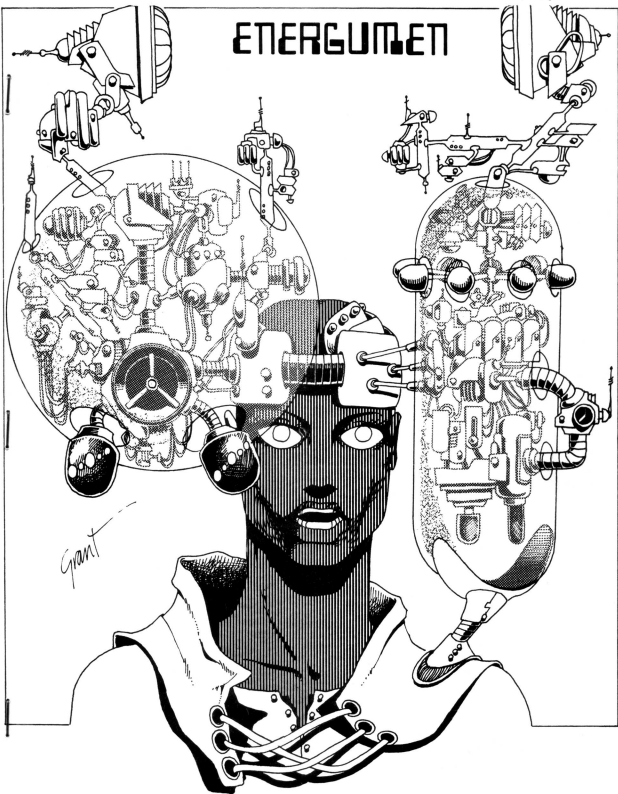


ENERGUMEN



Energumen 13

Sept. 72

The unlucky 13th issue of Canada's quarterly genzine ENERGUMEN is published for your enjoyment by Mike & Susan Glicksohn from 32 Maynard Ave., #205, Toronto 156 Ontario. It is available for substantial loc, arranged trade, contribution of artwork or written material or 75¢ cash. As our circulation approaches our print run, a very few subscriptions at 3 for \$2.00 remain available but be warned that any sub money beyond issue #15 will be used to buy hampsters for Larson E. (No US checks or stamps, please.) Cover this issue by Grant Canfield: Backcover by Dan Steffan.

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SUAMI Press Publication #22



THINGS TO COME... You hold in your hands a copy of the ante-penultimate ENERGUMEN. For those of you without the 'benefits' of higher education and/or familiarity with the songs of Flanders and Swann, that means the next to the next to the last issue. Or to be even more precise, ENERGUMEN will cease publication with issue #15.

There are many reasons behind this decision, none of which, believe it or not, has anything to do with our losing the Hugo. Primarily, though, it's a simple matter of fulfilling one's objectives.

When I first thought of publishing a fanzine (quite some time before I actually did produce an issue) I set two basic goals. I wanted to prove to myself and to my friends that I could begin a fanzine and continue it for at least ten worthwhile issues. And, much more important, I needed to prove to myself that I could do something creative and personal and do it at least as well as the majority of the other people doing it.

I've never been a particularly creative person. I can't build things. I can't play any musical instrument (my one year of high school band was a disaster.) I can't draw to save my fanzine. And I'm very much aware of my limitations as a writer. What talents I do have are probably in the field of mathematics, and even here I know I'm not capable of any original contribution. When ENERGUMEN was born, I'd just dropped out of graduate school, accepting that I'd chosen the wrong area of research. At the time it was particularly important that whatever I chose to do, I'd do it well. (Fans as social misfits, did someone say?)

Well, this is issue #13, and even my students know that 13 is greater than 10. A check through our bound file of #1-#10 shows considerable, steady improvement during those issues, so the first of my objectives has been met. And the second? For me, at least, it too has been attained: I'm proud of this fanzine, and I don't need our Hugo nominations to tell me that I've done a good job. Not that we aren't delighted by the nominations and wouldn't like a third, but it's the personal awareness and satisfaction that are most important.

I can't deny that ENERGUMEN has been and still is important to me. As I said, it was basically a proving ground.



feedback
from
the mike

This in large part explains my reluctance to share the editorial duties, even after Susan and I were married. To the extent that editing a fanzine is a creative task, I wanted, and needed, to stand or fall on my own ability. It's a measure of my healthier attitude that Susan has had more editorial say in recent issues, and yet I'm still not capable of properly sharing the load. I'm still proving something to myself, and in some way ENERGUMEN and I are bound together by ties I cannot explain. I have fashioned its basic nature and direction according to my own ideas of the sort of fanzine I'd like to produce; I've accomplished the tasks I initially set myself, and it's been my decision to stop at this point. Susan would like to continue, and it's highly likely that we'll publish another fanzine sometime. But one which will be ours, to an extent that ENERGUMEN has not truly been.

With this and the two issues that will follow, I think we've accomplished as much as we can with ENERGUMEN. We've reached the top, in as far as we're runner-up to LOCUS, and while I'm sure we could continue to publish interesting, attractive genzine issues, we'd be essentially duplicating our past achievements, such as they may be. The challenge is in getting to the top, and staying there long enough to prove it wasn't a fluke, not in maintaining your position interminably. Oh, we could change the fanzine, strike out in new directions, with new goals before us, but I have a great reluctance to do so. I've no objections to starting a new fanzine, one we can share and guide along a new path, but I prefer to let ENERGUMEN stand as it is. In a very real way it is the physical realization of my first ideas on fanzine production, and I'd as lief preserve it intact. So stopping publication of this particular fanzine seems in order.

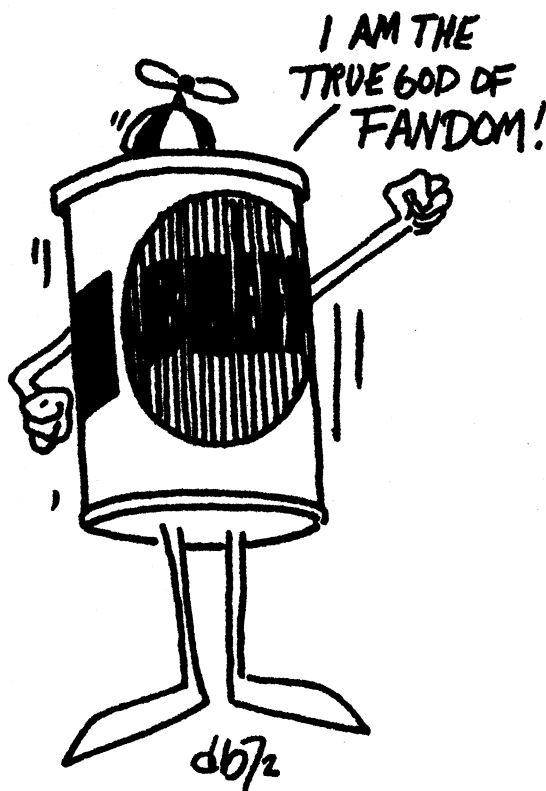
And yet I'm too proud to cease publishing the way so many faneds do, by simply not appearing for so long that eventually people move you from the "Delayed" pile into the "Dead" pile. I want to end with a little class, the way Dick Lupoff did with XERO. No loose ends, no gradual fading away, but a blaze of glory; a very definite ending that would be hard to top even if one kept on publishing.

We won't be going to fancy paper or multi-coloured mimeography, because that's not our thing, but the end has been planned out nevertheless. This is the last 'regular' issue. It has our usual variety of material, some sercon, some frothy and light, all, we think, well-written and entertaining, plus another in our series of graphic trips. Next issue, #14, will be a theme issue, and is shaping up as the best issue we've produced, both visually and in terms of content. (It will include, by the way, the Derek Carter comic strip that was under the bed, all nicely collated, when I wrote the editorial in #12 and is still there as I write this. So much for my new-found prophetic sense.) And #15 will wrap things up with the letters generated by next issue plus some special concluding features, just to keep us in your memories. If it all works out as planned, we should go out in style. And ghu knows we could use a little style in this day and age.

-oOo-

So the main reason for the demise of this fanzine is its achievement of its potential (plus my reluctance to continue this title in another form.) But I said there were other reasons, and so there are.

The most pressing of these is Time, or, as usual, lack of it. It's getting harder and harder to find the time to produce ENERGUMEN the way we'd like to, and it means sacrificing more and more to keep it on schedule. Sure we could drop back to twice a year, but it wouldn't be ENERGUMEN any more. I don't know if any of you can understand that, but it's important to me. Right now Susan has her thesis underway, and must work constantly at it. I'm in a new school with 6 classes instead of 4, 30 teaching periods a week instead of 22, and 170 students instead of 90. And on top of the greatly increased work-load, I'm spending an hour and a half a day more in transit than I did last year. Our mundane schedules just won't permit the production of a full-size regular genzine any more.



Another aspect of the time factor is that publishing **ENERGUMEN** is beginning to take up all of my time available for fanac. I first entered fanzine fandom as a letterhack and I've managed to maintain that side of my activity throughout the life of the fanzine. But lately I've had no time at all for locs. A frighteningly large pile of unanswered fanzines has built up recently, and my name is probably mud in dozens of fannish households. This bothers me because as great a source of satisfaction, enjoyment and egoboo as **ENERGUMEN** has been, I get as much pleasure out of writing locs. And while I may have reached my potential as an editor, I think I can still make a contribution through my locs. I'd like to have the time to do so. (I suppose it's fair to say that deep down inside, there's a letterhack kicking and screaming to get out.)

I'd also like the time to do a few other things besides type stencils, enter subscriptions, run stencils, collate folios, stuff envelopes, type mailing labels, etc. Nobody likes doing this, but if it only

takes a small part of your spare time, you learn to live with it. When your spare time diminishes to the point where that's all you seem to do, though, then something has to give. Publishing and distributing even just 240 copies of a 50+ page fanzine every three months entails a hell of a lot of labour (especially when you have to slipsheet!) We're getting into some apas now, and **TORCON 2** is coming up. Besides, Susan deserves to be married to a husband, as well as an editor. (To top off everything, we've undergone a recent surge in popularity. A flood of subscriptions has raised the initial mailing to about 230; coupled with my refusal to raise the regular print run past its current distribution of 240, this means we'll shortly be forced to send back subscriptions. Sigh-- there goes a bunch more deadwood.)

-oOo-



I imagine that no matter what we say, there will be those who'll think we're "quitting" because we didn't win a Hugo, or hoping to get a sympathy vote next year. In the first place, we knew all along we wouldn't win and this decision is one I've been talking over with Susan since well before **LACON**. It is a bit frustrating to have to realize that no matter how good a fanzine someone might put out, a circulation of 240 is just never going to get you that statue. But that's reality and you live with it. (**LOCUS** distributes more than five times as many copies as we do; **GRANFALLOON** has a print run twice ours; and **SFC** has 200 paid subs in North America alone. C'est la vie. All in all, we're delighted to have placed second.)

However, winning a Hugo is no fanzine's raison d'etre. The Hugo is simply one of the ultimate forms of egoboo (although there are those who scorn it) and since it is literally impossible for most faneds to win one, the majority of us are more than satisfied with egoboo of a somewhat lesser sheen, though of certainly no lesser significance. As I say in the lettercol to Grant Canfield, we'd love to win a Hugo, but winning one or losing one has nothing to do with the decision to stop publishing.

As for next year, well if we really wanted to win, we'd be doubling the print run instead of trimming non-responders to keep it at its current workable level. Sympathy votes? Our circulation is still 240, and LOCUS still has a circulation of over 1300, and there are still likely to be well over 500 votes cast... Influence of local voters? Let's ask Tom Digby about that... No, we're realistic about the award. We both think this has been a good zine, but a hell of a lot of fanzines that were a hell of a lot better than this one didn't win a Hugo either. (Fannish fans please skip the next two lines.) So while we're certainly hoping for another nomination for next year, those rocket-shaped doorstops would be frosting on the cake. And that's the truth.

-oOo-

So ENERGU MEN will appear in your mailboxes just twice more, then vanish into the pages of some future volume of fannish history. Producing it, and guiding it, has meant a lot of dull, boring work (to this day I loathe pasting in electrostencils!)(and up to this point I estimate that my work on this fanzine has included the insertion of 150,000 slipsheets!) but has also resulted in a great deal of satisfaction and egoboo. It's been a source of great pleasure, and a monstrous headache. We've been frustrated, overjoyed, enraged, disappointed, and delighted -- often all on the same night! But above all it's been fun, and rewarding, and that seems like a good way to remember it.

Perhaps anyone willing to put in the long hours and to bring a perfectionist's eye to the mimeo handle could have created ENERGU MEN...and perhaps not. I don't know, and it doesn't really matter. We did it, and I did it, and it seems worthwhile. And if it pleased you too, what more could we ask?



☞ -oOo- ☞

WE INTERRUPT OUR PROGRAM...to give you a much-needed break from this soul-baring and provide you with some hard and fast information. BULLFROG INFORMATION SERVICE was an Oregon-based counter-culture magazine whose eighth and last issue featured a special section on fandom put together by the ever-lovely Alpajpuri. It included articles by Andy Offutt, Angus Taylor, Jerry Lapidus, Hank Luttrell and Grant Canfield along with reviews, fiction and lots of good fanart. When BULLFROG folded, Paj eventually acquired a large number of copies and he's selling them for 50¢ each from Box 69, Ocean Park, WASH. 98640

Paj asked me if I could recommend his 'fanzine' and the answer is a definite yes. At 50¢ it's a bargain, even for the completists among you who've probably read several of the pieces in fanzines and elsewhere. Get a copy, you'll find it well worth it. Besides...it's the only way the contributors are ever going to get their pay!

THE OLD CON GAME...began for me this worldcon with a convention in Albuquerque the weekend before Labour Day. By some gross miscarriage of Truth, Justice and the American Way, I was the Fan Guest of Honour. It was a small gathering (if one discounts George Senda) but not even the continuously overcast skies, the periodic torrential downpours or the remarkable displays of raw, violent lightning could dampen our enjoyment. My sincere thanks go out to Chairperson Pat ("Oh, it's always sunny here in the desert") McGraw, horrible old Roy ("We always have perfect weather here in New Mexico") Tackett, and good old Bob ("It never ever rains in Albuquerque") Vardeman.

My flight down was undistinguished only by the presence of vast numbers of squalling children on both legs of the journey. (Nobody flies directly to Albuquerque!) I did experience the pleasure of phoning for a free limousine to the motel for the first time, but their Volkswagon didn't impress me. The weekend itself was most enjoyable, the con being very lightly programmed and thus allowing many opportunities for conversation with a variety of delightful people (and also George Senda.) Highlights would have to include being turned on to snuff for the first time, a trip to Vardeman's palatial apartment block (decorated in early bordello), and a guided tour, conducted by that very same gentleman, of Albuquerque's high spot. (Taco Bell, did you say the name was, Bob?)

Even more exciting than these touristy excursions, though, was watching Bob visibly shrink as hour after hour passed and Guest of Honor Ted White failed to appear. Almost as Bob was preparing to give refunds on everybody's banquet tickets (an idea we heartily endorsed after eating Hojo's food), Ted arrived to save the day. A virus had delayed him (dare I say it hurt his circulation?), but certainly didn't prevent him from holding an interesting and amusing question-and-answer session to highlight the banquet.

For my own part, I was more than slightly nervous at the thought of addressing a roomful of people as Fan Guest of Honour when at least half the people there deserved the honour more than I did. But thanks to the marvellous powers of IPA (a brew unknown in Albuquerque, which seems to exist on Coors. Come to think of it, that explains a lot about Albuquerque...) and the concealing folds of the caftan Susan had made (which kept my nervous shaking hidden from the onlookers), I managed a few short words. Those present were kind enough to laugh in all the right places, too, which made it a rather enjoyable experience.

I'd be remiss if I failed to mention the Sunday morning breakfast at the Speers'. Jack kept the conversation going while Mrs Speer and Pat McGraw prepared such a mountain of food that eventually even John Douglas threw in the towel. It was a warm and friendly gesture on the part of the Speers, and for me it added a new dimension to what had previously been just a legendary fannish name.

Of the eighteen hour drive from Albuquerque to Los Angeles, through rain storms that threatened to wash away the Rockies, the less said the better. But if you're ever forced to take the trek, I can think of few people who could make it seem as pleasant or as short as Judith Brownlee did. (With the help of her groovy dog Angel, of course.)

With the traditional friendliness of the Angelinos, we'd been offered a place to stay by the Trimble and Walt Liebscher. Since Bjo is traditionally inundated with visitors on these occasions, we thought it best not to burden her with two extra bodies, so we gratefully accepted Walt's offer. ("We" is John Douglas and I, by the way: Susan was unfortunately unable to make the trip this year.)

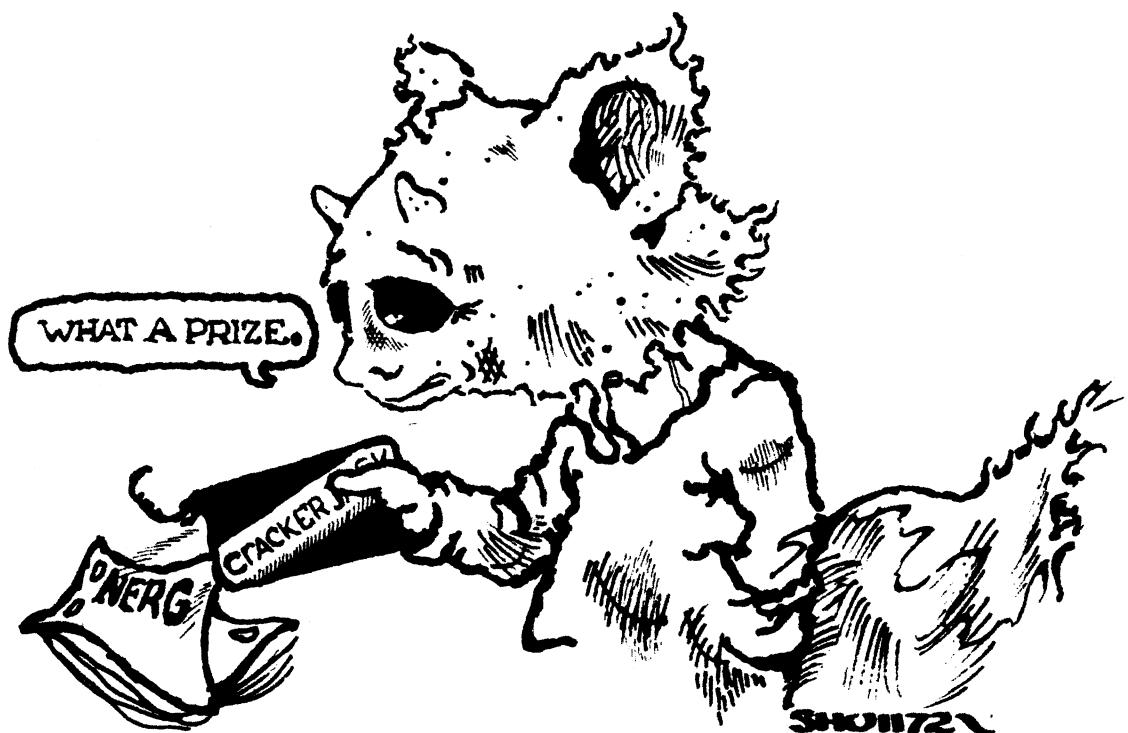
Judith again offered to drive us, accompanied by her room-mates Devra Langsam and Maureen Wilson, and the trip across and through Los Angeles turned out to be only slightly less hazardous than our previous journey. With surprisingly little delay, though, we found Walt's apartment, and squatted happily in his driveway drinking

beer and playing cards until Walt arrived home from work. And what can I say about Walt Liebscher? His warm, open nature has made him a man deeply loved by all who know him, and his many kindnesses to us enriched the trip greatly. Those of you who know Walt know what I mean; I hope the rest of you someday get to meet him -- this is one rare human being.

Before the convention itself began, I seized the opportunity to fulfill one of my long-time ambitions. On my fourth visit to California, I finally made it to Disneyland. (On the day of our second anniversary, as it happens.) Despite the schlocky parts and the corny parts and the good-clean-all-American parts and the kitsch parts (like the postcards that squeak when you squeeze them), I'd recommend it to anyone without reservation. There are rides and amusements there that are truly breathtaking in the realism of their illusions (and damn it all, that pirate did turn and wink at me when I said hello to him!) It's a clean attractive place filled with people enjoying themselves and I certainly didn't find it oppressively commercial. Maybe there's something to this good clean fun and wholesome family entertainment after all...

LACon had all the advantages and the drawbacks of an enormous world convention. Despite some poor planning in certain areas, the con seemed to run quite smoothly for most attendees, and the committee received the traditional round of applause at the banquet. For me, the chief blessing of the worldcon is that it attracts a lot of fans that I'd otherwise not have the chance to meet. By the same token, the modern worldcon attracts so many people that it's hard to get much of a chance to get to know these newly acquired friends. One or the other of you is always being taken away by other, older friends. A worldcon is a great place to be introduced to people but for meeting people I'll take a small regional anytime.

Nevertheless, it was a distinct pleasure to have the chance to chat, even though only briefly at times, with such good people as Grant and Cathy Canfield, and Jim and Lenora Shull, and Paj, and Robin Johnson and Bill Wright from Australia, and Jim McLeod and his wife, and many many others, among whom I'd have to include Greg Benford (who is funny when he's stoned, in a vicious sort of way) and God. That's right, I met God at the LACon in Los Angeles.



God, as many of you will know, is known to his intimates as Elmer Perdue. It was a complete surprise for me when I was introduced to this legendary fan on the Sunday night. I had no idea he was in the hotel, but such is the curse of the worldcon. Now that I've seen Elmer toke up while completely bombed, I'd have to agree that his nickname is totally deserved. (There certainly seemed to be a lot of dope at this convention...or so I was told.)

In addition to the many fascinating new faces, there was the traditional chance to renew acquaintances with a great many old friends, some of whom I hadn't seen for three years. The hours passed most pleasantly in the company of such dear friends as Jerry Jacks, the very first person I ever saw in fandom and one of the fans I like the most to this day, Astrid Anderson, who despite LOCUS intimations to the contrary asked me to accompany her at the masquerade, George Barr, as gentle and as interesting as ever, Tim Kirk, who gets more sardonic with each passing year, and Alicia Austin, who never seems to change at all, and the Trimble and the Browns and the Silverbergs and a host of others including many friends from the east coast that we fortunately get to see more than once every other year. I even had several chats with Terry Carr and Bill Rotsler, my fellow second-raters; on people alone, LACon was a fantastic success.

There was (or so I'm told) a full and varied program and a hell of a lot of movies. I actually attended a few parts of the former, although the latter almost completely escaped my notice. Having seen the movie room, however, this doesn't surprise me. As for the program, I personally don't enjoy the three-ring circus set-up that is currently the vogue. It sets up too many conflicts and can be embarrassing at times. I found myself on a panel addressing an audience of about 30 because many people had not yet figured out the layout of the convention space and we were on opposite Poul Anderson, a drawing card of not inconsiderable weight. I didn't mind, but the speakers who followed us and had their panel postponed for four hours because nobody showed up may have felt a little hurt. This was at least partly due to the poor design of the hotel, with function space scattered over a wide area. Many attendees never did discover all of the areas being used by the convention. On the plus side, though, the hotel provided remarkable room rates, so I suppose we had to put up with a certain number of drawbacks.

One such drawback was the location of the auctions in the smallest room in the hotel. Many potential bidders were simply unable to gain entrance to the overcrowded room and this must have hurt the bidding slightly. It was a shame, too, since the organizers had taken the trouble to prepare a catalogue of items on the block. This is a basically sound idea, although displaying the items might have been better than describing them. An indication of when each item would be sold would have helped immeasurably, too, since we wouldn't have needed to sit for hours waiting for one particular item to appear. This would have relieved the congestion problem also.

The art show was excellent, although once again the design of the room made the bidding sessions difficult to run, the masquerade was smaller than some but of high quality and very ably run, and the banquet was enjoyable despite the abysmal service, mediocre food and the Hugo results (sigh.) (Our table was absolutely the last to be served, long after everyone else had been cleared away. My thanks to Terry Carr and Barbara Silverberg for the green bean and potato that kept me going until the food did arrive. It's quite an experience to have the head table notables introduced when you're just starting your dessert.)

But all these complaints are only minor and are not supposed to indicate that I had a bad convention. It was a really good con, and if I noticed the areas where there were difficulties, it's because I want to know what to look out for next year. Our hotel is more efficiently designed than the LA one, so I'm confident we'll avoid many of their difficulties...and replace them with some uniquely our own! If everyone enjoys TORCON 2 as much as I did LACon, we'll have done a damn fine job.

"Life And Death In Dreadful Conflict Strove"



by Sandra Miesel

Mors et vita duello
Confligere mirando.
Dux erat mortuus
Regnant vivos.

---- Victimae Paschali, 11th C Easter hymn

Between 1963 and 1969 appeared one of the most popular recent sf series, Fred Saberhagen's berserker stories. Although the concept of a killer robotic spaceship is not unprecedented -- an earlier is Theodore Sturgeon's 1948 novella "There Is No Defense" and a later Norman Spinrad's STAR TREK script "The Doomsday Machine" -- Saberhagen explored the idea thoroughly, transforming it from a gimmick to a theological symbol.

The berserkers, millenia-old relics of war between extinct alien races, are the implacable foes of all life. These subtle, treacherous, wholly unpredictable asteroid-sized destroyers can devastate an entire planet within days. Guided by self-programming computers, they are capable of adaptation, learning, communication, and replication as in ghastly parody of their living prey. The voices of these soulless intelligences are the recorded sounds of captives, "bits of human emotion, sorted and fixed like butterflies on pins."

As the series unfolds the berserkers grow from mechanical menaces to horrifying images of Death and Absolute Evil. The earliest story, "Without a Thought"/"Fortress Ship", depends on an elementary application of games theory; the last, "Starsong", retells the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. Other stories employing simple devices include "Patron of the Arts" (art as expression of life), "The Peacemaker"/"The Life Hater" (a pacifist's bluff), "What T and I Did" (neurophysiology), "Mr. Jester" (a comedian allies with an inoperative berserker), "Sign of the Wolf" (post-technological barbarism forshadowing the setting of THE BROKEN LANDS and THE BLACK MOUNTAINS), and "Berserker's Prey" (growing plants as weapons).

In addition to these discrete adventures BERSERKER also includes a cycle of connected stories about the warrior-saint Johann Karlsen and his associates. "Goodlife" introduces High Admiral Hemphill whose desire to avenge his family makes him as terrible and implacable as the berserkers themselves. To him: "What else really mattered in the universe, besides smashing the damned machines?" A more sympathetic character is the homely poet Mitchell Spain who falls in love with Karlsen's doomed fiancée. Charismatic and deeply Christian Karlsen has the "tremendous assurance -- not of being right,...but of being committed to right." He leads a human armada to decisive victory in "Stone Place." But jealous of his popularity, Karlsen's half-brother Filipe Nogara, nihilistic ruler of the mighty Esteel Empire arranges his feigned death. Karlsen is trapped along with a berserker vessel in orbit around a neutron star and later rescued by Hemphill's men in "The Face of the Deep".

Literary borrowings, from Poe for "The Masque of the Red Shift" and Chaucer's "Knight's Tale" for "In the Temple of Mars," heighten interest in this part of the

series. Moreover it draws upon sixteenth century history. Johann Karlsen, governor of Austeel, is Don John of Austria, "the last knight of Europe," illegitimate son of Hapsburg Emperor Charles V, half-brother of Philip II of Spain. Under Don John's brilliant command the allied fleets of Spain, Venice, and the Papacy broke Turkish seapower for all time at the Battle of Lepanto, October 7, 1571. So astonishing was this victory, the Catholic Church has commemorated it for the past 400 years with the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. Even Saberhagen's battle tactics and statistics approximate those of Lepanto.

Don John was then sent as regent to the rebellious Netherlands where he ruled intelligently until felled by a combination of the plague and syphilis. (The historical prince was not quite as virtuous as Karlsen.) Rumor insisted that Philip had had him poisoned. Similarly, after the berserker's defeat, Nogara dispatches Karlsen to pacify the planet Flamland (=Flanders). Once this mission is complete Nogara has his brother placed in suspended animation but announces he died in an epidemic.

Saberhagen's portrait of Nogara blends legends of the Spanish king with fact. The scene in "Stone Place" where Nogara contemplates a vial of suicide drug is taken from Chesterton's poem "Lepanto." Nogara's cruelty, taste for sadism and perversion, necrophilous inclinations, and paranoia are those of the legendary Philip. His meticulousness, calculation, impassivity, and indifference to ceremony are those of the real Philip. With the passage of years both Esteeler and Spaniard spiral down into ever-deepening gloom, prisoners of joyless power.

History is also the basis of BROTHER ASSASSIN, a novel fused out of three novelettes. Here the struggle against the berserkers takes the form of a temporal war, permitted by anomalous space-time conditions around the planet Sirgol. From a last underground redoubt the surviving inhabitants parry berserker attacks on key events in their past: the Neolithic roots of civilization ("The Stone Man"), the reign of a great king equivalent to Charlemagne ("The Winged Helmet"), and the beginnings of science and global peace ("Brother Berserker"). The enemy is duly destroyed and men are free to rebuild their world. The book emphasizes ethics more than time paradoxes. The technology of time-probing is a "given"; victory hinges on individual unselfish acts.



The final episode, its magazine version exquisitely illustrated by Jack Gaughan in the manner of Dürer, is perhaps the best of the entire series. Saberhagen's sources are the career of Galileo and the legend of St. Francis of Assisi and the Wolf of Gubbio. Scientist Vincenzo and friar Jovann are targets of the most sophisticated berserker robot ever built: the one for his contribution to human knowledge, the other for his inspiration to human conduct. The disguised robot attempts to interfere in Vincenzo's heresy trial by helping him irrefutably prove the rotation of the earth. Vincenzo is dissuaded from using this proof and unable to confound his persecutor Nabur (Urban

VIII), continues the research essential to future Sirgol science.

Brother Jovann is St. Francis reverently duplicated, even to the details of his grey robe and name -- St. Francis had originally been called John (Giovanni). His foolish disciple Saile is of course Elias of Cortona, second General of the Franciscan Order who shaped it far from its founder's intent. Instead of taming a vicious wolf with love, Jovann pacifies the berserker robot. He's the catalyst that draws the subtle device from imitation to true life. Teilhard de Chardin's influence is evident in this climax as it is all through BROTHER ASSASSIN. (Evolution and evolutionary mechanisms are also the bases of Saberhagen's first two novels, THE GOLDEN PEOPLE and THE WATER OF THOUGHT.)

Struggle between the forces of Life and Death is such an elemental theme Saberhagen has continued to dramatize it in his newer, non-berserker novels THE BROKEN LANDS and THE BLACK MOUNTAINS. Both series follow the traditional scenario of cosmic conflict and trace the polarization of the universe. Aliens and men, even animals and plants unite to serve Life while Death threatens. Yet there are crossovers between the two camps. Death-serving orientations existed in mankind from the beginning. A few men collaborate with the enemy willingly ("What I and I Did") or can be conditioned to do so ("Goodlife"). The berserkers incorporate human tissue into their cybernetic devices ("Starsong"); men depend upon computers. ... "The fight would be computer against computer, faithful slave of life against outlaw, neither caring, neither knowing." A robot achieves living awareness to respond to love; men worship the berserkers to wallow in hate ("In the Temple of Mars"). Karlson's brother and dark antithesis Nogara feels kinship with the hosts of Death. Whatever the outcome of the war, he muses, "What did it all matter? Was it not a berserker universe already, everything determined by the random swirls of condensing gas, before the stars were born?" Whatever the reason the saga of Karlson was left incomplete, it was unnecessary to show a climactic duel between the brothers. Like the grisly High Lord Som in THE BLACK MOUNTAINS, Nogara is death-in-life. He must inevitably destroy himself.

There is nothing especially remarkable about affirming the primacy of goodness or observing that "eyes see more than lenses do." Yet at a time when human aggressiveness is loudly deplored in sf (STAND ON ZANZIBAR, etc.), Saberhagen accepts it as a fact of our nature and demonstrates its survival value. Humans are the backbone of the resistance; non-violent elder races are unable to defend themselves.

Suffering and tragedy punctuate the series. The author often depicts sorrow, loss, and regret (also in a non-series short story, "Young Girl at an Open Half-Door"). Yet his confidence never wavers. Virtue must ultimately triumph no matter how powerful the Adversary appears.

The great frustration in fighting evil is that it can never be totally eradicated. Men emulate berserkers whether as worshippers or as crusading fanatics like Hemphill. Despite their defeat at Stone Place, the berserkers are never quite exterminated. A few always escape to rebuild and attack anew. LORD OF THE RINGS and Chesterton's BALLAD OF THE WHITE HORSE end on this same note: no earthly victory is lasting. The laurels of Lepanto and Ethandune are as faded as those of Middle-earth. New threats inexorably arise.



What explains the berserker series' popularity? For one thing there is the attraction of Saberhagen's sound technical imagination which can see a story in a Foucault pendulum or a squash seed. Then there is his skill in plotting old verities on new coordinates. The author's views are wholesome and hopeful. His sincerity and concern for the issues he raises are clearly evident. Life against Death is the duellum mirandum, the wonder-war. As we flounder in contemporary ambiguities, apocalyptic tales are a welcome diversion. It might also be argued that these infernal automata seem more gruesome to today's reader than the wraiths and monsters of conventional fantasy.

Glittering style is not one of Saberhagen's strengths. His plain functional prose falters in "Starsong" but nevertheless improves -- compare **BERSERKER** with **BROTHER ASSASSIN**. His characterizations are generally rudimentary yet Karlson is an amazingly convincing figure. (Draffut the Beast-Lord in **THE BLACK MOUNTAINS** is another "impossible" character excellently portrayed.)

Saberhagen may be more artisan than artist but he is above all an effective storyteller. With deceptively simple tools he shapes fiction as staunch as a megalithic wall and as appealing as a fresh redaction of some beloved fairy tale. Through his tales we watch the Dance of Life.

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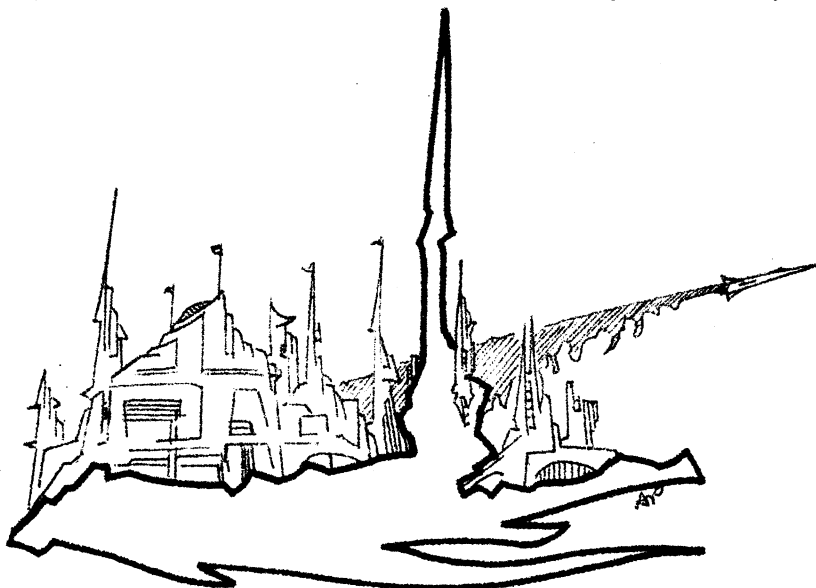
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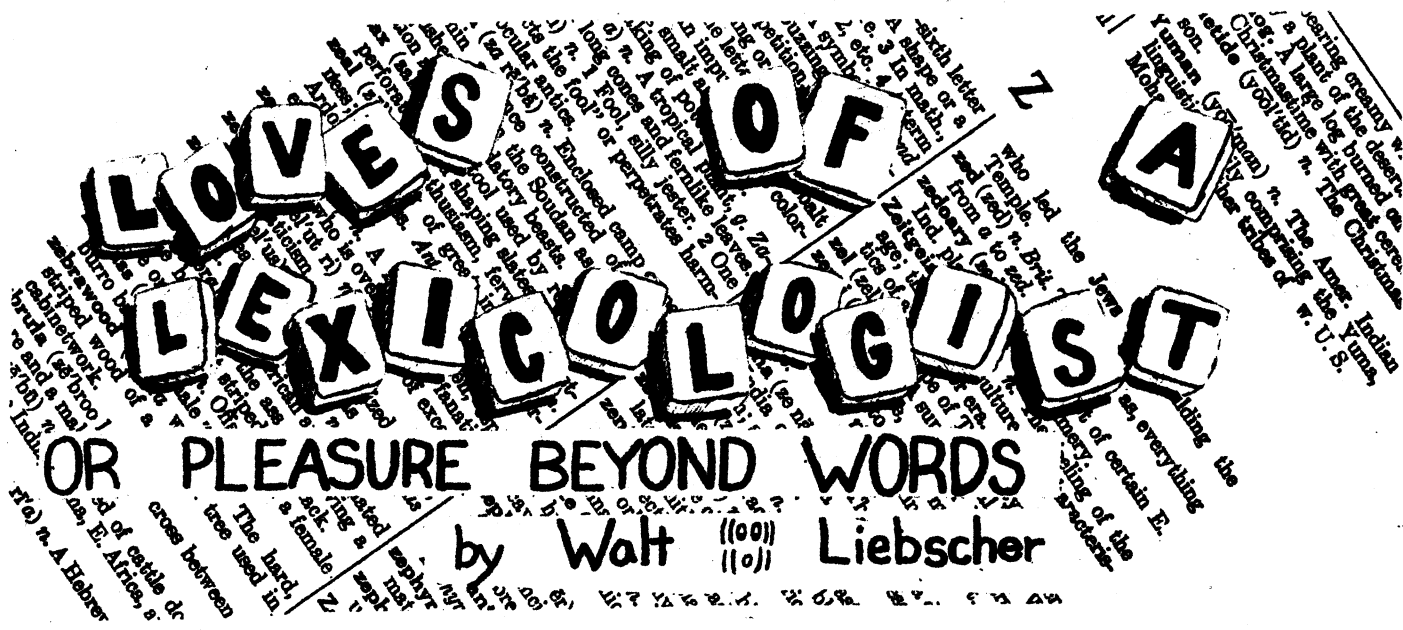
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Now, isn't that a nice sexy title. But, back off, brothers and sisters, this here is going to be an article as clean as the driven snow before the advent of smog.

I am in love with the English language. I am an inveterate Scrabble player. My favorite book is the Random House Dictionary of the English Language. Every time I touch it I almost cream my jeans. Such a wealth of knowledge, and fun, between the pages of one book.

Ordinary words I like, but unusual words turn me on. Following are a few that will be mentioned in this piece. It might be fun for you to guess what they mean before you look them up. And if you don't look up every word you don't understand, then shame on you. You are missing one of life's greatest pleasures.

ZORILLA	TIGLON	LIGER	CONCUPISCIBLE	CRAPULOUS		
IRREFRAGABLE	SUQ	SCUPPERNONG	LUBRICIOUS	LUCIFEROUS		
SATURNISM	SATRAP	PSEUDIPIGRAPHY	FOOZLE	FUNGIVOROUS		
GLORIOLE	GLUNCH	FIZGIG	FIRKIN	FRUSTULE	KLABERJASS	
GLABROUS	CRWTH	ZEBRULA	ZIGGARAT	ZEBRASS	SWINK	
SWONK	SWONKEN	SWEESE	SNASH	KOGAI	KODOGU	WAKIZASHI
KATANA	KO-KATANA	TSUBA	KOZUKA	DOGGAI	SEPPA DAI	

If you know the meaning of ten of the above you win a gaggle of swooses.

- o -

If you tell someone that they are concupiscible, you are not implying that they are very wet, but very desirable.

Someone who is crapulous is not stinking from what you may think, but is stinking drunk.

Irrefragable does not mean incapable of being fragged, but merely undeniable.

Suq is the only word (invaluable in Scrabble) I have found ending in Q. It's a Muslim market place.

Does one ride in a scuppernong? No, but you can trample them with your bare feet. They is grapes. There is a delightful custom in the South. People go scuppernonging. You just drive to the place where they is grown, pay the man in charge, and consume these luscious morsels until your belly is full.

Lubricious has nothing to do with petroleum products. If you are wanton or lewd, that's what you are.

Luciferous has nothing to do with the devil. It has something to do with fireflies and things of that ilk. It's what they are when they light up.

Saturnism has nothing to do with planets, unless you see heavenly bodies when you have lead poisoning.

A satrap isn't a device for catching sas, it's a Persian governor.

Pseudipigraphy has nothing to do with mapping swine, it's giving the wrong author credit for a piece of writing.

To foozle is to bungle, so don't go foozling around.

If you are fungivorous, that doesn't mean you make people laugh, it means you exist on mushrooms, or truffles if you are very rich.

A glorirole is not a place to have illicit sex. It's an aureole, whatever that is.

Glunch is not a titbit tasting orgy, when you glunches you grimaces.

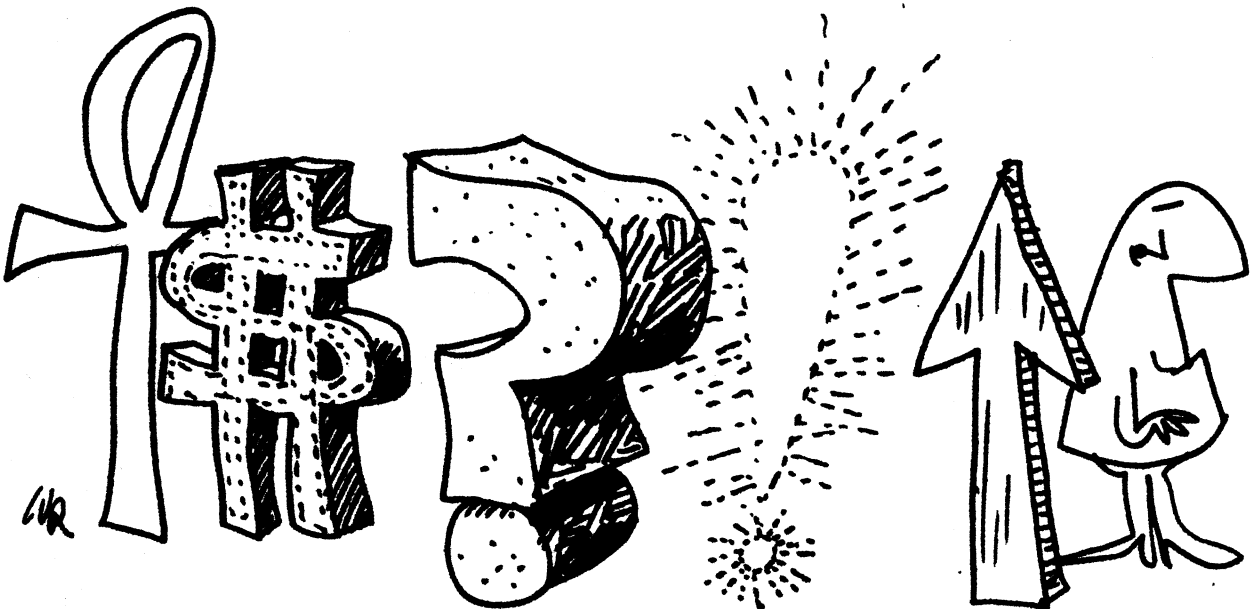
A fizgig is not a device to put bubbles in your drinks, but a giddy girl.

If you think a good firkin is something most humans enjoy, think again. It's a butter tub.

Frustule is the siliceous cell wall of a diatom. I never knew that before. In fact I don't even want to know it after.

Klaberjass is not a lot of talk about curdled milk. Would you believe a card game?

Glabrous is not a man with a severe head cold describing a beautiful woman. It





means you has no hair on your head, or a duck that has just withstood the ravages of a hurricane. Down is out.

Crwth (another Scrabble goodie) is the only word I have found with no vowels. A Welsh musical instrument.

A ziggurat is not something you smoke, unless you're particularly fond of Sumerian temples.

The book says swonk is a pt. of swink. I haven't the slightest idea what a pt. is. Swonken is the past participle of swink, which of all things means labor or toil.

Snash has absolutely nothing to do with women unless they use abusive language.

Now brace yourself. Kogai, kodogu, wakizashi, katana, ko-katana, tsuba, kozuka, doggai, and seppa dai are all part of one thing, a Japanese sword. If you think that's a gas, look up heraldry.

A tiglon is the offspring of a male tiger and a female lion. A liger is from a male lion and a female tiger. A zebrula comes from a female horse and a male zebra.

A zorilla is not a cross between a zoophyte and a gorilla, it's its own thing, a skunklike African animal.

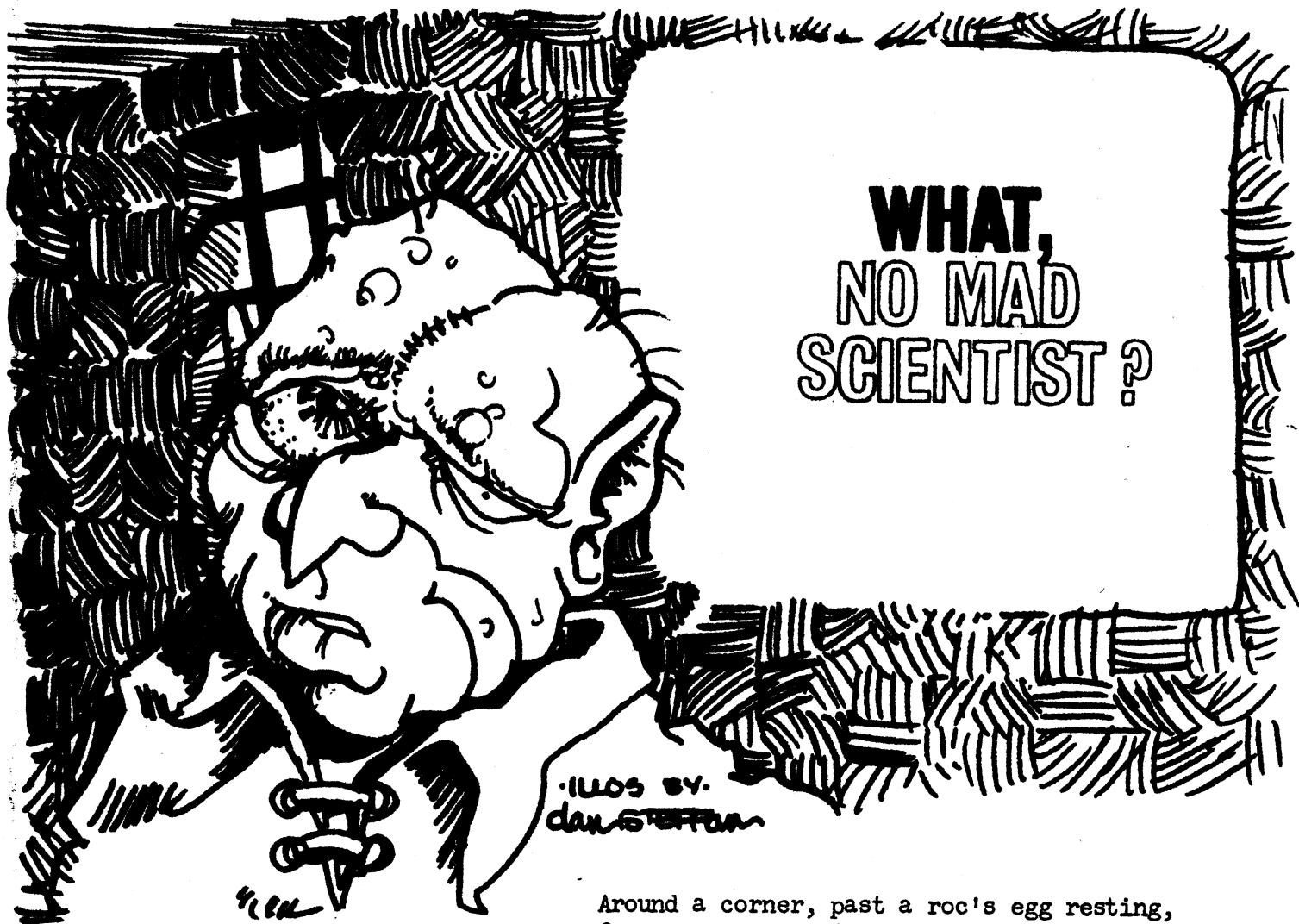
A zebrass is not the rear end of a striped animal, but the offspring of a zebra and a jackass.

I once knew a botanist who crossed a kumquat bush with a grapefruit bush. On one branch he had grapequats, and on the other, kumfruits.

A swoose is a cross between a swan and a goose. The plural is sweese, or, believe it or not, swooses.

To end this sterling, educational article on a high note, I must tell you about a friend of mine. He crosses pheasants with ducks. For reasons of propriety, he simply calls them birds.

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WHAT, NO MAD SCIENTIST?

ILLUS BY
DAN S. EGAN

bodies. I opened the lid of a small vat and stared down. A disembodied hand grasped the surface of the melted wax, frozen in attempted escape. My muffled scream echoed in the deserted room.

The beginning of a horror movie? Hardly. I was in Vancouver, B.C. at a science-fiction convention. One of the convention members had taken me to visit a waxworks -- that cliché of horror fiction -- and this was where they melted down cracked and chipped parts for re-use -- a transplant bank, so to speak.

Looking around the cavernous room -- empty of workers this Sunday -- I was struck by the preponderance of voluptuous female forms in attitudes of delight and abandon. This was explainable: the factory was currently supplying an order for a wax museum in Japan. One already in operation there displays, besides the traditional movie stars, statesmen and historical figures, an X-rated section depicting the delights of the flesh in such an explicit and animated manner that the Japanese police came to arrest two of the figures. This museum has proved so profitable that a second is planned in another city. Figures for that are currently being produced. Nude pinups decorate the walls above the workbenches, proving how dedicated the employees are to their craft.

The wax figures -- even the conventional types -- are most realistic. Were it not for their bloom of health and vitality one would think himself in a morgue. Each hair on the heads -- and stubble on the chins of the males -- is inserted by hand, with a needle into the wax. The eyes are the same prosthetic glass eyes used after surgery. A standing, headless torso, clad in long underwear, reveals that clothed

figures are dressed from the "skin" out so the costumes hang properly.

The girls, who spend all day inserting scalp hairs, are glad for a break in routine when asked to do nude modelling. The closed-off artists' workroom, I was told, has an executive and an employees' peep-hole.

What I wondered, do Pope Paul and the Mormon family, lifelike but disembodied, think, staring across the room at the bare and bountiful charms of Racquel Welch? Do they disapprove? If so, what must they think of the lesbian sado-masochistic scene, complete with whips, belts and bondage, that stands frozen in weird delight off to one side? They don't say what they think -- but they stare.

Out past the metal-skeleton shop -- past the roc's egg in its private bath -- past the ecstatic woman in the bottomless basket, past the polar bears in the rafters and the stuffed tiger -- I had seen it all.

But I knew, somehow, that beyond the next vat, hidden in the darkness, lurked Vincent Price and his hunchbacked assistant -- waiting. I hurried out the door.





PHILIP K. DICK
and
THE PSYCHOGENIC ORIGINS
of
DEATH BY METEOR-STRIKE
by Angus Taylor

Technicians of the Ordinary, Scientists of the Preposterous

It seems that editor Ben Bova of ANALOG wants "stories for the future" (sic) for his magazine. They should be "told for scientifically trained, technically employed adults. Usually, we like the theme to revolve around an ordinary technician involved in an industry 50 to 50,000 years from now."

How dull. How dreary. How trivial. Of course, if there's one thing I can't stand it's this sort of sick, New Wave garbage about ordinary technicians eking out their ordinary existences in ordinary industries of the ordinary future. Like some neurotic quantum mechanic whimpering away in the hold of some freighter on the Rigel-Aldebaran run while making boring adjustments to the ion-phasors of the hyperwarp converter. Ho hum. No friends, I'm afraid you won't find any of this sort of pandering to the tastes of an effete elite of gloom-ridden litterateurs in the works of one Philip K. Dick.

What alternative does Mr. Dick offer us in place of the tired anti-heroes of ANALOG? Well, for example, he offers us Lance Arbuthnot and his monumental and revolutionary thesis on "The Psychogenic Origins of Death by Meteor-Strike". Mr. Arbuthnot, (a nom de guerre of one of the characters in COUNTER-CLOCK WORLD) would have us believe that if a person is killed by a meteor it's because he hated his grandmother. A preposterous theory? Everything about Dick's stories is preposterous. I love it. Preposterousness is the essence of good science fiction. To hell with facts. Science fiction has little to do with facts, but much to do with truth. "Never let the facts stand in the way of the truth" should be the motto of all sf writers. Facts are for technicians. Facts are for hacks. Truth is for scientists like Einstein and science fiction writers like Dick.

Plato and the Bonds of Erotic Polymorphic Experience Motel

"I have a rule," Runciter said irritably,
"about my employees sleeping with one another."
"For or against?" Zoe Wirt inquired.

This article has been inspired by the fact that I have been on a Philip Dick binge recently. This binge may last quite some time, since it seems to be some sort of universal law that there are always more Dick books in existence than it is possible for any one person to read. Once you get hooked there's no stopping. It's worse than the Hardy Boys.

Dick's writing is very dense in the manner of French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss or of Jefferson Airplane's AFTER BATHING AT BAXTER'S album -- although a lot more fun to read than the former and considerably more unsettling than the latter. It is also endlessly funny and inventive.

The businessman chuckled, then picked up his morning 'pape, opened it to the front page. "Ship from outside the Sol system reported crash-landed on Pluto," he said. "Team being sent to find it. You suppose it's things? I can't stand those things from other star systems."

(Neither can I, as a matter of fact. Yecch!) The man is wearing "the gray pith helmet, sleeveless shirt, and shorts of bright red popular with the businessman class."

My favorite Dick invention is the devolution of Platonic idea-objects (ah, yes!), in which everyday objects regress in time, not into earlier, newer versions of their particular selves or constituent materials, but into previous versions of the universal archetype of a whole class of objects. For instance, a television set may turn into an old radio playing a pre-World War Two soap opera. In UBIK the hero finds his whole world devolving in this manner, reverting from 1992 to 1939. Actually, this is happening because, though he doesn't realize it, he is in the period of "half-life" following his death, with his body preserved in cold-pac in the Beloved Brethren Moratorium in Switzerland.

The disintegration of things-as-they-are is a preoccupation -- indeed, an obsession -- of Dick's. On a television commercial a housewife says, "I came over to Ubik after trying weak, out-of-date reality supports..."

"Yes," Runciter's dark voice resumed, "by making use of the most advanced techniques of present-day science, the reversion of matter to earlier forms can be reversed, and at a price any conapt owner can afford. Ubik is sold by leading home-art stores throughout Earth. Do not take internally. Keep away from open flame. Do not deviate from printed procedural approaches as expressed on label. So look for it, Joe. Don't just sit there; go out and buy a can of Ubik and spray it all around you night and day."

The world of human reality leads a precarious existence and persons who allow themselves to become separated from the society of their fellows are in that much more danger of having their individual realities undermined: "In the absence of Batys and Pris he found himself fading out, becoming strangely like the inert television set which he had just unplugged. You have to be with other people, he thought. In order to live at all." It's the fight against entropy, and Dick sees the enemy everywhere.

"Kipple is useless objects, like junk mail or match folders after you use the last match or gum wrappers or yesterday's homeopape. When nobody's around, kipple reproduces itself. For instance, if you go to bed leaving any kipple around your apartment, when you wake up the next morning there's twice as much of it. It always gets more and more..."
"No one can win against kipple," he said, "except temporarily and maybe in one spot, like in my apartment I've sort of created a stasis between the pressure of kipple and nonkipple, for the time being. But eventually I'll die or go away,

and then the kipple will again take over. It's a universal principle operating throughout the universe; the entire universe is moving toward a final state of total, absolute kipple-ization." He added, "Except of course for the upward climb of Wilbur Mercer."

Toward a Theology of Dog-Pooh

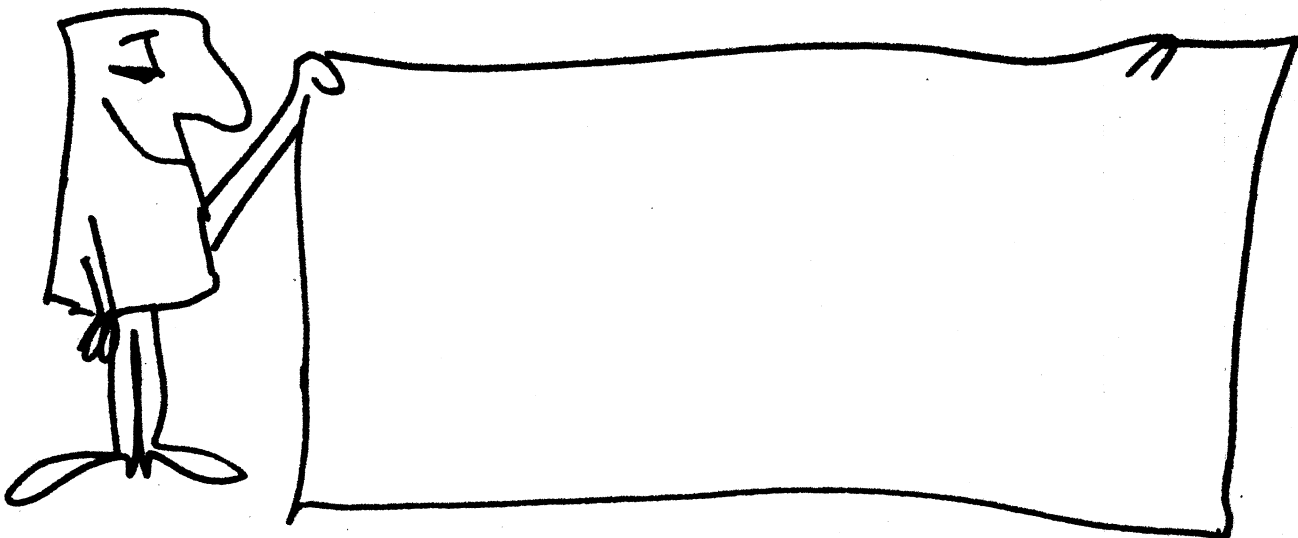
But is Wilbur Mercer just a fake, a television gimmick? Or is there really hope?

I mean, after all; you have to consider we're only made out of dust. That's admittedly not much to go on and we shouldn't forget that. But even considering, I mean it's a sort of bad beginning, we're not doing too bad. So I personally have faith that even in this lousy situation we're faced with we can make it. You get me?

--From an interoffice audio-memo circulated to Pre-Fash level consultants at Perky Pat Layouts, Inc., dictated by Leo Bulero immediately on his return from Mars.

From this passage we can see not only Dick's conversational, Holden-Caulfield-style writing, but also the way in which theology infuses all areas of life in his stories. There is a funny and revealing scene in *THE THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDRITCH* involving the words "desiccation", "desecration", and "defecation" in regard to a dog and a memorial pillar. Dick's characters discuss theological and metaphysical questions with a casualness and intensity generally reserved by people for last weekend's football games. Everyone talks about entropy, but no one can do anything about it. But if the body must disintegrate, maybe the soul is permanent, and we can all be reborn. "Christ, I hope so. Because in that case we can all meet again. In, as in *WINNIE-THE-POOH*, another part of the forest, where a boy and his bear will always be playing...a category, he thought, imperishable. Like all of us. We will all wind up with Pooh, in a clearer, more durable new place."

One of the endearing (if that's the word) characteristics of these stories is that they treat serious subject matter with a humor which adds to -- not subtracts from -- the level of discussion. ("A topic of world-shaking importance, yet dealt with facetiously; an android trait, possibly, he thought.") Dick does not mumble the usual



platitudes about doing good either. The hero of DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP? is a bounty hunter who kills escaped android slaves. Now, it's pretty obvious from the story that android slavery is wrong, but this is not the hackneyed civil-rights story worked into the ground by legions of sf writers -- the theme here is the hero's coming to terms with himself: doing wrong sometimes to do right, as Mercer says.

"That was an undisguised piece of factual reality, hard as it was to face." Dick's characters are always making very definite pronouncements about things -- especially about what is real and what is not -- and often contradict themselves with equal vehemence in the next paragraph. They are forever talking themselves into believing the most outlandish theories about what's going on -- because they are trying so desperately to find something to believe in. The more definite their pronouncements, the more you can be sure they don't have a clue what they're talking about. Events will contradict them almost before the words are out of their mouths. At least no one can accuse Dick's plots of proceeding linearly from A to B to C. Heaven forbid. And it usually does.

Maybe Portland Really is the Capital of the World, But I've Only Seen the Bus Station There

Speaking of heaven, I find it impossible to discuss Philip Dick's work without mentioning THE LATHE OF HEAVEN by Ursula K. LeGuin. This is a gorgeous story, in the best Dick tradition, and a real added fillip to anyone's science fiction library. As a matter of fact (and you know what they're worth), it's so much in the Dick tradition that Le Guin's syntax begins to resemble that of Dick -- though her writing is lacking to some extent in the mad humor that characterizes Dick. One almost wonders if the two authors have not conspired to perpetrate some gigantic hoax on the science fiction world. But then, why should Mr. Dick maintain a monopoly on this kind of writing? The more the merrier, I say.

Le Guin's hero starts tripping into other realities via a somewhat more regular type of dreaming than the drug-induced dreaming of so many of Dick's characters -- but the results are equally strange. Le Guin's hero has "effective" dreams -- dreams that come true, changing reality: history books, people's memories, their very existences -- the whole shebang. The hero, who is terrified by his involuntary power, is at one point struck by the thought that since his latest dream has, as usual, just brought into existence a reality which always has existed, therefore his memory of a previous reality is false, merely a bad dream; therefore he does not have the power of effective dreaming and never did have. (Put that in your pipes and smoke it, all you ordinary technicians of the ordinary future!) But he fails to comfort himself with this thought, and for good reason (see Asimov's drug-induced fantasy THE END OF ETERNITY regarding the concept of "physiotime" and overlapping sets of realities.)

The Machine as Oracle, the Alien as Angel

Dick's stories are filled with machines that mimic life. In addition to the usual crew of humanoid robots, there are talking you-name-its, including talking rooms, talking suitcases, and talking doors that have to be paid before they'll open and threaten to sue if disassembled.

"Considering you're a robot," Joe said, "I don't see what you have emotionally involved in this; you have no life."

The robot said, "No structure, even an artificial one, enjoys the process of entropy. It is the ultimate fate of everything, and everything resists it."

The robot in science fiction is not simply a mechanism, nor is it, simply, a human

being in disguise. It is both and neither. It speaks in riddles and offers new insights, as Gully Foyle discovered. It puts man in contact with the mysterious. Asimov's robots are not simply chess-playing computers; the Three Laws are never quite enough to explain the fascination they hold for us all. The telepathic robots and super-human machines of THE CITY AND THE STARS are part of a larger order of things, a greater design than the inhabitants of Diaspar can, or want to, understand. Science passes beyond simple human understanding, opening up a truly mysterious universe. With the rise of modern science and its increasing assumption of a position of authority in society, the idea of progress has become increasingly secularized until today it is being remysticized through the agency of science itself. "Mysticism is just tomorrow's science dreamed today," says Marshall McLuhan.

"I wonder, he thought, how many theologically inclined robots there are in the universe. Perhaps Willis was the only one..." Robots may not usually be into theology as heavily as Willis of GALACTIC POT-HEALER, but they nevertheless usually act to reveal, even if ambiguously, hidden knowledge or to dispense bits of wisdom. (Willis' real ambition, by the way, is to become a free-lance writer -- a suitable profession, perhaps, for an oracle.) There is a nice bit at the end of NOW WAIT FOR LAST YEAR where a taxicab gives the hero some valuable advice about his broken marriage.

Aliens play a somewhat different role. In THE LATHE OF HEAVEN, as in NOW WAIT FOR LAST YEAR, the non-humanoid aliens, contrary to human expectations, prove to be friendly, helpful, and wise. A Le Guin alien (from Aldebaran) is green and nine-feet tall. "It was grotesque to the point of being funny, like a sea turtle, and yet like a sea turtle it possessed a strange, large beauty, a serener beauty than that of any dweller in sunlight, any walker of the earth." It can intervene to help the hero if necessary.

"If desired. Speech is silver, silence is gold.
Self is universe. Please forgive interruption,
crossing in mist." The Alien, though neckless
and waistless, gave an impression of bowing,
and passed on, huge and greenish above the
gray-faced crowd.

It speaks in proverbs and platitudes, but not like a robot, not because of its own inherent limitations, but because of the inherent limitations of inter-species communication. The robot is a channel to the divine, but is itself closer to the human. The alien partakes of the very essence of a divinity which lies beyond the merely human.

He lay back. He clearly sensed the pity and protective compassion of the Alien standing across the dark room. It saw him, not with eyes, as short-lived, fleshly, armorless, a strange creature, infinitely vulnerable, adrift in the gulfs of the impossible: something that needed help...

Orr slept...Through his sleep the great, green sea turtles dived, swimming with heavy inextinguishable grace through the depths, in their element.

Perhaps a Cactus on Some Warm World

It seems to me that Dick and Le Guin are very close to the heart of what science fiction is all about. Not a literature of comfort, but one that unsettles while still retaining a strong medicine of humanism. Anyone who can describe Seth Morley's

meeting with the Intercessor at the end of A MAZE OF DEATH the way Philip Dick does can't leave us feeling too bad about things. Dick plunges madly into the heart of life and refuses to come out. My own favorites among his books are UBIK and NOW WAIT FOR LAST YEAR, with THE THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDRITCH not far behind. And that's not counting THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE -- his best book in some ways, but one which falls somewhat outside the orbit of his usual style and subject matter.

Ultimately, the enjoyment to be derived from his stories cannot be properly analyzed in the abstract. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, as our friend from Aldebaran might say, though Dick's pudding will not prove to be everyone's cup of tea. But if you can chortle and guffaw and nod sagely when you read a Dick story, why then you may just find yourself on the bus, as it were, heading for the bookstore to grab the next installment of Mr. Dick's Autonomic Perpetually Self-Renewing Saga of the Universe. That is, if the Second Law of Thermodynamics doesn't get you first.

And that's the truth.



"Thanks," I snarled as I took the bike from him. "William of Orange must be spinning in his grave," I added, pointing at the orange beribboned covey of drum majorettes that was prancing unsynchronously past us.

"Isn't he just," the officer agreed.

I walked my bike up Yonge, muttering obscenities to myself and calling the wrath of God down on my sister for using up all three kinds of flour I use to make bread.

When I got to Wellesley Street, I discovered to my horror that the parade started there. And Goldberry was on the other side of the street.

"Oh shit!" I swore. A matronly lady with an orange ribbon across her chest glared at me. I grinned at her. Her friend grabbed her arm and shrieked, "There he is! There's Herbie! Hello Herbie! We're over here!" Then they began to jump up and down.

"Quite a sight, isn't it?" someone asked.

"My God, yes," I answered. "If she's not careful, she'll rupture herself." I turned to see whom I was talking to. The cop had followed me from College.

"I suppose you want to cross the street?" he asked.

"How'd you guess?"

"Wait." He ambled across the street and talked with several other policemen, and a couple of minutes later, he wandered back.

"We've decided to let people cross the street between lodges," he said. "So as soon as this pipe and bugle corps passes you can cross."

"Goodie," I chortled.

"You're welcome," he answered.

"Oh, uh, yeah, thanks," I mumbled.

"Any time," he said, walking into the middle of the street and waving people across.

Because of the bicycle, I wasn't able to make it across with the first lot of people, or the second lot for that matter. By the time the third lodge passed, I was seeing orange and green spots and feeling homicidal. Then I noticed a break in the parade so me and my bike and a dirty, hippie degenerate started across the street. All of a sudden there was this man in front of me and he was waving a sword in my face.

"What the bloody hell are you doing?" I yelled.

"Get off the street," he sputtered.

"Stop waving that fucking sword at me or I'll hit you in the mouth!"

"What's going on here?" my cop asked.

"They're holding up the parade," the swordsman bellowed.

"The parade's a block and a half away," the hippie type person pointed out.

"I was crossing the goddamn street and this stupid bastard attacked me with his sword!" I screamed. They all stared at me.

"Well he did," I said; and gathering the shreds of my dignity about me I crossed the street. Behind me I heard the cop say something about assault with a weapon. The swordsman stormed away muttering "Damned Catholics!"

I looked him in his bloodshot eye and snapped "Damn right!"

"Creating a public nuisance again, Rosemary?"

"Doug!" (Doug works at Goldberry. He talked me into letting my cider go hard. It turned to vinegar. I am the only person on my block with two gallons of apple cider vinegar.) "You saw what he did to me. There's a law against that sort of thing, or there should be."

"You should turn the other cheek, you should insult with kindness, you should..."

"I should live so long," I interrupted, piling bags of things on the shelf around him.

"Want some grapes? Concord. Fresh this morning."

"Okay." I had finished loading everything in the knapsack when he got back with the grapes. He put them on top and closed the knapsack.

"Here," he said, handing me a piece of cake.

"Nummy, what is it?"

"Honey cake...to sweeten you up," he said, kissing me on the cheek.

"Oh, go play with your prayer wheel," I mumbled, blushing furiously.

"Rosemary," he said, walking me to my bike, "you present the world with a hard, cynical exterior, but I know deep down..."

"I'm soft and mushy," I finished.

"Yes," he said, beaming at me.

"And rotten to the core!"

When I looked back he was leaning against a parking meter, looking baffled.



creature feature

a portfolio
of
charming
grotesqueries
by

GRANT



charming
grotesqueries...?













my 2¢ Worth

BY SUSAN GLICKSOHN

It was Joyce Katz who scattered the first Straw-filled misgivings in my mind. Last year, at Noreascon, she greeted me with: "You're a Canfan. Tell me. Is Will Straw real?"

"Huh?" I said. Large, smoke-laden, noisy convention parties tend to affect my brain. "Will Straw? Oh, that old-time fan from Fort Erie who locs all the fannish fanzines. I don't know, I've always thought he was real. I mean, I've never met him, but he writes to ENERGUMEN and..."

"That's the point," Joyce explained. "Nobody's met him. He sounds like someone who's been an actifan for years, but no-one ever heard of him until recently."

"We think he's a hoax," Arnie announced.

"But," I objected, "just because no-one knows him personally doesn't mean he doesn't exist. Maybe he's a hermit, and doesn't like conventions. Maybe he's an old-time fan who's just Resurging. Like John Millard. Being TORCON chairman must have revived his Sense of Wonder, he wants to borrow all our POTLATCHs."

"And your FOCAL POINTs, too," said John, appearing to discuss the finer points of worldcon-chairing with Joyce. "Will Straw? I suppose he's a real person but I've never met him."

"He's a hoax," said Arnie Katz.

Though "Who is Will Straw?" never became one of the burning fannish questions, like "Who Sawed Courtney's Boat?" and "Will Bergeron ever publish the Willis issue of WARHOON?", it did occupy the fannish lettercols for some months. Various people, including Michael, pointed out that Fort Erie was a small town on the international border, so it would be easy for a US fan to zip back and forth across the bridge from Buffalo, collecting and posting mail for "Will Straw." The name, too, was perfect for a "straw man", a fabulous fannish facade made to be knocked down. Will Straw himself, rather indignantly -- after all, if you were real, you'd resent being turned into a hoax -- insisted he was genuine in some letters, and cunningly inserted bits of biography into others. This is just what he would do to create a phony persona, the sceptics insisted. It didn't help that he refused to shed the light of other days on his fannish origins. It was difficult to see how this apparent young newcomer to fandom could, in a letter to ENERGUMEN 10, refer casually, and seemingly with first-hand knowledge, to the mid-60's idea of a Tape Amateur Press Association, and the doings of British fandom, specifically OMPA. Learning that someone had sent him a mass of old apa-mailings and the like, which he presumably assimilated, didn't prove, or disprove, the snowballing Straw-is-a-Hoax rumours. Neither did his statement that, somehow, his address had been misprinted so anyone coming to see him would wind up in a hotel instead!

I believed that Will Straw was Real, but then, I'm a naive soul, trusting in Santa Claus, my teddy bear and the Boy Wonder. When John Berry visited the True North, we

mulled the matter over and decided -- largely because it seemed so unlikely -- that Will Straw was Harry Warner, Jr., with the help of a Buffalo or Fort Erie journalist friend. After all, who else had enough knowledge of fandom, and little enough personal contact with fans, to pull off such a deception? Harry hadn't really had a serious eye operation, he had only submerged briefly to develop his Straw personality, writing fannish locs instead of Hugo-winning meaty two-page Harry Warner locs. John and I debated writing to Harry, announcing: "Aha, Will Straw, All is Known!"-- but deep down, we knew we hadn't really even convinced ourselves.

Boyd Raeburn was appealed to, but denied all knowledge of a Will Straw in his Canfannish generation. "It does sound like he might be a hoax, though. Someone will have to drive to Fort Erie and find him," he said. We agreed, and the conversation turned to other fabulous fannish hoaxes, the finer points of Greek food, and similar esoterica. Soon John departed to experience being derailed by an avalanche near Banff, Alberta, and we ceased to discuss Will Straw.

Then, one hot and muggy July night, when the air felt like steaming soggy Kleenex and ENERGUMEN's parents sat panting, staring at the piles of unironed clothes, unlocated fanzines and unrun stencils, the phone rang.

"How would you like to go for a drive in the country tomorrow?" Boyd Raeburn asked. "I thought we could go to Fort Erie and find Will Straw. I don't really care if we find him, but it should be a pleasant drive. Besides, the car is air conditioned."

We accepted, with pleasure.

Next morning, the Raeburn Automobile awaited us. I must explain that this is no mere car, but a Gorgeous Machine (a new Mercedes) which I find Aesthetically Appealing even though I generally don't like machines. It is a joy to drive in it; it's displaced the Jaguars that a former next-door neighbour, who owned the only dealership for the beasts in Ottawa, used to flaunt, on my private covet-list. It just shows what you can afford if you don't publish a fanzine...

The drive was, indeed, Pleasant, with lots of barns and leafy trees and similar agrarian-myth things for me to look at and feel I was doing thesis-research, seasoned with dollops of small town Canadiana in Niagara-on-the-Lake, a United Empire Loyalist town that oozes gentility and the aura of Inherited Wealth. We were driving through Jalna country, and all the huge houses, and manicured lawns, not to mention the air conditioning, did things to my socialist mind and luxury-despising Presbyterian soul. The ruin was complete when we stopped to lunch at the Oban Inn in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the first Historique Olde Inne I've ever seen that doesn't come all over quaint on you, to gorge on such dainties of United Empire Loyalist imperial cuisine as steak-and-kidney pie and meringues and eclairs. By this time, no-one really cared if we found Will Straw or not, though I was beginning to feel it would be a pity if he were real -- a Real Hoax would add a certain cachet to Canfandom.

After another hour or so of meandering past Niagara Falls ("See the mighty cataract, dear" "All I can see is every tourist in North America, looking for a parking spot") and of enjoyable fannish conversation about the delights of British children's books (Boyd Raeburn has read the Arthur Ransome books! Any other fans of his out there?), we passed a sign that said "Welcome to Fort Erie."

"Good. Now we'll find a gas station, fill up the car, and get directions to Niagara Boulevard," said Boyd.

"We're on Niagara Boulevard," noted Michael.

"Really? With that sort of luck, we may find him after all. How disappointing."

We counted down. 529...457...329...287... 287??? The car U-turned in less space than my bicycle needs. But where was 303 Niagara Blvd., the address at which "Will Straw" received his ENERGUMENS?

"Aha! A fake!! There's 329, and a big gap, and that church, and then the 200s start!" Michael exclaimed.

"Wait, there's something else. St. Paul's Parish Hall. Obviously an accommodation address unless the unknown Mr. Straw is the caretaker," Boyd pointed out. He pulled up beside it. Empty. Deserted. It was all Very Mysterious.

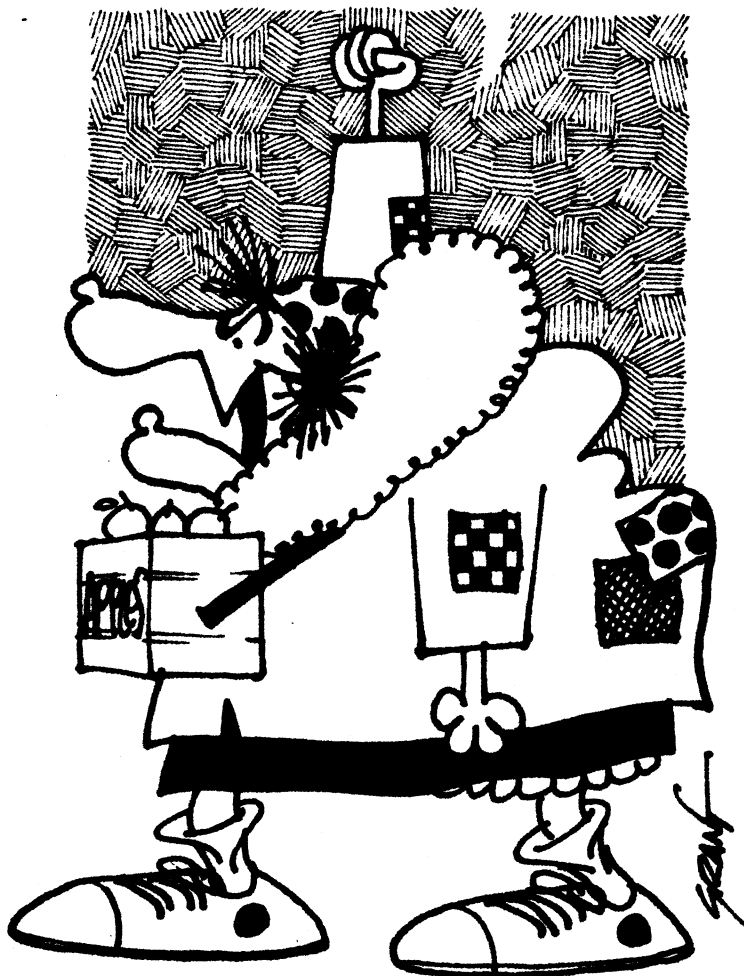
"There must be a manse, a minister's house of some sort," I said. "Look, there's a pathway up to that house on the hill."

"Mike, why don't you go up to investigate. Perhaps the priest will know who Will Straw is."

"Minister," I corrected. "That has to be a Protestant church. No crosses, and a flourishing bed of orange lilies in full bloom for the Twelfth of July Orange Lodge parade. This is probably a very Tory, militant- rotestant area, and I doubt if they'd allow a Catholic to grow an orange lily!" I am wise in the arcane folklore of Ontario. The others looked puzzled.

We were all puzzled a few minutes later when Michael returned, panting and sweat-

APPLESAUCE!!!



drenched. "It is 303, but there's nobody home, just a large dog. He barked at me." Michael sounded disappointed, since he cultivates friendships with other furry animals.

"Ahah! Trained to sniff out fans and Protect the Secret!" I exclaimed. "Are you sure no-one was sitting out in the garden?"

"Not a person in sight. I found out one thing, though; no fan lives there. I looked through the window, and there wasn't a book or a fanzine in sight." We all agreed this was crucial evidence.

We found a gas bar (the car could drink on Sunday in Fort Erie, but not us) and a phone booth. Sure enough, there wasn't a scrap of a Straw in sight. On an impulse, I flipped to the Yellow Pages, and looked under Churches. There it was, St. Paul's Anglican Church, Parish Hall, and -- hey! "303 is the Rectory!" I announced.

In a few minutes, we were back at the foot of the pathway. A couple of lawns away, a middle-aged couple were regarding our antics with carefully-concealed curiosity. I suggested we question the natives. Boyd suggested that I, as a respectable matron, appoint myself the interrogating delegation -- at least, what he said was, "You go, you're decently dressed and if they see Mike they'll have a heart attack." I trotted off in my gingham frock, tea-party hat and sandals, trying to look like a Sweet Young Thing.

"Uh, excuse me, sir, uh, we're looking for a Mr. Will Straw, does he live here? We're friends of his, that is, we publish a magazine he writes to, and he gave us this address, but I didn't think he was a minister. Uh, is Will Straw the minister's son, or something? We'd like to meet him, whoever he is." I had the feeling I wasn't being too coherent.

"Why, yes, William Straw is the name of the minister here," the neighbour replied, looking a little confused.

"Oh! Sh -- er, goodness! (Try not to sound like an Ulliot column, Susan, I warned myself.) Oh! That's interesting. So he is real! And a minister! Could you tell me where he is, please?"

It turned out, though, that the Reverend Mr. Straw was off with his family at their cottage, and was not expected back that day ("I thought ministers stayed around and ministered," Michael grumbled, disappointed.) As Boyd pointed out, the fact that a Will Straw existed didn't mean that the Will Straw existed; he could still be a hoax and now we would never know. So we left a sceptical note, said we were sorry to have missed him, and departed.

A week or so later, the first mailing of Canadapa, the first Canadian apa, arrived. Among the non-Canuck members was Michel Ferron of Belgium, who expressed the hope of renewing postal acquaintance with Will Straw, whose name he knew from other apas -- indicating the Unknown Fan had been around for a while. Then Terry Hughes' MOTA bounced into the mailbox, containing, among other goodies, a letter from Will Straw -- a letter about being ill during a drunken carouse on a train enroute to the Quebec Winter Carnival.

"Look at this letter, dear," said Michael. "Now I realize that as a trufamish ex-Jew, I don't know much about Religion, but surely ministers don't go around getting drunk in public on the way to carnivals?"

"Almost everybody gets drunk at the Quebec carnival, it's the only way to avoid the cold, but no, that doesn't sound like appropriate behaviour for a respectable clergyman from Fort Erie. Maybe the minister is just a mail-drop and "Will Straw" really

is a hoax! What fun!" I said.

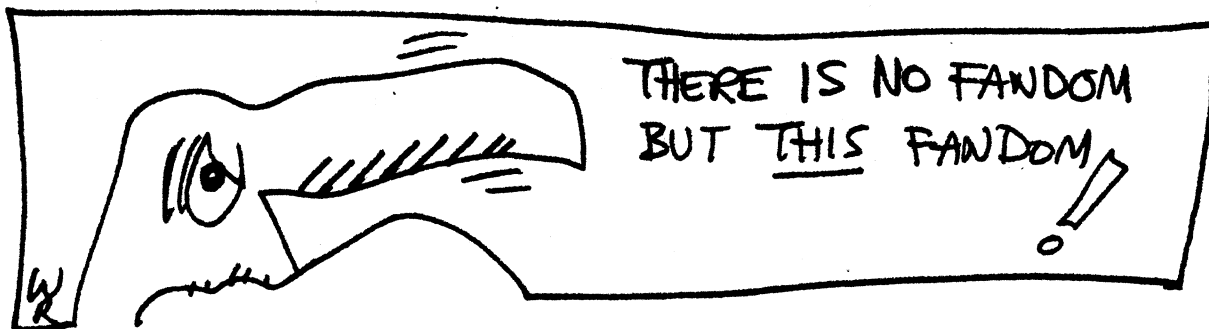
Finally, about ten days after our visit, we heard from Will Straw Himself. As Michael pointed out, ten days was enough time to forward our note, get a reply, forward it from Fort Erie... Yes, the writer said, he was real. No! he said, he wasn't a minister. The minister was his father, which made him a Preacher's Kid, but he personally didn't accept organized religion. He was sorry to have missed us, but he worked six days a week, and hadn't had Sunday off, and...

We told Boyd. He remained sceptical, and proposed another safari into the darkest gardens of Southern Ontario. We phoned. A male identifying himself as Will Straw explained he was sorry, but he was leaving, the very next day, to study journalism at Carleton University, so if we came to Fort Erie, he wouldn't be there...Michael was disappointed. "He must be real. No-one could plan such an elaborate hoax that they'd have someone with a realistic-sounding story like that ready to answer the phone any time a fan called. He must be real."

Me, I don't know. I'm waiting for Richard Labonte (now the mild-mannered reporter for a large Ottawa daily) to investigate. Deep down, I think I want a Fabulous Canadian Hoax.

In the meantime, why don't you all plan to drive up to TORCON 2? Then detour on your way home. Stop for lunch at Niagara-on-the-Lake, and try the meringues. Try two. Try to get tickets to the Shaw Festival there, if you can. Admire Niagara Falls. Then head for Fort Erie, and St. Paul's church. It's a pleasant drive, and you'll be participating in the Canadian Fannish Mythos. Happy hunting for Straws!

-oO+Oo-



Whether or not Will Straw is "on display" at TORCON 2, fandom and fan history will be an important part of our program -- if you'll help me. The 31st World Science Fiction Convention will celebrate several things: the joys of being a science fiction fan, (but every con should do that); the resurgence of Canadian fandom (and let's hope it doesn't collapse, along with the committee members, on September 4); and the 25th anniversary of Canada's only other worldcon.

To commemorate this anniversary; to remember the 200 gallant souls who gathered in 1948 to hear the GoH, Robert Bloch, being Superb; and to honour Harry Warner, Jr., who more than any other fan has made fandom's past live for fandom present, TORCON 2 will present the "All Our Yesterdays" fan history display. I've been asked to plan it -- and even if Mike and I are nominated for a Hugo again and have to resign from the committee, I'll continue to organize it privately.

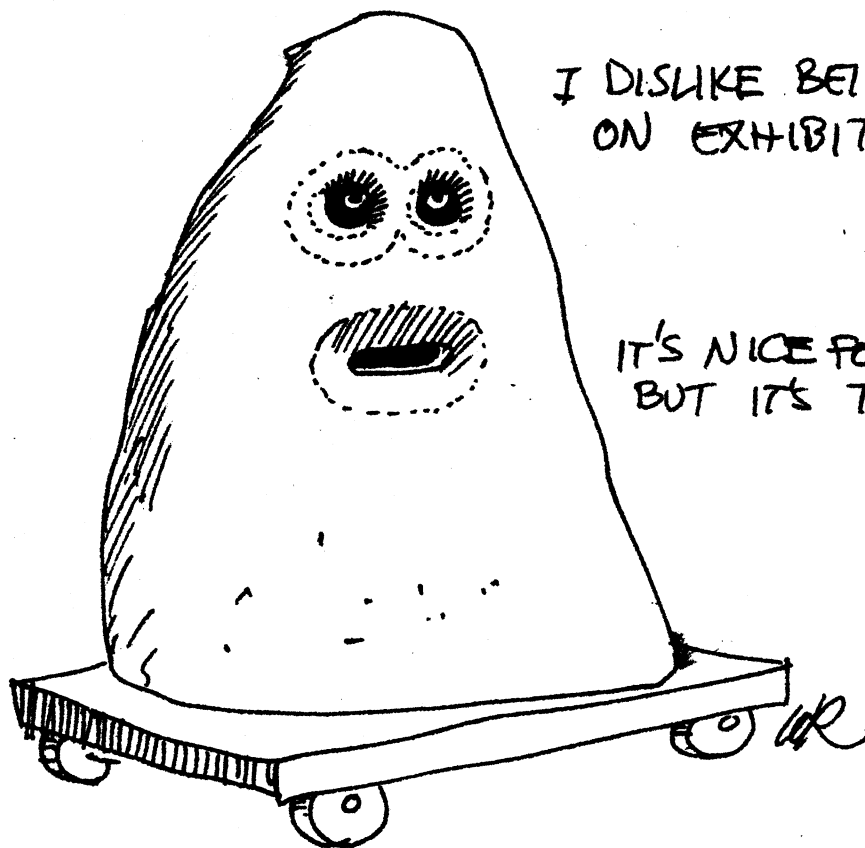
I'd like to recreate the atmosphere of the first TORCON. What were the fans in 1948 publishing, reading, feuding or agreeing about? I'd like to show the evolution of fandom to 1973. TORCON 2, like most worldcons, will be the first worldcon many sf

readers have ever attended. I'd like to give them a sense of fandom's past. I'd like them to be able to watch a St. Fantony ceremony, or the Big Heart Award presentation with an understanding of what's going on. I'd like to help people who've arrived at the Royal York to see their favourite author understand just why those pros, and all the other fen, have gathered: not for the publicity, or the "stars", or the speeches or the art show, but, basically, for the other fans.

I need your help. The All Our Yesterdays room will consist of displays of fan, and some sf, material and lots of comfortable chairs. The displays will have an information function, for the majority of us who couldn't be at the first TORCON (I was busy being born, that weekend), and especially for those of us comparatively new to fandom. They'll also have an evocative/nostalgia/mood-creating function. This is where the chairs come in, because the room should be, must be to succeed, a group of fans sitting around fanacing -- listening to Bloch be Superb, for example, or watching Bill Rotsler do marvels with a single line.

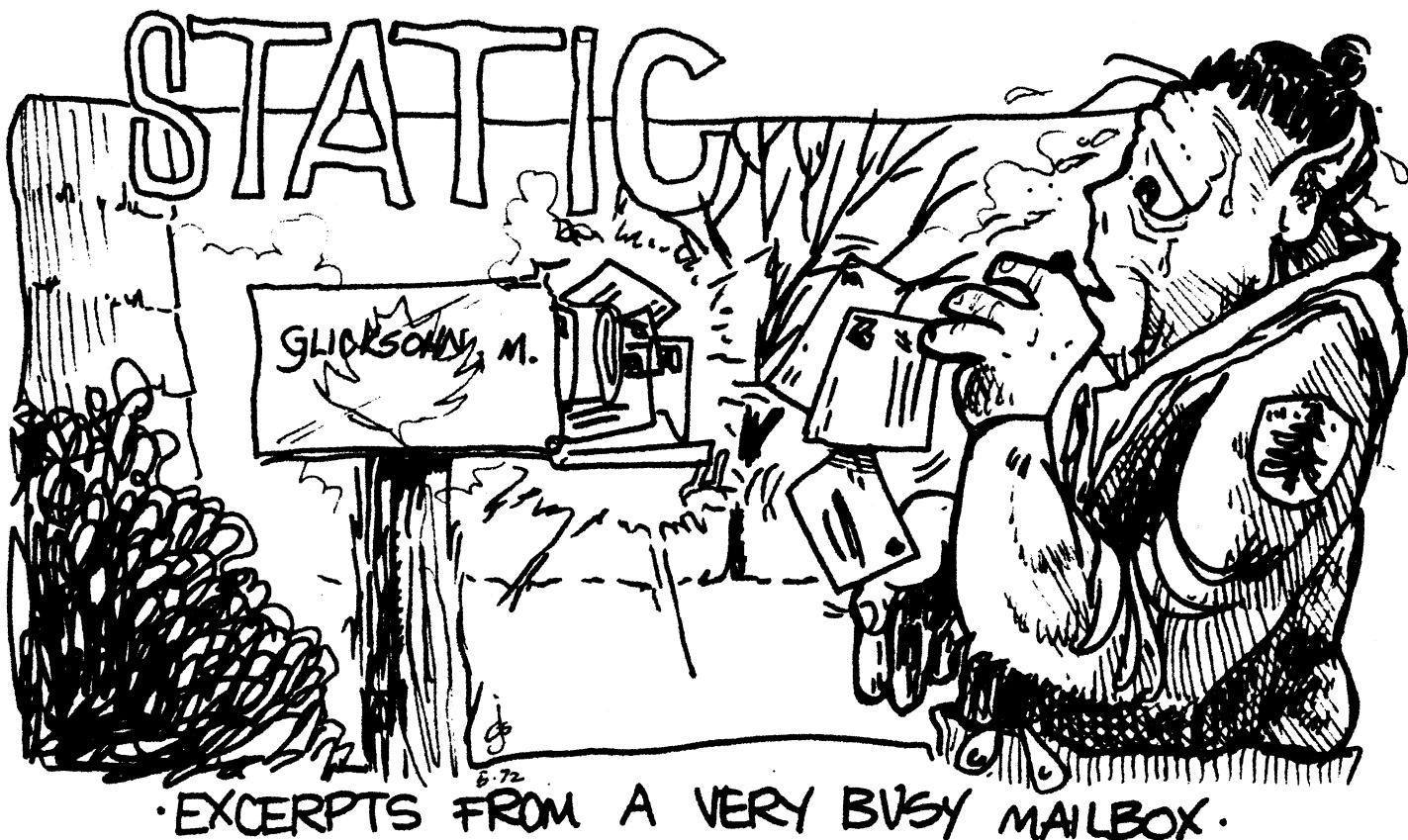
So: if you have a good collection of old pulps, old fanzines, and especially old fan photos and other memorabilia, and you're willing to loan them to me -- let me know. I can borrow a copy of A SENSE OF FAPA, but even Don Hutchison, our harried program planner, doesn't have the issue of MACABRE he distributed at TORCON. According to Harry Warner, Les Croutch took movies of TORCON. If anyone has any idea where these are, please let me know. Any tapes of the con, or of people who were there, would be welcome. All display cases will be locked, security guards will be on duty, and your treasures will be treated with respect and care and returned to you in person or by registered mail.

Please send me any suggestions or information you think would help in planning this display -- and please make yourself part of it at TORCON 2, Aug. 31--Sept. 3, 1973. And if you want information on the con itself, or have suggestions about the rest of the programme (24-hour movies, or none at all? three-ring circus programming, or nothing but the GoH speeches?) write to: TORCON 2, P.O. Box 4, Station K, Toronto 12, Ontario.



I DISLIKE BEING
ON EXHIBITION

IT'S NICE FOR THE EGO
BUT IT'S TIRING



EXCERPTS FROM A VERY BUSY MAILBOX.

GREGG CALKINS
150 Las Juntas Way
Walnut Creek, CA.
94596

Well, okay, I can't say that I'm wholly in favor of your trade policy but on the other hand I won't say that I can't sympathize with it, either. When I first started publishing OOPSLA! a million years ago, I wrestled a bit with the problem myself. My motives were different, perhaps. In part, the subscription

monies I took in had a lot to do with whether or not the next issue got out, but that wasn't all of it. It wasn't long before I realized that I was publishing a fanzine far superior to most of those received in trade, and if not that then at least far more frequently published, and frankly I just wasn't getting a fair deal. Oh, I agonized over this quite a while, believe me, because I also wanted to be a "nice guy" and didn't have the guts to stand up and say what I believed at the risk of hurting the feelings of others.

Fortunately, just barely before I had come to the realization that I was publishing the absolutely top-notch fanzine in all the world of all time and therefore couldn't trade with anybody, I snapped out of it. OOPSLA! was a good fanzine, and I was proud of it, but good is all that it was. Many were worse, true, but many were also better. I published frequently, true (early on, at least), but some others published still more regularly than I did. Faintly astonished at the discovery, I found I could trade "all-for-all" with absolutely anyone who came along and even though in some measure I was casting my pearls before the swine, the net result was that it all seemed to be balanced out. Not only that, my trade policy became simple and easy and a hell of a lot less of a headache than it used to be. No, it was better than that. Not only did I feel a lot less guilty about trading for the better and more frequent fanzines, I also felt a lot more magnanimous about trading for the lesser ones. Give them something to shoot for, eh?

((I think nowadays some discrimination is necessary: with monsterzines, Star Trek zines, comic zines, etc., if we traded all for all with anybody who asked, we'd not have enough copies left for contributors and regular subscribers. Fandom is so large now that the 240 copies we distribute vanish rather quickly as it is.))

Well, we've all got to have our own policies, and what was good for me isn't necessarily good for you and I'll be the first to admit it. OOPS was not, perhaps, as response oriented as you are. I never felt the insane sort of Harry Warner-ish desire or obligation to respond to anything and everything sent to me, regardless of individual worth. The fanzines I felt worthy of comment got same, regardless of whether or not we were trading, and vice versa. Some people, year after year, just sent money, and after many years of publishing I still didn't know them from Adam...but what the hell? Some people traded, others wrote letters, still others did both. It all worked out, somehow.

And, I guess, I always sort of felt that the people who wanted to comment on OOPS would do so and the people who did not, would not. This did not always fit my own desires, of course. For instance, for many years I sent Charles Burbee sample copies solely on the basis of his fannish godhood (plus, of course, the simple-minded hope that he might somehow feel the urge to contribute) and in all of that time I did not once receive a letter of comment. My emotions ranged from anger to dismay to the feeling that I will by God one day publish an issue so good he will have to comment, but he never did. After I moved to California and became a good personal friend of Burb it never seemed to matter, but at the time it did. Even so, I still felt the proper course was for me to do better on my part so that he would prefer to respond rather than be forced into doing so.

((We're publishing the sort of fanzine that we want to publish, and we accept that some people we might like to hear from are just not going to be interested in what we're doing. If we send someone three or four issues -- Elder Ghod or neo, it doesn't matter -- and don't even provoke a postcard saying "I'd like to be kept on the mailing list", then I doubt if that person would miss the fanzine if they were cut, do you?))

This is the first issue of ENERGIUMEN I've seen, and I must admit that I am favorably impressed. Your layout and artwork and legibility of reproduction are quite outstanding, and I have always thought this of prime importance in any publication. I put a lot of emphasis on it in OOPS, even though by present day standards I was not very imaginative, and of course in those days I didn't have the electro-stencil to work with. I wish I had a dime for every hour I spent laboriously over my light box. There has been a lot of talk recently about how little appreciation the average fan-artist gets for his work--which is true enough--but on the other hand I used to spend literally hours and hours tracing the artists every single line on stencil and precious few of them ever gave me any appreciation for it, either, so what the hell. I guess my prime conceit as an editor was that no other editor could reproduce a fanartist's work as well as I did...except for solid areas of black, I did my best to match everything else line for line...and I probably spent more time on some stencils than the artist did on the original.

Bill Watson was fascinating. I'm pretty much of a rat-race conservative, frankly, and all the more so considering that fandom has long been one of my main hang-outs. I don't like it, particularly, but I've learned how to live with it and as a matter of fact I don't know if I could hack anything else after all of these years, and it is really a treat for me to read about someone who has managed to live as differently as Bill has. I admit to some sadness that his lifestyle does not seem to last very long...for instance, his ideal arrangement of a pleasant wife and a plump mistress, the very quintessence of domestic tranquility, seems to have come a cropper at the end when he has to change situation, area and identity all at the same time. Sort of makes me wonder if the rat-race isn't all that bad, after all. Not that I'll ever know, most likely.

So okay...to get back to the original subject, I'll admit your point. Would I have written this letter if we were trading on a regular basis? Probably not...which puts you ahead on points.

((Understandably, we got quite a bit of comment on the trading policy I outlined last issue. Many faneds agreed with it, some agreed in principle but thought it too idealistic, several disagreed but granted us the right to do as we wished. Most of the comments were of mainly personal interest, so won't be printed here, but I think Gregg's remarks are of some general interest as well as being a literate statement of the other viewpoint. As most of our correspondants agreed, a personal policy needs no justification: nevertheless, I'll admit to a slight urge to point to Gregg's letter -- especially the last paragraph -- and say "Defense rests."))

GRANT CANFIELD The mail in the past few days has brought two pleasant items from
28 Atalaya Terr. Toronto, namely ASPIDISTRA 4 and ENERGUMEN 12, so I just thought
San Francisco, CA I'd drop a line to say thanks. Here it is:
94117

thanks

Are fan artists really that inconsiderate? I always thought it was you faneditors who were such inconsiderate bastards. It's disconcerting to learn that it's a two-way street.

Will Straw says, "Every year we're going to have new talents like Grant Canfield come along and sweep the awards, while Rotsler remains overlooked." I can either ignore that, which would probably be better politics, or I might as well say what I think about that, since it kind of irks me. I've seen comments like that in other fanzines, like "Canfield is just a new flash-in-the-pan, and Rotsler has been around forever" -- so I guess I'll say it and get it out of the way. Namely, Will Straw and all you others, I want the award. I mean I'd really like to win it. When I started out as a fanartist I set that as a goal, and I'm not ashamed of it. I'm proud to have been nominated, and I'd be "pleased as punch" to cop the Hugo. But I'm not like fanatic about it! I get the feeling that I'm some kind of villain because I'm the new kid in competition with the grand old man. Jeez, I'm really sorry I haven't been in fandom a long time. On the other hand, I thought the award was for best of the year...? Now if I'm best of the year, that's great. If Tim Kirk is best of the year, that's great. If Bill Rotsler is best of the year, that's great too. And I don't care if the award is also for longevity....I mean, it's happened in the past that somebody has been honored for his achievements in past years. The movie industry's Oscars are a case in point. If anybody wants to vote on this basis, or if anybody has this interpretation of the awards, that's perfectly all right with me. But I think you're all doing Bill Rotsler a great diservice by speaking of him like all his glory was in the past. Today he produces some of the finest artwork and some of the funniest cartoons in fandom! Today he's a great talent! On the basis of today alone I consider him the strongest contender for the award. I'm a big Rotsler fan myself; in fact, there's no one I'd rather lose the award to. On the other hand, it is as a compliment to Bill's work that I can also say, there's no one I'd rather beat out for the Hugo.

Politically speaking, that may be the dumbest paragraph I've ever written. But I've never been able to understand politics anyway.

((Nor have I, Grant, but I do understand honesty and eloquence and I think our readers will too. Naturally, we'd like to win a Hugo as well -- I imagine every artist, writer or editor in fandom feels that way, at one time or another. For a very small percentage of those, there's probably some justification for saying they deserve to win as well. But like you, we're not fanatical. If and when ENERGUMEN folds, it won't be because we have or haven't won an award.))

CHRIS COUCH
1109 Paquin St.
Columbia, MO.
65201

I was, as you know, quite surprised by your editorial in the last ENERGUMEN. As I told you at the Lunacon, and again at the Midwest-con, I consider the whole debate about trading policies to be quite trivial. Had your editorial been just a statement of your policy I wouldn't have bothered to write this letter. I've never mentioned the matter in print, and have discussed it with only a few people. However, you have also presented a very distorted report of our conversation and made several serious allegations about me; because so many of your readers know nothing of me and could not know how false these are, I feel compelled to answer you.

You did not mention, in your account of our Lunacon conversation, the important fact that I had asked you for an explanation of your refusal to trade for CIPHER at the Noreascon, and that you then (apparently) had none to offer. After waiting eight months for it, I was most certainly interested in what you had to say.

The paraphrase that you attribute to me, wherein I tell you "quite bluntly that fandom (is) a society with an accepted way of doing things and if (you aren't) willing to follow the traditions (you) shouldn't be in fandom in the first place!" completely misrepresents anything I might have said and everything I was trying to say. No doubt I said something to the effect that you should follow fan traditions; you were the one that mentioned 'traditions', and that would be a logical opening remark concerning what you were saying. But certainly there was no hint in my words of the threatening stance you indicate in your paraphrase.

I must also object to your use of a quasi-quote of a remark attributed to me by Rosemary. I think it should be obvious that any remark about "not reading fanzines" addressed to someone who has had so much published in so many fanzines was said completely in jest, not as the insult you presented it as. Even had this not been the case, a quote from a conversation about a completely different topic, a conversation that you didn't even hear, is completely out-of-place in an account of our discussion about trading.

I consider that the entire debate over trading is unimportant, but I feel that your description of me as "narrow minded to the point of intolerance" demands that I repeat a few of the things that I told you at the Lunacon. I told you then that the important thing was not the 'fannish tradition', but the raison d'etre of that tradition, consideration for other faneditors. I explained to you that as a student in a difficult and expensive university, I found that CIPHER consumes all of the spare time and money that I could possibly devote to fandom-at-large and therefore had to either trade or just not receive other fanzines. Many other faneditors, some students like myself, some struggling to become professional writers or artists, are in exactly the same position. At the end of our conversation I felt that I understood, though disagreed with, your position on trading. I thought that you understood my position, and that that was why you agreed to trade. Apparently I was wrong.

((Apparently there's a lot of misunderstanding on both sides. If you'll reread my editorial, I think you'll find that the question of trading was trivial as far as you and I were concerned. My remarks about you were based on what I took at the time to be your attitude concerning the relationship of the individual fan to fandom as a whole. Under this light, mentioning your remark to Rosemary was certainly pertinent since it seemed to reinforce the impression I had taken from your remarks at Lunacon. I accept your word that I misinterpreted and misrepresented your attitude, and I apologize. But I point out that you presented an apparently dogmatic approach to two different people at two different times and I suggest that the fault is not entirely mine. I agree completely that trading policies are unimportant, but the question of the right of the individual fan to do as he sees fit is a vital one and this was what I was discussing. We also agree on the essential importance of consideration for other faneds; the difference seems to be that I believe in personal contact as part of this con-

sideration and you are willing to forego it. It is, of course, for you to decide whether or not you wish to comply with our policies, but regardless of whatever disagreements may or may not exist between us, there isn't now and never has been any personal antagonism towards you. Like you, we hope this ends the matter.))

JAMES GODDARD
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Woodlands
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There's a lot in what Jerry Lapidus says in his column. Unfortunately though, things aren't as easy as he seems to think, at least not in this part of the world. For a start, we have nothing like the number of competent fan artists producing work for fan-zines. I can number the good artists on the fingers of one hand, two of these produce a very small volume of work, and one of them I had to wait eighteen months for a cover illo from. Things are that bad. The amount of artwork that makes its way here from overseas is very small, and, as Susan notes in her column, a lot of North American artists don't even take the bother to reply to letters, even when International Reply Coupons are enclosed. (Jack Gaughan is an honourable exception to this, by the way.) I don't think the UK is unique in this, I've noticed that the ratio of art to pages has worsened in the last few issues of ENERGUMEN; this may be deliberate policy on your part though. The remaining three UK artists who do produce quantities of artwork are usually so busy that they can't do it to order. My only hope to get artwork to match articles is to find a writer who can also draw, and ask him to illustrate his own item. The art position is pretty grim though. The only thing I can do is match up artwork as well as I can to the surrounding text, and then use a lot of fillers just to break the monotony of pages and pages of text.

((If we're using slightly less art now than in our earlier issues, it is a deliberate policy: those early issues were cluttered somewhat. Still, if you discount the lettercolumn, last issue had 28 illos or titles on 38 pages and that's about where we've been for some time. The problem of finding competent artists is a major one; the old answer of "Develop your own" is very easy to say but extremely hard to do. Noting the enormous number of superb fan-artists in California, I wonder if some of our more scientifically-oriented members couldn't analyse that state and come up with aerosol cans of "Essence d'artiste"? Then a quick spray might turn a convenient friend or relative into an Austin, Kirk, Barr, Canfield, etc., for just long enough to do the job.))

Goon fans might like to know that a new radio Goon Show has been recorded. One only, sadly. It'll be broadcast later this year on BBC radio as part of their 50th anniversary celebrations, that's in October I think. All the old crowd are in it, and even the Queen is reported to have laughed, so it must have its moments!

GARY HUBBARD
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Concerning the Poison Maiden. You know, it wasn't always thus. Back in the days when comic book writers had to be more circumspect about sex because of the Comics Code, female characters had much more personality. Lois Lane in the 40s was an aggressive and clever newspaper reporter who broke up spy rings and rackets (and without Superman's help, too.) In the early days of Marvel there was Janet Van Dyne (the Wonderful Wasp.) When she wasn't playing second fiddle to Henry Pym's 'Antman', she had two series of her own. One where she visited children at a local orphanage and told them stories with rather simpleminded morals about the consequences of greed, or the results of love, things like that. In another, she would take on villains who weren't being beaten up by other superheros that month. Since she didn't have any powers except the ability to make herself real small and fly around the room, she had to outsmart the bad guy.

That was the one thing superheroines had going for themselves. They weren't as strong as the superheroes, but they were often smarter. Just like those girls in the fairy tales who always knew how to trick the ogre, where to find the magic ring, or how to kill the giant with no heart.

Unfortunately, the comic book people found out that they had a sizeable adult readership, and started slanting their stories toward it. And doubly unfortunate, to the comic book writer, 'adult' rhymes with 'sex', and the comic book writer's knowledge of sex comes from what he picked up writing love comics. So nowadays the comic book heroine has big tits and a pea brain.

On the other hand, the male characters haven't fared so well either. In the beginning, Reed Richards had grey hair at the temples; he was obviously middle-aged. Peter Parker was a skinny, sickly-looking kid with high cheekbones. He looked like a refugee from a Nazi death camp. People used to write in asking where all those muscles came from when he turned into Spiderman. Comic book heroes were not Beautiful People in those days. But things began to change. Reed Richards became younger to justify his lusting after Susan Storm. Peter Parker filled out and beautiful girls flocked to his side. That wasn't too bad, but over the years each new superhero became more handsome than the next, so that now we have the 'new' and nearly naked Hawkeye and the Warlock. Both very beautiful boys.

And personalities have changed with looks. The old superheroes were problem solvers. The new style superheroes are narcissistic, insecure, possessive, jealous and fight among themselves.

Now, if you think that the portrayal of women in comic books is bad for a young girl's self-image, are things any better for a young boy? At one time, a skinny kid who didn't get along with his classmates could get some solace from the fact that Peter Parker had the same problems. And Peter Parker was Spiderman. Obviously, being popular and good-looking wasn't the only thing that was important.

However, any kid reading Spiderman nowadays might get the impression that being popular and good-looking is the only thing that is important. That's not good.

((The oft-made and undeniable point is that nobody gets a realistic portrayal in comics. The question of just how important comics are in the development of the young is one I think we'll have to shelve for lack of relevant data.))

BOB VARDEMAN
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A Clockwork Hutchison: I rather expected a review like this from somebody, somewhere, sometime. As actively negative as most of the reviews have been pro-Clockwork. As with everything else, I'm sure ACO, as soon as the hubbub dies down, will become a memorable film but not an all-time classic like 2001.

But ACO is being over-reacted to. First of all, it is not all that violent -- you never see anyone killed with the graphic bloodiness of The Hunting Party (which was a dismally bad flick) or even Bonnie and Clyde (which was quite good.) When Alex kills the Cat Lady, the pov is on him after one fisheye view of CL. In the entire movie, there are only five traditional weapons seen: Billy's switchblade, Alex's knife, and three rifles of the prison guards. Only Alex's knife is seen to be used and I've seen far bloodier scenes in 1940's westerns.

There is a good bit of kicking and general use of clubs, but outside of some blood on the mouth, this is it. And that kind of violence is standard fare on TV, fer Chrissake. The sex scenes are rather graphic and I suspect that this is why it got an X rating.

What makes the movie as good as it is, in my unhumble opinion, is the use of the music. That Kubrick goes to classical music was probably the result of Burgess's book doing likewise, rather than some obscure desire to plagiarize from himself in 2001. It seems that the music (and the use of color motifs) unlocks vistas in the film Don tosses off as "commercial." I guess some of us are more decadent than others.

((Don is a highly-successful free-lance movie photographer and this doubtless gave him a viewpoint on the film different from most fans. Looking back on the film I too realized how little actual violence is shown, but at the time I had a very strong impression of great violence in the first half of the film; a testament to Kubrick's skill, I suppose. But was it all necessary?))

I recently got a letter from Jay Cornell who was of the opinion that I really should get better artwork in SANDWORM. (I hasten to add, his wasn't a blanket grotch but was more that every piece should be of superb quality.) In some perfect universe, this might be possible, but I can only print what I get and I have only come across a couple of artists whose work I truly admire that I can rely on if I ask for something special. I can, in part at least, sympathize since artwork isn't something you can turn on or off like a faucet, and also an artist isn't likely to be as...vocal, in a written way...as a fanzine editor. But I quite agree that a simple "No" on a postcard wouldn't be out of order at all.

Of course, this cuts both ways. One artist recently wrote me asking if I'd want some cartoons -- seems she'd sent illos off to several zines, with SASE, and had neither gotten the illos back, nor seen them in print. Let's face it. Fandom had better be a goddam hobby or we're all the lousiest pros to come down the pike.

CONNIE FADDIS Your complaints about recalcitrant artists are certainly justified -- I've been often guilty of not replying to the editor myself. I don't think it's a case of being too busy or such -- I just don't seem to be able to get it together. Then, on the other hand, there are those cases where I get crudzines or similar things which just don't interest me: my normal state of mind-loop, when coupled with the irritable guilt those zines or requests give me, just does not output.

Maybe it would help if you editors enclosed a stamped, properly addressed postcard with your requests to hard-case artists. Scrawl two boxes on the back and label:

____ OK, I'LL DO IT ON TIME

____ SORRY, NOT THIS TIME

((This is a sound idea, and a courteous one, but the couple of times we've tried it, it still hasn't produced any results. Other faneds report consistent success with it, however.))

What disturbs me the most, though, is that despite an editor's honest, conscious efforts to treat artist's fairly, artists are actually treated like second-rate contributors. It's unconscious, I'm sure, but here's my point: no faned will refuse to print a well-written, entertaining, or even disturbing, article in his zine, even if it has little or nothing to do with sf or fandom. At least I don't know any faneds that will. But an artist's drawing or photo, (and I'm referring to half- and full-page work, not obvious fillos) though of equal quality, will languish in a pile waiting for the proper "text" to "enhance" it. I'm not sure what the solution would be. Maybe I'm campaigning for more portfolios. Maybe it would be nice to see occasionally single full page pieces unaccompanied by "text" and printed on one side only. Maybe faneds should attempt a rotating trade system of non-fillo artwork (with a six month time limit) so that someone is bound to have that appropriate article begging for graphic interpretation. What do you think?

((This is an old and completely justified complaint, Connie. The usual response

is "Sorry, but fandom always has been and always will be basically word-oriented." Which is rather unsatisfactory to an artist. Things are changing, though. Folios are more prevalent now, and zines such as TOMORROW AND...are more than willing to publish art for its own sake. In fact, we have two full-page pieces of art that will appear, by themselves, in a future issue of this fanzine. I don't think the rotating art file is the best solution, though, to the current problem. Many faneds are reluctant to part with a good piece of art, whether they have any immediate place for it or not. And it could easily happen that the piece would end up appearing in a fanzine the artist would prefer not to have it published in. Susan suggests marking the date of receipt on each piece and if it isn't used in six months, returning it to the artist to be sent out again to a zine of his or her selection. What do you think, fanartists and faneditors? (By the way, I am one editor who will turn down a well-written article if it is unrelated to sf or fandom!)))

MIKE GLYER

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Just an issue or two ago Dave Hulvey was coming on as the Resident Weird of ENERGUMEN, a great pillar of your lettercol, and generally a contributor to the cause. Now he is blathering in the current letter column about blandness. Blandness occurs when one prints writing with no content. Warner's piece is that kind of Bland. But blandness can also connote (and I think Hulvey intends it to) a kind of predigested, tasteless and standard fare. This I cannot see. You and your writers have too much integrity to present/produce trash. Leave that to the prozines.

You have on several occasions put me down for continuing to say something more because I have an extraordinary fondness for the phrase than for any merits that bear repetition. Hulvey seems to be streaking along such a trajectory. His little mis-sives describing the Hulvey Method of Fanning have been sprouting mushroom like in the pages of fanzines. The sociology of his NERG letter has also been orated elsewhere, and if he ever assembles the bits and pieces in a comprehensible article the theories may even call for an answer. Unfortunately I begin to suspect that his dispute is not with the purity of anyone's motives (as with SFC scholarliness, your "selling out" to the middle class) but is an internal conflict that he must resolve; he is coming across increasingly acerbic, increasingly disillusioned.

STANLEY STRANGELOVE'S CLOCKWORK ODYSSEY was thought out eight or ten years before the movie was conceived. Hutchison has invalidated his criticisms by casually applying to the picture a moral/critical sense that the picture has outstripped. Some of his minor criticisms I agree with, but the tone of pouting disapproval and misdirected vitriol turns me off. Hutchison would be a good critic for 1962 -- in the mainstream -- but is out of touch with sf idea progression -- except in the very heart of his opening thesis. The discussion of the violence trend and the personal criticisms directed at Kubrick are the most reasonable of his points. The rest seem to belong in a newsprint morgue.

((To me, the tone of Don's review was one of disappointment more than disapproval. I wish you'd been more specific in your objections, Mike.))

Not only were the letters in the lettercolumn themselves interesting -- the way you arranged them was also interesting. It seemed as if each contributor from the last issue was given so much space in which to receive egoboo; that the column was zoned off. I think Conner approximated this in his last MOBIUS TRIP. I don't do it myself, but then, different strokes for different folks.

((I suppose I do try to get one example of each major reaction -- pro or con -- to the previous issue. It seems to me to be more interesting to have a variety of comments on a variety of topics than a load of letters saying the same thing.))

DAVE HULVEY
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As for the rest of your zine, I much enjoyed it. That's a trite, but true, statement. I could have created some magical fantasy to duly honor your wonderful contributors. Somehow, though, that is inappropriate for the occasion. **ENERGUMEN** has seen a bit too much of my "freaky" prose as it is. Truly, I don't seek to relate to fanzines and their readers on that level. I used to do it because I was infatuated with my own ability to manipulate words, but after a while it becomes a meaningless repetition. I hang my head, and realize sadly, I've done it all before. Oh, I'm sure I'll still be doing surreal wordtrips, just as Jerry Lapidus and Alpajpuri do their own way out graphic trips. Believe it or not, I feel tired of the whole surreal package. It's not that it turns off a few people, not that at all. I don't care. Simply, I've grown a bit tired of it for its own sake. At least in locs to fanzines, of which over 50% never sees print. I'd much prefer to do a complete surreal wordtrip in one of my own zines. There, at least, is no fear on my part that I might be harming the reputation of a major fanzine with my mystical mutterings. Everyone in fandom already knows I'm a leftwing degenerate prevert, with *Strange Passions*, so they expect my own zines to reflect that. So be it.

Yes, there's just no place like home. Bill Watson strikes my fancy that way. He couldn't believe the things his life would bring to his doorstep. But then, can any of us? Ah, it's Harrisonburg here, just 30 miles from West Virginia, but it might well be New Guinea, as far as anyone else is concerned. Brother, only one thing more I cannot yet believe. Is there really a fandom? When I walk through the summer night down by the creek where the fireflies are the light, I cannot imagine why I'm in this insane egotrip called "fandom." Do I really need the accolades of anyone to tell me I exist? Certainly not.

((Yes, David, there is a fandom, and what you get out of it depends primarily on the outlook you bring to it. "Insane egotrip" or "worthwhile, meaningful diversion", the choice is ours. I'd hate to see your disallusionment drive you out of fandom; I think you still have much to contribute.))

MARK MUMPER For me, the most interesting part of #12 was Hutchison's review of
1227 Laurel St A **CLOCKWORK ORANGE**, which I will now proceed to tear apart. All in
Santa Cruz, CA a friendly fashion, naturally.
95060

Kubrick as a filmmaker invites his audience to participate, to work towards an understanding of his subject. There are always those who will not or can not (because of nothing more than personal viewpoint -- an everpresent factor) involve themselves in such an effort, who come away in a bewildered state; we've all experienced that frustrating inability to understand, but we don't always know which party is fostering the misunderstanding. But for those who do succeed in a participation, the experience becomes ever more great, a unique and satisfying whole in which both artist and consumer can relate.

Stanley Kubrick is not easy, and he most definitely is not simple. *ACO* requires a deeper viewing than the superficial one many critics have given it. On the surface it is indeed a violent, highly satiric film dealing with stereotypical characters and situations, but no more so than Burgess' novel. Perhaps it appears more overdone, not because of any inherent technique, but because the "movie" (as opposed to film) genre is so entrenched in violence and stereotype that our perceptions have been warped. But Kubrick uses the cliches of filmmaking to great effect, constantly aware of that usage and its results. If he appears obvious, one should suspect that he is actually undermining one's thought processes, preparing for a great shocker of an eruption.

The film deals with free will and the nature of violence, and necessarily depicts

violence in a typically realistic (and at times poetic) Kubrick fashion. Those who view the violence with disgust or condemn it because of its supposed pandering to current desires are missing the point, are indeed the very personification of the attitude toward violence that the story takes issue with.

ACO does not imply that our pursuit of free will must "create an entire society in which evil is a majority choice." Alex's society is already evil, decayed long before his entrance into it. The beauty of his individualistic strength is that he has chosen possibly the only course available to him by which he can remain a free man. He implicitly accepts the fact that he must become a creature of violence and vengeance to survive, and survive he does, by playing the establishment's game against itself.

To accept Kubrick's artistic right to his depiction of brutality is to allow oneself to enter the world of his film with an open mind, to let the images of hate and truculent attack hit with a truly brutal force, much as it has struck the character Alex. His reaction is to strike back; our reaction, which is perhaps Kubrick's intent, is to come away with a better, more honest understanding of the inner self we attempt to hide, but which cries out for justice despite our potentially fatal ignorance of it.

((I accept your conclusion: the image of 'Everyman as manipulator' is obvious in the film. I disagree with some of your arguments, though. I saw no "great shocker of an eruption" in Kubrick's rather cliched handling of aspects of the film; since you weren't more specific, it all looks like a case of the Emperor's new clothes, as Don suggested -- rather than accept banality on the part of Kubrick, you suggest some esoteric but essentially meaningless grand scheme which only the elite can appreciate. Sorry, Mark, but without concrete details I'm not buying it. And as for violent retaliation as the only free course in a violent world, I doubt that you, Kubrick or even cynical old me will accept that.))

DAN GOODMAN Sandra wants people to deduce Poul Anderson's social views
626 S. Alvarado #231 from his fiction? Try this passage from BRAIN WAVE:
Los Angeles, CA.
90057

"A naked woman walked down the street, carrying a market basket. She had set out to think for herself, Corinth imagined, and had decided that clothes in summer were ridiculous... No harm in that per se, but as a symptom it made him shiver. Any society was necessarily founded on certain more or less arbitrary rules and restrictions. Too many people had suddenly realized that the laws were arbitrary, without intrinsic significance, and had proceeded to violate whichever ones they didn't like."

So if the laws and customs dictate that women be regarded as inferior, don't go against custom by treating them as equals. Same for any other set of social beliefs; think for yourself, act for yourself, and society begins to collapse.

((It is accepted that it is ridiculous to take any single passage from the work of any writer and hold it up as exemplary of the writer's true beliefs. What Sandra had in mind was the possibility that a consistent and recurring set of opinions in the output of an author is more likely to represent that author's actual feelings than an isolated, randomly selected passage. Poul may believe as you have indicated, but you'd need a lot lot more than this one passage to even come close to making a case, as I'm sure you're aware.))

"The fact that West Coast voters will most influence the Hugo results this year..." I'd like to see Will Straw back that up. It seems reasonable -- but it's not auto-

matically true. Remember that the balloting is by mail; and that it's just as easy for a supporting member on the East Coast (or in Japan or France for that matter) to put a ballot in the mail as for someone living right near the consite.

((I've been told by members of two Worldcon executives (for an East Coast and Central Worldcon) that the the actual Hugo voter lists showed a definite bias towards the immediate vicinity of the host city. A comparison of the maps showing convention memberships in the fourth Progress reports of Noreascon and LACon bears this out dramatically. It's also a documented fact that LA's exorbitant profit-padding supporting membership fee has kept a lot of knowledgeable fans from voting this year; fans in the vicinity of LA don't worry about this since they'll likely be attending the convention anyway.))

JERRY KAUFMAN
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Bill Watson is superb, almost. (That word is reserved for Bloch, but I wanted to get as near to it as possible.) This and the Liebscher piece have done more for fan history than most of the Entropy Reprints. Whereas the Liebscher piece made me feel I belonged to something of great value, Watson made me wonder why I'm wasting my time. The answer flashes on me: if I had dropped out of fandom after reading Ah, Sweet Idiocy! all those years ago, I'd have never had the chance or the reason to read either Liebscher or Watson.

I think I rather agree with Don Hutchison. As nearly as I can pin down my elusive feelings, the movie is epitomized by the choreographed fight between the two gangs, a lovely scene with grand music and no humans in it anywhere, just flying debris and bodies. Many of the points of stress are distorted, Alex's fight with his droogs in slow motion, the beating of Alexander in extreme closeups with wide angle lenses, the torture of Alex by his former droogs going on forever (they hold his head under water for ages.) And most of the people are distorted. The droogs are extremely stupid, the parole officer (was that what he was?) extremely queer, Alexander extremely mad, the parents extremely bourgeois. Alex is the center, sort of calm and sane, not too bright on large pictures but on top of his own world (he thinks), not good at all but aware of his own evil as the others in the movie are not aware of theirs. I don't think I wanted to identify with Alex and yet Kubrick was trying to make me. So I think this is why I didn't, in the end, care for the movie.

I seem to have run out of things to say, but not out of fanzine, since there is this long and interesting lettercol. It is a long and interesting lettercol, too, and ends in a Bloch. If I were Tucker, I'd say something about solid endings, but...

NORMAN HOCHBERG
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11427

Don's piece is, by far, one of the most intelligent, well-written pieces of criticism that I have yet seen on ACO. To say that I disagree with most of it seems almost heresy. But I do, for several reasons.

For one thing I object to Don's implied suggestion that Kubrick made the movie simply to be in the violence vogue. The more I think about it the less ACO seemed to be depicting violence. I simply don't get the feeling that there was all that much violence in it. Of course, there was but Kubrick (as Don pointed out) de-emphasizes it. So in the end, we get a film that is not made of violence so much as it is made about violence. STRAW DOGS, we note in passing, is the reverse.

I also quibble with Don's criticism of the film on the grounds that a sense of humanity was missing. That was what the whole film was about (or one of the things, anyway.) Kubrick took Burgess' book and turned the approach to it topsy-turvy. It is

obvious that this is how Kubrick thinks if one just looks at 2001 which has a similar situation. Hell, even as far back as Paths of Glory Kubrick wasn't humanizing his characters as much as he was caricaturing them. They've always been archetypes not real people. This is Kubrick's style.

I do heartily agree with Don's criticisms on Kubrick's seemingly gratuitous slow and fast motion scenes as well as the never discussed rear-projection disaster. I can only advance the theory that this was intentional. I mean, this from a man who could develop projection to the levels of 2001 (many people still don't realize that all of the ape scenes were shot indoors with a background projected on a screen). Maybe it's his way of parodying the car ride's violence. Like -- "it isn't really happening, see"?

((Not unsurprisingly ACO accounted for much of the response to last issue. Everyone agrees that Kubrick was saying something, but opinions seem split between those who found him banal and trite and those who refuse to accept this from a creator of his stature and look for deeper reasons for what he did. If anyone has any new insight on the film, I'll be glad to publish it.))

You correctly chided Mr. Hulvey (Massa Hulvey?) for his cliché-ridden analysis of your fanzine. It is people like him who build up fandom's artificial gods - the BNFs. As one of those who met you for the first time at Noreascon and really got to talk with you at Lunacon, I originally was caught up in this syndrome of Gods (or, I guess "Ghods"). Like wow! There you were!! But, you see, all I had to do was talk to you, then I realized you were just a person. If Hulvey and others like him would stop trying to make people into semi-gods I'd be a lot happier (hell, even Buck Coulson is probably human.)

((Well, let's not stretch things too far...Actually, Norm, there are BNFs and they deserve the respect the term carries; but many newer fans tend to call any fan whose name they've read more than half a dozen times a BNF and this dilutes the importance of the term. And even the BNFs are just people, of course...now the PROS on the other hand...))

By the way, the damndest thing happened to me at Disclave. I was sitting on the floor during one of the parties talking with a friend about the Hugo ballot when this little guy came up, interrupted our conversation and asked "Say, are you sercon?" Wow! I thought that was something people only talked about in fanzines. I didn't think anybody really believed in it.

((There are more things in heaven and fandom, Norman...))

ROY TACKETT
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87107

This is, I want you to know, a genuine LoC. It is the first genuine LoC I have written in months. I have almost forgotten how to write genuine LoCs but I read ENERGUMEN 12 and there you were bitching and moaning about how nobody ever writes you LoCs so I said to myself, "Self," I said, "why don't you write ol' Mike Glicksohn an LoC?" "Well, yeah," said myself, "why don't I do that?" So I will.

Let me begin by saying that that is a cover you have there. It certainly is. I am sure it is just full of significance which I do not, of course, recognize. But that is the way I am. You know how I am, do you not? Well, you will by the time you read this. Or at least have an inkling. Let me assure you that whatever they say about me is probably.

We all, I think, desire response to our fanzines most of all. Personal response that

is rather than just a trade or something similar. I know that I eagerly look for the few letters of comment I receive. Equally I am almost always disappointed by the very small response to the zines I send through FAPA, but that is the nature of FAPA. I suppose the problem is that everybody publishes these days. Time was when mimeos and other means of duplication weren't too easy to come by so there were few zines and many letterhacks. Now it's just the opposite. Nobody has time for letters -- they're all too busy writing for their own zines.

((I agree completely; Something should be done about it... And thanks for writing and proving the merit of my policy again, Roy -- even if it did cost me a \$260 trip to Albuquerque to pick up your letter!))

BOB TOOMEY
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01105

A few weeks ago I was having my car serviced, and had to wait in the gas station office until it was ready. Casting about for something to read to pass the time, my eye fell upon a stack of mags with titles like *INTESTINAL ACTION STORIES*, *GOUGE*, *ALL MALE VENGEANCE*, *TRUE WAR ATROCITY TALES*, and so on and so forth, plus at the bottom a few back copies of *NATIONAL ENQUIRER*. My prurient interest was aroused. (Actually it's pretty easy to arouse my prurient interest. A nice female ass will do it every time. I used to get off on a good pair of tits, but I heard that this was immature, and lowered my sights accordingly.)

Anyway I sat for an hour or two in the gas station office and leafed through the mags. It was an education. Besides getting a full course in black garter belts and filmy white negligees, I also learned that the common factor in these mags is an absolute loathing of women. Women were raped, beaten and reviled. They were shown as screwing up men in every possible way. Between large doses of John Wayne style patriotism, the women were treated as tramps and teases and total nonpersons. There was no such thing as straight and tender sex. Occasionally a pure girl was pictured, the daughter of a missionary or something, the motivation for a daring rescue, but she was remote and untouchable, and apparently lacking in primary sexual characteristics. But for the most part intercourse was effected by ripping off a slut's clothes, after she has led the hero on and on past endurance to the point of no return.

The comic books are nothing compared to this type of propaganda. Kids get their attitudes from each other. But grownups who read tend to put their trust in the printed word. The *NATIONAL ENQUIRER* calls Germaine Greer the world's number one man hater. In the course of a single article of less than two hundred words, it called her that at least four times, and needless to say the article was a thoroughly stupid put-down of her. Greer is by no means a man hater. She's a beautiful intelligent sexy lady, but I wonder how many who read the *ENQUIRER* realize that. You can say that these wide distribution crud magazines and newspapers don't constitute much voting stock among the aware. But the aware aren't the ones who need to be reached, because for the most part they at least pay lip service to the ideal. I say that this pulp paper shit mirrors the deep down bedrock attitude of our age, the ego-fear most men have of losing their strength. Women are traditionally the weaker sex, and woe betide anyone who tries to change this view of them, and especially woe betide them if they try to change it themselves.

HARRY WARNER, JR
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I've never read the comic magazines on which Susan's article on feminine characters is based. But I've been working in recent weeks on a long article about daily comic strips for the *annish* which one of the local newspapers will publish next spring. This enabled me to renew acquaintance through microfilms with a comic

strip which nobody outside Hagerstown seems to know anything about. It was or is called Big Sister, it was drawn by Les Forgrave for most of its life, and as far as I can determine it holds the Hagerstown record for longevity: more than forty years of uninterrupted publication from its beginning in the late 1920's until the strip was dropped a couple of years ago. What makes it relevant is its good attitude toward what women can do in the world. It was basically a soap opera, probably a pioneer in the newspaper comic strip history in that respect, but it was almost never mushy or melodramatic and I can't understand why it isn't mentioned in the comic strip histories owned by the local library.

The strip began just as a middle-aged, lower middle-class man had been widowed, left with four children and a lot of debts. The oldest girl decides to quit school and take care of the younger children and try to help her somewhat fumbling father to keep going. The characters and the sets looked like real people and their environment, the strip would be humorous one day and tragic the next, the villains weren't physically deformed or mentally warped in the Dick Tracy style, and even though women's lib didn't become a rallying call until decades after the strip started, the heroine simply went ahead and did what had to be done, even though some of the deeds were those that men would normally perform.

Prodigies continue to descend upon us. Not long ago I got a long letter from Eric Bentcliffe telling me about the new fanzine he's preparing and its contributors who include almost everyone from British fandom in the 1950's who was anybody except Norman G. Wansborough, and now you pull from oblivion Bill Watson. I always felt a little uncomfortable around Bill's letters and fanzines because he seemed so much more sophisticated and mature than other people in fandom during his main period of activity. But it's strange to think that thirty years intervened between his gaffiation and my learning for the first time some details about the real Bill Watson of that early fannish era.

Nobody ever asks me to contribute art to fanzines so I can't speak for fanzine artists. But I can suspect something: that they have as much trouble writing that simple little word "no" as I have when someone wants me to do an article or a column. Downright refusal seems so drastic, so discriminating. If you remain silent for a while to the request for material, you may think of something to write about and you may have three hours of spare time unexpectedly and most fanzines don't stick to the deadlines they establish anyway. I don't contend that this is the honorable way to behave when people ask for contributions; I just offer it as a possible explanation for this silence which must be hard on the few fanzines that do stick to a schedule and plan ahead for what's to go into each issue.

((You have a point there, Harry, but I think there's considerable difference between a general 'Do me an article?' request and an inquiry as to whether or not an artist can do a specific illustration for a specific article for a specific deadline. The former can be left unanswered for a while; the latter deserves an immediate answer, surely? And, naturally, each fanned must try to treat his contributors with the respect and consideration he'd like from them.))

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DARRELL SCHWEITZER I agree with whoever it was that said that comics are a symptom
113 Deepdale Road and not the cause of our social ills. I do not seriously think
Strafford, PA. comics will change in the near future, because the formulas
19087 they are exploiting sell. Superficial relevancy is where it's
 at today, so as long as it sells more copies, they'll keep it
up. If the Jesus Freak movement ever becomes really big, big enough to supplant the
"counter-culture"/revolutionary/hippiedom thing, then comic books will slant them-
selves towards the Jesus people. But the distressing fact of the matter is that the
vast majority of the public wants trash, because it's an easy, quick thrill and

takes no effort to get down. Why do you think things like VALLEY OF THE DOLLS sell so well? How do you think television stations (at least American ones) can get away with the shit they broadcast? Because regardless of how much intellectual types scream about it being worthless, most people want mindless garbage.

((Unfortunately, but absolutely, correct. How else explain the continued enormous popularity of "The Tonight Show" while the intellectually stimulating Dick Cavett program flounders on the brink of cancellation?))

Comic books are still aimed at ten-year-olds (or some of them anyway), now mostly ten-year-olds who think they're hip and hip people who either like an occasional mental laxative or else have minds of ten-year-olds. The sexual attitudes are slanted to that audience and are simply immature. Most comic book readers still regard girls as "sissy" and nothing more than an inferior version of a boy. If Captain America started showing modern adult attitudes towards women the circulation would drop.

((I don't for a minute believe that Marvel or the newer DC comics are slanted towards or read primarily by ten-year-olds. Maybe they aren't intended for the adult market, but let's not go to extremes. And part of the problem is that comics have been "showing modern adult attitudes towards women" but the attitudes they've been showing have been those of a modern adult male chauvinist.))

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One of the problems I've encountered in my attempts to carve out my place amongst The Mortals in literature as a fiction writer is my use of female characters as essentially projections of my psychic state. I grant that I use all characters that way, but the animus types tend to come off better than the anima ones. I am strongly drawn to the stereotypes you mention from Greer and the She-male I conceive of. Unfortunately, my inalienable artist's right and all that does have its negative effects as well as alienating half of a potential audience. (Come to think of it, how popular are those figures with women...hey, now!)

One of those tacky problems in literature is finding or establishing or defining "feminine point of view." Vi Woolf goes a way in Orlando, but that really doesn't suffice. The base problem being that men have for so long dominated literature that they influence female writers, who like all writers learn by study and association.

And speaking of "females", I'm surprised you didn't pounce on one of my favorite points in Marvel. There are no women or girls, only females ("Drop that female!" "The female is mine!" "Have you seen a female...?"), something like on a breeding farm. "Men, go roust up a couple of females for the bar-be-cue."

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT...

MARK FRANCIS: "As for humor (and humour). Well, America is the home of Laugh-In, Abbott & Costello, Soupy Sales and Co.; but it also spawned Twain, Newhart, Peanuts, Bill Cosby, Cavett and Thurber. Not to mention Spiro Agnew."

JOHN LEAVITT: "ENERGUMEN is on the way to establishing a tradition for itself of bringing back great fen of the past, with first Liebscher and now Bill Watson. Watson sounds like a fascinating human being, the kind you'd like to sit down with and talk to all night over a couple of six packs. It was a little sad, though, like he's been looking for something for years, and doesn't know exactly what he's looking for, but keeps looking, and won't ever find it. It makes you wonder what you'll be

doing in the future, and if maybe you'll just keep moving around and never stay any place too long. A piece like this makes me nostalgic for the present..."

BILL BOWERS: "This isn't a meaty loc, no, but it is an expression of interest and hopefully encouragement. You're a good (if callow) rival, and despite the fact that once we get settled here I'm going to wipe you off the face of Andy Porter's fannish maps, you're quite welcome to make your envious insults at any time. I understand." ((When you've reached the apex of success as we have, second best fanzine around, you can accept the slings and arrows of the lesser lights of fandom; keep shooting your feeble arrows, Father William -- we're delighted you still have the strength to use a typewriter.))

ELIZABETH KIMMERLY: "One thing that occurred to me about 'The Poison Maiden and the Great Bitch' was that while male heroes in 'great' books may have more character (you don't expect too much from pulps in the way of in-depth characterization) there are very few books which don't fall into the trap of relating a huge social upheaval in terms of one man's experience. I wonder if any sf/new wave authors have ever tried to write a novel in which there was no hero and no leader? When you're talking about something as big as the Fight Against The Aliens, it stands to reason that the leader is very far removed from the conflict or in so close that only the team can survive since the individual members are expendable. The only book I've ever read that tried this "group as hero" was Camus' The Plague. Perhaps some of your pro writers would like to try it out."

ANGUS TAYLOR: "You like comment letters? You get comment letter. Find enclosed please. Is this. Same day I get, I write... I was much impressed with the reflections of Bill Watson. I think we have a poet of sorts here; seen through his eyes past events acquire new dimensions."

ANDY OFFUTT: "Lapidus was naturally interesting and well written (interesting to fanzine editors), but one grows summat weary of his, Alpajpuri's, and your own discussions of such ununderstandable esoterica as the methods of reproduction, the placement of graphics on pages, the amount and quality of bleed, and like that. To most of us unwashed millions a fanzine looks yechy, pretty cool, good or super, and we really like it if the art is decent and we can see it and the written art or material is legible as well as interesting, enlightening and/or amusing. I should suggest an Insiders' Newsletter for Fanzine Publishers and Completists, with all that dull stuff in." ((Sorry, Andy, but I guess that's the price you pay for being a member of one of the last free presses around. Why, I don't even pay any attention to those who order me not to publish any more writers talking about their books!))

BOB TUCKER: "I'm here to thank you for the June issue of ENERGUMEN, and that fine piece by Harry Warner. I was pleased with the issue and amused at Harry; if you will measure closely you'll find that my left leg is now quarter of an inch longer than the right one as a result of his pulling. I don't dare admit now what the two intentional mistakes were because he undercut so beautifully some of my supposedly accurate or inaccurate statements on which the errors were based. I am undone, and must resort to strong drink to maintain my faith in fandom."

JOSEPH WESSON: "I've spent the last few years -- eleven to be exact -- apathetically avoiding becoming involved in sf fandom. If all of it is as delightful as the three copies of ENERGUMEN Terry Austin brought over, I might believe I've been mistaken all these years, in avoiding this delightful trivia."

GEORGE PROCTOR: "Don Hutchison caught the visual images of ACO quite well in his description. I wish he would read them and then ask himself -- isn't that what the movie was supposed to portray? Was the movie supposed to be anything more than the portrayal of ultra-violence released on a smug, self-righteous world? And then, when they all get their shot at Alex, is there any difference? Not in my mind."

MIKE GILBERT: "The front cover is bad; it's a nice idea but -- a) what is the reason for all those sloppy black lines and areas -- was it drawn with a paper match -- it's clumsy and dirty --- b) it's a confusing 'line drawing' -- all lines and areas are equal in width and weight -- nothing stands out. The backcover suffers from pseudo hatch cross zip-atone effects -- too much 'white space' also in said effects -- In a mostly dumb letter David Hulvey made one good observation -- ... "you are bland" This is a little strong perhaps but it serves to indict the entire fanzine scene -- articles are dull and artwork is dull and the general tone of the articles is dull. It seems that no-one can find anything really interesting to talk about. Maybe I'm jaded and old. Rosemary was interesting and fun to read as usual and Susan was informative... all else paled (zzzzzzz), slow reading this issue. OK, pick it up up there -- excitement -- thrills -- " ((Quit beating about the bush, Mike; did you or did you not enjoy the issue?))



ROBERT BLOCH: "Enjoyed the second half of Susan's analysis, but was bought up short by her comment, "one thing is clear: love is dangerous", a valid observation, but it might be equally applicable to the plays of Tennessee Williams. As a matter of fact, a great percentage of today's novels, short stories, plays and films are based directly on this thesis, to which I can only reply, "Live dangerously." Thanks much for a stimulating issue."

ALJO SVOBODA: " Actually, the most horrendous accusation of /Brooklyn fandom/ that I've heard is that, at times, you can't tell where one Brooklyn fan ends and the other begins. That's not true! Just ask Arnie Kunkel."

TOWNSEND HAGER: "I applaud your publication of the Jim McLeod portfolio. McLeod is a superb artist, with an excellent technique. Although small, the portfolio exhibited a wide diversity of styles -- just look at the gulf between the complex pen-and-ink of the Arab, and the evocative simplicity of the sketch following, so reminiscent of the style of Kawanabe Kyosai's early sketches. Such a portfolio can only give Jim the recognition he deserves." ((Jim's portfolio was very well received by the readership. Few said more than that they really enjoyed it, but it appears to have been one of our most popular graphic features.))

DENA BROWN (On driving from New York to San Francisco): "It was good to get to see some of the country, and although we stuck to good old Route 80, some of the sights were pretty memorable. I must admit the midwest -- from Ohio to Wyoming -- was pretty boring. See, it was spring, and instead of seeing nothing but green fields of growing things, all we saw were acres and acres of fertilizer. Half the US covered in shit. Wow."

DAVID STEVER: "I would like to see Tim Kirk's bulldozer. After all, it was inspired by "Killdozer". The English Village Architecture was inspired by Compton's CHRONOCULES. I can't think of any time travel stories with Teddy Roosevelt, but he might turn up yet in Farmer's next Riverworld story. Why restrict yourself to cutesy aliens, Tim? Tell me what you've got, and I'll tell you how it relates to SF." ((David is the only person I know who writes us locs on 250 year old parchment!))

HAL DAVIS: "I hate to say it, but the Definition-of SF debate has me turning pages faster than a convention-site-by-glacial-regions-or-phases-of-the-moon rondelay. It's that rara avis, the open ended genre. The mission of SF should be to explode the genre. Now go back to sleep."

RICHARD HARTER: "It's interesting that the most powerful and enjoyable piece in the entire issue is by Bill Watson. I say interesting because it is written by someone who is no longer a fan, which makes for depressing thoughts on the general level of fan writing. The fan press, after all, should be offering a haven for many pieces of writing which fit no standard mold and can find no other home. One would hope that in an area unrestricted by considerations of commercial salability some really excellent off-beat writing would emerge now and then. However it doesn't seem to very often and it does seem a shame that this potential remains dormant."

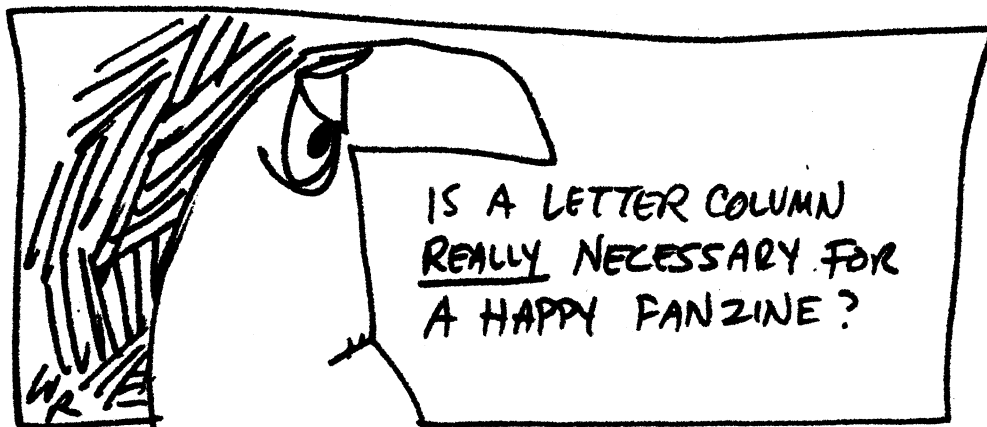
JERRY JACKS: "OK, women are downtrodden in comic books, granted; the stereotype role playing trip is exploited for all it's worth, granted; but how do you think GAY people think about comix -- the usual trip is a continuation of the sexual stereotypes into children's media by ignoring what has been going on. Can you imagine Robin or Speedy (who recently was 'revealed' to be a junkie) coming across Gay Lib at their schools? I sure can, but that kind of story has not been done, nor will it likely be done."

ERIC LINDSAY: "Now, let's see if I've got it. 'Slash for Susan, got it?' Got it. Double brackets for...ah, Bob? ...Brian? ...Bill? ...Bill!...Double Bill!!! Ah, I knew there was someone else behind that clever plastic Canadian disguise." ((Very droll, very droll. Ha, ha. Anyway, if this were really Bowers, your name would be mis-typed.))

DAVID SHANK: "I enjoyed Bill Watson's ribald article and was glad to read of 1940's fan history that was not touched on by the already immense ALL OUR YESTERDAYS. I wish I'd been born earlier -- I'm doomed to '70's fandom." ((A fate worse than death, David?))

JEFF SMITH: "Tim Kirk sparked an idea that might be interesting. Somebody should do folios of our favorite artists' non-sf work: Tim's bulldozer and Roosevelt and etc.. After all, writers are allowed to write about anything, so why not equality for artists?"

J. BRENT MACLEAN: "I received #12 in the mail. It is not an inspirational issue."



AND WE ALSO GOT LETTERS FOR WHICH THERE IS, ALAS, NO ROOM, FROM: Barry Smotroff, Ian Maule, Pete Roberts, Laurine White, Eli Cohen, Leo Murray, Doug Potter, Bob Stahl, Jerry Lapidus, Peter Gill, Dave Piper, Gloria Ptacek, Terry Austin, Jeff Schalles, Dave Nee, Terry Hughes, John Berry, Robert Bowie-Reed, Sheryl Birkhead, Dave Locke, Linda Bushyager, Lane Lambert, Yale Edeiken, Moshe Feder, Pat McGuire, Ned Brooks, Bill Andresen, Greg Shaw, Ethel Lindsay, Will Straw, Rose Hogue, and Murray Moore. And that doesn't count the dozens of fanzines received, subscriptions accepted, or submissions of artwork or articles. Sigh -- 'tis enough to make you old and tired...

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