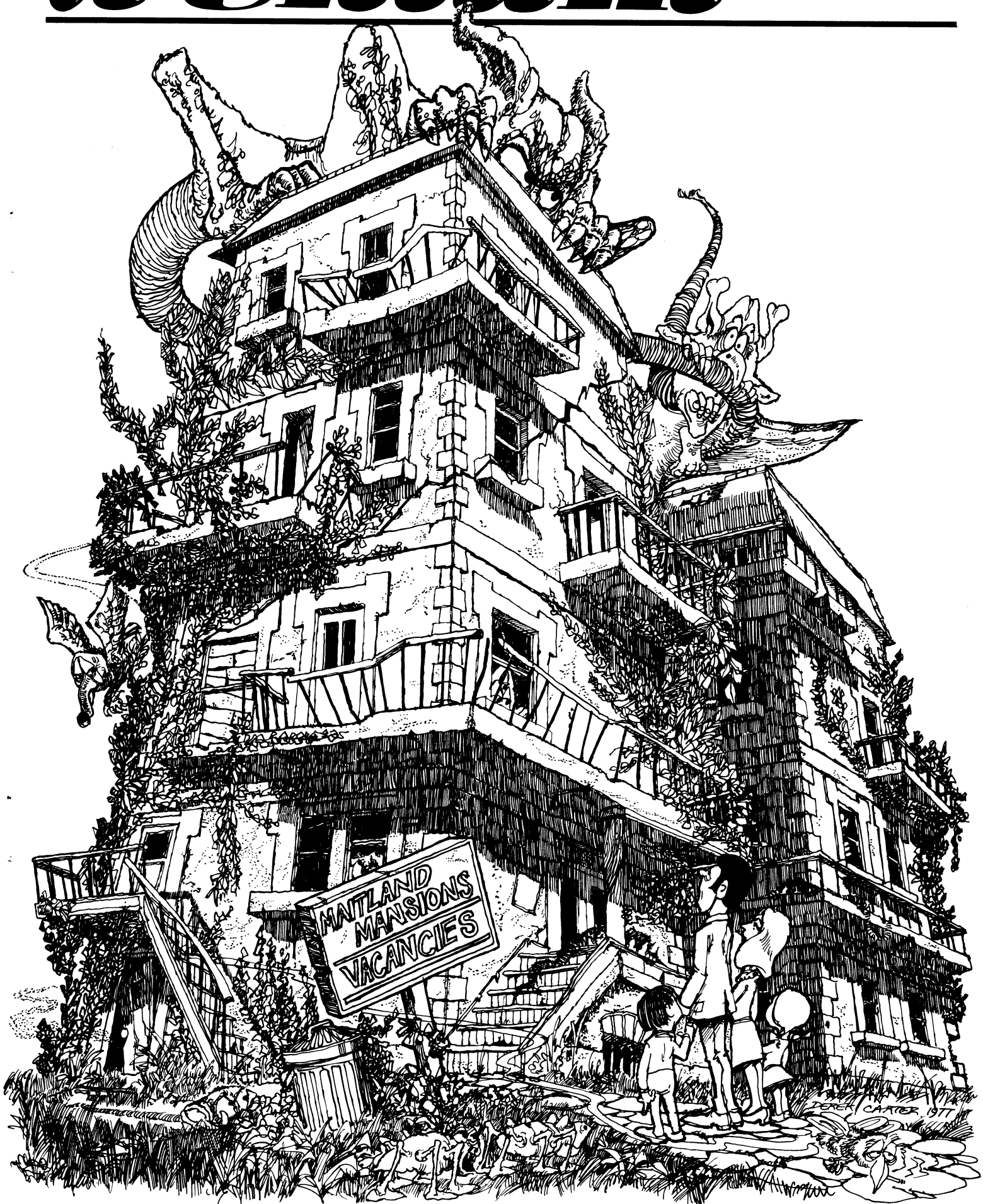


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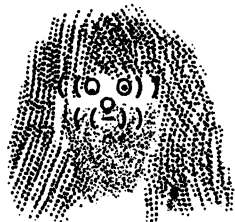


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XENIUM

appears with almost preternatural speed from Mike Glicksohn, 141 High Park Avenue,
 Toronto, Ontario M6P 2S3, Canada. As constant as the Northern Star, XENIUM remains
 available by editorial whim only. Those capable of rendering its hairy editor whim-
 sical include contributing writers and artists, old and new friends, Interesting
 Persons, publishers of Fascinating Fanzines, drinking buddies and occasional odds
 and sods. Locs are *not*, repeat, *NOT* demanded, although they are always appreciated.
 Rarely published, though. Begging letters, large donations of cash and crates of
 whiskey will be gratefully accepted but aren't guaranteed to extract anything more
 than P.T. Barnum style laughter.

Ssscotch Press #52



June 1978

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THE LANGFORD LETTER on page 19.

all intermingled with blatherings from the editor, interrupted by
 amusing interlineations, and tastefully decorated by a variety of
 talented artists whose names appear on page 22.

Welcome, once again, to XENIUM...The Fanzine That Gives You Something Extra.....
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"I'll bet you're real lucky at cards."



 And thick and fast they came at last,
 And more, and more, and more.

Lewis Carroll,
The Walrus and the Carpenter

Faithful readers of this irregular periodical who were startled to see one 1978 edition of XENIUM may well be flabbergasted to see a second following so hot on the heels of #2.7. (Everyone knows that 11 follows 2.7, right?) You can blame it all on Bill Bowers; I certainly do.

It has been evident for some time that Bowers is patterning his fan career after my own. I was a Guest of Honour at Confusion, so he became one. I was a Worldcon Fan Guest of Honour, so naturally he had to be one also. (Of course, I'm going to be there to share in his hour of glory despite the fact that he never came to share in mine.) And in preparation for his Moment of Truth in Phoenix later this summer, Bill's so far presented two "practice speeches" at midwestern regional conventions.

The second was given back in April at Marcon 13 in Columbus, Ohio. Just before he shook his way up to the podium, Bill offered me the opportunity to publish his remarks if I felt like doing so. After I'd heard what he had to say, I most definitely did so feel.

Most XENIUM readers will have encountered Harlan Ellison's "A Statement of Ethical Position By The Worldcon Guest of Honor" which appeared in JANUS, LOCUS and SFR that I know of. Bill's second warm-up for Phoenix consisted of two parts: the first was a direct parody, into fannish terms, of Harlan's statement. The second part was a serious reaction and counterstatement to the position Harlan outlined. I thought both parts deserved to be published, and I promised Bill I'd have an issue ready for Midwestcon. Which explains the uncharacteristic speed with which this issue has appeared.

If you possibly can, read the first part of Bill's comments in conjunction with Harlan's original statement. You'll appreciate the skill with which the parody is wrought that much more if you do. And don't worry too much if some of the multitudinous esoteric in-group allusions pass you by: I doubt that even Bowers himself understands all of the obscure references he inserted!

As it happens, I'd spent an evening with Harlan here in Toronto just prior to Marcon so I knew how he felt about fan reaction to his statement of ethical position. But Bill Bowers wasn't just any old fan disagreeing with Harlan's stand; he was *also* a Guest of Honor at Iguanacon, so I sent Harlan a copy of Bill's remarks with an offer to publish his reaction, if he cared to voice one.

Hoo boy!!

On the day Bill's speech reached Los Angeles with my covering letter, I talked with Harlan five times on the phone. During the first, and longest, call, I thought the receiver was going to melt. Harlan was furious like a hydrogen bomb is damaging. He was set to resign, but I managed to explain enough misunderstandings to extract his promise that he'd do nothing rash, but would wait until the next day for a cooling off period. Somewhat perturbed I went out for a bite to eat.

While I was out, Harlan called back. He had to speak to me right away. So I returned his call and he read me a short, sharp but surprisingly mild reaction to Bill's

remarks. Would I like it for XENIUM? You betcha, Red Ryder. Then a couple of hours later Harlan called again: the response had lengthened into three pages. I definitely still wanted it. I figured things had worked themselves out by then...

Call number four found me in the bath. Harlan had been rereading Bill's speech, had jumped to some wrong conclusions, and was more incensed than ever. During the fifteen minutes I spent calming him down the heat from the telephone kept my bath water from cooling down. He wanted Bill's phone number so he could call him immediately. "Harlan, I'm in the bath! I don't keep my phone book in my bath..."

So I called Bill shortly thereafter, then I called Harlan, then Harlan called Bill, and the next day they both called me back, and the end results you can read here in XENIUM. Apparently they've agreed to disagree; so you can read what each has to say in this speedily-prepared fanzine and decide for yourself who's right.

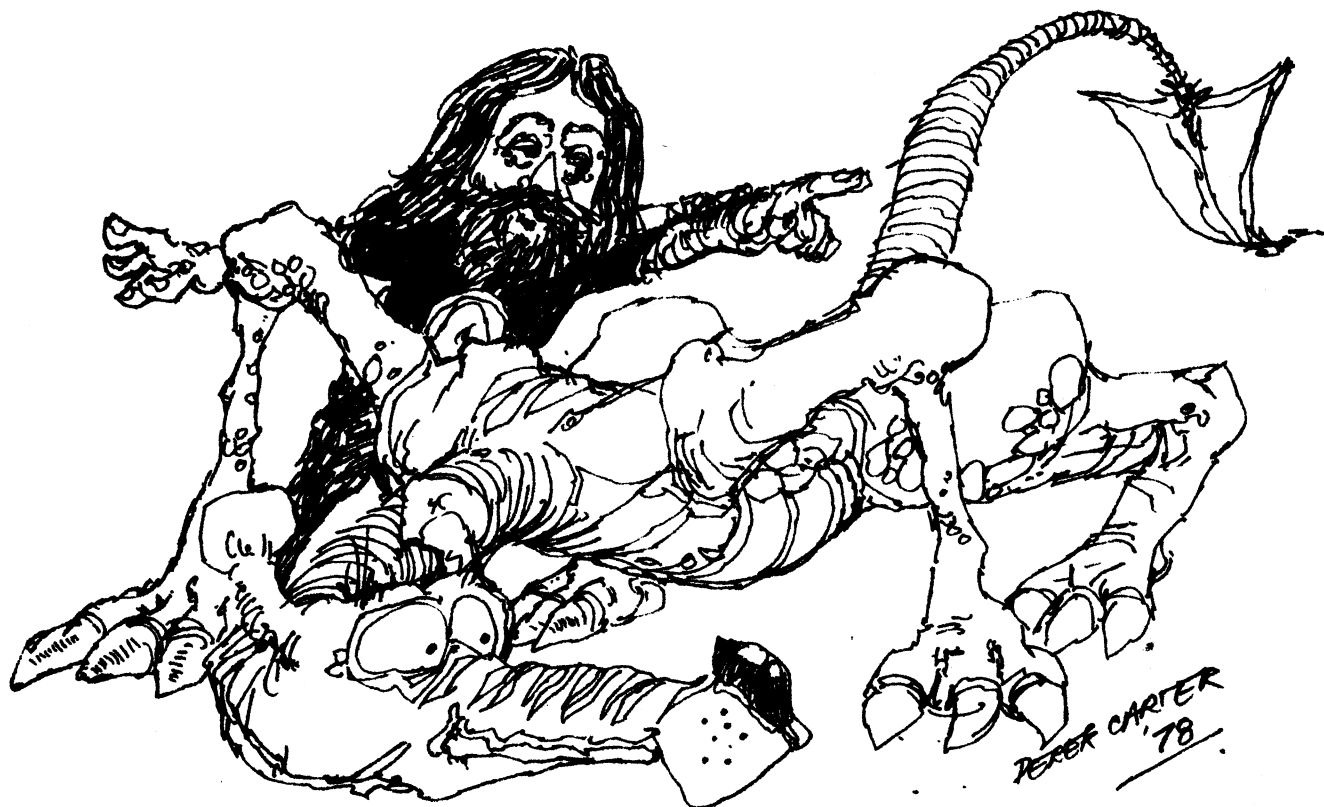
And I'll have fulfilled my promises to both of them.

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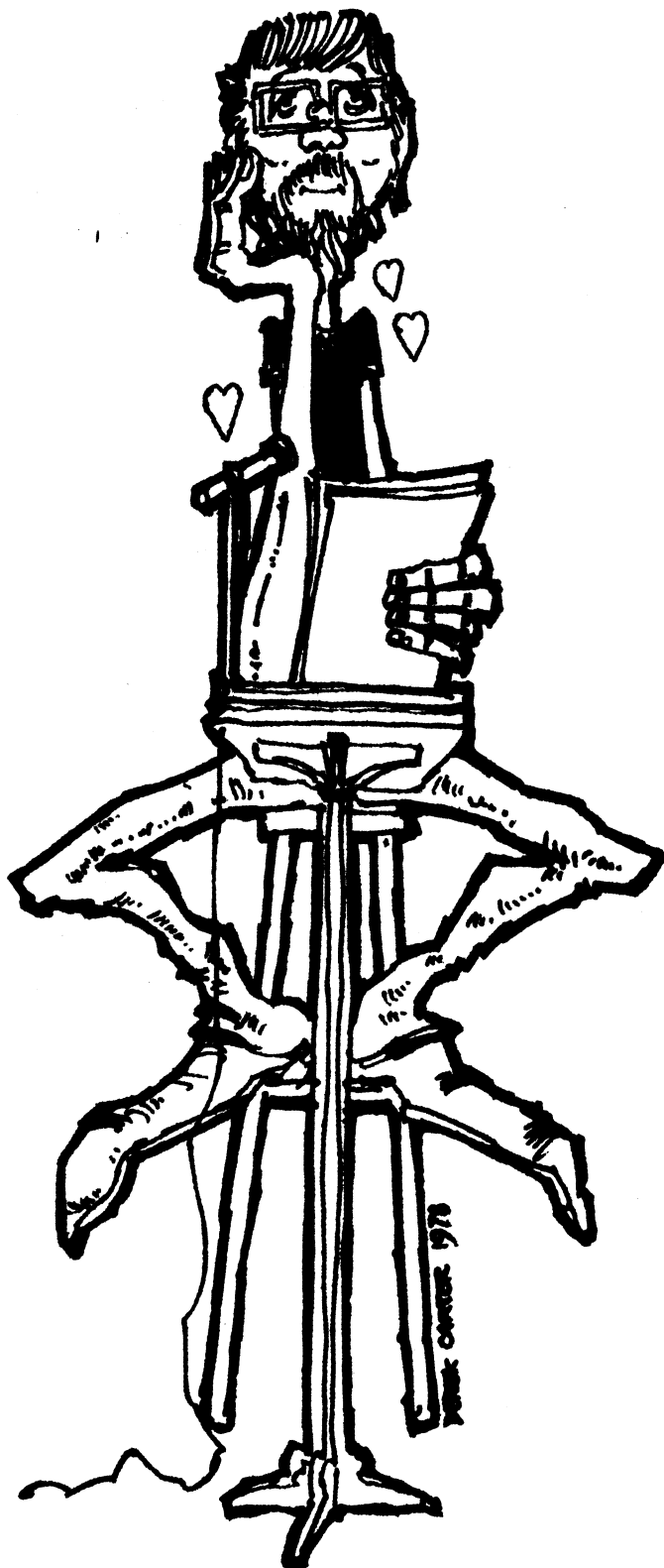
The other contribution appearing here has been in my files for quite some time. It is, according to its author who wishes to remain anonymous, an entirely factual account of a confrontation in Mexico several years ago. I think you'll find it frighteningly amusing. (And the first person to guess the identity of the writer and turn him over to the appropriate federal authorities will win a free year's subscription to XENIUM...)

* * * * *

And here's a last word on the Cat Controversy from resident artist Derek Carter...



LOOK, BOY... A CAT, A CAT!!



It is not enough to write statements for fanzines; in this life we must make speeches as well. Otherwise we are lipservice fans. That is the basic problem. What it refers to, is not quite so ...clearly printed. In point of fact, the situation to which that problem points, puts me -- as they say -- between a Dick Geis and an Andy Porter -- but no, I'm not Charlie Brown.

I am very much in favor of the ERAFTP -- the Equal Rights Amendment For Tall People.

Arizona is one of the states that has ratified the ERAFTP.

I think this is a bad thing.

(My short friends made me say that.)

Insert obscure reference here:
Strike obscure reference that was inserted there. I do it purposely to avoid lawsuits.

But, as I boycotted the Miami worldcon in large part because I couldn't afford to get there, and because I knew there would be a strong limey influence there, so should I now refuse to appear in Phoenix, because Eric Lindsay will be there. By turning down the accolade of being the 1978 Worldcon's Fan Guest of Honor -- something that caps my 17 years 8 months 21 days as a thoroughly unprofessional fan in the field -- I would cause myself great relief: I wouldn't have to make a speech. But would I be able to look at myself in the mirror and say: "They positioned things too damn low!"?

This was to have been my course...and I could still chicken out.

But there are considerations which make

BILL BOWERS' SECOND PRACTICE CONNACON SPEECH

A STATEMENT OF ETHICAL POSITION BY THE (OTHER) WORLDCON GUEST OF HONOR

such a decision extremely difficult. First, I was told about the Guest-of-Honorship after the convention was a ratified fact, when I was having a gay old time -- sorry, Downes -- in Kansas City, and I didn't need such grief. I just wanted to stay in the Phoenix bidding suite and get drunk, and to weasel out today would be unethical...and might imperil future highs. Second, that cause up there (whatever it was) is something in which I passionately believe, and I do think I have the right to morally blackmail the Iguanacon Committee into providing all the free booze that I can imbibe, although I've been advised that many of the members intend to drink me under Rusty's huckster table. Provided he moves to Arizona before the con.

If I were to vacate the Fan Guest of Honor slot, Leah would kill me. And god knows who they would give it to. I would also have to resume publishing *Outworlds*, and make my position known in *Captain Ro's Whizzbang*, *The Avenging Aardvark* and other platforms of mass fan communication available to me. I would have to urge those who might be coming to Phoenix in part because I would be there, to stay away.

Bowers, stay away! (It says here.)

I would do that, at the convention's expense. It would be the logical extension of my illogical decision. But there is no way of ignoring the ugly reality that such actions on my part would in no way damage the Worldcon, let alone the good and decent fans -- not to mention the Webberts -- who have worked so long and hard to put Iggycon together. It would certainly save them financially if I didn't come. They have finally signed the contract they can't get out of; they could move the convention to another state, but I was so hoping that Glen Campbell would have gotten there by Labor Day. I would thus be bludgeoning innocent people with my unethical imperatives.

I would be playing a tune I don't know. (Which would be not unlike Al Curry drawing a cartoon.)

Rock. Very loud music.

When I decided that I should think all this out -- i.e., when it became evident that the other Guest of Honor was getting all the publicity, and I was being left with only the CFG -- I went to shorter heads for guidance. They gave it with only a slight charge, but a lot of abuse. Stephanie Oberembt, Terry Matz, Carol Hoag who is the foot of the Iguanacon Committee, Lynn Parks (token tall person to balance Harlan's token male), Denise Parsley-Leigh and Rosanne Rosanna Danna have suggested alternatives as to the extreme position I should assume. One of these alternatives seems perverse enough, both diseased and indirect enough for my own search for egoboo.

Thus it is: I will come to the convention as Fan Guest of Honor, but I will do so in the spirit of making the convention a platform for heightism, underlooking the awareness of fans and Arizona as a whole to the situation. I will not even demand that they replace Tim Kyger with a chairman of some stature. I will do this because I feel like, *Oh, why not?*, but in a way that will minimize any crippling to me below the knees.

I will coordinate with anyone who buys me a drink, and even collate if they wish. I can be bought. I will take every possible opportunity to publicize my position in one-shots that nobody reads. I have been assured by the executive committee of the Iguanacon that there will be time for me to sleep, and that movable platforms will make all speakers and panelists appear to be of equal height. Also, I was told to provide my own entertainment. ???.

In this way I will attempt to make as much hay as I can out of an intentional moral dictation. I urge short people to rise above themselves to assist me in this. I

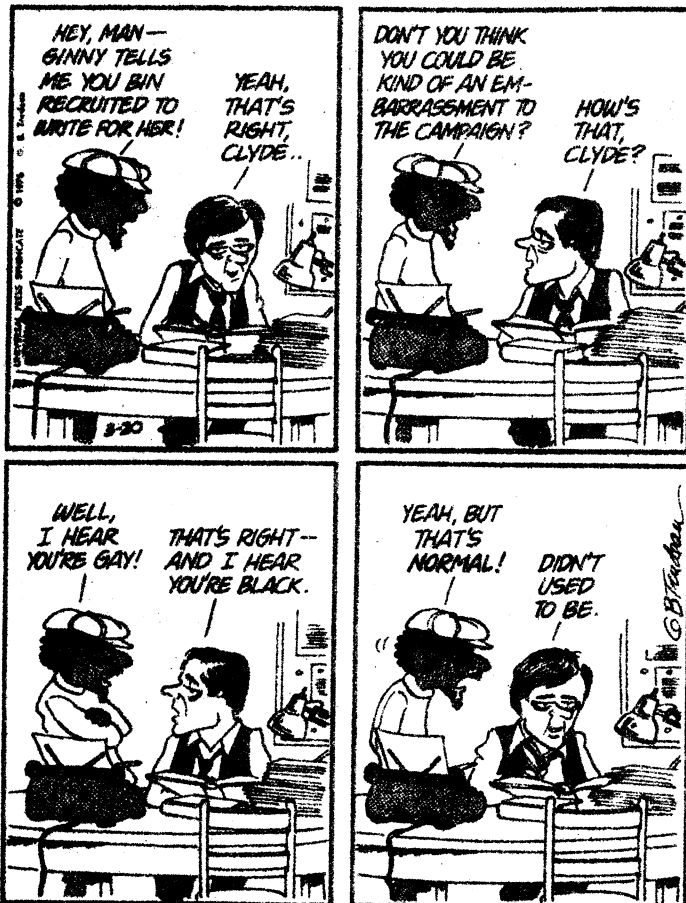
suppose in some ways I'm trying to have my Twinkie and avoid being told to "Eat it!"; too; but, gee whiz, I can't think of any other way to fill up this time Ross gave me tonight.

As for those who will begin the barrage of flack, well, I can take it: I come from northeastern Ohio. Just because I'm an "institution" (a mishap not of my doing) doesn't mean I have feelings. But may I just remind you that there is a not-so-recent precedent for utilizing a worldcon for one's own political ends. I'm sure that the Futurians in 1939 believed just as passionately in their rights as any present-day blood-sucker. I am doing the same. And it sucks. But I find myself in my cups and not to do it would be sobriety.

As for those who share my belief that the ERAFTP is an issue worthy of US Congressional attention, Real Soon Now, I suggest that fans coming to the convention figure out where all the closed-door parties are...and let me know. The convention should assemble a list of acceptable closed doors, for those who prefer to party elsewhere than the CFG suite. I will be one of those people if Tabakow's there. Don't shop in the stores; buy fanzines. Spend your money with Linda-Bushyager-Approved Non-Commercial Faneds. None of this is easy, but who ever said that anything that Mike Glicksohn has done can't be pleasurable to a normal-sized human being?

In brevity, let's just for once, in the world of S.F., talk the talk and not just walk the walk from party to party. For decades S.F. has trumpeted, and it's about time we changed our musical instrument. And yet, on the whole, S.F. fans and pros live in a Sometimes-Well-Maybe-Land when it comes to believing that the only platforms they should embrace are those under Derek's roommate's feet. I turn my head and say, That's none of my affair.

Dealing with Harlan from far-flung Ohio is great fun, but I suppose I should be concerned about my own safety. Important things first: at what point do we put our bodies on the line... not on this point, believe me; I have no wish to appear in a Joe Haldeman novel. Can we continue to deal with fanzines as being something worthy of Dr. Fredric Wertham? I say no, let's put them back in the gutter, as Judy-Lynn Femmefan said, from whence they oozed. Let us howl at critics and reviewers like Buck Coulson; it's fun. Can we permit the gap between *XENIUM* and *AY CHINGAR* to exist? Or is this, perhaps, a moment when we can make that foolish decision to publish our own crudzine, our literary abomination, our own platform from which to shoe flies?



I have made my decision. I will come down off my high horse long enough to go to the worldcon. And I will pitch my tent in the suite the committee graciously offered me.

Arizona, the Worldcon...I offer you nothing.

...except my thanks for inviting me, in spite of my caustic treatment of your era' in doing so!

***** POSTSCRIPT *****

Now then... I still carry the scars of a previous encounter, third hand, with Harlan Ellison. I do not wish, believe me, for another. But I have to say something, lest my silence be construed as total consent with his methods to implement important and, yes, admirable goals.

You see, nowhere in his statements that I have seen does he mention that there is another Guest of Honor at this year's worldcon. Or that that other person might *not* feel that politicizing the worldcon is a "Good Thing", no matter how worthy the goal. In fact, I doubt that Harlan stopped to think that, when he initiated his actions -- for reasons of concern, or conscience -- he might be demeaning something that others chose to consider a very high honor indeed.

I would be the very first to agree if you were to point out that I pale into insignificance compared to Harlan as a drawing card for any convention. And were someone to suggest that I might not deserve the honor these crazy Arizonians have bestowed on me, I would again be the first to agree. But all that is beside the point...once I accepted. I feel that I have an obligation, if not to help, at least not to hinder the committee as they work hard to get this thing together.

I was going to define "Guest of Honor", and attempt to put forth, in my terms (of course) the duties of the invited (the Guest) toward his host (in this case, a convention committee.) But the term is, at best, ill-defined these days: whether some Guests of Honor are chosen literally, or for the size of the crowds they'll draw, is a matter of conjecture. You pay your membership, you take your choice.

A lot of the things that are the most important to me, in life and in fandom, I attempt to make light of. It may not be the best method, but sometimes it's the only way I have of dealing with such things. (Institutions shouldn't cry in public.) I've had a lot of fun with the fact that the delegated members of the Phoenix bidding committee neglected to ask me if I'd be willing to be their Fan Guest of Honor until Friday night at Big MAC -- after they'd won the bid! (Perhaps it is best it happened that way: if I'd known in advance, I surely would have chickened out.) I'm still nervous about it, and I'll be more so until it's over. And then I'll worry about how well I handled myself...

But it is important to me. As Mike Glicksohn said, "The Fan Guest of Honorship at a Worldcon is perhaps the highest honour a fan can receive": it isn't something you can "win", and as far as I know, it can't be purchased or traded for. I am flattered and I am humbled...but not likely to admit to either!

And it hurts to see something I look forward to enjoying immensely being usurped for personal, non-relevant (to a science fiction convention) actions.

Words are Harlan's craft: he uses them and he uses them well. If I have any similar "craft", it is the assembling of the creations of others into something I find pleasing. Even were I so inclined, I doubt I could "win" a contest of words with Harlan. I'm not about to try. I'm just trying to make my statement, for the record.

I don't feel that science fiction conventions, fans, or pros, need any group causes to justify themselves. Neither do I like the idea that future conventions might become politicized to the extent that if I am not attuned to the ideologies of the chairman, or the Guest of Honor, or whoever happens to represent the most powerful

"bloc" that year, I would not feel welcome. Right now I can attend a convention and find both Poul Anderson and Harlan Ellison present: I like it that way.

Listen, I spend the vast majority of my life in the real world, with causes, trials, and tribulations. I may not like the real world, but I cope, and I like to think that perhaps I've even gotten across to a few people the things I do feel important. By talking to them, not by shouting at them.

When I read a science fiction novel I do so for entertainment. I am not unwilling to listen to the author's "message" -- as long as it does not interfere with the flow of the story. Otherwise it should have been an essay or a political tract. When I go to a science fiction convention, I do so to be with my friends and to enjoy myself. It doesn't always work out that way, but if it doesn't, it's probably my own fault, my hangups. Yet some of the best and most serious conversations I've ever had have taken place at frivolous conventions and fan parties. But they weren't programmed, or forced down my throat. And if I have managed to overcome some of the prejudices I started out with -- you know them by rote -- it is in large measure because of the people I've encountered in socially-unredeeming science fiction fandom.

It would be the ultimate in self-serving cop-outs to say that I believe in and support the ERA. It would be the easy thing to say; it's "in." I'll leave it this way: if you feel it necessary to judge me, please do so on the basis of what I do -- not what I might say.

I'm sorry, but I don't believe that you can legislate equality on the basis of sex with any greater degree of effectiveness than they tried to do on the basis of color. Some progress was made that way, yes: but not much. Women, blacks, gays, whoever, will get the "rights" they are "entitled" to only when they have the *economic* clout to take them; that's not right, nor is it wrong -- that's the way things work here. Note damn well that I am not saying that the ERA is not to be sought after, fought for, achieved. Simply that it is a step, a goal, a rallying point -- but it is neither the final solution, nor a religion.

I honestly believe that Harlan's actions will hinder, not help, the cause. At least in Arizona. Maybe I'm judging too much on my own reactions, but then again, to attempt any other course would be to pretend to an impartiality I don't possess.

I don't know about you, but if you want to change *my* mind on something that was drilled into me in my formative years -- as most prejudices are -- you are not going to get anywhere with me by shouting. Or by dictating. Or by demeaning me. I am too stubborn; I can turn off very effectively. On the other hand, if you're willing to talk to me, reason with me, most importantly show me that you practice what you preach, then, perhaps... It may take some time: I'm not always as easy as I'd like to be. But if it's worth it to you, you have a chance...

The people I've encountered in 17 years in fandom, the ones I've loved, cared for and gone ridiculous distances to see, have done more to convince me that the prejudices of my parents are wrong than any amount of legislation or flag-waving. In any religion, the most fervent are the recent converts. It seems to be the curse of the Judaeo-Christian ethic that we must atone for our sins, imagined or unintentional as they might be. But what if the convert/crusader alienates the very people you need to reach your goals? Faint hearts never won anything of importance, but neither did over-bearing zealots.

I don't doubt Harlan's current sincerity, believe me. But I can't help feeling that if he did a bit more missionary work and a little less evangelical sermonizing, he might serve the cause better. But then, what do I know? I'm only a fan.

On the night I was belatedly told about my honor in Phoenix, I made two statements. One was that nobody not yet so honored *deserved* to be the science fiction worldcon Guest of Honor more than did Harlan Ellison. The second was that I was immensely proud to share the billing with him. I meant them then. I mean them now.

Harlan Ellison is something very special in the world of science fiction. And the more he pisses me off, the more I love him.

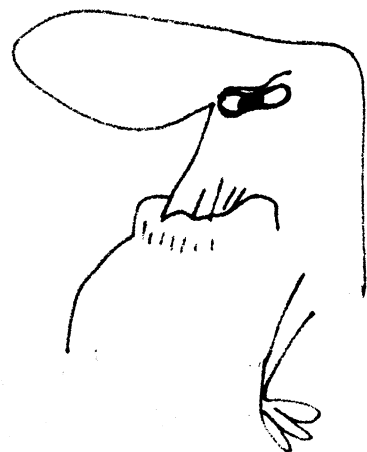
And he *does* piss me off at times!

May I do the same for you...

--Bill Bowers 4/13/78

HARLAN ELLISON REPLIES

HARRRRRUMPH!



If Frank Herbert had been chosen Guest of Honor, and if he had used his position to talk about what would be for him the burning issue of our times, ecology... Bill Bowers would not say a word against him. If Isaac Asimov had been chosen and, because of his recent illness, had announced that he felt the increasing incidence of heart disease to be a subject worthy of extrapolative discussion at a science fiction convention... Bill Bowers would not say a word against him. If Poul Anderson had been chosen and said he was worried about the future of atomic fusion and wanted to speak about it from the platform... Bill Bowers would not say a word against him.

I can't tell you how it cheers me to see that I, and the subject of women's rights, strike Bill Bowers as subjects for parody. He says I am "demeaning" the very high honor of being the Iguanacoon's Pro Guest by expressing a concern for human rights.

Bill Bowers is the fan Guest of Honor, and he responds to my call for serious discussion of a serious subject in the way fans frequently respond to attempts to force them to deal with the real world. He makes a joke of it. And he says I "demean" this great honor by standing up for human rights. The alternative he offers is mindless partying, not shaking things up, being a nice, quiet, hypocritical amusement.

But I presume that being a Guest of Honor indicates I'm being "honored" for the body of work I've produced over the last quarter century. It's certainly not for my winsome manner. But if that's so, and if it is what I've written that is being honored, then the things I write about, the beliefs and passions that fill my writings, the things about which my work is concerned are also being honored... otherwise what is there about me that is worthy of honor?

If Bowers is correct and I have been selected merely because I can draw a crowd, and my speaking out for the ERA will upset the partying of fandom, then he is absolutely correct in suggesting I was a wrong choice. A disastrous choice. Because I take as a commitment to the "honor" an obligation to speak out for that which has motivated my work for twenty-five years. Not to speak so would be a debasement of this "honor."

Yet Bill Bowers tells me women's rights have nothing to do with a science fiction convention...a gathering of supposedly intelligent people joined by a genre of literature that professes--endlessly--a concern for the future of the world and the human race. Bill Bowers tells me I'm "out of line," that I'm "hurting" the convention by asking the assembled fans to share my concern over a problem even Bowers calls "important." He calls me a sermonizer, a shouter, and says I'm dictating to fans. All I did was circulate one solitary statement of personal position and suggest that those who felt similarly act similarly. I order no one, I attack no one, I demean no one. In response to this lone statement, I have received over two hundred letters insulting and damning me, I have fielded phonecalls from nameless fools who threaten my life and warn me not to go to Arizona, I have had to spend endless hours answering just such polemics as Bowers' which display absolutely no familiarity with the ERA or what it says, which is, quite simply and logically, *equality for all, male and female, BEFORE THE LAW*; something that the Constitution does not presently guarantee. When people like Bowers tell me we already have laws that do the job, that we don't need such legislation, I perceive them to be people clearly out of touch with the realities of the situation. They are mouthing foolish platitudes and passing on jingoism. Should I avoid my responsibility merely because Bill Bowers feels there is no place at our annual convention for the discussion of *ideas*?

How the discussion of women's rights and an Equal Rights Amendment can hurt the convention is something I cannot fathom. Will there be fewer panels on such momentous topics as "The Effect of 'Star Wars' on Space Opera" or "Bondage Tropes in the Novels of John Norman" or "Building a Planet?" Will there be any fewer bull sessions, cocktail parties, costume balls, ERBurroughs luncheons, drinking, doping, groupie-chasing, vomiting or baiting of Ted White and Roger Elwood? I think not.

Bowers speaks of "politicizing the convention" with the tone of horror one used to hear attached to phrases like "the Red Menace" or "the New Wave." But just what, precisely, does that mean..."politicizing the convention"? Does he really expect cadres of placard-carrying picketers? Riots? Assassination attempts? Polarization, fist-fights, anarchy, chaos, raised room rates? My God, I'm appalled at all this silliness! Are we talking about the annual convention of the American Nazi Party or a getting-together of intelligent science fiction readers?

Bill Bowers says I deserve to be the Guest of Honor, he says what I'm advocating is admirable and important...he just says I shouldn't say it at the party thrown to honor me. Where, then, would he have me speak out? On a soapbox on the corner? In the silence of my bathroom? At the Christian Science reading room? If he's right, and I'm inappropriate speaking of this pressing contemporary concern at the World Science Fiction Convention, then how can I, in conscience, accept this "honor?" Because if Bill Bowers is judging fandom and the convention correctly, then there is nothing at all important or valuable about our annual convention beyond an opportunity to get together for backslapping and partying. Then we are no better or wiser than Rotarians or Elks. And, in fact, they are better than us because they, at least, support endless charities. What good works does fandom as an organized entity support?

Or is Bill Bowers expressing the quite correct fear of many men that the feminist movement does mean them harm? Because it means, bottom line, the end of the traditional dominant-subservient relationship between men and women in this country and the world. And that is obviously a threat to a great many men.

The big difference between the Guests of Honor this year is that one of them seems to think fans are incapable of dealing intelligently with the pressing issues of the day, that all they want from their annual gathering is an opportunity to party...and the other thinks that what drew him to science fiction and to fandom when he was an impressionable kid is a respect for that unquenchable spark of nobility in all of us, a concern for the future, a concern for humanity.

I lay no claim to great nobility of character, but if Bill Bowers had been the one caught in the kind of ethical bind I find myself in, I don't think I'd have used him as the brunt of parody, nor would I tell him he was being gauche.

Play your parody, Bill. You have lots of support.

The curious thing is that I'm being pilloried for standing for something, for having a passionate commitment; the other Guest of Honor chooses as his commitment a denunciation of *my* beliefs and the forum I find appropriate for voicing them.

If anyone out there disagrees, it would be nice if their voices were similarly raised.

Because if I am given the choice of being a good little boy, of not speaking of matters of substance, and not speaking at all, I would instantly opt for the latter. When this problem first came up, I tried to get out of the Guest of Honorship. If fans really feel it is wrong to try and bring the real world into our sphere of escapism and fantasy, then I should by all means be granted the right of dignified exit from this increasingly terrible situation. Beyond that choice, if I come, be assured I am committed to a mode of behavior already codified; and not even those with whom I share the Guest of Honorship can make me feel like a fool. Even if I am one.

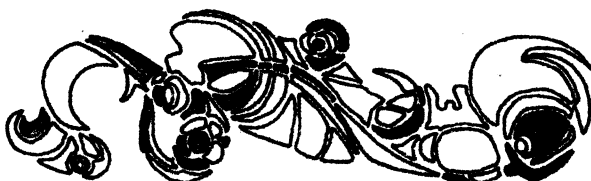
--Harlan Ellison 4/25/78

THE ELLISON CREDO

"Writing has nothing much to do with pretty manners, and less to do with sportsmanship or restraint...

"Every fictioneer re-invents the world because the facts, things or people of the received world are unacceptable. Every fiction writer dreams of imposing his invention upon the world and winning the world's acclaim. (Such dreams are known as delusions of grandeur in pathology but tolerated as expressions of would-be genius in bookstores and libraries.) Every writer begins as a subversive, if in nothing more than the anti-social means by which he earns his keep. Finally, every fantasist who cannibalizes himself knows that misfortune is his friend, that grief feeds and sharpens his fancy, that hatred is as sufficient a spur to creation as love (and a world more common) and that without an instinct for lunacy he will come to nothing."

--Geoffrey Wolff, 1975



EDITORIAL THOTS...

Whew! When the shit hits the fan I guess somebody ought to try and tidy things up a little. That it falls to me, someone who is essentially without emotional commitment to any cause, to try and arbitrate a passionate disagreement between the two worldcon Guests of Honor is ironic indeed. But perhaps a dispassionate fence-sitter is exactly what is called for...

I don't intend to try and persuade you as to the correctness of either of the positions expressed by Harlan and Bill. You can read what they have to say and decide for yourself who comes closer to your own point of view. I see points on both sides that I can agree with, although I'm by no means convinced that either really understands where the other is coming from.

First, though, there is one serious mis-interpretation on Harlan's part that must be cleared away. When Bill stated he was in complete agreement with Harlan's selection as GoH he meant it; Bill's reference to a GoH selected primarily for his drawing power was not a dig at Harlan. Read the last couple of paragraphs of Bill's speech and accept them as an honest statement of his feelings.

Okay...some thoughts...

I stated above that I am not a believer in causes. This happens to be my nature. I can accept intellectually that certain movements, beliefs, causes are meritorious but I am not a crusader. You'll never find me out beating the drum and fighting the good fight, proselytizing or urging others to see the light. I'll try and live my own life in accordance with the principles I see as decent but there is no passion involved in my adherence to them. If someone else disagrees with me, I may think them wrongheaded but I'm unlikely to get worked up about it.

As a result, I can see the humorous side of a clever parody of my own beliefs, such as they are. It's overwhelmingly obvious that passionate devotees to any cause are incapable of finding amusement in an opposing position, no matter how facetious and/or clever it may be. Harlan's sincere emotional commitment to his ethical position as Guest of Honor at Iguanacon has, I think, blinded him to the deftness with which Bill has lampooned him. And "lampoon" is a key word here: what Bill has done is very much in the tradition of Mad Magazine, or of "Saturday Night Live." He's taken some-



one else's work and played with the form of it for humorous effect. I happen to feel he's done it rather well and I also happen to believe that his doing so does not necessarily mean that he's completely opposed to the ideas that Harlan is expounding. There is an obvious and fundamental disagreement between Harlan and Bill but I don't think it's as basic as Harlan makes it out to be. If you read Bill's postscript it is clear that he is not anti-ERA or anti-human-rights or anti-seriousness-at-conventions. In fact, the two of them don't really disagree on the nature of the world at all; they just disagree on the nature of the worldcon.

So which of them is right? Neither? Both? Or is it somewhere in between?

Of course Harlan is right in believing in the ERA. Bill says so. Even I agree fully. (Somebody revive Jessica.) It would be nice to think that in a sub-culture as supposedly-intelligent as fandom, everybody shared such an obviously right-thinking viewpoint. Unfortunately we all know how much credence can be given to the myth of fannish superiority. Nobody that I know of questions the correctness of Harlan's beliefs: what Bill has done is ponder the manner in which Harlan originally appeared to be implementing those beliefs. And that brings us right back to the question of just what the worldcon ought to be.

Personally, I'm with Bill. The Worldcon is, to me, a place to meet my friends and enjoy myself. Since I don't happen to be the sort of person who gets great enjoyment from campaigning for causes, I'm happy with the social sort of convention that Harlan belittles in his refutation of Bill's speech.

But...

Harlan is totally correct in pointing out that my socially-oriented convention is in no way interfered with by the activities that are quintessentially important to him. The trivial occupations that amuse me at a con will not suffer if serious matters occupy even a majority of the attendees. And they normally do. But that wasn't quite what Harlan's original statement seemed to be aimed at and therein, I think, was the source of Bill's concern. (It is obvious that I'm attempting to summarize what I feel to be the positions Bill and Harlan stand for. This is dubious at best, but since Bill has undertaken to reply to what he believes Harlan thinks and Harlan has reacted to what he understands Bill to believe, I guess I'm on as firm ground as either of them!)

The position Harlan puts forth here strikes me as quite a bit milder than that outlined in his original statement. He expresses a desire to discuss the issue of the ERA, to express ideas and speak out on serious matters. Which is precisely what every science fiction convention I've ever attended has done! And who among us would dream of saying there was anything wrong with that? Certainly not Bill Bowers.

Harlan is correct in suggesting that Bill would not object to Frank Herbert talking about ecology or Poul Anderson being concerned about atomic fusion. But Bill Bowers would be enormously concerned were a worldcon Guest of Honor to turn our annual gathering into a platform for racism, or anti-semitism, or nuclear confrontation with the Russians. So, I suspect, would Harlan Ellison! And I think it is that concern that lies behind the objections Harlan has received from fans. A precedent, no matter how well-intentioned, can be the key to much more than we might like.

So. Emotionally I'm with Bill. Intellectually I'm with Harlan. Both are serious and honest in their beliefs. And I'm willing to bet that when the dust clears Iguanacon will be just like any other worldcon: a complicated mixture of seriousness and frivolity which will somehow satisfy both of them and all of us. Any takers?



I awoke with my head ringing. The phone was also ringing. I answered it. Someone wanted to speak to my partner.

"Jethro?" There was no response. I peered through the gloom. The other bed was empty; still made in fact. Then I remembered. "He's not here."

"Yes. Your friend is in a little trouble with the police. Would you like to help him out?"

"Huh?"

"It is not far."

"Yeah. I guess so."

I got dressed. Jethro had borrowed my leather jacket, so I put on a sweater and his nylon shell. And sneakers on my bare feet. I stopped at the desk. "Where's the police station?"

"Just two blocks down, senor."

"Gracias."

"Nada."

"Whatever."

As I stepped onto the street, the honour guard fell in on either side. It was a nice night, but as they had their rifles at the ready I decided to accept their kind offer of a lift. At the station, the captain told me Jethro had been apprehended in posses-

sion of a little grass. "Grass?" "Marijuana." "Oh yeah. I've heard of it."

He asked me to empty my pockets. He didn't seem impressed by my 600 pesos. (\$48.) He was, however, fascinated by my visa. "You have a car?"

"Jethro has a car."

"Where is it?"

"At the hotel."

"Wait in there, please." "There" was a cell. I stretched out on a cot. About a half-hour later I was invited out by the local constabulary. They offered me some of their chicken feet with chili. Chicken feet didn't grab me; and I loathe chili. But Mom always told me, when a man with a gun smiles and offers you something, smile and accept.

I smiled. I accepted. I regretted.

They laughed.

The captain returned, accompanied by a runt wearing a beige suit and a coprophagous grin. Secret police, as I later learned. He strode over and threw one arm playfully over my shoulder and, with the other, punched me playfully in the stomach. I thought of kicking him playfully in the balls. He ushered me into another office, and there was Jethro. And there was a table covered with bags of grass. "Sietenté-cinquo."

He either looked very young for his age, or there were seventy-five bags of dope on that table. We were going for a ride.

Almost. We'd just gotten in the car when some turkey with a camera came running up and pointed it at us. I raised my hand to shield my face, but the runt grabbed it and forced it down. FLASH. Then the runt got out and said a few words to the turkey. The turkey smiled and nodded vigorously. Seems we weren't going for a ride just yet.

The runt stood us behind the table. The turkey pointed the camera. I moved away from the table. The turkey frowned at the runt. The runt frowned at me. I moved back to the table. The turkey smiled at the runt. The runt smiled at me. I smiled at the turkey. Jethro made a gesture. FLASH.

The runt and the turkey chatted while the uniformed boys packed away the evidence. "Sietente-tres." The runt frowned again. Well, anyone can make a mistake.

(You know, as much as that last scene pissed me off, it was the luckiest break we got. The jacket I was wearing, Jethro's, had our university crest on it. That photo was the only way our Embassy had of knowing that two of its citizens were in jail somewhere in Mexico City. It took them a week to find us.)

We finally took that ride, to police headquarters. We were dumped in a holding cell with some other miscreants. In the morning we all shuffled into a waiting room where each in turn told his story. Jethro said he'd been arrested while out for a walk. I said I'd been arrested out of my hotel. *(In fact, no-one had ever mentioned 'arrest' to me. However, I began to suspect when the captain asked me to wait in a cell.)* They asked me who owned the car. I indicated my partner.

The head honcho mumbled something in a heathen tongue, and a flunky took Jethro by

the arm. "Stiff upper lip, old chap. I'll have the Embassy on your case within the hour." Then another flunky took me by the arm. "Actually, it may take a bit longer."

Another ride. To Schlachthof Quatro. Or something like that. We were left in a cell with four cement bunks. Three had blankets on them. Oddly variegated for government issue. A few moments later our six cellmates trooped in. We had just missed breakfast.

None of the others spoke any English that day. Late in the afternoon, Jethro and I were collected for another ride. It was back to police headquarters, this time to the office of a division chief. Inside was another table covered with grass. Same grass. The chief never asked us anything. After a while, some reporters arrived and asked us questions. We told our story and they snapped some pictures of us sitting behind the dope. Apparently we were there strictly for the publicity. I asked the chief if we could contact our Embassy.

"Momentito."

Motherfucker.

We were shipped back to Schlachthof Quatro. We just missed dinner. It was cold that night, but we didn't notice. We were too tired. In all we went 36 hours without even a drink of water.

Next morning we discovered that breakfast consisted of beans and coffee. That afternoon we discovered our cellmates could speak English. They read us the news.

We made the entire back page, in one paper. Apparently we had been arrested trying to sell grass in a restaurant. In another paper, we were also charged with the rape of a 13 year old girl. *(We later found out the official police statement said we'd been arrested on the street, together, carrying the dope in our knapsacks.)* That evening we discovered that dinner consisted of beans and coffee.

We were sent to three other jails over the next two weeks, mostly in an attempt to prevent our Embassy from finding us. Finally, however, they did, and quickly had us sprung. The Mexicans as quickly got us deported. Otherwise they would have had to produce our car, luggage, money and identification. Embarrassing!

(I'm leaving out most of our sojourn 'inside,' because two weeks is too short a time to get a representative cross-section of prison life. Any description could only mislead and possibly harm those who used it as a reference. Suffice it to say that I witnessed graft, homosexuality, violence and suicide. Until you've lived in a physical environment precluding exercise, and a mental environment pervaded with fear, with nothing to drink but coffee, you have no idea what pressure is. But what I have written is exactly what it's like to take "the Fall in Mexico.")

"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."

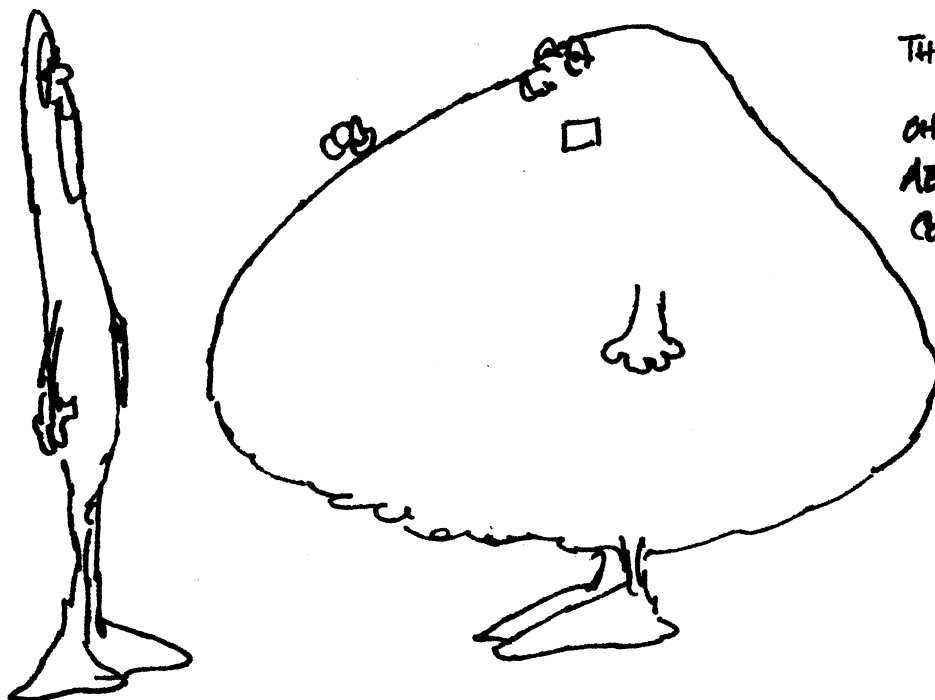
CONSEQUENCES

The best laid plans of Mikes and fen, as we all know, get oft derailed. A famous Scottish gentleman said that. I think it was Johnnie Walker.

I'd had in mind to write about some of the conventions that highlighted the summer of 77 but here it is almost the summer of 78 and certain circumstances mitigate against my former plans. Foremost among them must be my basic inability to remember many -- or even any -- details of a gathering that took place almost a year ago. That Dave Locke considers such material to be the very nadir of fanzine writing is merely added incentive to practice a degree of self-restraint I normally do not possess.

Still, while self-denial may be good for the soul, it does leave me with somewhat of a problem. One of the main reasons I wished to write about, for example, the 1977 Wilcon, was so as to have an excuse to publish the Randy Bathurst Memorial Wilcon Paper Plate. And if I don't do it, who will preserve for fannish posterity the Derek Carter reactions to the 1976 Midwestcon? Perhaps a little self-indulgent reminiscing can be excused in the light of such lofty and aesthetic goals.

Of course, when one really gets down to it, the reactions of my acerbic roommate to a convention need no lengthy explanations. Anyone who has ever attended any convention where there was a swimming pool will understand the following...



THIS IS MY MIDWESTCON PAUNCH.
OH LOVELY. I HAVEN'T BEEN
ABLE TO ATTEND TOO MANY
CONS THIS YEAR.
SO I SEE.

It is considerably more difficult, however, to capture the feeling of a Wilcon for someone who has never attended one of the Stopas annual Fourth of July parties. For me, at least, time seems to be suspended on Wilmot Mountain. The days blend together in an almost continuous stream of party activities: one talks, drinks, plays, smokes, loves, swims, listens, exercises and occasionally even eats. The individual emphasis, of course, depending on one's make-up.

Last year, without really meaning to, I found myself almost frenetically involved in an amazing round of card-playing, drinking and gamesmanship. Friday night came and went in a welter of poker games, frisbees and pinball. And empty bottles. Saturday slipped by in similar fashion, culminating in several more card games and producing one wasted fane who was too exhausted to admit he was verging on the catatonic. Besides, I was still cleaning up at the poker table! (My apparent comatose condition was, of course, an act designed to lull my fellow card players into a false sense of security... Coff, coff...)

I finally did collapse, for an hour and fifteen minutes, and Randy Bathurst captured the essence of my excesses in a paper plate. Entitled "WILCON 77: GREAT MOMENTS IN VALOR" and subtitled "The Marathon Man" it summarizes the wildness that, to the foolish among us, is Wilcon... Or perhaps I should say was Wilcon...



"Canada is a country where everyone feels so much more comfortable with amateurs."

--Barbara Amiel, *Toronto Life*, Nov. 1975

ANOTHER THIS-IS-NOT-A-LETTERCOLUMN SECTION

Despite my constant reassurances that locs on XENIUM aren't at all necessary, fans all over the world keep sending me material most other fanzines would be delighted to print. Terry Hughes wrote a treatise on enemas, for example, that would have moved even the hardest faned. But this is still XENIUM, I'm afraid, the Loc-less Monster of personalzines and all those painstakingly crafted essays and witticisms will serve only to make this proud and lonely faned happy without earning fame and egoboo for their creators. But you'll all get another issue of XENIUM and let that be a warning to you of the dangers of too-hasty letterhacking!

My very sincere thanks to the following trufans who responded to XENIUM 2.7...

JOHN BROSNAN, HARRY BELL, ERIC LINDSAY, RANDY MOHR, TERRY HUGHES, JON SINGER, JOAN HANKE-WOODS, VIRGINIA HEINLEIN, ED CAGLE, GEORGE FLYNN, BRUCE TOWNLEY, BEN ZUHL, GARTH DANIELSON, SUSAN WOOD, GEORGE PACZOLT, PHIL STEPHENSEN-PAYNE, BOB SILVERBERG, MIKE BRACKEN, BOB BLOCH, LINDA MOSS, STEPHANIE OBEREMBT, BILL BRIDGET, ALAN BOSTICK, REED ANDRUS, IRA THORNHILL, IAN WILLIAMS, MARY LONG, DAVE LANGFORD, CAROLYN DOYLE, ROY TACKETT, BRIAN EARL BROWN, and CAS SKELTON who faunched to be a "charming wife" just like Sadie Shaw. Okay, Cas: you are hereby designated a "seductive spouse," okay?

Amidst the plethora of superlatives describing Derek's cover and Joe's article for last issue, however, there was one especially appealing response. Anything a fan does once becomes a tradition; if it gets done twice, it's a well-established tradition. And three times must make it part of fannish history. I'm not sure what it is about this fanzine that compels English fans to write wittily about alcohol (perhaps they are trying to educate by example?) but here for the third straight issue, complete with esoteric anglofannish references, is that part of XENIUM known as

..... LITTLE KNOWN ENGLISHMAN OF THE ISSUE

..... Starring DAVE LANGFORD

Accept (please do) my craven, grovelling thanks for XENIUM. Also for your postcard, perusal of which brought tears to my gall bladder and left me a changed person. Perhaps your gift of a swizzle-stick will help me erase the brain-cells you have so punnily contaminated; perhaps not, as upon reflection (I am, of course, sitting on a mirror as I write) your humble correspondent recalls that he doesn't drink Mixed Things. Gin-and-tonic lasted longer than anything else, but finally I gave it up, no longer able to stand the morning-after feeling of a solid column of eau-de-cologne from gorge to sinus.

Of course, I could always use your gerbil-stick to stir more scotch into my scotch, but this would destroy the thrilling "taste sensation" of sipping through a layer of scotch to find the exciting layer of scotch beneath.

As for vodka combinations, there is no point in drinking them. One might as well spend the evening on some loathsome soft drink and administer the *coup de grace* with a Mickey Finn towards midnight. I want my drinks to taste of drink. Moreover, the stern moral warnings of the hangover are supposedly muted after an evening on this flavourless substitute for good honest meths; if vodka practices euthanasia upon one's scattering of remaining neurones, while whiskey kicks them to pulp with utmost brutality, one should surely choose the latter if only to keep track of the Warning Signs noted by Greg Pickersgill. Such as death.

There are, of course, other drinks such as Bacardi etc (just to forestall you, Mike -- in a Stan vs. Ollie competition I'd Bacardi any day) which, like vodka, are the same old surgical spirit with different labels. Real (dark) rum and brandy are much more acceptable but tend to pursue a scorched-earth policy within the cortex after consumption, not to mention having a similar effect on the bank-balance before. Liqueurs do both these things and rot your teeth as well. This learned discussion is confined to neat spirits because savant Langford doesn't like mixers; what's more, experiments conducted over many years by our most perpetually paralytic writer (Kingsley Amis---see his On Drink) indicate that neat spirits are less deadly to the system than spirits diluted to the point of maximum tissue-absorption; i.e., with about 50% water or whatever.

Through adherence to the neat-spirits policy I contrived to comport myself at Skycon



with a certain shambling dignity, until undone by sheer accident (or perhaps by Chris Atkinson: she's like that) when at a room party I inadvertently tripped over Jim Baen's legs (which were just lying around on the floor somewhere near him) and only saved myself by hanging on to something which proved to be Rob Holdstock and Marianne Leconte and Chris the aforementioned Atkinson. This of course was amplified in Rob's booze-filmed eyes; after passing through an intermediate version wherein I attempted to rape him, Chris and Marianne simultaneously, the story now has me stumbling about the Skycon corridors for long hours, feeling up any lady or Malcolm Edwards who ventured too close and debagging, deflowering or defenestrating the hotel security force... Unfortunately my memory of that night is so full of rubble and craters that I can deny nothing with any conviction.

...Since writing the above I've spent a quick lunch-hour at the sending-off party of a departing colleague, consisting largely of beer. That is, the party consisted largely of beer, though my ex-colleague made noble efforts in that direction. The ensuing scenes, dis-

gusting to view, made me consider whether I should have discussed beer in the above scientific treatise... Personally I tend to think of beer-drinking as a social occasion on a par with a tea-party or Kaffeeklatsch, since my consumption rarely exceeds two or three pints of the best local brew (Courage Directors); this is partly because of licensing hours (the craving for beer rarely strikes before 9.30pm, and the pubs shut at 10.30 or 11) and partly because of the beer's bloating effect. Other drinks have a positive-feedback loop in which, after a few, your sense of moderation is dulled and you're eager for more; good beer operates by negative-feedback, being so very filling that as you drink it you have less and less desire to drink it. Someone who becomes paralytic on beer alone must have a strong stomach in the most literal sense; I regard him with the same distrust as I would a caffeine-junkie who contrived to be reduced to helplessness by quarts of coffee.

This has been an attempt to sound sufficiently interesting (perhaps in the pathological sense) to win the whimsical favours of the editor of XENIUM, though I'll forego the favours and settle for a copy of the next issue if need be...

...Dave Langford



 "Met an authentic Jesus Person today on Greenleaf Ave., main drag of Whittier. Somewhat like being back on Yonge Street in dear dead days of immemorial past. No pamphlet, though; straight ahead attack: "Have you met God?"

"Huh?" I riposted.

"Have you met God?"

"Well... Not personally."

"Um," he riposted. We reposted a lot. Like for half an hour... Cain't argue with folks like them there. Claimed, he did, I swear, that God spoke through his mouth. Confidentially, God did not observe all rules of English grammar. God used double negatives. Frankly, God don't talk too good. This is a sad revelation to me. All my religious friends will be greatly saddened also. Perhaps I should keep it to myself."

Bob Wilson, *OSFiC EVENTUALLY*, 1974

SOMETHING EXTRA: THAT'S THE TICKET!



We all need a little something to look forward to I guess. The lottery tickets in this issue -- at a dollar each, an average of two a week -- certainly fills that need. A lottery ticket is one of the most ridiculous forms of gambling: tantamount to throwing your money away. Unless you win, of course! Then it's one hundred thousand tax-free dollars to realize those dreams you fill

the occasional idle moment with. And even in Canadian dollars that's a lot of cons, scotch, books, paintings and travelling! So I invest in my dreams, a measly couple of bucks a week, and look forward to motorbikes and Selectrics and First Class seats on planes. And since I've never won at least I've got Something Extra to send out with XENIUM...

ART CREDITS: Randy Bathurst.....18	Vic Kostrikin.....2
Harry Bell.....12,20	Bill Rotsler.....9,17
Derek Carter.....3,4,17	Joan Hanke-Woods.....14

SPECULATION ON THE SUPERIORITY OF GUINNESS: "Your agent has wondered if the difference all along was the water. But you would think, offhand, that this would work in our favor. Consider the drinking water in B.C. -- clear, pristine glacial water from the dewy brows of the mountain gods. In contrast, one imagines Irish water to be thick, brown, peaty stuff, polluted by leprechaun excrement."

Trevor Lautens, Vancouver Sun

"Do you remember Charnox of the Gods? The incontrovertible evidence that small humanoid creatures have been known to live inside women, and eventually to leave them from a southerly exit to become what we call babies? That these 'babies' are, in fact, an alien invasion which began thousands of years ago?

Of course you remember.
Now you must read Was God A Poof?

Why is there no Mrs God?

Is it just a coincidence that all the angels are male and have names like Gabriel, Jeremy and Keith?

Was the immaculate conception merely proof that there was no in at the womb - or is there more to it?

Was God A Poof? provides all the questions and none of the answers."

Leroy Kettle, TRUE RAT FOUR



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