JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT
IT WAS SAFE TO BIND YOUR FANZINES

ENERGUMEN 16



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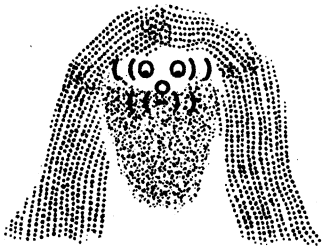
in memoriam
susan wood
1948-1980

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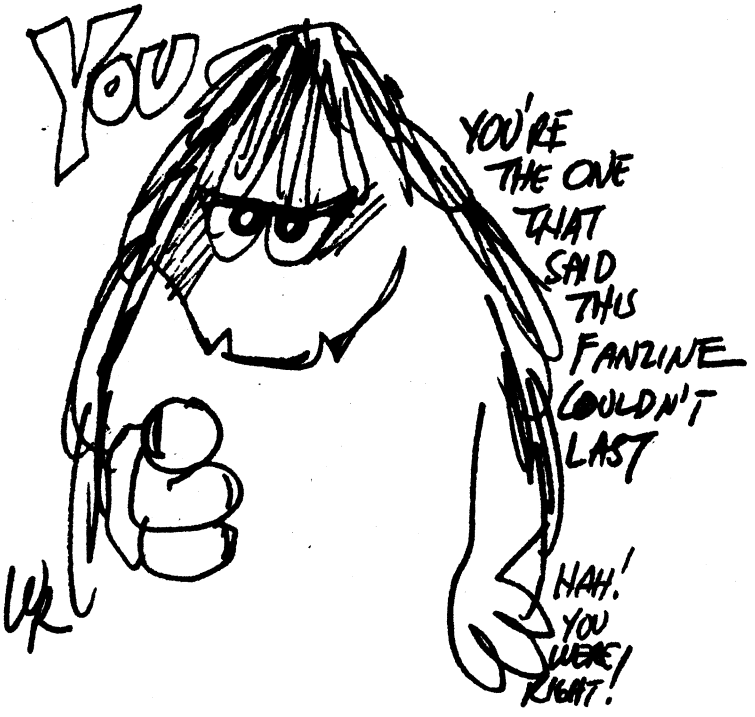
ENERGUMEN 16 was conceived by Mike Glicksohn and Susan Wood and was edited and published by Mike Glicksohn at #137 High Park Avenue, Toronto Ontario M6P 2S3, Canada in an edition of three hundred copies. ENERGUMEN 16 is available by editorial whim. Some copies will be sold for US $4 (by mail) or US $3 (in person) with all proceeds donated to the Susan Wood Scholarship Fund.



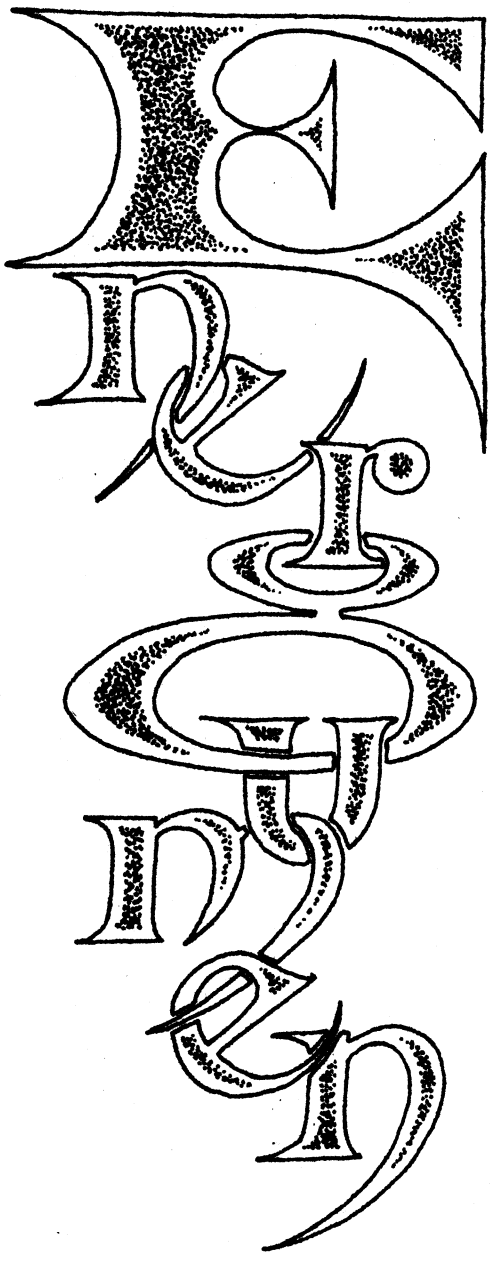
SSScotch Press Publication #63



SEPTEMBER - 1981



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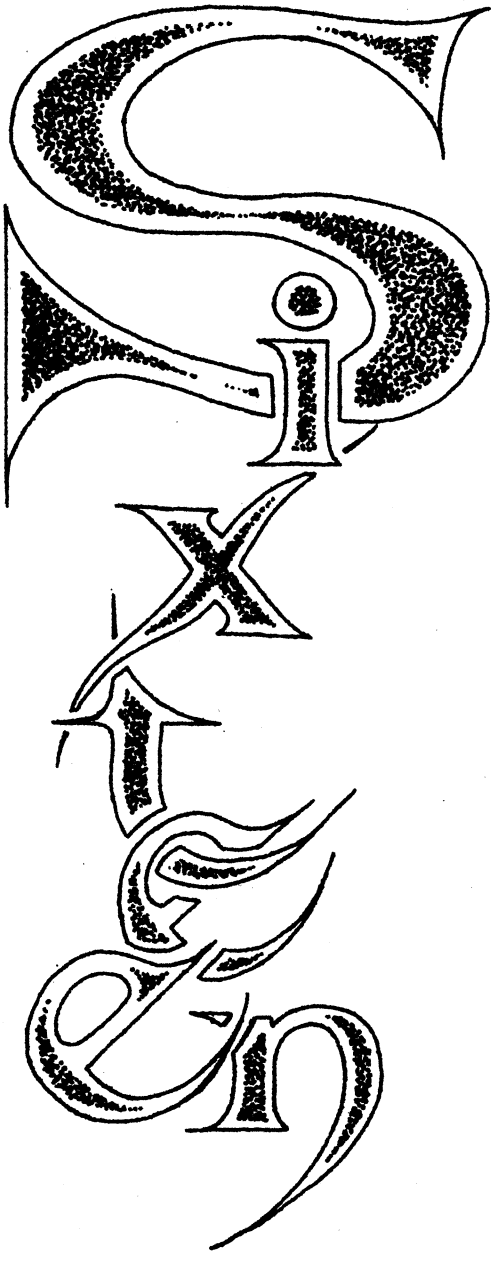
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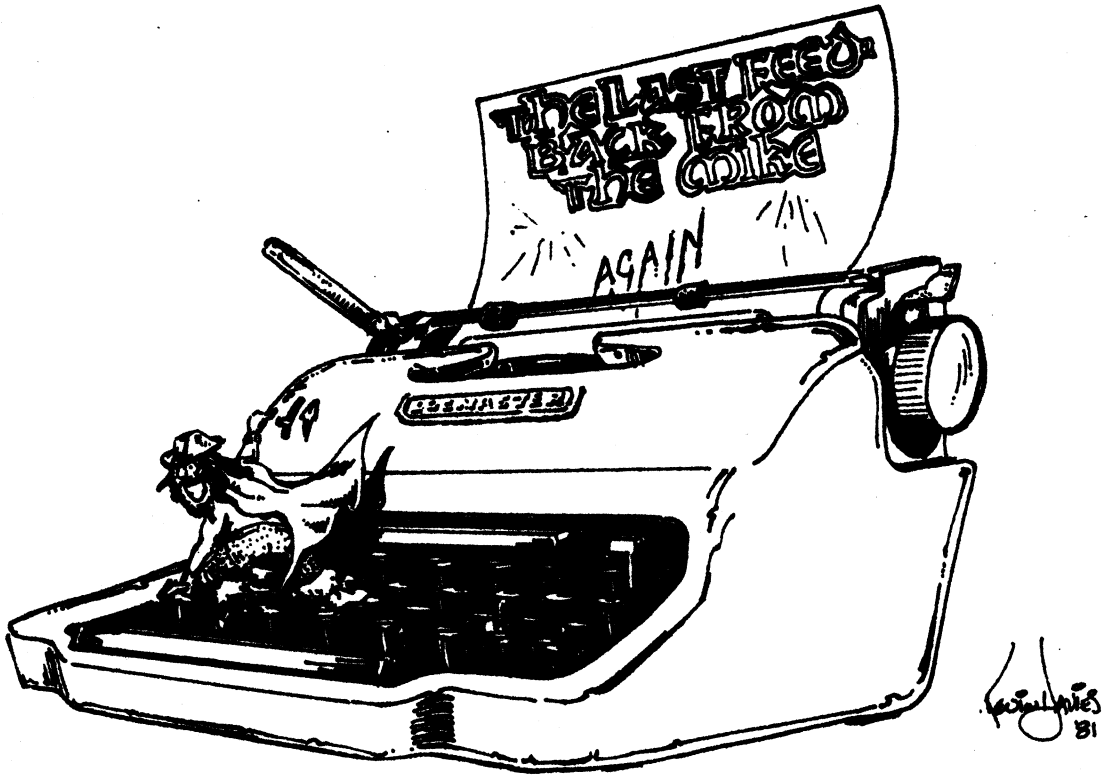
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Welcome to ENERGUMEN 16, the Tenth Anniversary Issue that should reach you just about twelve years after ENERGUMEN 1 and eight and a half years after ENERGUMEN 15. But who was ever able to prove that Fans Are Slans?

It's initially Bill Bowers' fault.

Early in 1980, Bill first presented orally and then published -- in a pale, puny twelve-page imitation of a fanzine -- the Tenth Anniversary Issue of OUTWORLDS. With a sense of timing uncharacteristic of fandom, he did this ten years after (re)starting his fanzine. While he did not actually come out and *challenge* us to match him, that speech/issue was liberally sprinkled with misspelled references to ENERGUMEN. The gauntlet had been thrown.

It's mainly Susan Wood's fault.

A little later in 1980, Susan called me from Vancouver. She'd read what Bowers had done, noted the implicit challenge, remembered all the fun of the "rivalry" between us and why didn't we show the bastard what a *real* Tenth Anniversary Issue should look like? Her voice raced and bubbled over the wires: we could drag the old columnists out of their cobwebs to write again, Alicia might be persuaded to do something, Terry would probably find a good reprint, perhaps Tim would... and I was swept along on the tidal wave of her enthusiasm. I began adding suggestions of my own and suddenly the issue was taking shape in my head and I was feeling that heady excitement that comes from creating something special, something fannish. All this despite the fact that I'd bound the first fifteen NERGs years ago and had long considered ENERGUMEN a part of fandom's history.

But my lust for egoboo didn't totally overwhelm me. Let's keep this in the dark, I suggested somewhat later in the conversation. We'll work on it secretly, have all the contributors keep quiet about it and then we'll spring The Perfect Fanzine on a croggled fandom! (It's that sort of thinking that makes Bill Bowers refer to me as "machiavellian".)

A part of it is Alan Bostick's fault.

At this stage, wiser heads might still have prevailed. Late-night, scotch-enhanced, long-distance enthusiasm can wilt in the cold morning light of labour and economics. But a mere two weeks later, with only a few desultory feelers having issued from Toronto, I read all about ENERGUMEN 16 in an issue of Alan's formerly frequent fannish fanzine. Suddenly fans all over the country were talking about and writing about NERG 16; I even got a subscription in the mail. So much for croggling fandom. While my back was turned, the gauntlet had been picked up, cleaned and pressed and mounted in fandom's collective scrapbook.

I guess it's also Mike Glicksohn's fault.

Presented with this apparent *fait accompli*, I could still have backed down. I could have pleaded poverty, Old-and-Tired-ness, Twonk's Disease or even Bergeron Syndrome. I could have simply vanished, reappearing at conventions with a haircut, shave, three-piece suit and an appropriate alias to join in the general condemnation of cop-out faneds. Instead, I visited Susan in July of 1980 and in the kitchen of her Vancouver apartment we thrashed out the basic structure of the issue. I'd have to do all the actual production work if we decided to go through with it and it would be a *lot* of work indeed. Three hundred copies of perhaps a hundred page fanzine: all that typing, printing, slip-sheeting, de-slipsheeting, collating, mailing...you would have to be a fool to undertake a task like that singlehanded. A fool, or a fanzine fan. And those twenty-four boxes of fanzines in the storage room aren't there because I think they're cheaper than fibreglass insulation.

So welcome once again to ENERGUMEN 16, the fanzine that was never supposed to be. At least now you know who to blame for being here.

* * * * * * * * *

"Susan Wood died today. A part of me died with her. She was the first woman I ever loved and I guess I loved her right up to the end. The loss is a tragic and senseless one."

I wrote those words on November 12, 1980, a few short hours after learning of Susan's death. I wrote other words too. Words put down in shock, in pain, in anger at the wrongness of it all. But you won't read them here.

In the weeks following her death, I wrote several tributes to Susan and read a great many more, tributes more eloquent and moving than anything I could say, words from some of the many people whose lives she had touched, changed, enriched. Someday I expect there will be a volume dedicated to her, a volume which will attempt to capture her drive, her energy, her talent and her passion for the ideas and the people who were central to her life. But this is not it.

This is ENERGUMEN 16, the fanzine Susan started. It may be a tribute to the things she believed in and cared about but it is not a memorial to her. It isn't the same issue it would have been but in essence it remains that Perfect Fanzine we roughed out in Vancouver and started to smooth into shape through excited letters exchanged in the fall of 1980. That's why this section did not start my editorial and that's why the cover is still the one which delighted Susan when I described it to her over the phone. And that is also why her words appear here exactly as she wrote them, bittersweet though some may be now, and why the contributions received while she was alive remain unaltered.

This is not just a fanzine, it is the sixteenth issue of a fanzine with a clearly defined history and style. After Susan died, I strove to preserve that style while carrying through the idea she had initiated, that of publishing a Hugo-worthy *fanzine*. My goal was always to produce something Susan would have been proud of.

ENERGUMEN 16 then; not an obituary, not a memorial issue, but perhaps my personal tribute to the legacy of excellence of Susan Wood, a fan whose accomplishments have earned her a permanent place in the history of fandom, a fan who, in the words of her mother, Elsie Wood, "did not live in vain, only for too short a time."

* * * * * * * * * *

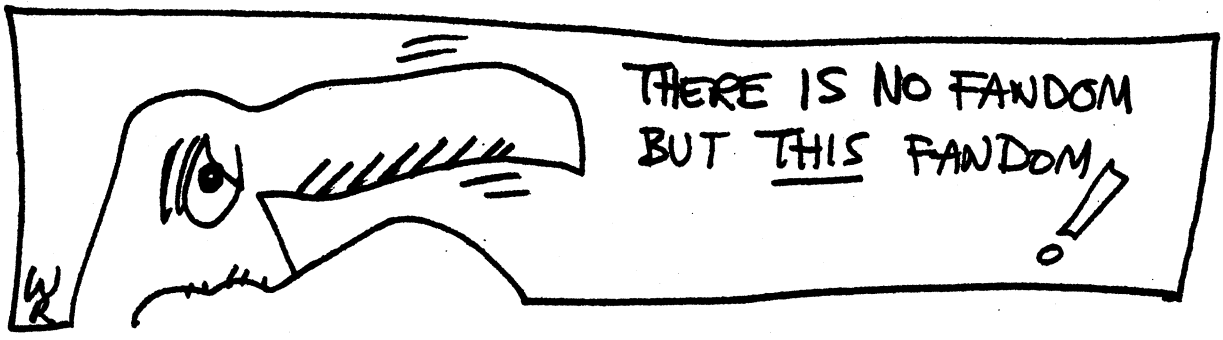
So now you know what this isn't and have an inkling of what it's supposed to be. We wanted to go back to the days of the old-fashioned fannish genzine while simultaneously extending the gestalt of ENERGUMEN at least one more issue. So we set out to incorporate as many as possible of the elements which, to us, had made NERG unique while trying to entice the "best" current fanwriters and fanartists into the issue.

The result is somewhat of a hybrid, made more so by the fact that the issue was only in the planning stages when Susan died and its final form thus reflects primarily my own rather personal vision of today's Perfect Fanzine.

It is recognizeably an issue of ENERGUMEN: Susan, Rosemary and I are here, as are Alicia, Tim and Derek. And yet it is also different, lacking the emphasis on artistic pyrotechnics which characterized the earlier issues; a change necessitated by the sheer size of the issue.

And while *every* top talent in fandom may not be represented here, I think you'll find the line-up second to none for fanzines of recent years. The genzine may be a dinosaur -- doomed by our inflationary economy to imminent extinction -- but at least it's going to go out in style!

* * * * * * * * * *



ENERGUMEN 15 was published about eight and a half years ago. Eight and a half years; that may not be too many but it certainly is enough; at least two fannish generations. Many people reading this weren't even fans when #15 appeared. Many more have entered fandom, risen to some prominence and disappeared completely in the hiatus between issues.

It belabors the obvious to point out that Things Were Different Back Then. Not just things like the world political situation, the economy and the value of the Canadian dollar but *important* things like fans, fanzines and fandom.

I like to think I'm not one of those backward-looking fans who is constantly blinded by the reflections from his own Golden Age of Fandom. Nor am I naive enough to ascribe my changing reactions to fandom simply to changes in fandom without recognizing the changes that have occurred within me too. And yet I think it is more than simple nostalgia which causes me to find current fanzine fandom less stimulating and less exciting than the fanzine fandom of which ENERGUMEN was a major part.

The economic reasons for the decline of fanzines are well-documented and impossible to argue with but this knowledge fails to make the situation easier to bear. I get

fewer and fewer fanzines and an ever-decreasing percentage of those manage to hold my interest. It is true that after fourteen years as a steady letterhack -- a record I suspect places me second on the all-time list, a mere few decades behind Harry Warner -- I may be burnt out but that can't be all of it. Accepting that the publication of WARHOON 28 would have been *the* event of whatever year it happened in, why should the rumored resurrection of VOID, INNUENDO and ENERGUMEN be the big stories of recent fanzine fandom? Can TWLL DDU, PONG and TELOS alone maintain the continuity of what used to be *the* vital area of fannish communication and creativity? And how embarrassing to have to admit that *I could not think* of five fanzines or five fanwriters deserving a Hugo nomination for 1980!



Fandom runs in cycles, of course, and things may change again but currently fanzine fandom seems to be still deteriorating. I guess this issue is my way of trying to stem that tide and recapture just a bit of that glow from my own Golden Age.

* * * * *

In 1973, Superman was still a comic-book character, Darth Vader was far, far away, a close encounter was what you hoped for at worldcon and if stomachs burst at sf films it was due to the plot and dialog on screen. The worldcon was almost half again as big as it had ever been, attracting a mere 2900 to a hotel that received a standing ovation at the banquet.

If fanzine fandom seems temporarily moribund, convention fandom -- despite setbacks due to inflation -- is quite the opposite. The explosion of big-budget SF film spectaculars is probably the single most significant factor in the changing nature of conventions over the last eight years. Several formerly comfortable fannish regionals are now attracting fifteen hundred attendees and the 1982 worldcon committee is -- wisely -- allowing for the possibility of 8000 members. Fandom has changed since NERG 15 and many fans aren't too pleased about it.

But I'm not one of those who rail against the waves of fringe fans which swamp our larger gatherings. Hell, I entered fandom through the pages of "Famous Monsters" so who am I to cast stones? (I would, however, fully support a "no-frills" worldcon bid -- provided it was thoroughly explained to potential voters -- if any of the groups currently toying with that idea actually put it into practice.)

As far as I'm concerned, *my* fandom is essentially unchanged despite the changes in fandom *per se*. Socially, I have never found fandom more enjoyable than it is right now. There are still small fannish relaxacons to go to, and even at worldcon it is quite possible to create that "con within the con" that fannish fans have always relied on. The unfannish masses are an annoyance, true, but despite the compulsions I personally may feel, nobody is *forced* to go to worldcon. Those who do undertake the expensive pilgrimmage to our annual reunion must do so in full awareness of the chaos they're heading into; to do otherwise is not to exercise those broad mental horizons we so often claim to have.

Since 1973, the worldcon has ranged from almost six hundred to nearly six thousand. It's been to foreign places such as Melbourne, Brighton and Miami. It's been run like a smoothly-oiled machine and like a low-budget disaster film. And through it all it has survived and grown and annually lures us, like moths to a flame, if only to hiss as they hand out the Hugos.



So I'll be in Denver (along, it seems, with merely a *small* handful of friends) to see if rumoured disasters materialize and to experience, first-hand, my fifteenth worldcon of the sixteen that have been held since I became a fan. (If I manage to find any of you there, I'll explain why I'm just one week shy of having copies of this *magnum opus* to hand you.)

And, of course, next year in Chicago. We can hiss together and reminisce about 2900 people and standing ovations...

* * * * *

If a lot has happened to fanzines and fandom since May of 1973, a lot has also happened to most fans.

The appearance of NERG 16 pretty well coincides with my fifteenth anniversary as a fan. Consequently, almost exactly 55% of my fannish career has taken place *since* NERG 15. It is wryly amusing to consider that more than half of my activity within fandom has occurred since I stopped doing the thing most fans would probably say I did best as a fan. *Sic gloria transit* and so on.

Of course, I haven't exactly been idle during the last ninety-nine months. In that time I've published thirty fanzines (a drop in the bucket to apahacks who often put out that many in less than a year, I know, but I've never been one to go to extremes ...coff, coff...), attended some hundred and twenty conventions, frequently in some official capacity, built up one of the better fantasy art collections this side of California, written a million or more words in response to other people's fanzines and -- according to some -- come close to destroying midwest regional conventions by re-introducing poker as a major fannish pastime. If there's ever a fannish history of the '70s I like to hope I'll have earned a place in it...if only for helping invent and popularize the Spayed Gerbil!

Those past eight years of pretty active fanning helped make 141 High Park one of the better known of fannish addresses (maybe not the Summit, but close) so the sentimentalist in me regrets that ENERGUMEN was never published there. I moved in three months after #15 appeared and was moved out three months before #16 was ready. Now eight years is a reasonable time for a fan to have the same address (and I'd have happily stayed there for eight or eighteen more years) so the coincidence of the publication of #16 and my sudden departure from 141 has me somewhat worried. Will 137 be snatched out from over me if I ever decide to publish ENERGUMEN 17?

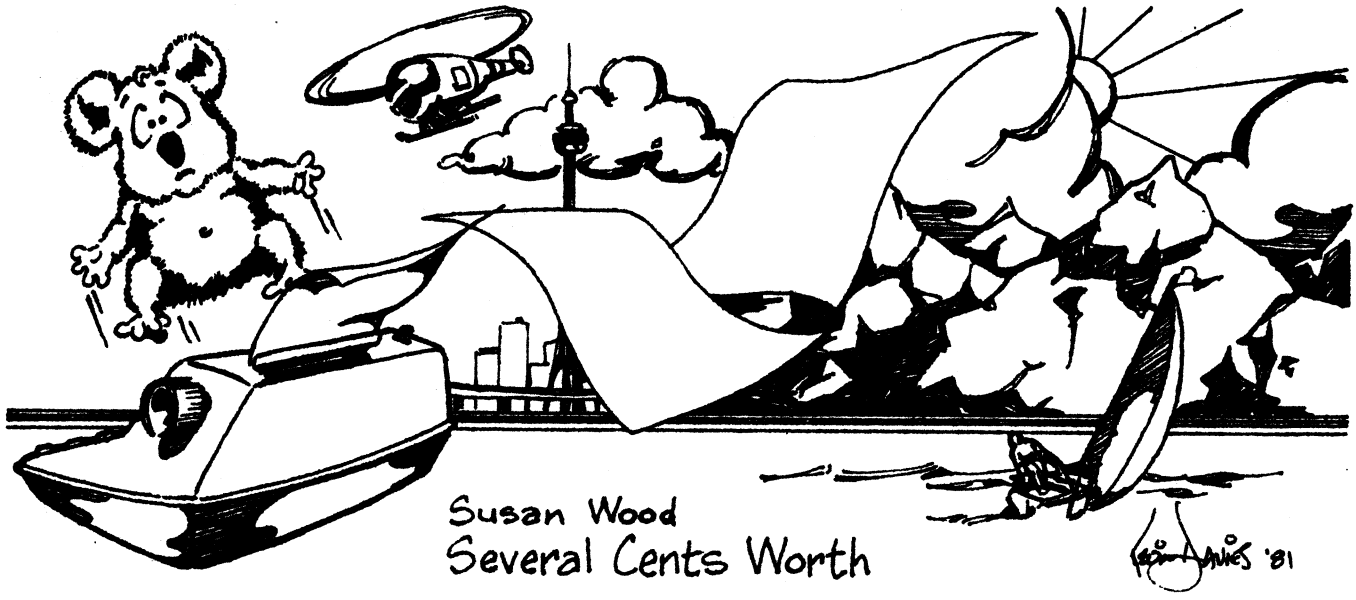
Speaking of which, there may or may not be one. Someday. *If* the quality of response to this issue merits it, I'll produce a smaller, mostly-lettercolumn follow-up. Whatever happens, though, I'm a believer in D.U.E. (Dissemination of Unpublished Egoboo) so copies of all relevant comments will be forwarded to the contributors. So don't let the possibility of remaining unpublished dissuade you from responding/reacting to the issue; I'm going to need *something* to make thirty one thousand two hundred slipsheets worthwhile! (That *is* too many.)

Still, if there's one thing my last eight years as a fan have prepared me for it's

excesses. Not just the small personal excesses -- like eighteen hour poker games or thirty hours of non-stop partying -- but the excesses which are the essence of fannishness. Like ten years and a 600+ page hard-cover fanzine, for example. If WARHOON 28 and the Fan Tarot Deck can both finally appear and ENERGUMEN can rise from the dead then anything is possible. Bowers may get a job, Tucker may go on the wagon, conventions may get smaller, postal rates may go down, hotel elevators may start working and THE LAST DANGEROUS VISIONS may even get published.

Join me here in about eight years time and we'll compare notes...





This story begins with a phonecall from Dr. Gregory Benford, Physics Department, U.C. Irvine.

"Hi, Susan," he said, calling me in Berkeley on his WATS line. "I saw in LOCUS that you got tenure! Congratulations. You know, I've been worried about you all year. Is there anyone you'd like me to kill?"

"No, thanks, Greg. I just feel a little shell-shocked; I've been dodging flak all year."

"Yeah, I know," said Greg, and proceeded to tell me the horrendous details of what *his* university had done when he'd tried to set up an sf writing class with Barry Malzberg. We discussed the Academic Establishment's, um, negative attitudes to sf, with Greg using phrases like "well, we've got you in place, now we've got to organize" and "we have to form a network."

As I tried to point out to Greg, though, the very idea that there were enough academics interested in sf and fantasy to even *consider* banding together as a sub-subfandom was rather remarkable. Yes, I encountered some opposition, last year. I also encountered a lot of support, from students and colleagues, as I (with a little help from my friends) transformed the sf class I'd hidden under "studies in fiction" into English 337, Studies in Fantasy and Science Fiction: a real, live, permanent class, approved by the English Department and the Faculty of Arts for credit towards a degree. (We also have a children's lit. class with a large fantasy component.)

In ENERGUMEN 1, I wrote about studying sf in a free-school environment, for love.

Ten years later, I'm still looking at it with love. The difference is that I get *paid* to read sf, and talk about it! (It used to be fantasy, now it's fact...)

In fact, I consider myself (despite the rigors of tenure year) very fortunate.

So: this editorial really begins with a call from Greg Benford, one of the VOID boys.

After we got through with the academic stuff, Greg got down to real business, like congratulating me for noodging at Terry Carr to get INNUENDO (which has been sitting, parts of it, unpublished for 9 years) into shape for Patrick and Teresa Nielsen Hayden to run off.

"My article for him is almost ten years old," Greg pointed out.

"Yeah, well, mine's four. That's not too many. If the Willish of WARHOON can come out, and Ted White can promise to revive VOID -- on a Xerox machine, for Ghu's sake -- then anything is possible."

"Yeah," said Greg. "And what's this about you and Mike doing another ENERGUMEN? Do you want me to write something? Oh, and I just had a letter from Ian Watson, who says FOUNDATION is still alive, and..."

Of course. A physicist at Irvine calls a Canadian Lit professor from Vancouver, in Berkeley, to tell her how her friends in London are doing. Why not?

It's fandom. And I love it.

I don't wish to perpetrate the fable that fandom is one big happy family which will automatically give you friends, floorspace, food and flattery. As Bill Rotsler said, in "How To Be 'In'" in the pages of this very fanzine (and not so long ago, by fannish time), you have to earn your place in this world, as in any other. Dressing up in a Darth Vader suit, or ripping off food and drink at a bidding party and then setting off fire alarms and/or barfing will NOT make you an honorary cousin of mine.

Fandom is, rather, a tribe, with common customs, history and language -- and a wide diversity of opinion, interest and activity. It is Le Guin's Ekumen, a far-flung communications network which exists to enrich our lives. I know it's enriched mine.

I've been involved with fandom, in some form or another, for almost half my life. (It's all Labonte's fault...) It's brought me most of the people, outside my blood kin, whom I love. (It's also taught me that you never have to lose a person, except to death, unless you really want to. I've been in homes where I *never* expected to be an invited guest... and thrown parties to which I invited people I'd resigned myself to never seeing again.)

Fandom has taken me to strange and wonderful places: the top of the Empire State Building, and the top of Mt. Diablo; the pier at Brighton and the deserted streets of downtown Kansas City; a ferry across Puget Sound, and another across the Mersey. It's given me birthday parties at conventions in Toronto, and in Melbourne. It's taken me to the home of John and Sally Bangsund in Canberra, of Ursula K. Le Guin in Portland, of Malcolm Edwards and Chris Atkinson in London, of doug and Sharon Barbour in Edmonton and of Brian Thorogood and Deb Knapp on Waiheke Island, New Zealand. It's given me strange sights: the Aurora Borealis (white, green and red) opening Noncon in Edmonton; wombats; Bruce Gillespie looking happy; Mike Meara pogoing in Cas and Skel's lounge at 4 am; deer in Golden Gate Recreational Area and Mae Strelkov being overawed by laundromats in Washington, D.C. It's given me a helicopter ride across San Francisco Bay because Walt Liebscher (bless the kind heart under the checked shirt) was kind to a fan -- because years ago, Robert Heinlein befriended *him*. It's given me Hugos, Academic Publications, half my teaching career, terminal exhaustion, and in a roundabout sort of way, an idyllic (and platonic) romance on the Isle of Skye. I'm an honorary First Fandomite, the entire Vancouver branch of the Western Pennsylvania Science Fiction Association, a founder of Le Front de Liberation de la Piscine, the Western Duchess of Canadian Fandom, a long-time LOCUS collator and a member of the Greater East Bay Sociosexual Coprosperity Sphere. My happier memories include sitting on a beam in the Berkley suite watching the sun rise over Phoenix; walking with Bob Tucker through Honolulu Airport; and handing out daffodils in the Melbourne train station. I've heard both sides of the 'Rosebud' story, I was once mailed a brick for the Tucker Hotel (thanks, Jody), and I think I made the worst Tapdancer joke of all.

And my friends are all talented, lovely people.

Fandom? I couldn't live without it. I gafiated once, after Torcon. That lasted ten days.

Fandom? We're ordinary people, with faults. We're also special. Want a doctor? I hadn't seen her since she put green glitter in my hair in 1974, but she drove from Santa Clara to Oakland to get me through what I hope are the last stages of the last year of brain damage. Want a computer freak -- which city? A synthesizer player who's also a composer -- New York, Minneapolis or Canberra? A sailor -- small craft in Sidney, B.C. or merchant vessels in the Tasman Sea? A rare book -- sf, mysteries, historicals and Canadiana are easy, the rest will take time. An interview with the Prime Minister of Canada -- that should be easy, and if you'll settle for the leader of the New Democratic Party, that'll take two calls if I do it through Richard Labonte and maybe only one if I go through Norm Clarke. A physicist -- the internationally famous one who climbs mountains, the one who wins sf awards, or the one who runs conventions?

Typesetting, an authentic Tudor costume, legal aid, information on Japanese history, editing, advice on running a bookstore or on farming, an introduction to an Indian chief -- people on this mailing list can do these things.

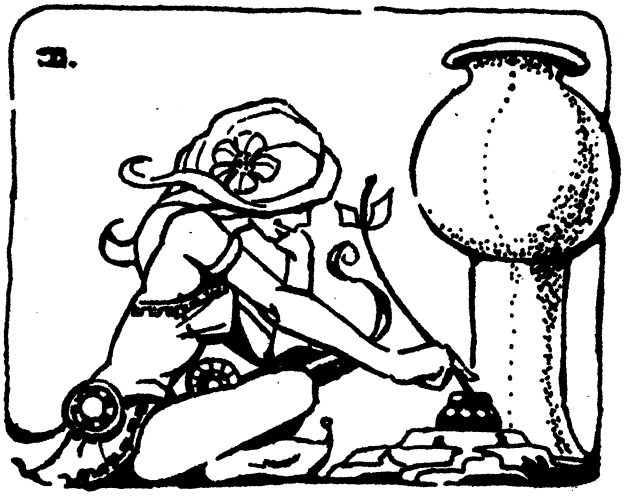
Now if someone would tell Pete Townsend how much I admire The Who...

(I have wanted to see The Who live for 15 years. They are such *survivors* -- and so much a part of my life... "Who's Next" is watching the tenth anniversary of the Apollo moon landing on BBC in Dave and Cath Piper's living room; "Won't Be Fooled Again" is dancing with Freff at the Lupoff's Mary Baker Eddy party; "Tommy" is Mike's and my first apartment, not to mention meeting Stephan Mconel, one of the world's better humans, this month... and yes, fandom *even* got me in to the Vancouver Who concert, which was marvellous.)

I once described fandom as "a mail order cocktail party." Worldcon is our tribal meeting. We give each other kisses and hugs, and whoosh off into the void, saying "We must talk, real soon now," and "next year in Denver!" A mundane friend once said "You're so organized, I bet you know where you'll be on...on...on Labour Day, 1983," and didn't understand when I said "Probably on a plane coming home from Sydney, Australia."

Fandom. Is a way of life.

It's a pretty good way.



Some Words from the Publisher



Mike Glicksohn

Since only a rank neofan writes about the various problems which delayed publication of his ish, I shall refrain from mentioning the national postal strike which cut off desperately needed mail from the US and trapped at least one contribution, nor will I talk about the Gestetner paper mill strike which made ENERGUMEN-blue paper impossible to find. And I certainly won't point out that I was forced to move when the issue was half stencilled. After fifteen years, I'd hate to be mistaken for a neo. Instead, let me say a few things about the people you're about to enjoy.

I modestly put it to you that Derek Carter is the best artist currently not working in fanzines. While gafiated (again) and plying his trade in Chicago, Derek will occasionally render a cover for a Ssscotch Press Publication. His latest -- based on a suggestion I gave him when the issue was first in the planning stages -- is another in a long line of superlative drawings which have graced my recent fanzines.

Dave Locke is arguably one of the finest fanzine writers in North America; he is inarguably one of the shortest. Dave publishes mainly in low-circulation apas (and YANDRO) and isn't as well-known as he deserves to be. Since he and Jackie Causgrove -- who illuminated his words for me -- are two of my favorite talking/drinking/fanning friends, I'm delighted to present this example of his wordsmithing. Faneds are encouraged to ask him for con reports and fanzine reviews for their own fanzines.

Ted White needs no introduction, having argued his way through several decades of very high-profile fanac. As a regular columnist in the latter issues of the old NERG, Ted was a natural choice for this special edition. Typically, he offers up a mellow piece of personal reporting, artistically augmented by his close friend and fellow professional Dan Steffan.

In 1976, at the first AUTOCLAVE, I listened to what is generally considered to be one of the funniest GoH speeches ever presented. Gene Wolfe's masterful collection of puns and wordplaying was snaffled up by a *soi-disant* faned named Ro Lutz-Nagey and promptly vanished into fannish limbo and was eventually lost. I thought of it as I planned this issue and happily Gene still had a copy in his files. Some of its impact derived from Gene's superb presentation but it holds up well and I'm pleased to finally get it into print, especially since the *last* AUTOCLAVE is now history.

Steve Leigh is a promising young sf writer, a somewhat bruised young juggler and as decent and good a man as can be found even outside of Cincinnati. He also has a t-shirt stating "One of the two best...", a reference to my once chastizing him for limiting his fanwriting when he was probably one of the two best fanwriters active

at the time. Well, he's still (somewhat) active and at last here he is in a *real* fanzine.

Bob Shaw, award-winning fanwriter, notorious speechifier and ambassador-at-large for Guinness has been a legendary mainstay of fannish fandom for a quarter of a century. He re-appears in NERG with a typically Shavian description of one of those once-in-a-lifetime occurrences which happen to him every day. Phil Foglio -- long known as the American Jim Barker -- demonstrates that you can't keep a good illustrator down as he graphically embellishes Bob's words.

For someone who never wrote for the original ENERGUMEN, Bill Bowers managed to be as closely associated with it as anyone, including the editors. When #16 was conceived, Bill was one of our "must" contributors. His piece is typical of the recent Bowers' canon: convoluted, esoteric as hell, yet possessed of a beautifully intricate structure. Perhaps it belongs in a personalzine but there are many good reasons why it appears here. You won't understand it all but I think you'll admire the craftsmanship of the writing. It proves, again, that Bowers isn't just another pretty caftan.

The Patrick Hayden piece originally appeared in substantially different form in ECCE FANNO 4, edited by Patrick in November, 1979. It was rewritten specifically for this issue and is probably the most quintessentially fannish contribution in the fanzine. Patrick is a mainstay of that small band of Pacific Northwest stalwarts who are (were?) trying to keep fannishness alive during the current Dark Ages.

Joe Haldeman is a fabulously well-known sf writer, a gourmet chef, a near-excellent poker player, a closet poet and one of the best friends I have. He appears here for all of those reasons. Tim Kirk, perhaps *the* great cartoonist in fandom's history, was a vital part of the first 15 NERGs and this issue would have been incomplete without him.

Mike Glicksohn is a friend of the editor.

Possibly the greatest disappointment of my ENERGUMEN days was being forced to pass up the opportunity to publish John Bangsund's "John W Campbell and the Meat Market," perhaps the greatest piece of fanwriting I've ever read. When we planned this issue, Susan and I agreed that an absolute essential was a contribution from John Bangsund, one of the best writers fandom has ever produced. Of the three "tales" presented here, the first is original while the second and third are reprinted from Australian Book Review, September and October 1980. John is frightfully erudite, occasionally obscurely Australian, a jovial gourmet and connoisseur and one of our finest writers. It is a long-overdue pleasure for me to publish him in ENERGUMEN.

Dave Langford is the best fanwriter in England and has several awards to prove it. Beyond that, though, he has produced an impressive body of work which sparkles with wit and erudition and clearly establishes him in the forefront of modern fanzine writers. Here the notoriously deaf fast-talking TAFF winner presents a cleverly-disguised convention report which can be enjoyed even by those who miss the esoteric references to English fandom. Jim Barker --long known as the English Phil Foglio -- demonstrates that you can't keep a good illustrator down as he graphically embellishes Dave's words.

Terry Carr is another of those legendary fans whose activity has shaped fanzine fandom as we know it today. Publisher of several of the most highly respected fanzines ever produced and creator of some of the finest faanish writing in the field, Terry's career spans almost thirty years. For this issue he resurrects his famous fanhistory column and presents a piece of his own faan writing, an example of a genre which has since disappeared from fandom. Ironically, the heading for Terry's introduction, by fellow San Franciscan Jay Kinney, was done several years ago for a column that Terry

never managed to write for...OUTWORLDS! The reprint itself is illustrated by Stu Shiffman, himself a TAFF winner and one of the few artists active with the interest and ability to actually illustrate fannish writing.

Much of the notoriety of the early issues of ENERGUMEN was due to the collaborations of Rosemary Ullyot and Alicia Austin. Rosemary's acid pen and vivid dialog were beautifully supplemented by Alicia's exquisitely detailed cartoons. Rosemary went on to appear in all but one of the first 15 issues and Alicia achieved considerable professional fame, albeit essentially gafiating in the process. #16 simply wouldn't have been an ENERGUMEN without one of Rosemary's inimitable columns and it delights my fanhistorical heart to be able to present it complete with Alicia's incredible illustrations. Perhaps, at times, you *can* go back again!

Ro Lutz-Nagey is a noted raconteur, a professional (non sf) editor, an agent of Chaos and a procrastinator without peer. He too has a t-shirt which says "One of the two best..." and if he ever learns to meet a deadline he may well prove me right. The empathic and inquiring mind of the father of ConFusion presents us with a piece that is both personal and analytical and is guaranteed to shake up the complacent.

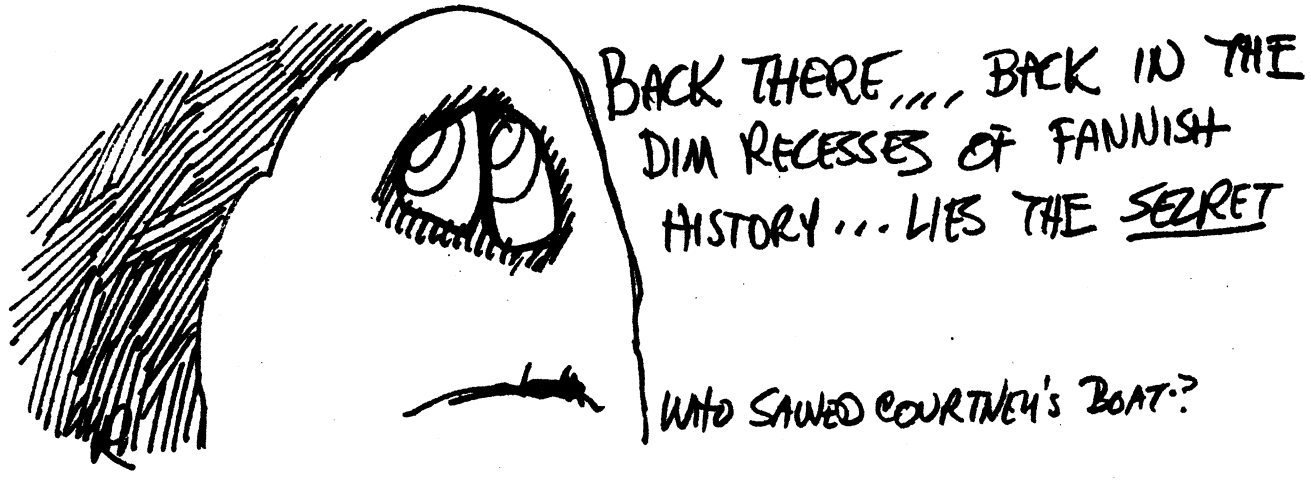
Joan Hanke-Woods is an unemployed artist, an unemployed computer person, an unemployed typesetter and one of the few full-time professionally flakey people I know. In a delightfully charming way, of course. Her distinctive artwork has graced many amateur and professional publications and highlighted many art shows and she seemed the perfect choice for the back cover of this special fanzine.

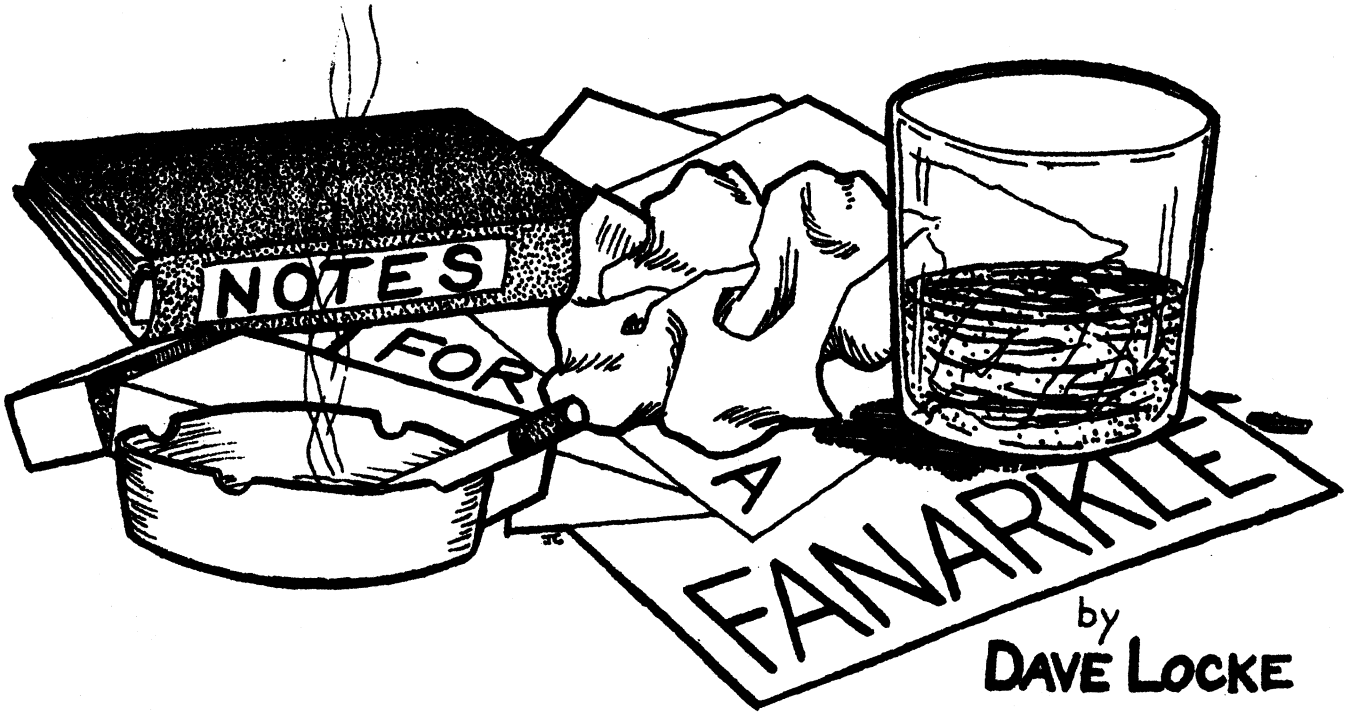
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Some three dozen different writers and artists contributed to this sixteenth issue of ENERGUMEN and I'm indebted to every one of them but I owe a special vote of thanks to a young Toronto artist whose patience, perseverance and talent have immeasurably enriched the issue. Kevin Davies, whose headings augment so many of the contributions here, is a young man on the move. As a publisher and especially as an artist, his drive, energy and ability are phenomenal. Kevin is going places and getting there fast and I'm very grateful that he stopped off along the way and placed his talents at my disposal.

* * * * * * * * *

There may be a plethora of superlatives in the above introductions but with the all-star line-up of this issue it was unavoidable. I'd be hard-pressed to count the number of professional credits, awards, fan fund victories and fannish honours accumulated by the writers and artists who have come together to offer you ENERGUMEN 16. Quite simply, I think this is the best fanzine I've ever worked on and that's exactly what I set out to make it. I hope you'll agree and I hope you'll enjoy.





It was late July, 1980, in Lou-uh-vull, Kentucky. Mike Glicksohn, looking and drinking just like himself, was spending a few days with Jackie Causgrove and me. In fact, we were all drinking just like ourselves, the scenario blurs and blurges, and only specific incidences remain.

* * *

"Dave, Susan Wood and I are going to put out ENERGUMEN 16. I'm running around trying to line up some of the better fanwriters to write articles for us."

"Whew, that's a relief." I finished off my scotch and poured another. Mike, sitting across from me, looked puzzled.

"I don't understand," he said with a mildly bewildered chuckle.

"Well, for a second there I thought you were going to put the bite on me."

"But, I *am* going to put the ... I *am* going to ask you to do an article for us."

"Us?"

"Susan Wood, Dave. Does the name strike a bell?" Mike waved a hand in front of my face. "Hello?"

"Well..." I said.

* * *

It was 1975, a nice evening in early August, and I drove down to the Marriott for what was billed as a "Pre AUSSIECON Flight Party." Los Angeles was the gathering and jumping off point for all the fans who were flying to the Australian Worldcon. Scads of us local fen toodled on down to party and meet the out-of-state faces. A little later on we gathered back at the Marriott for the NASFiC, and on the last day of the convention enjoyed the company of those who made it back on the first return flight.

But I want to talk about the Pre Flight Party, or at least lead up to the part where I didn't meet Susan Wood.

I met several fans for the first time, All of them, except Susan Wood whom I didn't meet, serendipitously. Serendipitously, in this context, because we didn't know each others faces. To meet someone serendipitously requires third-party introductions or a "Hi, I don't know your face" approach. I tried the latter in an effort to speed things along, and wound up meeting nineteen LASFS members.

Abandoning the approach I relied on introductions and a lot of floating around. Sticking my ear into various conversations I would often deduce the identity of one or more new faces, and as a consequence I would sometimes work my way into the conversation and thus engineer meetings with the out-of-state fans. When you don't get around much, one must be resourceful.

Later in the evening, slightly whiffoed from too much drink and too much running around and too much conversation, I saw Susan Wood. I had never met Susan Wood. I knew it was her because I had recently received two fanzines with her picture on the cover. My gosh, I thought, this is almost too easy. Here is someone I have read from afar, as they say, haven't met, I recognize her from her photographs, she isn't talking to anyone, and in fact she's standing alone. I moved in for the introduction.

As I approached we made eye-contact and she smiled. I was already smiling, just in case she looked my way and became frightened at seeing someone with my usual countenance bearing down on her with great deliberation. "Hi, Susan," I said, extending my hand. "I recognize you from your photograph in a couple of recent fanzines. I'm Dave Locke."

Let me take everything down to slow-motion for just a moment. Susan began extending her hand toward mine. Her smile broadened just a bit, and her lips began parting as she started to form a "hi" or "hello."



Okay, back to full speed.

"*You're* Dave Locke!?" These words did not issue from Susan.

The hairiest-looking small creature I had ever seen in my life appeared suddenly from behind Susan, who is not very big at all and hardly a person you would think capable of blocking your view. Moving quickly, it squeezed in between Susan and I, pointed at me, and began choking.

"*You're* Dave Locke?" it repeated, aghast. I could tell it was aghast because the hair twitched incredulously. "You can't be Dave Locke. I know Dave Locke. Dave Locke is a *giant*: a man of mighty thews and bulging biceps, a veritable Conan among fen. I *know* what Dave Locke should look like; I've read his fanzine and his letters and his articles and his wrongheaded opinions. You're not Dave Locke. Who are you?"

"Er, I'm sorry, a minute ago I *thought* I was Dave Locke." I saw that Susan was looking over and around the small hairy creature as though to figure a way past it, but it kept moving and bouncing and jiggling. "No, you can't be," it cried. "Dave Locke is six feet three inches tall, with no shirt, and with muscles all over."

The little creature seemed fair to crap from apoplexy. He flagged down two or three passing LA fans and asked them if I were really Dave Locke and they all said no. Susan apparently became tired of standing there, shifting from one foot to the other, and wandered away. I tried to wander away, too. It was not to be. The hairy one grabbed my arm. "Come clean. Who are you, really?"

"Who are *you*?" I asked.

"I'm Mike Glicksohn, Boy Wonder of Canadian Fandom."

I stared at him a moment. "I thought you were shorter," I said.

"You're Dave Locke!" he cried.

This is not the story of how I first met Mike Glicksohn. It is the story of how I did not come to meet Susan Wood. I *still* have not met Susan Wood, and I have had to meet Mike Glicksohn at least six or seven times after that.

No one ever said that fandom was supposed to be fair.

* * *

Late July, 1980.

"But Mike, in twenty years I've written maybe six things that I like. And a tremendous amount of crud."

"Nonsense," Mike told me. "You're one of the best writers in fandom and I want you to do an article for ENERGUMEN 16."

"I'll bet you tell that to every Bangsund, Shaw and Langford in fandom."

"Dave, I'd like to have an article by you in ENERGUMEN 16."

"I don't know as I can do it. I've been writing a lot of apa mailing comments this past year, and I may have lost my touch. You know how Alan Bostick says the apas have insidiously corrupted the general quality of fanwriting."

"Dave, you write great articles." He added "sometimes," and refilled his glass with the bottle that had rested between us.

"I don't know as I believe you."

"Why would I lie?"

"You wouldn't, but you do like to drink things called Spayed Gerbils, walk around conventions wearing a colored tablecloth, and tell neofans that their first issues show promise. Anyone who goes that far would go farther."

* * *

Later July, 1980.

Jackie and Mike and I were sitting around the dining room table, drinking our little livers away. We were engaged, as always, in extraneous conversation.

"That's not really true," I protested. Mike's 'knowing look' changed to one of incredulity. "Oh, come on, Dave.

"No." I assumed my habitual expression of innocence.

"It's been said that 'things happen around you,' and you have been called the Master Of Weird Experiences, but I always found it hard to believe. No one person could encounter that much craziness and live to be as old as you are."

I examined his statement, with idiotic care. "But, I'm only 36," I protested with hopeless bafflement.

With a wave of his hand he brushed the point aside. "Remember a couple of years ago when I stayed with you folks for a couple of weeks or so? Nothing strange happened. Nothing at all. We got drunk, and stoned, just like normal people, and nothing strange happened. True," he said, raising his finger, "I ate dinner out of a paper sack on your office desk at eleven o'clock one night, and loaned you a hundred dollars, and later you begged off when Jackie and I went to dine out with Harlan, but nothing really *strange* happened."

Mike finished his drink in one long swallow. "I think you embellish things, Dave," he said, with an expression of chronic disillusionment.

It became one of those taciturn moments which are disconcerting.

"Maybe," I finally suggested, breaking the silence, "you'll be luckier with this visit. You've hardly just arrived."

"We'll see." He poured another.

* * *

Just a handful of hours later.

Shaved and showered and working on page two of the Louisville Courier-Journal, I was sipping on my first cup of morning coffee when Mike came trotting out in his bathrobe. I hadn't seen this bathrobe before. I know this, because I would have remembered it. He had a note in his hand. I knew what it was because I had just written it not a half an hour before. In fact, I had written two of them, one for each bathroom door. They both read: "Do not turn on water or flush crapper."

Mike stood there in front of me, on extremely hairy legs. I tried to avert my eyes from the busy colors of his bathrobe. With ineffable patience he stared at the note and asked: "What's this?" Just then Jackie came trotting down the hall, in her bathrobe, holding a virtually identical note and asked: "What's this?"

"They turned the water off again," I explained. "They don't want us to turn anything on because they're making a pressure test. Apparently there's a leak somewhere."

Jackie said "Oh," and went off to pour a coffee.

Mike said "Oh no!" and stood around looking clumsily embarrassed.

I glanced at him, squinting at the glare from his bathrobe. "What's wrong, Mike? They should have it fixed in a couple of hours or so."

"Do you realize how long it's been since I had a shower?" he wailed.

I tentatively sniffed the air. "Three or four days?"

"At least," he agreed, emphatically. "Between dead dog parties and running around with Bowers and using a spare hour here and there to sleep, there's been no time. Boy, was I looking forward to that shower when I bounced out of bed this morning!"

"You bounce out of bed?" I asked, incredulous.

Finally I got Mike to sit down and poured him a cup of coffee. The last cup in the pot. When I saw the final drop roll out I knew this was going to be a tough morning. "Don't anybody ask for seconds," I announced.

There was a knock on the door. I admitted four men who work for the management of this apartment complex. Three of them carried pipe wrenches and assorted small tools. The fourth, trotting in behind the others, held a four-foot long sledgehammer.

"That man has a sledgehammer," Mike said, swivelling in his chair and pointing as they disappeared down the hall. We drank our coffee, listening to occasional snippets of dialog that drifted up from the work party. Finally, we heard them have an argument.

"Hold this," said one. "I'll give it a couple of whacks."

"Horseshit," exclaimed another voice. "You hold it and *I'll* hit it."

"For chrissakes hang onto the goddam thing, will you?"

Finally two of them left and returned a couple of minutes later with a smaller sledgehammer. It had a handle two-feet long. Mike sat there alternately staring at me and into his empty coffee cup.

I trotted down to neighbor Bill & Cindy's apartment with a large, empty kettle, and came back lugging a few gallons of water. I passed two of the men on the way back. One of them had a smaller sledgehammer.

A fresh pot of coffee was beginning to drip when they returned for the third time. Now they had a very small sledgehammer with a handle less than a foot long. "You look safer, now," I told the man. We all felt better about it, especially after our second cups of coffee.

Finally they all left, pronouncing the problem solved. Mike took his shower, beating Jackie to the bathroom door by at least four seconds. I poured out what was left of the kettle of water.

Mike finished his shower, dressed, and reappeared with a beatific smile. Jackie headed for the bathroom to take a tub bath and I headed for the kitchen to wash dishes. As I turned on the faucet it coughed and spat three drops of water. I heard cursing from the bathroom. Mike looked guilty.

At five-thirty that evening, half an hour before we were to have a houseful of company for dinner, they turned the water back on, at my urging (I hung from the ceiling of the manager's office). Breathing a sigh of relief, Jackie, still in her bathrobe, took off to fill the tub. After twenty minutes of running the water at full blast the color had lightened up to approximately the same dog-vomit yellow as the paper that YANDRO is printed on. She took a bath in it anyway.

"I'm sorry, Dave," Mike said. "I really thought you embellished all those crazy stories."

"It's all right," I offered, magnanimously.

"I suppose I'm going to have to read all about this, now."

"You'll do more than read it," I told him.

* * *

Just a little later yet.

"Okay, we're all set," Mike said, pouring more of The Famous Grouse Brand scotch into his glass. He swirled it around lovingly and, holding his beard out of the way with the other hand, took a swallow. "You'll write the article, then?"

"Sure."

"Oh good."

It was silent for a moment, except for the ice cubes in my drink.

"I wonder," Mike said, looking pensive, "do you think Jackie would illustrate it?"

"You won't get her illos on the egoboo you used in plying me. Go ply her."

"Okay. Then, maybe, you could stencil it up, with the illos and everything."

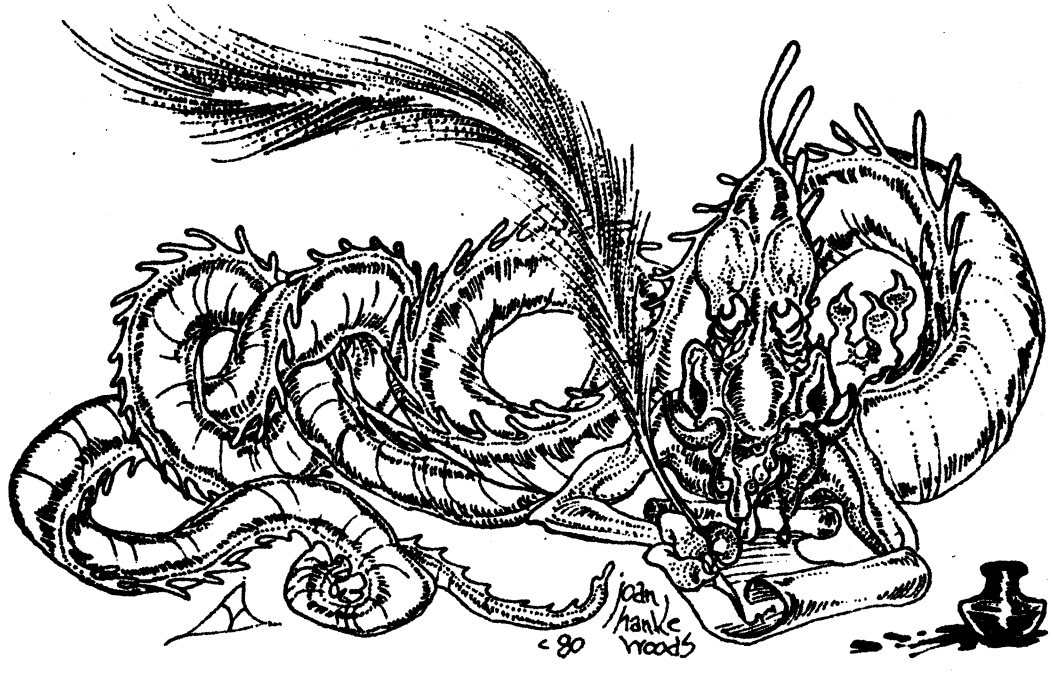
"Mike..."

He looked thoughtful. "And you could run off 300 copies, and mail it to me." He took a swallow. "Collated," he added.

"Do you want us to write letters of comment on it, too?"

He wasn't listening. "I can't overdo this fanpublishing thing," he told me. "It's been eight years, you know?"

* * * * * * * * * * *



THOTS WHILE LAWN MOWING



by ted white

A STATEMENT OF FACT: It is a true fact that (a) I do a lot of lawnmowing, and (b) many of the thoughts in this column were first summoned to my mind while following a lawnmower around the more than an acre of lawn which is under my care.

I am no stranger to these lawns, having first mowed much of them with a hand-type, push-mower while yet a boy, sweating under the summer sun, the lawns stretching out before me for hours while all that time a book languished only partly read in my room or on the porch. At such times that I was not cursing my slave-like lot under the grueling sun I thought about the book I was then reading, which, if I had not read it before (no sure bet; I used up most of the available books for reading at an early age and often reread my favorites as many as a dozen times), I would speculate about and consider the character and nature of the protagonists and their problems.

By the time I was a teenager the era of the power-mower had dawned, but my family was a conservative one and none too swift on the uptake where advances in technology were concerned (we never owned a TV set, for example; in fact my father did not buy his first set until only a few years before his death). Thus, our first "power mower" was the old-fashioned push-mower type with an electric motor perched on top, and -- above that -- a takeup reel with about a hundred feet of cord on it. The takeup reel had a flange which rested on a spinning wheel, the effect of which was to keep the takeup reel tugging tautly on the power cord. Thus, the cord had to be plugged in on the porch and I had to choose my mower's path carefully to avoid winding the cord around trees or bushes. In the open areas, mowed in a square, I had to execute a figure-eight pattern at the fourth corner to avoid running over the cord or having it wrap itself around my legs. Thus I still had plenty of time to think while I mowed. I usually thought about the sf stories I was reading in the prozines.

Finally my parents wised up to the fact that a modern rotary power mower would cut higher weeds (living in a semi-rural area as we did, we had plenty of high weeds, which once had to be cut with a scythe; in fact the question of what was "lawn" and what was "field" was usually determined by the high weeds, and after we got our first rotary mower the lawns were extended considerably into what had been fields, especially in the orchard). So they bought one. Natural-

ly it was not self-propelled. It was teen-age-boy-propelled. Our lawns were on a variety of slopes, although superficially flat to the untrained eye. Summertime still meant sweating in the sun, pushing a mower. But by now when I was not designing the cover logo for my dream prozine in my mind I was cogitating the latest fanzine to arrive in the mail, writing a letter or article in my head, or planning out my first fanzine (which in no way resembled the first fanzine I actually published, you understand, being ineffably more glorious in every respect, including the accolades it received, than reality would allow).

I soon learned that it was better to daydream than to write out in my head a letter or fan piece that I actually intended to write, for somehow those letters or pieces always sounded much better in the form they first took while I was lawnmowing than they did transcribed to paper. So I daydreamed a lot.

I daydreamed the usual adolescent When I'm Grown Up fantasies, and I daydreamed more specific fantasies of when I would be a Big Time editor and publisher, something like Ray Palmer as I viewed him in 1952 or so, when he edited and published OTHER WORLDS. It is rather pleasant, I must say, to look back on those daydreams and realize that I have in most respects (allowing for the variations insisted upon by the exegies of reality) lived them now. I have accomplished virtually everything I dreamed of as an adolescent, from my fannish ambitions (good fanzines, con chairman, awards, egoboo) to those of professional success.

Then, late in my teens, I moved away -- and away from all that lawnmowing. Only on stray visits back home would I put my hand to a mower. (On one such occasion I was mowing the orchard, which hadn't been mowed in a month or two, and mowed over a yellow-jacket nest. The little bastards resented it and expressed themselves forcefully. I retired from mowing with stings on my arms and scalp. Out of this, oddly enough, came one of my best stories, "Stella.")

Many years later I returned to the old home, to take it over as its owner. And there were those lawns again.

But, funny thing, I found myself looking forward to mowing the lawns. I was nostalgic for the smell of fresh-mown grass. And as I followed the mower over the old familiar courses I was struck by how much smaller they were now, especially with a self-propelled mower which could do the entire job in two hours or so. I even found myself flashing on the old daydreams when, turning a particular corner with the sun shining just so through the trees, a buried memory would be triggered.

The self-propelled mower, a Toro, I bought from Jay Haldeman.

Then one day a copy of ENERGUMEN arrived in the mail and something in it stuck in my mind as I mowed the lawns. I worried that thing over and over in my mind as I mowed, and when I came back into the house it was to write the first of these columns.

The title derives from an old Francis Towner Laney column (or was it by Charles Burbee?) called "Thots While Bandsawing."

Last week, in late November, I had my new Toro Mulcher out, mowing the lawns once again, this time to mow up the fallen leaves -- which I've found to be much easier, as well as more healthy for the lawns, than raking all those tons of leaves. While I mowed, I watched the nearby woods, wondering whether there might be a beady pair of eyes in a bandit face, watching me covertly from under a fallen log...

AIN'T NATURE WUNNERFUL: Once upon a time Falls Church was a place where cows roamed the fields and grazed the woods clear of underbrush, the roads were unpaved except for the two highways that met in the center of town ("The

Crossroads"), and small boys like myself climbed the nearest tree when a cow ambled up. During that time I heard of weasels getting into the chicken house, and we put fences around our vegetable gardens to keep the rabbits out, but the only really visible wildlife was the squirrels.

Now Falls Church is considered urban, the last cow is long-gone, the streets are not only all paved, but all have gutters and sidewalks as well, and most of the vacant lots have had houses put up on them -- townhouses and "cluster dwellings" on the most recently developed tracts. Naturally there has been an influx of wildlife.

Around the time I left home my mother started finding an occasional possum living in one of the sheds. It had a small-animal-sized egress, suitable for cats, which had been left that way for our cats which often found themselves outdoors during inclement weather. Possums found it equally handy, if not more so. Since they move slowly when surprised by humans, they were easy to catch and get rid of (usually to a man who liked to eat them, a transplanted native of the Deep South). I finally barricaded the egress they'd been using when I turned the shed over to my daughter to store her bike in (it had served the same purpose for me thirty years earlier), and found upon cleaning it out that possums shit in their own nests. The shed's floor was literally covered with turds the size of dogshit, making the cleanup job considerably less pleasant than it would otherwise have been.

Possums are all over the place. Friends of mine exclaim upon finding them all but on their doorsteps, and possums are often to be found dead in the streets, run over by cars. Less evident except circumstancially (for the most part) are the raccoons. My grandmother, who is in her mid-nineties and still lives by herself, says that she can't recall any raccoons in the old days -- and I certainly never heard of or saw any as a boy.

My first awareness that raccoons might live relatively close by came when one turned up dead by the side of the road on the other side of the hill from our woodlot. That was eight or nine years ago. When I realized raccoons were in the area one minor mystery was cleared up: each summer all the apples both on and *under* our one surviving apple tree would disappear in a single night. One day the tree would be full of ripening apples and the ground underneath it littered with fallen apples, many of them half-rotten with squirrel-bites notched from them and bees buzzing around them. The next day the tree would not have an apple on it -- not even on the highest branch -- and the ground below would be swept clean with not so much as a rotten half-eaten apple remaining.

Soon it was impossible to grow corn. I'd find the stalks pulled down on the ground and half-eaten, not yet quite ripe enough for me, ears of corn lying about.

However, the raccoons kept their distance and sightings were rare.

One night a few weeks ago, around 4:30 am, I was brushing my teeth and getting ready for bed when I heard a great thumping and banging that made me think at first that a large branch had fallen onto the roof. But this was soon followed by sounds directly overhead -- from the ceiling itself of my bedroom. I heard sounds of animal claws on rafters, of a body or bodies brushing against the other side of the ceiling.

My bedroom has a door which opens outside onto a fire-escape balcony. A portion of the roof also comes down to this balcony, its eave only a foot or so above the floor of the balcony. A couple of years ago I'd discovered that squirrels had gnawed their way through the wood skirt to the gutter where the roof met the balcony, making a small hole through which they'd gained access via a circuitous route to the attic over my bedroom. I had blocked their hole with a concrete block that was handy.

I thought at first that the squirrels were back, and I opened the door and went out onto the balcony to check the hole I'd blocked. It was blocked no longer. The concrete block looked as if it had been tipped aside -- a feat which seemed to me to be beyond the muscular capacity of most squirrels, even if two of them acted as a team. The hole looked a bit larger than I remembered it, too.

Grumbling to myself I went back inside my bedroom. Directly over my bed is a simple trap door which is the only access to that attic, at least for humans. The last straw for me with the squirrels of a couple of years earlier was when squirrel piss dripped out around the edges of that trap door one day, soaking my bed. Now, armed with my trusty four-cell flashlight, wearing only a bathrobe and slippers, I pushed open the trap door and climbed from my bed up into the attic.

It was cool up there (it was cold outside), and a quick basic sweep with the flashlight revealed nothing. Stepping from rafter to rafter, I began a more systematic search. Still, it was almost by accident that, half way through that search, I happened to shine the light down one of the channels formed by the roof rafters, the roof, and the ceiling of my clothes closet, and eyes were reflected back at me. There, down by the north eave, in a space measuring fifteen inches by five and a half inches, its eyes glowing a bright gold, and well beyond my reach, was a raccoon.

There was nothing I could think of to do about it then. My mystery was solved, and I hoped that the raccoon -- being a nocturnal animal -- would settle down and be quiet while I got some sleep. It was by then nearly six. I fell asleep hearing slight noises of small movements overhead.

I should explain that I rise fairly early in the morning to get my daughter up, dressed, breakfasted, and off to school. Then I go back to bed for the rest of my "night's" sleep. By a remarkable coincidence it was that very morning at 8:30 when men arrived with chainsaws to cut up a tree next door which had fallen in a recent storm. (It was an incredible storm, too, which arrived as a solid wall of mixed green leaves, branches, dust and rain which I saw slam across the yard from west to east, tearing more leaves and branches from the trees as it went, and toppling the TV antenna on my roof. It knocked down trees everywhere and blew all the windows out of one side of an apartment building near here which sits unprotected atop a hill.) My last opportunity for sleep was rudely shattered.

Thus it was that a rather irritable, not to say short-tempered, Ted White -- this time fully dressed -- climbed once again up through the trap door into the attic. This time I carried a six-foot pole (yes, the proverbial one) as well as my flashlight. Almost immediately I discovered that the raccoon had shifted its location to a southern eave, which was closer to its exit hole and also much more accessible to me. Once again it stared at me. This time I could see its bandit face easily.

I spoke to it. I told it that it was bothering me and that it should leave. "You're bothering me. You should leave," was about the way I put it. I was not shouting. I was not yelling uncontrollably. I was just expressing my sincere feelings a bit forcefully.

But it just watched me. It did not leave.

I tried prodding its rear to urge its departure more compellingly. It squirmed a little, barked at me, and turned to bite at the end of the pole. ("Aha!" I thought to myself, ever the science fiction author, "this life form cannot recognize cause, separated from effect. It believes that the end of the pole is poking at it, and does not realize that it is I, at the other end of the pole, which is really poking at it!" This brief flash of insight was intrinsically rewarding, but of very little help in dealing with the immediate situation.)



But still it stayed where it was. It did not leave.

At this point I'm afraid I lost my temper briefly (I told you that brief flash of insight was no help; stacked up against next to no sleep it was virtually useless) and I yelled at it, yes, and swore at it and jabbed viciously with no real aim at it with the pole.

This was clearly not the sort of day the raccoon had in mind for itself when it had entered my house earlier that morning, and this was very clearly not the ideal spot for dozing raccoons that it had expected. Quite suddenly it moved out of its corner under the eave and made for the nearby exit hole. I used the pole to help it squeeze through the rather small hole and hoped to hear its footsteps any moment now running down the fire escape steps. Alas, this was not to be.

The stupid animal had, in its haste, missed a crucial turn and had fallen, trapped, into a narrow space between two walls over the stairwell that led to my bedroom. For the next several hours I heard it alternately scrabbling furiously with its claws against the wallboard and resting, breathing in great agonised gasps. Hoping to help it on its way I rapped a stick against the other side of the wall occasionally, but it was now beyond my immediate reach, no longer in the attic itself but under that portion of the roof which is over the stairs that lead from my bedroom to the livingroom below. I abandoned the animal to my other tasks of the day, pausing to rap the wall or listen to its efforts only when I happened to be on the stairs coming or going to my bedroom for something.

That stairwell serves only my bedroom -- the rest of the upstairs (my daughter's room and the Green Room in which Rich Brown currently resides along with my sf magazine collection) is reached by a different stairs. At the top of the stairs is my bedroom door and a window. At the bottom of the stairs are two doors. One leads to my livingroom, and the other opens directly outside, under the balcony I've already mentioned. With remarkable foresight I closed the door at the top of the stairs on each occasion that I went up and down. I customarily keep the door to the livingroom closed.

Early in the evening I happened to be in the livingroom when I heard a crash-bang-thump from the direction of the stairwell. I cautiously opened the door from the livingroom and turned on the stairwell light. I looked up the stairs and there at the top, looking balefully back at me, was the raccoon. I addressed a few choice words to it, then opened the outside door at the foot of the stairs, left it open, and returned to the livingroom, closing that door behind me. The raccoon had an easy exit and I hoped he'd use it.

Silly me. After I'd fixed dinner for us, I went back to the stairwell to see if the raccoon had yet departed. Of course it was still there, sitting on the landing at

the top of the steps. It looked at me with a faintly worried look. I called my daughter and she viewed it with a lively curiosity from the bottom of the stairs. "Oh, the poor thing! It's so *cute*!" was her verdict.

It was in fact a large raccoon, bigger than any cat I've seen, bigger than some small dogs. It looked very fat and healthy -- probably on my apples. Taking my trusty pole with me I went halfway up the stairs, hoping to encourage the animal to go down the stairs and out into the cold starry night. But it retreated into the corner, standing up on its hind legs, its back against the wall, snarling and barking at the tip of the pole with which I was nudging it. When I glanced back over my shoulder I saw the hole it had made getting out of the wall. There was plaster on the steps.

We were at an impasse. It wouldn't go past me and I couldn't get behind it. I went back down the stairs and tried throwing things at it. I threw a number of old shoes at it, but all I accomplished were a few dents in the wall behind it. It did not even flinch at the near-misses. When I succeeded in hitting it, the angle from which I'd thrown the shoe (up the stairs) precluded much force from being imparted to the blow. It would bark at the shoe, then drop to all fours to sniff cautiously at the now immobile object on the floor.

I had an 8:30 appointment that evening. Around 7:30 I gave up on the raccoon exiting under his own power and called the police. I wasn't sure the police could do anything, but when I called I said "I have this raccoon in my house. Can the police do anything about it?" and the dispatcher (a woman) said "I'll send someone over." One nice thing about Falls Church: it's a tiny city, occupying only two square miles of land. It doesn't take the cops long to come.

The first cop was a young black guy. I showed him the raccoon. The raccoon had been making constructive use of its time: it had climbed up on the top end of the bannister, and with one rear foot on that and the other on the doorknob of my bedroom door it was trying to climb the doorjamb molding. It looked down at the cop and the cop looked up at it.

"That's a *big* one," the cop said appreciatively. "It's too bad the animal shelter people are closed for the night," he said. He grinned. "They're never open when you need 'em."

He called in for another cop, this one to pick up and bring a device used to capture dogs: a pole with a loop at its end which can be tightened by the person holding the other end. We sat around and talked about wild animals in the city while we waited. "You're lucky," he said. "We had this one woman, she had raccoons living in her walls, they had to take half the house apart to get them out." He also told me about raccoons that had come down people's chimneys, emerging from their fireplaces to make themselves at home. I'd heard



of some *living* in chimneys, setting up their nest over the summer and going undiscovered until fall or winter when the first fire of the season is kindled in the fireplace and smoke billows out into the room because the chimney is plugged up. (In fact, I'd had a three-day period this fall when the fireplace smoked badly although it was still getting some draft from the chimney, and I wondered if a raccoon might have had a hand in that.)

Finally the second cop, a white cracker-type, showed up, with the dog-catching pole. We went around the outside of the house (it was strange but while I'd felt no uneasiness about relaxing in my house with the black cop, the white cop was one I preferred not to let in) to the door at the foot of the stairs. We looked up. The raccoon had not moved from his perch half-way up his climb up my bedroom door.

"Stay back," the white cop said. "They can be vicious -- they'll attack!" He manoeuvred the pole and dropped the loop over the raccoon's head and shoulders. It snarled, barked and hissed, clawing furiously at its perch, but fell to the landing floor. When it fell the cop dropped his end of the pole and jumped back, startled. But the loop had been secured around the raccoon's body, and held firm, anchoring it to the pole.

While I watched from outside the white cop again advanced inside and picked up his end of the pole. He then dragged the raccoon, spitting and snarling and pissing, down the stairs and outside. I went into the house to straighten a pile of things which had been stacked at the stairbottom, which the raccoon had clawed at and knocked around in its passing. I heard shouts from the two cops.

"Look out! He's gonna attack you!"

"Sumbitch!"

"*There* he goes!"

I saw the raccoon, now freed, streaking off across the moonlit backyard toward the woodlot. "Did you see that?" the black cop asked me. "When Fred turned him loose he started straight for 'im, like he was gonna *attack* him! Then he turned and made off. Whew!"

"He was angry, all right!" the white cop said. "That was a big one, too!"

They'd had to turn the animal loose once it was out of my house; there was nothing else they could do with it except shoot it, which they'd have done only if it had really attacked them (there's a danger of rabid animals although I strongly doubt this one was -- it was just somewhat naturally peeved by its treatment over the course of that day). From the way it took off I suspect it won't be back; its associations with my house have got to be bad ones.

It left behind a few momentos, however. My stairwell, even with the window wide open, smelled terrifically "doggy" for several days as a consequence of the raccoon pissing in its struggle, although I scrubbed the walls, floor and steps. And at the top of the bannister there are a number of deep claw gouges in the wood. I notice them every time I go up; my hand naturally falls on them at the top of the stairs.

I've repaired the entrance hole under the roof, using new wood and sheet-metal. The hole in the wall of my stairwell remains to be fixed, however.

Thus ended one encounter with a denizen of the wild. I can't help wondering what it will be next. Bears have been sighted only twenty-five miles to the west. If we have another long hard winter, will there be wolves...?

AUTOCLAVE - 1976

GoH SPEECH

GENE WOLFE



The subject of my address today is the relationship the automobile has born to science fiction, and most particularly to science fiction fandom. And even more specifically -- if you don't object to a further narrowing of focus -- to the part of fandom I know and love best: fanzine fandom.

When I was a little boy down in Texas, about eight or ten years old, I decided I ought to have a car like the big kids. I guess I was tired of making my getaway on a bike. Anyway I asked my dad to buy me one, and he said nothing doing. You can imagine my *Dilemma* (see? Now there's a tie-in to fanzines right there.) Well, if he wouldn't buy me one, I decided to do what all the other neighborhood kids did -- steal one. But I soon learned I couldn't keep whatever I got for long -- you see, I wouldn't have had a *Title*. So I decided to end the population problem.

I seriously believe that within the anticipated lifetime of many of you present here today -- that is to say, within the next 200 years -- we will be building stations in space.

Many of these space stations will be WJB, WBBY, KTHT, and like that; but others will be Texaco, Esso, or Arco.

Such space stations will utilize solar energy to convert the food wastes and particularly the human wastes of the station personnel -- that's your pumpers and mechanics, and most particularly the guy who tells you he don't know when you ask him which way to Antares -- into methane; then catalyze the methane to form gasoline. Since there will be more...material...than demand for gasoline, the gas will be

The first AUTOCLAVE, held in July 1976, was considered by many of its attendees to be one of the finest regional conventions ever held. The two Guests of Honor were Donn Brazier and Gene Wolfe and I was the Toastmaster. Gene's speech, published here for the first time, was prefaced by his ad-libbed explanation to the effect that the speech had been collated the previous night at a room party and pages from two different speeches had inadvertently been mixed together. Thus the audience was treated to the sight of Gene constantly flipping pages, with each flip accompanied by a sudden change in the flow of the speech as parts of the "two" speeches were intermingled. These alternating pages are indicated by a change in typeface in this published version. The original of the speech begins with an otherwise blank piece of paper containing the words COVER SHEET; this is followed by a second sheet of paper containing just the words UNDER COVER SHEET. ---mg

given away, but you will have to pay for the free air. You'll pull your spaceship in front of a pump and say, "I'll have 10,000 cubic feet of Rocky Mountain High, and could you open your reactor and process a few scoops of Mike Glicksohn, who as we all know published a V-8 fanzine back before his energy shortage.

Now when we open the hood of an automobile, what is it we see right up front hugging the radiator? That's right -- it's the *fan*. If you look carefully at Mike or any other fan, you'll find that the thing that keeps him going is at least one *belt* -- and usually several.

So the fan is pumping hot air into the machine -- let's call it our Fanzine Super 6, since very few of them ever get past that number of issues.

As most of you know by now, an automobile requires a *distributor*, and so does a fanzine; but in the case of the fanzine, the distributor is usually the fan himself or herself. That means we must think of the poor little devil spinning around with argumentative points on the tip of each blade, drawing the sparks of controversy.

Now, before we build our automobile up a little more, it might be wise to decide where we're going to drive it. The Fanzine Super 6 has many possible destinations, but the one chosen by most fan editors is *right into a black hole*.

In fact, a prominent educator I spoke to a few weeks ago told me that the second most frequent question asked by her students -- right after, "Do we have to hold up our hands even if we have to go real bad?" -- *is "How can we keep our spaceships from falling into a black hole?"*

Well. You may think that's a silly question after I tell you that some black holes are only as big as licorice jellybeans, while the larger (or Cordwainer Bird model) spaceships are ever so big. But actually it just sounds *silly because what you are saying mentally to yourself is, "How can I keep my spaceship from falling into a licorice jellybean?"*

The answer is that you cannot leave Kirk in charge. Kirk couldn't get out of the way of a Hostess Twinky, much less a sinister jellybean with an event horizon and all that kind of stuff. No, you must put Kirk in command of the kitchen where he belongs, and not expect anything nicer than sardine sandwiches for lunch for a while, and in his place promote Leah Zeldes, who may occasionally have a little trouble parking, but who, though I am told she cannot drive, will put a tiger in your tank.

However, if our Fanzine Super 6 is to see the broad highway of opportunity that stretches so enticingly before it, we will need something to keep the windshield clean -- and here I refer to the squirts, or neofans.

A neofan can see much more clearly than the editor where a fanzine is going -- in fact, a neofan can frequently see it just by reading an old review in Le Zombie.

But even with the fan wafting the fanzine ahead on a current of hot air and controversy, and the neofan making everything perfectly clear, the Fanzine Super 6 may still be in trouble. And that is true whether it is a big, thundering, air-conditioned Algol or a plucky little foreign Maya. I refer, of course, to *the energy shortage*.

I think we all know what terrible things the bad old energy shortage can do to us, but few of us know why *it can do those things. The reason is that there is no substitute for energy. Maybe science will discover one a long, long time from now; but there is no substitute now. Maybe that big word substitute is confusing to some of you. It means "to take the place of", like when you run out of chalk you spit on*

your finger and write on the blackboard that way. *When raw materials are in short supply, old materials can be recycled; wood can take the place of steel, paper the place of wood, and corncobs replace paper. Mommy could even marry your old Daddy again if things get tough enough; but without energy nothing works.*

There are two ways to deal with an energy shortage -- and I say fie! fie! to those who suggest that they are lying down in bed, and sitting in a big, comfortable chair with a dishtowel over the canary's cage. No, the ways in which we can deal with an energy shortage are by finding new sources of energy, and by saving energy.

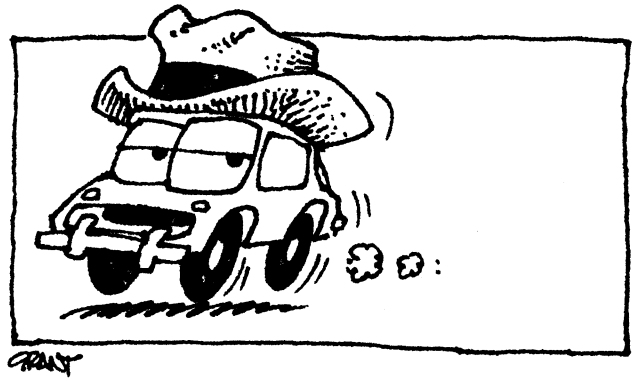
Now those alternatives may sound as if they are almost the same thing -- no doubt many of you are thinking right this minute that as soon as school is over you'll build a nuclear generating facility. That's all well and good, but you have to realize that unless you are willing to miss practically everything on TV, you may not even have a little breeder-reactor "on line" (as we say) for several days, even if your new Daddy lets you use his tools.

But saving *energy is something all of us can do right during commercials. Think of those twisty telephone cords, for instance -- it stands to reason that it must wear out all the tiny electrons to go around and around like that before they can even get out of your house to go to Grandma's. Let's all pull the twisty cords straight* tonight!

Another big energy waster we can all fix up right in our own homes is leaving chewed-up pencils, and old postcards from when Aunt Martha and Uncle Doug went to Disneyland, and those messy little bits torn from Save the Seven For Seventy-Seven *posters between the pages of books to mark the place. You may find it hard to believe, but the authors of those books have poured lots and lots of energy onto their pages -- sometimes every night for a whole week. And when they are left cracked open like that, what do you suppose happens?*

That's right, the energy all runs out. The snappy, smart little sentences that you like all run together into long, languid, sluttish sentences that just go on and on and on forever like this one until eventually some of them start missing periods, and become pregnant with meaning. Why the first thing you know, there might be a whole lot of ugly little sequels and commentaries running around the house playing with your toys and making the maid quit. But if you will just pull out all those nasty pencils and postcards and posters, it will save a whole lot of energy, and the next time you meet a poor, tired author, he will say

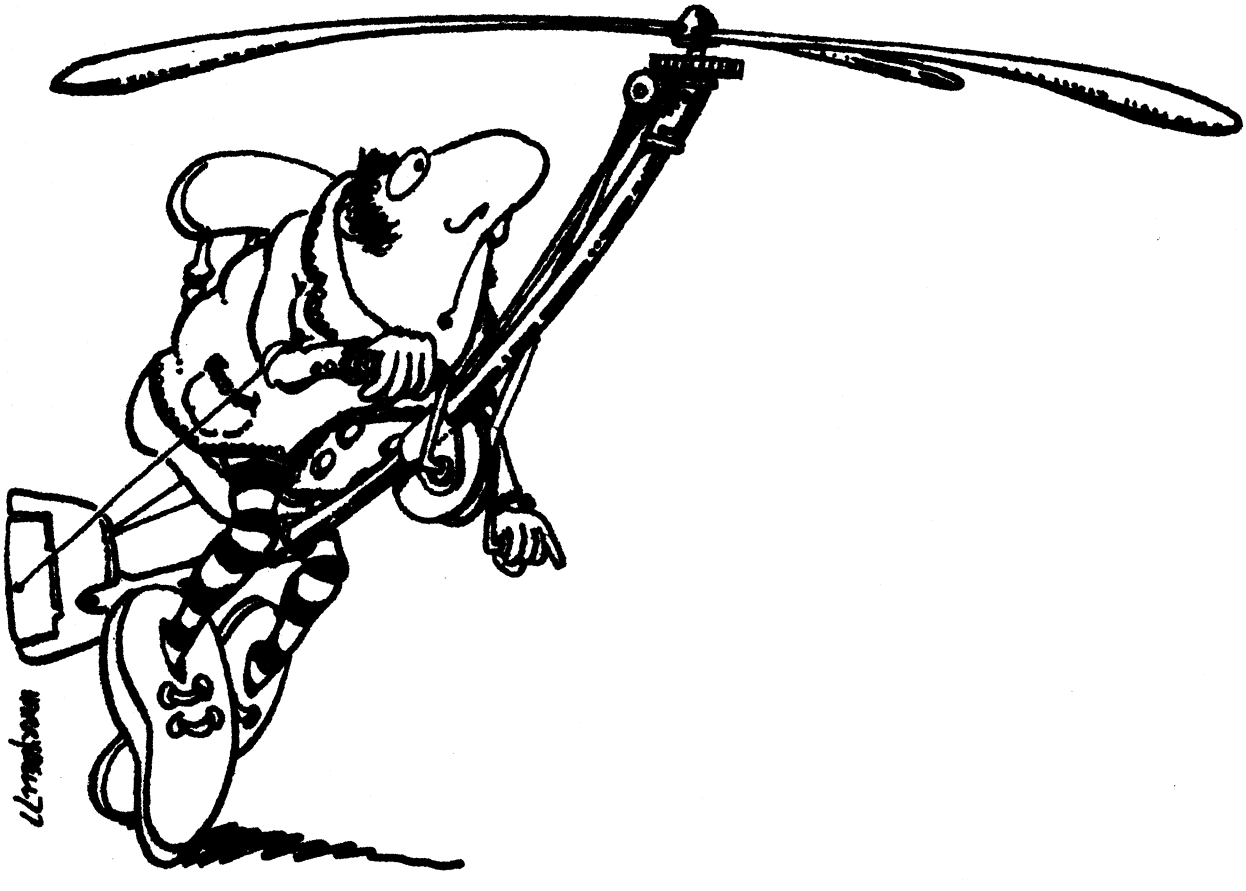
Welcome to AUTOCLAVE, gentlefen, and thank you, Mike, for that lovely introduction. Before I get into the principal part of my address, I'd like to mention a few of the people we have with us tonight. I had to prepare this speech in advance so some of



the people whose names I call may not be here physically, but I feel sure all of them are with us in spirit. Let's hear it for Gary Mattingly, Joe Wesson, Leah Zeldes, Howard Devore, Howard Hughes, John Benson, Sid Altus, Denise Mattingly, Diane Drutowski, Diana Prince, Diana of the Crossways, Cy Chauvin, Donn Brazier, the Don Cossacks, Donald Duck, Bill Bowers, Bill Bailey, Linda Bushyager, Andy Porter, Andy Capp, Randy Bathurst, Bathless Groggins, Don C. Thompson, Sadie Thompson, Lloyd Biggle, Bill Fesselmeyer, Wilson Tucker, Bob Tucker, Hoy Ping Pong, King Kong, Chris Sherman, Chris Craft, Gary Farber, Patrick Hayden, Patrick Henry, Jeff May, Mutt May and Seth McEvoy.

Not to mention Allan J. Wilde, Jonathan Wilde, Wayne MacDonald and his brother Ronald, The Marx Brothers -- Groucho, Chico, Harpo, Frodo and Karl; Sheryl Birkhead, Gordy Dickson, George Railroad Martin, J. Railroad Tolkien, Ro Lutz-Nagey, Bruce Townley, Robert the Bruce, Martin Alger, Winston Smith, Lynn Hickman, Neil Armstrong, Attila the Hun, all the guys from the Spanish Inquisition, and Lewis Carroll. Let's hear it for them!

Our idea of fishing is to put all the exertion up to the fish. If they are ambitious we will catch them. If they are not, let them go about their business. If a fish expects to be caught by us he has to look alive...We expect a fish to eat the hook very thoroughly, to persist until he gets it well down and then to signal us that all is well by pulling the float under water...and the fish should be mostly bullheads. Bullheads know their business; they hook themselves more completely and competently than any other fish. A bullhead will swallow the worm, the hook, and the lead sinker, a part of the line, and then grumble because he hasn't been able to eat the float and the pole. ---Don Marquis, PREFACE TO A BOOK OF FISHHOOKS



TOO GOOD FOR PICA

By Stephen Leigh



I'm not a racist. Or, at least, I make a conscious effort to avoid wearing my bedsheet as an item of apparel, and though there's a farm just up I-71 that occasionally exhibits a charred cross on the lawn just below their tattered rebel flag, I've never been to one of their elaborate cook-outs -- I've an aversion to hot cross bonfires.

However, I was once told that honesty must prevail. I don't believe that statement any further than I can throw Billy Graham, but let's assume for the moment that truthful confession is good for the soul.

I *am* an elitist.

I too have had my public exhibitions of destruction. A copy of EMPIRE OF THE ANTS was thrown with gleeful disgust into my fireplace, and I once stood on the porch of the bandhouse and smashed a recording of Disco Hits with a mike stand. Aaah, the glorious sound of splintering vinyl...

* * *

He was one of those people that inhabit the dripping dungeon of my mind labeled "For Boors". Two minutes in close proximity to him and I tend to run screaming from his presence. He stands too close to me, talks too much and always about himself; he doesn't seem to notice the none-too-subtle signals I send him -- the glazed eyes, the close-mouthed "uh-huhs", the shifting of weight from foot to foot, the too-large smile as I pretend to notice someone across the room waving at me. Monosyllabic replies fail to impress upon him my immense indifference, sarcasm doesn't penetrate the skull but simply falls to the floor and gets stepped on -- after that it's all smushed and filthy and no-one can use it anymore.

I don't particularly like him.

I caught a glimpse of his face in the corridor outside the con suite, and I immediately glanced frantically about for cover, since I was near the door. Too late... his eyes caught mine and he nodded, moving with determination in my direction. Gritting mental teeth and cursing the social cowardice that prevented me from impaling him with the best blank stare in my repertoire and simply walking away, I endured a short monologue from him and quickly made my excuses. Attempting to look purposeful, I walked over to where a few friends were sitting. Frank Johnson was among them. I shook my head at him, lips tight. Thumb over shoulder to point out the new entry to the suite, I said: "I wish he weren't black."

(Passing note which has nothing to do with anything but which always struck me as Somehow Significant: the correct term which I learned from my peers is "black". Yet the term my parents consistently employ is "Negro". My grandmother -- in blithe innocence of the current vernacular -- uses "colored" /Glicksohn's grandmother would probably say "coloured"/. She insists, rightly, that it would have been a grave insult in her time to call someone "black". And I also remember a brief period when "Afro-American" was all the rage. Yet none of this various nomenclature has made a hell of a lot of difference in attitudes.)

Frank raised an eyebrow, waiting to see what followed my statement and probably mentally sizing up which part of my anatomy was most vulnerable; for some damned reason, he's inordinately sensitive to racial slurs. "Okay," he said, very slowly, staring from me to my tormentor, "why?"

"So I could dislike him without feeling guilty about it."

"Aah." Frank shook his head and shrugged at the same time. "It's hell, isn't it?" he said in his best radio voice. He gave me one of his patented, non-commital glares.

It's a shame to mask emotions for the sake of latent middle-class white liberalism. Intense dislike and hatred can be such *powerful* feelings.

* * *

THE LITANY OF ELITISM (partial):

I will not eat at McDonalds unless there is absolutely nowhere else to go and I can touch my spine from the front.

I will not write with a pen that does not use black ink. I will make disgusted noises if offered any other color.

I will keep a Rapidograph 00 in my pocket at all times -- it conveys the impression of cultured eccentricity, even if it is sometimes more trouble than it's worth.

I will be extremely critical of music and musicians...

I will be extremely critical of art and artists...

I will be extremely critical of writings and writers...

...including myself. Sometimes.

I will audibly cringe at bad grammar, unless it is my own voice I hear.

I will associate only with those people I find interesting, whether they wish for my company or not.

I will be impatient with those who do not grasp a concept as quickly as I might, but I will not be in awe of those that reach enlightenment sooner than myself -- they were just lucky.

Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa.

* * *

The camera store.

Located dead in the middle of a dead neighbourhood, a *changed* neighbourhood -- since after all, who'd be foolish enough to begin a business requiring luxury money in the midst of Welfare Row -- that had been predominantly white and middle class. It has now been conquered by an influx of poor, in this case mostly black. Several empty buildings which the vagrants happily call home stare down at cracked sidewalks with broken windows, the wind blows the detritus of old newspapers and beer cans across

the street, occasional brown bags sit forlornly in the rain --if kicked, they tinkle with the bright sound of broken wine bottles. The breeze bears the fumes of Gallo and piss and dogshit.

Madisonville.

Contempt comes easily here.

Characters abound. Everyone deviates from the norm. The store gets an interesting blend of the very destitute and the very rich and ignores the middle class almost entirely. The shop happens to be the only one of its kind easily accessible to Indian Hill and Hyde Park, where the Old Money of Cincinnati sits and reproduces itself in blissful aloofness -- Procter and Gamble money, Cincinnati Milacron money, Kroger money. A good many of these people (exclusively white) are friendly, amiable, and surprisingly unsnobbish -- there is a certain security when you know your money isn't going to run out easily. However, the inbreeding that has occured among the Old Money Families does have its inherited flaws -- the gene pool is rather small, not even deep enough for a diving board. Keeping the line pure: much the same has happened with pedigreed animals. Those obnoxious little toy poodles would be buying Vallium on the streets if they could get their grubby little paws on the money. They emit soprano yaps at the slightest provocation and piss on your ankle from excitement rather than maliciousness.

A few examples: Mrs. Henderson (whose spouse would dance and sing as Mr. Kite flew through the ring) stands at the counter and looks tragically bemused. She is attired in Gucci leather, alligatored blouse, Caribbean tan and chronic illnesses which she'll discuss at the drop of a thermometer. "Oh no," she protests as you, for the third or fourth time, explain to her why a more sophisticated camera will produce the results she demands and never achieves from her Instamatic. "I don't want to have to think," she tells you, glancing up with grey eyes laced with veins. "I don't have *time* to think. Why can't I get a camera that will take professional-looking pictures *for* me? Don't you have *anything* that does everything by itself?"

Mr. Hoffman, who has just returned from a month's visit to obscure portions of Peru and who could buy the store several times over, twirls his handlebar mustache and grumbles: "Do you think Dave (the owner) can give me some kind of discount on this?" He hands you a brown paper bag which contains eight or nine rolls of Kodacolor. "That's a lot of money, there." He keeps the bag after you dump the film out, folding it carefully and placing it with reverence in the pocket of his tweed jacket.

Mrs. Sneager, all breathless, has parked in front of the store in the No Parking zone (the parking spots are metered). She runs in, her heavy body inclined forward, spike heels clattering on the linoleum. She doesn't look at you, but claps a cartridge of 110 film on the counter and begins walking quickly away. She shouts over her shoulder as she heads toward the door. "I can't wait. I have something important I must do. You take care of this." A simple declarative statement, voiced as an order. She's gone before you can say "glossy or lustre-lux finish?"

Leaving behind a miasma of contempt.

And you get to pass the contempt along in your own turn, like a paper bag of rotten fruit, for the store also gets the poor ones, the sad idiots that come in on the first Friday of every month to waste their welfare money on Polaroid film, speaking in a thick black accent that is nearly as indecipherable as the hillbilly twang of Price Hill.

"Aay, man, can youse blow dis up?" "Y'all gots any bubs?" "Shit, I seed dem camrahs at Swallens lots cheaper."

Contempt. Which you desperately try to temper with humor before it becomes brittle and hardened.

* * *

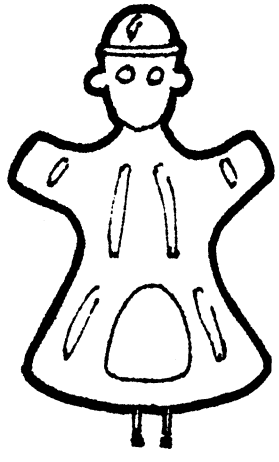
In utter frustration, I had to parody the situation -- had to turn to sophomoric humor (Obligatory Elitist Comment: that's the only type of humor my co-workers would have understood) or become as jaded as the rest. Yall Products, in a flowing of creative juices -- thank you, Roger Elwood, for that singularly awful metaphor -- was born.



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SIDE VIEW



FROM ABOVE

REMEMBER: BUY YALL! WITH YALL®-- YOU GET WHAT YOU DESERVE

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Fandom mirrors life. The vast majority of fans, to my view, are not slans. And we certainly break off into our special cliques very easily. Fans *and* pros are elitists -- hell, just look at the way we insist that fans are not 'mundanes' -- mundane is a word rife with elitist connotations.

--I was in the hucksters' room at NOREASCON, moving desultorily through a stack of old books. There were two fans at the table next to me. Both were attired in silver lame pants and blouses, with techie-guns strapped to their belts. They were talking. I *really* didn't intend to overhear...

"Did you check the books over there?" one said with a shrug in my direction. "Nah," replied the other, not even glancing up from the movie stills through which he was paging. "Anybody that reads that is just archaic. Books are extinct -- the publishers just haven't realized it yet. *I* don't read: the *real* future of sf is in film."

--A group of friends were standing in the lobby. We happened to be discussing the Hugos, which were to be awarded that night. Some unknown-one wandered by, hovered around the edge of our group for a minute like a large blue-bottle fly ready to pounce on horseshit, then broke in with a comment, interrupting the woman who was speaking. He proceeded to tell us who would definitely win the Hugos.

There was an unspoken pact between us. We all simply ignored him, began talking again as if he hadn't said anything. We closed our ranks, not giving him room to push in. No-one looked at him. Eventually he went away.

--There was a discussion among some of the writers at NOREASCON concerning the SFWA suite. Several of the authors were upset at the ease with which the common, ordinary fan could gain entrance. The exchanges in this conversation were warm, if not actually heated. Both sides had their points -- I'm not sure how I feel on the subject (though I dislike the splinters one gets from sitting firmly on the fence). Yet I did see a few of the better-known writers interrupted in the middle of conversations with other writers or editors or friends. It was inevitably by some unwelcome fan wanting to talk about the latest book or get an autograph or simply enter the conversation.

Such rudeness would annoy me terribly.

But some of the comments of the closed-suite proponents bothered me: "They're (fans) here for us. We have to have a refuge." "This convention wouldn't exist if it weren't for the writers. We deserve a place to ourselves."

I don't know...

--And what of the smofs, who clutch their briefcases with whitened knuckles when some unimportant fan walks by. The cease talking, grin with showing teeth, and watch with irritation until the poor unfortunate is gone. What immense secrets do they hold.

* * *

How many science fiction writers does it take to screw in a lightbulb?

* * *

Ishtar Karin Brunnel felt great. The world pleased him -- after all, he was one of the Elite. The Master Wein had almost said so with his remarks on Brunnel's retirement: "We have before us a man who spent his time in service to the State, in submission to those above him. He will have his award." Immediately afterward, they'd presented him with a plaque commemorating his fifty years of service. But Brunnel knew better -- Master Wein meant for him to have greater glory.

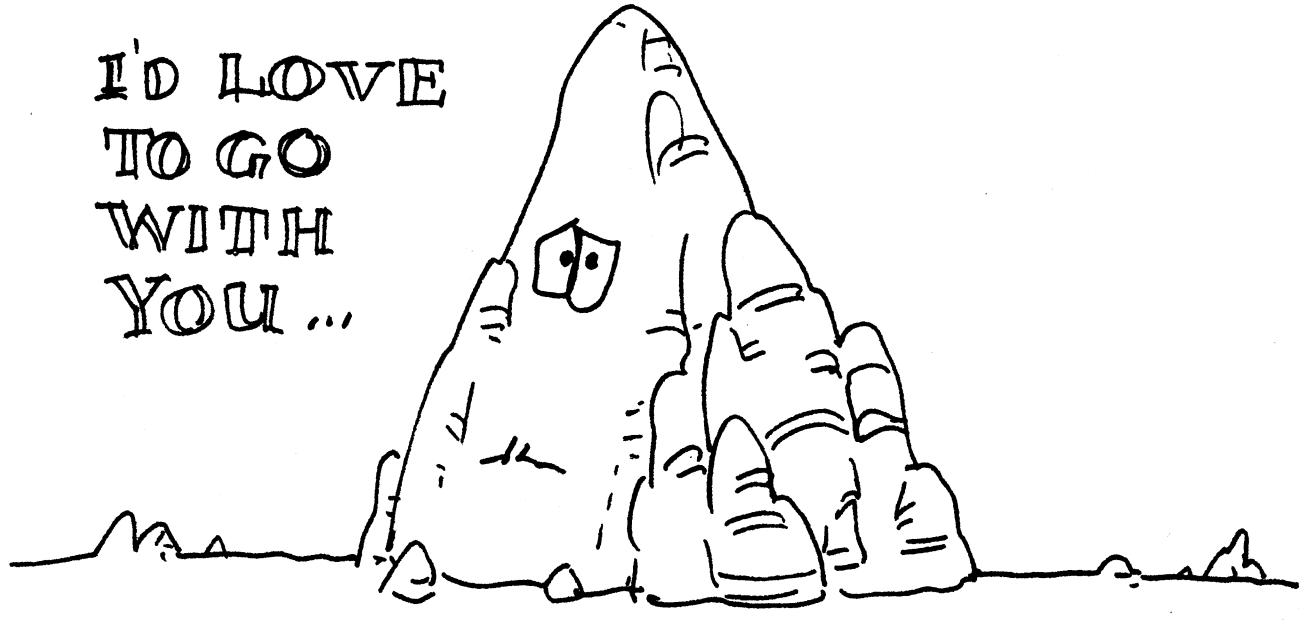
It was customary for those who had spent time with the State to go to the Cryogenic Palace, there to stay the day and wait for the calling of their names. The ultimate reward was the gift of a chamber, where the body would lie undisturbed until such a time as the State's technology could rejuvenate the flesh. On that wonderful day, the gates of the Cryogenic Palace would open to let loose a torrent of loyal servants. Already the Elite, the highest officials, had chambers reserved for them. For those like Brunnel, there was the chance of that one day. Those not granted chambers on their day were never allowed access to the Palace again. Brunnel was confident. He could feel surety in the well-wishes of his friends, in the bland smile of Master Wein.

He entered the Cryogenic Palace via the massive gates, decorated with friezes of the accomplishments of the State. Once inside, Brunnel was struck by a wave of frigid air -- the Keepers vented the cold from the tanks into the huge lobby where the supplicants waited. The chilliness was a reminder of the promise given them and they should not complain, the Keepers explained. Brunnel shivered. Several men and women were seated on bare marble slabs situated around the room. The Palace was stark, as cold as the air around them. The walls were slick and white, arching to a meeting far above them, the expanse unrelieved by paintings or architectural gee-gaws. It was as depressing and uncomfortable a place as Brunnel could imagine. Yet he smiled as he took -- gingerly -- his seat. He did not expect to be here long. Master Wein would have talked to the Keepers.

His optimism waned as the day dragged on. A white-coated Keeper appeared once, about noon, and the supplicants looked up in hope. A name was called, but it was not Brunnel's. They went back to their silent vigil, and a Keeper did not appear until nearly six, when the Palace was to close for the night. Again, a name was intoned; again, it was not Brunnel's. He could not bear the agony; Brunnel rose as the Keeper turned to leave, grasping at his sleeve. Brunnel poured out his story hurriedly, making sure that Master Wein was prominently mentioned. The Keeper grimaced with obvious impatience, and plucked Brunnel's hand from its grip on his coat. The man's manner was remote, aloof, distant. The Keeper stared down -- eyes chilly -- at Brunnel. He spoke, disdainful words that shattered Brunnel.

"My dear sir, you must realize that the State cannot install all its servants in the Palace. You are given your day here, and the most worthy are given a chamber. Mr. Brunnel, of the people that come here, many are cold, but few are frozen."

* * *





BY BOB SHAW

On a flat mountain top in the south of the Oman, not far from the Yeman border, there lies a football-sized rock which belongs to John Berry, the well-known English faned, fan writer and founder of the Goon Defective Agency.

Here's how I know about it.

Back in '71 I was a journalist doing publicity work for Shorts, the Belfast aircraft company, and had flown out to the Persian Gulf with a photographer to research some articles about the use of the firm's Skyvan planes in the general area. It was a job I wasn't too keen on because, inevitably, it would involve a lot of bush flying in Skyvans -- an aircraft which always seemed to be a jinx for me. Only a couple of weeks earlier, for example, I had made a complete fool of myself in one.

A party of about a dozen Commonwealth journalists had arrived in Belfast to see what effect the new Troubles were having on local industry. Shorts were anxious in case overseas customers got the idea we couldn't meet promised delivery dates, so we went to great lengths to assure these journalists that the factory was very secure and had not been affected in any way by IRA activities. I was escorting them on a demomstration flight along the County Down coast to the Mountains of Mourne and, to keep them happy, was delivering a spiel about the beauty of the Mournes and what a lovely experience they were going to have seeing them for the first time. This was shameful dishonesty on my part, because I have always privately considered the Mournes to be particularly dreary and insignificant little hills, but it was all in a good cause.

I waxed lyrical, as they say, while the plane wheeled over Belfast Lough and set a course for the south -- and was still waxing away at full blast a few minutes later when we passed over Bangor -- then I noticed that something odd was happening. The aircraft was turning back for Belfast. I glanced towards the flight deck and saw that the pilot was beckoning to me. When I went forward he closed the flight deck door and motioned for me to put on intercom headphones.

"I've just got word from the control tower that we've got a bomb on board," he said. "We're going straight back to the field, but the passengers mustn't find out that anything is wrong."



"Oh God," I quavered. I had often considered having my ashes scattered over County Down, but not like this, not so *soon*. "I've just promised them the Mourne Mountains -- what am I going to say now?"

"I don't know," the pilot said, obviously with bigger problems on his mind. "You're supposed to be the bullshit artist around here. Tell them *something*."

"Right." Still without a coherent thought in my head, I squared my shoulders, doing my best to look like John Wayne in The High And The Mighty, and went back into the cabin. Aircraft passengers have an uncanny sixth sense which warns them when something is going adrift, and this lot had already developed a look of wary expectancy.

"Change of plan," I said brightly. "We're going to skip the Mourne Mountains and go back to the field." I was hoping nobody would ask why, but one man waved his sheaf of hand-outs at me and said, "Why?"

"Ah..." I looked him straight in the eye, silently ordered my mouth to say something, and listened aghast to the words which came out. "We've just got word from the canteen that your afternoon tea is ready," my mouth said. "If we don't go back right now we won't get any. It's a sort of a union thing..."

They stared at me with a mixture of bafflement and contempt which occupied their minds until we slapped down on the runway a couple of minutes later. Some time afterwards they left the premises quite convinced that the Northern Irish were even more tea-addicted and union-ridden than the English, but they hadn't found out about the bomb threat. From that point of view, I suppose I conducted a successful public relations exercise, but it irks me every time I realize that scattered across the globe are twelve influential journalists who, if they remember me at all, are convinced that I'm an idiot.

The first few days of the Persian Gulf assignment were not too bad. Bill, the photographer, and I stayed in a good hotel in Bahrain and concentrated our attention on civil Skyvans, and I didn't even have to go up in one of them. But the stories I had really been sent to get were in Muscat and Oman, where the forces of the new Sultan were waging a hot war against Russian-backed insurgents and Yemeni raiders. We flew from Bahrain to the ancient city of Muscat, where only a year or so earlier

the punishment for being seen smoking a cigarette was a year in jail. I managed to get a close look at that jail, which was a castle straight out of the Arabian Nights, and understood at once that a year in there was actually a death sentence.

Muscat wasn't bad either, because we stayed in a brand-new hotel plonked down in a stretch of desert, where good food and booze were plentiful, and it was all very luxurious, picturesque and *safe*. I got plenty of good material at the Omani Air Force base there, but soon had to push on to Salalah in the extreme south, where the rarely-seen Sultan Qaboos had his palace tucked away in the hills, and where the real action was taking place. That was the part of the trip I wasn't looking forward to, and the fact that the Sultan was so anti-Communist meant I couldn't even have the consolation of making puns about a little Red Qaboos behind the terrain.

On arriving at Salalah we were immediately escorted around the Air Force base by a very correct English lieutenant called John, who seemed to have been given a PR job similar to the one I had had with the Commonwealth journalists -- namely, that of convincing us that everything was safely under control. His task proved tougher than mine, however, because we had only been there about five minutes when an air raid siren sounded. Bill and I glanced at each other, but the lieutenant seemed not to have noticed the siren, so we shrugged and walked on with him.

Suddenly there was an explosion not far away.

As a kid I had been through a number of heavy air raids, and more recently had heard a lot of bombs go off in Belfast, and so had no trouble in classifying the explosion as being of military origins. Bill and I locked eyes again, but the lieutenant was unperturbed. He might have been taking us on a tour of Disneyland.

"This is the battery house," he said, "and over there is the ops room."

Brroomph!! Another explosion, closer this time.

"This is the officers' mess," John droned, "and there's the shop. If you need cigarettes or..."

"John," I said tactlessly, interrupting him in mid-flow. "These sirens and explosions -- what does it all mean?"

He looked embarrassed. "I'm afraid it means the base is under rocket attack."

"Really?" I hesitated, afraid of making a chump of myself, then saw that the photographer was nodding encouragingly at me. "Forgive me for asking, but isn't there some kind of... er... shelter for when this kind of thing is going on?"

"Well, there's a dug-out over there," the lieutenant replied. "I suppose you could sit in there if you wanted."

Bill fiddled nervously with his camera case and I knew exactly what he was thinking. It would have been bad enough to get hurt in Belfast, where we had a personal involvement in what was going on, but the thought of sustaining even the slightest injury in the Oman just for the sake of helping our aircraft sales manager increase his year-end bonus was absolutely intolerable.

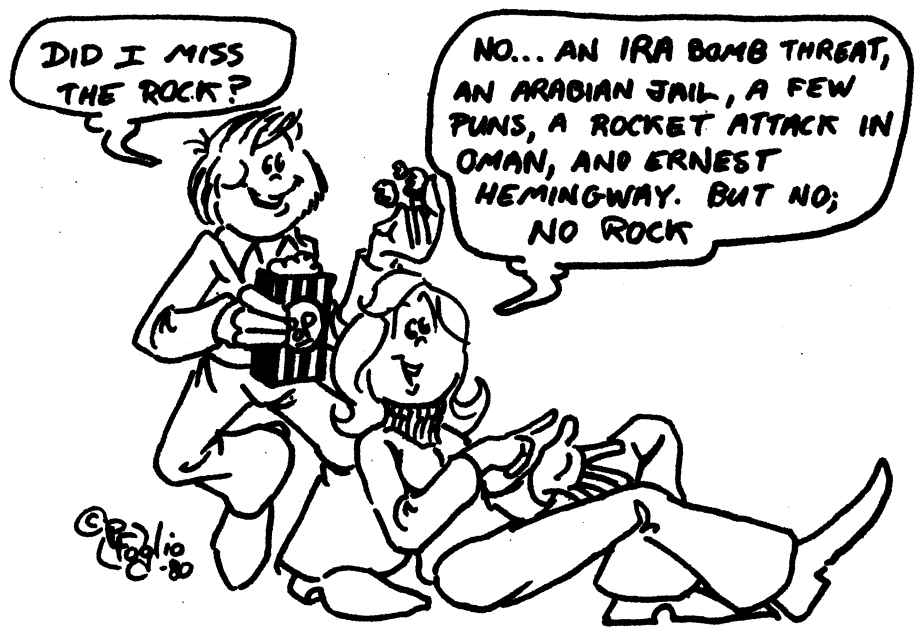
Brroomph!! BRROOMPH!!

Abandoning all pretense at dignity, Bill and I sprinted to the shelter, leaving our escort to his own devices. We huddled in there for the ten minutes the attack lasted, and not one other person joined us. It turned out that the base personnel had

complete faith in the ability of the perimeter defenses to keep the attackers just out of rocket range. After a couple of days there we began to share the same faith and then became quite blase. We used to take our drinks out to a little garden in the centre of the officers' quarters so that we could watch Strikemasters roaring off and pounding targets only five miles or so to the west -- just as if it was all part of a fireworks display in a public park.

A month or so after we had left something went wrong somewhere and a rocket landed right in the middle of the self-same garden, causing serious injuries, but Bill and I weren't to know about that and we actually began to enjoy doing our Ernest Hemingway act. That's how it came about that we jumped at the chance to fly on a Skyvan supply mission to a mountain fortress about ninety miles away from the main base.

We went in a helicopter so that Bill could photograph the Skyvan in action against a really rugged background. The copter had to continue on to another destination, but that was no problem -- the arrangement was that we would return in the Skyvan after it was unloaded. The copter departed and, as the Skyvan unloading was taking quite some time, Bill and I grabbed the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to go for a stroll on a mountain top in the wilds of Araby. We went over a crest, thus cutting ourselves off from visual contact with the aircraft and the fort and all signs of man's handiwork.



It was near sunset and the scene was probably the most beautiful I have ever seen. Range after range of mountains stretched into the blue distances, and the air was incredibly pure and still. We sat down on an outcropping and I smoked my pipe, savouring the prehistoric grandeur and silence of the place. There was a football-sized rock on the ground in front of me and I had been gazing idly at it for a couple of minutes when it filtered through to me that it contained a perfectly preserved fish-like fossil. I was admiring the fossil, marveling at the evidence that our mountain top had once been under the ocean, when I realized there were many varieties of other fossils in the same rock. In fact it was so crowded with them that there was scarcely any room for ordinary stone!

I picked the rock up, confirmed that it was a packed sampler of pristine life forms, and immediately decided to transport it all the way back to Belfast as a gift for John Berry. John was a keen fossil-hunter, but I knew he would never have encountered a treasure like this one and would really appreciate it. The rock was very

heavy, but I reckoned that once I got it into a plastic carrier bag I could tote it around fairly easily.

"This is what life is all about," Bill said peacefully, inhaling the serene air. "I hate the thought of going back into all the noise and fuss of city life."

I nodded. "Me too. Isolation like this is good for the soul."

Bill nodded as well. "It's a pity we can't stay here all night."

Not to be outdone, I nodded even more. "It's a pity we can't stay here forever."

At that moment we heard an unexpected noise -- it was the unmistakable sound of the Skyvan revving up its engines for take-off.

The colour drained from Bill's face. "Oh Christ, *no*," he said strickenly. "They're going without us."

We jumped to our feet, whimpering with panic, and ran up the gentle slope towards the crest from which we would be able to see the landing strip and the fort. The air was very thin at that altitude and by the time we had gone twenty yards we were heaving like antique steam engines. I tried to pick up some speed regardless, then realized something was burdening me down. It was John Berry's stupid bloody rock! I hurled the thing away into the gathering dusk and ran on, reaching the crest just in time to see the Skyvan take off from the strip and spiral downwards out of sight as it headed for the coast.

Bill caught up with me, face haggard with strain, and we took stock of our situation. The air was turning bitterly cold and the only place for shelter was the antique and forbidding fort. The big question was: would the Arab machine gunners, who had earlier grinned at us in such a friendly manner, react in the same way when we came stumbling towards them, unannounced, out of the twilight? The lesson I learned at that moment, gentle reader, is that life in the city, *any* city, is much better than life on top of a remote mountain in an alien country at the onset of night.

I won't spin the story out to an artificial length...

What happened was that the Skyvan pilot, who thought we had left on the helicopter, was appraised of the true situation by radio a couple of minutes after he took off, and he came back for us. That's all there is to it. I would just like to add that the extra-large gin-and-tonic I had on arriving back in Salalah was the most enjoyable drink of my entire boozing career.

And that fossil-hunting is a dumb way to pass the time.

The first fact one must accept about Britain is that all British literature, no matter how improbably it reads, is realistic. You meet its most outrageous models everywhere you turn, because Britain is full of improbable people, behaving in what an American or a Frenchman wrongly suspects is a fictitious manner.

--A. J. Liebling

The Eighteen-Nineties opened with a scandal. The British public was not shocked by the Prince of Wales' extravagant life, nor by his mistresses, nor by his bets on the race track. These were British failings. But the rumpus that broke out in the early weeks of 1891 over a game of baccarat caused a sensation. Baccarat has a distinctly foreign flavour; it must be a vice.

--Virginia Cowles

Cause and effect.

...of words: spoken flippantly, or written carefully.

I've never been totally at ease with words, in either format, and I probably never will be... But I like to think that I've gradually become just a bit more fluent in non-touching communication over the years: while the sequence and the logic of the words still gets jumbled a bit from time to time... from time to time I'm actually pleased with something I've written.

...or said.

"All of my friends do creative things," I said to Denise Parsley Leigh. "...so what is with you?" That was sometime in the fall of 1977. The following June, at Midwestcon, a copy of GRAYMALKIN #1 was thrust into my hands. Along with a snide comment. Or two.

You will, of course, pardon me if I take more than a small amount of pride in the fact that (at least in my conception of things; Denise may have a slightly different version!) one of my caustic remarks was the impetus for the production of what has since become one of the best fanzines of recent memory. (It probably would be *the* best, if Denise didn't publish on a Glicksohnian schedule, while utilizing my dictionary for spelling.)

...but of course, the fall comes shortly after the pride:

At *this* year's Midwestcon I was introduced to a very attractive young woman. "I've heard of you," she said, glitteringly. Ah, I thought to myself. (And here I'd believed that only males from Toronto -- and Steve Leigh -- had that kind of reputation.)

Several days later -- days filled with wondering just what she'd heard of me; I was convinced that it would probably be a very pallid version of the truth -- I worked up enough nerve to ask Hania just *what* she'd heard about me.

"Oh, nothing much," she said. "...just that you're a friend of Denise's."

After that, I think the wisest course is to go back to *writing* words for a while... which leads us to:

BILL BOWERS' THOTS WHILE SWINGING

When I moved into 2468 Harrison (first floor, front) in June of 1977, I did not plan on staying for long: it was simply a base camp, one that once I was established in and familiar with Cincinnati, I would vacate for other quarters. My record for not having spent much more than two years (usually less) in any one residence after "leaving home" in 1961 lent credence to this theory. Besides, it was much too small: I moved from a two-bedroom townhouse -- which I had more than adequately filled with kipple -- into three medium-sized rooms. A lot of the boxes of books, fanzines, and magazines had to go into the basement that Saturday in June...against the day I either got organized, or moved.

Almost forty months later those boxes are still in the basement, and I hesitate to go down and investigate what ravages time, humidity and the kids from upstairs have inflicted on my once precious material possessions.

The back room is insufferably hot in the summer and the front room is frigid in the winter; the kitchen is generally used for storage and not cooking...and I hate anyone who can enter the closet-sized bathroom without ducking. Water pressure is a myth; the thundering herd of kids overhead (I've only seen three; I haven't had my eyes checked in years) is matched not only by the mufflerless cars laying rubber out front, but (even more irritatingly than Fugghead #8 at AUTOCLAVE) by every asshole over five foot two banging -- resoundingly -- the directional signs that mark a curve

in Harrison. Said curve neatly equals the frontage of this house; hence the inopportune placement of the signs.

And while it may be big enough to handle my responsibility, it is certainly not big enough for the two additional cats I have received (on perpetual loan) since moving here. Oh, yes...I'm still here. Occasionally, if not weekly, I say that I'm going to move. Once I get a little bit ahead...

I'm not so sure about that "getting ahead", but eventually I'm sure that the return address on that other fanzine starting with the letter "X" will reflect a change. Still, even should that happen tomorrow, I suspect I will remember this place for a long, long time: several of the "best" and a few of the "worst" episodes of my entire life have taken place while I have inhabited this space. It is, I realize with a sudden start of surprise, quite literally my home.

But while the memories will remain, I suspect that what I will miss most about 2468 Harrison is the one physical aspect I have yet to mention: the large porch spanning the entire front of the house.

I've spent a lot of time out on that porch -- usually after the sun has gone down, and sometimes until almost dawn -- whether I was working the next day or not. On that porch I have solved the world's problems, and occasionally my own. I have mentally created the world's greatest compositions and devised the appropriate response -- snappy comeback/understanding support -- for every contingency. I have commiserated over my sorrows and celebrated my joys; both with goodly quantities of rum-'n-coke.

It's the very same porch on which, less than a month after my arrival, a short hairy friend accused me of having "plunged all of Cincinnati fandom into war."

I've spent a lot of time out on that porch...if only to watch the small cross-section of humanity that passes before me on the sidewalk. Sometimes I watch with amused superiority...and sometimes with bemused envy because "they" seem to know where they are going. And sometimes it almost seems that I "know" these anonymous passers-in-the-night better than those I know best...better than I know myself.

Even though I enter and exit the apartment through the side door, in ever so many ways that front porch is my launching pad where I build up thrust and then, later, my landing strip where I come back to regroup and to refuel my energies. Or my emotions.

The first year I simply sat on the top step, leaning back against the railing. Then, in late July, 1978, I bought a porch swing. [illegible] The swing is now a bit battered since I haven't taken it down the past two winters, but the wood has aged well. I'm a bit more battered than when I first sat in it, but I've aged and, well...

Porch-swinging may not be everyone's perfect method of coming up with Vast Thots and fanzine material but I've personally found that it beats the hell out of lawnmowing.

...even with a Toro.

* * * * * * *

We could go for the obvious.

I would suppose that (at least among those who "know" us) given this space in this circumstance, many would presume that I would regale you with tales of Mike Glicksohn's shortcomings...adding just a few more planks to the building of the mythos started a decade ago.

The temptation is certainly there; the structure occasionally seems near collapse, and this would be the golden opportunity to respond to/repay for the one formal piece of Mike's writing I've published. (Now *that's* esoteric! (But my standards were lower then, I guess.))

The material is certainly there: I've just looked over the editorials -- and Rosemary's columns -- in the first several ENERGUMENs. But those who know me will testify that while I am often obvious...it's usually when I'm attempting to be subtle... so with this one exception...

* * * * * * * * *

I owe Mike Glicksohn an apology.

From time to time, if not oftener, I have chastised Mike (in print and otherwise) because I "felt" that he all too often referred to NERG as "his" fanzine...which I defensively felt (intentionally or otherwise) diminished the role Susan had in the fanzine that formerly bore this name.

(And, yes, Mike, I well remember the dinner we shared before the awards presentation at TORCON II.)

...defensively for two reasons:

1) I was continually irritated (and didn't know what to do about it) when I was introduced at conventions by Bill Mallardi as "the person who 'helped' /him/ put DOUBLE:BILL out." (No...it was in no way malicious; but it hurt nevertheless.)

2)...and while I have pretty well consistently reiterated that, without Joan, OUTWORLDS (that what made me famous) would not have been what it was, I have just as often stated that it was "my" fanzine...that it would have come about one way or the other in any event. It just wouldn't have been as "easy".

End defensiveness; enter apology...

It wasn't until this summer, in a moment of enforced idleness (i.e., unemployment) when I was sorting through boxes of old fanzines (well...they were in a box labelled "good fanzines") that I realized/remembered that, indeed, the first few ENERGUMENs were solely edited by Mike.

What this all proves, other than that NERG started out "Mike's" and OW ended up "mine", I'm not sure, except that I'll have to postpone convention wearing of my new T-shirt.

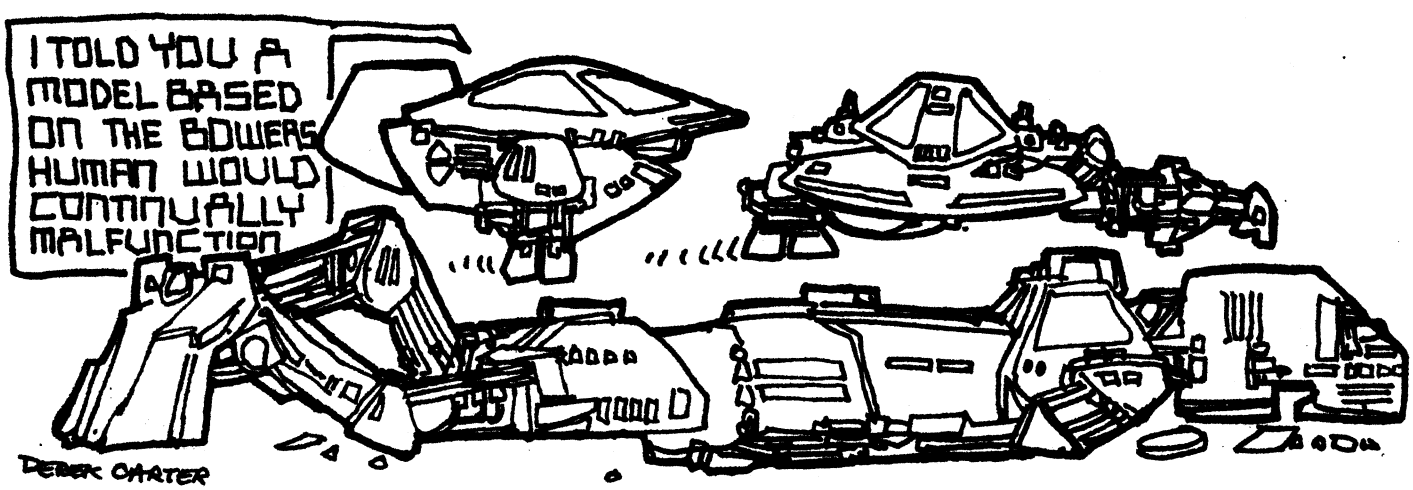
...the one that proclaims "I am the Memory of Mike Glicksohn."

...and here I'd been doing so well recently.

* * * * * * * * *

...and so with that one exception, I will attempt to not again mention Mike Glicksohn's name in these pages.

Instead of going for the obvious, let's go for...



Well, back out to the porch to think about it for awhile...

Synergy was very carefully explained to me in the parking garage at NOREASCON TWO. It's what Theodore Sturgeon writes about.

No writer of worth can be stereotyped into a one-subject summation, but if I identify strongly with much of Joe Haldeman's [illegible] work to date, perhaps it's because -- even though I "only" manifested the bodies in plastic bags through...and emerged physically unscathed -- I was much, much too close in '67 & 68.

...and since my instructor taught well the concept that objects in works-of-art should always be depicted in odd numbers, here's a third:

Ro Lutz-Nagey is inarguably the best natural story-teller I know. And he's not a bad writer, either. But I really couldn't tell you what he writes *about* because, outside of his job, the published sample is far too small to make a valid determination from.

(That's probably unfair, but it's the only tactic I know to get Ro to actually set down in typewriter copy the piece that he promised me in response to the-speech-that-was-OUTWORLDS 30. [illegible])

That all leads into this:

I recently proclaimed myself (GRAYMALKIN 5, page 10) as being much more the fanzine writer than the fanzine editor these days. It was an immodest thing to do, therefore completely out of character, but I had to: nobody was noticing.

Returning again to Boston over the Labor Day weekend: I was told, in a place other than the parking garage, that the fact that I'm obviously very introspective was one of my greatest strengths.

Several hours later, I was told that I introspected too damn much.

It was my eighteenth anniversary (and 93rd) convention so why should things be different? I came home confused.

If someone before that had asked me for a summation of my "work" over the past several years, I would probably have replied that, obviously, I wrote about me...and my problems in dealing with my world and the people who intersect it. It's been a bit repetitious at times but that's the subject matter that motivates me enough to sit down at the typewriter and actually put the words I think on paper. I don't know about the synergistic success of my work but I definitely do tell "war stories" (of the most ancient "battle") and the stories that I tell myself out on the swing are much better than the ones that get written down.

Still, I think I've pinned down a one-word theme that I've been exploring in my own way over the past decade:

Assumptions.

The trouble is, I'm still not at all sure which bothers me most:

The assumptions I make about others...

...or the assumptions others make about me.

I *do* know which intrigues me the most: I'm still not firmly convinced Hania told me the whole truth about what she'd heard about me.

* * * * * * *

I would assume that the basic "speech/not-a-speech" format that I utilize is by now familiar to enough people that I won't have to explain it here. I also assume that, like most things, some people like it, while others don't. That's okay; I'm still having fun with it.

And most of the aspects of the format are here: the pre-title intro, the egotistical

usage of "I", the convoluted segues. But one is not: the extensive insertion of quotes from the previously published Bowers Canon.

The deficiency here is not due to a lack of suitable quotes on which to draw: no way.

The lack here is simply that I knew that you'd expect them.

* * * * * * *

...and while I think it's nice to try and give both sides of the story, in my role as The Fannish Observer, I often don't. Sometimes because it impedes the story, the point I'm attempting to make. Having come out of the corner to become a participatory observer lends some inherent, even if not insurmountable, obstacles to objectivity. Besides, being subjective is so much more fun.

The one thing to remember is that I'll always go with what intrigues *me* the most. Even if I have to embellish the truth.

...or, on occasion, unembellish it.

* * * * * * *

I've this feeling that ENERGUMEN 16 will be a rather strange and unique blending of contributors and material. It's only a feeling because, although I know a number of the people who've been asked to contribute, I've no idea of who will come through (tho I'm sure Ro won't), or what the material will be...other than Patrick's piece which I read (and enjoyed) in the original version.

...well, that's not totally true: I *have* promised to introduce Dave Locke to Susan Wood at the first available opportunity. After all, I can see *over* small, furry objects. No matter how fast they move about.

And if you suspect this is a particularly convoluted segue, you are right. If only because I've realized that I am not yet capable of unembellishing enough the incident I was going to relate here. Changing gears, slightly, then...

The impetus for my writing varies. But whether it be done for a "speech", for a fanzine of my own, or because of a request from someone I love, anything I write -- and *finish* (with the exception of personal letters; and we all know how prolific I am with those) -- is generally published.

...as will be the segment that would have been here: when I'm ready, when/where you least expect it...

But it still all ties together, because... Well, give me a minute...

Earlier this year, for the first time in a very, very long time, I exercised prior censorship: I did not publish something that I had written, and stencilled, for my own fanzine.

(Some will be impressed. Dave Rowe will be intrigued.)

The reasons are irrelevant (Mandatory Esoterica): it was a conscious (if awkward) decision on my part.

What is relevant is this: Having an unexpected page and a half to fill in XENOLITH 13 and very little time to fill it, I rummaged, and found a couple of unpublished segments written in the late sixties...threw them together with a concocted rationalization for including them, and (despite my mimeo aborting) had the issue published "on time."

You wouldn't believe how many comments I've gotten saying that those two fillers were much better (..."more poetic"...) than anything I've written recently.

I may not be able to learn...but I can take a hint.

Having had a not totally unexpected (I've spent two weeks occasionally thinking about it) problem in tieing the loose ends of this piece together, I went rummaging

again...and I found this slightly battered sheet of cheap white typing paper: the upper lefthand corner is folded over, and it's unsigned, but I know it's mine -- the dashes, x's and periods, vertically and horizontally, are a registered trademark of the way I type things up before transference to stencil or master.

The typewritten heading on the page went:

*

(33/59) OUTWORLDS II (59/33)

*

There was such an OUTWORLDS; there was such a page. Singular. (No comment.)

I promised you no "extensive insertion of quotes from the previously published Bowers Canon." This is true. But, as part of my contribution to the rather strange blending of this, the NERG that is 16 (much too young for me)...perhaps a time-binding insert?

Relevance is what is important to me; the totally unexpected is my day-to-day norm. The rummaging is finding a way into, or out of, 2468 Harrison; segues are to articles as consistency is to relationships.

And I've not only read THE PRINCESS BRIDE, and very recently OD'ed on John Varley short fiction, but I'm finishing up my first Tom Robbins...err...novel, ever. (He stole my technique.)

My sister had/has hair that color, and the Moon I see has no anus betwixt its smile -- and besides that, no matter how high the cliffs I have to climb, I see no sex... changing the fact that:

There was such an OUTWORLDS. It was dated March, 1970.

There was such a page.

But it contained nothing such as this.

Why it didn't, I do not know. You'll have to ask *my* memory...

Given that...this:

* * * * * * *



IMPRESSIONS VI

I was conversing with myself, the other night
(a habit into which I fell quite naturally)
...and I said: "Self..."
(we being equals...eliminates a lot of needless formality)
..."why"...
(the word is nice and concise; almost as much so as is 'if')
"...why is it that we persist in publishing a fanzine?"
*
Just why is it that we do this thing
...when stories that are unwrote, remain unwritten?
...while not unlimited finances make other 'hobbies' more practicable?
...while books lie unread
and prozines proliferate in the shelves
...untouched by human hands?
*
Why not, indeed, let the Dead remain so in Piece?
...why must a new tendril escape from the stump of DOUBLE:BILL?
...an offshoot, and yet...not
)despite what they may say(
in the image of that which went before.
*
---something considerably smaller (physically)
and yet maybe
---considerably larger in its own way?
*
Why do I/we/you&me, self...why do we ask that the wife should collate
(we do it in the living room, Joyce)
before she dusts and sweeps.
(Methinks that maybe *she* would like an answer to this one?)
*
What is this thing called 'Egoboo'
that makes grown men tremble at the slightest whiff of it?
Is it contagious,
or curable (once contacted)?
*
Need I worry (or should I hope for) my children to be born with mimeo ink coursing
through their starblood
---and have them weaned on the sickly smell of corflu?
*
Better minds than mine have attempted Answers and Rationalizations
---but I'll tell you the Truth and the Reality:
*
It's a delightful (yet demanding) joyful (with moments of depression) affliction.
---it's just a ghodamned hobby...evolved into a way of life;
But more than All This:
It's what I do best.

(Bill Bowers; probably January or February, 1970)

* * * * * * *

And I still do. In my own, slightly, inimitable way.

* * * * * * *

An Observation:

After almost two decades of reading the stuff, I have come to the conclusion that

the trouble with most fanwriting is that, no matter how excellent the writing, no matter how intriguing the theme, most fanzine material comes up short. In other words, I see one hell of a lot of vignettes, but very few developed essays, and even fewer full-fledged articles.

Yes, I know the cited reasons: we are all just amateurs here...we don't get paid for what we do. But I still refuse to accept 'amateur' as a pejorative term; and payment tendered in cash is the most easily frittered away. Ask me.

I don't know; mayhap it's only a personal idiosyncrasy, since I prefer novels to short stories...just as I prefer extended relationships to one-night stands. (... not to say that both can't be works-of-art; in either case.)

But, naturally, as with all other Bowers Sermonettes, the faults I find in others are usually ones that I've been unable to "correct" in myself. When I do write these days, I generally do so at some length. But I achieve that length by...let's face it...utilizing a series of vignettes, seemingly united only by the overall title.

And I very rarely reach the denouement of the theme I've set out to explore. I hate stories that end leaving the final solution up to the reader.

But that's o.k. I love LOU GRANT.

* * * * * * *

...and, after the credits: COMING NEXT WEEK---

* * * * * * *

Very late, after the party, the four of us retired to the room.

After maybe an hour of settling into place, I commented: "...you know, given our respective reputations, nobody at the party would ever believe what we're doing now."

A giggle...

(...we sipped our drinks...)

...and I dealt the next euchre hand.

* * * * * * *

THE EPILOGUE AS A STATION BREAK:

Cause and effect.

...of words: spoken flippantly, or written carefully.

This time -- rather than asking -- I was asked to do a Friday nite "speech" at CONFUSION.

I had fun with this one in the concept stage, and I did it well, by focusing on the front row of the audience (but that's another story, Part Two)-- despite the purported evidence I viewed on videotape at SPACECON TWO.

And it went over well: in GRAYMALKIN 5, Gregg Trend wrote "...the structure of a Speech as an aural fanzine was clever, if not inspired." Ro promised to actually write the article I had titled over his name. And Joe Haldeman is working on the song...

Modestly, the CONFUSION speech was titled: "Bill Bowers' OUTWORLDS 30: The Tenth Annish."

Before publishing it, since I was a bit worried about one of my former columnist's reaction to a particular humorous aside, I sent out an advance copy of the transcript. It was passed ("...people keep asking if I was ever a fan...") and I published it in time for MARCON.

In May, 1980, I received a letter... "When you sent me advance word of the annish, I wrote to Mike. Mike is coming here to visit in July. We are sitting down to plan

the Tenth Annish of ENERGUMEN, the Hugo-winning fanzine. It's your doing, Bowers!"

...from Susan Wood.

Now I may not be totally sure of my role in GRAYMALKIN's gestation...and I'm even less sure of Hania...but this one I have proof of!

And I'm pleased, but...

No, don't thank me.

The thought occured to me, as I was sitting on the swing with a young woman the other day, that the idea of Mike sitting up there, having to stencil and run off all this ...well, that is reward enough for me.

After all, I have in Mike's own writing the fact that as "of late /Bowers/ sex life would prove to be far more interesting than /Glicksohns/ anyway!" The poor man needs something to do with his spare time and, since he is my friend, I'm glad that I could provide it.

...well, if you've enjoyed this fanzine, and really want to thank me, that's okay too.

I just want to thank Mike and Susan...just for being...

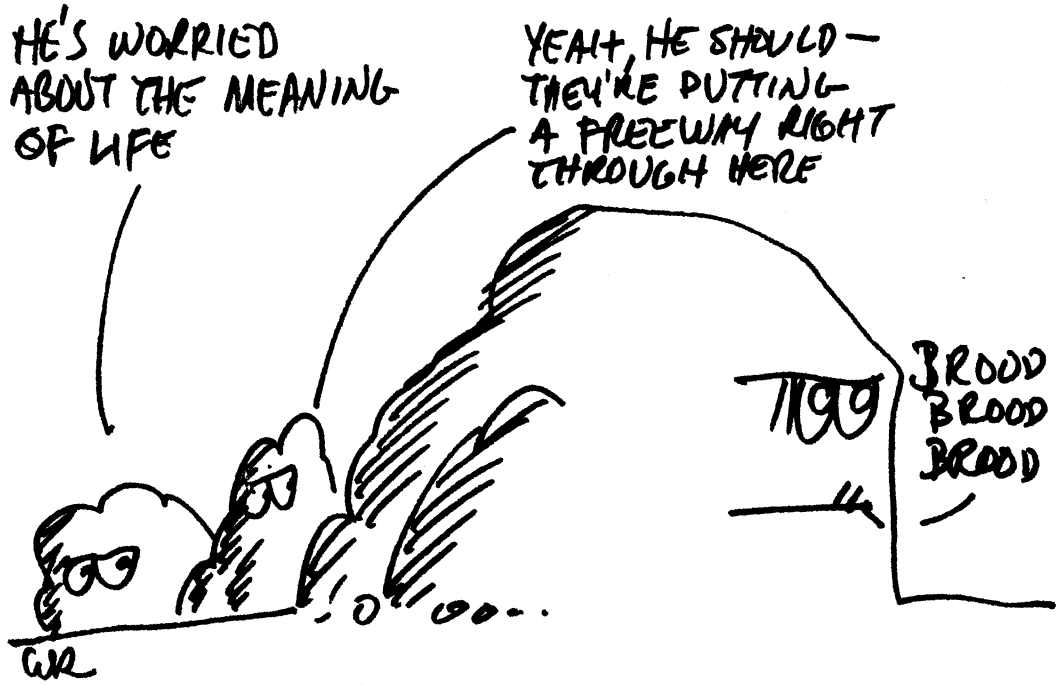
* * * * * * *

ENDNOTE: I *was* going to title this piece "OUTWORLDS 31", and dedicate it to Ken Keller, so that He could tell me where to file it. But I have a better idea: do you suppose...you with the slantastic imagination...that we could arrange to have the speech that will be OUTWORLDS 31: The Twenty-Fifth Annish *printed* in ENERGUMEN 18: The Twenty-Fifth Annish...?

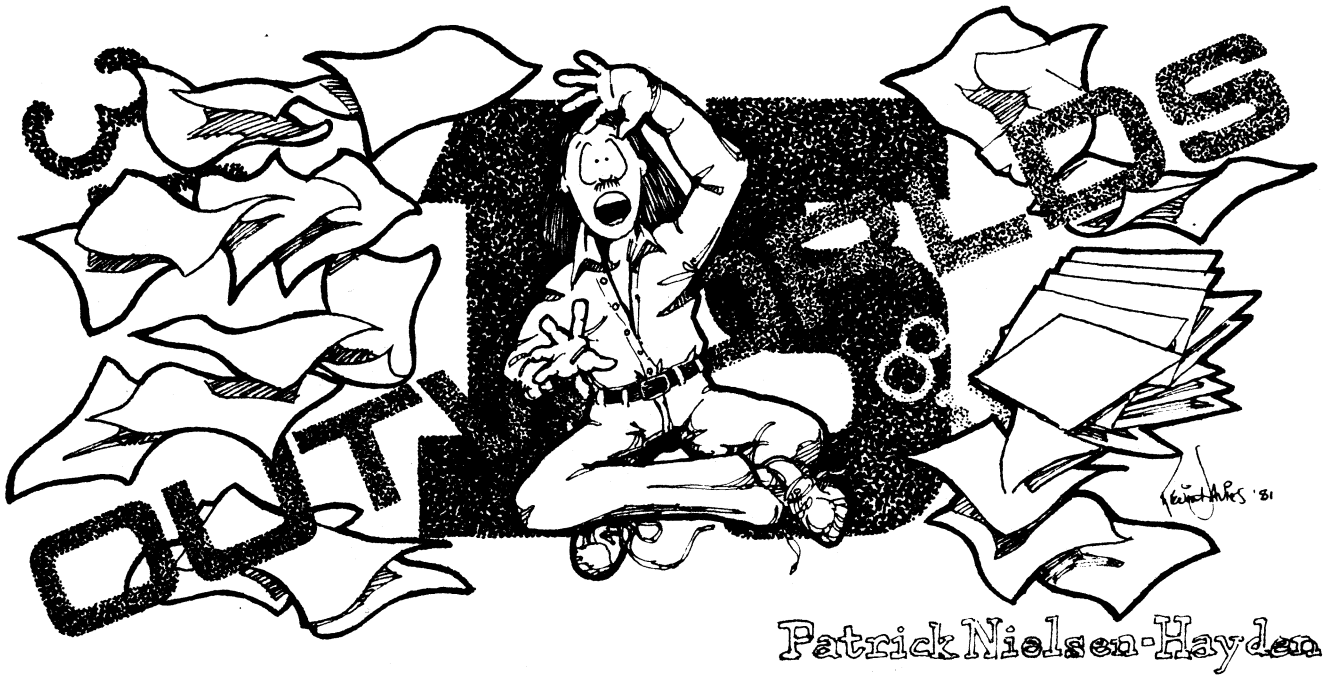
Ah well, just a thot.

...don't hold your breath.

(But where the hell *is* SCIENCE FICTION FIVE-YEARLY?)




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AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MIMEOGRAPHY

or

BILL BOWERS STOLE MY SOUL

Last fall, we had a new house. It's summer now, you understand, and it's the same old house, but by that very fact it can be seen that it's no longer a *new* house; nor is the concept of having A HOUSE (new, old, or whatever) a remarkable thing, fit for contemplative rumination and exclamations of "We have a house!" which, while admirable in their authenticity, did tend to garner odd looks in supermarket checkstand lines. Thus do we age with grace; elegant ennui marching arm-in-arm with progressive bourgeoisification. But last fall we had a *new* house.

Why *did* this house, this fact of domicilic residence, this -- here the writer is tempted to say "dump" -- this abode entrance us so? Lines of memory are cast back, and come up with one answer with monotonous regularity: space. We believed, with a faith touching in its naivete (matched, perhaps, only by the article of faith that fans are quite, quite different from human beings), that this expansion of our quarters from the dimensions of a succession of meager apartments to a full-fledged house would somehow put us well ahead of ourselves, and that by the time we filled the space rendered available by a complete, by gosh and golly, *building* we would undoubtedly be well on the way to the sort of self-satisfied success (cf. Moving Up In The World) that would enable us to simply obtain a new, larger model. Such was the pitifully vague state of our plans, and as the writer sits amid the heaps of fanzines, books, phonograph albums, dirty dishes, stray room-mates and sheer kipple that decorate and enrich his daily existence, much educative opportunity is availed him for the contemplation of Folly.

But it seemed like an Idea at the time. We even had a spare room.

"Gary," I said on the phone, "we have a spare room."

"Great," said Gary Farber, his voice peculiarly damped by the absorbent qualities of the wall of paperback books and crumbling fanzines that had surrounded him since March of 1979. "Now we can sort out my fanzine collection."

"Teresa," I said on the phone ten minutes later, "we're in for some interesting evenings.

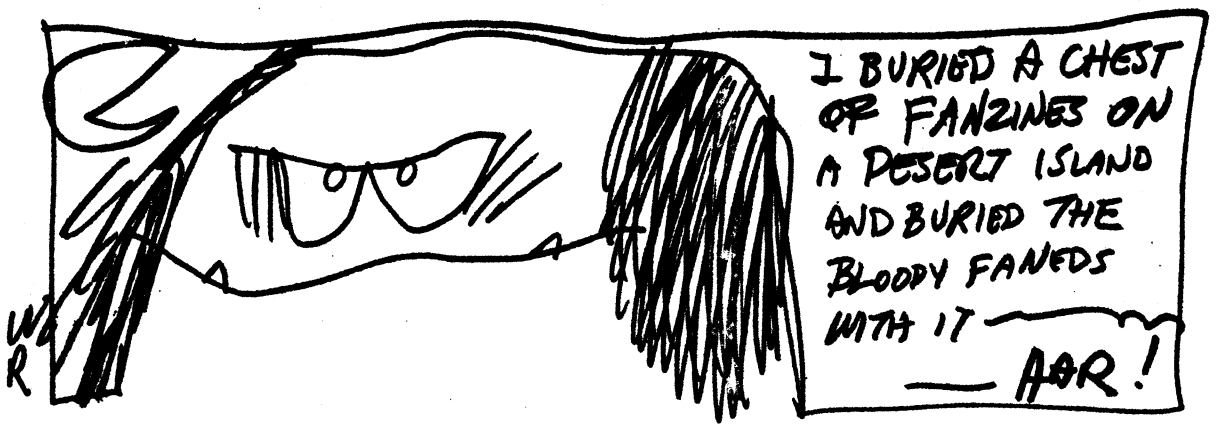
We began the task of alphabetizing the zines by editor by laying out 26 cardboard boxes in the living room and tagging each one with a letter. Giant heaps of fanzines were made available to each volunteer and the riot was on. "Who do you want to file THE GAFIATE'S INTELLIGENCER under?" "I can't find an editor for this THURBAN I!" "Is THE REALIST a fanzine?" Gary whirled this way and that, tossing off arbitrary answers to these and other questions requiring the highest facilities of his null-A-trained double brain and looking more and more harried all the time. The card table in the corner showed repeated signs of being about to collapse beneath the weight of forty years of apa mailings. "Hey, here's one of your first fanzines, the one you did the heading for with a paper clip!" "Oh, yeah, well, where *did* I put that copy of TWIBBET 7?" Tempers rose as the long-buried detritus of everyone's shameful neohood bubbled out of the duplicated muck. Alan Bostick sat on the couch and snatched top-quality stuff out of the burgeoning stacks for his own supine perusal. Teresa hid. Strange shadows gandydanced in the corners, shades of forgotten crudzines and legendary BNFs. Rhythmic cracklings from the heat vents recalled a Max Keasler typo, a Ted White sneer. Herbal enhancement calmed the dervish-like sorters, and at long last the untold quantities of yellowing twiltone and duplicator bond were sorted into a rough system, 26 stacks of fanzines arranged by the names of their editors, a tidy box crammed with convention publications, and a charming scale model of Mount Rainier sculpted out of decaying apa mailings. These were transferred back into the spare room to be brought out bit by bit and sorted further into order within the stacks.

A few nights later Gary came back again, and mindful of the terrors of the previous session, we resolved to partake of Dr. Anslinger's *bete noire* before sallying forth, in order, you understand, to take the properly fannish view of it all. This worked fine all through the small "A" stack -- Adkins, Ashe, Atkins, Ayotte -- and our success at conquering this first among letters encouraged us mightily, for next in line was the largest single stack, that top-of-the-pops surname-initial for prolific fan editors, "B". The five feet of zines were trotted out, and with gaily fumigated grins on our sensitive fannish faces we proceeded to tackle them. Bushyager, Brown, Berry, Boggs, Brown, Brazier, Bangsund, Brown, Berry, Bergeron, Bowers, Brown, *thwack, thwack, thwack*, into their neat little piles on the floor the old fanzines flew. A few reinforcing medicinal administrations of the vapors of trufandom, and we began to put the individual piles in order. Life was grand, and it was solemnly agreed that any fandom with John Bangsund in it could not possibly be all bad.

"Oh, you picked up the Bowers stack," remarked Gary as I hefted eight inches of genzines. "I'll bet I've got a near-complete run of OUTWORLDS in there. Let me know when you finish, hey?" "Right," I nodded, and got busy ordering the pile. Ominous shadows giggled in the fireplace, whispering of Seventh Fandom and Deglerian psychosis. I paid no heed.

"Let's see, here's number one," I muttered. "Right, and numbers two and three, and ... ah! three point five. Bill must have published a supplement there... oh, here's a three point two. Ah, yes, number five, September-October 1970... hm, three point *four*? Curious... August, 1972? *After* number five...? Odd. Dum de dum...seventeen, sixteen, summer 1973? Uh... this doesn't make any sense... Gary..." My head swam. Laney rose out of an old SPACEWARP on the table and cackled at me.

"Patrick," said Gary, looking over. "Patrick? Patrick!" I fought back to the eternal Now. "Um...right...uh huh, back to work." I riffled through the stack and found an index to Bill Bowers' publications. "Oh, I see," I announced to no-one in particular. "First he published Roman numerals I through V, then he did (written out) 'Six', 'Seven' and 'Eight', then (in Arabic numerals) 8.5 and 8.75, *then* he did



the decimals 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5, then he picked up with 15, 16, 17, etc. Right. Makes perfect sense." I reshuffled various stacks of immaculately-mimeographed Bill Bowers zines. I through V, Six through Eight (plus 8.5 and 8.75), 3.1 through 3.5. Fuck you, Bowers, I hummed merrily to myself in a cheery tune containing elements of "Long Lankin." Then I came across The Issue.

I flipped through the pages of The Issue, looking for something like a colophon to determine its place. Shull popouts assaulted me, Mike Gilbert paper airplanes tickled my nose, four-color mimeod art on foldout pages flicked past while Piers Anthony called somebody or other a nasty poopoo, but no colophon. I turned the magazine upside-down and examined the stiff back cover. It shifted its space-time orientation and turned into a pster-sized zodiac chart while Dean R. Koontz murmured about Piers Anthony having cooties, but no colophon. Dismayed, I returned to the front.

Then It started doing Its thing. Rotslers on loose sheets rained out of the fanzine in a shower of shards from the demented psyche of the graphics-mad fan editor. Three-dimensional foldouts emanated from the stapled binding in a fanfaronade of James Shull comic strips. Elaborate Selectric borderings swooshed by, surrounding wandering Billy Wolfenbarger poetry. My personal universe deflated, creased and collapsed, gnawed at all the while by a farrago of foldouts, fold-ins, pop-ups, put-downs and over it all the soft quiet voice of William "Father" Bowers intoning the virtues of OUTWORLDS, The Unpredictable Fanzine. I screamed. From a great distance I heard Gary and Teresa's wonder-struck voices. Reality seemed long ago and far away.

In a gray void, a flock of Letraset headings flew past me in flush-right formation. Among them fluttered a scrap of paper. It glistened.

With my last reserves of strength, I cast myself forward and snatched at the wayward rectangle of twiltone. "OUTWORLDS," it proclaimed. "3rd ANNISH: January, '73." And then in a strident typeface, black and Grotesque: "15."

I had it! The power was mine, if I could only intone its Number! Fighting back tears, I whispered the holy names of Boggs, Bergeron and Carr, and girded myself. "OUTWORLDS 15," I shouted into the chaos that surrounded me. And it Changed.

Gray peeled back to reveal apple-green twiltone. Panoramic backgrounds of insane graphic spreads collapsed inworlds on themselves. Flocks of loose scraps of odd-sized fanart sped back into the nether recesses of the fanzine's spine. The entire mad universe of OW seemed to withdraw, to contract, to close up. Faint outlines of my living room penetrated through to my overloaded eyes and brain. "Patrick!" I heard my friends babbling excitedly. I passed out.

They brought me back, with succor and Tab, but not whole. Not whole. The fanzines

were sorted some more, and we actually got about two-thirds of the way through the collection before mysteriously losing the spirit for it. Now our spare room is filled with other stuff, and our living room is generally too crowded for such purposes, and the Farber collection sits brooding in Jerry Kaufman, Suzle Tompkins and Rebecca Lesses' attic. Including, far, far towards the bottom of a gargantuan stack that is the "B"s, a fanzine published by Bill Bowers eight years ago. And it's got a little of me in it (somewhere, impaled on a loose staple, flapping in a gale of running heads) -- and every now and then, it lets out a little (very small, muffled by the weight of all that fat genzine mass), a very tiny scream.



The trufan writes letters of comment to nearly every fanzine he or she receives, although he trades fanzines with the other editor. The trufan can be found eating a cold can of beans in the middle of winter to pay for postage stamps from an organization he constantly criticizes. He is the person who makes a mimeo from a broken typewriter roller, an old oil drum, half his son's mechano set; and then turns out a fanzine that looks like it was done on an offset press -- he also manages to misspell his own name four times on the front cover. The trufan is a fanatic: a mystic without a belief. He produces his fanzine or runs a convention in defiance of alleged economic good sense, gives it away to people who ask him for it -- and then they send him a letter saying it was no good!

---Eric Lindsay, GEGENSCHEIN 16

If there is ever a need to define 'fan', Eric could stand as this definition incarnate: his writing is witty, quite informed, humorous, poignant, and pointed. And we are all overjoyed at his decision to spend half of each year overseas.

---Neville Angove, EPSILON ERIDANA EXPRESS 3

Despite trying too hard he doesn't seem to have got the hang of managing his insults so that they do more damage to the target than to himself. The Easthope method consists of chopping off both your own legs then waiting for the enemy to faint at the sight of blood.

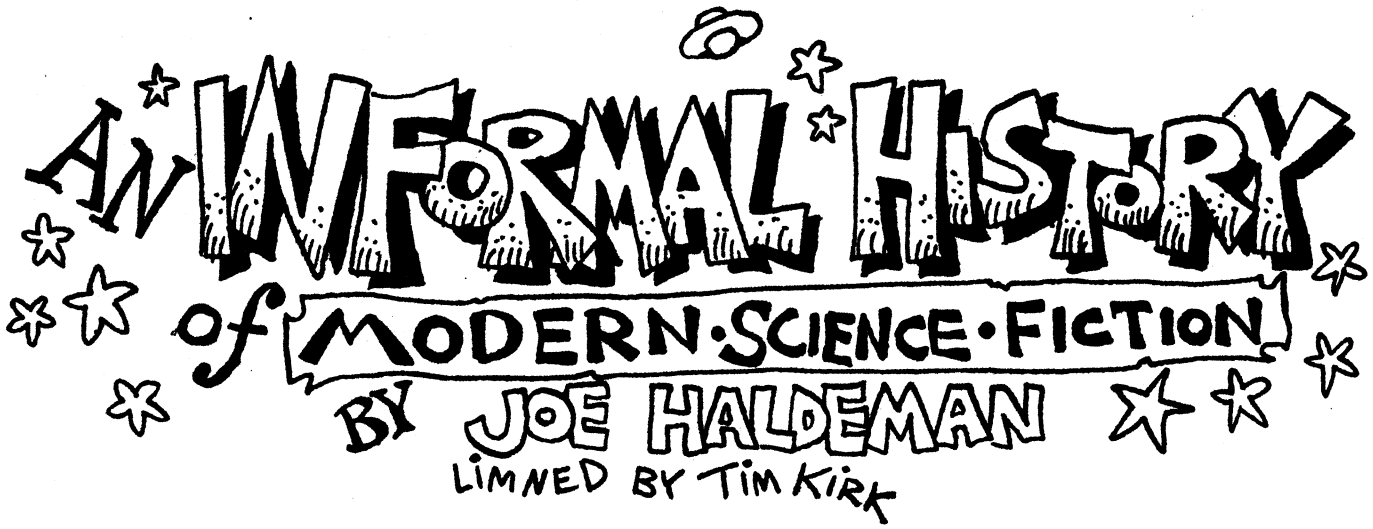
---D. West, STOP BREAKING DOWN

That decision caused all hell to break loose in the roundabout apathetic hamfisted way that even the most cataclysmic things happen in fandom.

---Greg Pickersgill, RITBLAT/GRIM NEWS 1

Greg Pickersgill is an arch-example of the Ratfan paranoiac. Believing ninety percent of fandom to be mainly cretinous he is morbidly afraid of being counted among them.

---Graham Charnock, WRINKLED SHREW 1



(Tune: "Rock and Roll I Gave You All the Best Years of My Life")

Well, I can still remember when I read my first s.f. --
Burroughs pulps and Conan, full of blood and guts and death,
And half-clad nubile maidens who would never go too far...
Breathing in the atmospheres of Jupiter and Mars.

Then I read the masterminds who wrote the real stuff,
Like Leinster and Jack Williamson; I never got enough
Of humanoids and aliens and ships to other worlds...
Bought myself a typer; thought I'd give the stuff a whirl.

(Chorus)
Oh, science fiction, you took all the best years of my life
All the sunny Sunday mornings, all the moonlit summer nights.
While I was sitting in a back room writing love songs to you,
You were changin' your directions, and you never even knew
That I was always ... just one step behind you.

I knew I couldn't just start out and write hard science tales,
So I wrote a fantasy about a hero tough as nails,
Who stumbled onto Mars through a wrinkle in time-space --
I packed it in an envelope and sent it off to Ace.

They sent it back, with a letter I thought rather terse.
"I rejected fifty tales today, but yours was far the worst.
"Don't ever kid yourself that you could ever write for pelf
"Go out and get a job, or better yet, go hang yourself."

Many more rejections came, and some were worse than that.
I got the real impression that my story was old hat.
So I spent the next two years on a nice bench in the park --
Reading modern science fiction by the modern guys like Clarke.

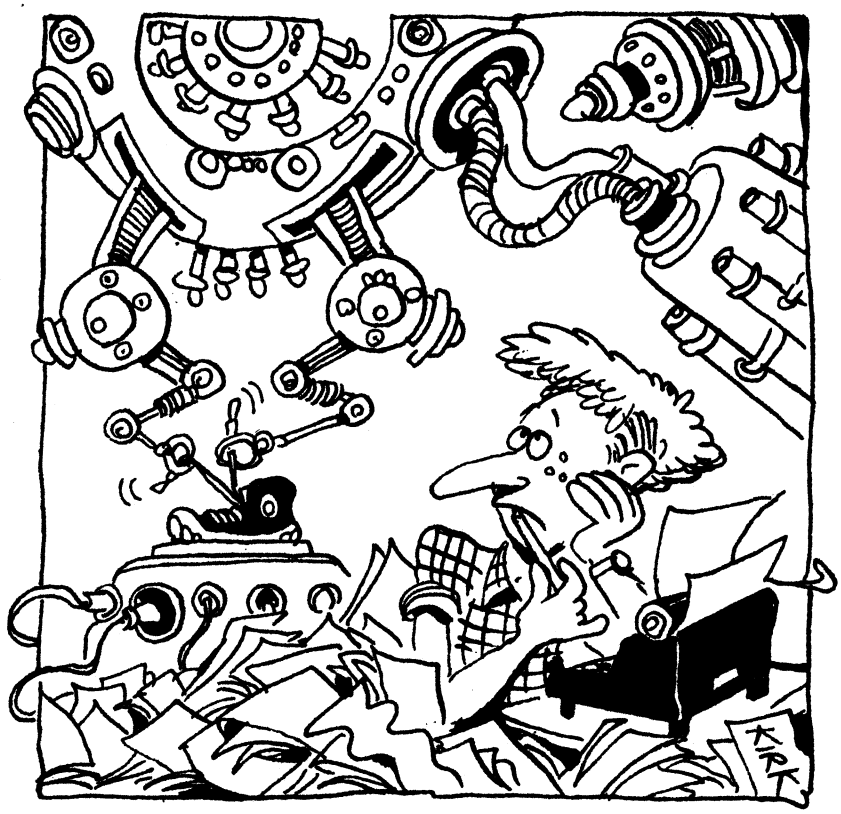


I liked Ike and Pohl and Kornbluth, Bester was just fine.
But none of them was quite as good as Robert A. Heinlein.
So I took a couple more years till I had his stuff down pat
And wrote a book about a blind poet who was an engineer and
lived a thousand years and saved the world, and had a cat.

Oh, science fiction, you took all the best years of my life
Cost me reams of paper and a perfectly good wife.
While I was pounding at the typer, writing you a *billet-doux*,
You were changin' your directions, and you never even knew,
That I was always ... just one step behind you.

I sent that novel off to H.L. Gold at GALAXY,
Who sent a form he'd printed for the thousands just like me
"Those who copy Heinlein's work are only thieves and tramps,
"So just to teach a lesson, why, I've steamed off all your stamps."

It seemed to me that GALAXY just didn't like my tale,
So I tabled it a few years, and bought myself a bale
Of books on engineering, physics, ghosts and big machines --
Settled down to write some stuff for ANALOG magazine.



After seven tries I got a letter from Campbell,
In fifteen pages, single-spaced, he said, "You might as well
"Stop sending me these time-worn tales of poor mutated genes,
"And clowns who save the world with their Heironymous machines."

Oh, science fiction, you took all the best years of my life
Filled my world with debts and angst and existential strife.
While I was biting off in science books much more than I could chew,
You were changin' your direction, and you never even knew
That I was always ... just one step behind you.

This was in the sixties, and I thought -- Oh, what the hell.
The magazines are dying, so I guess I might as well
Do like Chip Delany, LeGuin and Roger Z. --
Subordinate the science to the liter-ar-y.

I went back to college so's to get two Ph.D's
In classics and in English -- thinking that would set me free
To write for classy English markets -- ORBIT and NEW WORLDS,
And bring me fame and fortune, and perhaps some groupie girls.

But ORBIT sent me back a little note from damon knight,
Saying "No one ever would deny your prose is erudite.
"Just a few small things would make this story really hot --
"Like character and style and pace and structure, sense, and plot."

Oh, science fiction you took all the best years of my life
Every damned rejection slip, it cut me like a knife.
While I still thought that ANALOG had dirty-word taboos,
You were changin' your direction, and you never even knew
That I was always ... just one step behind you.

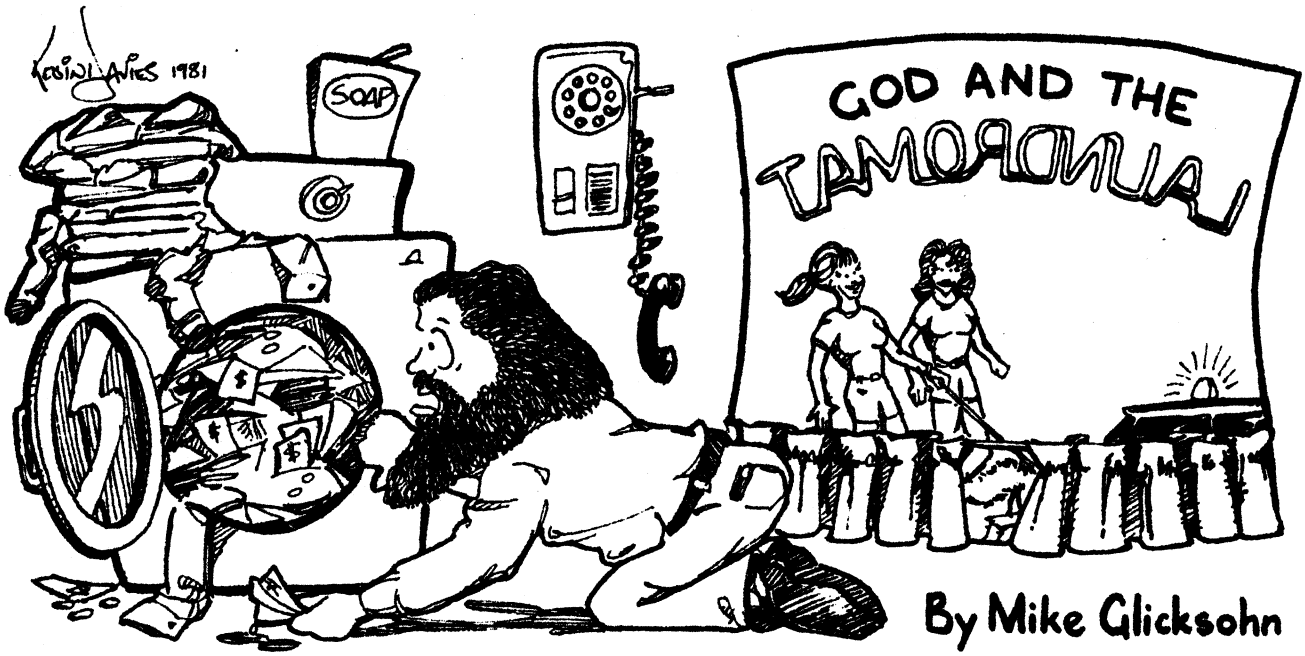
So I went out to Hollywood and said I'd write for scale --
With twenty pages every day, well, I could hardly fail.
After fiction, writing dialogue was nothing but a snap --
Ten thousand bucks a week for twenty pages full of crap.

Well, science fiction, you took all the best years of my life
But I'm getting my revenge on TV every other night ...
With stuff that wouldn't make the grade on Captain Kangaroo,
I'm changin' your direction, and there's nothin' you can do
'Cause I was always ... just one step behind you.



The standard of perfection for vodka (no color, no taste, no smell) was expounded to me long ago by the then Estonian Counsul General in New York, and it accounts perfectly for the drink's rising popularity with those who like their alcohol in conjunction with the reassuring tastes of infancy--tomato juice, orange juice, chicken broth. It is the ideal intoxicant for the drinker who wants no reminder of how hurt Mother would be if she knew what he was doing.

---A.J. Liebling



God, as any trufan knows, lives in Los Angeles and sometimes goes by the name of Elmer Purdue. Ted White lives on the opposite coast to Los Angeles and is occasionally considered to be the opposite of God. Neither man, to the best of my knowledge, is famous for having written an article about laundromats. This is not as insignificant as it sounds.

Some things improve, somewhat, with time: red wines, certain cheeses, and Bob Tucker, for example. My memory is not one of these things. This is why I intend to sit here at two in the morning of Saturday, June 21, 1980 and to try to put down on paper the events of the last couple of hours. To do so, however, will require a certain amount of rambling background. You may think of it as tunnel-vision fanhistory if you like.

I've been a fan for fourteen years now. That's a mere blink of an eye to God but at times it seems to me as if I've done a lot in those years. One of the things I've done a lot is bemoan the fact that I'm just not one of those people to whom Things Happen. Liz Fishman and Rosemary Ullyot became (temporarily) famous by being the foci of unusual occurrences. (Many of you probably said "Who?" just now, thereby establishing the ephemerality of fannish fame.) Dave Locke has had a much longer career of reporting close encounters of the strange kind and for that (if nothing else) I envy him. But I've had to labour under the definite drawback of living an amazingly *mundane* existence. I've never met a cow-fucker in my life; no drunken strangers have ever wandered into my living room; not *once* have I been accosted by a scrofulous ambulatory penis. There are times when I wonder if I was really supposed to be a fan at all or whether it's all some sort of bureaucratic fuck-up.

I live alone. This is essentially a matter of choice and it has its advantages and disadvantages. One of the advantages is that I can sit here at two-thirty in the morning (I write slowly) and drink scotch and type fanzine articles without bothering anyone else. (If you don't know what the disadvantages include then you're probably young enough that your mother is reading this article to you and she'll explain when she thinks the time is right.) I also live in a house, which is wonderful at all times except when all my socks are dirty. That's when I have to endure the bachelor's rite of passage known as Doing The Laundry. (Compared to Doing The Laundry, celibacy is a snap.)

I have friends for whom Doing The Laundry is a mere bagatelle. They simply elevate down to the basement, assault a machine or two, then return to the comfort of a glass of wine, an easy chair and a bootleg copy of "The Empire Strikes Back." At times like these, I almost envy them their inflated rents.

I've recorded in numerous locs my belief that for some obscure reason which I've never been able to precisely identify the act of doing one's laundry in a public place is one of the most demeaning aspects of being a solitary person. I think it's the combination of "public place" and "solitary" that does it; it is somehow soul-destroying to realize that when you reach the bottom line of getting the stains out of your bottom line, you're entirely on your own. As a result of this belief, I traditionally do my laundry after midnight at a twenty-four-hour laundromat about a fifteen minute walk away from where I live. And because of that fifteen minute walk (each way) and because of the way I feel about washing one's dirty linen in public, I do my laundry as infrequently as possible. ("I used to do a wash every two weeks but since I got the second pair of underwear I only go once a month," as they are wont to say.)

If a laundromat is somewhere I don't like to go, a convention is somewhere I most definitely do like to go. I must, I attend sixteen or seventeen a year. And when I attend a convention, I *attend* the convention! I know of no-one else in fandom who dissipates as much energy or as much of themselves at a convention as I do. (Many others undoubtedly feel the same way but I've got the pictures to prove it.) Sometimes, I overdo it, but we all have our little idiosyncrasies, right? I get too little sleep, drink too much alcohol, play too much poker for far too long, eat too little food, and end up feeling as if a miniaturized Russian army has held manoeuvres in my body while their dance troupe has practiced inside my head. It often takes me two full days to recover from a really good con and the chances are good that I'll never fully recall everything that happened.

You see, I've always had this quirky memory. Even when I was a kid -- and still a model of sobriety -- I had trouble recalling names, places, events, conversations, promises *et al*. Excessive drinking has undoubtedly exacerbated this tendency but it hasn't created it: at the best of times I'm inclined to be more than just a bit wooly-headed.

Conventions, of course, are not the best of times as far as memory is concerned. Conventions are entire lifetimes condensed into a single frenetic weekend and under the barrage of sensory input that occurs during a typical con it isn't surprising if a few synapses short out. This is the main reason I always carry a notebook with me at a con and always try to record promises I make, money I lend out, or information I take in which I'll need to know when the con is over. One of the standard post-convention winding-down operations I always perform is a careful scrutiny of all the scraps of paper I find when I unpack myself and my suitcase after a fannish weekend. Reading these notes, names, numbers and other nonsense gives credence to the often-heard claim that there are some things man was not meant to know!

Most of these mysterious notes come out of the bottom of a brown leather bag I've been taking to conventions for the past nine years or so. The bag was a gift from Susan just after we got married and may well be the most useful and most-used present I've ever received. I almost always have it with me at a con and into it gets put most of the kipple one accumulates while drifting through a gathering of fans. Unpacking it after the con is over is like opening a time capsule: items both familiar and entirely strange are taken out to be examined and marvelled over. Money, for example.

In recent years I've developed a penchant for playing poker at conventions. (This will not come as a surprise to some of you.) Although I occasionally lose in spec-

tacular fashion, I have had the good fortune to win more often than not. Of course, I play poker in the same way I engage in most conventional activities: drunkenly and to excess. (I have many vices but self-delusion is low on the list.) And that means that quite often at a con I'll spend a reasonable amount of time stuffing cash into my brown bag and carrying it around with me until I get home and have the time to see where I ended up financially.

(This habit had an amusing consequence which I never quite got around to writing up for MOTA. On the way back from the 1979 MARCON -- totally enervated and almost comatose after a typically excessive weekend -- I was stopped, questioned and eventually searched by the RCMP at Toronto airport. It was a strip search. Apparently, the police are not allowed to touch your money, although they can tear your suitcase apart if they feel like it. When they looked into my bag and saw money at the bottom of it, they told me to unpack it myself. I started pulling out handfuls of crumpled American twenty dollar bills and stacks of Eisenhower silver dollars. Several minutes and over five hundred dollars later I got a great deal of pleasure from watching the look on their faces.)

All of which is a preamble to establish that when I get back from a con I usually don't know exactly how much money I'm carrying with me.

TORCON 2 showed this aspect of my character quite well. At TORCON the pressures I was under were even greater than usual. It was partly "my" Worldcon, I was trying to be a huckster for the first time in my life, I was under intense personal pressure and it was the Worldcon. It was a wonder I was able to remember anything about the con at all once it was finally over. But I could, and, in fact, wrote quite a lengthy report about it. Part of that report went as follows:

"Second story to indicate my mental state during TORCON: my wallet has a 'secret' compartment built into it. I seldom use it. But sometimes when I'm trapped on the toilet with nothing to read, I'll go through my wallet and look at all the little notes I've stuffed into it, trying to figure out what the hell they mean, or play poker with the serial numbers on the bills. I was doing so some two weeks after TORCON and checked the secret compartment on a whim. Inside I found three twenty dollar bills! I've not the faintest recollection of putting them there, but I must have done so for safe-keeping sometime during the con."

Did someone say *Plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose* or was that just the wind whistling through my empty scotch glass?

We had another convention here in Toronto just a week ago. It was called AD ASTRA. I was there. I played some poker, didn't sleep, drank a lot, got locked *into* an apartment not once but twice, and even spent most of each day pretending to be a huckster. (I realized I was only pretending when most of the people trying to buy my old Marvel comics were the co-owners of Toronto's biggest comic book store.) It's been over for five days now and I'm almost recovered from it.

In five days time, when my recovery is complete, I'm taking off for my ten weeks of summer vacation. In order to get ready for that departure, I went to the laundromat earlier this evening. I arrived there a little earlier than usual, just after eleven p.m., but to my delight the place was deserted. I loaded up three washers, made sure they were properly set up (I *could* tell you personal stories of bachelor ineptitude but I still have *some* pride) and wandered off to a nearby Chinese restaurant. (These little details add little to the general thrust of the article -- oh yes, there is one -- but I hate to waste them.) Since all I'd eaten all day was a can of octopus and the olives out of several excellent martinis, I had a pleasant snack while completing all but two clues in an extremely difficult cryptic crossword and hence returned to the laundromat feeling rather pleased with myself.

During my absence a wino had wandered in and fallen asleep under one of the tables used by patrons for folding their washing. During the winter this is quite common but only the unusually severe June weather we've experienced this year would have caused such an event to occur today. It almost seemed like an omen.

As I entered the laundromat, two of my three machines clicked off simultaneously. Anyone who has ever done public laundry knows that this never happens. I should have realized then that this was no ordinary day. Leaving my shirts to wend their way through the longer permanent press cycle (I'm tempted to say these details are for local colour but those items were in the other machines) I loaded up a dryer. But before I could deposit my quarter the suddenly-apparent snores of the wino indicated that the third washer had completed its job. I wandered over and raised the lid...

Sitting right on top of the mass of slightly soggy shirts was what looked to be a Canadian twenty dollar bill. Also slightly soggy. I was somewhat startled. When I reached in and picked it up I realized why it only *looked* like a Canadian twenty dollar bill: it was actually *four* Canadian twenty dollar bills, all stuck together. All slightly soggy. I believe I said, "Shit!" The wino rolled over and mumbled under his breath. My mind flashed back to TORCON and the incident related earlier. "So *that's* where all that AD ASTRA comic book money went to," I thought.

I started taking the shirts out of the machine, carefully checking the pockets of each one. Every so often I'd unearth another twenty or, occasionally, a purple ten, all plastered onto a wet piece of shirt material. By the time I'd finished, I'd



Q: WHAT IS WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE OF MICHAEL ?

A: NO BOTTLES OF CHIVAS.

found seven twenties and three tens, one hundred and seventy dollars of very well laundered money. I spread them out to dry on the table above the wino. It somehow seemed the right thing to do. And my mind filled with thoughts of TORCON and Dave Locke and Ted White and Elmer Purdue. It is a proud, lonely and esoteric thing to be a fan...

As if to make up for a lifetime of uneventful meetings, the evening turned out to be far from over. It struck me that the moment such as the one I'd just experienced ought not to go unshared but who is there to share things with in a laundromat empty of all save an unconscious bum? So I decided to tell Phil Wright's telephone machine what had happened, Phil's number being one of the very few I'd somehow managed to memorize. (I knew Phil wasn't home but machines have good memories and it seemed like a good idea at the time.) As I stood there talking to a tape recorder, with 170 dollars worth of found money drying on a table across the room from me, two very nubile young ladies on roller skates accompanied by an enormous German Sheppard suddenly exploded into the laundromat, did a fast turn around the place, eyed the wino and my cash and disappeared out the door. I thought to myself, Dave Locke, eat your heart out!

I turned to watch the nymphets and their canine companion vanish into the obviously unreal night (expecting to see Rod Serling doing a voice-over at any moment) just in time to see a police car stop three young kids on lightless bicycles directly across from where I was standing. As I hung up on Phil's remarkably uncommunicative machine and listened to the invective emanating from the confrontation a few feet away, a second patron entered the laundry. His eyes were glazed, his clothes were almost as shabby as mine and his first words were, "Got any papers?" I wondered if Mike Glyer had written the scenario.

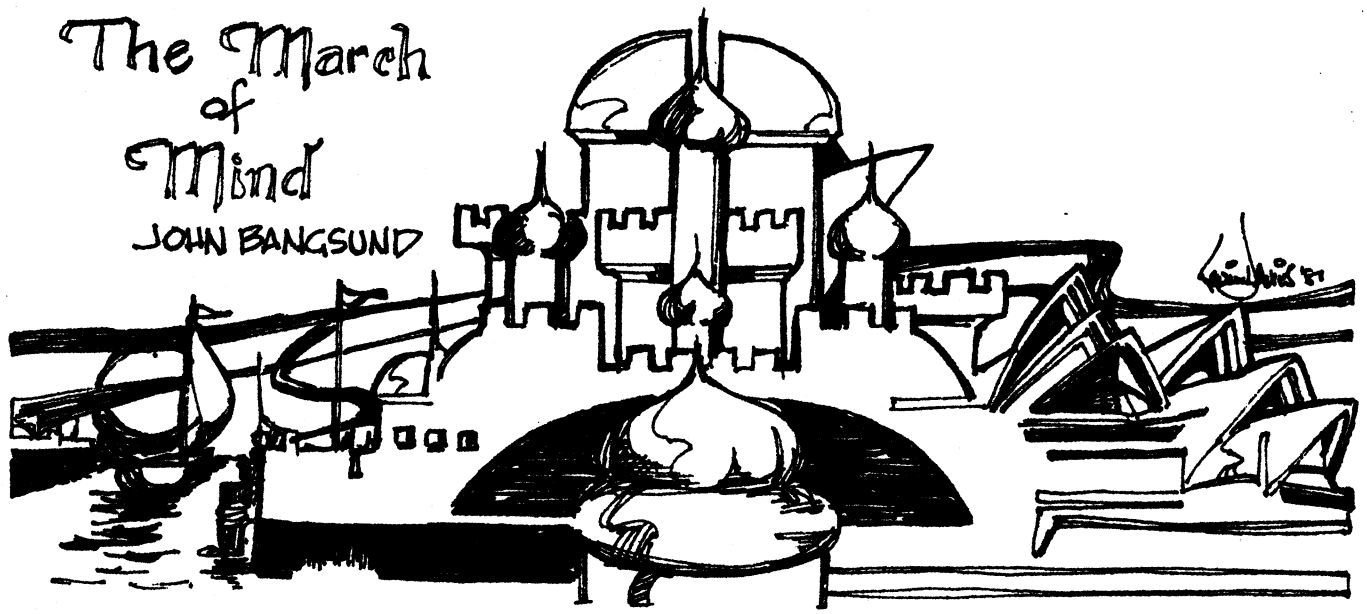
For half an hour the cops were by the doorstep interrogating three kids, the wino was snoring underneath my table, an ex-hippy smoked dope in the back of the laundry and I folded my wash. All the time my mind was making obscure connections for a fanzine article, wishing I were Dave Locke or Ted White and remembering the days when I published a fanzine myself.

Eventually, as must happen, I folded the last towel and the universe returned to normal. The police car peeled away, laying rubber, and as I left my fellow launderer handed me a piece of foil and told me to enjoy myself. I know little of such things but I seem to have fallen heir to about half a gram of hash. If this had happened to Ted White he'd probably have handled it better but I suppose it's unreasonable to expect people to hand out bottles of Chivas, even in a Dave Locke universe.

When I got home, it struck me that I'd actually lived through something worth writing about for a fanzine. For the first time in 14 years I was able to see connections between what had happend to me tonight, other things that had happened to me, things I'd read about happening to others, and articles I'd published in ENERGUMEN.

Especially I recalled an article I'd published by Ted White in which he reminisced about how his fanwriting style had been influenced by Elmer Purdue. Ted described how Elmer would write these rambling sort of pieces that superficially appeared unconnected but when read more carefully turned out to be extremely carefully crafted, each apparently separate topic growing from the previous one and leading to the next until the entire article returned full circle to its starting point. Ted wrote about this in an early issue of ENERGUMEN; he wrote about it in a rambling sort of way, in a piece which managed to return full circle to its starting point. That starting point -- and hence ending point -- had to do with God.

God, as any trufan knows, lives in Los Angeles and sometimes goes by the name of Elmer Purdue...



SNOB BUSINESS LIKE SHOE BUSINESS -- A TALE OF OLD VIENNA

When I first got my V12 Dino Ferrari, back in 1976, it was just an upwardly mobile Renault 16. It had belonged to a dentist, who had given it ideas beyond its station, and I encouraged those ideas, because a mate of mine has a V12 Dino Ferrari and I get awfully frustrated when he goes on about it, which is a fair bit. His Ferrari has a video-cassette player, a Nakamichi sound system, with AM, PM and FM stereo, and a baby Steinway, and there's hardly room for him when he's got them all going, let alone passengers. My Ferrari didn't even have a radio when I bought it.

It was the dealer suggested a radio. I kept taking the car back to him and complaining about noises under the bonnet and behind the dashboard, and he looked at me in an odd way the last time and said that a radio would fix those problems. It did, too. The day the diff fell off I didn't even notice. Got the car home and my wife said, "Do you know the diff's fallen off?" and I said, "No, but if you hum a few bars I'll fake it," narrowly avoiding an even older joke but walking straight into her incredible left hook. Ah well, vive la diff, as they say.

Anyway, I was sitting there in my Ferrari in the traffic jam in Hoddle Street, listening to the radio, and this character came on talking about how to look after your swimming pool. This is not a subject that worries me a lot. The Northclump City Council looks after my swimming pool, and I haven't been there since Joe Fogg refused to give me a Herald Learn To Swim Certificate in 1949. I was idly wondering whatever became of Joe Fogg -- he doubled as municipal baths manager and dog-catcher -- when I heard this bloke on the radio saying it was a marvellous idea to keep trout in your pool. How extraordinary! I thought -- you could have five of them, and invite the neighbours in for a bit of chamber music -- and I giggled, and before I'd gone another two blocks I'd accidentally made up a silly little story about Schubert and Schufred, and it went something like this.

# # # # #

Once upon a time there was an ancient family of cobblers. They lived in a little village not too many leagues from old Vienna, and their name was Schuh. Schuh is pronounced like "shoe", but with the accent on the comfort rather than the style. Originally their name had been Smith, but some time during the Dark Ages they changed it to Schuh, because they thought it would be good advertising.

At the time of which we are once-uponning the family consisted of Schuh Ludwig, his wife Schuh Fiona, their children, Bert, Fleur and Fred, and a bloke named Blucher, possibly an uncle, who was old and untidy and a snob to boot. They were a happy little family, living in a typical little cobblers' sort of house, cobbling away from morn till night, singing traditional cobblers' songs and laughing merrily whenever one of them cobbled a sole on back-to-front or pricked his thumb or fell in the glue.

But as the children got older they started questioning their existence, as children have an exasperating way of doing, and Bert for one started feeling strongly that there must be more to life than following in his father's footsteps, as they say. He had become fond of poetry, and every now and then would defiantly chant snatches of Heine's dirtier lyrics when the rest of them were happily singing Chu Chin Chow or whatever the latest thing from Vienna was. On his days off, the second Saturdays in March and August, he spent all his time in an espresso joint, morbidly scribbling tunes to go with Heine's poems on menus, table-cloths and the legs of his shorts. High on caffeine, late at night he would go staggering home to the cobblery, singing his dirty liederhosen at the top of his strasse.

Fleur, who was younger, started getting silly ideas about life by reading silly magazines flown in from Paris by the local newsagent. Fred, the youngest Schuh, was a rather strait-laced youth. The only thing that had his parents worried about him was that he went to church a lot, even on his days off. He confided to Fleur once that he wanted to be a preacher when he grew up, and she told on him, which was an awful thing to do, because for weeks after that they would stop singing their happy laughing cobblers' songs when he came into the workroom and start singing hymns and crossing themselves and falling about in irreligious merriment. Blucher made up a joke about the cure of soles, and dribbled on his smock whenever he told it, which was pretty often.

Anyway, the years rolled on and things turned out pretty much as you would expect. Schuh Bert left home and became a famous composer. That was okay for a while, but the family disowned him when the scandal blew up over his filthy opera "Heine Kleine Nightcart". He died soon after, when the contra-bassoon in which he was travelling ran into a stationary ophicleide. Schuh Fleur went to Paris and became famous too, in a way, as one of the notorious topless cauliflowers at the Lido, and they disowned her, too. Fred stayed at home and settled down, his religious enthusiasm obviously just a parson phase that boys go through, and remained faithful to the last.

# # # # #

Alf. I don't see what all that's got to do with trout quintets.

Me. Me neither, but what's the diff?

Alf. Yeah, who cares?

* * * * * * * * * * *

TWO OR THREE ON A TOWER -- A TALE OF OLD MELBOURNE

Lee Harding has had a mystical experience in a tower. At Geelong. "The Buck Mulligan of the science fiction world," I said. "Who," said Harding, whose brain has rotted from reading too much of that crazy star-wars stuff, "is Buck Mulligan?" "Stately, plump Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed", said Damien Broderick, approximately. Damien reads as much sf as Lee does, but he's younger. "You mean Hop Harrigan", said Lee, and went on to tell us about some mystical experiences he had as a youth with Hop Harrigan.

Damien and Dianne have acquired a very pleasant house in the better part of Brunswick, that stimulating multicultural suburb where the best phonebox graffiti these days are in Turkish, and we were dining there. The food was heavenly, the conversation almost as good. I'm not sure how the ladies felt about it, but I became a little irritated -- no, envious is a better word -- at all the high-powered professional writers' talk that was flying about, so I was forced to admit modestly that I had just made my first sale to the UK. That shut them up, by crikey, for a few seconds. They didn't seem to be pestering me for details, so I volunteered them before they could change the subject. I won four quid in the *New Statesman's* comp. Look it up. It's the issue for 27 June, vol. 99 no. 2571. "I'm thinking of joining the SFWA", I said. "You can't", said Lee. "Why ever not?" I said. "It's the Science Fiction Writers of *America*", said Lee, "and sales to other countries don't count." What a blow! I thought they would let anyone join. The talk moved on to what it must be like being a writer-in-residence -- the night was full of that sort of thing, and grants and advances and the avarice of publishers and so on -- so I let slip that I was considering an offer from Collingwood Tech of an appointment as proofreader-in-residence. A damnable lie, as it happens, and it didn't impress them in the least, so I gave up and listened to Irene and Sally and Dianne talking about the real world.

# # # # #

Keats and Chapman often had mystical experiences in towers. One of them happened while they were in Germany doing a spot of proofreading for a local publisher. The first few books they read in their rented tower did not overtax their knowledge of German, but during the third week there they were given a job that nearly drove them crazy. It was a very long, intense, convoluted novel by someone named Dan Vinniken about twenty-four hours in the life of an ancient astronaut. This rather improbable being had spent a day in June 1904 wandering the streets of Darmstadt, apparently quite undetected, observing the stolid Hessian burghers and poking about in their minds by some sort of alien psychic means. The story was hard to follow, and the author's style was the most complicated abuse of the German language the friends had ever seen; after a while they gave up checking the spelling, as the typesetters had before them. Altogether they spent six weeks on the book, and for most of that time they were haunted by the feeling that they had been there before, a feeling intensified by the author's frequent use of the mystical term 'deja voodoo' and many other slogans and names that began with the letters DV. At last they reached the end, and were annoyed rather than surprised to discover that the last sentence in the book was the same as the first sentence. "Well," said Keats, "what do you make of that?" Stately, plump Chapman took off his spectacles, dusted them, and said: "Vinniken's fake." Keats fell sobbing on a great pile of galley proofs.



# # # # #

That story, such as it is, is dedicated to Lee Harding. Lee and I had a mystical experience on a mountain one night, years ago. I'm not sure about me, but he has never come down from it, bless him. And I rejoyce, pardon me, rejoice for him, winner of the Australian Children's Book of the Year award in this year of some surviving grace 1980.

What happened on that mountain? Well you

may ask. I've read three versions of the story by Harding and heard others, so my memory is confused. What I do remember is that we were standing there one chilly night somewhere near Mount Dandenong, and I was dying to go home because I was freezing, but I stayed because I'd been a bit rude and unfeeling towards Lee in recent weeks or years and I really did like the man. He was going on and on about how he wanted to be a writer, he'd always wanted to be a writer, and he *was* a writer, but somehow he wasn't making it, and here he was nearly 30, and what do you do when you're nearly 30 and you're not getting there and all you've ever wanted to do is be a writer? and so on. I said "Be a writer." He looked at me with a wild surmise -- silent, upon a bit of a hill in the Dandenongs -- and then we went home. Well, what would *you* have said? Anyway, he has gone on being a writer, and he's very good at it, and I am happy for him.

* * * * * * * * * * * *



GHOST-WRITERS -- A TALE OF OLD ADELAIDE

I bet you never wondered before where writers get their ideas from, eh? You probably thought they just made them up out of thin air. Dear me, no, it's not as simple as that. As long ago as fairly recently I found out where writers get their ideas from, and it was an amazing revelation. I had just met an American writer named Vonda McIntyre, and I thought, by crikey, here's my big chance, and I asked her where she gets her ideas from. "Schenectady," she said.

On the hottest day in 1977 I took Vonda to a radio station in Adelaide to be interviewed on a talk-back show. In between commercials for plumbing appliances the DJ asked her some pretty stupid questions about 'sky-fie', as he called it. Vonda doesn't write 'skiffy', as she calls it: she writes science fiction. She writes it very well. She is living proof that you can be a feminist and a good writer *and* a good sf writer. (So is her friend Ursula LeGuin. In fact, there seems to be a whole bunch of them up there in the Pacific North-West. It might be something to do with the climate.) In between earnest advice about blocked drains the DJ asked Vonda some pretty stupid questions about women's-libbers, too. No-one was ringing up to talk back, so he started repeating the commercials. He wasn't intimidated by having a feminist sf writer in his studio: he was bored. Also plain rude: off-air he didn't even look at Vonda, let alone talk to her. I desperately wanted to shake him a bit and remind him that Adelaide is the *home* of the Cultural Cringe, but I was on the other side of a soundproof window, so I just sat there and made sympathetic gestures (like forehead-slapping and throat-cutting) when Vonda looked my way.

On the way home Vonda asked me where he got his ideas from. "Damned if I know," I said, "I think it might be something to do with the water." "Uhuh," said Vonda, who had tried the water. "Or the salt damp," I said. "Terrible thing, salt damp -- that and dry rot -- they're everywhere in Adelaide." "Uhuh," said Vonda, who had

noticed one or both of these things at our place, especially in the spare room where we put visiting writers. If you ever happen to be in Seattle and you see a Chev Comaro convertible with a 5DN bumper-sticker, that's Vonda's. I believe she tells people these days that she gets her ideas from Adelaide.

The truth is that we are surrounded by ideas. The air is full of them, and as recently as not long ago I found out why this is so. We had this Spiritualist chap drop in on us, a delightful bloke, fascinating to listen to, bursting with vitality and beaming good will -- fatter than me, too, something I always admire about a man. He was selling framed prints door to door. I can't recall his exact words, but he said he could sense thousands of spirits in the house. They were sort of chattering away to him from our books. We have quite a few books about the place, and over the years many of them have spoken to me, but not out loud, if you follow me. Sally innocently said something about hearing mice in the ceiling sometimes late at night, and he said very gently that maybe it wasn't mice. A very thoughtful sort of look appeared on my wife's face -- a sort of 'more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, and for all we know, the ceiling' look. Ghost-writers in the sky, I thought, but I wasn't so disrespectful as to say it.

I am a Seventh Day Balloonist myself, and quite rigidly broad-minded, so I didn't dispute his absurd ideas. Besdides, as I said, he was bigger than me. So, having exhausted religion, we got talking about books. He said books have had it. Outmoded. I wanted to ask him whether they have been superseded by television or telepathy, but he was telling us that he doesn't need a houseful of books because he has total recall, and he's a speed-reader into the bargain. Amazing. With abilities like that I wouldn't need books either. I thought I would get off books then, because the subject was dejecting me, so I said how much I liked the enormous framed McCubbin print he had with him. He looked at it as though he'd forgotten what he'd called in about, and said, "Oh, I thought it was a Roberts. Obviously you know more about art than I do." I'm still not sure what to make of that.

# # # # #

Keats and Chapman once got tired of standing-by for cheap air fares and stowed away on a tramp steamer, which, it turned out, wasn't going where they wanted to go anyway. Two days out they were discovered and offered the choice of working their passage or leaving the ship instantly. Some days later, while they were scrubbing the decks, Keats (who was in a foul mood) snarled at Chapman "Where's the bloody soap?" Chapman said, quite cheerfully, "By Jove, it does, doesn't it!" Keats uttered a rough nautical expression and threw his bucket at him.

The geographic location of Australia has in many ways been a blessing in disguise. What some Australians label 'the tyranny of distance,' others could easily call splendid isolation. Although the social-cultural scene is sometimes joltingly reminiscent to our '60s, isolation has encouraged Australians to invent their own unique lifestyle. Trains and buses run on time, people put in a full day's work, business runs with smooth efficiency, yet there is an air of inertia and languor in the air. It's relaxed, hedonistic, hospitable, undemanding, optimistic and slow motion. Recently, when the Liberal Party published its policy booklet called "The Way Ahead," the first page was upside-down.

--from a Canadian tourist brochure

I am Jack the Lad when it comes to talking about man's relationship with his four feathered friends. This comes about because I am a Small Man and the S.M. is indeed a special case when it comes to pets, because he, more than most, often needs a companion he can turn to for instant affection and no funny answers, and the obvious choice must be either one of God's creatures or a deaf and dumb nymphomaniac.

--*Ronnie Corbett, THE SMALL MAN'S GUIDE*



A REPORT FROM

ALTAIR 5

INTERCEPTED BY

DAVE LANGFORD

1. Eschatological Morphology

The Investigators, hereinafter referred to as "we", "us" or "that deaf twit Langford", infiltrated a typical ethnic gathering of Terrestrials, termed SILICON 4. The highly typical nature of the gathering was confirmed by numerous "British fans", thus utterly refuting numerical estimates of previous investigators who claimed attendances of several thousand at ritual "conventions": SILICON was attended by some 60 entities, at times perceived by "ourselves" as 120 or more (see Appendix A(iii), "Visual Aberration In Terrestrials: Possible Causal Links With Beverage Absorption"). A standard infiltration was performed, the recording filaments permeating the forebrain of a local entity (see Appendix C: "That Deaf Twit Langford") whose admittedly sporadic mental processes indicated that it considered itself a wholly normal and typical specimen, all other "British fans" being eccentric and weird. Investigation later demonstrated this attitude to be characteristic not only of "fans" but of most other subgroups of Terrestrial "life".

The Report is set out more or less chronologically as recorded, any imperfections being due to the chaotic state of the forebrain concerned: see also Appendix A(vi), "Gonzo Journalism: Possible Causal Links With Beverage Absorption".

2. Semantic Breakdown At Transfinite Entropy Levels

Approach to the SILICON locus (Newcastle, England, August 1980) was uneventful, apart from a clinically interesting increase in the subject Langford's habitual alarm and paranoia on being confronted with the sign SEMI-AMBULANT TOILET. The chauffeurbeing, designated Kevin Smith, displayed similar symptoms on studying a Newcastle route map which later proved to have been copied by one Kevin Williams from the incorrect map distributed two years previously for SILICON 3. (Mr. Williams' response when later confronted with this fact gave our linguistic analyzers a ritual form of Terrestrial apology: "Ho ho.") On arrival at the convention, highly formalized conversational patterns at once emerged:---

Of 60 attendees, approximately 75 said to Hazel Langford, "Why aren't you knitting?"

(Fugal variation noted: "Why aren't you bloody knitting?") A similar number asked one or both Langfords (who apparently awaited deportation under the cruel TAFF regulations -- see Appendix G, "Funny SciFi Words And Their Epistemological Significance") in the uncouth words of Graham Charnock, "Why aren't you in bloody America?"

Most attendees also said: (a) "I must give you some money for Ansible, Dave." (b) "When are you flying, then?" (c) "Not gone to NOREASCON yet you bloody globe-trotter?" All these phrases seem frequent enough in their usage to be recommended as standard conversational items on Sol III. The same cannot be said of the following samples, not yet fully alalyzed by the Linguistics Department:---

D. West: "Yes -- I'm starting a course in Interdisciplinary Studies at Bradford U: psychology, literature, philosophy *and* bloody sociology, making a right Stableford of myself. At least it's better than signing for the dole. And I got a three hundred pound Arts Council grant to write Significant novels, and I'm doing a book on Georgette Heyer for Borgo Press..."

Kevin Smith, subsequently: "Bloody hell, I'm pissing pink!"

Unknown hotel room-maid: "I do hope you can keep Mr. Pepper the hotel owner up till dawn *every* night -- it's great; he sleeps to 11 or 12 and doesn't pester us..."

Rob Jackson: "I still remember your SILICON 3 report, Dave, that bit about me "uneasily fingering a water-filled balloon"...yes, I was having vaguely mammary thoughts."

Member of hotel staff: "Dr. Jackson is needed urgently on the telephone!"
Rob, subsequently: "...my mother wanted to know if I'd be free on Tuesday."

Mr. Pepper, 5.30am: "I think I'd better go to bed...will you turn the lights out when you've finished with the hotel?"

Kevin: "D. West's allegations? What's he allegating?"

Dai Price, around dawn: "I can *tell* Martin Hoare must be tone-deaf like you. I mean, his singing proves it."

Far too many entities, around dawn, to the tune of Monty Python's Drunken Philosophers Song (see Appendix F(i), "Mass Psychoses of Sol III"): "Oh, H.G.Wells made some fearful smells/And Verne was a champion farter/Fred Pohl, Fred Pohl, blows flames through his hole/But he can't out-fart Lin Carter!/Arthur C. Clarke with a single bark/Could demolish half the Gents/And L.Ron Hubbard had to do it in a cupboard/Or he'd overload the vents..." (Etc, etc.)

Arnold Akien at breakfast: "Have I told you about lumbar punctures? They make you put your knees in your mouth as you lie on your side and they stick this thing like a knitting needle into the relevant place in your spine. If the doctor isn't very experienced that can take some considerable time... probing... "

Everyone else at breakfast: *various indescribable sounds, possibly onomatopoeic.*

Brian Smith: "Alan Dorey hasn't got what it takes any more. Alan Dorey won't be BSFA chairman much longer. The bar's been open an hour and Alan Dorey is still drinking... coffee!"

Brian Parker: "BSFA -- they're the famous casette makers, aren't they, ho ho?"

Alan Dorey: "Did I ever tell you how I was writing SEWAGE FARM WORKERS ASSOCIATION on

the SFWA door at SEACON, and Marion Zimmer Bradley came up behind me and said 'I suppose this is jest yore British humour' in a voice of indescribable menace..."

Fan whose name (like the rest of him) was garbled in the record: "Did you know the Cambridge U. SF Society has a drink called a Bloody Tourist? It's for offering to tourists: coke and tomato juice. CUSFS members have been known to drink this..."

Greg Pickersgill: "Rob Hansen's an odd lad. He's staying with us, to the end of the year at least -- goes around humming to himself with this big inane smile, or he'll be in the upstairs room and go suddenly silent until after a pause he shouts 'Ouch!' or 'Gosh!' or 'Wow!'..."

Kevin: "Time for the great fannish football match -- going to come and watch and take photos of Me?"
Langford: "No."
Kevin: "*Poot.*"
Greg: "*I'm* not playing. I'm old, tired, ill."
D. West: "I'm busy lying down."
Langford: "Oh, hello, Mr. Hansen: I thought you were over there."
Rob Hansen: "I *am* over there."

Langford: "Did you notice you can see 28 empty bottles of champagne substitute in the back yard if you stand by the bog window and happen to be over six feet tall... No, you wouldn't."

Rog Peyton: "This is going to be the great Space Invaders game of the year. I've spent bloody twenty quid just practicing. I tell you, sometimes I wake in the night dreaming of new strategies to zap them all with a single shot..."



Langford: "Ah, hello Kevin -- as Ansible's new football correspondent, do give me a blow-by-blow account of what happened at the football match."
Kevin: *sound of teeth being reduced to powder.* "We lost."

Langford: "Ah, hello Phil -- as Ansible's new aerospace correspondent, do give me a blow-by-blow account of Andy Firth's latest display of mighty home-made orbital rockets on the football field."
Phil James: "I turned round for half a second and in that time Wernher von Firth's rocket had fallen over at 45 degrees and gone out. They had to stick it together with Eve Harvey's sticking-plaster when the fins fell off..."

Langford: "Ah, hello Rog, there you are again. As Ansible's new Space Invaders correspondent, do give me---"
Peyton: "I bloody lost by bloody ten points! Knocked out in the bloody third round by bloody Neil Hepple! I'll *get* him though; he's got a lovely girlfriend, oh those *hips*, everything just right. I'm going to seduce her while he's busy in the final..."

Eve Harvey, over curry: "I knew someone who had an *ingrowing hair* at the base of his spine and had to have it removed. It's *far* more painful than it sounds and he couldn't sit down and the *hole* in him had to be packed with gunge so it could heal slowly from the inside out---"
Kevin, weakly: "Anybody want my Bombay potatoes?"
Langford: "You be careful where you dispose of those potatoes, they've got a half-life of 20,000 years and give you ingrowing---"
Hazel: "Never mind."

Eve to Hazel: "Did you know your husband picked up my husband at NOVACON and used him as a battering ram? It ruined his trousers."
Langford: "This is a contemptible lie, a calumnious imputation, a---"
Pat Charnock: "What did his trousers have to do with it?"
Eve: "Imagine what would happen if somebody picked *you* up suddenly."
All: *sounds indicative of general hysteria and collapse.*

D. West, falling over: "This proves it!"
Langford: "This proves it?"
D. West: "No. No, you can't say that. It's... copyrightAstralLeaugel977donotimpinge copyrightortheAstralLeaugewilltake*measures*. I am the sole prop-pop-pop-pop oh bloody hell. Owner."

Eve, overheard in poolroom: "I can't get the thing out, John!"
John Harvey: "It's bloody stuck in!"
Rob Jackson: "Actually, they were talking about a jammed coin in the Space Invaders machine."
Langford: "Spoilsport."

Kevin, 4am: "Now let's play Finchley Central---"

Harry Bell: "It's half-past four, Langford, and you're still making sense. This is not good enough! Hic."

Langford: "Look, it's dawn. Time to play Residents and Security Men."

Stan Eling, over breakfast: "Peter Weston does nothing these days but grow vegetables."
Helen Eling: "He's slowly *turning into one*, a swede or a giant cabbage."

Phil James: "I've been reading a book on strange customs in the desert."
Langford: "What do they do in the desert?"
Phil: "It's not so much what they do in the desert as what they do with their fingers."
All: "Eh?"
Phil: "They wipe their greasy fingers on their beards, or on the tentflap. The greasier your tentflap the more hospitable you are..."
Hazel: "Of course the Tuaregs wipe their fingers on their feet."

Langford: "Don't look now, but Jim Barker has just come in wearing an Ellison-style glass hand with one of the fingers up his nose---"

Joe Nicholas: "This is the book, Karma by Arsen Darnay. Let me read you the incredibly awful passage about the giant telepathic rabbit."
Brian Smith: "Of all the harebrained ideas."

Pat Charnock: "Here's a copy of the new Astral Leauge cassette for Terry Hughes. You must tell him *not* to play the Get Down Jacqui track anywhere near Jacqueline Lichtenberg---"

Barman, pointedly, to Langford: "I suppose you want a *soft drink*---"

Mr. Pepper: "Who's written ARNOLD THARG WAS HERE on my roller-towel? How do I get it off, then?"

All, rapidly: "Been a great convention... goodbye... goodbye..."

A logical interpretation of the above terms and phrases is currently being derived by exhaustive computer analysis. Meanwhile, see Appendix F(ii), "Mass Psychoses In The Linguistics Department".

3. Interactive Modal Structuralism

The exosociological team achieved considerably more significant results than the linguistic investigators (see Appendix F(iii), "Relatively Mild Psychoses In The Exosociology Department") and the following subclasses of ritual activity were isolated:

3.1 The Quiz Game: This is an intellectual struggle between curiously designated teams---in this case "The Peter Weston School of Gardening" (members of which wore artificial moustaches of a ritual nature, and on their entry performed the ceremonial dance of the goose-step), "Welshfandom: Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogogoch Division" (it was noted that non-Welsh persons laboured under a taboo against the pronouncing of this name in full), "The Astral Leauge" and "L'Academy De La Chronically Effete De La Surbiton". The holy man presiding over the ceremony puts highly formalized questions to the teams---typical ones generated by our computer from the existing pool of data are "Who wrote Somtow Sucharitkul?", "Have you ever heard of John Brunner?" and "Is there *anybody* here from Oregon?"---and in due course ignorance and unbelief are ritually defeated and the prize given to the Welsh team. Further attempts to analyze the full religious significance of the questions and responses are discussed in Appendix F(iv), "Mass Suicide In The Linguistics Department".

3.2 The Twenty Questions Game: Here a concept is chosen, eg. 'A Brian Burgess Pork Pie', and contestants attempt to deduce its precise nature by asking up to 20 questions to be answered "yes" or "no" only (local terms roughly corresponding to our Altairan phrases "Your warts ooze with mine" and "Your spawn is mildewed"). Evidence of clairvoyance in Sol III natives was noted when the subject Langford, watching this ritual, remarked "I bet they'll have to guess my hearing aid next." Instantly a concept-designation card was held up to the audience, and on it was written LANGFORD'S DEAF AID. The Paraphysics Department is investigating---see Appendix A(xxv), "Psi Ability: Possible Causal Links With Beverage Absorption". A further concept, 'Rob Holdstock's Weapon', caused embarrassment during the guessing sequence and may have some painful religious significance.

3.3 Presenting 'The Richard E. Geis Memorial Award': This involved a convention member, Alan Dorey, asking for votes for this possibly coveted award and in the same breath murmuring "The fix is in for Joe Nicholas." In due course the native called Joseph M. Nicholas was required to receive his trophy (an ornamental bust carved with great artistic inability, the property of the hotel); he demurred, pretending he was not worthy; there were ritual cries of "Is there anyone here from Pimlico?" and the entity D. West took Nicholas symbolically by the forelock and dragged him to the waiting cameras for the presentation. The trophy was slowly brought down upon the head of J. Nicholas amid much camera-flashing. We have not fully analyzed the motives and prestige associated with this award.

3.4 Charades: The natives of Sol III have brought the art of mime to a high level of

ineptitude, and this was demonstrated in their 'charades'. The creature D. West, for example, enacted the phrase The Fallible Fiend by first falling over a good deal and subsequently making hideous faces and gibbering at his interlocutors. It later transpired that this formed his entire repertoire of mime, though sometimes it would be interspersed with vicious kicks aimed at some suitably small and helpless victim (Graham Charnock). We are uncertain of the symbolism by means of which the entity Jean Frost eventually conveyed the phrase "Sex Pirates of the Blood Asteroid": in passing we note that when she'd succeeded in doing so, the subject Langford's wife instructed him to "apologize to Jean Frost for writing that story!"



3.5 Finchley Central: An informal game of skill and strategy wherein several natives sit in a circle uttering in turn the names of London Underground stations which may or may not possess religious or sexual connotations. The first person to say "Finchley Central" wins. To say "Finchley Central" too soon in the game is to lose face and become the object of withering scorn. The as yet unfathomed strategy of this game appears to involve great subtlety, or---to verbalize our alternate hypothesis---no subtlety at all. A variant version, "Heinlein", substitutes the names of works by the Sol III artist Robert A. Heinlein (whose art involves the making of marks on 'paper', a disposable form of cloth) for those of stations; to win one must say The Number of the Beast. To refrain from saying this is a great point of honour amongst natives.

3.6 Polymorphous Perverse Activities: We merely record pool, drinking beer, darts, drinking gin, football, drinking whisky, rocketry, drinking rum, watching illicitly made recordings of Demon With A Glass Hand and The Peter Weston SEACON Show (edited version, without Peter Weston), drinking lager, conversing (see section 2), drinking water to wash down aspirins (the only use of this unclean fluid permitted by the religion of "British fans") and playing 'Space Invaders', a species of war game not likely to promote good relations between Terrestrials and we natives of Altair 5. For notes on the beverages mentioned above please see the 500-page Appendix A(i), "Drinking: Possible Causal Links With Beverage Absorption".

4. Conclusions

4.1 The planet is unfit for colonization.

4.2 Study of behavioural patterns at SILICON 4 suggests that we should proceed with caution, since several alien infiltrators are obviously conducting similar investigations to our own. The most blatant of these is the entity D. West, whose aspect and activity most closely resembles that of the native form of we toads of Altair 5.

4.3 No rational reason for the natives' attendance at these enfeebling and soul-destroying "conventions" can be advanced.

4.4 Very much more research is needed. See especially the whole of Appendix A, "C_2H_5OH For Fun And Profit".

4.5 The author of this paper therefore requests permission to conduct further investigations at SILICON 5, SILICON 6, SILICON 7, SILICON 8, SILICON 9 and SILICON 10, to begin with.

We should try, always, to be tolerant of the other fellow's whims. Samuel Butler knew a wealthy drunkard who refused to give money to the poor. He said they would only use it to buy food and clothes for themselves and send their children to school.

--H. Allen Smith





TERRY CARR'S Entropy Reprints

I've been commissioned by the West Coast Editor of ENERGUMEN to select another piece of fannish writing for reprint -- "one of your own things from twenty years ago when you used to be a BNF," she said winningly. "Surely the stuff in THE INCOMPLEAT TERRY CARR can't be *all* the good material you wrote." I chose to regard this remark as egoboo.

Well, as a matter of fact the stuff in THE INCOMPLEAT TERRY CARR, published in 1972 by rich brown and Arnie Katz, wasn't even compleat in itself, since one of the stories therein was missing its last paragraph, but that's another matter. (Gary Farber says he hopes to reissue TITC within the next fandom or two, and will restore the missing ending.) Susan wanted something, er, "new" to reprint, so I forced myself to reread a bunch of my old fanstuff...and gosh, I did find something else that may be of interest to today's sophisticated fan readership even though most of you are spoiled by in-depth interviews with James P. Hogan and scholarly analyses of the work of Mack Reynolds.

"The Fan Who Hated Quotecards" first appeared in UNEVEN, Goojie Publication #3, December 1958, published by Miriam Dyches; it was reprinted in THE BEST OF FANDOM: 1958, published by Guy Terwilleger, and I don't think it's seen print since.

As with most epiphenomena of fandom's past, this story requires just a little explanation if you're to understand its inner essence and beauty. Quotecards were very popular in the fannish fifties; they were usually 3" x 5" cards on which someone would type a funny quotation and slip the card into the envelope with his or her next letter to a correspondent, who would sign and date it and pass it on to some other correspondent, etc. Dick Eney's FANCYCLOPEDIA II credits London fan Vin¢ Clarke with inventing them for passing around at conventions early in 1954, and damon knight with inaugurating the practice, later that year, of circulating them with letters. They usually bore the legend, "Short-snorter quotecard -- sign and pass on."

Interestingly to me, FANCY II notes that "The fad had sunk to a low level by the end of 1958," which exactly coincides with the original publication of my story.

It wasn't I who killed the fad, though: if any one person was responsible it was Honey Wood Graham, who as a member of the 1955 worldcon committee and later the mainstay of the NFFF Welcommittee engaged in voluminous correspondence and came to loathe the scores of cards that trickled out of envelopes and cluttered up her desk. She and husband Roger P. Graham (who wrote sf mostly under the penname "Rog Phillips") moved to Berkeley about the same time I did in 1957, and we spent many enjoy-

able evenings together gossiping about fandom and listening to Honey telling marvelous anecdotes about the teenaged Harlan Ellison (yes, Meyer, fans told Harlan stories even then) and delivering tirades against quotecards.

(Speaking of Harlan stories: At the 1954 worldcon in San Francisco, I and the local fans showed up with mimeographed quotecards to pass around; Harlan saw one and whipped out a blue Gestetnered quotecard in reply. He said, "I've got Dean A. Grennell quotecards, and you can't beat 'em, buddy!" ...Later, with the connivance of one of his roommates, we slipped into his room and left quotecards saying BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU on his pillow and floating face-up in the toilet.)

But by the end of 1958, just as FANCY II says, quotecards had had their day. Commenting on "The Fan Who Hated Quotecards" in the lettercolumn of SYZYGY, Goojie Publication #4, Rick Sneary wrote (sic): "...he put down the truth about quote cards, that no one else has ever dared to put into words before.. We have all (but one) /Honey Wood Graham/ been getting and passing them on--knowing it was for ego-boo.. But no one said it, and no one else cared to cast the first stone... I don't suppose I'll ever be able to sign under the name of Ron Ellik again, would fealing guilty."

Some of the other comments on this story were amusing in other ways:

Bob Bloch: "...where did you discover this Terry Carr? He shows a certain amount of talent and there are times when his writing almost seems like an imitation of Carl Brandon's." (By this time everyone knew "Brandon" had been a hoax and that I'd written most of his material.)

Charles Burbee: "Terry, I notice, is now writing like Brandon and this is bad. I mean not bad writing but a bad thing. ...You fell for this fella when he was writing like me, you know. Now that he is writing like Brandon what sort of fella is he? Look deep into his eyes the way they used to do in the movies, recoil, and in shocked voice say: 'But...you're not...the Terry Carr I know!' And you'll be right, too, because he's now the Terry who is writing like Brandon." (Miriam and I had recently married. The marriage lasted for two and a half years, but it didn't break up because I wrote like Carl Brandon.)

Bob Leman: "'The Fan Who Hated Quotecards' is clearly the best thing in the issue... Does this boy have any plans for turning professional?" (Leman's compliment was especially kind because one of his own best fan pieces had appeared in the same issue, and he was one of the very best fan writers ever. ...Leman started selling sf and fantasy about five years after I did, and Harlan Ellison recently called me specifically to tell me that Leman is *the* hot new writer of the eighties.)

Bruce Pelz: "T. Carr takes top honors in the issue. Though I wonder about the accuracy of direct quotes from several years ago. Aweel, I suspect most fan articles are a bit apocryphal even if written immediately." (Bruce's mistaking my bit of fiction for an article gave me much glee, but I don't quote him to make fun of him... especially since Len Moffatt published a story five years later -- "Her Sensitive Fannish Face" -- that I too thought at first was an article.)

...Let's get out of these brackets. Bruce's comment does bring up the question of just how much literal truth there was in this story. Answer: practically none. "Chuck Tigert" was of course based on Honey Wood Graham, but her personality was nothing like Tigert's and she never used such language. Tigert's last name came from Mike Tigert, who was a roommate of mine when I was attending the University of California, Berkeley, but there's no other similarity. (Michael Tigert has since become a rather famous defense lawyer, among other things having been one of the lawyers, in the sixties, for the Chicago Seven, or was it the Seattle Three?) The character

of Tigert was based on a number of people I'd known, including Peter J. Vorzimer, Richard E. Geis and Harlan Ellison...and several non-fans.

This is a long introduction for a piece of ephemeral fan-fiction written twenty-three years ago. But there are always people, even fannish fans, who ask, "Where do you get your ideas?"



It's been a couple of years since any of us have seen Chuck Tigert, but we still talk about him every now and then. We'll be sitting around at a club meeting or one-shot session or something and one of the guys -- usually George Denison -- will say something like, "Seven quotecards today. *Seven lousy quotecards!*" Then we bust up laughing and we're off on a bit of reminiscence for awhile.

Chuck was quite a guy. He wore glasses sometimes, and he was fairly short, but he had a hell of a build. When he was first attending club meetings he was all redhot for the girls -- he'd just finished highschool and to him a fanclub meeting seemed like a school social or something, especially since so many of us were teenagers and at that time there were so many girls in the club.

He was dating this one girl in the club -- Clair, a real honey-blond with this figure. But all of a sudden they stopped seeing each other and hardly talked at meetings, even. It wasn't long before Chuck told some of us what had happened. They'd started some pretty heavy petting and all of a sudden she stopped him. He said what's wrong, let's *go*, and she said she was afraid she might get pregnant. "After all," she said, "science fiction fans of all people should be able to look to the future." Chuck said she was too God damned much of a fan.

But later he got pretty involved with fandom himself. He got to flexing his biceps for us and telling us that that arm was the one that cranked out thirty pages or more of fanzines a month, for ghodsake. And there's a story that George Denison tells about Chuck that later, when he got so well-known in fandom, he was trying to make time with this femmefanne and she wanted him to say some love-words or something to her. Well, Chuck must have been pretty bad at it, because she got completely cold and said why couldn't he be *poetic* once in awhile. Chuck blew up and said, "For Chrissake, I'm a *BNF*, isn't that *enough?*"

Chuck started publishing back in the middle of the Seventh Fandom ruckus, when I



wasn't much more than a fringe-fan myself. In six months he'd worked his way right to the top of the heap, if you want to put it that way. Chuck always did, anyway. He said that fandom was like anything else, you had to work like mad if you wanted to get anywhere. "I never knew a guy who could take a dame to bed without working his ass off for it, and fandom is the same way," he said.

And he went at fandom like he was on the make. He had two zines going for awhile, CLOCKWORK and HERE THERE BE TIGERT. CLOCKWORK was a monthly mag, and he prided himself on its regularity, as you might guess from the title. HERE THERE BE TIGERT was shorter, and usually appeared more often--it was one of the "snapzines" that were appearing so much then, like Larry Balint's, and John Magnus', and Charles Wells' and so forth. It was the thing to do then.

Well, he had these two zines, and he really played them for all they were worth. He had this driving urge to get to the top, to be a BNF, to be a force in fandom or something like that. Not through conceit -- I'll give him credit for more than that. It was just that there were a lot of things he didn't like about fandom, and it seemed the most natural thing in the world for him to try to change them. The only way he could do that, he figured, was to gain some sort of stature in the field.

CLOCKWORK was the zine he used to set himself up at first. It was a pretty decent zine, all in all. He never had Willis or Bloch or any of the really top writers, except maybe in the letter column now and then, but he had a pretty good eye for new talent, and he developed his own stable of writers, as he called them. George Denison was one of them, of course -- he had a column in there. And there was Marty Beyne with his "Fanhistory Rewritten" series, and Sylvia Harrison's cartoons. Ron Ellik did fanzine reviews for him for awhile, I think.

Well, by his fourth or fifth issue Chuck was really hitting his stride. The letter column had expanded to around ten pages an issue -- that's with Sylvia's cartoons padding it out a bit, of course. Chuck often bragged that he wrote fifty letters a week, and though I don't know whether that was true or not, it probably wasn't much of an exaggeration. The guy spent all his evenings writing letters, and he was a fast typist. I don't know who he corresponded with in particular, but George says his letters were mostly fan-politics of one sort or another. "Smoke-filled envelopes," George likes to call them.

I remember that he started getting irregular in his attendance at the club meetings then, and it was because he spent so much time at his correspondence. When he did come to meetings he invariably started a harangue about how the rest of us ought to get into fandom more, not just sit around at meetings talking. "Get off your cans!" he'd say. "You guys are completely unknown in general fandom!" And we'd tell him we *liked* just reading and talking about stf and that fandom could go hang. He finally said, "Oh Christ, forget I even brought it up. You guys would just go join the N3F anyway."

Along about this time Chuck decided to start his snapzine, HERE THERE BE TIGERT. He always used my mimeograph, of course. It's funny how he could make that thing reproduce a neat page when I couldn't run off anything that looked better than one of Ray

Thompson's things. He wrote fanzine reviews in the zine to start with -- long ones, maybe a page or more on each zine -- but before long he was expanding his opinionating to more general topics. He got off onto this kick against the apas for awhile, saying they were draining the lifeblood of fandom away. "Fandom's Never-Never Land," he called them, "where they build castles in the air and argue over how many mailing comments can dance on the head of a pin."

Well, he went on for several issues, a week or two apart, and naturally his opinions started quite a bit of controversy, which he printed as much as he could. He was attracting a lot of attention to himself, all right.

But he was also expanding his list of correspondents, and it got to the point pretty soon where it was a choice of dropping some correspondents or spending absolutely *all* his time writing letters. He chose to drop some correspondents, and unfortunately a few of them got mad about it. First thing he knew, good old Chuck Tigert was involved in two or three feuds.

If there's anything that will undermine a fan's reputation in fandom, it's feuding. Fan-feuds rarely are conducted on a strictly honorable or even logical basis, and as is usual Chuck came in for some pretty heavy personal attacks. One fan jumped on him for a typo he'd made in HERE THERE BE TIGERT, and harped on that for all it was worth. Chuck got really mad about that -- after all, there he was publishing this thing almost every week, and trying to keep up with his correspondence and CLOCKWORK too, and then this guy started yapping about a simple little mistake like spacing wrong when referring to "Destination Moon" as "George Pal's hit movie." You can't really blame Chuck for getting mad.

Actually, though, he went overboard himself in his reply, and some of the language he used wasn't in the best taste -- probably not even legally mailable. After all, as somebody (I think it was George again) wrote in to the next issue, swearing was an old fannish tradition, from Tucker to Burbee, but even they had purposely invented and used circumlocutions like rosebud and fugghead.



Chuck around this time was in his greatest period in fandom, but he was already starting to slip, at least as far as his plans for fannish fame and influence were concerned. You can't maintain a respected position when you're under personal attacks like Chuck was, and especially not when you're as thin-skinned as Chuck. He got blasted, he blasted back, and before long even the formerly neutral fans were making cracks about HERE THERE BE TIGERT being run under the law of the jungle, and so forth. You know how fans are. To make it worse, he wasn't able to keep his monthly zine very regular, and one of his critics sent him some Ex-Lax that Christmas.

Chuck might have pulled out of the slump -- he was pretty hot-headed, but he had good sense underneath -- if it hadn't been for the beginning of quotecards right then. I don't know who originated the things, but the first ones Chuck got were from Harry Enevoldson, the guy who'd teed off on him over the "Destination Moon" typo. I remember the night Chuck came over to my place to run off an issue of CLOCKWORK, and he brought these two quotecards from Enevoldson with him. "Son of a bitch," he said, "look at *these* things. I'll bet old Harry-butt thinks he's really

come up with something fabulously fannish here." He showed them to me, but I didn't think much of the matter at the time.

Chuck didn't get out another issue of HERE THERE BE TIGERT for a couple of weeks after that, and in that time he got about half-a-dozen more quotecards, including some more from Enevoldson. Well, in his next issue Chuck cut loose with a blast at quotecards. He knew by this time that Enevoldson hadn't originated them, but that didn't matter. He said they were just the sort of crap that Enevoldson would go for anyway.

I'm afraid he wasn't very coherent in his blast, though he managed to come up with some of the most bitter prose ever written in fandom. What was really griping him about the things, he said, was that their only purpose seemed to be for fans to show off what big wheels they were by signing them and sending them to some BNF. Then, he said, other fans would get the impression that these guys were corresponding regularly with the big names. He went on for paragraph after paragraph on that, but my favorite line was, "Quotecards are the most perverted form of self-gratification that fandom has."

I doubt that even Chuck was surprised when his tirade drew heated comments from other fans, but he kept up the crusade, slipping in comments about quotecards even in the fanzine reviews -- those of them he still had time to write. He was in so many feuds by now that his correspondence was stupendous -- and of course Chuck was never one to let an insulting letter go unanswered.

Enevoldson, of course, was his prime opponent in the feuds. He wrote two letters to Chuck which Chuck printed in full, replete with editorial interjections. But behind the scenes, I know, the feud was even hotter. I doubt that many fans know that Chuck once paid almost a buck postage to send Enevoldson a jagged stick, labelled "Short-snorter shaft. Ram it and pass on." Chuck was quite a guy.

Well, when you come right down to it, there really isn't much you can say about quotecards, either for them or against them, and before long the subject started to peter out. I guess the whole thing would have blown over in time, except for something that happened while Chuck was stencilling HERE THERE BE TIGERT #11. He was just about done with the issue, and it had been pretty mild, on the whole. He started digging around in his notes for some other things to write on to fill the last page -- and just then the mail came.

At my house that night running off the issue, he explained to me: "I was sitting there when I heard the mailbox clunk, so I got up and got the mail. And God *damn* it if there weren't *seven lousy quotecards* in the batch! Now *son* of a *bitch*! I haven't got *enough* trouble trying to keep up with my correspondence, but I have to mess around with reams of bastard *quotecards* too!"

HERE THERE BE TIGERT #11 will probably be remembered by anyone who received it as the most incoherent issue of all. Chuck went completely overboard, writing two more pages right on stencil. He ended up by saying that if anybody sent him any more quotecards he was going to keep them bighod. "I'm going to start a *collection* of the damn things," he wrote. "I'll file away every one I get, until I've got them all, every one. Maybe that way I can keep them out of circulation!"

Three weeks went by before I heard from Chuck again. He showed up at my place one night with ten stencils under his arm, ready to mimeograph. I told him my mimeo was on the blink just then, which it was -- the roller wasn't engaging properly. But he hardly heard me; he just stormed into my den and slapped the first stencil on the drum. "Don't bother me with excuses," he kept saying, "I've got some of the most classic insults ever seen by man in this issue. I invented at least five new Anglo-Saxon idioms, right on stencil!"

"What happened this time?" I said. "*Happened?* I'll tell you what happened!" he said. "Since the last issue I've been getting more God damned quotecards than ever before! Enevoldson has started a bastard *campaign* to send me quotecards! He calls it the Tigert Shafters' club, or T. S. for short!"

I had to laugh at that.

"Very funny, very funny!" he snapped. "But I fixed *their* asses -- I saved every single quotecard, just like I said I would. And last night I put them all in the center of the floor in the basement and *burned* the damn things. They made a pile a foot high, I swear to God! They flared up and threw sparks all over the damn place. My goddam *collection* damn near caught on fire! I've got a Startling with the best parts of a Bergey cover burned away to thank Enevoldson for." He stopped. "What the hell's *wrong* with this idiot mimeograph, dammit!" he said. He'd been cranking the machine all this time, hardly paying attention to the way the paper just got torn into shreds.

"The roller doesn't engage," I told him again. "It won't run; you might as well give up."

That didn't stop him, though. He just muttered something and started cranking again, only faster. And the sheets of paper ripped all to hell as they went through -- *if* they went through at all. "What the hell *is* this thing, a confetti machine?" Chuck said, and kept trying to make it feed properly.

There's nothing more frustrating than trying to use a machine that's acting like that. Chuck stood there bitching and swearing and turning the crank round and round, then trying to fix the roller, trying it again, and swearing even louder. Finally,



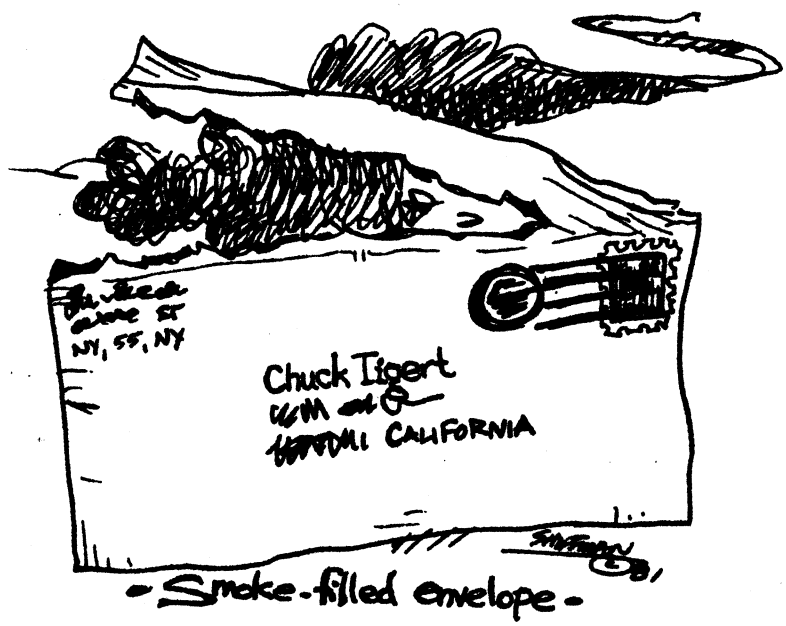
after he'd already wasted half a ream of paper, he threw back his head and yelled at the top of his voice, *"BALLS!"* and started cranking furiously, the paper tearing and shredding all over the mimeo table and floor. Then he stopped cold and very deliberately and silently cleaned everything up, removed the stencil from the drum, picked up his stencils and paper, and stalked out.

He turned in the doorway and said, "Why don't you get a God damned *hektograph?*" and slammed the door.

George says that after that he came to him and wanted to use *his* mimeograph, but George read the stencils and said he wouldn't allow them to be run on his machine. Chuck blew his stack, told George what to do with his column in CLOCKWORK, and left.

He hasn't been heard much from since. That issue of HERE THERE BE TIGERT never appeared, and CLOCKWORK folded too. The last I heard of Chuck he'd graduated from college and had a job as a salesman somewhere, making close to $10,000 a year, mostly on commissions.

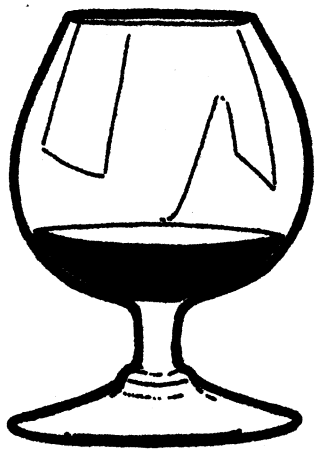
Every now and then George and I get together, sometimes along with a few of the older club members, and we talk a bit about him. But George never has told me what was in that last issue. He says he doesn't use that kind of language.



-Smoke-filled envelope-

I want to make a few sage comments on the item by your friend and mine, Ted White. I think it's a great column. I really do. I want to get this straight, right here at the outset. I loved it all, every bit of it. I especially loved the second section, which is shot through with my name and some kind words about me. It is an excellent character sketch; it captures the essence of the man Terry Carr for all time, etching it cleanly into stencil wax. (You won't notice this, since it will, I hope, be run off by the time you read this. I certainly hope it will be run off, because I hate to envision myself running from fan's home to fan's home, Ellison-like, showing everyone the stencils for the piece.) ---Terry Carr, LIGHTHOUSE (1961)

It seems I have a power saw, lots of blades, a dado attachment, a lot of good lumber and a lot of books. To the ordinary person that would instantly mean bookcases. But I am not an ordinary person. I am a fan. That means that I have slow reactions, a bewildered outlook, and a total inability to conceive of anything that is not galactic in scope. ---Charles Burbee, BURBLINGS 3, 1948



KUMQUAT MAY

In the fall of 1973 I went back to school and abandoned sf and fandom. My only real contact with science fiction has been two screenings of ALIEN, OMNI Magazine and being the only person in the world who hasn't seen STAR WARS *or* THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK. It is, then, with a certain amount of fear and trepidation that I even begin this.

"Make it funny," Michael said last September. "And I'd like it for Thanksgiving. Alicia says she'll illustrate it. And the old gang will be there: Angus, Alicia, Richard..."

Well, it's now February, three days before my 37th birthday and the thing still isn't written. Michael called me two nights ago and bribed me with an expensive dinner at Barberian's if I deliver the column before the 20th.

I'll dig out the notes I made last fall, I thought, polish them up and presto, one funny column and one expensive dinner. I could see myself dressed to the nines, wallowing in calories.

"No problem, Michael," I said. "I have it all done. I'll just tidy it up and take it to the library to type it up on the Selectric. You can have it on Wednesday."

We chatted a bit longer and then I went into the bedroom to find the column. I couldn't find it. Being older and wiser than I was in my flaming youth, I did not panic or even swear. Instead I tore the apartment apart looking for the damn thing. At the end of two and a half hours I had the cleanest apartment in Toronto but no column.

I was beginning to panic. I knew I couldn't reconstruct all that I had written last September. Shit, I couldn't even remember what I had *done* much less what I had written about.

Maybe if I sit down and have a cup of tea and think calm thoughts I'll remember where I put the damn thing, I thought. I was drinking the tea when someone knocked on the door.

"Go away!" I snarled.

"It's Lou."

"You've come to fix the leaky faucet," I said, and let him in. Lou is my landlord. His appearance around the apartment usually coincides with Haley's Comet. He was looking decidedly uncomfortable. He was also carrying a large white legal-looking envelope.

"Not exactly," he said. "Rosemary, I'm selling the house, but before I do I want to renovate it. This is your notice to vacate."

"WHAT!!!!" I screamed.

"You have to be out by the end of April," he said, backing down the stairs. "I'll be in touch."

He'll be in touch, I thought. I'll kill him, I thought. Shit, bugger, damn, I thought. I have no column, I've been evicted, the temperature is -27°C, and the vacancy rate in Toronto is 0.3%. I panicked. I swore. I put Mahler on the stereo and ate a large pizza and drank four beers. I weighed myself and I had put on four pounds. Now I was dyspeptic and depressed. I called a friend to bitch.

"There are all kinds of things you can write about, Rosemary," he said.

"Like what?" I whined.

"Like Ken."

"Oh sure, like Ken. I was never so embarrassed in my life."

"I thought you handled the situation quite well, under the circumstances. How were



you to know he was only 17."

"You were kind enough to tell me... several times."

"I know his father, too. You might be interested in him. He's only..."

"I'm not interested," I snapped.

"You'll come up with something, Rosemary; you always do."

After much thought and serious consideration I decided that fandom just wasn't ready for the story of how I tried to pick up a 17 year old busboy after having a screaming row with my 47 year old lover. Besides, his mother might find out. My lover's, not the busboy's.

I curled up in bed with a bottle of brandy and sulked. I re-read the old ENERGUMEN columns and sulked some more. I drank some more brandy. Through the alcoholic haze a thought emerged. So here it is, ladies and gentlemen: the first Kumquat May in eight years... How I Spent My Summer Vacation, or, Rosemary Meets The Creature From The Black Lagoon.

For the last three years I've spent two weeks in July on a small lake in eastern



Ontario. My friend has a small cottage on this lake, which is about ten miles from the main highway between Kingston and ottawa. The property is maintained by a widow lady and her two sons who live on the adjoining farm.

Getting to the property is a bit of a problem as I don't drive. Usually, Barbara, the widow lady, collects me and my forty pounds of books at the Kingston railway station. After I buy food and some batteries for the tape recorder, she takes me to the cottage and leaves me there alone for two weeks to go to seed. Barbara or one of her sons shows up once or twice to take away the garbage and see if I'm still alive. They all think I'm crazy, but they leave me alone.

Last year, as usual, it took me a day or two to unwind; the quiet can be unnerving. However, by midweek I was settled into a routine of eating, sleeping, reading and sunning. I had made friends with the chipmunk and had even gutted a fish. It was going to be a great two weeks.

Thursday morning dawned hot and humid. Too hot and humid. The radio was broadcasting storm and gale warnings and the barometer was dropping rapidly. Barbara drove up in the ½ton and helped me pull the boat from the water.

"Are you sure you won't come up to the house?" she asked.

"No," I replied. "I'll be fine. I've been here when there were storms. I quite enjoy them. I'll sit in the living room and watch, like I did last year."

"You weren't all alone last year."

"So what can happen?" I asked. "There'll be some thunder and lightning and a little rain. Don't worry, Barbara, I'll be fine."

She left reluctantly. As she drove away I noticed that the access road was mostly clay. The cottage is at the bottom of a small incline. If it rained really hard the road would be impassable for a couple of days.

The day stayed hot, sticky and overcast. The falling pressure gave me a migraine. I took a caffergot and went to bed. I woke up about 7 that evening. The sky was yellow and the silence deafening. Nothing moved. The lake was like molten lead. I put on the kettle and stood looking out the window.

The cottage is a new one, an A-frame. The whole front is glass and the view across the lake can be quite spectacular. This evening it looked ominous.

I got my tea, a bottle of brandy and put Bruckner on the tape deck. Then I settled down in front of the window and waited for all hell to break loose. I really love storms. All that thunder and lightning and pouring rain and howling wind... There ain't nothin' like a good storm.

By now it was pitch black and the wind was up. It was pouring rain and I could hardly hear Bruckner for the thunder. I had put out all the lamps and had only a fat candle burning when a terrific flash of lightning lit up the whole beach. I could have sworn I saw something coming from the lake. "Nonsense," I said aloud.

More lightning. The tape recorder ground to a halt, its batteries dying. Without Bruckner's 2nd Symphony to deaden it, the noise outside was deafening. The wind was howling, the cottage moaning and creaking and I was afraid the glass in the window would break, it was raining so hard.

There was another flash of lightning. This time I was sure there was something com-

ing from the lake! And it was heading for the cottage and me! It was pressing up against the window. Thunder and lightning were crashing all about me and The Creature From The Black Lagoon was pounding on my window, bellowing "ROSEMARY!!" "It knows my name!" I gibbered.

"ROSEMARY!!!" it roared. "Go away!" I screamed, scrambling across the floor on all fours. I think I was trying to hide under the sofa.

"Rosemary! Let me in." The thing was flapping its arms about. It's not The Creature, I thought, it's a Giant Bat. Then its hat blew off. It was Barbara. I crawled to the door and let her in.

"I was worried about you," she said, dripping all over the floor. I came down in the ½ton to take you up to the house but the truck got stuck in the mud a mile back."

"You scared the shit out of me!!" I screamed. "I was doing just fine until you showed up. I thought you were something out of a Lovecraft novel!"

"Who?" she asked as she slopped into the bathroom, leaving a trail of mud and weeds behind her. She looked like something from everyone's favorite nightmare. She had cut her face somehow, so she was covered in mud, blood and bits of foliage. Her green slicker was wet and slimy-looking. Her hair hung in strings.

"Did I really frighten you?"

"No, no. I always writhe about on the floor uttering screams of terror at 10:00 on Thursday evenings. The villagers can set their clocks by me."

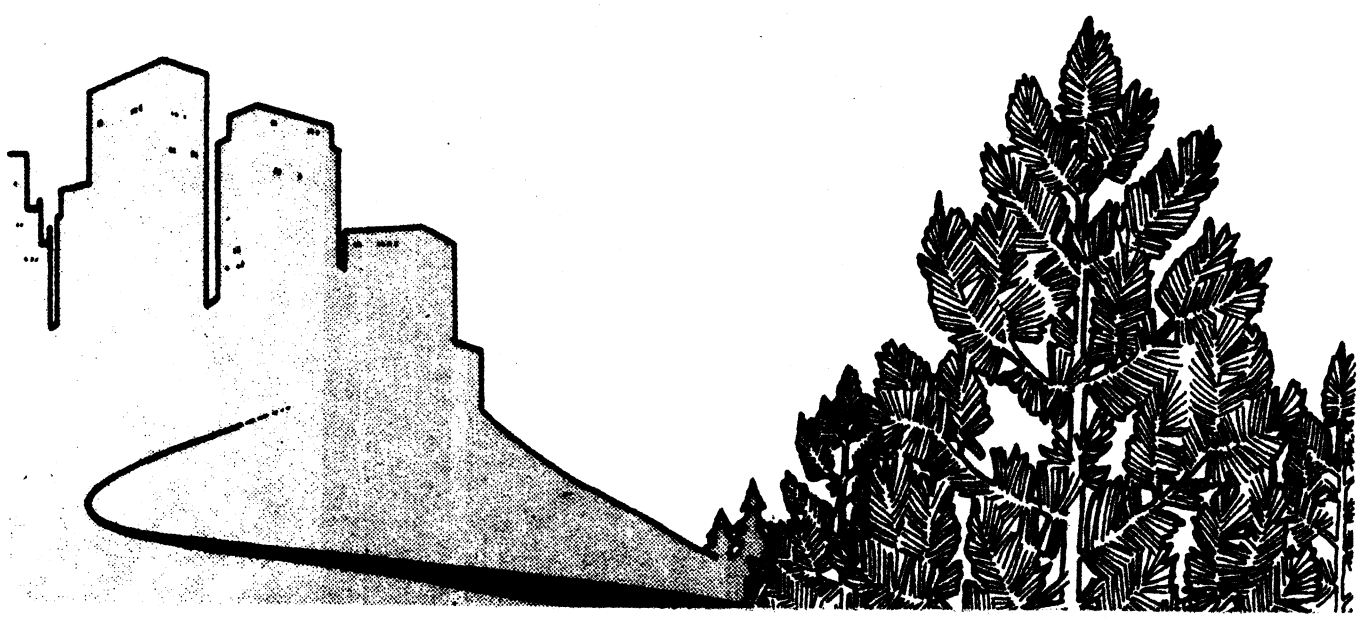
"Don't be rude to your elders, dear. Pour me some brandy, there's a good kid."

"There's none left," I moaned. "I spilled the last of it. And it's all your fault."

"So we'll drink beer. Won't hurt you a bit."

It rained all night. The road was impassable for two days. Thanks to Barbara I know all I'll ever want to know about cows, milking, calving, drunken husbands and ½tons. She's discovered P. D. James and Thomas Hardy and Collette.

In only 5 months and 3 days I'll be there again. I can't wait. It may even rain...





-or-

EXCERPTS FROM THE INSTRUCTION MANUAL ON HOW TO BE A RO

Someone forgot to issue me an instruction manual at birth. It might be my fault... maybe I got in the wrong line. Regardless, here I am, a twenty-eight year old descendent of the Magyar tribe, trying to assemble the operating manual on my own.

It's not easy. I'm the only Ro I know. The instruction manual can only be assembled by inference, by drawing bits and pieces from practical experience. From *my* practical experience. Observing an Alex gives me insight into what his instruction manual must say, but next to nothing about what mine should say. I have to learn myself from myself.

And that, of course, is exactly what makes all this so tough. Pull out an instruction manual for any of the products you have around the house. Note how the first thing the manual describes is the function or purpose of the product. Since I failed to obtain the manual at birth, I've had to cast about looking for my function/purpose on my own. Experimentation has proved a valuable input.

Just as a blender would have a tough -- if not impossible -- time making it as an alarm clock, I've learned that, even if I don't know what a Ro is, I certainly can't make it as a Bill, a Joe, or a Mike. For good or bad, I'm stuck on being a Ro.

For over seven years, fandom has provided me with a tremendous amount of opportunity, freedom, and, especially, patience to write, rewrite and edit large sections of my manual. It has let me use it as a testing ground for hypotheses -- some of which proved true, some disasterously false. But pound for pound, I've gotten tremendously more from fandom than from most other aspects of my life, these last seven years.

What have I given to fandom in return? The answer is largely rhetorical. Paraphernalia such as CONFUSIONs, Stilyagis, Cap'n Ro's Whiz Bangs, Secret Handgrips of Fandom, *et al*, are immaterial. Besides, I didn't consciously give them to fandom. They happened. And a lot of other people deserve massive amounts of credit as well...if handing out credit is important. In truth, there's only one thing I've "given" to fandom. As I learn more about what it takes to be a Ro, I should be making it easier for people to understand me -- making it easier for people to understand whether my presence makes it easier or harder for them to go about the business of constructing *their* instruction manuals.

Assembling these manuals, I think, is one of the key benefits of fandom. The experience of fandom, especially in the decade of the '70s, has been exceptionally conducive to learning how to be yourself. If that's what you were looking for. If, on the other hand, you were looking for a good time, casual sex and fair booze, fandom was still a good place to be. Fandom lets you have it either way. Better yet, you can have it both ways at once.

The experience of fandom has been fairly well documented. What fandom is becoming has also been frequently discussed, usually by fans with the taste of sour grapes still in their mouths and with an acidic pen in hand. Rarely, however, have I seen fandom compared and contrasted to other fandoms.

"Gasp," I hear some of you exclaim. "Could there be other fandoms?" You bet.

I started juggling in late August, 1980. I learned from the Flying Karamazov Brothers when, at the end of their performance, they offered to teach anyone who might want to hang around after the show. Steve Leigh, Frank Johnson and I learned the basics in about 45 minutes that Sunday afternoon.

I never imagined that I would learn to juggle -- I never really had even an intellectual curiosity about the art. Juggling, I assumed, was a freak technique -- something you see clowns do at a circus -- or strange looking Europeans you saw on the old Ed Sullivan Show. The energy the Karamazovs exuded on stage, however, encouraged me to give it a try.

Since I never considered that I would learn to juggle, I never expected that it would provide new chapters for the manual and cause revision of others. In the last year, juggling has done as much for my life as the totality of fandom.

It started slowly. I practiced three-ball juggling infrequently, perhaps for five minutes every few nights. I struggled to achieve and maintain a basic cascade, the simplest juggle. Within a few weeks, I could do 50 to 75 consecutive throws and catches. The sense of accomplishment was phenomenal. The energy I felt was tremendous -- much like the energy many neos feel at one of their first cons, when they finally relax and join in the discussions and the partying and find out that they won't be rejected simply because they are neos.

Once a neo hits that plateau, the natural tendency is to become more involved, to explore the other aspects of fandom. I got into fandom, tenuously, in 1973. By the end of 1974, I had formed the Stilyagi Air Corps, published the first, godawful issue of Cap'n Ro's Whiz Bang and had started work on the A^2 Relax Icon, which would rapidly evolve into the more euphonious and more aptly named CONFUSION. In a short period of time, I had become *very* involved -- as have many other neofen in their day.

As to why, the answer lies in the energy feedback I received. The more furiously I "worked" at fandom, the more energy returned my way. The answer also lies in the plateaux I achieved. As I grew (and grew up) in fandom, I perceived more and more of the inner workings and connections that held fandom together -- that held me together. With each plateau I hit, there was a quantum-like inrush of energy that hit me, pushing me on to search out the next plateau, each plateau offering a higher level of energy. So it should come as no surprise that the first juggling plateau--a sustained three-ball cascade--pushed me on to search out the following levels. From the occasional five-minute practice sessions, I pushed onward to every night practice, devoting more and more time. From five minutes to ten to thirty minutes to an hour and more.

I have never been particularly co-ordinated. In fact, as a child, I had to take several years of physical therapy to achieve even the most basic coordination. I was the last picked in neighborhood games -- and there were times I wasn't even picked.



Those memories came back to me as I continued to improve my juggling techniques. The dichotomy was startling and bothersome: from being so unco-ordinated to juggling. It didn't make sense. The thought rolled around in my mind for several months.

Meanwhile, Steve Leigh was undergoing the same experience. We got together at cons and at each other's home to practice and start passing balls back and forth. Another plateau. Three-ball juggling requires a more-or-less precise arrangement and movement of three balls and two hands in space. Passing with a partner requires not only more precise juggling on the individual's part but also a precise sharing of rhythm with the partner. At first our attempts were laughable. But there came a day when Steve and I were passing balls consistently. We could hear the balls smacking against our palms in rhythm, we could feel the energy that we were sharing with each other. A new plateau was reached.

It spurred us on. We began to experiment with the other classic juggling objects: rings, scarves and clubs. Each time we tried something new, the results were laughable. But after trying something new, we found that when we returned to our last plateau (from ball passing back to individual three-ball juggling, from clubs back to ball passing) juggling on this level was unbelievably easier. For want of a better term, we invented our own. It was as if, upon returning to this former plateau, "time had slowed down."

At about this time, at OCTOCON, I approached Nancy Tucker, chairman of the '81 CONFUSION, about the possibility of Steve and me doing a modest juggling exhibition and workshop -- perhaps passing the hat for TAFF and DUFF at the end. She accepted the proposal and we began planning what we'd do as we began to learn the basics of club passing. As we discussed what we might do at CONFUSION -- usually while retrieving clubs scattered about one of our living rooms as we practiced -- the idea began to grow. From a simple exhibition and workshop beginning, Cosmos and Chaos were born.

If you were at CONFUSION (or, later, at MINICON) you saw us do "Scary Stuff": hatchets, bowling balls, meat cleavers, sickles, Kermit the Frog. Strangely, we did not learn to juggle these objects for the purpose of the show. It all relates back to the concept of time slowing down -- if you can juggle (or struggle to juggle) three hatchets, then juggling three clubs becomes incredibly easy.

Again, the plateaux are phenomenal. The first time I juggled a bowling ball, the energy coursing through me was damn-near overwhelming. (Several days later, as the black-and-blue spot ripened to full majesty on my forearm, I realized that I had apparently caught the bowling ball on my arm. At the time, I had felt nothing.)

At the start of our act at CONFUSION, we were scared shitless. After all, here we were doing a show in January after having learned to juggle in late August the year before. As we prepared to come out juggling, Steve (Cosmos) and I were slapping the resin bags, in vain hope of stopping the palm sweat that made dropping inevitable. A small cloud of resin dust formed around us as we tried to overcome our nervousness. A few coughs later, we were on stage.

Scared out of our minds.

Roughly fifteen minutes later, we were both backstage. A pre-recorded comedy commercial was playing over the PA system while Steve and I prepared the props for our next set. The first thing we did on getting offstage was embrace and laugh. In relief and in excitement. We knew that the act was working. (I've seen the videotape of that performance. You can see the difference between that set and the subsequent. We were much more relaxed. The juggling was much better.) At the end, Steve and I were given a standing ovation. A new plateau. Ego overload. I honestly can say that I don't remember the next several minutes after the audience got to their feet. If you see the videotape sometime, perhaps you'll notice I "checked out" for awhile. The experience was overwhelming.

When you start trying to pass clubs, you're busy watching your own clubs and hands, haphazardly throwing one club and only looking up to catch the incoming club at the last second. More often than not, you miss a catch. More often than not, Steve would get hit by one of my poorly thrown clubs. Occasionally, I would get hit by Steve's.

With practice, we improved. We would watch the thrown club a little longer, learning what we were doing right (and wrong) and watch the incoming club earlier, anticipating its pass through space. As our observational distances moved from inches from our hands to a few feet out, we began to talk about "the alley" opening up. There were fewer surprises. Throws were more accurate. Catches became more frequent.

Then, one day, the alley opened up all the way. A moment before it opened up, we were watching the clubs from the time they left our hands to the time they were caught. The next moment, we were passing clubs back and forth while staring each other in the eyes -- all the time.

It freaked us.

We stopped juggling and tried to explain to each other what it felt like. We weren't watching our hands and our clubs. We weren't watching the other's hands and clubs. We were juggling by looking into each other's eyes. All the information we needed was expressed in the other's eyes. We finally gave up trying to express to each other what it felt like and simply let out loud shouts and yelps of glee. We embraced.

Shortly after CONFUSION, I joked about our passing hatchets. Our wives laughed with us, but also said that they wouldn't be there the first time we tried -- they didn't want to see the result. I said, "If we practice together a lot, hard, we might be able to do it by next August...one year after learning how to juggle." Suuurrrrre.

Instead, we did it in March, six months after learning. True to their word, our wives weren't there.

Passing hatchets with any accuracy (and you need all you can get) requires that you throw the hatchet such that the business end, the blade, arrives at the catcher pointing directly at him. A bad throw, a bad catch... There can't be more trust afforded to another person.

What Steve and I have been through, how we've grown through juggling, is much mirrored by what fandom has traditionally offered fans. Admittedly, fandom offers, by and large, fewer physical risks but the emotional risks can be greater. As you grow in either, you find yourself tackling more and more of the Scary Stuff.

But can fandom today provide the same training/growing ground that it did even a handful of years ago? The answer is clearly "no". Perhaps it will continue to be some sort of training/growing ground but not the same one: the rules are quickly changing.

Ironically, considering where you're reading this, fanzines are dying. The culture of the '80s will bid the fanzine a swift adieu. Postage rates are soaring. Printing costs are ridiculous. And, sadly, the printed word is becoming a less important aspect of our life.

Originally, fanzines were the only vital communications format of fans. The growing and learning came from exposure to and from fanzines. A certain anonymity was afforded. Age, sex and other key "given" aspects of yourself could be hidden through the printed word. (To this day, I get mail addressed to *Ms.* Ro Lutz-Nagey.) Legion are the stories of fans confused by another fanzine fan's sex, age or background.

In the '70s, however, the transition began. Thanks in part to the readers of fanzines who wanted to get to know each other personally (another plateau), conventions suddenly grew by leaps and bounds. During the decade, getting to conventions became incredibly easy. As fanzines became more expensive to produce, as media other than the printed word became more accessible, as the number of fans grew...each made the convention the more popular route for the incoming fan.

Early on, conventions were modelled after the earlier fandoms. The bulk of programming centered on science fiction authors talking about their work and science fiction fans talking about why they produced fanzines or why they locced and how others could do the same. But conventions started to breed a new type of fan, the convention fan. He was someone you saw at many or all of the conventions you attended. Someone who would be on a panel at the convention -- not so much for what he had done in the other areas of fandom but for the number of conventions he had attended. He had a *schtick*. He could entertain the increasing number of neos attending cons.

Ultimately, we're seeing more and more relaxacons, where science fiction is a negligible part of the convention. In the Midwest, I can readily think of Octocon, Midwestcon, Spacecon, Wilcon and the occasional Sidcon or Mikecon as examples. Simply friends getting together over the weekend.

There's nothing wrong with this change. Change is part of living. A case in point: consider that seven years ago, the microprocessor didn't exist. Today, I can think of at least five products in my home that use one.

I own a computer that I use, largely, for word processing. I earn my living by writing and editing. The computer more than doubles my productivity.

A computer only does what it is told to do. *Exactly* what it is told to do. Absolutely no *more* than what it is told to do. Which is exactly why I'm always amazed at people who blame computers for their problems. Yes, they can be blamed. But rarely. Once, I had the card that communicates between my computer and my printer break -- physically. I was right on top of a deadline. In fact, I was past the deadline. It took a while for the circuit card to be fixed. The article was written -- but until it could be printed on the printer, it might as well not have been written at all. But this is the exception. A rare occurrence. Yet we so often hear the phrase, "due to computer error"...

Wrong! The phrase would be much more accurate as "due to programmer's error" or "due to computer operator's error". Computers rarely make mistakes. People do.

As an intellectual exercise more than anything else, I wrote a word processing program for my computer. The early drafts (all too many) were written on the computer itself. The program taught me a lot. The program right and left justifies copy, and centers copy, dates and numbers pages, puts copy in both boldface and italics and even checks spelling.

While writing the program, I frequently yelled and screamed at the computer. How

dare it make mistakes! Ultimately, in each case, I painfully learned that all along it was I, not the computer, making the mistakes. The computer was simply doing exactly what I had told it to do.



Computer programming probably sounds boring or tedious. A freak technique, perhaps. Just like juggling.

Just like juggling, just like fandom, there are plateaux, ever-increasing levels of energy that are fed back to you from the energy you put in. The subtleties, the intricacies, the refinements possible in each of the three activities are infinite.

There simply is no "best".

There is no Golden Age of Fandom...except the one you're in when you reach the most plateaux.

There is no end to the creativity of juggling. Even using three balls, new juggles are being created all the time.

There is no limit to computers or computer programming. One person has just introduced a program called "The Last One", suggesting that this will be the last computer program ever written since you use it to create other, new computer programs. I like the name, but it's wrong, of course. Someone will, in the next few years, write a program that will let you create the program called "The Last One", only to be superceded by a program to let you write the program that will let you write the program called "The Last One" which lets you write all other programs. And so forth. Eventually, computers will have their own conventions.

Right now, the personal (or the misnamed "hobby") computer world is creating its own fandom. It's a fright. You find 12 year-olds discussing arcane languages for programming their computers -- which are worth thousands of dollars. They congregate in hotels much as we do for conventions, and they have infrastructures virtually identical to ours. Not everyone owns a computer -- just as not everyone in sf fandom owns a large collection of sf. Their conversations, their intensity astounds and bewilders the casual passerby -- just as ours do. The newspapers are likewise inaccurate in their write-ups of "computer nuts" invading their town.

They are more intense in their enthusiasm now than we but the similarities indicate that we are not all that unique. In fact, you can almost plot a one-to-one map between the two fields. The major difference is that their field is evolving much more quickly than ours. The first accessible microcomputers didn't exist a decade ago. Now, their conventions are larger, more intense than ours. They may even pass us by in the next few years.

On the other hand, juggling lags far behind. I just attended my first worldcon of juggling. Oddly enough, it was held in Cleveland, my old home town. It was their 34th worldcon and all of 500 people attended. Let me give some background to help you understand why I say they lag far behind us.

All but a handful, literally, of fulltime jugglers attended -- those who couldn't get out of paying commitments being the only absentees. Performers from all over the world were there.

I was doing research over at the Case Western Reserve engineering library the first

day of the con. I dropped in just to check it out. The programming event that morning was the Junior Nationals -- those who had been juggling for three years or less. The contestants ran the entire spectrum of ages. The winner was an incredible eight year-old -- all of three foot high -- who could juggle six balls and seven rings. Later that day, they had endurance contests. One was for juggling five clubs, the other for juggling seven balls or rings the longest. In the former, the world's record is roughly three minutes, in the latter...about seven seconds.

What amazed me, seduced me, was the fans. The university gym had been set aside as the huckster room and as the juggling room. At a typical sf con, perhaps a few percent of the total membership are pros, those trying to become pros or even those simply trying to learn the craft. I watched closely at the juggling con, trying to find the exception. I didn't. Every single person there juggled. From random conversations, maybe a third gave performances once or more a year.

I was a neo. As I stood in the gym, juggling and trying out new juggles I had seen that day, I had complete strangers come up to me and say, "I see what you're doing wrong...try it this way." I had been nicely trained by sf fandom. Shortly, I was going up to others, people I didn't know who were trying to do a juggle *I* could do, and taking the time to show them what to do.

The full-time pros were just as involved in the process as the rest. Not only did they pass on tricks to the semi-pros, they fully and freely took time to teach the other full-time pros -- the people they compete with for bookings and bucks -- the tricks they'd picked up since the last worldcon. At sf cons, writers might talk contracts and markets. It's rare to see them talk about writing and how to do it better. There are too many distractions.

The gym was open 24 hours a day...it was the equivalent of our con suite. Unlike ours, however, there was next to no drinking or smoking. I think the entire weekend I saw three bottles of beer, one joint. Although there were plenty of women present, there was none of the cuddling, petting and pairing so frequently seen at sf cons. To steal a phrase from the Karamazovs and twist it slightly, "You juggled till you dropped." As I took the taxi home Thursday night, my wrists were screaming at me for the six or seven hours of non-stop juggling I had put them through.

Friday, I called into work and took a day of vacation. That morning, I ran into someone I had talked with briefly the night before. When my taxi had arrived, at 1:30 am, someone stopped me and asked what was on the program for tomorrow. In haste to catch the cab, I had given him a quick rundown and split, afraid that if I talked longer, the cab would take off.

As we went up to the main programming room, to watch the Senior Nationals and Team Competition, I finally pegged Peter, the guy I'd met the night before. He's the blond male lead on the TV show, "Bosom Buddies". That afternoon and night, we juggled together. He can do five clubs and six balls. He can occasionally hit a run of seven balls. Impressive.

Random conversations were hauntingly familiar. For example:

"I dunno. Five hundred people at the /world/convention are too many."

One huckster to another: "I don't like /so-and-so/. He sells crap and charges too much." The other: "Yeah, but if I'm going to have to make a couple of hundred clubs next year, I'm going to have to raise prices...it simply takes up too much of my time now." To the best of my knowledge, other than JuggleBug, the "big" juggling supply operation and makers of what are largely considered the worst juggling equipment on the market, the major manufacturer (95% of the jugglers at the con used his equipment) makes about three thousand clubs a year.

But the field is undergoing explosive growth. In another ten years, they may be at the point we in sf reached at Phoenix. In relation to the Hugos, they are true neos. Their first awards for juggling skill were given out, I believe, in 1978. And there is a lot of sentiment against handing out awards. Much more clearly, perhaps, than in sf, there are no "best" jugglers. The field is too broad to make easy comparisons. Moreover, every juggler I talked with agreed, you can't measure your juggling against another's, only against yourself.

This brings me back to the question I raised earlier. How did I become a juggler when I had been so uncoordinated as a child? The answer sounds so very simple that I wouldn't blame you for discounting it. But try it, it works.

Before I tried juggling, I assumed it was but a freak technique, and that, naturally, I couldn't do it. When I first began, I came to realise, slowly, that I might be able to master a three-ball cascade. First plateau. With each subsequent plateau, it became more obvious that if I stopped letting my rational self tell me what I could and could not do and if I would simply *try* doing it, more often than not I'd succeed. My most recent plateau stems from learning not to "try", simply to do.

There are no givens. We are not limited by anything other than what our minds tell us we are limited by.

Paradoxically, in trying to assemble the instruction manual on How To Be A Ro I've come to learn that no such manual can possibly exist. In learning the disciplines of juggling and computer programming, I've learned the freedom that the disciplines bring. There are no laws but those we allow our minds to impose upon us.

Without a discipline, you can't experience a freedom. Again quoting the Karamazovs, "First you get your disciplines, then you improvise."

SF fandom is becoming, increasingly, an undisciplined lot. It is losing its freedom. I'm not, however, leaving fandom. I refuse to accept that our continued lack of discipline must follow as night does day. The harmonic distortion we're experiencing (sorry, Steve) must indeed be just a passing stage. Reports from ARCHON indicate that fans realise that they're losing their uniqueness and want to re-establish their discipline in science fiction.

I'm not leaving. But I may be spending more time in other fandoms, particularly juggling. In juggling fandom, everyone does. In sf fandom, fewer and fewer people (as a percentage of fandom's population) are putting out fanzines, running cons, turning pro.

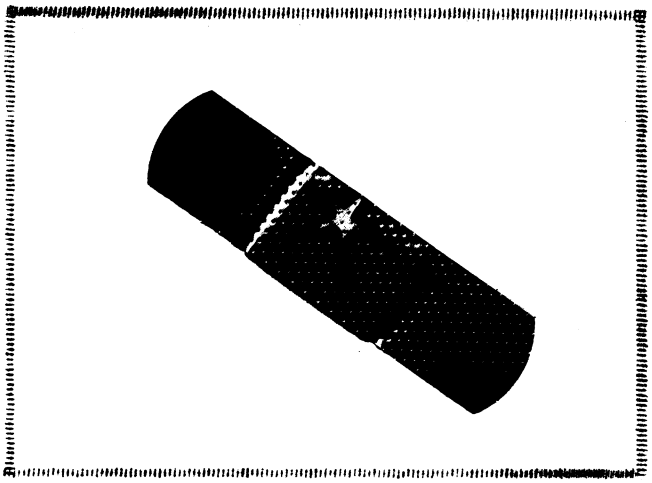
I am attracted to juggling's innocence and its discipline. I've learned from sf's fandom enough that maybe I can help juggling stay on its path better than I can help sf fandom get *back* on its path. Or maybe it's just that I'm at a point of hitting more plateaux now in juggling than I do in sf. I don't know. And I won't know until I try. No...I won't know until I do.

Oh yes, one last thing. If you want free juggling lessons, stop me at any con, I'll be more than happy to teach you. At CONFUSION next January, I'll be the one juggling the Samurai sword.

If you need help in writing your instruction manual -- or in destroying it -- I'm sorry. You're on your own.

Which is how it should be.

When I master juggling lines on pages, maybe I'll try balls.--Glicksohn, NERG 16,'81



XENIUM erg... en...
THE FANZINE THAT GIVES YOU SOMETHING TO STICK WITH

This back page is brought to you by Susan.

In 1969, at my first Worldcon, I was given an issue of ODD 20, the last issue of Ray and Joyce Fisher's Fabulous Fanzine. In ODD 20 there was a Jack Gaughan illo of St. George, slaying the dragon. Where the spear pierced the dragon, Ray and Joyce, overcome by terminal silliness, had affixed a bandaid. Three hundred bandaids. Ah, sweet idiocy!

After ENERGUMEN was put into cold storage, in 1973, a certain hairy Brit (no, not Greg Pickersgill) started a personalzine, of impeccable appearance and great irregularity. XENIUM became "the zine that gives you something extra," with Toronto subway transfers, wine labels and similar pieces of kipple inside.

Well. I ran away from school, this past June, to Berkeley. Walking into Wendy Timer's bathroom, I noticed a box of Cosmic Curad bandaids. "Gabble," I said, or words to that effect. "*Where* did you get these? I haven't seen them since 1967."

(Figures I'd find them in Berkeley. Someone put a bubble dome over the city in 1967, and time has stood still. There was even an anti-draft demonstration in People's Park while I was there, and just *what* decade did you say this was?)

"Oh," said Wendy, "they're three boxes for a dollar, over in Canned Foods on San Pablo. Why?"

I couldn't stop giggling long enough to tell her. The clerk looked at me, um, ODDly as I bought eighteen boxes. Fortunately, the customs people did *NOT* search my car.

So here you are. The Cosmic Curad back page of, if not the perfect fanzine, then the best we can do. May you never be without a bandaid, trufan.

Susan Wood -- July 8, 1980



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.....or, living in the tail of the comet.....

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XENIUM erg en...

THE FANZINE THAT GIVES YOU SOMETHING TO STICK WITH