until I got out of the hospital and started full-time school attendance with the 5th grade, there may be extenuating circumstances. Nothing like denying something to someone to make them appreciate it once they can perform the actual laying-on of hands. I revelled in my childhood. Proportionately it contained the best years of my life, once I was allowed to enjoy it. School for only nine months of the year, with liberal holidays and extravagant vacation. Home by 4:00 pm, with homework gotten out of the way during study halls. Woods, mountains, and lakes to cavort in. Summertimes filled with good things, including some healthy outdoors work. Hell, I loved it. Now I work for 50 weeks to get 2 weeks vacation, never get home before 5:30 and sometimes as late as 9:00, and live in a city. It's just the nature of the beast, but no, I found childhood to be as much fun while living it as some people would have liked to live it in retrospect.

I think this is all personal opinion, but I don't consider cartoons to be art. Some people, like Gilliland or Jim Davis, are excellent at it, but I don't consider it art. Nor do I consider abstract art to be art. I think it's subjective, because all I know is that art is what I point to when asked to give definition...

The Finnish equivalent to oil painting is hekto printing. Ditto ain't bad, but good hekto is a joy to behold and a pain in the ass to create.

I liked Intila.

MARTY HELGESEN

I will anxiously await Arthur's response to your efforts to define the perimeters of his opinions: "do you support laws against child molestation, or do you think they are an unjustified attempt to regulate people's sex lives?"

I don't know, but I tend to think that his feelings in this line might parallel mine. Legislation on sexual matters should concern itself only with situations where victimization can occur: rape, child molestation, and child support. Victimless sex, or victimless anything, is not a proper subject for legislation; it's only a subject for the people involved.

Let me recommend to you Phil Dick's VALIS. It's not particularly good, as unfortunately Phil has overindulged in too many bad drugs for too many years and his brains have oozed out of his ears, but it is interesting. He postulates a new religion, and does a good job of that. In fact, it's more plausible than most extant religions. I think you might be amused by the scope and the logic.

The various discussions we've all had on religion seems to miss a point. Beyond the fact that personal opinion abounds, established fact and logic does not generally apply. Being an agnostic, in the sense that I can fit under that label without too much showing around the edges, I can't see any reason for believing in a God or Gods other than that possession of such a belief might appeal to someone. If Tarzan walked out of the jungle and encountered the perplexing subject of religion, how would you succinctly explain to him the reason why you believe in a God? Could you, or would he likely be as puzzled as ever if you did?

To put it another way, the detail of a religion's structure and tenets no longer interests me. What interests me is listening to intelligent people explain why they believe in something. Not why they're interested, or how they feel about it, but why they believe. In that answer lies their credibility, a measure of how much they understand themselves and their subject, and a potential insight on the part of the listener as to the value of the subject in question.

MEADE FRIERSON

I enjoyed Tevis' *THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH*, but I couldn't get into *MOCKINGBIRD*. To me it seemed overly like dozens of other novels with the same shtick, but the sin was that he didn't seem to be adding anything new in terms of ideas or style. Perhaps Tevis isn't familiar enough with sf to know that he's just one more fellow covering old and gravely tired ground. Currently I'm reading Phil Dick's *VALIS*, as I mentioned earlier, and haven't all that much further to go. It's a bad story, poorly done, but as you note it is indeed "intellectually-stimulating speculation."

PAULINE PALMER

I didn't notice, until just now, your enormous address change from a zip of 98225 to 98226. This is almost as little a change as it's possible to have, I imagine. A long time ago, in a place far away, my address changed from P.O. Box 207 to P.O. Box 335, and another time, also far far away, from apt. #16 to apt. #9 (I remember cutting the "16" out of my rubber address stamp, discarding the "1", reversing the "6", and glueing it back in...). Mikey Glickson just moved a couple of buildings down on the same street, and I note we don't have it recorded here in any of our voluminous records. Probably thought it was too easy to remember, as we didn't write it down when we first heard it.

Okay, cat stories. Scamp is the name of our all-black shorthair. Two days ago she was scheduled to be spayed and declawed, which got postponed because, with a guarded bank balance, the fee appeared alarming. Naturally she showed her appreciation for this respite by clawing me across the wrist (I guess it was only fair; she was trying a balancing act on her stomach across the top of this wooden slat chair, reaching between the slats to play with her tail, and I reached over and tugged on her tail. She lost her balance, came tumbling down off the back of the chair, and then trundled over and slashed my wrist).

Scamp, like most all cats, has a burning curious nature on how things work. For one thing, she didn't understand the toilet. She stands up and sticks her head over the seat to watch things drain away, though she's more cautious now than she used to be. I got up one morning in my usual dazed state and didn't immediately notice this as I relieved myself.

Something in your comment to David leads me to suspect that you ~~read~~ savor books as ~~slowly~~ thoroughly as I do. This harks back to how a person learned to read. With me, it's one word at a time. I mow them down at about 250 wpm.

I'm sure Jackie will respond to your question to her, just like I'm going to, and thus you'll read this twice. When Brian came out to visit me, one of the movies he wanted to see was *TARZAN THE APE MAN*. We caught this on a double-bill with *CLASH OF THE TITANS*. As a consequence we refer to having gone to see *JANE OF THE APES* and *CLASH OF THE TURKEYS*. *TARZAN* turned out to be, for me, low-key and basically interesting. *TITANS* was so godawful bad I have erased most of it from my memory. The opinions of Brian, Jackie, and Sandy varied somewhat from this viewpoint, but no one thought *TITANS* to be an overly successful movie. Like you, Jackie and I wiped it off our preliminary list of movies-to-see after the initial reviews came out.

DRAGONSLAYER, on the other hand, was like you say: "not great, but enjoyable." The dragon, in the cave, should win a Hugo. In the air it weren't bad, either. Overall the movie was quite enjoyable, actually. They could have matured-it-up a little when dealing with the sorcerer's apprentice, which I would pinpoint mainly as a flaw in the casting, but I found the movie well worth seeing.

ROY TACKETT

"Edited" and published by Horrible Old RoyTac. How about "written and published"? How about just "from" Roy Tackett? Have you noticed that most of the fans who prominently declare themselves the "editor" of their fanzines (you and I are the exceptions, of course...) couldn't or don't edit their way out of a ream of paper? Most fanzine editors are afraid to edit. Probably for good reason.

"Mundanes have trouble distinguishing one nut from another." I like that. In many cases I even sympathize with that... Charitably speaking, the only difference between a nut and a mundane is the saving grace of how firmly the tongue is set in the cheek.

I suspect there is many a fan, and many a mundane, who is tempted to go into the predicting business. It seems like too easy a way to make a living, which it is because misjudgements are too easily forgotten. Predictions are judged upon their amusement value at the moment, and not upon their track record (scores, accurate scores, are heavily marketed; misses are ignored). It has occurred to me that I should check into the details on this method of making a living.

Don't tell me about radar traps in Texas. We are carnally familiar with them. Out of state license plates, randomly chosen, will be found guilty of speeding strictly for purposes of fattening local wallets. Beware of Shamrock, Texas. Beware of it not only for phoney speed traps, but for gas pumps that will fill your tank with half again as much gasoline as it is capable of holding. There are some states, like Maryland, which have taken care of problems such as this. Texas is not one of them.

"Travel in a pack" won't do it, Roy. We were in a pack, with Texas license plates passing us like we were standing still. I think that possibly the secret is to do about 10 mph less than the speed limit, just to show that you're overly cognizant of what the potentialities are. Even so, on return trips we didn't feel overly safe. Merely overly cautious.

Have you noted where Barry Goldwater (Sr., very Sr.) has taken on the Moral Majority and others of its ilk? Much as I've disagreed with many of his positions, I've always liked Goldwater, and here he is doing what I would like to do if I were in any position of authority to give hell to these asshole organizations. And in the same manner that I would go about it. Give 'em hell, Barry!

You know, I agree with you that Reagan & Co. is leaning to Big Business and away from individual freedom. That's bad. I also see Reagan leaning away from Big Government and big Tax Bite, which is good. Reagan is going to cause a lot of hurt in a lot of ways, but the bottom line (imho) is that nobody other than Reagan is going to do the big-ass job of beginning to get Big Government off our backs, and that's good even if we have no choice but to put up with a lot of spinoff consequences. It's a mixed package that he is giving us, and I would wish for a better on-the-balance quality, but Reagan is doing what he said he would do, it is something that needs doing, and after he's done the dirty job that needs doing we will, on the balance, be a hell of a lot better off. And then we'll all be ready for a Democrat to come in and restore some of the individual freedom that got lost along the wayside. It's not a perfect world, no one is going to do a perfect job, and if I now had to pick a person to do the dirty work for these times and these circumstances, it would be Reagan. But, after that, it's time to re-evaluate. There has never been, historically, a good balance. You can only kick the pendulum in the other direction. Thankfully we did that, but the next time around we have to take another close look at which way the pendulum needs kicking. If Reagan does what he has to do, next time we'll have to go Democrat. If not, we'd better stay with hard-ass Republican.

MIKE SHOEMAKER

I could never understand the thinking that would lead to taking a middle-age woman -- Mary Martin then, Sandy Duncan now -- dressing her up as a near-pubescent boy, and casting her as Peter Pan. Other than that, I didn't like PETER PAN anyway...

Hell, I was with you all the way until you made a left turn at the corner and wound up on Mars. "All this seems to me to point to some kind of innate conception of 'goodness,' which I think is the strongest indication of the possible existence of a deity." I've heard people say that the existence of the universe, or of life, or of fried okra, points to the same thing. The hell it does. All it points to is that some people like to grab an answer out of the hat when faced with something they don't have any explanation for. People like to have a theory to explain the unknown, which is fine. What isn't fine is that: 1. Too many people can't tell theory from fact, and 2. There should be some plausible connection between the evidence and the theory. Your question is: "What is the source of the impulse of charity?" Why, is there something wrong with wanting to help others less fortunate than you are? Can't benevolence arise from a sense of community? Is it really puzzling that people would wish to contribute to the overall good of the society they live in? The answer to your question: A sense of humanity and community. Don't go make a left turn on me and call this an "indication of the possible existence of a deity." There are much more plausible possibilities, and I just gave you a theory of my own which to me seems much more plausible.

"What prevents you from going on a murder rampage?" Possibly the fact that I don't want to. If I did, I probably wouldn't unless I could figure out what appeared to be a foolproof way of avoiding the usual consequences of such an action. Of course I feel it to be wrong to go on a murder rampage. Why? Stepping on someone else's right to live. If I didn't think a specific group of people deserved to live (for some reason), obviously I wouldn't consider it wrong to climb up on a rooftop and start potting at them with an M-14... But I'm not yet insane, so as of today I won't do that. Maybe tomorrow.

The word "ethics" is frequently misused. The language is to blame. Most dictionaries show "ethics" and "morals" as synonyms, though I don't think most people would agree with that.

Nope, my Kuttner reference was made independently of yours. Speaking of that, I wish he were still alive and writing. He was one of the best.

I'm with you. I want milk shakes, not soft, whipped ice cream in a cup. It ain't the same thing.

ERIC LINDSAY

Back when I was writing abstracts I encountered an article which pointed out that there are indeed "victim types." The arkle gave tips on converting that image to one less troublesome.

Okay, you met Joe. What were your impressions of him?

You want to save the universe, Eric? Hell, what for? Oh, okay. Weekends.

I didn't see any "go away" doormat when we visited Buck & Juanita, but that might have been because a dog was lying on it.

Inanimate objects are infuriating sometimes, aren't they.

That's interesting about not having filed a tax return since 1976. Until I went to work for General Electric at the age of 21, all my jobs were paid under the table. I worked as bartender (it was legal to do that in New York at the age of 18), assistant caretaker for summer homes, general laborer, I cut pulp in the woods, and with a partner built and installed formica products and kitchen cabinets. Of course, that was a way of life in the northwoods. Once you go to work for a company, they send taxes to local, state, and federal government and give you what's left over. At that point, you automatically receive new tax forms in the mail each year, and for some reason they expect you to fill them out and send them in. Of course, if you do so, sometimes you get money back because they've deducted too much from your paycheck. Sometimes you still owe money.

You have three ways to fill in tax forms. You can claim standard deductions and get the task over with in just a few minutes, or you can itemize your deductions and see if you can beat the standard. Surprisingly few people check to see which way saves them the most money, because itemizing deductions can be a pain in the ass the first time you read through all the rules to learn how to do it. Which leads to the third way: have a professional, or moonlighting amateur, fill out your tax forms and show you how to cheat with low odds of getting caught. There's a fourth way, which is to have the Internal Revenue Service advise and assist you, but the federal government doesn't stand behind any of the advice or assistance it gives and consequently you pay the penalty for any mistakes that are made.

I take it that in Australia it's up to the individual to pay taxes once a year, and Business doesn't get involved in payroll deduction for taxes. Is that right? But if they catch you in a census, then they expect to see tax returns filed? One of these days you'll have to write an arkle entitled I WAS A FUGITIVE FROM THE CENSUS.

DEAN GRENNELL

I added water to your instant mc's and the size of the mailing increased to 600 pages. Christ you're wordy, Eldrin. I baked them in the oven for a while and the mailing shrunk down to its former 109 pages. Close call.

Normal height for male Caucs is 5'8" or 5'9"? I don't think that's right, but it would be nice if it were... At 5'7" I tend to observe that average height is more than just an inch or two taller than I am. I'd guess average at 5'10". I'm positive there's published statistics on this, but I have no reference on it at hand.

Well, now I have a reference at hand. I just got off my ass and called the reference desk at the Cincinnati library. They had no breakdown by race, but they did have statistics from The National Center for Health Statistics covering average height for U.S. males and U.S. females during the years 1971 through 1974, categorized by age groupings. Here they are:

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
18 - 74	5' 9"	5' 3.6"
18 - 24	5' 9.7"	5' 4.3"
25 - 34	5' 9.6"	5' 4.1"
35 - 44	5' 9.1"	5' 4.1"
45 - 54	5' 8.9"	5' 3.6"
55 - 64	5' 8.3"	5' 2.8"
65 - 74	5' 7.3"	5' 2.3"

Obviously I'm too young for my height (shut up, Suzi).

ARTHUR HLAVATY

Your APA 69 overrun was interesting for a perspective that I haven't encountered very frequently. I can recall someone once pointing out their viewpoint that women could and frequently were friendly with homosexual men because no sexual 'threat' was presented to them. Apparently these men were 'just one of the girls' to them. My own observations tended to concur with that.

It would seem to follow, then, that women could have a better friendship basis with a man who was less likely to somehow become a sexual partner. This was one of your points in this zine. Of course, I would think it more likely that women who felt this way were looking at it from this standpoint: that men who wanted to start off with a sexual encounter were less likely to become friends than men who wanted to start dealing with them conversationally as people without the blatant objective of jumping their bones. Either approach could be appealing, but for different reasons, and friendship would be more likely encountered with the latter. And the latter did not exclude a sexual relationship, which made it ultimately more appealing.

There is a reverse parallel. Husband-hunters have too heavy an objective for some men to want to deal with it. The husband-hunter can obviously be a very nice person, worthy of knowing, but the handicap has to be either overcome or shared before friendship can develop.

In general, too many people are 'looking for something.' Unless you happen to be looking for the same thing, and it clicks between you, these people aren't usually the kind with whom you're looking to strike up an acquaintance. People who approach you without causes or ulterior motives are the best kind to encounter. Unless, of course, you have a cause or ulterior motive and are either looking for someone with the same view or someone who can 'react' favorably with your objectives.

I say 'causes or ulterior motives,' but should qualify that to exclude the desire for straightforward human interaction of the type which doesn't place demands or obligations on the other person. Social interaction. Friendships can be built on that easily; otherwise, handicaps have to be overcome.

Interesting zine, Arthur.

BECKY CARRWRIGHT

Hey, you twit, I was 'having you on' about your being in the glades of gafia. Actually (I don't think I broke that word correctly), you're in the fields of fafia. But wherever you are, it's nice to see you hanging in here...

Nice words to the absence of Ed Cagle. For some strange reason, and I probably shouldn't even say this, I've felt that the four of you would have hit it off like corn flakes and milk. I even thought it somewhat likely that the opportunity could have occurred. Yes, 'he'd do to ride the river with.' Yes, indeed.

Hearts: "...even though others were occasionally forced by their hands to play his silly game." Mike, wake up and take note. Lon, you too. As soon as we all become millionaires we should meet at a central point somewhere and wage serious & unserious Hearts. And, of course, as millionaires we should have this affair catered. One bartender and a fried okra chef should be adequate.

Wait a minute. You play Hearts "6-handed, double deck with a widow"? Scratch that game. You can play with Suzi's daughter, instead. Take the fried okra chef with you. We'll keep the bartender.

Becky, let me interrupt your mailing comment for a moment to congratulate Lon on his third DeepSouthcon Hearts Tourney championship. True, it's a 'cheese championship,' as experts like David Hulan and Dave Locke and others weren't there to provide a high level of competition, but we should recognize that it is hard to go through a field comprised of nothing but fish and emerge the winner. Congratulations are in order. Let us take a moment to applaud this victory. Clap, clap. Nice going, Lon!

Yes, Becky, we do need a description for us folk who have tremendous ideas for works of art but can't draw worth sour owlshit. Would 'untalented' or 'nonartists' serve, or do we need something more flattering?

Many genzines offer subscription rates, but it generally takes a long history of proven performance (e.g.: YANDRO) before you can get enough subscriptions to significantly defray costs. The norm is that fanzines don't last very long, and subscription monies are absconded with.

Yup. It kind of stops your eyeballs in their tracks when simple words are just plain fucked up in the syllabication process. We encountered oodles of this in the DA-ILY BNEEZE of Torrance, CA, and now we're running into it again with the CINCINNATI ENQUIRER. Locally we've run across soot-he and ha-d as the worst examples of the practice.

Ohio has more flexible rules on the hiring of a temporary. I think they're reasonably good ones. The law says a company that wants to hire a temporary has to pay an agency for 90 days before the worker can be switched to the company payroll. No pay-off fee, as in some states, but there's a difference in interpretation of the law. As a consequence of this difference in interpretation, some temporary agencies say you can switch the worker to the company payroll after a total of 90 days, and others say you have to pay the agency for 90 days from the time you contact the agency and state your intention to hire the worker. Needless to say, only ignorance concerning this difference in interpretation allows agencies with the latter policy to survive. Those in the know do not deal with agencies which interpret this to the agency's advantage.

See the August 3rd issue of ISAAC ASIMOV'S SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE, for the BASIC GENESIS article by Barry Longyear and Jerry Pournelle. For anyone in the market to buy a personal computer and word processor, this article would seem basic and invaluable. Highly recommended.

I note more than a few country music fans in this here gathering. I was country when country wasn't cool, too. Not that I really give a shit, but country music is on a comeback trail again. Right on, Hoyt! Right on, Dolly! Right on, Statler Brothers! Right on ... ! (The reason I say I don't give a shit: I've never been unwilling to enjoy something alone.)

Can one really be successful at robbing Brinks trucks? We'll have to discuss this further. Send me the details.

"It's not that women are more peaceable by nature, just more practical." You may be more practical than most men, but I don't think most women are. At best, all things being equal (which they're presently not), on the average women could be as practical as men. I think you're generalizing from your own position.

The term "usually" excludes a lot of ground. We've got a number of broken and maimed inanimate objects around this apartment as the consequence of Jackie's anger. Of course, we've also got a few as the consequence of my clumsiness. Jackie's clumsiness results in her getting bruises, and my anger causes nothing but extremely measured wordage.

I think about the last thing I'd wish is that you gafiate or that Jutz follow your lead if you did so. From what I said it was obvious (to me, if no one else...) that I was jiving you into getting angry and publishing 28 pages of ROUND TUIT to prove me wrong about your gafiation... Four photo-reduced pages isn't conclusive proof that you're either here or there, but...

Hi.

How's my job? What job?

Oh, that one. I forgot.

Yes, Monty Python engaged in a lot of overkill. Agreed. Sometimes they were capable of turning overkill into humor, but most often their excesses were merely boring. One of the consequences of their having to crank out that much material: more chaff to be separated from the wheat.

What? Kent is drinking diet soda? He'll never be the same again. It's all a diet soda drinker can do to look a glass of real soda in the face. It tastes terrible. Thick. Sweet. Syrupy. Terrible. The next step of degradation is to become a gourmet of diet sodas. Kent will discover that Faygo is the best, with No Cal right behind it. He will disdain Shasta, retch at store brands, and wax poetic over the aesthetic qualities of some of the better diet root beers. It will all become unbearable.

I haven't leafed through all of it, but I've skimmed 101 USES FOR A DEAD CAT at several places (it always seems to be turning up somewhere). It is amusing black humor. Something that Dave Vereschagin claims he has aspired to, but apparently only in retrospect (he failed, but made capital out of the excessively overboard reaction his work received).

Ta, Becky. See you next time with 28 pages, right?

Time for an overview. Overview? What's that?

For 109 pages, this weren't a bad mailing. In fact, it were a good mailing. Everyone (except Dave Wixon, Laggard) showed and contributed readable material. Despite a relatively small pagecount, this may have been one of our better mailings. Certainly it was as enjoyable as many and better than some.

So much for the overview.

For the underview: I liked it.

What follows is some stencils that I received from Sue Cagle. Four pages, incomplete, of an apazine that Ed started for the April mailing of FLAP. I don't know whether it just didn't work out for him to complete them, or whether he was dissatisfied with what he had done, but Sue found them filed away in the kipple.

I rather enjoyed them, despite the fact that it's an incomplete story. After holding onto them for a while, I decided to run them. As far as it goes, it's good, vintage Cagle.

FOR F.L.A.P. # 9

APRIL 1931

H. Cagle Star Rt So Box 30 Locust Grove, OK 74352

Reading about Michael G's travels in Florida during the summer of 1930 brought to mind fond memories of some of my own long-ago wanderings in that part of the world. I shall endeavor to relate a few of my experiences, for whatever purpose they serve, and, for once, make a supreme effort not to concentrate on the more bizarre episodes of that interlude.

IT WAS LATE IN SEPTEMBER . . . my favorite season is Florida. A slow time, just past the endless broiling days of high summer, but before the seasonal influx of tourists. A perfect time to enter into a simpler life, if only for a few weeks of blissful funky living.

THE MOTIVE WAS STRONG . . . for both my first cousin (hereafter to be known as "Cuz") and myself. Cuz was just past a rather unsettling divorce, in Hawaii, and his subsequent retirement after 20 years in the Navy. He was getting itchy from the effects of the first seemingly aimless months of his retirement, and needed excitement and a change of scene in the worst way. I was itchy at that time, myself, but from entirely different causes. My itches, at least some of them, were physical, but my own inner faunch to Go Far Away was equally as strong as Cuz's. My head & bod both needed time to bake in the sun.

THE CONDITIONS WERE PERFECT . . . courtesy of Cuz's many relatives in that part of the country, many of them owners of beach properties on the Gulf and quite willing - delighted, even, or so it seemed - to have us live in their beachfront homes while we cleansed ourselves of years of the waxy yellow buildup of Responsibility and Obligations. We would waste no shekles on lodgings and, we knew from past experiences, if we could subsist on grouper, flounder, scallops, blue crab and whatever else we could get to trade with the nearby commercial fishermen and store owners for non-piscatorial ingestibles, we would have more than enough extra cash for the Nicer Things In Life. Not that we needed to economize at that time; we were both embarrassingly flush. But that only made it better. Money is so much nicer when you have it in big old nasty lumps and have nothing particular in mind to do with it. Money, when there is scarcely enough of it to cover the pressing needs, tends to be weak and watery and almost to dissolve of its own accord, whereas when it is thick on the ground and heavy in the stalk it seems almost to be self-propogating, a veritable fount of fical fertility. We were set.

FIRST THINGS FIRST . . . required that we pay our respects to Cuz's relatives before trudging off to the beach. This was by no stretch of the imagination an obligation that anyone but a Level 7 Misanthrope would look upon as onerous. No sir. In the first place, Cuz's relatives are sufficiently full of life to make enjoying their company a constant joy, and, at least in my case, they are old native Suth'run folks whose hospitality is one of the wonders of the world. Visiting them is like suddenly being declared King For A Month and Most Important Person of the Year. I love those people, and I am not blind to their little flaws and lapses. Just being there with them makes everything seem right and proper, and life a worthwhile thing to possess.

CHOCK FULL . . . of everything from wild turkey to scallops, we headed south of Wakulla toward the coast near Panacea, Florida. We were later to venture farther south . . . and take in the more civilized parts of the state, and all its attendant distractions, but at that time we were content to establish ourselves in a more primitive setting. We opened up the beach house, a 7-bedroom, 3 bath affair made of cypress and set on tall pilings, no more than 10 feet from the high tide line, complete with 50 by 40 main room, kitchen and enormous screened porch, and set about laying a stock of essential supplies. We went out and bought a lot of scotch and all the other little goodies that are necessary to a carefree existence. We also bought a lot of mullet for bait, and in the process got well acquainted with the local contingent of commercial fisherman who spent the long hot afternoons at a combination bait house-ice house-marine dealer-fish market-shipping terminal-boat basin-grocery store-charter service-bar & grill and goodtime social club. Within a few hours we knew most of the people who lived and worked on the half-mile peninsula, and their children and grandchildren, and had shared a drink or two with most of them. We learned where exactly to go for scallops - not more than a hundred yards in front of the beach house where we were staying - which reefs were best for grouper and (in season) red snapper, what time of the evening to close the north windows so the mosquito truck wouldn't fog us out, who not to drink with, who not to put out to sea with as a non-paying guest/deck hand, who was indulging in hanky panky and who wanted to indulge in hanky panky but was afraid to, which pass ..pardon, I mean Pass ... not to try to negotiate in a small boat on the incoming tide, what charter Captains had the best luck, and the worst, and what happened to a mullet net when a 400 pound jewfish (Sea Bass) got caught in it. We came away with seventeen different sets of directions to go by boat to a liquor store and restraunt situated on an island, and still managed to find it by accident. It was a long and enjoyable first day at the beach, topped off in remarkable fashion by a rather exhausting dinner and party at one of our new friends' houses.

DESPITE MILD AGONY . . . I managed to get^{up} in time the next morning to catch the tide coming in. This was supposed to be a hot time to catch fish in a narrow channel that passed within 50 feet of the house. It was my intent to catch a grouper or two for breakfast. It must have taken me all of three minutes to catch more fish than I could carry. On an impulse I hooked the last half of a mullet I had been using for bait on my hook and pitched it far out into the channel, then settled down to watch the blue crabs drifting into the inner lagoon and try to figure out a comshaw way to catch them without complicated efforts. While lost in thought something that must have been at least as big as a locomotive latched onto my bait and literally ripped 300 yards of 50 pound test line off the reel. All I could do was stand there and watch it happen, and hold fast when the line ran out and whatever it was broke the line from where it was tied on the reel spool. I remember deciding at that moment that I would not swim in the channel.

AN 8 POUND GROUPEE ON THE FOREHEAD . . . brought Cuz back into the real world enough that he managed to be up and dressed by the time I had the fish cleaned and cooked. (Note for David Hulan: Of the many ways to cook fresh sal water fish, I think the best is to undercook them a bunch. Don't actually cook the fish, just heat the pan and threaten him with it.) Cuz did the fish justice, but, as I knew he would from having been on Total Mindcleaning junkets with him before, he washed it down with a beaker or two of Scotch and soda. Ordinarily a conservative drinker, Cuz makes a determined effort to clear away most of his cobwebs right off the bat by overindulging to an extreme at the onset of a trip. Blowing off steam, I think. Usually this entails a lot of motion to chaperone Cuz through his Day One Getdown, moving from bar to bar or wherever the most interesting people are to be found. (Cuz, unlike me, is constantly social.)

WITH BOILERS FULLY STOKED . . . Cuz meandered along the peninsula, with me in tow, and in general ingratiated himself with most of the residents. It was hard to miss anyone who was in residence at the time, since our house was at the tip of the spit and aside from the blacktop road on the north side there was only room on the south side for 100 foot lots until you were on the beach on the south side. Walking from our house to the store on the land-end put you within a few feet of everybody. It was during this stroll that we met Frank and Melinda June R., a couple in their 40s from Tallahassee who must have shared a mutual dislike of clothing. Frank, a rail-thin type, didn't look all that bad in a swim suit that looked like a stripper's G, but tulip-lipped Melinda June, whose accent was sweet to a point where it sounded like an compliment when she told Frank to kiss her ass, and who was truly a nice lady, just had too much bod to be contained by the scraps of material she wore as clothing. When she bent over I was reminded of the lady aerial artists in a European circus. Her skimpy bottoms just gave up, rolled up and disappeared between gluteal muscles the size of medicine balls. In front the gauzy material kept being nudged down beneath an ample stomach, leaving a tiny triangle of blue framed by a frizzy fringe of dark red pubic hair. Cuz was pleasantly snookered and not terribly affected by the display, but I developed severe eyestrain trying to look everywhere but at Melinda June's over-exposed bod. The problem continued to plague me the entire time we were there, since not once did she alter her basic outfit. Only the colors would change.

MR & MRS GREEN THUMB lived two houses from Frank and MJ. Another Frank and a thinner, much better clad wife named Georgina (pronounced 'Your - ghee-na' in the Greek manner, which was appropriate since she was Greek). The Green Thumbs were a pain in the neck when rhapsodizing about the jungle they had created in the yard, but well worth listening to for the trips to Georgina's family's restaurant in Appalachicola. On our three trips there I learned not to overindulge in anything in a Greek restaurant. Cuz danced a lot. I was content to listen to Frank and his brothers-in-law reminisce about making an illegal dollar with small craft. Lots of illegal dollars.

FARTHER UP THE WAY . . . lived the Hornies. They were an older couple, in their sixties, living with her three sisters and various assorted nieces and nephews of doubtful moral fiber. Roy and Ivalee, retired from a lucrative farming operation in Georgia, spent each spring and fall on the peninsula, and brought everyone from home who could get loose. And they all got looser when they got to the beach. Roy, an oak stump type with a perpetually blistered bald head, couldn't leave the women alone. He even took a shot at innocent Melanie June one night. I guess he couldn't stand watching those briefs roll and crawl any longer, and proceeded to extract them from their fleshy retreat. Innocent MJ turned killer for one brief moment, moving with speed that belied her size to seize and bring crashing down over Horny Roy's head a large plastic bowl full of potato salad. Even withdrawing Ivalee had her forthcoming moments, generally when she'd been too long in the rum and "chinaberry tea" (haven't the faintest what it was). Ivy was sly, though, and restricted herself to long stares of unnerving lustful intensity, or quiet vigils in a darkened bathroom with her pants down, waiting to be 'surprised.' Obviously she was not a well woman. Who could be, living with Roy? But Ivy and Roy were as nothing compared to one of Ivy's sisters. Cassie was a 50ish widow, mannish of appearance until you looked closely, childlike of manner, aloof at times and at other times solicitous to an extent that would drive you up the wall. Get a minor injury and Cassie was all over you in a minute. And her attentions often ranged far afield from the injured area. She would feel you all over checking for further wounds. I was tempted to tell her Cuz had hemorrhoids.... I observed Cassie one night with one of the local men, on a flounder spearing expedition with several other boats, doing some spearing of her own design.

THEN CAME THE RECLUSES, . . . three families living next door to each other who rarely mixed with anyone else.

BEYOND THE RECLUSSES . . . lived The Preacher, whom also did a little commercial fishing and made curios out of horseshow crab shells and devil masks out of tree bark and palmetto leaves. Preach was the resident scuba expert, and on two occasions did his level best to scare the living crap out of me diving on a wrecked freighter. I was perfectly content to watch the marine life around the wreck, and didn't really give a damn about going inside the ship. Cuz wouldn't go inside, and I wished I hadn't after I lost track of how to get out. Fascinating hobby, though, skin diving. Or snorkeling. Or free diving. The Preacher also got us on a 50 foot fisherman as guest/deck hands, and despite a certain amount of hard labor I enjoy that as much as anything. I managed to get a severely burned hand when something bigger than me took a handline I was tinkering with, but those three days on a working boat were just foreign enough and satisfying enough to cause me to give serious thought to making it permanent.

NEXT CAME AL, . . . dying of cancer and raging at the world from the confines of his screened porch. Do not go softly.....rage, rage against the dying of the light and all that.... Evidently Al, like most of us, did not view death as "that good night." I had mixed emotions about Al's anger at his rapidly approaching death. Not long before that time I had gone through several months when everyone but me expected me to die, and I probably should have understood something of what Al was feeling, but in all honesty I never gave death much thought. There were times (quite brief, I assure you) when I thought maybe it would be better if I was dead, but given the option I doubt if I would have pulled the plug.

ORDINARY FOLKS . . . made up the rest of the residents of the narrow strip of land. That is, their quirks were less flashy than those already noted.

MOVING ON, . . . we eased on downstate at a pace that was ridiculously slow. We got so bad about stopping to look at everything along the way that Cuz was stopping to shoot the breeze with truck farmers working in their fields. Not that it wasn't interesting.

We stopped in Tampa to see an old Navy buddy of Cuz's, a hyperactive ex-Chief Bosun I still know only as Fat Jack. Jack escorted us around at least half the clubs and bars in Tampa in one evening, and we wound up eating smoked mullet somewhere in a swamp. Three days and nights had passed when I woke up in the camper on Bradenton beach, not 10 feet from a No Camping sign. I distinctly recall that breakfast that morning consisted of an eggplant and pepper sandwich, washed down with a cold beer.

For the next week we slowly made our way down into the Keys, watching tourists and spending half our time in the water. Unseasonably hot weather drove us back northward, where we wound up on the beach at Daytona. I ignored the warnings about Portugese Man-of-War and Ray infestations and went body surfing at night anyway. Later, when Cuz speared a large ray, and I got a look at his barb, I had second thoughts.

Cuz fell in love in Daytona, if momentarily. Sally was a tourist, airing out her personal problems in the warm sun before heading back to Denver and two kids. Our accomodations being somewhat cramped with the addition of Sally, I spent my nights a few hundred yards up the beach, alternating between sleeping and surf-casting.

Following a two-day gorge and visit with more of Cuz's relatives in Orlando, we made our way back to the beach house.

On our first morning back at the beach ho use I again lost all my line to something very large and very strong in the tidal channel. Shark, I thought, and went after bigger tackle; 100 pound test leadcore line and a 10 foot steel leader on a pole the size of a pool cue. Twenty minutes later I landed a half-pound grunt,.. Never did find out what was wrecking my tackle.

Later on our first day back an imprromptu party started at Frank and Melanie June's house, and by evening half the people on the peninsula were there. Spirits were high, almost unbearably so.