

WHIMSEY 2



Back by popular demand and personal necessity—now that I owe even more people letters than I did when I first began this craziness—is *Whimsey* 2, an Obsessive Press publication (#71), completed on 5 December 1983, edited by Jeanne Gomoll of 409 S. Brooks St., Madison, WI 53715 USA, and, if you are very lucky, delivered to you by All Duck Tri-Motor Air Mailard Service. All uncredited material is by Jeanne Gomoll and all material is copyrighted © 1983 by Jeanne Gomoll. Rights revert to authors and artists on publication. Copies of *Whimsey* can be obtained with letters of comment and bad English translations, especially those found in instruction books and on packages. (See example near the end of Chapter 1.) The letters of comment, however, should be typed or written on stationery and refer to *Whimsey*. So you still don't know what this is? This is a Happy Holidays card: Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy New Year and Joyous Solstice to all of you. And once again, you owe me a letter! Ha!

Chapter 1: On Risking Exposure

The hardest part of doing this fanzine has been an ongoing debate I've had with myself about exposure. How much and what parts of my life do I want to make public here? How much and which letters do I want to print? How much and which parts of my person should I display on *Whimsey*'s cover to make a sufficiently sarcastic reply to David Langford?

Editing letters became a larger project than I imagined for this (merely the second) issue of *Whimsey*. As John Berry predicted, I have been inundated with LoC's, which has been delightful. But, having never worked much on letter editing for *Janus* or *Aurora*, it's been a crash-learning experience in the art. Another element that made letter editing a sometimes intimidating experience was a coincidence. By chance I had been writing my first-time-in-my-whole-life Letter of Comment (about LoC's) to a comic book during the week I edited *Whimsey*'s LoCs. And thus I set certain standards for myself.

I do not read many comic books. In fact, until this past year I've only bought one or two (Superman) comics in my life and though I've read a few more than that and have been much impressed by Bernie Wrightson's art, I'm definitely not an aficionado of comic books. So, I'll probably use a few improper terms in the next paragraphs and I apologize ahead of time for my *faux pas*. Nevertheless, I got interested when, a few years ago a good friend of mine and artist, Richard Bruning, involved himself with another Madison artist (Steve Rude) and writer (Mike Baron) and together the three of them created the very excellent, beautifully-drawn superhero comic, *Nexus*. I picked up the first issue, liked it, and now have a complete run of the (so far) six issues. It's amazingly good, without the excessively macho, misogynist stuff that I've peripherally noticed or been told about existing in a lot of other current superhero comics. I recommend it. They've been trying to encourage more women to get involved in the lettercolumn and I had been putting it off, but finally I did write to them.

I wrote to them about why I was uneasy about locating *Nexus*. It's the lettercolumns of comic books that bother me, I said. "I find them embarrassing."

"I'm familiar with different kinds of lettercols, and that very unfamiliarity with comic books may be the source of my embarrassment (and make all my comments irrelevant to you)... [From my experience with SF fanzines]...I guess I've gotten accustomed to certain customs. Fanzine lettercols are different from mainstream professional magazines in that letter-writers actually seem to be talking to one another and are allowed more space by the editors than in professional zines in which commercial considerations require heavier editing. But still, certain rules seem to be generally accepted with regard to editing letters. For instance, one is that we don't print subscription letters. They are boring. ('I like your zine. Here is a check for \$6 for a year's sub. Thanks!') Another is that we don't print much editorial praise unless it is part of a substantive comment. ('Loved the zine! Gosh you people are wonderful! I think you're publishing the best fanzine I've ever read! Sincerely...') Of course, such letters are wonderful to receive. We pass them around basking in the praise, smiling at one another, pleased that our efforts are recognized and appreciated, but we don't print them.

"That would appear too close to boasting. Everyone who would be concerned by a dollup of editorial praise (as opposed to praise for an out-of-towner's contribution) has pre-

sumably read the letter. And re-read it. Unless the letter has some intrinsic interest, an imaginative comment or idea or reaction, I find it a little rude to print such a letter. It seems to say: 'Look at how great we are that everyone praises us so!' Praise seeps in anyway, in the adjectives and asides hidden among the comments that do get printed.

"I know that I'm not familiar with the different customs of comic book lettercols. And, admittedly, comic books must share the problems of fanzines or pulp zines which publish all fiction, namely that the letters one gets don't have a whole lot of substantive content. 'What Happens Next' speculation and inquiries, nit-picking of details and trivia, and general praise comprise the bulk of mail for such zines. The comic book lettercols I've seen seem to go overboard in all these categories and, besides, they've got bigger problems because the 'substantive comments' that might possibly be triggered by comic book story lines, even *Nexus*, probably tend toward the metaphysical. There are not a whole lot of 'real life' connections to be made, it seems to me. Also, comic books encourage a peculiar 'voice' from all of its contributors. Richard, you've never spoken around me the way you write in *Nexus*! Neither, I suspect, do LoC-writers ever talk in 'real life' the way they do in their letters. It's as if you all talk in super-hero bubbles, with at least one word per sentence in **Bold Face**, and exclamation marks and superlative adjectives scattered liberally throughout. And that's probably the point: Letters in comic books are self-consciously mimicking the super-hero speaking mode.

"But I don't like it in letters. I'd rather keep that style in the comic. As I said, I find it embarrassing, and it's boring too when there's so little real discussion between the adjectives of super praise."

Well, I continued on in that letter and told Richard how much I liked *Nexus* anyway but found myself carefully restraining my praise, trying not to match the superlative exuberance of the typical comic letters...just in case they chose to actually print my letter.

Whether or not my reaction to comic book LoColumns is shared by other women or in any way explains the predominantly male comic book lettercols, I wouldn't dare to guess. I haven't read enough comic books or talked to other women about it to be able to theorize. But writing that letter certainly did force me to lop off huge chunks of highly complimentary parts from your letters... And it set me to thinking hard thoughts about how much of the letters and which parts I wanted to weave into the substance of my fanzine. In the end I was ruthless—even if the page count of this issue seems to belie that assessment—and the next time I may have to be more ruthless.

A different kind of culling process occurred when I planned my own contributions to *Whimsey*. Those decisions sprung partially from reading some recent fanzines. So, if you'll excuse me a few paragraphs, I'm going to digress...

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I knew exactly how I'd loc Clifford Wind's second issue of *Rhetorical Device* when he named the subject of discussion: "Moods and Manners". "Ah, Ha!" I said, grinning in anticipation, "I'll quote Miss Manners at him, that funny letter she's got on not spoiling your social relationships with honesty about your moods." Two pages later, Clifford quoted the witty Miss Manners from that very letter, saying "What the world needs is more false cheer. And less honest crabbiness." Having been foiled there, I was tempted to quote another

piece of Miss Manners' advice to Linda Blanchard after receiving her latest *Egoboodle*. And I will. And then, I'll come back to the subject at hand, *Whimsy*, and What It's All About.

Rhetorical Device, a fanzine from Clifford Wind is a fascinating zine of choreographed discussion. The first issue's topic was religion and this second issue's focus is "the popularity of compulsive self-revelment, 'letting it all hang out'". Cliff doubts the usefulness of displaying one's negative emotions with the expectations of thereby resolving the situation responsible for the emotions, and suggests too (with Miss Manners' assistance) that the socially responsible behavior for an unhappy person is false cheer; that it is impolite and, in the end, not very therapeutic to indulge in spreading the news of one's mood among friends. A la Kurt Vonnegut's character, Howard Campbell in *Mother Night*, she counsels that pretense becomes reality. (The rest of *Rhetorical Device* is taken over by wonderful letters of comment expertly edited and arranged, reacting to Cliff's comments on religion from the previous issue.)

Compulsive self-revelment, in Cliff's and Miss Manners' examples would implicate me, for instance, if I answered every "how are you?" with a description of my torn foot ligaments, stress at work, and feelings about the latest argument with my mother. I agree with Cliff about the boorishness of those who act as though their own problems were the only and the most interesting ones around. That pitfall is a dangerous though, for personal fanzines like this one. I frequently worried in the course of putting this issue together that I would forget the prime importance of telling an interesting story and fall instead into the easier habit of transcribing a list, a dull diary of events, expecting my readers to be as interested in the minutiae of my life as they are in theirs.

Linda Blanchard most definitely does not forget the importance of telling an interesting story in her fanzine *Egoboodle* soon to be changed to *The Moving Paper Fantasy*, but we most certainly do learn a lot about her life. The most recent *Egoboodle* (#6) contains a lot of delightful, descriptive writing by Linda who seems to want us to see the scenery around her as she sees it in her memory. The centerpiece of the issue is a three-star con report of Constellation, "Seeing*Stars" in which Linda falls in love and is engaged to be married. There is also a pleasant anthology of anecdotes, impressions, ideas and reviews by Linda introducing the issue, followed by articles by John G. Cramer and Steven Bryan Bieler which complement Linda's introduction, being short, well-written, anecdotal pieces themselves. Tom Weber, Jr. contributes a short, funny description of the fannish events of the post-worldcon party at the World Pong Headquarters, which has already been reported now in two fanzines. Also included is the second installment of Linda's "The Summer of '73", an autobiographical chronicle of events that led up to her joining the navy. She describes "The Summer of '73" as an example of fannish "revelatory writing", and has been surprised at some of the reactions she's gotten, especially from non-fannish readers who were a little shocked by her description of her former lifestyle. She protests that "The Summer of '73" does indeed give new information about me to old friends and new, but it's old new information. In this series I'm talking about the girl I was ten years ago, who bears some resemblance to the woman I am now. This is my petition: please don't confuse who I was with who I am." In her convention report, Linda tells her detailed story of her courtship with and engagement to rich brown, and I worry for her about the kind of reactions she's going to have to deal with after this issue. It is at this point that Miss Manners clears her throat and talks about another interpretation of the term, "compulsive self-revelment".

"The birds are singing, the flowers are budding, and it is time for Miss Manners to tell young lovers to stop necking in public.

"It's not that Miss Manners is immune to romance. Miss

Manners has been known to squeeze a gentleman's arm while being helped over a curb, and, in her wild youth, even to press a dainty slipper against a foot or two under the dinner table. Miss Manners also believes that the sight of people strolling hand in hand or arm in arm or arm in hand dresses up a city considerably more than the more familiar sight of people shaking umbrellas at one another. What Miss Manners objects to is the kind of activity that frightens the horses on the streets, although it is not the horse's sensibilities she is considering. It's the lovers', and their future.

"Heavy romances—we are speaking of the kind in which the participants can hardly keep their hands to themselves, not the kind in which they have nothing better to do with them—can progress in only two ways:

"They can (1) end. In this case, if you have displayed the height of the romance publicly, the public will take pleasure in seeking you out in the depths. Just when you are being very careful not to move suddenly because you have your heart tied together only with bits of old string, it will spring at you and demand to know, 'Where's Rock? I thought you were inseparable?' or 'How come I saw Hope out with three other guys last night?'

"That is not the worst that can happen, however. Romances can also (2) not end. The participants can get married and live happily ever after. Then they are in trouble. This is because one day the will stop behaving conspicuously. Then everyone will notice. The cause may not be that the romance will have gone out of the marriage, but that it will have a home to go to. With more opportunities to express affection, the couple no longer seizes the opportunity to do so on other people's sofas. The other people will then have a good snicker which, unlike the original snickers, cannot be passed off by the loving couple as jealousy. The Duchess of Windsor once said that she hated to have dinner in a restaurant alone with her husband because if they failed for one minute to chatter sparkingly at each other—taking, say, a moment to chew their food, instead—everyone in the restaurant would be saying, 'You see? That's what he gave up a throne for, and now look how bored they are.'"

I enjoyed Linda's con report and smiled often—whenever I recognized feelings and situations from some of my own romances, especially when she described the tense expectations which heighten one's emotions at the beginning of a love affair. But I worry about how she will feel about having all this in print in later months or years [scenario (1) or (2)]. In some ways, recording a romance in a fanzine is worse than "necking in public", because it is more public and not nearly so forgettable by the audience. My cowardice in this regard is based on my own experiences and it's probably unfair to suggest that everyone else might have the same experience (or even react in the same way to similar circumstances), but I've gotten nervous about too much personal exposure of this sort.

There is at least one embarrassing apa-zine of mine full of euphemisms (not nearly as entertaining as Linda's own euphemism, "communicating") and hints that I was having one hell of a great time at the 1977 Westercon in Vancouver. As I got more daring and critical of the cuteness of excessive hinting and use of euphemisms, my contributions to *A Women's Apa* got progressively more honest. I wrote a lot about relations between a current lover and myself, chronicling the happy beginning and describing in torturous detail the rather unhappy ending. Right in the middle of the denouement, the lover's new lover suddenly joined the apa, and I stopped writing about the situation. I was lucky in that no one in the apa noticed the coincidence of my stopping and her starting to talk about men with the same name. But I felt rather shaken by the close call with the potentially awful situation of having a group discussion in the apa about the triangle with the two of us there. Since then, I've preferred to be a lot more circumspect about very personal events and relationships.

Still, I think everyone has to define the necessary boundary of their privacy for themselves. Linda writes at the beginning of "Seeing*Stars": "I can't report what conventions were like, rather my convention notes were always about, well, me." And that acknowledged point of view is exactly what

makes her writing so interesting. She doesn't just list the parties and program events and sights, she tells us why these events were important and how the people she interacted with changed her. A very personal point of view can make writing vital in an entertaining and meaningful way. And so I wish her luck: both with her marriage to rich and with her writing: may she continue to feel comfortable risking exposure. We all—as readers—benefit by her daring.

Diane Martin, a friend here in Madison (and the head of the *Aurora* publishing cooperative) laughed when she read the first issue of *Whimsey* because of the low-key manner in which I announced the fact that I was moving in with Peter. It is an important event in my life. But that's about all I'm going to say on Peter's and my relationship here. I feel pretty comfortable with the level of exposure I've established in *Whimsey*.

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A NEW HOBBY

- *Before cooking, soak it in water a few minutes, wait to soften, then clean it with fresh water.
- *Cut the fungus to pieces with which soup can be boiled, fried vermicelli can be made, vegetable can be cooked, or other fixings of food will be done.
- *It is a natural fungus, grown up on wilds, no artificial color added.
- *Having Black Fungus all the time can keep you avoid from keaptsache.

I have a new hobby. Like it says in the colophone, I'm collecting bad English translations like the one to the left. This particular bad translation was on a bag of Chinese black fungus, used in the preparation, in this instance, of Hot & Sour Soup, mm-mm good.

Is that last word a misspelling of the word, headache, do you think?

I'd also like to get hold of a copy of a book of instructions that came with my brother Rick's ravioli-making attachment to his pasta machine. It's been several years since I've seen it, but I remember all sorts of references to "raviolfes" and

other outrageous turns-of-phrase. (Do you still have it around, Rick?

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THE NEW JEANNE GOMOLL

Steve Stiles was pretty confused by the two of us: Spike (also known as "the new Jeanne Gomoll") and me standing there with a group of fans by the elevator waiting to go up to Jerry Jack's party. Sometimes it seems that Steve Stiles starts out confused, but he was very confused this time.

"No, come on, tell me, which one of you is really Jeanne Gomoll?"

"He doesn't know", I said, suddenly aware that Steve wasn't kidding, and that he didn't recognize me even though we'd talked several times over the last few years.

"He doesn't know!" said Ted White, delighted at Steve's discomfort.

"Will the real Jeanne Gomoll Please Sit Down!" said Spike enthusiastically, entering into the spirit of humiliating Steve Stiles. Actually, Spike enters into every enterprise with enthusiasm, and usually with a loud, infectious laugh. I like to introduce friends to "my friend Spike", emphasizing the name, because she will always behave even more outrageously than people expect a woman with a name like Spike to act. Spike was delighted by Ted White's characterization of her as my "butch friend". At Constellation she immediately got along with everyone I introduced her to, as if she'd known them for years: no one called her a neo, though she most certainly is. She's got great stories, for instance the one about the black nightie... But you'll have to ask her about that yourself. I'll introduce you sometime.

Anyway, at that embarrassing moment for Steve Stiles by the

elevator, a short, non-filmed version of *To Tell The Truth* was staged. Steve asked a few vague but funny questions about my drawing style and *Cacher*, addressing them to both of us, and Spike and I ad-libbed with forgettable wit, I'm afraid, and eventually I let him off the hook. Pretending to be offended by his snub, I said "Well, I recognized you!" But Steve was kidded about his memory throughout the rest of the evening once we got to the party, where everyone in the room seemed to be getting as confused as Steve.

John Bartelt was the first one who called Spike "the new Jeanne Gomoll", inspired, I think, by his own rechristening as "the new Jim Young". Jim and John share a bizarre sense



of humor, are good friends, and as Jim progressively gaffed from Minstf fandom, John got more active. Now, of course, Minneapolis fandom needs a new John Bartelt, since the real John Bartelt has followed Jim into gafia and now has moved to Stanford, CA. Anyway, John calls Spike "the new Jeanne Gomoll" because she seems to be in training for my role in Madison fandom.

Spike's taken over my position as the head of the advertising de-

partment on the WisCon committee. She's gotten more active in the Madison group while I've withdrawn, and she's been going to more conventions than I recently. We both work at the DNR and work out at the YWCA Bodyworks studio, though at last try I could still beat her arm wrestling. She almost moved into my old apartment. And there are a few other coincidences as well.

But it wasn't until the ticket clerk at the Ozark desk at the St. Louis airport (on our way to Baltimore for Constellation) asked whether we were sisters, that we started to consciously rehearse our "act". Of course, the black Ozark clerk did say that all grinning white women looked the same to him, and so maybe we over-reacted... But by the time we got to Constellation we were playing with the possibilities. We switched nametags a few times and proceeded to confuse the confused Steve Stiles.

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Chapter 2: A Moving Experience

The day we moved, it was a bad day for wheels. If someone had read my horoscope, or read my palm or done a tarot reading for me, I'm sure that the consensus would have been that I should stay off wheels. It's not something that a normal person worries about, though.

The day started with only a small wheel-related problem and we dismissed that as a product of too little sleep and fuzzy thinking. In the end, of course, almost all of our problems could have been explained with that excuse, but I'll always think of it as having been a bad day for wheels.

The plan was this: Peter would pack up his apartment and I would pack up my apartment, and Saturday morning 8 of our friends would arrive with their vans and cars and load up all our belongings from the two apartments and transfer them to 409 S. Brooks—Peter's and my new house. We'd rented a U-Haul truck to lead the fleet and needed to pick it up by 9 am Saturday morning. Neither Peter nor I own a car, so Dick Russell and his van arrived early at my house and with his knock, woke me up from the only hour of sleep I'd had that night. Peter arrived having gotten no sleep the night before, and looking it, and the three of us went off to get the truck, and also to pick up the sofa I'd bought from a friend for the new house. The day began and the first problem arose almost immediately.

By the time we got to the U-Haul place the problem was obvious. It was an arithmetic problem: Two manual transmission vehicles (Dick's van and the U-Haul) and three people, only one of whom could drive stick. After another trip back to my apartment to pick up friends, who'd by this time arrived and after a little shuffling around, we got the job done, and the moving commenced only a little later than originally planned.

Both Peter and I lived one flight up. Our new house could be entered on the ground floor. So the worst part of both portions of our move was carrying the boxes and furniture down and into the truck and the van and the cars. It was a fairly hot August day, though not as hot as it had been and would be; we'd picked a good weekend to move. Nevertheless, it was a dreadful and torturous day for all concerned. My apartment held five year's worth of accumulated furniture, files, books, kitchen stuff and all the *Janus/Aurora* back issues. My apartment alone completely filled up the 13-foot U-Haul one and a half times, Dick's van, and several cars. And I packed tight. (As the daughter of a corrugated box designer, I know about packing: every box is filled so that it can be taped shut and stacked with other boxes. Everything that can be boxed is boxed. Every box is sealed. I've helped too many people move who didn't quite finish packing and we movers ended up stuffing loose ends into bags and overfilled boxes that are impossible to stack.) We drank a lot of lemonade.

As we were unloading the furniture at Brooks Street, I remembered my sister, Julie.

Julie had called the day before to let me know that she'd be arriving later in the morning to help me move. She was going to be having a long night, she said, and wanted to get some sleep. Fine, I said, get here as late as you want. We'll need help all day long for the moves and for cleaning our old apartments. Great, she said, I'll get to your old apartment at about 11 am. Fine, I said, I'll wait for you there and show you how to get to my new house.

It was 11:30. I was not at my old apartment. Nobody was at my old apartment.

What happened was this: Julie arrived at my old apartment looking scruffy from too little sleep and a long drive from Milwaukee to Madison (about 75 miles). No doubt my landlord recognized her as looking like the rest of the scruffy, tired movers and told her how to get to the house. "Over there," he pointed vaguely toward the southwest part of town. "Take John Nolan Drive and turn off right and you should find her somewhere in that neighborhood." Having had too little sleep to balk at those hopelessly vague instructions, Julie got into her car, made what she thought were two wrong turns and through sheer dumb luck and lack of coordination (certainly not because she remembered the address which I'd never given to her), she ended up smack in front of the house where she recognized Dick Russell pulling a box from the van. She'd somehow managed to take the most direct route from the apartment to the house.

It was 11:30 and Julie walked into the house. That was the first time I sensed that events were out of my control and began to suspect my problems with wheels.

By the time we finished moving Peter's apartment (another truck-load, another van-load, and a couple car-loads), it was late in the afternoon and we were all exhausted. Most people had a hard time standing up and were experiencing difficulty moving their hands above their waists. Having been working out regularly at the YMCA gym with weights, my soreness was a passing complaint, but Carrie Root later told us that the next day she got up and down stairs at her house using a peculiar sitting-crawling maneuver. Anne Steel said she limped for several days afterward. Dick Russell took me aside at one point, laid a friendly arm around my shoulder and smiled. "Jeanne, I want to give you some advice," he said. "Yes?" I asked, puzzled because his grip now threatened to crush my shoulder. Still he smiled, but his voice was no longer friendly. "Don't move again." "Right," I said.

I tell you all this to try to convey to you our state of mind, that is, our total lack of attention for anything other than for a comfortable place to sit and something cool to drink. We were not really responsible adults at the time. It was a bad time to be making complicated arrangements having to do with money and timetables and especially, with wheels.

So what did we do? We leaned against the truck and made complicated arrangements having to do with money and timetables and wheels. Peter and I would take everyone out for pizza and coke and beer and Spike would drive the U-Haul over to Steve's house. Steve is a friend of her's, and Steve and Bill—another friend—were moving and wanted to rent the truck from us to move their apartments. We would call Spike Sunday morning and arrange to meet her at the U-Haul place with the truck around 9 am. At that time Peter and I, riding with my sister Julie (who we assumed was staying over), would give Spike a ride home where Spike would help Steve move his apartment and Spike would clean out her old apartment. It seemed that everyone in Madison was moving that weekend. And it all seemed perfectly reasonable.

We all went off to the pizza restaurant and people started talking about going out to a movie. Peter and I sulked at this since we were not through yet and couldn't go to the movie with them: we had to clean our old apartments yet, since our landlords would be checking them out the very next day and deciding how much of our deposits they would return to us. At that point I could have slept for two solid days, but instead had to contemplate many hours of scrubbing, vacuuming, and touch-up painting before I collapsed on a bed. We ate pizza and poured liquids down our throats and tried not to think about it.

We'd only just finished cleaning my apartment when Julie and Dick and Carrie stopped off at about midnight to see how we were doing. They'd just come back from the movie. Julie yawned and said she thought she'd drive back to Milwaukee now. Peter and I were sort of hunched over in exhausted poses and neither of us were seeing too clearly, but I heard what she said and let out a little moan of disappointment. But I was still only vaguely aware of the repercussions of my erroneous assumption that she was going to stay over night. At that point, I only knew that Peter and I were going to be trapped at his apartment with nothing but bare (possibly clean) floors to sleep on when we finished working there several hours later. At that time no buses would be running to transport our vacuum cleaner, mops, brooms, rags, cleaning potions, buckets and selves to the house.

Our friends took pity on us and made some new arrangements. Dick would drive Carrie home and Carrie would leave her car for Peter and I to use to get to our house after we'd finished cleaning. Carrie, after all, lived only a few blocks from the new house. She dropped us off at Peter's old apartment and Peter plugged in the vacuum cleaner and I poured some Ajax into a bucket and started scrubbing the kitchen walls. It was horrible, but luckily I don't recall much of it anymore.

It was very late when we finished and gathered up all the rags and cleaning implements in boxes and carried them down into the quiet early morning cold and pushed them into the back of Carrie's car. At that time of the morning there are very few cars on the road, which was a good thing, because Carrie's car had a manual shift transmission and it might have been embarrassing. But we were so befuddled with aches and pains and sleepiness that it didn't matter to either of us. Peter had driven stick shift a few times (though not often enough to have safely driven the truck), and we got home smoothly enough, all things considered, parked the car and dragged ourselves and the stuff into the house.

That's when our problems really began. We knew that we'd have to get up early enough to drive (or ask Carrie to drive us) to U-Haul and meet Spike, and a little later in the morning to meet Peter's landlord, but we didn't know what time it was. There were no functioning clocks in the house yet. Our phone wasn't hooked up yet and I'd left my watch behind

in Peter's apartment. Well, the next day we realized that we could have gone out to Carrie's car and turned on its radio to find out what time it was and set our alarm clock, but what we actually did was to unpack the stereo components at what turned out to be 3:30 am Sunday morning and sit on the floor amid stacks of boxes and furniture and wire up the stereo and speakers so that we could listen to its radio. Three days later we also discovered that because of the phone company strike, that our phone in fact was still hooked up (or rather that the previous tenants' phone number was still hooked up) and that we could have called time. But none of that mattered once we'd set the clock for a 7:30 am wake-up alarm, undressed, unpacked some blankets and collapsed on the bed. I have never enjoyed falling asleep so much as I did that night.

We woke up at 10 o'clock am. If the alarm had gone off, it had given up some time before that.

"Peter!" I said, shaking his shoulder. "Peter!" It's 10 o'clock!"

"Better call Spike", he mumbled.

"Peter! We don't have a phone!" At this point Peter woke up and we both scrambled to get dressed.

We drove over to Carrie's house and asked her if we could use her phone. Carrie was amazed that we'd just then woken. "...and we were supposed to get the truck back before 9 o'clock!" I moaned. So I called U-Haul.

"Oh don't worry," the lady said, sounding a little tipsy, "You just have to get it back sometime today before we close!"

"Oh wonderful!" I sighed and relaxed. "What time to you close?" I asked.

"At 11 o'clock," she said, and then proceeded to tell me about the wonderful picnic that U-Haul was providing for its staff and that they'd already sort of begun the festivities in the office. She took an audible drink of something and then wanted to tell me about the food and liquor varieties being provided and the games that were planned. But I stopped her and asked again, "Did you say you're closing at 11 am?!"

"Yes," she said, and started to tell me more about the picnic. It was 10:45 am and U-Haul was at least a half hour ride from Carrie's house. I hung up, desolate. Who knew what they'd fine us for keeping the truck out two extra days.

I told Peter what I'd discovered and we were quiet for a minute. I called Spike and found out from her roommate that she'd left the house some time ago. He sounded a little irritable to be woken up and so I didn't hold him on the line for any more questions. Peter mentioned then that he'd probably missed his landlord by now, because checkout had been scheduled for 10 o'clock. We'd blown it. We'd blown everything, I thought.

But then I had an optimistic thought. Spike is a bright person, I thought. Not only that, but she got sleep last night! Maybe she just went ahead without Peter and I when she couldn't get hold of us by phone and brought the truck back herself! After all, I'd pre-paid the truck's rental with plastic money, and all that would have to be done was to drop the truck off. Spike had another car and she and Steve could have managed it. But how to find out?

"Peter, why don't you call U-Haul and ask them if our truck has come back?" I suggested sweetly.

Peter was tired but not so far gone that he didn't briefly protest. "Why don't you?" It would be a pretty odd-sounding request after all. "Has our truck, Lassie, come back?"

"They might recognize my voice," I said. Peter accepted that lame excuse and called U-Haul.

"They have?...Good...Where?...Oh, well, yes...yes...Have a nice picnic...right...thanks." The truck had indeed been returned and we relaxed once again. Peter said that the person who'd answered the phone had said something about the whole bunch of them being at the Country Kitchen restaurant

across the street and then tried to tell him about their picnic. I nodded yes, they'd told me about that too.

So the crisis was over, we thought, and Carrie drove us to Peter's apartment where we'd indeed missed the checkout, but no harm had been done. We picked up my watch and stopped off at Peter's landlord's office and got things straightened out. Carrie dropped us off at the house and we went to bed for 8 more hours of sleep. Later that evening, rested, we rode our bikes to a nearby hamburger restaurant, and ate in relaxed comfort. Finally, finally, it was all over, and we could unpack and move into our new house at our leisure.

After we'd finished eating, I decided to call Spike and thank her and congratulate her on her initiative for taking the truck back to U-Haul on her own. The phone rang, Spike answered, "Jeanne!", a door slammed in the background, and she continued: "You'd better be in the hospital!"

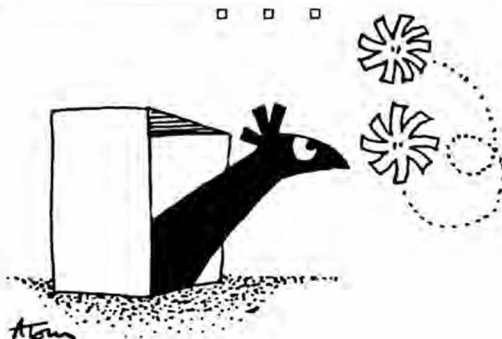
Obviously my problems weren't over. I asked what was wrong.

It turned out that Spike and Steve had taken the truck back that morning, but had not been informed by the slightly tipsy U-Haul employees that I'd already paid for the truck. They had waited two and a half hours for us to show up and pay (and give them a ride back into town) before the U-Haul folks remembered to tell them that the truck was paid for. They were waiting, in fact, at the Country Kitchen restaurant across the street from the U-Haul place, a message that had gotten garbled amid the picnic news when the slightly tipsy U-Haul employee had talked to Peter on the phone. After they'd finally discovered that business had been taken care of they had to wait another hour for a bus, it being Sunday, a day much neglected by the Madison Metro bus schedules. Steve, especially, was furious for having been made to waste that time when he was supposed to be moving his belongings across town, and it was his slam of the door that I heard on the phone when Spike announced my cursed name. Steve was mollified later in the week with a bunch of flowers and Spike was not really all that angry anymore, and we joked about the string of misunderstandings and convoluted disasters of the day before. I laughed because I thought it was all over.

In a horror film, this would be the lull before the final onslaught of The Creature. The heroine would be undressing and slipping into a warm bath, totally unaware of the horror still to come.

When Peter and I strolled out of Brat 'n' Brau we were like that unworried heroine. We unlocked our bicycles, swung onto our seats and pushed down the pedals. My pedal made a sudden, strange, Ka-Thunking noise and the whole bicycle convulsed. The chain had dislocated itself and was wedged between the shift gear and the wheel post. It would not come loose. My hands and most of my lower arms were completely black with grease by the time we admitted that it was no use and that Peter would have to go off in search for some metric tools so that we could loosen the wheel. While he was gone on a quest that took him through many, and wrong boxes at our house, and then (finally successful) to Carrie's house again to borrow some tools, I sat there in the gravel beside the traitorous wheels of my bike, and contemplated my betrayal by all the wheels of that weekend's move.

Happily, that was really the end of the weekend's disasters, and things have gone much better since then.



LETTER INTERLUDE

Norman Hollyn
178 Spring Street
New York, NY 10012

I am intimidated by the colophone of this first issue of *Whimsey*. I owe you a letter now. I must do something about this. Actually, I appreciate you sending me this issue "instead of the letters [you] have owed [me] for the last 8 months." I didn't even realize that you owed me a letter. It's a damn good thing that you sent me this issue, since otherwise I might never have realized that you owed me a letter. Now I can get properly indignant at not receiving one. And now I can also get very guilty if I don't send you one. *Sigh!* Fandom is worse than Judaism.

One advantage of not having been doing anything in fandom in the last umpty-ump years is that I don't know of most of the fans and their feuds. One disadvantage, though, is not knowing of most of the fans and their lives. For instance, I get the feeling that I should know who this Peter Theron is who you've moved in with and why he needs an office. I also feel that I should know just why you need an office (aside from fanning, I take it.) I mean, I figured out that you do graphics for the Parks people, but do they let you do that at home???

...Searching for a place to live is not only exhausting but thoroughly disheartening. Janet (the woman who I live with) and I have been looking for a place to buy here in the bowels of New York City. A year ago the prices were ridiculous so we thought that if we saved real hard and waited another year we'd be able to get something that we could actually live in without bumping into a wall whenever we took more than two steps in any direction. Well, this year we began looking again. We had a good chunk of money more than we did last year—but lo and behold—the prices of everything had also gone up by enough money so that we once again couldn't afford a thing. Of course, we don't want to live in an area where we'd need a sub-machine gun to get from the subway to the front door. We would also like to live in Manhattan, rather than in the boondocks of Brooklyn or New Jersey. This puts us squarely in the midst of the \$BIG BUCKS\$ area. Well, TANSTAAFL, and all that rot, eh wot?

Your number-phobia, while not exactly a problem of mine, does remind me of my learning-phobias. They were all related to one thing—anything that I had to memorize, as opposed to understanding, was instantly forgotten. When I got into college, after a successful math/science background in high school I was stopped dead by Physics. There were all of those ridiculous formulas to memorize, for no really good reasons that I could see. All of the supposedly "concrete examples" that I was given to memorize involved strapping balls to the ends of a pendulum hung out to dry in outer space or some such nonsense. "Concrete" my gluteus maximus. I remember learning some ridiculous formula in my first semester of Physics that could accurately predict the centrifugal force of a drop of coffee in my coffee cup as it sat in my hand, in a classroom at Stony Brook, on Earth, circling the Sun. A wondrous piece of information, except that it wasn't totally accurate. You had to add in friction, and the other forces exerted on it by the moon, Mars, and the dumb-witted geek in the seat next to me.

Not long after that I switched to being a Theatre Arts major.

((Joy Hubbert asked—in a portion of her letter I edited ruthlessly out of the letter column—"Why do so few Americans own their own homes?" I think I'll offer your letter as an exemplary expression of one answer to that question.

Peter is a teaching assistant for the University of Wisconsin math department and needs his office for class work and numbers-related scribbles and record-keeping. He also likes to have a place that doesn't have to be as neat as I want the rest of the house to be concrete.))



Chapter 3: Our House Is a Very Fine House

Norman Hollyn wants to know what I need an office for, and Jane Hawkins complains (in another of those ruthlessly deleted letter segments) that she can't visualize my setting when she reads my letters, now that I've moved. Both the question and the complaint provide me with an adequate excuse to do what I wanted to do anyway, that is, to write about Peter's and my new house.

Jane, at least, has seen my old apartment when she visited me in Madison last year and probably wouldn't need to ask why I'd appreciate a larger work space. When I moved into my former apartment five years ago, I converted the larger room—originally a living room with a closet—into my bedroom, and changed what had been a small bedroom without a closet into a place for my desk, typewriter, file cabinet and bookshelves. I did most of my writing and stored all my graphics equipment and materials there, but was forced to draw on the kitchen table for lack of adequate space in my studio. The kitchen table area in turn, gradually assumed a variety of functions: I drew there, I ate there, I cooked there whenever I (usually) ran out of cabinet space, and I entertained there. Therefore, whenever the kitchen table assumed the role of drafting/layout table, a significant portion of my time was spent bringing my tools and materials out from my studio, and later, putting them back again to make room for dinner or whatever. During the weeks of *Janus/Aurora* layout, all extraneous kitchen activities were postponed, since eating, entertaining or even moving very quickly, might disturb the billions and billions of tiny scraps of important paper, partially laid out galley pages, and waxed bits of art that occupied all available surfaces.

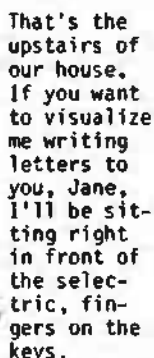
What do I need an office for beside fanning, Norman? Isn't fanning enough? I lay out the Madison Science Fiction Group's magazine, *Aurora* (formerly *Janus*) a few times a year, keep up the SF³ mailing list, and up to this year have done all the WisCon publications, the brochure, the program book, the pocket schedule, etc. I did the yearly SF³ catalog that purple thing you got in the mail about a month ago with the yellow slip complaining about battered fingers) and laid out the whole of *The Cacher of the Eye* on that schizophrenic table. Apazines, locs, article-writing and fannish artwork take up left-over portions of my copious spare time.

But you're right, there is more beside the fanac. DND work gets done at my office downtown; the non-fannish stuff I do at home is mostly of the freelance variety. For instance, in the last year I painted a cartoon warthog riding a bomber (the fairly disgusting mascot of a local air force reserve group); designed a business card/brochure/ad package for a 13-year-old magician; drew a dozen caricatures as cards or presentation plaques for various friends and groups; designed a logo for Technical Resources, Inc. five times and learned never to work on a flat fee basis when the final decision will be made by a committee). I write book and film reviews for *The Feminist Connection*, have gotten several con-

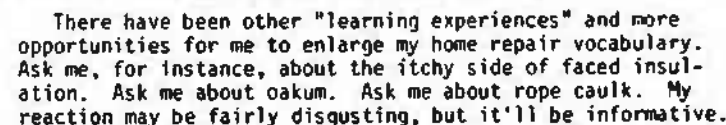
Load Is Not
Enough.

Three months ago, you could have told me that a house had a 30-amp load (or a 100-amp, or a 300-amp load) and I would have smiled non-committantly, said "hmm," and hoped you would be

wouldn't expect me to continue the conversation in any substantive way. Nowadays, I will often be the one to tell you that our house has only a 30-amp load,



usually with a slightly shrill tone to my voice and a rolling of eyes, and with the least encouragement ("mmm" is sufficient) go on to tell you that nearly all the appliances and my office (and in fact most of the house) are on one 15-amp circuit. With the least show of interest I will describe how often we've already blown the house's fuses and had to search blindly for candles and the flashlight and stumble into the basement to replace the fuse.



Oh, it hasn't been bad. I'm still fairly delighted with this house of our's; I'm just a little more realistic about the advantages of an older house. (This one was built in the '20's.) And we're half serious when we talk about the "learning experiences". Knowing what to ask about and to look for when we do eventually buy rather than rent will be valuable knowledge. How many anps?, will be my first question.

□ □ □

Chapter 4: Letters—Tying up Loose Ends

...thanks for Whimsey, which I liked. Indeed I loved the chutzpah of this enormous inane grinning Jeanne Gonnell who totally dominates the cover. Maybe in future issues we'll see the profile, even the back of your neck...? For the ts): the personal bits I enjoyed, the my sympathy (I too have published vast favourite null comment on TAFF-DC (it-dzine in comparison to Cacher)) was Gary q that since he'd read a 500-word extract

in *DNC* he wasn't going to bother getting the whole zine as patently it would be lots more of the same); the mathematical bit roused my wonder at the diversity of things, since numbers are one of the few things in life I've always thought understandable (my bugbear was sodding French. Ever been taught French by a teacher whose powerful Welsh accent totally blots out any trace of Frenchness? It is an experience.); *Wiscon* definitely sounds like a con; *Filker* left me worrying about reality and hoaxes since I don't know anything about *Fiddler*, and indeed have no idea whether you're making it all up or not. Only the name of the alleged author makes me wonder whether, perhaps...

((You weren't the only person who was unfamiliar with *Fiddler*, Dave. Outside of outraged complaints about the typist's sadistic use of a light typeface for emphasis—the most common variety of comments I received on *Whimsy* were ones of embarrassed, shuffling excuses about misspent childhoods and deprived social lives which caused them to miss *Fiddler on the Roof*.)

Harry Warner, Jr.
423 Summit Avenue
Hagerstown, MD 21740

You are probably better off for not having sold many copies of *Cacher* to a non-fan clientele. This way, the danger is lessened that a copy of

the reprint might find its way to someone connected with the publishers of Salinger's original novel or to the author himself if he's still among the living. Terry did an ingenious parody of the original, no doubt about it, but he borrowed so extensively from *The Catcher* on a word-for-word basis that I've always suspected trouble might result if the parody's existence became known to the wrong persons.

I wish I could enjoy properly your review of *Filker on the Roof*. But somehow I've managed to go through all the years since *Fiddler* was popularized without becoming familiar with the subject of your takeoff. I've never seen the musical in a live stage performance, I missed the movie when it was in local theaters and later on the tube, and I've never read its script in printed form. Nor do I own the recording of its score. So all I know is some of the tunes from having heard them accidentally over the radio and as much of the plot as emerged from several articles I've read about the musical. But I hope you or Moshe or someone writes a full-scale parody along the lines of your review. There can't be anyone else over the age of eight or nine years in fandom other than me who wouldn't be able to enjoy it thoroughly thanks to a background of familiarity with the object of the parody. I've never seen *Star Wars*, either, or attended a drive-in movie, to cite a couple more examples of the mysterious gaps in my sophistication.

((There must be a lot of eight and nine-year-old fakefans out there.

((For reasons other than my discovery of this fannish blind-spot, I at least plan to stop with this parody at the review stage. I'm not really interested enough in doing a full-scale parody, nor—as a few kindly souls have pointed out, when they noted a frequent lack of scansion in *Filker*'s verses, anxious as they were to help me avoid career disillusionment—am I particularly musical in aptitude. Anyway, Moshe Feder has considerably more material written up toward a full-scale *Fiddler* parody than I have, and has a true, marvelous musical aptitude, as witness his work on *The Mimeo Man*, and I really do hope that he finishes his (very different) version. You should all write to him and encourage him. Here's a taste of Moshe's version: instead of "AnatefCon", which was my title for the play's last song, Moshe used "Science Fiction". Perfect scansion and a real tear-jerker.))

Wilson Bob Tucker
34 Greenbriar Drive
Jacksonville, IL 62650

for traditional reasons. You do believe in traditions, as witness Chapter 4.

In 1942, T. Bruce Yerke dropped a "G" from *The Damn Thing* and it became *The Damn Thin*. The same Yerke published another fanzine in 1944 called *The Knaves*, but it was supposed



The International Fan Symbol — spotted at Constellation, often mistaken for the International Bubbler (or Water Fountain) Symbol

to be *The Knaves*. I suspect that he knew a good thing when he saw it and so repeated himself, although he blamed the lettering error on the fan using the lettering guides.

I enjoy a personal fanzine such as this, and hope that you continue to write the same; never mind those outside contributions. Your presentation of the review of *Filker on the Roof* is an admirable example of personal journalism as opposed to a more formal review for a general-type fanzine. Your point was brilliantly made and now I want to see the musical; I launch for it. (But I do wish you had included

a city and a date, for I don't know where RocklandCon took place.) I hope the mails delivered Larry Propp's copy to him before he died; he would have hugely enjoyed the role you assigned him, and would have probably made it a point to tell you so the next time you met.

If Carl Brandon sends a comment on this review, please publish it.

((I will. RocklandCon was held in Rockland, New York, where the mental hospital in which Carl Brandon is being held incognito is located, as reported by Nick and Noreen Falasca. Possibly Brandon thinks it unseemly to comment on a review of a play he authored, but if they gave him the copy I mailed to him, I'd like to take this opportunity to tell him that I'd love to hear from him...))

John Berry
525 19th Avenue East
Seattle, WA 98112

Incidentally, why did you change typefaces for italics? The typeface you changed to was actually less noticeable than the regular text face,

so the effect was not to emphasize the different words or phrases but to make them look somehow out of kilter with the rest of the text. (I'd use a bold face for emphasis, if you really want it; or italic (but not script!); or simply use good old underlining—after all, the availability of different typefaces doesn't mean you have to use them! (Now if only I could figure out why Richard Bergeron feels called upon to use Old English....))

I like the idea of doing a deadpan review of a nonexistent fannish parody, though I'm sure I missed a lot of bits because it's been years and years since I saw *Fiddler on the Roof*, and I can barely remember more than one or two images and tunes. The tone of the review, though bothered me. It was too deadpan; the last couple of paragraphs, particularly were the kind of slightly earnest, slightly plodding review that crops up so often it's too easy to parody. The idea, though, of criticizing the fake parody for what it didn't include is a neat double-trick.

The typeface I changed to was "Dual Gothic" and I promise never to do it again. Certainly the unanimous opinion among *Whimsy* readers was that the way I used this typeface irritated and disconcerted them, and that tends to suggest that it wasn't translating my "voice" in the way I intended. It's interesting to me, though, in retrospect, for what it reveals about my intentions. I knew, you see, that Dual Gothic was a lighter version of Letter Gothic, this very typeface, and that's exactly what I was after. When I speak and want to emphasize a word or phrase, I've noticed that I lower my voice (in tone, not in volume) in a sort of conspiratorial manner. Possibly this has something to do with



the operation I had ten years ago to remove a nerval cyst from my neck which incidentally paralyzed my left vocal cords and rendered my voice very breathy and soft. Well, you've probably noticed that my voice has gotten considerably stronger during the intervening years (as the right vocal cords took on more of the work), but in that time I've learned that a quiet voice sometimes has its advantages (especially when a yell, or a firm, raised voice is not an option), and my speaking style has changed accordingly.

Rich McAllister
2369 St. Francis Drive
Palo Alto, CA 94303

It's definitely time for people to quit apologizing for xerographic fanzines—even I'm being convinced by the argument that the reason

mimimed Twiltone became the Standard Fannish Medium is that it was the easiest and cheapest way to put out readable text and graphics. Well, now xerography is the easiest and cheapest way for most people, so it's the Standard Fannish Medium. This doesn't mean that it's not worthwhile to put out mimeoed zines, but people should realize that they are explicitly worshipping their fancestors, not just putting out fanzines.

I can't balance my checkbook without a calculator. Lin and I went to the IBM PC Faire last weekend and bought a nice custom piece of furniture to put our computer on. Neither the fellow who was selling it to us nor I could figure out how to add up the option costs, deduct the 15% discount, and add in the 6% tax until Lin pointed out that there were approximately 600 computers in the room—two within three feet of us—and that computers were notoriously competent at addition, if not much else.

Jean Weber
PO Box 42
Lyneham ACT 2602
Australia

Actually, my experience with arithmetic and numbers in general has been rather different from yours. I have a bad memory (or what I consider a bad memory) for both, but I really enjoy keeping books (both of the cheque and club accounts variety) and working out my tax returns etc. I remember that when I went overseas and wanted to transfer my account to an Australian bank, I told the assistant manager (or whoever was helping me at the San Francisco end) that my account was X dollars and Y cents. He came back some minutes later, with an astonished expression on his face. "That is correct to the penny", he whispered in awe. "Well, of course", I responded calmly, trying to look as if I thought everyone kept their chequebook balanced to the penny, even though I knew few people did.

AnneLaurie Logan
PO Box 191
East Lansing, MI 48823

"Fear of numbers"...is by no means a disease confined solely to women. Nobody in my family, male, female, or pet, has ever been able to regard numbers as anything but a curse laid upon the innocent and dyslexic by bad fairies, WASPS, or Republicans. You say you had a hard time during arithmetic class, but you don't mention actually throwing up or going into strong hysterics when faced with all those dreadful squirming numbers...a physical reaction so strong it actually got me dropped from remedial algebra and trig when I took it in college...for the fourth time. The only class I ever repeated in high school was third-year algebra; Sister Mary Edith grew so frustrated with what seemed like my deliberate decision to remain ignorant of all algebraic functions that she finally decided I must personally dislike her. In return, she grew to loathe the very sight of me—but I don't credit my inability to comprehend trig with her personal feelings. It's true that I scored in the 90s on the geometry Regent's Exam, but I still think this had less to do with an innate bias in favor of forms over symbols than with the fact that my geometry instructor was simply a much better teacher than any algebra teacher I've ever run into. (Logic, for instance, makes no more sense to me than integrated functions.)

My own fear of math extends beyond "losing" numbers: when I'm pushed hard enough, I lose the ability to read numbers and symbols. (I was the only kid in the third grade who could work the most complicated "word problems"—"If Suzy takes three hours to fix a meal, and her husband takes six, how long will it take him to eat her delicious cooking as a

delicious meal together?—in my head without being able to handle far simpler equations written out on a neat line. Certainly, part of this irrational terror developed when I gradually lost the ability to copy first-grade addition problems off the blackboard correctly...a form of "stubbornness" and "stupidity" which my first-grade teacher couldn't verbally abuse me out of when it was discovered that I'd just become too nearsighted to see as far as the front of the room, by which time I was firmly convinced that mathematics was illogical and untrustworthy as a discipline. Part of it was, just as certainly, a mild form of dyslexia. I still transpose letters and syllables in the middle of multisyllabled words, but one can eventually "memorize" possible and impossible English grammar combinations (even such—for me—tricky combinations as the right spelling of ~~tomorrow~~ tomorrow, or the difference between Calvary and cavalry), while numbers are infinite in their potential for confusing the unwary and the tired. The final cap to my phobia, however, was my parents' loudly repeated assurances that NOBODY could understand complicated numbers—nobody except a few moldy grinds, hopelessly unpoetic and probably neurotically crippled freaks of nature. THEY, for instance, had never learned anything beyond elementary addition and subtraction (and those not too well) and look how well THEY managed in life! (To which the non-involved adult would probably have added, "Perpetually broke, and unable to succeed with the only Church-approved method of birth control, which requires two partners able to count up to 26," but there are some things a six-year-old, however precocious, just can't predict.) Are you the only one in your family who can't handle math, Jeanne? Or would a late-blooming mathematical talent in one of your siblings have led your father to threaten to disown him on the grounds that no son of his could possibly advance beyond long division? (Yes, he did; even though he claimed it was a joke, I don't think my brother took it quite so lightly.)

In any case, Numeraphobes Anonymous sounds wonderful... for other people. I don't think I'm ready to stand up in front of a roomful of people and start vomiting, just yet—even assuming that a chapter were to be formed in East Lansing.

((Well, I didn't mention getting sick or having hysterical responses to math and I do not want to turn this discussion into a competitive, I'm-more-scared-of-math-than-you-are one, but in fact I've had experiences similar to yours and I sympathize. No parental pressure that I can remember, but that college statistics class I mentioned in Chapter 2 of *Whimsy* #1, was one of the most traumatic experiences of my life. After four happy years of school without math classes (other than that enjoyable logic course), I was required to take an honors (accelerated) course in statistics called "Analytical Methods in Quantitative Geography". It was an hour-and-a-half, five-credit class that met twice a week, and those hours were sheer torture to me. The only prerequisite supposedly was advanced algebra, which I had, but actually more than half of the symbols and concepts used during lecture (not to mention the text) were entirely foreign to me. Straining as hard as I could to follow the lines of reasoning, and carefully copying down in my notebook every mark the instructor made on the blackboard and as much of his lecture as possible, I was still completely lost by the middle of each lecture, and as the semester progressed would often surreptitiously brush tears of frustration from my face as I struggled to copy down the meaningless information before it was erased. Private talks with the instructor cleared up none of my confusion. Questions from the other students (who were mostly Chinese) made it clear to me that they were much further along in understanding than me (when I could understand them and there were no assignments, quizzes, or mid-term exams to help me study. The text was worse than the lectures. There was only one exam at the end of the semester and one chance to be graded. That made the situation all the more horrid because at the time I was very concerned about my grade point average, and was unaware that after college I'd never once be asked what my GPA had been. Believe me, I got sick more

than a few times contemplating what I estimated was the ruination of my academic career. What actually happened was that the exam was partially a take-home one, and I found an example problem in my notes that seemed analogous to the exam question and I worked it out blindly, and then memorized my hopeful construction which I transcribed at the exam. I got a "B". I retained no skills of statistical analysis and immediately after the evening exam, I fled to the University Book Store, sold that hated statistics text, and used the cash to buy a tiny can of frozen orange juice and a hip flask of vodka, which I brought back home and shared with Vicki, a housemate. It was the first time I'd ever been drunk, but I made sure we did a good job of it, finishing off the vodka but leaving most of the orange juice for the next morning. The only thing I recall from the latter parts of the evening was the two of us dancing in my room, nude to the waist, snapping our fingers above our heads to the accompaniment of the *Fiddler on the Roof* soundtrack. That musical made a strong impression on my mind; the vodka made a strong impression on my body. Luckily it was a weekend and I had a couple days to recuperate.))

Alexis Guilliland
4030 8th Street South
Arlington, VA 22204

A word I recently came across was "numerate", the numerical analog to literate, and of course, "innumerate"...a coinage referring to those who can't manage numbers. Bob MacArthur, a taxi driver now living in Florida with his ailing mother, once told me that the problem with "street smarts" was that you couldn't use it to cash a check. In this case, the problem was not innumeracy, but the inability to produce any form of identification. He was a free lance technical writer, and sent Larry Niven a critique on *Ringworld*...the Niven-MacArthur papers Niven mentioned in the introduction to *Ringworld Engineers*. Anything but illiterate or innumerate, Mac once described himself as having "street stupids"...not altogether a good thing in a taxi driver.

((Maybe there's an opportunity for a whole range of adult education curriculum: it'd be fun to see a bunch of middle-class, white-collar management types doing lab work for a night course in "street smarts". Actually, the picture I imagine looks rather like one of your cartoons. There certainly seems to be a market for a "Numeraphobes Anonymous" workshop. Several people didn't think I was joking about that (perhaps there were just a few too many hoaxes in *Whimsy*...) and asked whether I knew about any chapters in their area. Anyone interested in purchasing a franchise, need only send me a blank check or money order (thus saving you from having to deal directly with numbers before your cure), and I'll set you up, so to speak.))

Richard H. E. Smith II
2007 Howard Street
Evanston, IL 60202

I don't need Numeraphobes Anonymous, but I've shown your piece to several people who now want to know how to sign up! Is it a national organization, or how can a chapter be started? We numerophiles are only capable of watching from the background, but there are lots of other numeraphobes who need to be saved. (Please save them! They drive me nuts.)

I'd assumed that the "small press perfection" for *Cacher* was just WisCon thoroughness; I didn't realize that you'd set out to imitate the paperback. It's too bad if the price might have discouraged someone who would have enjoyed the parody, but I think that Taral is making us all out to be even poorer than fans are. Then again, maybe I shouldn't take myself as an example, since I bought one of the 18 copies you sold at WisCon that year. I bought the *Willish of Warhoon*, too. I'll bet that the real reason for the prettiness of *Cacher's* presentation is your own desire to do something graphic with the work. You are a graphic artist, right? ((A "Graphic Artist 2", according to the state of Wisconsin)) Just remember that there is nothing wrong with mimeo on twiltone, and you'll be OK...even if you do your own zine by the xerox.

Marc Ortlieb
c/o GPO Box 2708X
Melbourne, Victoria 3001
Australia

I enjoyed your account of the joys of publishing the chapbook. Mumble. No matter how one does something, there's always someone

who's willing to complain. I too think that Taral's criticisms smack more than a little of paranoia. Surely it's up to the publisher how said person feels that a zine or whatever should be published, and while I will knock a zine because I can't read it, I can't see the point in criticising just because it looks too professional. Several of the local media fen have taken to referring to a mainstream fannish *Cult Of The Sacred Mimeo*. Comments like Taral's make me wonder whether or not they might actually have something there.

Robert Lichtman
PO Box 30
Glen Ellen, CA 95442

Taral is really barking up the wrong tree if he equates "egalitarian" with "sameness" as he seems to in the piece you're quoting from. Certainly throughout the history of fanzine fandom every conceivable form of reproduction has been employed, from hectograph to printing press, and what has mattered all the way through is the quality and interest of what's there in print, not the type of print itself. Some of the worst crudzines of all time had beautiful production work, while the focal point of the sixth fandom that some folks deplore other folks harking back to, *Quandry*, was often so scruffy looking that if it were appearing now some folks who write of standards would probably put it down for its appearance. I'm reminded of the old dictum that appears for us all to remember on the first page of every issue of Bill Danner's *Stefantasy*: "You can fool some of the people some of the time, and you can fool some of the people some of the time, but you can't fool some of the people some of the time." —Ambrose J. Weems.

Mike Glicksohn
503 Windermere Ave.
Toronto, Ontario M6S 3L6
Canada

I never wrote to tell you how much I enjoyed *Cacher* so let me make up for that oversight here. I'd never read the Salinger original (merely one of thousands of "standard" works I'm unfamiliar with) so I got the book from our school library and read the two in tandem: a chapter of *Catcher* followed by a few pages of *Cacher* until I caught up to the section of the original I'd read. Perhaps this spoils my appreciation of the work as an entity but it increased my awareness of the closeness of the parody and I think that was a good exchange. I was delighted with the book, with its appearance, with Terry's introduction and with the whole concept. I'm really quite surprised that you have any copies left from such a small print run but fans tend to surprise me a lot in that regard: as often as they like to talk about their fannish heritage they as often seem to ignore the chance to buy a part of it. I recall Ethel Lindsay offering some found copies of John Berry's *TAFF* report for sale in one of her fanzines and when it finally reached me after a couple of months crossing the Atlantic I quickly sent her some money in "the off chance she'd saved a few copies for overseas readers" and it turned out I was the first person to ask for it!

What you seem to have, you know, is not Fear of Mathematics but Fear of Arithmetic. As a math teacher (and hence also an arithmetic teacher at times) I'm naturally distressed that you'd succumb to this easily-avoided phobia but at least you seem to be coming to terms with it. And as any teacher of high school mathematics will tell you the majority of the best students are usually female so the myth of female inferiority in matters mathematical is indeed just a myth. (Oddly enough, though, the very best math students generally are male. How much of this is due to cultural and environmental factors and how much to natural ability I wouldn't even care to guess at.)

((Seven years ago when I worked for the Women's Research Institute, I was involved as a typist in a study about young women and math directed by Professor Julia Sherman of the University of Wisconsin. She found, through a longitudinal study (involving the study of several groups of students through six years of school), that teacher expectations had a lot to do with the fact that young women generally excel in arithmetic and math until the 10th or 11th grade and then hit a "brick wall", at which time, boys do better and start

taking more math. Boys' and girls' math aptitudes did not change; the differences arose because boys were more often encouraged to continue in math ("No matter how difficult this stuff is, you're going to need it in college and in your jobs."), and girls were not so encouraged ("Well, do the best you can. If it gets too difficult, you probably won't find advanced math that important in the future anyway."). When teacher expectations changed, i.e., when successful women role-models were brought in whose fields depended upon math and who encouraged girls to consider math careers, and when teachers behaved as if they thought all students could comprehend the material—students' test scores changed dramatically and became much less marked by a sex difference.))

Frank Denton
14654 8th Ave., SW
Seattle, WA 98166

....I noticed that you didn't mention a calculator at all in your mathematics story. ((God, is there any other way?)) It does wonders for

keeping checkbooks straight, providing that you've entered things correctly. At least the math is correct; it's the human error of entry that oft goes astray. Anyway you sound well on the way to cure.

Your chapter on WisCon and your involvement was well done. I can understand your burnout. Seven years of involvement is a lot, and it wasn't just simple tasks, either. You're right. There does need to be a fresh infusion of people willing to take over. One could not help but notice a string of new faces on panels at this year's Westercon. Young, energetic, frighteningly bright young authors beginning to assume at least a modicum of importance at this con. I was very impressed with Clare Bell, Barbara Hambly, Lisa Goldstein, Janet Gluckman, Greg Bear and Raymond Feist. That lineup ought to scare anyone trying to break into writing SF. Very intelligent and very verbal people.

Roelof Goudriaan
Postbus 1189
8200 BD Lelystad
Netherlands


As with other articles about personal experiences in fandom, your discussion of how people tend to find what they are looking for and the necessity of "SF-4-F-101" panels contained quite a few elements in which I recognize experiences of my own.

After four years of fandom, I now and then tire of the nth piece on Dutch or European fandom, certainly after a year and a half of doing a European newsletter. Burnt out after four years....I guess the Dutch constitution is not as good as your's....But it amazed me how many people kept asking for the "European-SF-101" type of article for *Shards of Babel* (SOB, as the newsletter's called), despite clear remarks from my side on the kind of cynical fannish material I'm looking for.

Basically I'm finally beginning to understand that a newszine like SOB is the "SF-4-F-101" kind of fanzine, and I'm beginning to fear in my more cynical moments that I'll have a lot of difficulties to become more than the "European-fandom-101" fan. Luckily there's my genzine and especially personal contact to help me out, and give air to my own evolving notions.

THE CACHER OF THE RYE

BY CARL BRANDON



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Jeanne Gomoll
409 S. Brooks St.
Madison, WI 53715

((Fanzines are a lot more responsive to editorial control than are cons. Look at me: a reputation for being a sercon editor of *Janus/Aurora* hasn't prevented me from starting anew with *Whimsy* and from getting lots more fannish response than *Aurora* gets. I'm sure you can leave the "European-fandom-101" persona behind if you want to.

((As for leaving behind the experience of running an "SF-4-feminism-101" convention, the only solution I've found seems to be to quit the thing. I've found it interesting, though, watching the convention planning proceed from the outside. One of the main things I've noticed and mentioned to some of the WisCon staff is that there seems to be a tendency to "hold tight" to major jobs by long-time concon members. We are desperate for help from new members, but when it comes to actually accepting work, we make sure that we do a re-write, or that we make the final arrangements, and in effect, often denigrate or invalidate the perhaps clumsy or imperfect work of a new concon member. The new members conclude that their work isn't good enough, or, if they've got healthy egos, that we're too egotistic ourselves to appreciate them. But either way, they don't stay on, and the concon remains understaffed. It seems to me that old-timers have to grit their teeth and accept the work as-is unless it is drastically flawed. Next year that new concon member will know better. That's the only way the new people will learn and believe their work is appreciated.))

Jane Hawkins
4121 Interlake N.
Seattle, WA 98103

I agree with so much of what you said in Chapter 4 that I'm going to allow myself to take off on one closing remark—"Small puddle politics".

There is a sort of Concom Thermodynamics which generally leads to entropic decay, and politicking is a symptom of it. The WisCon concon strikes me as having been unusually free of it, comparatively. NESFA conquered it through bureaucracy. But most cons suffer rapid decay.

It goes like this: Putting on a con is a lot of work. The motivation for doing all the work doesn't come from masochism (Well, maybe for some people!). People are motivated by rewards. Initially, the reward to a concon member is oriented around the con itself—seeing people have a good time, getting praise, learning new skills, and so on. (This, of course, assumes that the con isn't a disaster!)

With succeeding years, the whole thing starts to get a little repetitious. As you pointed out, certain kinds of programming events have to be held or attendees will create them. Or complain bitterly about their absence. It is also a lot of hard work. The people who are most motivated to continue putting a lot of time into it are those who derive the most reward from it.

As a direct outcome, cons tend to boil down to those who derive a large part of their sense of self from the con. Concon members pretty much must be willing to put a substantial percent of their free time into working on the con. The work isn't just for a week or two—it lasts about six months. Those people who have other interests that are more important to them tend to burn out on the con. No one has unlimited time to pursue everything they wish to do.

As people with substantial interests outside the con sift out of the committee, the tone of the group changes. Because it consists more and more of people to whom this is the major life interest, disagreements about what should be done become more acrimonious. People start seeing these disagreements in a more personal way. They feel attacked as a person by criticism of their ideas on con-running. Because they are deriving so much sense of self as a person from the con, such criticism is personal even if not intended that way.

This tendency accelerates the departure of people who view the concon as a less vital activity. They don't feel strongly enough to fight it out and thus don't get to do what satisfies them. So they leave.

The remaining concon may devote more and more of its en-

ergies to in-fighting. If one's main sense of satisfaction comes from putting on a good con, the reward comes once a year. If the satisfaction comes from in-fighting, the victorious ones can get rewards with every con meeting. And in-fighting can be easily justified to one's self by saying it's all for the good of the con.

Of course, this is all based on my experiences with the Norwescon committee. I may be generalizing too much. And I am glad there are people who feel strongly about con-running. They put a lot of energy into it. How else could all the cons I love to attend be possible?

((My experiences are based on WisCon with its feminist reputation. A lot of British fans, all in a turmoil with their new TWP—*The Women's Periodical*—were provoked by this subject matter...))

Joy Hibbet

11 Rutland Street
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire ST1 5JG
United Kingdom

Ahh, you are so forgiving. Could it not just be possible that many fans just see any feminist programming as indicating that the committee are manhating? ChancelCon, the 1982 EasterCon over here had a similar

problem, that people preferred to believe that the committee was feminist simply because there was only one man on it....I see what you mean about judging percentages: at the con I was just talking about, 1½ years ago, there was a woman in fandom session. It was supposed to be a discussion in the fanroom, but ended up being held in the residents' lounge where it was quieter. At a committee meeting for this year's NovaCon, the organizer of the fanroom was heard to say that he wasn't going to have a 'woman in fandom' panel as there are always women-in-fandom panels. I miss very few conventions, and would certainly have heard about a women-in-fandom panel at the few cons I've missed if there had been one. I can only conclude that one panel in 1½ years is too many to his mind. Alternatively, and more likely, he is seeing fanzine panels etc., which are made up of mostly women (as has happened at least twice to my knowledge since then) as being women-in-fandom panels, the assumption being, I suppose, that if it's got women on, then it's about women. I suppose women aren't allowed to talk about fandom or fanzines in general, that being a male subject.

Have to remember that phrase "excelled in their assertiveness lessons", sounds a lot better than "stropky".

((Joy's letter also included a page-long description, with lengthy quotations, of Ian Sorenson's fannish rockopera, *Neo*. Any special aficionados of fannish musical parodies can send me a note, and I'll send you a copy of that page.))

Darroll Pardoe
11b Cote Lea Square
Southgate, Runcorn
Cheshire WA7 2SA
England

Richard Bruning's cartoon strip reminds me of an incident that happened to Linda Pickersgill at a convention recently. Linda is OE of the British women's APA TWP. Arnold Akien came up to her. "So you're the

enemy", he said, which nonplussed Linda a bit till she realized he was referring to her in connection with the copy of the latest mailing sitting on the chair next to her. "I've heard that MEN aren't allowed to read it", he went on, "Not even LOOK at it". "Gosh, I hadn't heard that, Arnold", she replied, "Just let me take a look at the rules here. Nope. Don't see anything that mentions MEN at all. Sorry." Whereupon Arnold slunk away, defeated.

[the] Lindsay
69 Barry Road
Carnoustie, Angus DD7 7QQ
Scotland

Of course I have been interested in the feminist scene as it is all so different from when I started. I often think that I was fairly lucky not to encounter

fandom until I was 30 as I then regarded it as a wonderful place in which to talk and write about books... and really did not pay much attention to the fact that it was predominantly male. My age and the fact that I was not particularly pretty saved me from being treated as a female first and a fan after. I saw some very pretty girls come

and go very swiftly. Maybe I was fooling myself but it seemed to me that I was treated as just another fan. I certainly had no desire for any romantic associations with fans and in fact the only long-term affair I have ever had was with someone completely outside fandom. But that had a lot to do with a love of privacy.

I suppose too, I enjoyed the masculine atmosphere, after all I worked in a world of women the majority of whom were excellent nurses and very silly women. I guess I was a feminist before the word was invented probably just because of the nursing world which contains so many passive women. Fandom was freedom to me.

Whilst I grew up marriage was still a thing in which a woman "belonged" to a man...and that was a thought I could never abide. Things have changed greatly of course, yet when I read AWA [A Women's Apa] it seemed to me that the young women of today still had plenty of problems. Good luck to them, I say, my favorite song is "I'm glad that I'm not young anymore!"

Dave Rowley
11 Rutland Street
Hanley
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire, ST1 5JG
United Kingdom

Over here there seems to be occasional rabidness against the Women's Periodical apa. Of course, it has a reputation of being "only to be read by women". This is untrue, the women who have male partners don't have to hide their cop-

ies from us men. At RaCon, in February, I was seen looking after a copy of the WP for a potential new member. I happened to look through the photocopied bundle to see if Joy's contribution was in when a rather nosey chap asked to see it. As a bit of fun, I said no, but didn't make the point clear that he should ask a woman who is in it, and nicely, to read it. He kept badgering me "Why, why, why?" Eventually he gave up.

Odd isn't it, how things acquire this "separatist mystique" about them. I think almost everyone in British fandom, must now know the rules of the Women's Periodical, and some really good fan writing has not just appeared in it, but also branched out elsewhere (*Sic Biscuit Disintegrat*, for example, [*Tiger Tea*, for another]). This last fact must surely shut up the "It'll keep writers like Linda Pickersgill and Chris Atkinson from pubbing elsewhere" crowd. One thing I did wonder about WisCon. Just when in the year is it?

((WisCon is held shortly after the worst of winter, guaranteeing that those critics who talk about "those frigid, ball-busting feminists at WisCon" will be at least half right. In 1984, for instance, WisCon will be held on February 24-26. (Our slogan is, "Real fans aren't deterred by the cold.") Guests of Honor will be Lizzy Lynn and Jessica Amanda Salmonson; the theme, not surprisingly, will tend toward martial arts and S&S fiction.))

□ □ □

Chapter 5: Muscles? What Muscles?

Jim Meadows
1605 W. Main, Apt. #4
Peoria, IL 61606

Like you, I am a converted jock. I assume you don't mean the stereotypical jock mentality when you speak of being a jock, the mentality that most of us can't quite define, but, like science fiction, know it on sight well enough to point it out. Unlike you, I would guess myself to be a much lazier athlete. (My grammar is disintegrating here.) Part of this may be because I practice rather solitary pursuits, like jogging (I work nights, which affects my interaction with the rest of the known world), when I actually need sports as a social activity, this need being further screwed up by the acute embarrassment I suffered in sports while a kid. This confused athletic background has led me at times to take up sports I'm not really cut out for, just because I wish I was. Boxing was one of these, and while I might get into it again in the future, if events permit, I'd have to find a really, well, mellowed-out sparring partner.

One supposedly macho sport that fell by my wayside was

the pumping iron that you engage in. But there was no ego-threat involved with this sport. I just found it too incredibly boring. If you keep up with weight-lifting for any amount of time, and progress at it, I can only admire you for your patience and tenacity, and ask you how you do it.

((Remember, you asked!))

o o o

People react in lots of funny ways when I mention that I work out at the YMCA every day.

"Hey that's great. Boy, with this body, I should be doing something like that..." shuffle, shuffle. "—one of these days I really should... I've been meaning to... *sigh*..." Not once during the course of this soft shoe act do they look at me as they guilt trip themselves. Sometimes I avoid bringing the subject up, fearing that I might provoke a guilty reaction.

Sometimes though, they ask how I can afford the new wardrobe. Well, I could admit that I did spend quite a bit on a pair of good running/biking shoes this summer, and agree that Speedo swim suits are outrageously priced, but that's not what they mean. They mean the pink and purple bodysuits, color-coordinated with the mauve tights and nattily accented with those bulky knit leg-warmers that Jane Fonda wears. They assume I've turned jock to be chic. So I grimace and shake my head and explain to them about the YMCA.

The YMCA, I say, is not That Sort Of Place. We work out down in the humid basement of the very old YMCA building whose directorate convenes a summit conference whenever somebody wants to spend more than \$1.00 on repairs or improvements. The decor is not chrome, leather and ferns, but perspiring concrete walls, dusty steel and sweat socks. Jane Fonda wouldn't be caught dead in Bodyworks. We don't even have any air conditioning or piped-in muzak. "So what does that have to do with tights?" they sometimes persist. So I tell them. My "outfit" consists of an old t-shirt, grey sweat shorts and floppy thongs. All right—I'm not typical. Most of the others wear their (safer) tennies. But none of our group of about 25 regulars is what you would call fashion plates. We get hot and sweaty only a few moments after starting our workouts on the universal gym or the free weights, and are conscious of very little beyond our own straining muscles and how much more time of working out remains. Bodysuits are pretty; I like them—so why ruin them with sweat? At lunch hour—which is when I work out—only women are allowed in the place, and so it retains a sort of extended locker room ambiance. Very comfortable, very casual. Not very stylish.

It's actually one of the best bodybuilding studios in town because the staff is mostly drawn from the excellent physical education department at the University of Wisconsin, and though the equipment is old, it's all quite serviceable. An old-fashioned 50-pound barbell still weighs 50 pounds. And I like the women who work for and who work out at the YMCA. Unlike the heavy atmosphere of competition at the YMCA where everyone watches to see just how much the new person can bench press, at the YMCA we tend to act as cheering sections for one another.

Unfortunately, the pool's obsolescence is less superficial than Bodyworks'. First of all, it was built as an afterthought on top of the original 11 floors when the YMCA moved into the building. The location is an unusual fire control feature but otherwise it's awkward, especially for handicapped swimmers who have to climb the last flight without the benefit of an elevator. The pool itself is small and a non-standard size—45 feet long—being that size in order to fit into the available space, but more critically, the pool is the victim of decrepit plumbing. So sometimes the showers lack water pressure or heat or both. Still, I keep coming in around noon time because I've got a year's pass and—most importantly—because it's only a couple of blocks from my office downtown. As I said, the YMCA's not stylish, but I like it.

Some of the women enrolled in YMCA's aerobics, jazzercise or ballet courses might fit the stereotype of fashion-conscious women struggling to take off just a few more pounds but less concerned about the activity than that they are dressed right when they do it. But those of us with a three-month or a year's pass who come in regularly to pump iron or swim without scheduled classes (as I do on alternate weekdays), tend to be a different sort. For one thing, we're not faced with a wall of mirrors while we're gasping for breath. For another thing, a few circuits on the universal or a good swim-plus-shower just doesn't leave a lot of time for careful dressing much less a make-up session during one's lunch hour. I feel lucky if I have time to dry my hair after a swim instead of having to let it freeze dry outside on my way back to the office. (In the summer I don't bother: the wetness keeps me cooler for a while longer.) But the result is a sort of culling process which separates the fashionable types from those who don't make a big production out of their appearance.

I've gotten another kind of reaction, too. I say I've been working out at the YMCA, swimming and weightlifting, and the person I'm talking to says, "Oh?..." as their eyes track upwards and to the right. They are thinking of Arnold Schwarzenegger. Of Russian women weightlifters on cortisone. "Aren't you afraid you're going to develop too many muscles?" For a lot of people, women bodybuilders conjure up incongruous images of muscles and beauty. Recently, Arthur Hlavaty wrote on this topic in his *Dillinger Relic* #31:

"...Psychology Today [October, 1983] has an interesting illustrated article on female body builders. There is something unusual about the look of these muscular women (some-one is quoted in the article as saying that there's no Jungian archetype for this), but I don't find it entirely unattractive. The question of the esthetics of female muscle building seems to be still up in the air. Should the contests be won by the women who've built the most muscles or are there other factors? The authors are a bit worried that if the criteria became 'just enough and no more,' the whole exercise becomes pointless, like a 100-yard dash in which the runners are required to take more than 10 seconds to finish. On the other hand, it seems perfectly reasonable to me to see muscle-building as something where you try to find a Golden Mean, rather than simply taking more as better. I've always thought of the more extreme male muscle builders, like Arnold Schwarzenegger, as having a kind of self-induced deformity."

There are a couple activities and value judgements all mixed together in this paragraph of Arthur's, and though I realize he tossed this thought out in a casual sort of way, just listing what he'd been doing, reading and thinking about in the diary-like format of *Dillinger Relic*, it reminds me of the confusion I confront quite often when I talk seriously about bodybuilding to friends. So, using this paragraph as a jumping-off point, this part is about some comments that have irritated me...

When people talk about weightlifters and bodybuilders, they are generally mixing up all sorts of activities and preconceptions with one another. So the first thing I want to do here is to define some of them. There is competitive, or "career" bodybuilding. Career bodybuilding doesn't necessarily mean that the person involved makes a living at it (practically never does, in fact), it just means that the person spends a sizeable portion of their lives working out...I'd guess at least four hours a day. Then there is the in-my-spare-time, or "casual" bodybuilder. This person may work out regularly but their schedule allows for no more than a few hours a week. Of the two, only the career bodybuilder can even hope to grow the spectacular bulges advertised on the back pages of comic books and pulp magazines.

There's another separation of "types" in the bodybuilding field: there are male bodybuilders and there are female bodybuilders. Bodybuilding is a variety of what is called Anaerobic exercise, that is, a method—using weights and re-

petitive lifting or pressing movements—whereby one can concentrate on specific muscles and increase their strength and bulk. Men's muscles are capable of far more growth than are women's: men simply have larger muscle mass to begin with and less subcutaneous fat to smooth away obvious muscle definition. When I see that slightly worried expression on the faces of people who ask me if I'm not afraid of developing too many muscles I realize that they're simply not aware of the vast differences between career and casual bodybuilding, or even between the very real differences between male and female weightlifters.

Once, a woman came into Bodyworks and the staff person was helping her develop an exercise program. The new woman was very concerned that she not be programmed with too many really strenuous lifts because she didn't want to develop bulging, obvious muscles. Overhearing her, Spike and I smiled at one another as we sweated away on the bench and military press, both of us pressing considerably more than most women at Bodyworks. Spike and I have both been working out at Bodyworks for about two and a half years. If the new woman had looked our way, and her instructor had told her that the two of us had been trying to build muscles for all that time by steadily increasing the weights we pressed, and by coming in to work out two or three times a week, the new woman would probably not have believed her or would have laughed at us with scorn. I can make a more impressive muscle when I flex my upper arm than I could a few years ago, but nobody's going to cast either Spike or myself in any Ms. Conan film, that's for sure. Instead, the instructor reassured her, told her the facts of life and furthermore told her that it would take daily, strenuous training to achieve even the kind of limited muscle definition that women are capable of. It's bizarre that men are generally admired for keeping in shape if they work out with weights in their spare time, while at the same time, so many women have been inoculated with the surrealistic mythology that they will, with the least effort, become inflated with gigantic ballooning muscles, and suddenly resemble men, if they so much as play around with a barbell. (Some days at Bodyworks, I wish it were that easy!)

I'm not saying that women who bodybuild casually don't look any different from women who do not pump iron, because in fact I have noticed differences about my own body: a stronger looking back and shoulder muscles, especially. And perhaps the reality of that subtle difference may be part of what feeds the myth. What I think is happening is that women bodybuilders—and in fact all women athletes—are changing the accepted standard of beauty to one based on health and strength rather than on the status symbols of pallor/weakness/lack of stamina that used to define women's pedestals and keep women immobilized on them. And I think the change is a Good Idea. But in the view of some people who still accept the former standards (especially the judges at women's weightlifting competitions and maybe, too, Arthur Hlavaty when he talks about the "golden mean" of beauty), for them even the physiques of casual women bodybuilders and athletes might look somewhat unnatural. Too bad for them, I say. They'll just have to learn differently.

There is a very small, delicate woman who works out at the YWCA's Bodyworks, her appearance the very epitome of the traditional standards of beauty. She moves gracefully and seemingly weightlessly, like a dancer. "Strong" would not be a word you would use to describe her until you saw her lift weights or discovered that she owns several weightlifting trophies. Lisa's voice is thin and high, and when she speaks she provokes smiles from those of us at the YW who know her and see the irony. When Lisa works out she really concentrates on what she's doing and when she lifts particularly heavy weights, she blows forcefully through clenched teeth and often shouts to herself in a suddenly low voice to encourage herself. I would really have liked to have been at the last competition where Lisa won in the dead lift category. I'd have liked to have watched the audience as they watched this lithe, petite, blond-haired pixie walk on stage with the big, heavy leather belt around



her waist. She stops in front of the barbell and glares down at it, as if to intimidate it beforehand and then slowly bends her knees and grasps hold of the steel bar from a squat position. She squints her eyes tightly shut, slowly inhales, and then suddenly tightens her grasp, and you see the muscles across her chest, arms and legs strain. "EASY!!!" she shouts/curses through clenched teeth as her breath whistles out through them. And slowly the enormous barbell rises above her head and her knees lock straight.

I admire Lisa. Talking about whether she is distorting her classic, "delicate" beauty by bodybuilding is irrelevant to me. When definitions of beauty get in the way of encouraging people to do the best they can or of maintaining their health, I think it's time to re-examine the definitions of "beauty".

Not all bodybuilders work out for purely health reasons. In fact, there is no evidence that full-time anaerobic (literally, "without air") exercise is healthy; there is plenty to suggest that it may actually put undue stress on the heart. Aerobic ("with air") exercise, like running or swimming, exercises the heart and increases its capacity; while anaerobic exercise, like weightlifting, merely increases the heart's workload without improving its efficiency. If bodybuilding isn't done in conjunction with and balanced by an equal amount of aerobic exercise, there is a high chance that the athlete will literally wear out their heart, and that is precisely the risk of a career bodybuilder. Why then, are especially male bodybuilders admired for what might be regarded as a physical deformity rather than physical perfection?

This is my theory: Just as, traditionally, a woman was admired for her lack of strength because this condition represented the status of a person taken care of and possessed by a financially secure man, a bodybuilder is admired for the status his condition represents. For example, some time ago, pale skin was a high-status look because laborers and poor people worked outdoors and tanned skin was the badge of their class. More recently, when most laborers and lower class people worked indoors, tan skin gained in status because only the rich had the time and money to develop their tans. But even that has become less of a badge of status as more and more ordinary people have increased amounts of leisure time (and access to tanning studios). In fact, the whole concept of status leisure time activities has undergone change. It used to be that the very wealthy displayed their wealth by flaunting their physical idleness; now they more often display their wealth with outrageously expensive physical activities. *Newsweek* recently ran an article on the new fad, triathlons, which are events that combine running, swimming, and biking marathons into one, long, grueling super-marathon. Too many dentists were qualifying for the Boston marathon, the article in *Newsweek* said, so the wealthy athletes have flocked to this new sport that, just in order to compete (much less to place), requires the athlete to work out practically full time. So too, with the professional career bodybuilder: This is not an identity that can be maintained during lunch hours and after work. For such a person, bodybuilding is their job, and to display a career bodybuilder's

physique is to flaunt the fact that one has the time and resources to devote to this entirely egotistical pursuit.

Status may not be a major motivation for all or even most career bodybuilders. I know a few and I think there is a real thrill for some of them to find out just how much their body will do, just how much they can shape it. That's been my motivation for my casual involvement as a bodybuilder, but I agree with Jim Meadows about the potential for boredom: I certainly wouldn't be interested in spending more than two or three hours a week training. Still, I suspect that the desire for the status of a developed body (like the status of a tanned one), is a major element for why bodybuilders are admired. And I think that aspect explains a lot about the ambivalence of many people's reactions to women career bodybuilders. We're still not rid of the former status definition for women which defines their beauty in terms of idleness, weakness, lack of stamina, delicacy, etc. (Bound feet and corsetted bodies symbolize these ideals.) Having the time and resources to be a career bodybuilder is not yet included in our culture's vocabulary as a definition for a high status woman. Myself, I'd rather strike the definition, for men and women, altogether.

So anyway, every weekday, I leave the office building and walk to the YWCA—much more through habit than through any strenuous force-of-will. This answers another familiar reaction I get about my workouts, "Where do you find the will power to keep working out every day?" It's not something I consciously think about anymore. It's hardly ever, "Today I have to go to Bodyworks", or "Today I have to go swimming". More often it's: "Oh, here I am at the YWCA... It's Monday, I must be swimming", and I take the elevator up to the eleventh floor or it's Tuesday and I go downstairs to Bodyworks and start my stretches. It's mostly a habit now—a good one—but just a habit. Once in a while strange questions or comments draw my perspective outside this routine and I consider it from other medical, philosophical, or political points of view, but most of the time the most "real" point of view is that I'm "hooked".



Chapter 6: About the End

At about 9 o'clock every weekday morning, a few co-workers and I usually walk across the street from our office, Gef-2 (known also as its spelled-out version as the Second General Executive Facility), to The Dome. The Dome is a small greasy spoon restaurant which gets its name from the workplace of most of its patrons: Capitol (dome) workers, mostly aging legislators playing hooky from desk duty and reporters. Usually there are four of us: the younger, less bureaucratic contingent of the Bureau of the Parks and Recreation, and we prefer The Dome over Gef-2's cafeteria for breaktime because it's less likely that we'll be seen or overheard by other DNR employees. It's a getaway. And Jody says the coffee's better. I don't like coffee but I enjoy the tacky, 50's red plastic covered chairs and the travel posters that cover the walls, all of them depicting mountainous scenery from all over the world, fantasy landscapes for Wisconsin.

The conversations are usually interesting, except when Jody and Bill rapsodize on their pocket knife collections or, once in a while, when football or baseball is the topic. Jody is developing a mapping business of his own part-

time, and has lots of stories about his and his wife's canoeing and backpacking trips into Wisconsin wilderness areas. Bill is a fellow weight-lifter and we often trade information and encouragement on that topic. Or, once in a while Bill will come to The Dome with his newest scheme for making big money through some flim-flam he's read about. Bob, the bureau's archaeologist always has stories about his latest digs, and sometimes I try to explain fandom. Then there's always the traditional topics: current events, politics, movie reviews, etc. Before George, the bureau's naturalist retired, we used to be entertained with his tall tales, and also seemed to have more dark, gloomy discussions about humanity's race to kill itself off by various chemical means. Now we still get into that topic once in a while, but more and more often our gloomy talks center upon the possibility of nuclear war.

A couple months ago—long before any of us had heard about the ABC production, "The Day After", we were sipping our juices and coffees and immersed in a discussion of what each of us would do if we knew, for certain, that there would be a war in the next couple weeks. Would it be worthwhile going to New Zealand or Australia? Would the post-war climate in South America be any more conducive to a white person's survival than in the more radioactive northern hemisphere? All of us have been contributing monetarily or with our time to some of the freeze groups in town, but we wonder how much political effect those groups have. We debated the morality/practicality of unilateral disarmament. We compared opinions on how we thought war's onset seemed most likely: terrorist attack, surprise attack, accidental launch, an insane offensive first attack, etc. And each time the talk gradually slows down and erodes to a hopeless silence. Once though, Jody hypothesized that perhaps what people need to be made really conscious of the horror that war would bring, is a horrible example, assuming I guess, that Hiroshima wasn't horrible enough. He said he thought that it was inevitable that someone in the Mideast would get hold of the bomb and would use it, and assuming it stopped there, that the public reaction to the devastation and human misery that the catastrophe would cause, might be enough to force the governments to stop building bombs and to get rid of the existing ones. He said that he really doubted that most people really understood or believed that a nuclear bomb was much more than a really big explosion and that the shock of the reality of the thing might be necessary in order to avoid an all-out war. I shook my head at this. People will always be able to say, have always been able to say: "It happens to other people." "It won't be as bad here." And, "I will survive." If an example is necessary, I said, it has to be one that is directly connected to the people it's for.

Why not, I said, a movie: with a big budget for showing graphically the actual effects of a war on an average American community. If an example is important, why wait for a horrible actuality.

And then we heard about "The Day After", which was produced by the television community for perhaps the same reasons that Jody and I talked about with regard to the need for a powerful example. Maybe the same sort of conversations have been happening breaktimes all over the country, including the ones in Hollywood. And so part of me is hopeful, both for what this film represents and for what it may spur. Another part of me is a bit nervous about the kind of interest that the film's publicity seemed to generate: interest like the kind that a demolition derby's audience shows. Morbid interest in the mechanism of our own destruction.

Here is part of a letter from Judith Hanna, who is involved with the European anti-nuclear movement.

Judith Hanna 22 Denbigh Street Pimlico, London SW1V 2ER Great Britain	With some 200,000 (quite estimate) or 400,000 (my estimate) marching, we can hardly claim it as a fanish gathering, but we did make up a fanish sub-section... (including Joseph Nicholas, Mary Gentle,
--	--

Chris Atkinson, Malcolm Edward (and Thomas), Phil Palmer, Chris Bailey, the Pickersgills, Lisa Tuttle, and Rob Hansen)...

...It's not far from Forbidden Planet to the Embankment, where the march was mustering, and we passed several other small clumps or scattered individuals obviously out for the same purpose—badges, banners, general normal scruffy non-Tory look about them. But once we'd crossed the Strand, the clumps thickened into a thick, shoulder-to-shoulder crowd. It took us about 40 minutes wedged in with the drift of the crowd to reach the Embankment, staying close together because it was clear that if we lost sight of each other for more than a few moments, chances of finding the group again were minimal...About the time we reached Embankment tube station, where a woman in pink with a megaphone was exhorting "Keep moving, keep moving past the station, there are thousands of people trapped down in that station". She changed the message to "We're moving! We're off! Keep moving past the station, please", then a little later, "I can see movement!", and she began reading out the banners that started moving past her...

...We had a lovely day for it—clear blue skies, weak wintry sun with just a hint of warmth, but no chilly wind. So we just strolled along, chatting desultorily as we went. It was a peaceful demo, placid, sedate and absolutely huge. We never got to see the whole of it, but we never saw an end to any part of it. We were, I think, near the front of the first block of the first march [of two], but I couldn't see the front, and by the time we arrived in Hyde Park, it looked already very crowded...We sat down near the edge of the crowd, pulled out apples, oranges, newspapers and plastic bags to sit on...We'd moved off about 11:45 from Embankment, had arrived at Hyde Park about 1:00. Around about 2:00 an announcement told us that the end of March 2 had still not moved off from Blackfriars Bridge, which was further down the Embankment than the assembly area was supposed to extend. I think it was around 3:00 when the Pickersgills and Rob Hansen found us—they'd been on the shorter march, which was still arriving, but must have been near the end of it, since the second march started arriving soon after. The group broke up gradually, until about 4:00 the Pickersgill/Hansen party went off in one direction to look around, while Joseph, Chris Bailey and I decided to burrow into the crowd trying to get near the stage. That made us realize just how far from the stage we were—it's hard to tell when all you can see of it is a barrage of loudspeakers; and how many people were packed in front of us. By that time the crowd had become so densely packed it was impassable, some 100 yards in from where we'd been, the figures on stage were still miniscule with distance. So we fought our way out, found that where we'd been sitting was now packed-standing-room-only crowded, and continued out of the park.

While we were sitting we'd known, intellectually, that people were still streaming in, but hadn't really noticed the build-up in the density and extent of the crowd. Heading out, against the tide, we found there was now no gap or empty grass between crowd and the edge of the park, it was all thickly scattered with little groups, some sitting quietly, some parading and performing or selling their broadsheets and newspapers. The way home was back down the march, down Grosvenor Road, so we walked along and could still see no thinning of the flow, let alone an end to it. We walked down Victoria Street till we could look down towards Westminster Abbey, and still the banners and the people were coming, thickly as before. It did make the claim "We are the majority" in opposing the deployment of cruise and the purchase of Trident seem very solid and real. The calmness of the march, simply ordinary people there to be counted, not radical stirrers ranting slogans, reinforced this feeling. I've never been able to visualize just what any large figure actually means. 200,000 people doesn't sound all that over-whelming to me, though "quarter of a million" sounds immense. We certainly had at least that many people, and how many more could have been handled I can't imagine,—that number closed down Tube stations and

caused colossal traffic jams, they filled our allotted streets for the whole afternoon, so that some didn't leave the starting point until more than four hours after the first marchers started, and no doubt some wouldn't have reached the final destination until after dark. Yet in Rome, the official estimate is that half a million turned out, while in Bonn there were another quarter of a million. That is strong and solid opposition to American policies in NATO, and to the European governments going along with them. 1) the cynics and scoffers who say "What good do you think marching will do" meaning that it won't change anything but will be totally ignored by governments are right, then just what is this "democracy" these nuclear weapons are supposedly there to defend? A "democracy" which ignores 48% disapproval of cruise deployment (34% approve, 15% don't know), and 50% disapproval of Trident (26% approve, 24% don't know) is hardly acting in accordance with the wishes of those it governs. The same poll, conducted by Marplan, published *Guardian* 22 Oct 1983, shows 65% in Britain think both superpowers equally threats to world peace (23% USSR more to blame, 6% America more to blame).

Linda and Lisa, both Americans, said that until they came over here, the threat of nuclear war seemed fairly distant, and that they had had no reason to question that other countries looked to the US for protection. When I lived in Australia, nuclear war seemed similarly distant, and it seemed just possible that even if Bombs did devastate Europe, Russia and America, little harmless Australia just might escape; we did demonstrate against uranium mining, not wanting to provide the raw material for other countries' bombs; small marches, where the crowd never became so thick you needed to elbow your way through it, and where you could be pretty confident of finding any acquaintance you were actually looking for and a number of others you hadn't seen for yonks as well. We didn't like US cultural "coca-cola-bubble & soap opera imperialism" either, or playing host to US strategic or spy bases, but here was little urgency about our opposition. But here, we know that if any bomb does go off, Britain is a number 1 sitting target, that no bombs we possess will lessen the damage so bombs are no defense, but that if 'our' bombs are used it will be to wipe out ordinary people like us who happen to live in Russia under a government which doesn't pretend to be democratic. Neither as "shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted" revenge, nor as pre-emptive first strike, is such genocide any less an atrocity. Yet our "democratic" governments, which we support with our taxes (even if not our own votes) are basing their defense policies on the threat of such genocide.

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I also heard from Brian Earl Brown who suggests an analog song for Filker's "Matchmaker, Matchmaker": "Smofmaker, smofmaker, make me a smof...", Bill Patterson who felt compelled to "correct one minor misapprehension: There Is No Substitute For A Letter", from Jackie Shuda who writes that "if I were to do something akin to it [Whimsey], an appropriate name would be Whoopsey", Brad Foster (who sent art) ((thanks!)), Atom (who also sent art) ((thanks!)), Arthur Hlavaty, Marty Cantor, David M. Vereschagin, Steve Johnson, Linda Blanchard, Lee Pelton, Jim Orban, Gil Gaier, Stu Shiffman, Darrol Pardoe (again), Neg Stull (twice), Richard Bergeron, Rick Sneary, Terry Carey, Jessica Amanda Salmonson, David Bratman, Richard Ellington, Suzy McKee Charnas, and Bill Rotsler who sent a longish letter about photographing nude models and his personal feelings about his job and the models' feelings about their jobs. He wrote in reaction to my comments on feminism last time, but my response was a confused, "how did I provoke this?" It does not really connect to the comments in this issue on SF programming, but is interesting in its own right, and I'm going to keep it on file for next time, maybe, and use it with some of my own thoughts on the censorship issue.



ART CREDITS: Illustration on page 8 by Brad Foster, illustrations on pages 5 and 17 are by Atom, colored illustration is really an Elbow Grease rubber stamp; and all other artwork is by Jeanne Gomoll because Andy Porter complained.

MENTIONED INSIDE...

Logoboodle, edited by Linda Blanchard, 23509 Hedlund Avenue, Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043, available for letters of comment, contributions of articles or artwork (on approval), editorial whim, silk flowers, beach glass, **TRADE**, or for 50c a copy or \$2.00 for five issues.

Dillinger Relic, edited by Arthur D. Hlavaty, 819 Markham Avenue, Durham, NC 27701, available for the usual.

Miss Manners' Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Behavior, by Judith Martin (Warner Books, New York, 1982), available from bookstores and libraries.

Nexus, written by Mike Baron, drawn by Steven Rude, and edited/designed by Richard Bruning, Capital Publications, Inc., PO Box 908, Madison, WI 53701, available for \$1.75 (US) or \$2.25 (Canada) at your local comics dealer.

Rhetorical Device, edited by Clifford Wind, #206, 308 Summit E., Seattle, WA 98102, available for discourse and by editorial whim. Money accepted only as a last recourse.

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