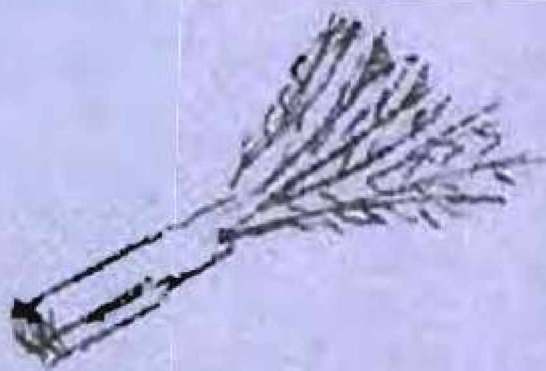
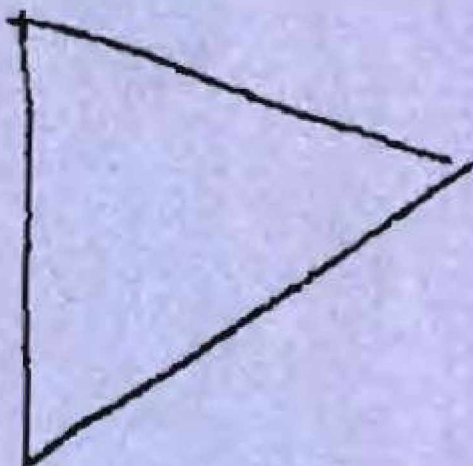


WHISTLE STAR

3



BANAPPLE GAS

While snow falls in the Midwest and merry revels are completed in the Northwest, a plethora of San Francisco Bay babblings is gradually replaced by the silence that would become the spiritual vacuum of a Christmas Eve spent alone, were it not for the resolute desire to finish this journal of hyperbolic perspication.

The last few months have been, for me, a time of strangeness and holding on, to preserve elements of my life which may supersede amateur publishing. Certainly, the friendship and support conveyed to me by the fanzines I have received is not something I would wish to ignore.

So, welcome, once again, to the magazine which reflects the curiosity of travelers in the Bahamas, restless stay-at-homes, superliterate, and Rainbow Indians.

Traveler out walking with a
church ahead
said I can't get slick, 'cause
my shirt is red.
My mind's been staggered and I've
seen the cracks,
where souls do wander past the railroad
tracks ...

However, recently, I've been trying to hold on to a tough teaching assignment, and re-enter the world of regularly scheduled sociability. One of my cats has just had kittens, temporarily taking over the bedroom closet.

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Thanks to Dave Rike for obtaining twilltone paper and ink. Right now, there is no fibertint in California. Will there ever be, again? To those of you in Great Britain, thanks for keeping the fanzine spirit alive in 1985, and thanks for importing Lois Cook. Thanks, also to Whistlestar's new columnist, Mitchell Bailes, for filling the space left by an indecisive Lucy Huntzinger. Mitchell was at Discon II, Disclave, last year, and is a former college radio dj.

WHISTLESTAR #3, from Lenny Bailes of 504 Bartlett Street, San Francisco, CA 94110, is available for letter of comment, trade, or because I think it might be good for you. This issue dedicated to Cafe Fandom, which comprises actors and actresses in its numbers. The kittens died. There is a road...

Ink 'un Blues may be enclosed as a rider to this issue for some of you. Additional copies may be available if you really want them.

THE ADVERSE CITY: Through the psychotemporal gate our hero passed again, transiting from the dreamtime and telepathy of the Plastic Scene Exile to the Galactic Milieu, where Robert Silverberg and Greg Benford still sipped white wine and discoursed on the origin & destiny of man.

"In his essay on Plato's theory of the Forms, Harold Gadget, Bs., compares the Forms to the medieval Christian "Chain of Being". This shows a complete lack of understanding of the true nature of the Forms, and reflects his own misconceptions as to the value of vertical social mobility. The "Chain of Being" represents a linear progression that has its base in Aristotle's metaphysics, not Plato's.

Again to walk hotel corridors; spokes radiating from the Hub out to the periphery of the Grand Wheel. Our hero's six strings were rendered inert here, where more songs about buildings and food vied for the souls of computer dwarves in cheerless gamerooms.

After ten sidereal years on the other side of the Magic Gate our hero had met the awesome devastation wrought by the Metapsychic Rebellion.*

Imagine an alien chin pencilled and inked in 1957 by Gil Kane and Murphy Anderson, a simple obscure artifact occupying a panel of about one inch, square, almost forgotten in the press of years.

Now imagine the simple library card bearing outcasts of your youth, their brains holographed and amplified by a titanic eruption of plastic. Who were these dwarves, now seeking their niche under rustling dice and pseudo-random numbers; chanting praise for the demons of diamond-vision? Had any of them ever witnessed Phil Klass and Sam Moskowitz fleck bits of corned beef on each other as they debated the merits of an issue of Astounding?

No, the benign mutations of these Fir-Verlag had vanished. The mutations were out of control. From a crack in dark crystal had come the hideously banal monsters of Steven Spoilsport, distorted and magnified into a gross alien chin which was larger than the Library of Congress.



Our hero fingered the hair on his own chin in wonder and disgust as laughter echoed from a chamber of living balloons. Stripped of cherished illusions the naked spirit departed science fiction conventions in search of Felicity.

((Felicity was actually an 18 year old physics student with kinky blonde hair who our hero met at a Grateful Dead concert in 1981. After too brief an interlude of shared recognition her ass was grabbed by Phil Lesh and she disappeared in a swirl of white powder.))

* See Tues Aft. Lunch, Whistlestars 1-2: "The Many Collared Land", "Golden Tort", the collected works of Julian May and your local Magic Cookie bush.

* * *

Sometimes I can believe that I've grown old and slow, therefore am naturally less capable of catching on to the worlds of emotion which flesh out the post-modern tableaux other people accept as logical evolution. New scenes merely necessitate refinement of the sensorium.

Other times I theorize that my disconnected avoidance of current social and artistic expression, contrasted to my earlier passionate involvement is actually a righteous reaction. Maybe the human pendulum is swinging, carrying consciousness far from a place where I can add my energy to its momentum.

Just a little while ago, I thought, the world was experiencing a journey into the roots of species consciousness, a journey on which the technology of this society was being placed into a much needed human perspective, no longer dictating values and behavior. It felt to me like kindness and compassion were allowing our wills, our core feelings, to transcend flashing lights, manipulative advertising and soma drugs -- that we could see our reflections somewhere high above those walls.

Since the West was won by selling firewater to the Indians, perhaps it is only karmic justice that America should now complete its manifest destiny by falling victim to its own giant technological bender. Perhaps our genetic susceptibility is not to alcohol, but to electricity.

"I've got a girlfriend," David Byrne sings, "who's better than that. There's nothing better than bzzzt!" Art students and dishwashers alike affirm this brilliant vision of woman as Skinner box, as they strive to recognize anything that's progressive about the '80's. We've got the Talking Heads, now, not the Beatles to reflect on where the action is.

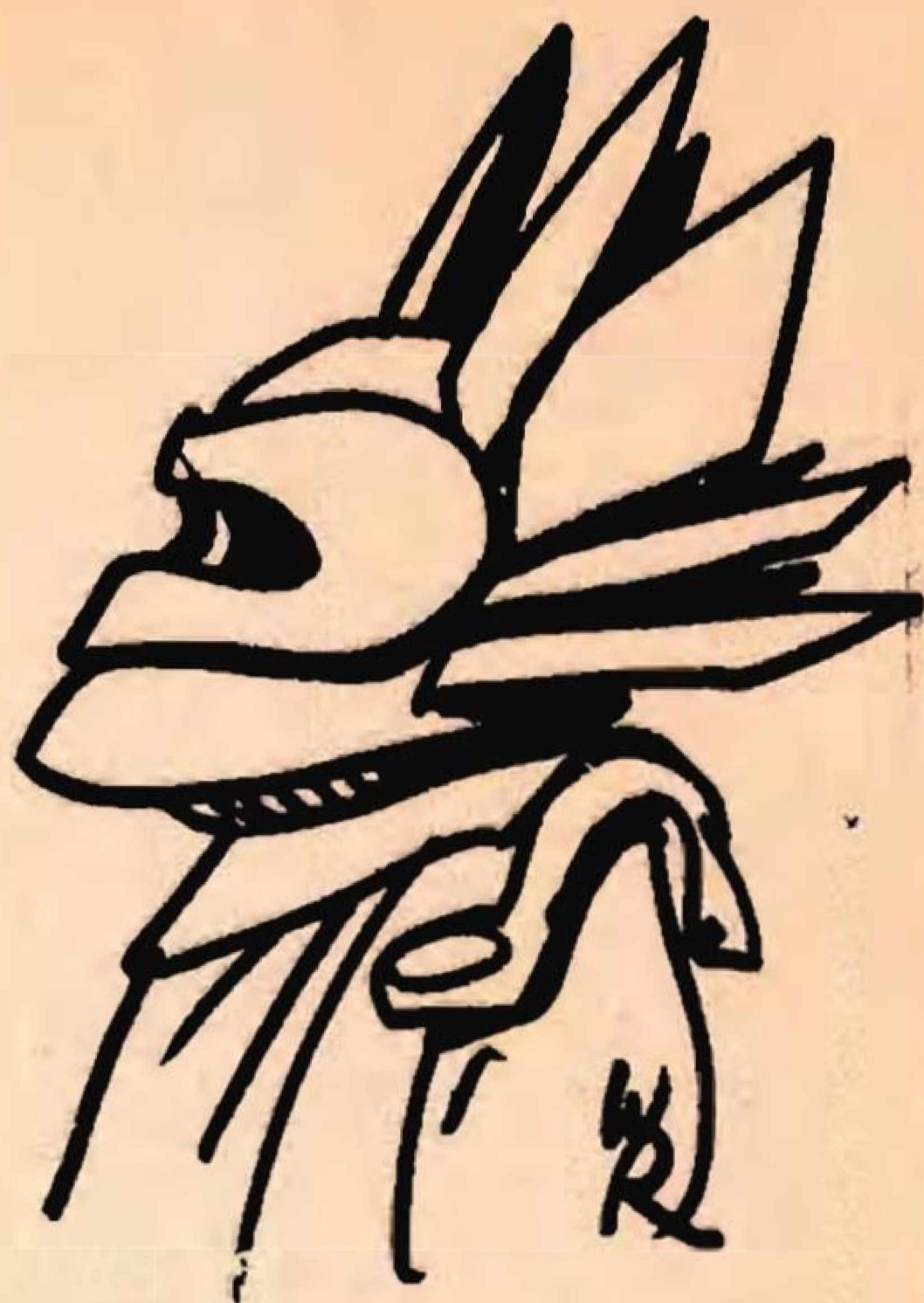
It has become progressively less fun for me to look down at Dwight Eisenhower and the '50s while Lionel Richie descends from a flying saucer at the Olympics to wild applause. Some of my friends who read Stranger in a Strange Land when it came out have now graduated to Close Encounters. Wow, science fiction is real!

I wish it had been Roger Ruskin Spear and his Humanoid Boogie Band that climbed out of that saucer to give Mary Lou Retton the cosmic message. Maybe she'd be happier as a vegetarian. Maybe Lionel Richie can sell a few more Winky-Dink magic screens and all the kids can jump into the picture tube and get high on dry ice.

Go for Gold, Larry Niven. Don't think any more silly thoughts about eclectic aliens or governments that recycle your organs. Let's booze it up and sell capes and shields to the Pentagon. (Regency capes, of course.)

* * *

One day as I savored a cheese sandwich while reading statistics on unemployment and hunger, all the above-described background radiation stimulated the processes of natural selection for me in mid-bite.



Munch, munch, read, read ... I'm above poverty level ... successfully fighting instructions to drown in the river or burn my house down ... clever facilitative organism, I've got a girlfriend, she's --

"50% OF U.S. HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS CAN'T SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS!" a page in the newspaper said, and presented some trivial math and reading exercises. I almost skipped right over because I was mulling over really important issues ... why were the gaunt earringed waitpersons at my local cafe now reluctant to play the rare cassettes I had provided them of Bob Dylan singing "Dear Mrs. Roosevelt"?

As I looked at the newspaper again I felt a synaptic spark, and the two problems became one. Maybe it was time for a change. Maybe instead of discussing the history of the Weimar Republic with grizzled cafe patrons carrying Immanuel Velikovsky novels I could plunge into a different milieu. (This might also decrease the waitpersons' tendencies to crank up Siouxi and the Banshee albums when our scholarly conversations drifted over the counter.

I could go away, to a place where nothing exists but Silas Marner and The Red Badge of Courage... slip a Don Marquis poem in between the Rhyme of the Ancient Mar-



ner and The Hollow Men -- maybe even xerox the poems off the back of The Times Are A Changin' and pretend it was American Literature. Why not take a little bit of our electronically obsolescent civilization over the skirmish line so carefully patrolled by candy cane manufacturers?

A bizarre new tactic against the Adverse City -- I could go back to college and become a teacher.

Well, playing Buffalo Springfield songs in coffee houses didn't seem to be changing anything much, so I did this. I spent last year in classes and picked up a California teaching credential, reducing my finger-slavery for lawyers to part time and developing new communications skills. (Talking to high school students requires a simplicity of concepts and some anecdotal contrast which required quite a different mindset from my usual one.) (Also see poem "Classroom Notes", in Whstlstr #2.

This year I was hired by the San Francisco School District to teach high school geometry, starting in September 1985, and to teach carrying paper and pen to class every day -- "maybe it will help you; doing math might help you to understand TV, so you can find a good hero." (Maybe they can find good heroes, but don't know who to vote for.) Remember the stick in 2001? My job is to convince 90 kids a day that the stick was really a ballpoint pen.

"Brother, remember the cold. When we, your friends, need warmth, be warm, remembering the cold. When friendship pains you, forgive us, remembering the cold. When selfishness tempts you, renounce it, remembering the cold. For you have gone the distance and returned to us renewed. Remember, remember the cold."

-- Bruce Sterling (Cicada Queen)

LIGHT A ROSE Taral put the finishing touches on a big blue farewell card depicting a fierce birdwoman thumbing her nose while Patrick Nielsen Hayden carried a four foot pedestal into Moshe Feder's room at Dis-Clave '85. Downstairs flowed rivers of what was then believed to be the last Coca Cola obtainable from the marketplace. Happy throngs crunched Carvel Flying Saucers and drowned them in the ubiquitous corrosive river (except, of course, for the newly appointed editor of Stardate magazine, who sipped New Coke and handed out business cards).

The partygoers took turns standing on the pedestal as the arrival of the guest of honor was awaited. Then, outside the room, a mezzo-soprano voice suddenly burst into song. If there were any lightning bugs in the neighborhood they probably would have glowed along the stairwell (the lights in Picnic, lighting the way to the dance). A young chorus gathered at the ballustrade overlooking the pool; and I heard a song from The Mimeo Man for the first time. I felt like a character in the play.

"Lida Rose, let's pub again
In the fanpolls we'll pass by."

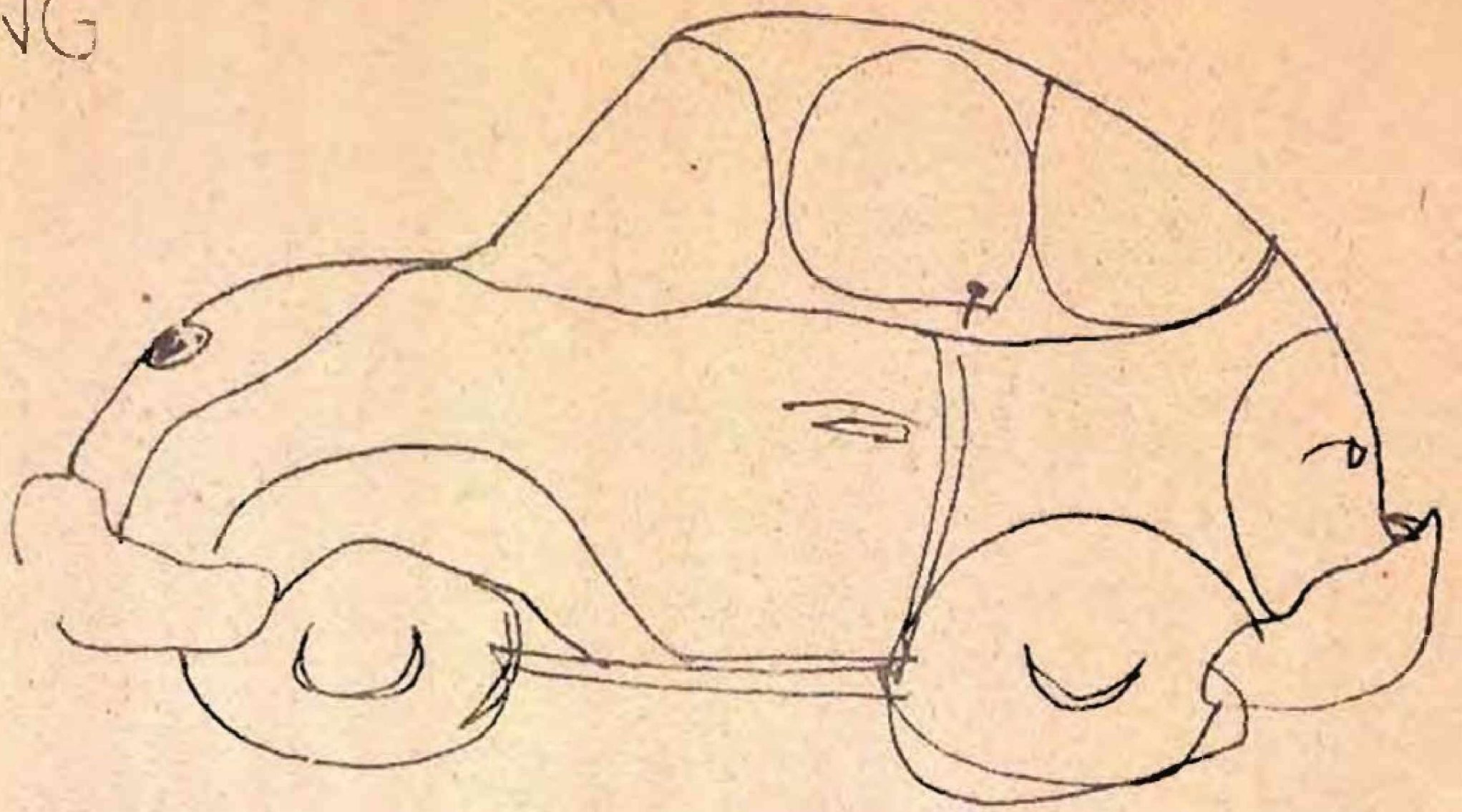
I saw the real words, later, in a Stu Shiffman fanzine. Avedon Carol finished the aria and came in to get her card. I think even some Bostonians in green bowling shirts paused and listened as the contadine swept in (with their Cokes). Moshe took the Astral Pole from its resting place on the mystic pedestal and resumed the contortions which had thrown him helplessly to the floor in 1984. I gathered around Teresa Nielsen Hayden as she displayed her photographs of British Fandom and provided a full length narrative to accompany them. Beer and conversation flowed uphill from Stu Shiffman to rich brown, defying gravity. Steve Stiles looked on, occasionally chuckling quietly to himself. Avedon, Ted White and Patrick Nielsen Hayden cycled in and out of the room like pistons of a mighty engine waiting for a cosmic hand on the gearshift.

I hardly noticed my tape of old Kinks, and Them being turned down after the Homecoming Queen, maybe it was my home-recorded Jerry Garcia Band tape that was too much. Lise Eisenberg carried on as a true hostess and I wandered underneath the stairs; encountering rich brown again in preoccupied mood. Somewhere Ron Saloman sat without thinking of his camera. I took the cover Stu Shiffman had given me for Whistlestar into my hotel room and went to sleep. I don't remember any thunderstorm taking place this year. Maybe next time we can go back to discussing alien chins. (Gil Kane's are paternally authoratative).

-- LB

BUG BLASTING BABYLON

BY
JEANNE
BOWMAN



Here I was thinking I had a long streak of Volkswagen colored bad luck. Thanks to Suzie Tompkins and her elucidations on the Woopsfla curse I know it's just because I am become fan.

Within the time that I have taken up this ~~way of life~~ hobby I have had a chronic oil leak, a rusty gas tank (half dozen fuel filters), two rebuilt carburetors, two wire fires, a shredded tire, a new generator, a busted brace master cylinder, a clutch plate, a new pressure plate to go with the clutch plate after one of the springs got busted re-uniting the engine with the car* and a crankcase that attempted to become a Molotov Cocktail (That was scary, not that having the car fill with smoke when I was carrying four children, two not mine, and another adult wasn't).

I was going to a Christmas party & had a malfunction in the Caldecott Tunnel. No forward power. I was headed into Berkeley, so I coasted through to the Broadway exit thinking it was the one that ends on a slow slope with gas stations at the end. No. It loops under the freeway, up a slope into a stoplight for an off ramp (no good to run it). So I'm out of momentum with no signs of life nearby. I made a poor parallel park & got out to locate the loose wire. A good samaritan stopped, asked if I needed help & I asked if he spoke Volkswagen. His whole life had changed since he graduated from his square back wagon. I couldn't sell him mine & I tried. He was very impressed by my spunk, "I don't do electrics, hold the flashlight," as we fixed the wire.

It was then I knew I wanted my life to change.

I vowed to park this beauty & not drive it anymore. But I swear I will not sell any VW to anybody I know, anyone anybody I know knows or anyone there is any chance of ever seeing again. OK, I'll run an ad:

"HELP EXORCISE VOLKSWAGEN JINX. BUY THIS \$400 CAR."

That would be fun. Ha, yeah, but who would pay money to be spiritual and well

* How many of you have done Volkswagen mechanicing? How long did it take you to get the engine lined up on those four easy bolts??

intentioned like that and take the body away? What about my friends; the ones who've hauled children out of smoking cars, or walked 4 miles in the dark to a phone because the car quit, or gone for miles with heads out the window to avoid breathing exhaust fumes, or took me to parts stores or applied myrrh gum & cold compresses to my wounded & bleeding body after I crawled out from under the car, or those who have tolerated never knowing if I'll get there and came to fetch me and two crabby others, when I didn't. What of the dearest of the true blue who have unflinchingly withheld their honest opinions and a price? I feel I owe them some token of my appreciation.

I'll have an "I sold my Volkswagen" party. Hey, great motivation to sell it. I told my sister this plan, asking her if she wouldn't like to be a used car salesperson. She got a strange gleam in her eyes.

"Ya know," she said, "I talked with the guy you bought that car from and it has more of a history of mechanical dysfunctions than you know. Because I love you I will only say that the strike by a bolt of lightning was his last straw. That's when he quit. You don't have a jinx; that bomb has a curse. It wouldn't be ethical to party after selling it. No. We need to party and smash it. Bust it up. Mash it to smithereens. Gimme a ballpeen hammer. I HATE VOLKSWAGENS YAR YAR"

She raced out screaming & flailing, "Jeanne, you don't need this ha ha" toward the garage. I talked her down.

"Wait," I calmly spoke. "You're right. But we can still ~~make money~~ have a party. Everyone can pay to come & Demo Derby ... I could pay off the mechanics and, and--" panting, we contemplated --

"Oooh, I like this (doesn't it sound like a truly faanish event?) -- pay like \$7.50, come to Glen Ellen & bid on the part you want, strip off the good stuff & then swing a sledge, slash out existential angst and burn that sucker.

Then play volleyball, eat ice cream & converse quietly as the children dance ~~through the flames~~ while the wreckage smolders.

We'll have an AI parting out party. What a blast. So all you Volkswagen & former Volksw owner-operators do come actualize your true desires & fantasies about this genre of car.

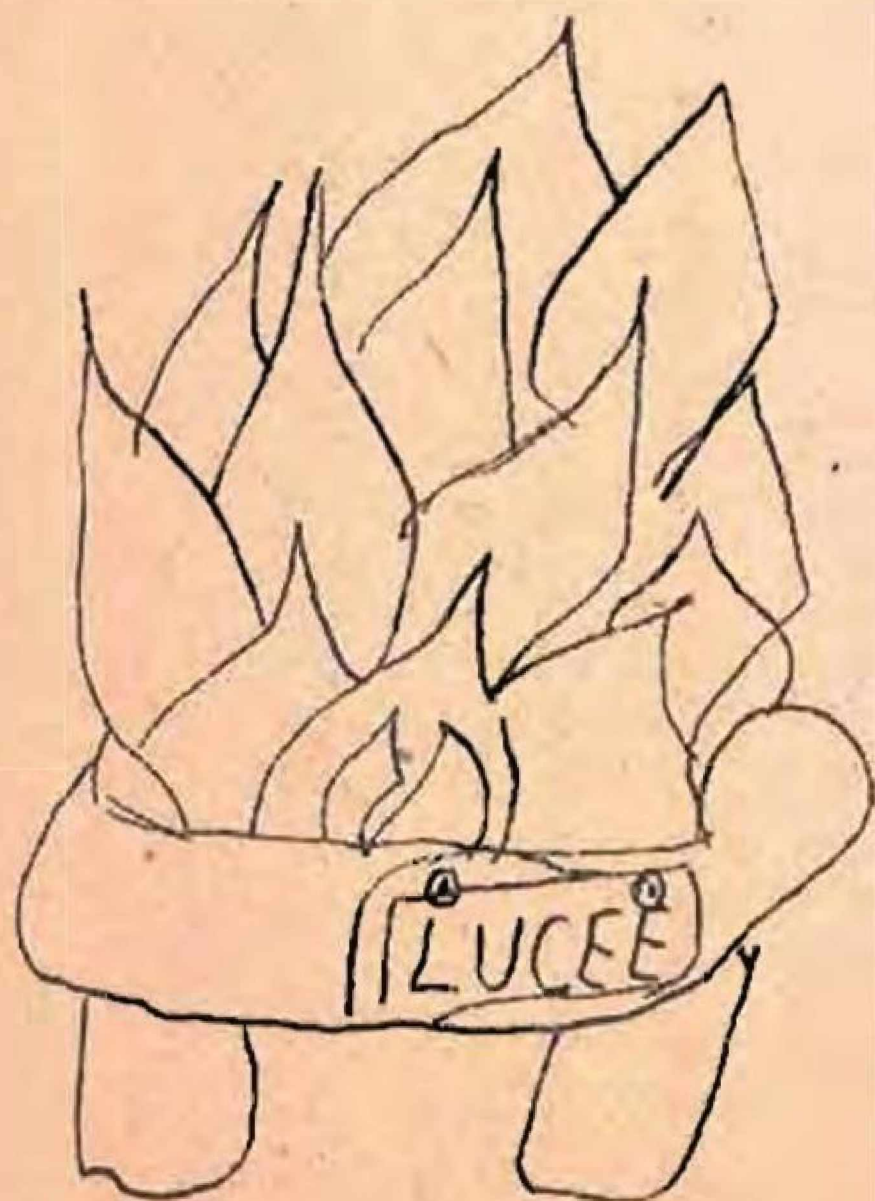
That's right, reserve your piece of the action. Change my life. (And I don't mean maybe!)

Write:

"GRADUATION RITUAL"

P.O. Box 982

Glen Ellen CA 95442



ROBERT LICHTMAN -

TALKIN' ABOUT THE WEATHER

Can a fanzine article be about anything, even the weather?

One weather phenomenon that has amazed me each of the rare times I've observed it is the sudden "spring" that occurs when a good rainstorm hits an otherwise mostly area. Since I don't live in an area quite like that, I've only seen this phenomenon a few times on cross-country trips. They often were among the highlights of the trip.

In 1970 Dick and Pat Lupoff were about to move from Poughkeepsie, New York to Berkeley, California. Prior to the move, itself, they made a trip to Berkeley to seek to purchase a house. At a going away party held for them upon their temporary departure, they announced that if anyone at the party wanted to travel back and drive out with them in the near future, they would give that person a 1965 Volvo sedan. At that time, being self-employed, and desirous of taking a little vacation to "get away from the business," I accepted this intriguing offer.

Thus it was, some weeks later, that I found myself flying to New York's Kennedy Airport (my first cross-country plane ride), being met by the Lupoffs and taken to Manhattan for dinner with the Silverbergs and others (Terry & Carol, were you there?) at an exotic Indian vegetarian restaurant somewhere in or near Greenwich Village. I had brought some extremely powerful smoke with me, which was having little or no effect in cutting through what I considered the very "heavy vibes" of New York. Everyone who shared it with me was falling out with exclamations about its strength. We walked around the West and East Villages after dinner, venturing into a "bad neighborhood" to see if Mike McInerney was home. He was.

I also remember a going away party for the Lupoffs (and a welcome to New York to me) at Ted White's old place out in Brooklyn. Many legendary figures of New York fandom were in attendance. Then, as now, New York fandom was a diverse lot. It made the party interesting.

On our last day the Lupoffs wanted to do the final bits of packing themselves. I had been helping them, previously. I could well understand their position and took the opportunity to go away for the day in my soon-to-be Volvo. I drove down into Manhattan on my own, taking back highways from Poughkeepsie through New York towns to "experience them" (so different from California), crossing over into Manhattan from Yonkers on Broadway, then driving the entire length of Broadway down to the Village and beyond, exploring the lower tip of the Island, then circling back to the Village, where, wonder of wonders, as I pulled up to the legendary (to Beatniks) corner of Bleecker and MacDougal, a car pulled out of the very corner space and I got to pull in.

I spent the rest of the afternoon wandering on my own around the Village, both East and West again, at a more leisurely pace than some nights earlier when I had been accompanied by fans. I ate in a little sidewalk vegetarian restaurant, downing huge glasses of carrot juice, as it was a warm mid-spring day. With an orange glow from the huge dose of carrot juice, and the setting sun, I drove back up Broadway, very satisfied with my explorations. I stopped briefly at the Clusters and returned to Poughkeepsie.

The next day, we were off in a two-Volvo caravan. There was me, driving the sedan, and the Lupoffs in their slighter, newer, Volvo station wagon. The three kids were split between the two cars (which was the point of all this, actually). "We" included at least two other adult passengers, one of whom was a strange male hippie

with whom the Lupoffs had somehow become connected.

Almost everything about the trip across was a delight, what with the road and scenery being entirely new to me -- this was my first cross-country drive ever! Eating in restaurants and sleeping in strange motels in strange towns; the one drawback was that the hippie had the curious habit of waiting at a restroom stop until everyone else was done, and had walked around and was really ready to go; and then he would go off for a lengthy visit to the facilities, himself, delaying everyone. After the first few times, we spoke to him of this, but he never changed his ways. Finally, in Reno, we got fed up with it enough that we ditched him at the gas station, leaving his backpack and other stuff on the pump island and getting the approval of the station attendant, and took off. But I digress.

It was late spring, going into early summer during this trip and as we went westward, the temperatures got hotter and hotter. We arrived in Salt Lake City near midnight one evening and it was over 90 degrees out. The residents of this desert metropolis were all up and out cruising the business strip, which looked like every highway business strip in every town in the USA, and was replete with every fast-food franchise known to man. We surveyed all of this, decided that this was not the place to spend the night, even though it was late, and we were all tired; and we pressed onward, out across the Bonneville Salt Flats bound for Elko, Nevada, the next town of any consequence.

As we drove across the flats by moonlight, thunder and lightning started happening behind us, slowly catching up with us as the night wore on. We pressed our way across the unceasing vistas of the salt flats, dead animals lining the roadsides, until, as we neared Elko, it began to catch up with us. No sooner had we pulled into Elko, at around 4 a.m., and gotten into our motel rooms, with slight sprinkles beginning to happen. Then it broke loose entirely, and for the next hour or so we were treated to an intense rainstorm that left the town's roads flooded. Of course, we were all asleep.

The next day, driving out of town, we could see from the debris in the road and the puddles along the shoulders of the pavement that it had, indeed, been a real gully-washer. All was changed out on the desert as we drove out. The weather had become temperate, with temperatures in the 70's instead of the 90's. There were many impromptu and, doubtlessly, unnamed lakes that had overnight come into existence. Long, unwatered, desert vegetation had also overnight sprung into life, so that the desert was a patchwork of greenery and just-sprouted wildflowers.

It was with a real sense of wonder about it all that we drove on across Nevada and into California.

Several years later, driving out from The Farm to California in a VW bus, which we were transporting to sell in California, my ex-wife, ten-month-old son, and I, encountered a similar occurrence. Leaving southern-middle Tennessee, we had taken back



highways out across the western part of the state, and driving into and through Memphis, gotten on the interstate briefly, so as to cross the Mississippi River. Once over, we took one of the first exits on the other side and went up through Memphis, gotten on the interstate briefly, so as to cross the Mississippi River. Once over, we took one of the first exits on the other side and went up through the Ozarks, at one point using a small ferry boat to cross a river up high in the mountains, where no bridge had ever been built to span the water for the state highway.

On we went, through Kansas and Colorado, staying on two-lane older highways, really seeing the countryside without the benefit of Howard Johnson's, Day's Inn, 200-foot-tall gas station signs, and other benefits of U.S. road culture. Instead, we passed through places such as a town with the world's largest hand-dug well. Very large, indeed, we found, after paying a quarter to take a tour. It was about as big around as the central hub of the Red Lion Inn hallways in Sacramento (site of the recent Westercon) and very deep, with catwalks leading down to the bottom. It was still in use, too, providing water for the moderately sized town in Kansas where it was situated.

We drove up over a high pass in the Rocky Mountains, some 11,000 feet, and it was still in use, too, providing water for the moderately sized town in Kansas, where it was situated.

We drove up over a high pass in the Rocky Mountains, some 11,000 feet, and it was snowing lightly the last 2,000 feet of elevation, up, and then down the other side. We stopped at the very top, where there were places provided for cars to pull over, and enjoyed the sensation of being so high up--the air was pretty noticeably thinner than we were used to--and in a snowstorm in June.

It was later, on old US 50, just across the Utah border into Nevada, that we experienced our storm. We had parked to camp for the night at the top of an 8,500-foot pass. As we settled in for the night, we began seeing a little cluster of lightning and black clouds out to the east, back in Utah, maybe 200 miles away. (We were very high up, and the view was stunning.) It seemed to be heading our way, but it was such a long way off; who could tell if it would strike or bypass us? It was some time after we'd dozed off that the storm hit like gangbusters, and woke us all up, dumping considerable rain on us before continuing in its hasty westward path.

The next day, the same miraculous transformation of the desert environment had occurred, and we drove across Nevada with great pleasure. Then, we took a high mountain pass, newly plowed through maybe five feet of snow, over the Sierra Nevada mountains, and through Alpine County, the least populated county in California, and very beautiful. We must have been one of the few vehicles through there that time of that particular day. It was normal for such roads to be closed during the snowier portions of the year--and chipmunks, squirrels, rabbits, and an occasional deer would run off into the woods as we passed through, leaving deep paw prints in the snow.

We drove down, off the mountains and into the arid flatlands of the Sacramento Valley, still staying to back roads. It wasn't until around Concord, some 40 miles east of San Francisco, that we surrendered with a great speed rush to the interstates leading into the main portions of the Bay Area. As we drove up into the tunnel, through the Berkeley hills, and out the other side, we were confronted after our ride through the valley heat with a wonderful sight: a thick covering of fog, obscuring much of the area.

// The weather certainly is a wonderful thing.

TRAVELER'S DIARY

-- Mitch Bailes

As I sit on the green carpet of a San Francisco stairway, I don't know how to tell the cat it's time to tell my story. Here goes.

While the rest of the world marked its holiday following the winter solstice (and I still need to determine if it's a day long, and usually doesn't fall on my brother's birthday), I flew to San Francisco to visit Lenny, setting out before sunrise, December 25.

The airline stewardess nodded when I mentioned her Born in the U.S.A. button. Is this Bruce Springsteen's first Christmas as an American Institution? He may be no match for the myth of the relentlessly advancing reindeer.

The flights from D.C. (a connection at Chicago) were late by slightly under an hour, with the delay this time attributed to the phenomenon of negative weather (courtesy of the arbitrary scale selected for us by Fahrenheit). Just cold, that is, and the time factor proved untroubling, since Lenny lives closer to the airport than I expected. Not 10 minutes after reaching Lenny's house our anxious father called to check on my arrival. Off into the land of sunshine, a triangular building, and houses serving coffee we ventured.

"Masters of War" came on the Avis provided stereo, the antecedent of the only recently released pop song to capture my attention. "Where the wealth's displayed, thieves and sycophants parade .." sings Joni as the title cut of her album, Dog Eat Dog. At times the rest of the album makes me want to inquire of Joni whether she thinks she's revealing a secret. Doesn't she know that it's impolite to point? But perhaps table manners are, indeed, for people with nothing better to do. While some people treat money as society's license for laziness, no one can justify using money as a tool for indifference to me. Exploitation of people fuels my anger (more about how to turn a dollar into a 50¢ expectation, later). How does it feel? I like "Dog Eat Dog", the song, and still want many more doses of Dylan's righteous anger. However, we all need balanced diets, and Lenny, apparently, felt no immediate appetite for a serving of more Dylan, as the college radio station segued into "Like a Rolling Stone". A switch of stations and practice watching meters brought space, a successful landing on the shores of North Beach.

Through what appeared to me as a harmonious mingling community of mostly closed shops and gathering places of the Oriental, Italian, and purely commercial types, we found a path to the Cafe Trieste. The coffeehouse was open and populated. With few places to sit, we took our beverages to a table with two empty chairs opposite a man occupied with readings from a South American poet. After granting us permission to share the table, he showed little awareness of us until after my conversation with Lenny had covered some experiences with teaching his geometry students.

Our companion at the table revealed that he, too, teaches, albeit at the elementary school level. Eventually, our conversation turned to guitar playing, then Bob Dylan. Remarkably, he told us that he, too, had just listened to "White Christmas" ((by Arlo Guthrie)), "Masters of War", and "Like a Rolling Stone", on the radio. I found his reaction a bit odd. "He was a tremendous up," he declared.

For me, being reminded of bitter truth seldom melts away my gloom like "Here Comes the Sun" can. My mind drifts to past evenings in Washington, D.C.... "That's Bob Dylan to me," as some similar phrase was sung by the Minutemen's guitarist

/continued on backcover../

12

ASTRAL

FINGERS



ON
BANAPPLE GAS

HARRY WARNER: The second Wistlestar got off to a fine start for me with the first line of typing. "The on-stencil composed" symbolized for me a tradition that is rapidly disappearing from fandom, as one fan after another obtains a computer or a futuristic word-processor-type typewriter, and gives all the prose produced on it a thorough revision and sprucing up before it goes onto stencil or hits the copying machine or otherwise gets duplicated. The difference is something like the change that has come over recorded music since the invention of recording tape. When tape became available, it made possible the perfecting of performances before they are available in recorded form, splicing in the better of several takes, deleting wrong notes and inserting right ones, and adjusting balances. Now commercial recordings are much closer to the performers' ideal and intentions than they were when recording was done in four-minute takes for release on 78 rpm records and there was no easy way to correct individual notes on a

master. But some spontaneity is lost and I think there's a lessening of concentration by musicians when they know everything can be fixed before it goes on sale. Just so, I find it harder to run across the indescribable spontaneity that composed-on-stencil fanzine pages at their best possessed.

AVEDON CAROL: Whistlestar #2 was interesting even when it wasn't in code.

WALT WILLIS: It was noble of you to airmail it, but it makes me feel guilty for sending only a postcard rather than the great LoC's you seek ... all I can say is that I have noticed cats do not eat postcards.

BRIAN EARL BROWN: There seems to be some confusion regarding nachos. You describe the best in S.F. as swimming in guacamole and sour cream, but the nachos my wife and I expect when we order them is a plateful of doritos drowned in cheese. The fast food places, movie houses, etc., serve a "cheese" sauce made of velveeta. The best nachos for us is at Old Mexico where the chips are covered in Monterey Jack cheese and broiled until sunny ... now which is the authentic nachos? ((Guacamole & Sour Cream are extra -- it's just lasagna which makes a nacho unusual))

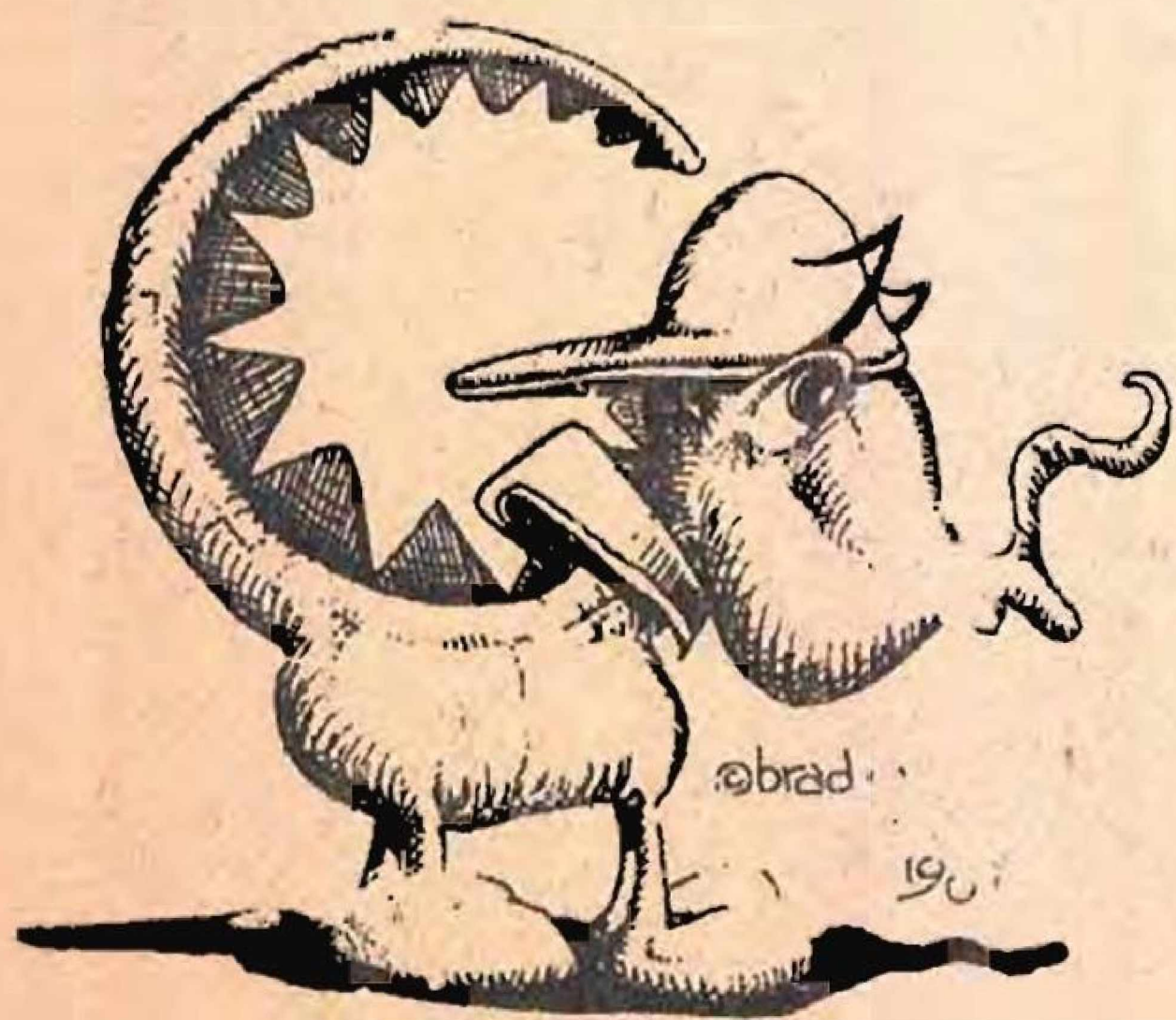
Ralph Eno, the science fiction fan who doesn't read ... I think we have met the future in this "fan." But even if they develop computers that can read and write for us - will people sit down long enough to listen? Will fiction be reduced to what can be narrated on a 90 minute cassette? ((No, a five minute video.))

CRAWLING FROM THE WRECKAGE

ROB GREGG: The highlight of the issue, for me, was the excellent "Crawling from the Wreckage" by the ever consistent Lucy Huntzinger. She is such a fine writer that she manages to encapsulate the mood of British genzine fandom, which is a remarkable achievement, for an outsider, with little experience of its intricacies. It is true that while American Fandom has been taken over by "Topic A", the British zines have remained largely oblivious to the subject.

"Fwa" is a good idea ... but why exclude those in Britain and Australia? Fan Writers of the World would be a better idea.

((Actually, the foot of the mushroom which contains the fwa continuum maps national boundaries into the curved space of a CORFLU business meeting. Perhaps your thought can be considered in



the future or in the past, whichever part of the matrix first intercepts the collective sensorium))

HARRY WARNER: I liked Lucy's thorough coverage of those British fanzines, particularly for the fact that some of them have received few, if any, reviews on this side of the Atlantic. Some day, I suspect, United Kingdom fanzines from the 1980s will be among the most-sought collector's items in the United States, because some of them circulate in such limited quantities or not at all over here.

JEANNE BOWMAN: I will be writing to England just so soon now, if only to compare tastes with Lucy. (I thought the piece in This Never Happens about style had a few good points buried in absolutely classic sercon rant, but Lucy is dead on about the art.

ON
PHILIP K. QWERTYUIOP

BRAD FOSTER: "The Game Palyers of Write-In" is just so slopping-over with in-references (and this sentence too crowded with hyphens) that my poor little brain can little understand the wonderousness of it all.

JEANNE BOWMAN: Dave Rike's artwork is wonderful. I can picture Dave scrunched into his portable lighttable occasionally rifling for the correct tool out of that basic black lunchbox of styli. Looking up & pausing to make an implausible (at first) interjection into conversation with that savvy but demented look in his eye, with no break in his artistic concentration.

BRIAN EARL BROWN: I tried to figure out who really wrote it but gave up. It's undoubtedly someone from the Glen Ellen Group Mind - you or Rike, Lichtman or Paul Williams. (I threw in Williams because Qwertyuiop knows his Dick.)

HARRY WARNER: At first I mistook /it/ for a parody on A.E. Van Vogt's fiction. Then I realized I'm the only person in fandom old enough to remember Van Vogt's Null-A stories, the 1950's answer to Dhalgren, so this must have Phil Dick as the referent.

RICHARD BERGERON: I assume Qwertyuiop is Dave Rike: all the earmarks are present. Witty writing and a flair for the totally insane.

PASCAL J. THOMAS: ...Just like many Dick novels it seems to hover precariously on the edge of relevance (But to what? ...)

ON
PINK FLAG

RICH BROWN: Tom Weber is brilliant... his evocation of Washington Square Park reminds me of what Papa Hugo used to say--"Plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose."

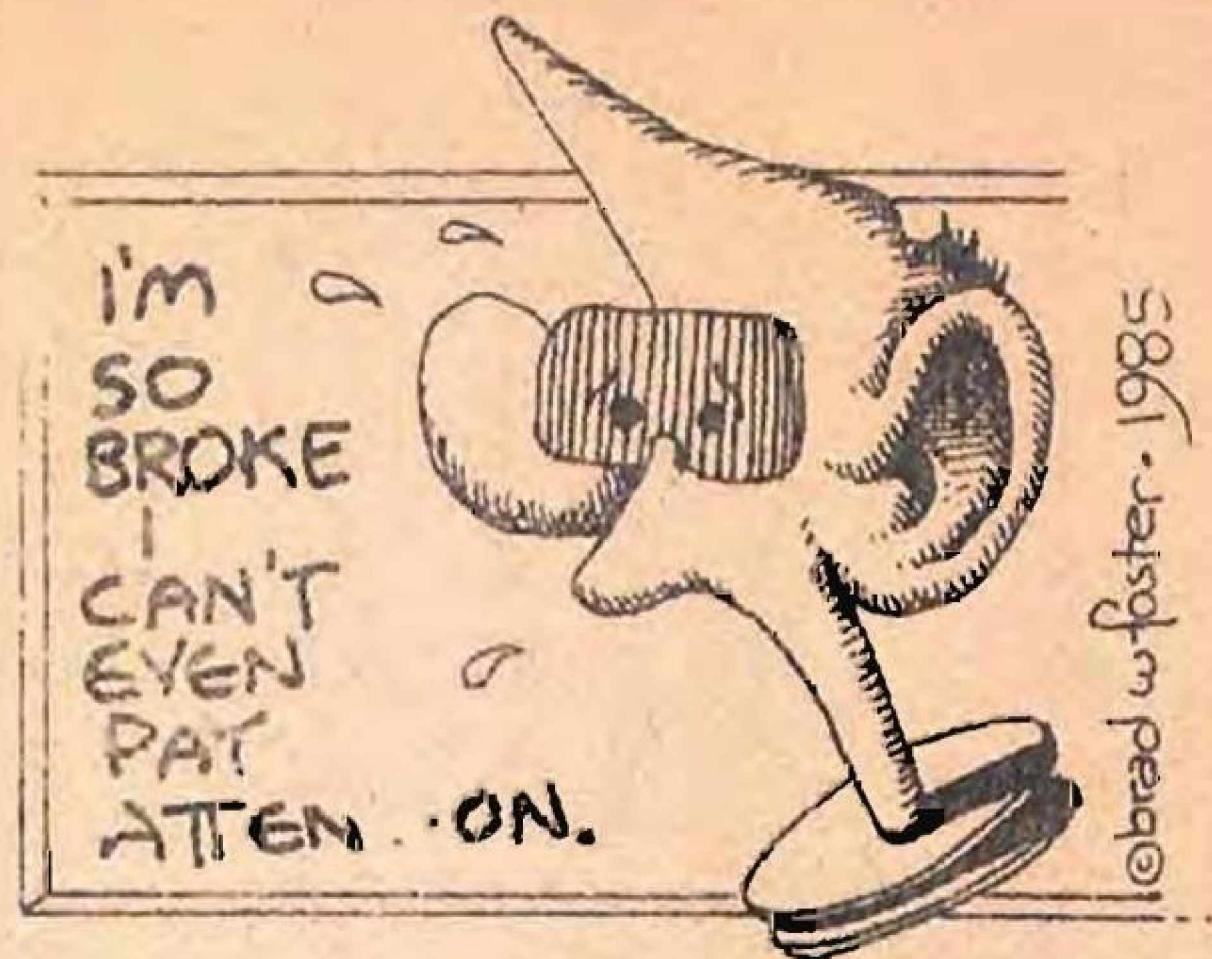
(At least, I seem to recall he was quoted as saying that on the back-cover of some old F&SF, although for all I know Papa Hugo may have been quoting Roger Vadim, or someone like that.) The musical noise, people dancing and playing and talking, even the gauntlet of dope sellers strike a responsive chord in me; yes, yes, that's the Washington Square Park I used to know and love and get totally wiped out in. Not skateboards -- we didn't have them in the Old Days -- although I, for one, am perfectly willing to put up with skateboards. In fact, a whole parkful of people on skateboards

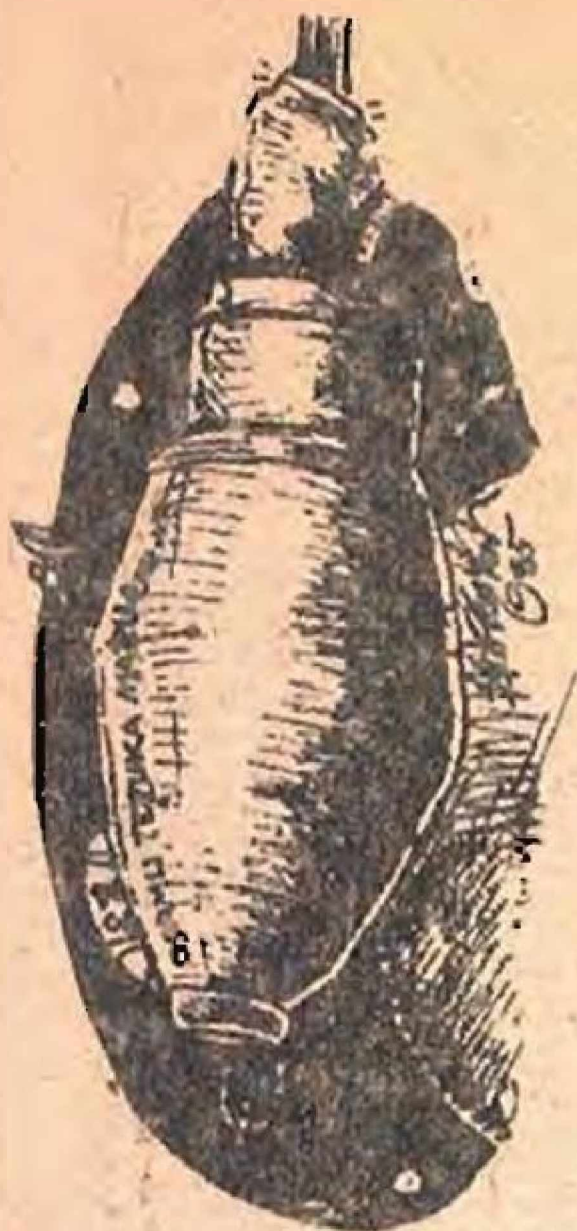
wouldn't have bothered me much; what bothered me, when I was in Washington Square Park less than a year ago, was finding it almost totally (a) unoccupied in the middle of the afternoon and (b) covered with concrete. What happened to the trees? I don't suppose they've replanted them but it's nonetheless good to hear that the lack of people was just a temporary Philip K. Dick reality I stumbled across. Left me, it did, with the feeling of vue ja de (which, I recently learned, means "something like this has never happened before").

I suppose Tom and I are at odds /on objective music criticism/ because I don't know any people who are objects and, for that reason, I object (little pun, there) to people being required to be something they're not. Criticism is the articulation of insights, opinions and tastes -- all of which are self-evidently subjective, so it's perfectly reasonable to me that these should vary from individual to individual. I don't know what Tom means by "objective" here, but I think it's safe to say (if he means what I mean when I use the term) that no one either of us knows is or can be truly objective. Speaking "objectively," the music of John Phillip Sousa is "just as good" as the music of John Coltrane, which in turn is "just as good" as the music of R.E.M. and Gang of Four which is also "just as good as (fill in your own) -- judging only by the honesty of the intentions involved and the "success of the artist" in achieving them. ...Certainly by any objective criterion, all of the above (with the possible exception of "fill in your own") would be "good" music -- but it seems absurd to me that a critic could (or should be required to) like them all equally or refrain from expressing any opinion about their relative merits for that reason. But there's no other way to go, objectively, since while these artists all had different intentions, they all succeeded in achieving what they set out to achieve.

((Is success at achieving a set of preconceived goals what we really mean by good? And why should an artist have to be honest? Some people end up telling the truth when they set out to lie, although this may not be good for them when society makes them rich))

AVEDON CAROL: I liked most of Tom's piece, especially, except that part of it I didn't understand, because I would describe two of my very favorite all-time groups as "artsy" and "pretentious". I thought the Doors were pretty entertaining





before they reduced their artsy/pretentious content. Procol Harum saved my life with their wholly pretentious music - especially that stuff on Shine On Brightly and Salty Dog. And it wouldn't have been nearly as powerful and effective if they'd skimped on the pretentiousness.

But Tom speaks as if good art never comes from laziness and accident and pretention. "... sometimes ... a lazy artist who wants to look important anyway will work to create the appearance of profundity." Hell, sometimes the best stuff comes when you're faking it. Sometimes, of course, you only think you're faking it. Sometimes a lazy artist will come up brilliant like hard work never will. Hard work and practice will get you skill, but inspiration is magic, believe me.

And anyway, Tom's example - the Eurythmics - makes me wonder what he thinks music is. Thank God he goes on and argues with himself. Still, he sounds ambivalent. After all, "no it isn't" "yes it is" pretty much gives you a precis of most arguments about music anyway. What counts isn't whether it's brilliant or pretentious or anything else. What counts is, do you like it?

WALT WILLIS: My very favorite bit was the one about the cosmic saxophonist, by Tom Weber, Jr. Well, why shouldn't the Music of the Spheres be saxophony rather than, say, Bouley or Holst? There is no good reason why it has always been for me the sound of those big metal humming tops children of my generation got at Christmas.

ON LIFE & LETTERCOL

BRIAN EARL BROWN: Life in Detroit is exciting when it's not depressing. We got robbed, my wife just graduated from nursing school... settling down, getting "real" jobs, finishing that long postponed degree, that seems to be the temper of the Eighties. The Seventies, for many, was an extended childhood. Suddenly we find ourselves into our 30's, sometimes well into our 30's and the options don't exist anymore. Besides, we've been seduced by the bourgeoisie's lifestyle - VCRs, computers, homes of our own -- gasp children! Certainly there's no way back from the Many Collared Land.

JEANNE BOWMAN: You never told the rest of your dear readers (and merciful companions) that you do, indeed have lyrics /music/ for Dinosaur Cowboys. And that that cute little harmonica neckbrace does more than punctuate & complete the musical props department. It makes music.

On 3 August of this year a guitar and work vest (the latter supplied by Dave Rike) journeyed north to Glen Ellen to participate in a hogshed demolition party thrown by one of Sonoma County's most innovative hostesses. A happy time was had by all participants as light conversation and wood carrying gave way to mandolin music, themes from popular motion pictures, a bit of Tom Thumb's Blues and musical noodling.

Thoughts go out this issue to Harry Andrusak, and others who sent fanzines in trade, and post-punk rock n' rollers seeking good investors.

THE BOOK NOOK: Tom O'Bedlam leaves me thinking about Russell Lafferty and Aztec artwork. After Her Habiline Husband I find myself traveling from improbable tribal rites on Venus to dreamtime in Africa. Norman Spinrad's glider planes have become stranger since he left California; the blue and red fireflowers on the cover of his latest novel pulled me into his new California narrative. Nouvelle Orleans and Rhialto (I wound up seeing Rhialto after replacing a lost copy of The Infinity Concerto at the library). Universe 15 and The Lunatics of Earth, Philip K. Dick's convention speech in there, as well, between Norman's and Michael Bishop's novels.

St. Thomas Aquinas placed Daffy Duck below Elmer Fudd in the "Chain of Being" with both Men and Angels positioned well above them. His logic was not unsound; he just needn't have accepted Aristotle's metaphysics in the first place. The fact that Daffy Duck is a two dimensional character does not make him any less alive than a three dimensional cartoon character like Thomas Aquinas.

Maybe until Thomas makes it into his own feature, this is true. The beginning and ending interlineations, this issue, are from an underground publication called The Synthesist, edited and partially written by Buck Moon. It is available from P.O. Box 40916, San Francisco, CA 94140, if still being published. I haven't seen an issue of this since May, but it is one of a number of underground publications which have emerged from the punk & art scenes. The Bay Guardian had a fanzine review column a few months ago which was more promising than any of ours have been recently.

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CRITIC'S CORNER

In the Valley of Valencia Kelvin was lord of appliances, refrigerators and stoves. Heald, his brother, was god of Business, neatness and success, watching over worldly pilgrims seeking the Golden Fields north of the Great Bridge.

Sauna, the fertility goddess, was the daughter of Kelvin, a lover of leisure time.

CREATION MYTH: One day, Heald found Sauna in a green mall near Sir Francis Drake and tickled her with a feather until in a steamy burst, she gave birth to Quiche and Croissant, the patron sprites of restaurants, whom all waiters hold sacred, offering them blessings to win the good will of Heald.

Strat was a stargazing, musical being, a lover of fields and flowers.

One day, Strat left his idyllic garden, having been invited to dinner at Quiche and Croissant's place. They tempted, tickled and tormented him, only to vanish at midnight, abandoning Strat in a deserted shopping mall.

Thereafter, Strat dyed his hair green and frayed his shirt in grief. He traveled everywhere with his hair standing on end, wearing old Krishna pants. Forsaking the stars, and his fields, Strat appeared to mortals via UHF television, where he screamed out his grief and confusion.

--:--:--:--:--:--

DESK GRAFFITI

(BALBOA HIGH SCHOOL, Fall '85):

Yes, I sat in this same place and fell asleep.

I used to like rap until
I found out all it is
is synthesizer and people talking.

Jose, why did you go to Europe without me?

Catch your train.

The Coke Truck Robbery

Def Leppard

$|6 + -6| = |6 + 6|$ (*sigh*)

Into the rock
flew, want to
break from pictured life,
from Yesterday.



I'm beginning to think
we got off at the
wrong bus stop.

The Creation of the Small

In the night
before the world
all the problems gather
into a little ball of confusion

In a massing crisis
of shattered glass
and broken houses,
cracked vessels and crumbled towers,
all the scribbled colons
and teeming silver fishtails
every unsymmetrical thing caught
in a grinning net of chaos.
A worried sleep
settles over our heads
like a dark blanket.

We haven't a prayer.

And so it was
when all was lost
that out of this
bungled mess
something happened!
A feeling was expressed,
a word,
and all at once
there was a reason
for everything to exist;
and like a smile
on the face
of a tiny white fish
each thing responded,
was glad to be itself,
and the little earth
turning ever-so-slowly
to the sound of tinkling glass became
a perfectly clear-cut
crystal ball
invisible to all,
but me!

-- Jerry Ferraz

TRAVELER'S DIARY /from p. 12/

(D. Boon, I think his name is). The words are often drowned out completely when I'm drenched in this band's waves.

A different phenomenon yielded a similar effect for the weary traveler in the Haight Street cooperative movie house, Wednesday evening. I sat, obliviously, as images from one of Lenny's favorite movies soared by. I think some of the music seeped into my unconscious mind.

But, back to The Minutemen. They are a band that is rapidly slowing down. Unsigned by a major label, to me, they represent the American music happening, today (Talking Heads are 10 years old). These guys are no punks; they can play their instruments. I approve of stopping in the middle of a concert to distribute "U.S. out of Central America" leaflets, even if I don't plan to go to a Nicaraguan farm to grow coffee for three weeks. The Minutemen are an original band of today, and I'm suspicious as to whether Lenny would relate.

"Play here" announce the bold green letters on a bright white banner above the door at a small grocery store. The postermakers realize that dreams never end. Underneath, a girl, perhaps less than half my age (I'm 26), clutches a nicotine cylinder. A sickening definition of "play" is what I see for a moment. However, in a longer run the many big L's displayed are dim, when contrasted with bright moments from a rare visit with my oldest brother. I still summon strength from recollection of a performance of Duke Ellington's sacred music, which I attended the day I arranged this California visit.

No cipher here. Lenny presented me a glimpse of a wonderfully alive city, and I could not have enjoyed these days more any other way. "You were good company, tonight," he told me, Wednesday evening. And that made all the difference.

-- Mitch Bailes



WHISTLESTAR #3

12/27/85

FROM:

L. Bailes
504 Bartlett St.
San Francisco, CA 94110

RETURN REQUESTED

TO: