

Random Jottings 17  
A Corflu 36 Fanthology

**FIAWOL.**



Steve  
Stiles





# Random Jottings 17

## The Corflu Fanthology Issue



*Random Jottings* 17, The Corflu Fanthology Issue, is edited by Michael Dobson (editor@timespinnerpress.com) and published by The Canal Press (thecanalpress.com). It is available for The Usual, and automatically if you are a member of Corflu 36. It is available in print form through Amazon, and in PDF at [efanzines.com/RandomJottings](http://efanzines.com/RandomJottings). Copyright © 2019 The Canal Press on behalf of the creators, CC BY-SA 4.0.

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Cover and Back Cover by Steve Stiles

# Scanners Live in Vain

editorial by Michael Dobson

Experiments are by definition always successful, in the sense that you always get an answer, whether or not it was the one you wanted. Corflu 36 FIAWOL has been an opportunity for me to try a number of things. All the experiments have been educational, though some haven't worked out as well as I'd hoped. I'm going to count this fanthology as one of the better experiments, and hope you'll agree.

Unlike most publications, in which the editor exercises judgment, I went with crowdsourcing, inviting fans to submit whatever pieces of fanwriting or fanart they thought deserved another shot at an audience. There was some skepticism. Andy Hooper wrote, "Sounds like a glorious trainwreck," and to illustrate his point sent a page from a Damon Knight drunken one-shot complete with nonstopparagraphing. Pat Charnock said, "Will you be exercising any editorial judgment...or are we really being invited to submit anything we want to, of any length, and you'll publish it?"

Basically, yes. But I did require all submitters to provide an introduction explaining why the piece was chosen. That seemed to do the trick. Several submitters didn't stop at a single contribution, bringing still more classic fanwriting to the fore.

I initially requested that people scan the original fanzine pages. While it takes some work to make them suitable for printing, I thought that it would give the fanthology a more fannish flavor and preserve some of the glory of the original work. A few people went that route, but most decided to retype their articles, some simply as text both others trying to recreate the original format. Sandra Bond decided that letters of comment on an article were part of the fannish context, and provided the complete commentary on Ted White's "The Politics of Fandom." (The original article appears in the form of scans, but the letters had to be retyped for practicality.)

Under the (nonexistent) rules, you could submit your own work, and many did. In the case of the four art portfolios (in order of appearance, Steve Stiles, Grant Canfield, Jay Kinney, and Dan Steffan), the artists themselves chose their best classic work.

The submissions are in order of receipt, more or less, so you can easily see who procrastinated. Just in time for the deadline, Jeff Schalles sent a sequel to his earlier piece, "Looking for Sunset Mountain," which appears as the very last piece. The last line, "What a long strange trip it's been," certainly captures the spirit of this fanthology, and indeed of Corflu 36.

I do intend to keep experimenting with this, so if you find the perfect classic piece, make a note of it. I may be back for more. In the meantime, enjoy this collection of fan writing and art chosen by you, the long, strange, tripping readers.

# A Steve Stiles Portfolio

## Steve Stiles

It all started in 1954 with MAD: It's Harvey Kurtzman's fault, which is an old story with a lot more cartoonists than I'm probably aware of.

I was at home, sick with the flu, and my grandmother brought me a stash of new comics: Little Lulu, Carl Barks' Uncle Scrooge, Hopalong Cassidy, Gene Autry, and MAD #11, which sported a very strange cover by Basil Wolverton, mimicking LIFE magazine's format: I had never seen such a thing! Intrigued, I opened this strange new comic and the first thing I saw was "FLESH GARDEN!," illustrated by Wallace Wood, and Dr. Noah Zark is tied to a dinner table, amid salt, pepper and ketchup, with a very grotesque alien drooling over him with a knife and fork in its tentacles. And Flesh is saying, "Let us not leap to conclusions, Dale!... What makes you think this alien creature is going to eat Dr. Zark?"

Boom! I was hooked! I had been a big fan of Pogo and L'il Abner back then, but for some reason it took Wood and Kurtzman to push me over the edge: suddenly I wanted to be a cartoonist!

Later, I became hooked on the more serious E.C. titles, especially Al Feldstein's science fiction comics; the latter featured adaptations of Ray Bradbury stories like "The Million Year Picnic" and "A Sound Of Thunder." When E.C. folded I then sought out more Bradbury fiction at my public library, and at some point I decided to check out some of the other authors. Like Robert A. Heinlein and Isaac Asimov. Hooked again!

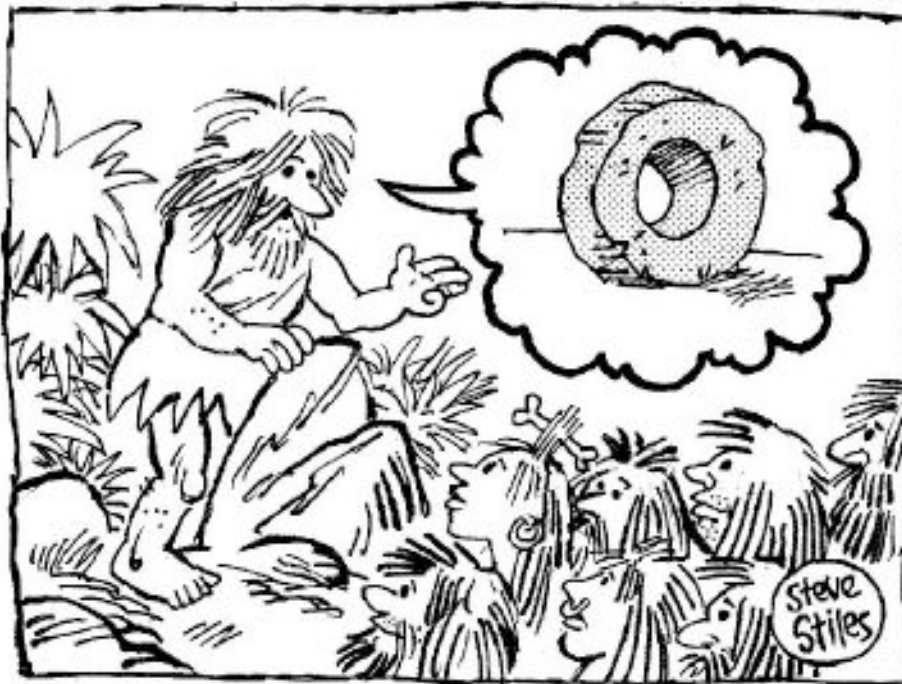
By 1957 I was exchanging letters with a fellow E.C. fan I had contacted through Larry Shaw's Infinity magazine. His name was Peter Francis Skeberdis and I got into the habit of including little scribbles with my letters to Peter; he sent one of them to a fanzine.

Just before I left for my first day at the High School of Music and Art --Harvey Kurtzman's alma mater!--an envelope addressed to me arrived in the early mail (we had that back in those days!); I opened it to discover this strange thing called CRY OF THE NAMELESS #116, edited by F.M. and Elinor Busby, and featuring a cover by Atom, Arthur Thomson, depicting a drooling bem oogling a photo of bikini clad young woman.

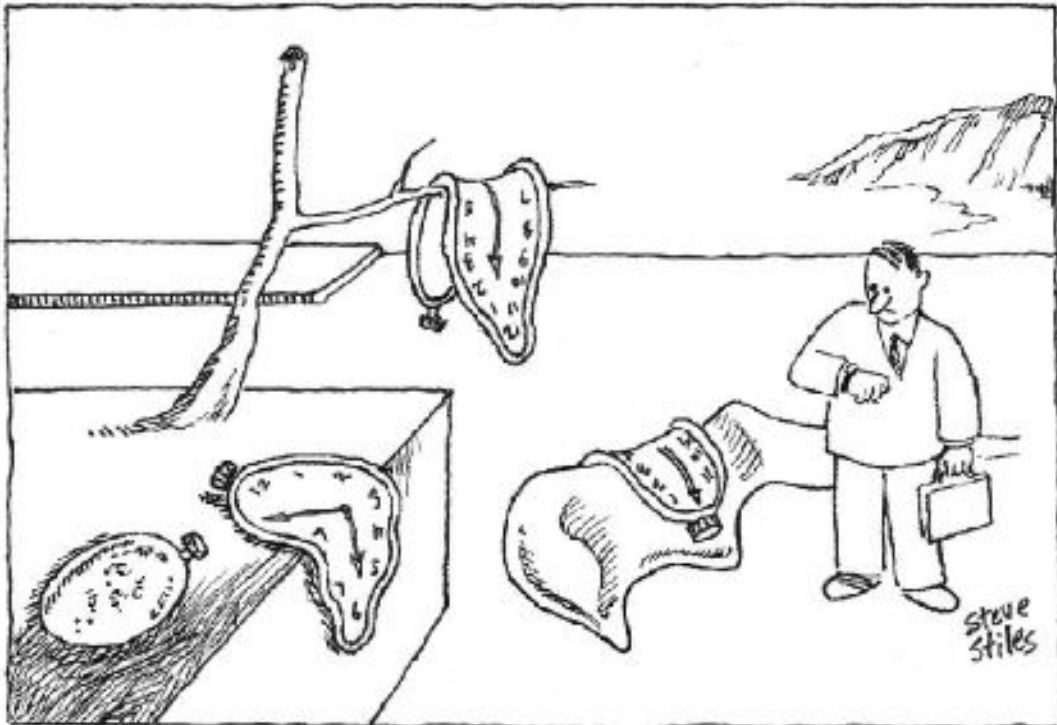
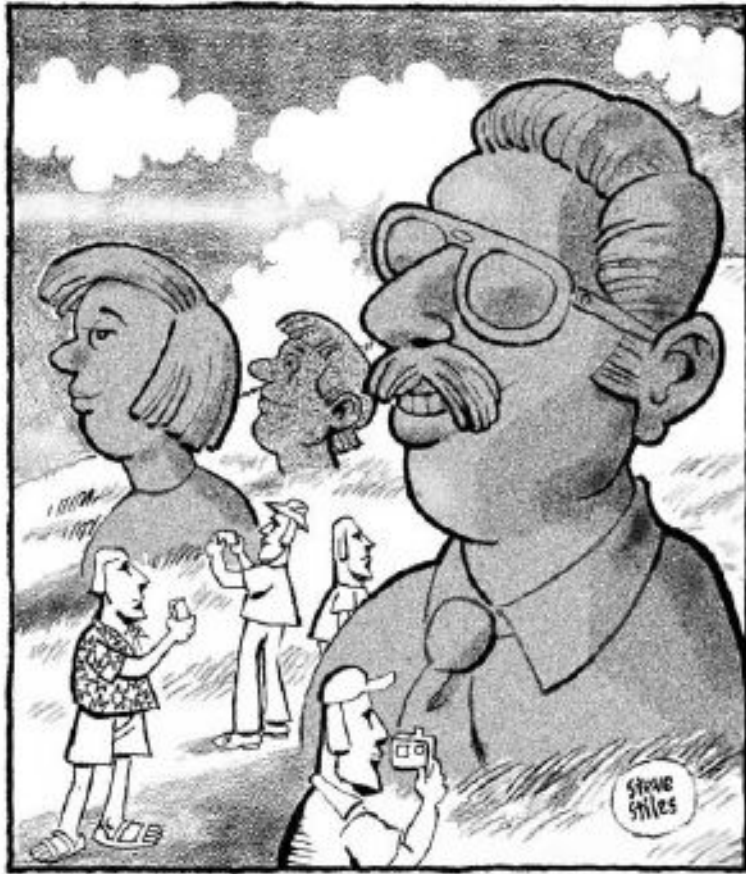
Imagine my surprise when I discovered that Skeberdis had sent one of my awful scrawls to CRY and that the editors had printed it! My art in PRINT! And so it began.



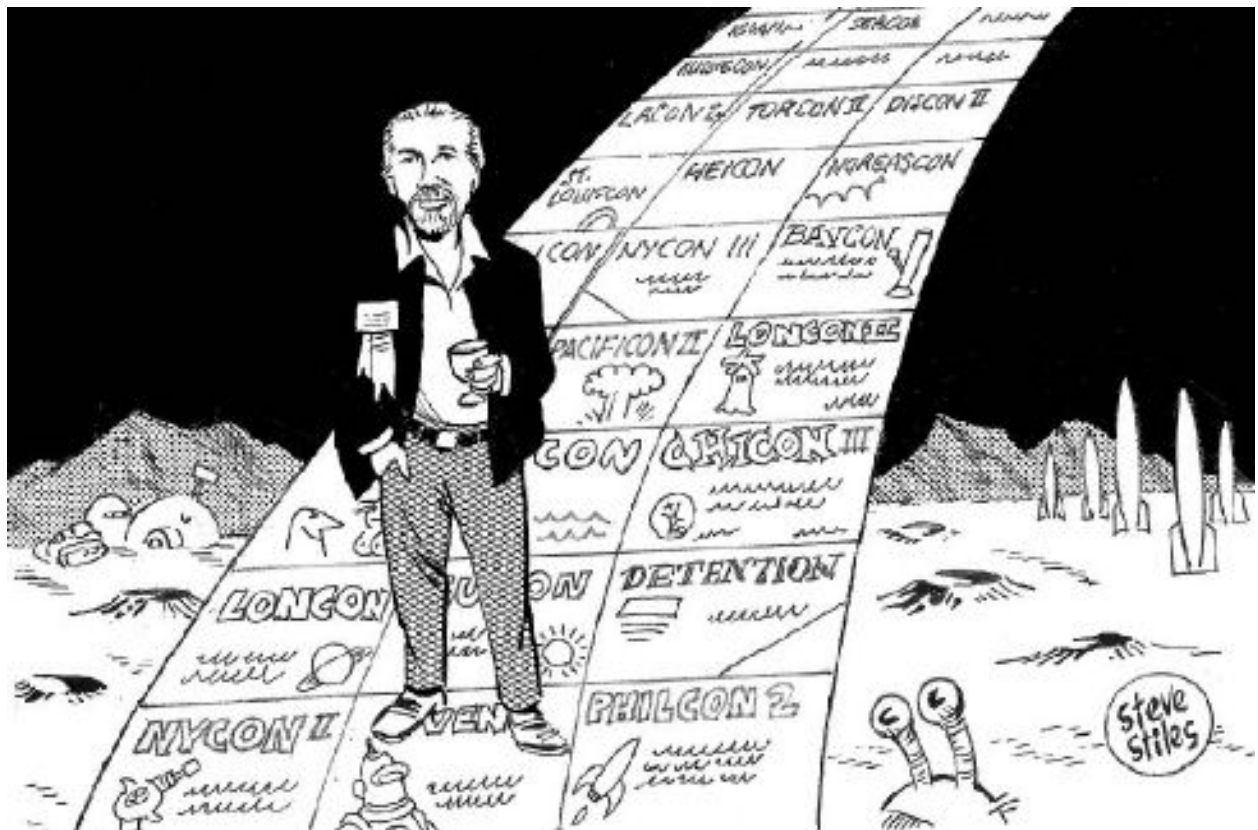
## FIRST SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION













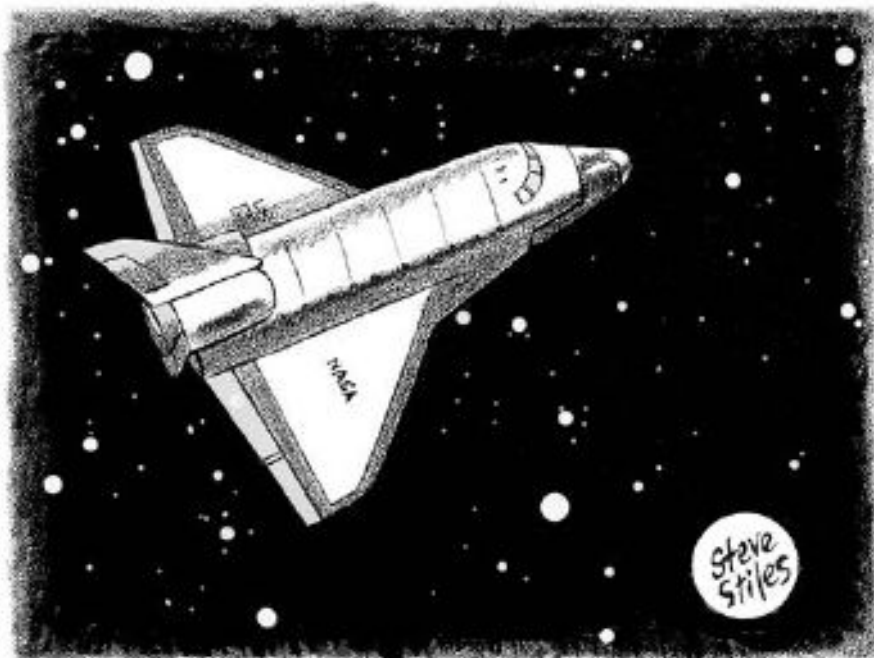
"Screw the Ring! One more Jehovah's Witness and it's goodbye Mordor, hello Shire!"



# Sense of WONDER Stories







*No wonder they're not twinkling anymore—we're out of gin!*



Evidently Cthulhu was out that evening.



WORLD LEADERS ARE GREEDY, BLOODTHIRSTY  
MANIACS WITH THE MORALITY OF CRIMINALS!



*Try Photoshop.*





# Living in the Seventies

Kim Huett

Kim Huett has been around since the eighties and that's all you're getting because he finds writing biographical material an unpleasant task and doesn't believe writing such is worth the effort as nobody willingly reads biographical introductions anyway due to their extreme tediousness.

Why these articles?

Well for starters, all three of these pieces are set during the seventies and I have very fond memories of the world as it existed then. Furthermore, while I didn't move to Sydney till 1981 and thus didn't begin to experience big-city life for myself till nearly a decade after the stories presented here, in many ways the world they describe are full of experiences I myself know only too well (well except for John's encounter with that gang of street thugs). Drive-ins? I remember them well (saw *Star Wars* for the very first time at a drive-in in 1977). Unsalubrious inner-city apartments? The first place I lived in after moving to Sydney was a tiny single room with access to communal facilities in a decaying old mansion. Dubiously maintained communal living? Being on the fastidious side I never descended to the planet of the dogs level myself but I did have friends who did and visiting them was always an adventure. (For anybody with fond memories of inner-city grunge living I'd recommend John Birmingham's book *He Died With a Falafel In His Hand*, or the film *Dogs In Space*, for the full Aussie version of the experience.) Then there's the interconnection of it all. The way those fans crept into each other's stories appeals to me greatly. Even John Brosnan manages to name-check John Ryan and John Bangsund in an otherwise seemingly unfannnish tale of urban existence.

— Kim Huett

# Fit the First - The Origin of PLEH! -

## by Peter House

Appeared in *Pleh!*, published by Leigh Edmonds for *Anzapa* #16, April 1971

Our story starts in the censor's office, where Roger Corman's film of E.A. Poe's *Premature Burial* had hung in chains for nigh on ten years, convicted of the heinous crime of attempting to pollute our pure and chaste theatres with its filth and depravity.

After its incarceration (not to mention a small castration) they decided to risk releasing it on an unsuspecting public, planning to blame the wave of crime and sexual depravity that must surely follow on sunspots. Besides, with all this new permissiveness overseas their shelves were rapidly becoming overcrowded.

Breathing a prayer of thanks for meat pies, cold beer, and common sense I and four other brave and intrepid idiots set off for a drive-in located in the depths of darkest Brooklyn (an outer Melbourne suburb). This merry band consisted of Paul Stevens (part-time vampire, full-time sex-maniac), Mervyn Binns (known as "rubbish" to his friends, moonlighter of books, and delighter of fans), Leigh Edmonds (all fan, all man, pure heart, and mind like a garbage can), Malcolm Sims (inventor of the double breast-bone, master of the grinding gear change, and body-snatching ghoul par excellence). Last, but not least, we have Peter House, who three squirrels spent half of last winter trying to stuff up a tree... need I say more?

Since both Mervin and Malcolm had cars it became necessary to split into two groups. Malcolm knew where the drive-in was, so he was to lead with Paul and Merv following in the station wagon. Probably due to deep-seated masochistic impulses, I decided to travel (how can such a simple word be used to describe an experience so terrifying) with Malcolm... Leigh's reason was much simpler, he just didn't KNOW!

For anyone who has not been to the club I should explain that it is half-way down a lane which, having driven up, you must back out (which may not be good English, but is

certainly good logic). During this relatively simple operation Malcolm managed to (a) narrowly miss parked cars on three separate occasions. (b) scare ten years off the respective lives of an elderly couple who happened to be crossing the lane as we emerged, (c) created heart conditions in anyone who happened to be coming up the one-way street we then backed in to. The latter Malcolm accomplished by the simple expedient of sailing merrily down towards them while he searched for a forward gear... any forward gear!

I turned around to reassure Leigh, just as we shot through a red light that myopic Malcolm had failed to notice, but as Leigh was busy kneeling in front of his seat to pray and write out his Last Will & Testament I decided not to interrupt him.

Despite the perverse enjoyment I was deriving from the mental image of Stevens going crazy in the car behind I felt compelled to point out to Malcolm that we were supposed to be leading the others, not racing them.

Mr Edmonds was no longer taking any interest in proceedings, and the only indication that we had that he was still in the car was an occasional whimper emerging from the depths of an overcoat on the back seat.

As we shot past the Rising Sun Hotel in Footscray a trembling hand crept from under the folds of the fore mentioned garment and shakily proceeded to write the letters P L E H on our misty back window. Stevens, in the car behind, assuming it was some sort of obscene remark directed at him made an appropriate gesture in return.

Seeking enlightenment from the white face that surfaced every five minutes for breathing purposes, I was informed that the word was HELP! A desperate plea for deliverance from the clutches (not to mention gears and assorted motorised implements) of “Mad Malcolm, the Maniacal Motorist.”

With a sadistic chuckle (cleverly disguised as a pitying croak) I pointed out that, instead of reversing the direction of the letters, he had reversed the letters themselves, thus creating a whole new word. This revelation was apparently too much for his overtaxed brain to bear, and with an agonised groan, he buried his head in the corner of the back seat and began to feverishly chew on the upholstery.

While hurtling down Geelong Rd at about twice the speed limit I told Malcolm not to worry about Leigh since his teeth weren't very sharp. For what must have been the sixth



or seventh time we seemed to have lost Stevens and Co., so I told Sims to come down below the speed of sound so our hapless pursuers would have a chance to catch up. Since I'd seen the drive-in whizz past five minutes ago it also seemed like a good idea to start looking for a turn-off road.

After ten minutes of crawling along at a mere 50 mph we had sighed no turn-off road and no station wagon containing two maniacs bent on our homicide, so we pulled into a garage for instructions.

As the attendant walked up to help us Malcolm accidentally put his foot on the accelerator instead of the brake. From the top of a petrol bowser our friend then gave us detailed instructions on how to get to a certain place and what to do when we got there. This was not a great deal of help since our 'drivers' present style had already demonstrated his ability to get us to that particular location without any such advice.

After Malcolm had agreed to drape his feet out the window where they could be seen by all concerned, we were able to coerce the petrified petrol-pusher from his parrot-like perch. He then gave us a set of instructions which a five year old could follow. Much to my surprise so could Malcolm, and within ten minutes we were paying our entrance fee into this passion pit with celluloid diversions.

Now that we were finally here it seemed like a waste of time. What fright film could hope to match the terrors of our journey to its place of exhibition?

Since we had not sighted the Stevens/Binns vehicle in the last half hour we assumed they had somehow arrived before us. The only way to find them then was to do a circuit of the drive-in, and this Malcolm proceeded to... at about 40 to 50 mph. Have you ever hurtled around a three-quarters full drive-in, dodging in and out between cars, flying up and down the mounds that the speakers are set on at fifty miles per hour? It's an experience not soon forgotten.

Showing a thither to unsuspected yearning for suicide, I found myself enjoying this flirtation with disaster. However, a strangled yelp from the back seat plainly showed that Edmonds was not sharing our enthusiasm. Looking behind me I was confronted with the sight of a long-haired, purple-faced maniac, his hands clutching convulsively in the direction of Malcolm's neck. From his quivering lips there were issued but two words, "S-T-O-P I-T!!!"

Having spotted the station wagon Mr Sims pulled up to a speaker nearby and did precisely that. Peeling himself off the front windscreen, Leigh cast a terror filled glance at Malcolm and fled screaming towards the station wagon. I don't think it was the screaming that made us the center of attention. More likely it was the fact that he didn't bother to open the car door as he left... This is not a common sight, even at the Brooklyn Drive-In.

Throwing himself to his knees beside the car containing Paul and Merv he mumbled incoherently and gestured wildly in our direction. After watching this display for some seconds Stevens exchanged glances with Binns, wound up his window on the still babbling figure, and then the both of them burst into fits of hysterical laughter.

Edmonds arose with dignity and walked slowly back to our car with his head bowed and collapsed onto the back seat, weeping softly.

“Don't worry,” I told a surprised Malcolm. “He always was a rather nervous passenger.”

# Fit the Second – The Perils of Sydney

by John Brosnan

Appeared in *Why Bother?* #2, published by John Brosnan for *Anzapa* #3,  
February 1969

My changes of occupation always seem to coincide with other changes in my life. When I started work at the Pocket Bookshop a friend of mine from Perth, Richard Harmer, also arrived in Sydney. Previously we'd decided to share a flat together, so his arrival sparked off a flat hunt and a subsequent shift from the Ryan stronghold at Fairfield to Kensington (and a sudden drop in living standards). Looking back, I can see that we were too hasty. I can't think of any other reason why we picked that dump. For \$20 we got two rooms and a kitchen. Kitchen... ha! Our landlord, Clive ("Call me Clive, boys") had cunningly sub-divided a broom cupboard six times and called the result kitchens. We also got to share a bathroom... if we were lucky.

Before long, as was to be expected, I had committed most of the cliché mistakes of the new, naive flat dweller. I had blown out all the fuses in the building after changing a light globe. I had blown up a can of steak and onions. This resulted from placing the can directly on the hot plate so as not to 'waste time mucking about with water in a saucepan'. When it swelled up like a balloon I became alarmed, "Hey," I said to Richard, "Don't be surprised if a geyser of steak and onions goes spurting up the wall."

I stuck the opener in the can and - lo and behold - a geyser of steak and onions went spurting up the wall. The stain is probably still there, unless the new occupants have cleaned up the place.

I broke an egg and not only missed the frying pan with it, but also missed the stove. They don't make egg shells like they use to.

I set fire to the kitchen stove. This was the most exciting incident. I was sitting on a stool reading while I waited for some garbage to cook, when I noticed a strange odour. (For an odour to be noticed in that place it had to be really strange.) For a time I ignored it until it became so strong that even someone as dense as me had to realise that something was amiss. Finally after much sniffing it occurred to me to check the stove. I opened the door and flames shot out.

Quickly I shut it.

My quick glance had revealed that the source of the fire was in the grease drip-tray or whatever the professionals call the thing. With this bit of info assimilated I began to wonder about putting it out. What does one do with a grease fire? Throw water on it? Or wet sand? Or was it a wet blanket? Where could I get a wet blanket?

Keeping cool and perfectly calm I decided to ignore it for awhile. I began to read again.

Black smoke started to curl out from under the door.

Panic.

It was time for decisive action. I shot out the door and almost collided with a fellow flat-dweller just coming out of his own kitchen.

"Excuse me," I said, "but my stove is on fire."

He raised his eyebrows, "What?"

"My stove is on fire," I repeated.

"Oh. . ." he said. There was a lengthy pause, and then he said, "Let's see." I led him inside and opened the oven door. On cue the flames roared out.

"Hmm," he said, and stood there staring at the bloody thing for what seemed ages. I started to fidget.

"I was considering wet sand," I ventured.

"Hmm? Oh no. . ." He reached over, grabbed a tea towel and wrapped it around his hand. Then he extended his hand into the inferno and withdrew the blazing tray. This he dropped into the sink and turned on the cold-water tap.

I know now that this wasn't the correct thing to do. An eruption of flame resulted. I yelped and tried to climb over him in an effort to reach the door. It wasn't fear. It's just that I wanted to make sure that my comic book collection was safe before the rest of the building caught fire.

"It's okay now," he said calmly, I turned around and saw that the flames had died down to a mild splutter. "Thanks," I muttered. He grunted something and made a nonchalant exit.

I cleaned up the mess, then went to have dinner in town. Afterwards I went to see the movie I had intended seeing. It was (and this is the truth) *In the Heat Of the Night*.

As I was saying... every time I change jobs something happens. And when I left the bookshop and started at Commonwealth Industrial Gases it was no exception.

The Saturday night between jobs Richard and I had gone to see a terrible movie called *The Battle of Anzio*. It proved to be another prophetic title. After the show Richard suggested making a detour through Martin Place, as he wanted to post a letter. As we walked past the post office a herd of young er... teenagers... ran past us in the opposite direction.

"Boo!" yelled one of them.

Not wanting to let such an example of devastating wit go by unappreciated I turned and clapped.

It was one of my more stupid acts. We had continued about three yards when I heard the pitter patter of little feet. After that things became confused... and messy.

To cut a gory story short, I finished up lying in the road in a definitely kicked condition. I staggered to my feet (I would have stayed there longer but the traffic was beginning to bother me) and fell onto the bonnet of a nearby car. And came face to face with a gentleman sitting in the car who stared back with placid unconcern, Naturally I don't blame him for staying in his car during the fight (fight - ha!) but I do resent his lack of interest even when the danger was past.

Then I began to stagger down Martin Place looking for Richard. I assumed that he was lying between two cars in a similarly battered condition. I was a little surprised, then annoyed, when I saw him strolling leisurely towards me, apparently unmarked. It



turned out that he had made a break for it at the start of the fight and had outrun a couple of the bastards. I must admit that he didn't escape completely unscathed – an injured neck and a few bruises, but minor compared with my own injuries.

By this time strange things were beginning to happen to my face. I'd been kicked in the jaw, among other places, and it was swelling at an alarming rate. Also it made funny crunching noises when I opened my mouth. By the time that we reached home my head was twice its normal size. I drank half a bottle of wine, took several aspirins, put a cold compress on my face, and went to bed.

By Monday the swelling had only just started to go down. I had cuts and grazes across my nose and forehead and my eyes were hideously bloodshot. It was in this condition that I arrived at my new job. My new boss took one look at me and sent me to their first-aid officer. (Little did they know that the bloodshot eyes were normal.) He took one look and sent me to the hospital to have an x-ray. After that I went home.

Now that's the way to start a new job.

# Fit the Third – Dead Man's Bluff

## by Leigh Edmonds

Appeared in *Sugar Tooth* #3, published by Leigh Edmonds for *Anzapa* #12,  
August 1970

The other night Paul and I were sitting around (well, to make the tale quite accurate, Paul was standing and I was sitting on a bike in our kitchenette), talking about nothing very important: you know the sort of stuff - tearing various notable personalities of local fandom to little bloody bits, the sex life of the water rat, the creature we'd found growing in a bowl of two-month-old custard – the usual small talk. It was a scene of tranquil domestic bliss (or as close as you can come to it when you're living in the same flat as Paul Stevens), and there we were, just relaxing.

Knock, knock, went the door. “Damn!” ejaculated Paul, and “\*\*\*\*\*” I stated loudly. Nobody wants visitors when they have friends like we have, but still I dismounted and went over to open up the door to see who it was standing so gallantly on the other side.

Well, to cut a long story short, it wasn't anybody that I knew either by sight or by reputation. However there are certain standards of common decency that one must abide by, so I said hello in an uncommonly decent tone of voice. While I stood taking in our caller (by which I mean that I looked at him; quite a sight he was too in a suit and collar and tie) he took in our flat. Well, let me see. I suppose that if you were standing on our doorstep the first thing you would notice would be the big old chest of drawers that stands rotting just in front of the door so that it strikes you in the face if you have the door opened to you (which some people don't). Also there is a black bike parked in the middle of the lounge room, bits of dusty old board stacked up against the wall, movie posters, and old newspapers and bottles scattered everywhere.

I could tell from the look on his face that he was beginning to doubt the wisdom of knocking on our door. Probably he was regretting the fact that he had ignored the quite obvious NURDLE sign on our door.

By the look of him it seemed pretty obvious that he was selling something, or would want us to donate something to something; why else would he, a complete stranger, stand on the open portal of our flat?

He started by saying, "I'm an inspector..." He shouldn't have said that, for as soon as I heard the word 'inspector' I linked it in my mind to the word 'PMG' to form 'Post Master General Radio and Television Licence Inspector'. We don't have one. We do have a TV set and a radio. However, we don't have the \$200 you need to pay the fine for having either of the latter without having the former.

My vision blurred and I could feel the strength draining from my knees, All thoughts except those of panic were rushing through my mind when I realised that he was continuing, "...for the Royal Globe Assurance Company and I've come to offer you a proposition." All I could think of to say was, "Yeah?" Paul, who is far more agile in affairs of the wit, replied, "We don't have any Royal Globes."

You could see our good friend outside, on the doorstep as it were, wilt visibly. But I'll say this for the lad. He had pluck, Nay, he had more than pluck. He was downright fearless. "Do you mind if I come in?" he asked.

I was amazed. Greater men have ventured into our flat, and found themselves subdued by the horror of the five-month-old garbage which stalks the living room, or have found themselves attacked by the sentient creature (thing) which has grown from the stuff that we left in the sink for a few weeks. Even I, the supposed ruler of this flat, have trouble in passing through the lounge room without being attacked by at least a dozen of Paul's socks - they lie in wait for me (and my unfortunate visitors) under the bones of a long dead refrigerator.

As I said, I was amazed because he had asked if he could come in. I had heard the words with my very own ears. But, by studying the expression on his face a little more closely. I could see that he didn't really mean what he had said. Indeed, the quivering of his lips, the spasmodic jerking of his facial muscles, and the look of terror spoke for themselves.

And then, quite suddenly, he pulled himself together and said with determination, "Look, let's cut out the bullshit, are you interested in buying any life assurance?"

To tell you the truth, I wasn't, but even if I had been interested he would not have sold me any. Nobody who says something which is supposed to be as downright honest and down-to-earth as that as if he was standing in front of a mirror reading it out of a book sells me anything. So I explained to him that I was

already insured up to my ears, for what reason I'm not too sure, and that I didn't want any more – I couldn't afford it.

I could see written on his face quite plainly that here was a sucker who couldn't resist a bit of the good old soft sell, no matter what. Unfortunately he was right.

But then from behind me came salvation.

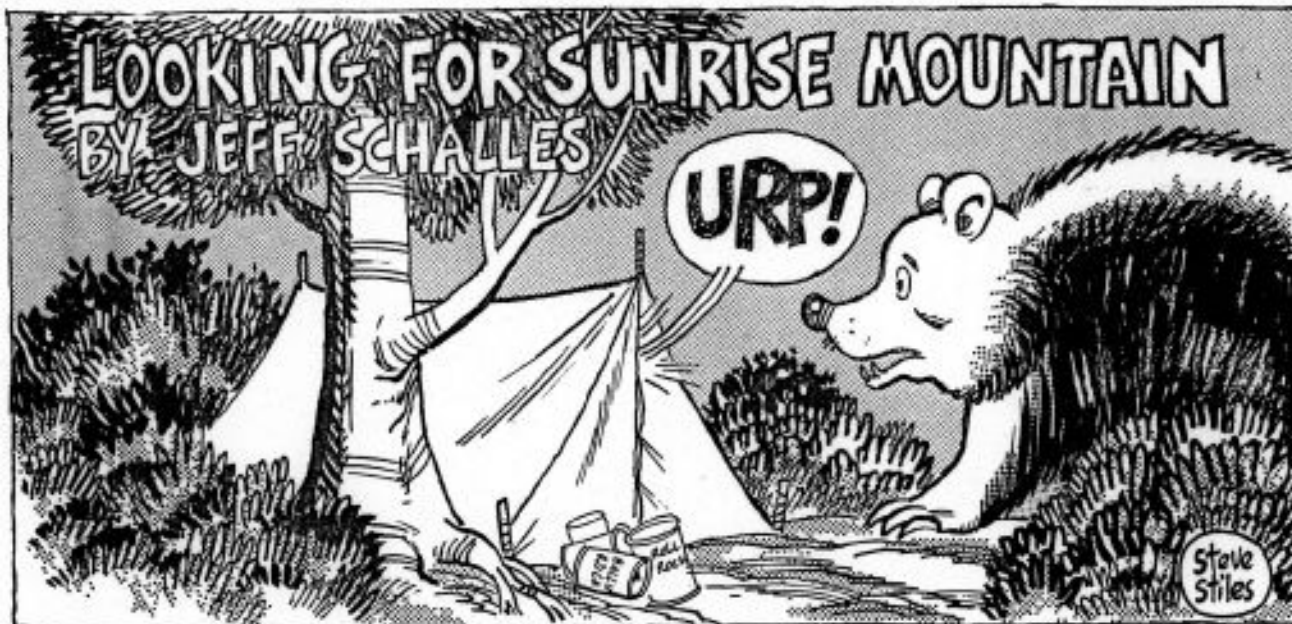
Paul Stevens appeared from around a corner and leered over my shoulder at our friend and muttered that yesterday he'd fallen off the roof and had died, so he could do with some life assurance.

The guy on the doorstep then muttered something and left rather more quickly than most people do. I turned to look at Paul. Do you know what? He does look at least a day dead.



Introduction, by Jeff Schalles

I wrote this piece in 1988, my first contribution to Robert Lichtman's fabulous long-running fanzine, *Trap Door*. This appeared in issue #8. My earliest pieces, starting in the 10th grade, around 1968, were pretty rough. I was trying to emulate the humorous fanzine writing of that era, but not very well. *Looking for Sunrise Mountain* was my breakthrough piece, written after many years in NYC reading slushpile for David Hartwell and John Douglas. That was my graduate school in creative writing. Thanks, David, thanks, John! *Looking for Sunrise Mountain* went through 5 or 6 revisions, aided with suggestions from Robert. Years later I met Andy Hooper at a Minneapolis Fallcon, and he heaped great praise on me for *Looking for Sunrise Mountain*. Thanks, Andy!



HIGHTAILING IT STEREO BLASTING Motörhead up Third Avenue in New York one Saturday last winter, my 1970 Chevelle Malibu running at the head of a snarling pack of taxis, traffic parts abruptly in my mirrors like the Red Sea before Moses and a dark blue four door sedan charges through, cutting every- body off, blowing its horn, not braking. There's a clenched-jaw well-dressed middle-aged woman driver sitting bolt upright, looking straight ahead. There's also a bum clinging to her wipers, sprawling across her hood from fender to fender, legs in space, as she swerves. His face is the face of the storyteller in Poe's "A Descent into the Maelstrom." He's a human, damnit lady. She fishtails past me through two red lights ahead and disappears. I want to follow, call the cops. I wish I still had a cab radio. It's 2:30 on a rainy winter afternoon and my head hurts from seeing Tackhead at the Ritz the night before and my hangover requests a right turn across the Queensboro Bridge.

I much prefer being atop high big rocks looking out over wild and distant landscapes. When I visited New York City in the early and mid-seventies (the first time for Mondocon in 1970, the last for the World Fantasy Convention in 1976) I always came away with that "chem lab" itch, with clear visual memories that every outdoor and most indoor surfaces had a permanent coating of abominable filth. It was dirty and scary for me the winter of 1981-82 when I moved here, and it's still dirty and scary. I survive because I'm suspicious and paranoid. These are among the survival traits.

I came to continue my explorations of the realms disclosed to me as I rock 'n roll my way through the years. I came to dance at the Ritz, hang out at CBGB's, go to Fanoclast meetings. I didn't know I'd end up playing in rock bands again, but that happened too. There's little point in elaborating the stream of consciousness details of my last six years. LoCs to the 1978 issue of my

fanzine COVER marveled at my ribald true adventures and progression of interesting jobs. I haven't changed. And, so, this is about The Mountains.

Many years in Boy Scouts and Explorers taught me that woods and streams release torrents of ideas. I actively pursue this elusive soaring freedom. Sometimes it comes upon me in art galleries and museums, other times in the midst of blasted urban landscapes. But scouting taught me about tents and fires and maps and stuff. Especially the maps--I got into USGS topographic maps when I was eleven. I order ones of places I'm interested in and when I go exploring I already know a lot about where I'm going. Not everything, mind you. Some things only the mountains can tell you, or the people there.

My first spring in New York, 1982, I was working for an abusive madman television syndicator, Sandy Frank. My stereo was still in Maryland, my books were in Pennsylvania, and I wasn't comfortable with either the city or my apartment. The second Saturday in May I threw my camping gear into my old VW and drove west across New Jersey on I-80. I got off the interstate about thirteen miles from the Delaware Water Gap and made my way to a road that showed on both my Appalachian Trail (or "AT") guide maps and on Amoco's. Blairstown, New Jersey, was the key. It was early afternoon by the time I rolled into this very old rural town. Not touristy yet, but with a few ferny restaurants. I pass an interesting bar before finding my way through the back of town to the mountain road.

After five or six miles of winding, rolling narrow farmland blacktop, up rises the steep flank of Kittatiny Mountain. There aren't many passes in this eastern rampart of the Appalachians. One, the Water Gap fifteen miles to the south, was there before both the current mountains and the previous ones.

I was hoping this first time there'd be a place I could leave my car and hike a couple of miles south on the AT, find a camping spot looking out over Pennsylvania. As I wound up the switchbacks in second gear, the cool, partly-cloudy day turned into a cold drizzly day--with solid clouds waiting for me on top. There were "No Overnight Parking" signs at the several pull-offs. But my old friend the AT was there. I hung out for a couple hours, hiked a mile or two and back, found I could get NYC FM, screamed insults at Sandy Frank. Going back the way I came, I pulled up at the bar I'd seen earlier. A sign over the door said "where old friends meet." Sure enough, inside in a wonderful old curved-glass standing cooler were seven-ounce bottles of Rolling Rock. The place is full of people in orange caps. I order a burger and fries and the next thing is this woman making her husband pull his pants down to show everyone his leg wound. Seems he'd drunkenly shoved his unsheathed hunting knife into his pants pocket the night before.

The next few years found me collecting maps and battling the mass psychosis of New York. It's like a big institution. I found New York's Taconic State Park through a piece in the Village Voice in 1983 about little-known parks with good swimming holes, visited it once but couldn't stay. Picnicked in 1984 at High Point State Park in New Jersey with John Sulak, a non-fanzine but inherently fannish fan I met at Phlange II in 1970. High Point sits in the northwest corner of the state and is, of course, the highest point in New Jersey. The AT runs through the park up Kittatiny Mountain from the south and then veers east to link up with the Berkshires and head north up the last stretch, to the White Mountains, in Maine.

I was amused the next year when this rowdy bunch of New York editors I know announced that they had discovered Taconic's park, and as my Chevelle was then sitting in front of my apartment building with a broken timing chain while I figured out how to fix it (book: 1. To remove timing cover, drop oil pan. 2. To drop oil pan, remove engine.) my girl friend of those years, Valerie (who I met when she auditioned to sing in my band, "Intensive Care"), and I rode up with these scourges of fandom to picnic and swim (in the old ore pit, bottomless, clear and cold) at Taconic. The following summer Valerie and I camped for four days there and on Saturday several carloads of NY's SF ne'er-do-wells joined us for swimming and a cookout.

The evening before Valerie and I had climbed to Sunset Rock, an hour going up, less coming back. Taconic is a large park with two separate camp-grounds. The one at the ore pit is smaller, tucked in a fold in the series of mountains that form the western rampart of the Berkshires.

From Sunset Rock, several hundred yards from the Massachusetts border, you can see west across the wide lush farm valleys past blue hazy ridges to a purple smoky slash that is the Hudson Valley. Beyond lie the Catskills and Adirondacks. There were no takers from the beer drinkers around our picnic table that evening, but Sunday morning Valerie and I went up again. It was clear, and with polarizing and haze filters I took some solid postcard shots. I was happy. We got real sunburned at that altitude. In the nude.

In the late afternoon Valerie went to the ore pit. There'd been a light rain earlier, and I sat on the picnic table surrounded by smells of wood smoke, wet pine needles, June breezes, creosoted lumber, wild flowers. The campground sits half way up the mountain, nestled in a valley. I feel as well as hear gentle breezes running high through the treetops. They come up the valley alone and in groups. It is so quiet in the blue light of approaching evening that I can trace little ones as they move, circling about, acre by acre, up the mountain side. Little travelers with happy voices. I believe I have encountered bad spirits moving on foul night winds, but these are not like those. They happily ride the crest of the evening, following the terminator. Forever.

Meanwhile in New York I left the Harris Poll after nearly three years as Data Entry Supervisor for a lower paying job, learning typesetting. It was in August of my year at Envision East, a funky audiovisual studio on 32nd Street full of weird artists and driven hippy entrepreneurs, that I made my first serious wilderness assault in years. I hadn't hiked overnight since I explored the Georgia and North Carolina stretches of the AT for several weeks in 1976. My Chevy was running again (secret: you don't have to drop the oil pan, just pry the front of it down...real careful) and my camping gear had been in the trunk all summer.

Just me this time. I've driven the back roads of the four major forests in northwestern New Jersey several times by now. I feel at home as I make my way up the steep approach to High Point, watching for fresh corn. The two-lane blacktop is posted 55, and several stands have flashed by without warning. Finally, on a long flat stretch a sign says "fresh corn ahead" and I pull off easily onto the shoulder. The two aging "good ol' boys" were snoozing under their folding table and the one jumps up yelling "yes sir, yes sir" army style. Small, picked that day, baked in their husks soaked down with spring water over my wood fire in the High Point campground that night, I roar with approval. I'm new to this campground but I've got my favorite spot--furthest from everything else. But still just before dark a ranger comes tramping up the trail "just to say hi" and I have to hide my Rolling Rock. New York state park campgrounds permit alcohol...just not "rowdy behavior."

Monday morning I'm actually parked at the trailhead and shouldering my pack by 10:30 a.m. People ask me, "where do they drop you off?" and stuff, but it's not like that. There is no "they." Just you and your resourcefulness. I've seen ads on the back page of the Village Voice for "group trips" where you pay someone to take you hiking, but not for me thanks. High Point's trailhead parking registration consists of picking up a mimeographed 3x5 card from the desk ("name"/"arrival date"/"departure date") and leaving it on your dash. There were some fifteen vehicles there already. I walked south.

I wasn't humming quite yet. I still had work and love life entanglements running amok through my head. The night before I caught myself calculating trail distances in points and picas. My pack was heavy. With lone hiking you have to carry everything yourself: tent, stove, fuel, cook kit. To my maximum arrogance, I was carrying a Melitta funnel, filters, fresh-ground coffee and...a pottery mug! Plus a heavy SLR, lenses, filters, tripod, cable release, twelve rolls of film. Hiking many years before in Georgia with the same basic gear (minus the coffee stuff) and with a lot more food (but only an old rangefinder) I covered 8-16 miles a day, every day for two weeks. This time it is harder. Mr. "Drums Is Aerobic," who doesn't bicycle as much as his usually rampaging imagination would have him believe, isn't enjoying this as much as he remembered.

Aside from trespassing, sanitation and other simple rules, the 2,000 mile long AT requires that you hike in to every shelter, and stay only one night. High Point is good for this--within the borders of the park are three shelters strung out over seven miles. Parking is in the middle. I hiked 5.2 miles that afternoon on the rocky crest of Kittatiny Mountain with my heavy pack. I bypassed the Lake Rutherford shelter (off the trail half a mile down the mountain) and by late afternoon



found myself nearly outside of the park. Mashipacong shelter is a half mile past the Deckertown Turnpike, a genuinely ancient narrow blacktop running up over the mountain, probably following an oxen trail. "No Overnight Parking" signs abounded. I was brought back to the fact that I was in New Jersey and not in Georgia when I saw the sorry state of the lean-to, built of stone and timbers in 1936. It was full of filth and excrement and had a four foot pile of rubbish in front. There was a leaning outhouse and a large grassy clearing beyond. The AT continues on around the west side of the ridge top, to Gren Anderson shelter. This is where my heart pulled me that night, but I could do it easily in the morning. It was only six more miles. A mile before Gren Anderson is Sunrise Mountain.

Instead, I explored the upland sidetrail leading from the top of the clearing. Making my way up through the young forest, I found a series of grassy camping sites on small flat patches among the rising rocky shoulders of the mountain. People had been here probably for centuries. There were many fireplaces and patches of flattened grass. That night I had the multi-storied mansion to myself. The highest meadow was protected on the north by the jagged vertical backbone of the mountain. South the grove soon ended precipitously at a solid slab of upended conglomerate seafloor, dropping for several hundred feet into a leafy canopy below.

It was wonderful that evening. My mind was slowing, shedding frantic city obsessions, allowing me longer and longer periods of uninterrupted heavy thought. I kept the fire going until late. Deckertown Turnpike had occasional traffic, pickups downshifting for the last haul, a pause, the wine of tires down the far side of the mountain. I wished I was driving through the night too. Slept like a rock (trade secret: short foam pad under sleeping bag) and woke to a wonderful Tuesday morning. One thing I'd always hated on earlier trips was feeling grubby. So, after coffee and freeze-dried scrambled eggs that couldn't be beat, I boiled more water and washed my face and hair.

My body was not being cooperative. I was having a fine time, but I saw that I wasn't the powerhouse of eleven years before. I might make it on to Sunrise Mountain. I might die in the attempt. Ready to hike by 11:00, I turned back. The three miles to Rutherford shelter turnoff (east down a 300 foot descent of steeply sloping sandstone into the lower forest) were of full-blown faerie. I was humming "Ol' Dan Tucker" (the guy who combed his hair with a wagon wheel and died with a toothache in his heel) as I strolled along. I saw many deer and photographed some from a distance. I took many remarkable Kodachrome slides that day.

But something was bothering me as I walked the mountain crest, dipping in and out of shallow coves of upland northeastern forest. The rocky shoulders where the old sea floors stand perpendicular, where you can have lunch sitting on the earth's mossy upthrust throne, had conifers amid the high rocks, deciduous in the sheltered coves, and laurel, rhododendron, dogwood and many mosses and wildflowers everywhere. In most of the little upland dells I noted the noisy presence of thousands of birds, marking their borders and chattering away like a bunch of silly birdbrains. In a few places, though, there was only the breeze. The first few times I walked through these places I paid little heed, but during two days of tramping and resting it became uncomfortably obvious.

Did a major population of songbirds following millennia-old territorial and migratory patterns take off from this or that valley and perish in Central America upon finding their winter home sacrificed forever for ten years of fast food hamburgers? Are there horrible wars now being fought unknown between groups of territory-holding and of newly-homeless songbirds in the Central American highlands? I believe it, and I do not believe that this is what we were supposed to do with this planet when we were given lordship over it.

Though I had only hiked a few miles to this other shelter, I felt a tremendous sense of accomplishment. That night was another heavenly spot of time. Again, the lean-to had been fouled by unevolved and no doubt rowdy visitors, but again there were plenty of spots in the glades along the brook behind the shelter. The brook was amazing. My water the night before had come from a pump by the Deckertown Turnpike and hadn't tasted very good. The trail guide listed a spring near the shelter. It turned out to be the source of the brook and the best water I'd drunk in years. I spent the rest of the afternoon and evening guzzling it, clambering back among the rocks in the midst of a hemlock thicket to refill my canteen. It was all so wonderful and serene that I made afternoon coffee and sat against a tree for hours.



After another productive evening alone by the fire retracing my steps through ancestral memory chains, I was asleep before midnight. Sometime later I was galvanized into wakefulness by rooting noises in the trash heap by the shelter. It jolted me into a semi-frantic defensive mode, lest it turn out to be a bloodthirsty wild dog. Probably a raccoon, it came up and snuffled the nylon side of the tent. I growled. A deep menacing primeval bruin snarl that scared me, too. I used a vocal cord I never knew I had and it made my throat raw, but the beast snuffled off. I lay awake a bit and found I could hear ever so far away trucks on I-84, across the Delaware. It seemed I had just fallen asleep again when a commuter jetport nearby let loose with a couple dozen small jets.

Wednesday morning. After cleaning up and doing breathing and stretching exercises on the lawns by the tree-shaded brook, I hiked back up to the ridge. Gone was any thought of Sunrise Mountain. I just wanted to jump in my car and drive somewhere. After lunch in a friendly roadside place at the foot of the mountain, I drove across the river and headed south on Pennsylvania 209, following the west bank of the Delaware River. A well-paved blacktop following a wide flat river through a National Park on a Wednesday afternoon is different from Third Avenue. I remembered seeing a sign for Dingman's Ferry Campground at dusk one winter exploring with my friend Ruth. We were looking for a restaurant and found the Walpack Inn, across the river, deep in the park. Anyway, when the sign came up, I made the left. It is a great place, nearly empty, with primitive tent sites by the river, down a rutted road from the RV sites. I was soon sitting in the Delaware on an August Wednesday up to my neck and humming Beethoven's 6th.

That evening I drove out of the campground, north, eight miles to Milford, Pennsylvania. Much touristier than Blairstown, where all this started long before. I bought a bag of ice and a case of Iron City beer (not distributed in New York) and asked if there was a bar where I could sit and eat. The Tom Quick Inn is named after an "Indian fighter" who sounded more like the Marquis de Sade, but I ate well and listened to local real estate gossip. That night I sat up late reading the New York Times and Daily News by propane lantern (car trunk camping only) and drinking good ol' Irons. No radio, no TV, just the hiss of propane burning in the mantles and the ticka-tick of bugs against the hurricane glass, with the gurgle of the river beyond.

The rain came an hour before sunrise. My tent is essentially a bug screen, good against straight down rain with its storm tarp but lacking a waterproof bottom. The sheets of water coursing down the impermeable sand I was camped on began to trickle past my cheek. Solid blocks of water were pouring from the sky with wild lightning and deafening thunder. I've stuck out plenty of these when I had to, but this time my Chevy was only twenty feet away. I jammed wet gear into the trunk and powered my way up the road-turned-stream to the upper campground. I was afraid I might go off the road and run over someone in a pup tent. Driving towards New York on I-80 during the morning rush hour taught me something new about yuppies. They drive the way they conduct business: selfishly, incompetently and viciously. I exited and found a mall to wander in, looking at expensive waterproof tents in the sporting goods store.

A couple more years of typesetting and I can buy land on the side of a mountain somewhere. Maybe even in time to escape the already-in-progress (do not attempt to adjust your set) environmental disaster and the highly probable social disintegration and hysteria to follow. The brutally corrupt Reagan regime is straight from the Book of Revelations. In this unending class war, the rich will stop at nothing to keep the lower classes on the edge, financially, emotionally, physically, with powerful jingoist propaganda, with dangerous food source manipulation, with nukes, fluorescent lights and microwaves (in our kitchens, no less), tobacco, sugar, sodas, crack, hot dogs, and badly animated Saturday morning television programs. Worse, the majority of the combatants have been on their knees so long that they can't even perceive their position. They somehow think the rich are out to help them. You can't go on feeding kids caffeine, chemicals and sugar, make them sit under fluorescent lights all day, and then expect them to learn or think. I find myself playing Steppenwolf's 1970 "Monster" cut real loud ("...and it just sits there watching...") until the anger passes, until I remember the mountains.



--Jeff Schalles

# The Cutty Sark Affair, or TAFF Report at Sea

Steve Stiles

Many years ago I won the TAFF race, went to England, and learned to like beer a lot.

I had a terrific time and, in accordance with my obligation as an administrator to write a trip report, began doing so in the pages of QUIP, FOCAL POINT, SAM, BSFAN, and CHUNGA. It was called HARRISON COUNTRY, and thanks to Randy Byers and a score of other good people, it was eventually collected and published.

But years before that time went by: I got married, I got divorced, I had romances, I had unromances, I embarked on a comic book career, and I travelled up and down the east coast of the United States, and had adventures and somewhere along the way all my notes for the remaining chapters of my trip got lost.

Time passed. All the way up to 2006. I began to feel guilty, but I have a bad memory; what to do? Then it hit me: I could draw on my experiences of all my years in the advertising field on Madison Avenue: I could BULLSHIT!

Thus was born the final installment of my TAFF report, “The Cutty Sark Affair, or TAFF Report At Sea, chapter 145.”

I wanted to include this in the fanthology because I greatly liked the Goon Show and hope I did it justice, and secondly because I liked Gardner Dozois and it was on this trip in 1968 that I first met Gardner, getting to tour London and actually visiting the Cutty Sark with him for real. At the time I thought Gardner was nuts. Later I realized that he was nuts but nuts in the best ways possible and I miss him. As do many others.

— Steve Stiles

STEVE STILES



After attending the 1968 ThirdManCon in Buxton, England, TAFF winner Steve Stiles, accompanied by Ella Parker, Alex and Phyllis Eisenstein, and Gardner Dozois, returned to London for a touristy-type excursion to the world-famous tea clipper ship, the Cutty Sark, moored on the Thames, little dreaming of the curious adventure that awaited them. ...

### **Our Cast:**

**Gardner Dozois**  
as played by Eccles

**Alex Eisenstein**  
as played by  
Mr. Henry Crun

**Phyllis Eisenstein**  
as played by  
Miss Minnie Bannister  
and Bluebottle

**New York Fanoclasts**  
as played by Bluebottle again

**Ella Parker**  
as played by  
The Hon. Hercules Grytpype-Thynne

**Pirate Chieftain**  
as played by Comte Toulouse-Moriarty

**Steve Stiles**  
as played by Neddle Seagoon

(Confusing, isn't it?)

WALLACE GREENSLADE: "Readers, this *isn't* the BBC Home Service."

(Wild cheers, mad applause, sobs of heart-felt gratitude.)

GREENSLADE: "Yes indeed, at no expense to the British taxpayer, we bring you the *final* installment of *Harrison Country*:"

## Chapter 145: *The Cutty Sark Affair, or TAFF Report At Sea*

(A great deal more sobbing, wailing, gnashing of teeth, and applause from David Langford.)

SEAGOON: "So this is the famous Cutty Sark in dry-dock, and it *is* dry, but a trifle spongy, like hectograph gelatin or spotted dick!"

ECCLES: "Here, it all depends on where you are: a few steps backwards and spotted dick can get rather knobby. How's yer old dad, eh?"

SEAGOON: "By George, I do believe I'm standing on none other than the foot-noted Doctor Dozois. What's up, doc, and what are you doing with that sealed bottle and an anchor?"

ECCLES: "Well, I *am* rather dry and I ain't got me my cork screw!"

SEAGOON: "That's a corker! Why not use a crowbar?"

ECCLES: "Where do you think I got this here bottle dere? Lord, dey almost pecked me half to death!"

SEAGOON: "Come to think of it, wherd'd you get that somewhat dampish 850 lb. anchor?"

ECCLES: "Td rather not go into a great deal detail on dat; it's laying across me windpipe!"

GRYTPYPE-TYNNE: "I can answer that, Steve - I sold it to him. Amazingly, some wasteful Socialist fool had thrown it into the Thames!"

SEAGOON: "Thrown it into the Thames? To throw Cutty Sark's perfectly good anchor into the Thames? That seems a bit strange.... And why is England receding?"

GRYTPYPE-THYNNE: "We can talk politics later. Now, could I interest you in any fore rigging jibbons, gibbons, a patent steering apparatus? We also offer a gangway, with top-notch moldings and flower-work. Still not interested? Try our top gallant forecandle - it's wainscoted!"

MINNIE: "Oooo, you'd be pallid in kilts too: it gets *cold* up there!" *(Fade)*

(Interlude with "Tubas In The Moonlight" by Vivian Stanshall and "Legs" Larry Smith on the femur.)

SEAGOON: We were adrift at sea, port and starboard to the left and right of us! I could explain it all to you, but my head might explode.

*(Muffled detonation. Fade In)*

SEAGOON: "Four bells and a tambourine. Lost at sea on the Cutty Sark and not a thing to eat for days! And Gardner continues to naughtily impersonate a ham and swiss sandwich on rye bread with mayonnaise and lettuce, with a side order of Oscar Mayer wieners."

CRUN: "And you look to me, mate, like a wiener yerself."

SEAGOON: "A TAFF wiener, eh?"

GRYTPYPE-THYNNE: "Hungry, my friends? It just so happens that I so happen to have here with me this week old bucket of cod, mackerel, flounder, and trout - all available for mere dirty old money of the unlaundered persuasion."

CRUN: "That's very selfish of you. Any tuna?"

GRYTPYPE-THYNNE: "No, I'm out of tuna."

CRUN: "Then put down that piano."

GRYTPYPE-THYNNE: "Well, how about some-thing more exotic? I've also got some tasty plankton here."

MINNIE: "Who wants to eat 2,000 pounds of lumber?"

SEAGOON: "Suddenly we were confronted by a one-legged, one-eyed parrot wearing a pirate. Strange swabbie, this pirate - voted himself as best dressed chum bait of 1905 twice in 1954. Having been keelhaunched for the next six hours by a plunder of goons, I asked for a glass of water to help me recover from drowning."

EX.: GLUG GLUG GLUG GLUG, GLUG, GLUG, GLUG, GLUG, GLUG, GLUG (et cetera et cetera).

MORIARTY: "Now, matey..."

EX.: GLUG GLUG GLUG GLUG, GLUG, GLUG, GLUG, GLUG, GLUG, GLUG (and so forth and so on)

SEAGOON: "Ah! That was good! Another glass of water, please?"

MORIARTY: "You just had one all day yesterday!"

SEAGOON: "Ying tong idle I po."

MINNIE: "How did you pirate types get here, anyway?"

MORIARTY: "We came in a speedboat."

ECCLES: "A drug shipment by sea, eh?"

MORIARTY: "So, Stevie, you're the American TAFF representative, are you?"

SEAGOON: (thinks) "How did he know that? Was it the cut of my jib? My cleverly mimeographed passport photo? Or was it the full scale replica of Sam Moskowitz stapled to my forehead that gave me away?"

SEAGOON: "That's right!"

MORIARTY: "You silly twisted boy!"



MORIARTY: "Anyway, I'll get to the point - we're pirates, and you'd better play ball with us, so here's my pitch: we're after moolah, cabbage, plunder, booty."

MINNIE: "Hands off that, you cheeky man!"

MORIARTY: "Speaking of assets, we're holding Steve for ransom (*picks up phone conveniently left on topmast*). Hello, operator? Get me the New York Fanoclasts."

EX.: RING!

BLUEBOTTLE: "I heard you ring, my little telephone - I heard my telephone call - waits for audience applause, or throwing fanzine against the wall. Yessss?"

MORIARTY: "Is this the New York Fanoclasts?"

BLUEBOTTLE: "Thinks. Could this be Mrs. Ficara, dreadeded landlady type archfiend? Quickly dons disguise by reversing cowboy trousers and throwing away smoking implements and Good Vibrations 45. Attempts to erase beard and mustache but runs out of sandpaper."

MORIARTY: "Do you know who I am?"

BLUEBOTTLE: "Can't you remember?"

MORIARTY: "I am Very Bellicose Comte Toulouse-Roger, the famous naval pirate!"

BLUEBOTTLE: "Innie or outie?"

MORIARTY: "No, no, you winky little spudnut! I'm a brigand of the high seas who seriously tunes swabs' conkers with a grit-club, and we've clapped Steve Stiles in irons!"

BLUEBOTTLE: "We've clapped him in tweed. He'd wear anything for applause."

MORIARTY: "What I mean to say is, we've captured Steve Stiles and are holding him for ransom. This means he's our prisoner."

BLUEBOTTLE: "So that's what 'this' means!"



MORIARTY: "Surely you wouldn't want one of your own to walk the plank? Steve Stiles, who has upheld the honor of U.S. science fiction fandom by vehemently denying that he ever shaved any monkeys, documentation be damned?"

BLUEBOTTLE: "Steve in the dreaded drowning-type water? Aeiough! No, no, a millyum times no, you naughty mans! This must not be! Never, never, never, I says!"

MORIARTY: "I'm glad you feel that way. Now, let's talk money...."

EX: CLICK!

MORIARTY: "That's funny, I could've sworn I heard the meaty thunk of a body hitting the floor in a dead faint just before we were disconnected. Ready that plank, men!"

CRUN: "Port astern!"

SEAGOON: "Port? You mean land ho?"

ECCLES: "No, mate, he means I finally got dis bottle open. As for land, it's about five feet away - we drifted back hours ago."

MORIARTY: "Land, eh? Well then, in my other capacity as Harbor Master, I must inform you that this ship was originally licensed to carry 2500 lbs. of freight, but it so happens you're over our capacity to legally float - 2635 lbs. - which automatically

results in a fine of three hundred pounds, twelve shillings, and nine pence. You may now all form a line behind my wallet located in that cash register."

GRYTPYPE-THYNNE: "So, Steve, just how much do you weigh?"

SEAGOON: "One hundred and thirty five pounds. Why do you ask?"

EX: SPLASH!

ECCLES: "He's fallen in da watah!"

GREENSLADE: "Yes, readers, the water was taller than he was and Steve had been liquidated. It was a shame he only knew how to swim downwards, but he never liked to make waves. True, he did have some faults - lust, cowardice, avarice, selfishness, procrastination, envy, sloth, anger, leaving the toilet seat up, never replacing the cap on the toothpaste, consorting with The Great Old Ones, shaving monkeys, discrimination against servicewomen in the navy. Hmmm.... Maybe it's a good thing he drowned.... On the other hand, I can truly say he was one of the finest human beings that ever trod this earth, a godlike being of a superior nature. I *can* say that, but I won't. Death was nature's way of telling him when to stop. Let that be his epitaff."

END



# Newer Orleans

Keith Lynch

Mr. Dobson has asked me for an intro to my piece, “Newer Orleans, ”which was first published in the *WSFA Journal* in 2005. It has always contained its own introduction, so I decided to introduce myself instead, as this is my first Corflu, so many of you don't know me.

This is my 106th con, but my first Corflu. Ted White told me about Corflu maybe 20 years ago. Ever since then, I've been checking online a few times per year to see if it was going to be in the DC area.

I've been going to cons for 40 years—more than a quarter of the time since the Civil War. I've been involved with online fandom, initially on the ARPAnet, predecessor to the Internet, even longer, so I'm a relative latecomer to fanzines. I've never been on Facebook, Twitter, LiveJournal, or any other so-called social network. I prefer email and Usenet newsgroups. My posts can be found on the old SF-LOVERS email list and in the rec.arts.sf.fandom newsgroup where I'm still very active (more than 40,000 posts and counting).

My favorite fanac has always been conversation, online or in person at cons, club meetings, picnics, etc. I like to talk about almost anything, especially STEM, hard SF, history, law, medicine, philosophy, and skepticism. I can stay up all night chatting.

I was editor of the *WSFA Journal* for about two years. I was also WSFA's webmaster, and I put 30 years of back issues of the *WSFA Journal* on the club's website, indexed by author, topic, etc. If you don't like “Newer Orleans,” you can find 77 other *WSFA Journal* articles by me from that index, all quite different. I especially recommend “Is Science Unlikely?”.

If you want to email me, my current disposable email address can always be found at [KeithLynch.net/email.html](http://KeithLynch.net/email.html).

*Originally appeared in the WSFA Journal, October 2005.*

Because sometimes the best way to deal with horror is with humor and absurdity, here are five whimsical sfnal approaches to preventing recurrences of the recent catastrophe on the Gulf coast.

New Orleans, the site of my first Worldcon, was recently devastated by two major hurricanes, Katrina and Rita. There were thousands of deaths, hundreds of thousands of homes destroyed, and billions of dollars of property damage. Dead bodies were stacked in the corners of the convention center where fandom once trod.

How can such a disaster be prevented from recurring?

## I

Since there's no way to guarantee that a levee will never break, pumps should be sized to be able to keep up. I propose a greatly expanded and improved city-wide storm drain system, containing hundreds of extremely large and powerful pumps. Each pump would be immediately adjacent to a multi-gigawatt nuclear reactor, all of whose power output would be dedicated to its pump.

Of course those reactors will need a lot of cooling. No problem. Simply remove all the levees. The city would then be surrounded by waterfalls -- from the Mississippi, the Gulf, and Lake Pontchartrain. The waterfalls would promptly disappear into the storm sewers. The water would be removed by the pumps, and would cool the reactors.

What do the pumps do with the water? The obvious thing to do is to send it back to the surrounding bodies of water via large-bore underground pipes. But we can do better than that. The rebuilt New Orleans will be a City of the Future. As every SF fan knows, a City of the Future should have a dome over it. Glass domes are obviously impractical, especially for warm, damp cities; they'd trap heat, humidity, and air pollution. And of course they're prone to shattering and dropping lethal shards of glass on the city. But consider a dome made of water, a city-wide fountain. It would clean and cool the air, like a rainstorm. If the water temperature could be kept below the dew point, it would also dry the air. It also blocks UV, preventing skin cancer.

It doubles as a defense against terrorism. Any hijacked plane that tries to fly through the dome would be swatted down by the rapidly-moving wall of water, like an insect sprayed with a garden hose. The fountain would be programmed to produce holes in the dome timed just right for regularly scheduled flights. Or the airport could be relocated outside the dome, if it isn't already there.

During high winds that might cause part of the dome to drop its water on the city, the upwind side of the dome can be temporarily turned off.

Would it be dangerous? Would it chew up aquatic wildlife and any people who inadvertently got sucked in? The pumps have to be powerful, but there's no reason they can't be gentle. The designers can take lessons from the designers of artificial hearts and heart-lung machines. The first attempts at building such things were miserable failures, since they smashed the delicate red blood cells, unlike a living heart. Eventually, people figured out how to avoid doing that. Scale up the technology, and there's no reason why fish, dolphins, scuba divers, and whales shouldn't survive their journey through the pumps none the worse for wear.

Soon, every city near water will want similar waterfalls and domes. In colder climates the dome will double as a heater. The reactors can easily warm the water, so that it acts to warm and humidify the city. New cities will be built on the bottom of the Great Lakes, and eventually even at the bottom of the oceans.

## II

Another approach to rebuilding New Orleans is to rebuild it higher, by using landfill. How much higher? There's no hard and fast limit to how high a rogue wave or storm surge might be. To be safe, I propose an altitude of 10,000 feet. (Any higher and some people might start to have trouble breathing.) At that altitude, the city will not only be at extremely low risk of flooding (unless Ceres splashes into the Gulf, which isn't very likely (for one thing it wouldn't fit)), the air at that altitude will be drier, cooler, and cleaner, and the city will be above most of the weather.

That leaves the problem of where to find that amount of landfill, and how to keep it from subsiding. Few people want a city-wide, 10,000 foot deep, hole in their backyard. The solution is to use a single block of solid bedrock, quarried from the bottom of the ocean. This would have the beneficial side effect of increasing the volume

of the ocean, thus slightly lowering the sea level, compensating for one undesired effect of global warming.

I haven't quite yet worked out all the details on how to extract, transport, and install the block. Possibly a very large airship could be employed. I'll leave it as an exercise for the reader just how large the airship would have to be.

### III

My third approach is for people to adapt. Houses were ruined when they were partly or entirely underwater for a few weeks. What if everything in the house were waterproof? If furniture, carpeting, and books were all made of plastic, and if electronics and food containers were all hermetically sealed, nothing should be harmed by immersion. People who ran up into their attics to avoid floodwaters should have found a full set of scuba gear there for each member of the household. And there should have been a submarine-style escape hatch in the roof of the attic. Once floodwaters recede, everything can just be hosed down to remove any mud, dead fish, etc.

Alternatively, buildings could be designed to float. Then when floodwaters start to recede, the only “repair” necessary is a tow back to the building's proper place. Or, if the owner prefers the new location, they can just stay there. Indeed, the city might periodically be deliberately flooded to rearrange the buildings to more convenient locations. The next time New Orleans bids for a Worldcon, the bid can include promises that the hotels and convention center will be moved next to each other.

### IV

My fourth approach is to prevent hurricanes. The butterfly effect is now widely accepted. Hurricanes are caused by the flapping of a butterfly's wings a few months or years earlier, in the sense that if that insect hadn't flapped its wings just then, that hurricane would not have happened, at least not where and when it did. With a sufficient number of weather monitoring stations, and sufficient amount of computer power, it ought to be possible to figure out which butterfly is responsible, and to send in a highly trained commando team to capture or kill it.



## V

My fifth and final approach is conceptually the simplest, and, I think, the most realistic. What with hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquakes, tornados, typhoons, blizzards, droughts, monsoons, lightning strikes, sandstorms, mudslides, wildfires, avalanches, volcanoes, ice storms, plagues of locusts, quicksand, stampedes, malarial mosquitos, and hailstorms, it should be obvious to everyone that the surface of a planet is no place for people. Some of these disasters can only happen near water, but others can happen anywhere on our planet. Some can happen on other planets. Civilization must relocate to its proper place: outer space, where the hazards are simpler, more straightforward, and easily protected against.

- Keith Lynch

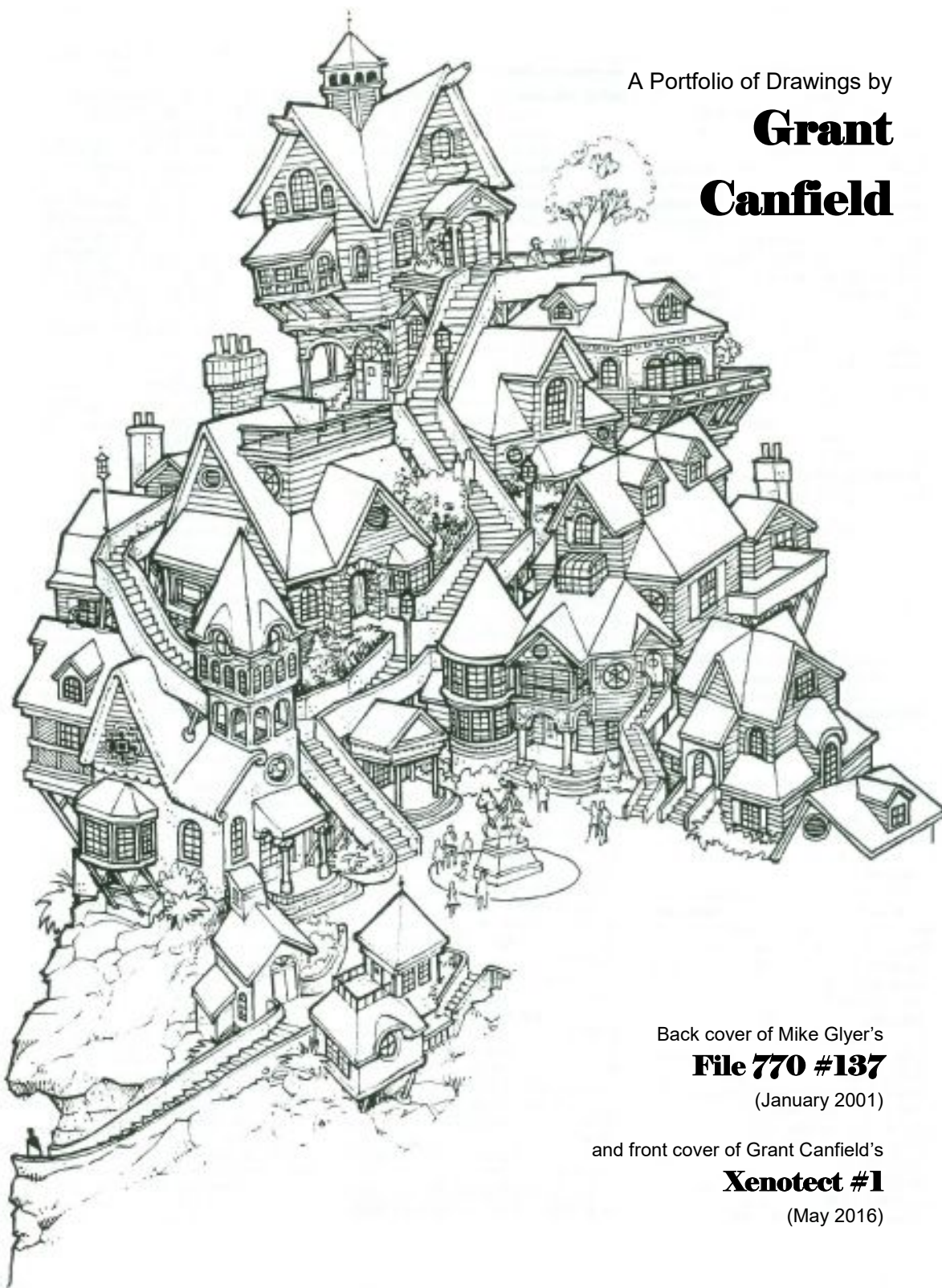
# A Grant Canfield Portfolio

## Grant Canfield

I got bit by the bug early, so I've been cartooning my whole life. Many of my early efforts were born in the office loft of my Grandad's drug store, where if I wasn't reading comic books, I was teaching myself to draw by copying their covers. I painted Christmas cartoons on our living room mirror. I frequently adorned the pages of my textbooks, and those of my friends, with little flipbook cartoons in the corners. I drew cartoon posters for friends campaigning to be class officers. All through high school, I was staff cartoonist for the student paper and yearbook. As editorial cartoonist for our college paper, I was named "Outstanding Cartoonist in a Class AA Student Publication in the State of Missouri" for 1966, which I likened to saying, "I have the fastest Nash Rambler on the block." After college, I began selling gag cartoons to national magazines, a sideline mini-career that lasted a bit more than a decade. And I became a fan artist.

In 1969, men walked on the moon, I met a beautiful woman I later married, I picked up my first fanzine (an issue of Dick Geis's *Science Fiction Review*), and I started submitting drawings to fanzines, starting with *SFR* and Al Snider's *Crossroads*. But nothing lasts forever. Men stopped walking on the moon after Apollo 17, my marriage dissolved after eight years, and by the mid-'80s I had more or less gaffiated to concentrate on my career as an architect.

Even gafia doesn't last forever, it seems. After retiring in 2012, I renewed some old fan friendships, contributed to a few fanzines, attended a Corflu, illustrated a book, and even pubbed an ish—*Xenotect #1*, a 2016 retrospective collection showcasing a half-century of my drawings. In retirement my favorite pastimes are playing poker and shooting pool, but I still occasionally manage to draw something. I hope you enjoy this little portfolio, and Corflu 36!



A Portfolio of Drawings by

# **Grant Canfield**

Back cover of Mike Glyer's

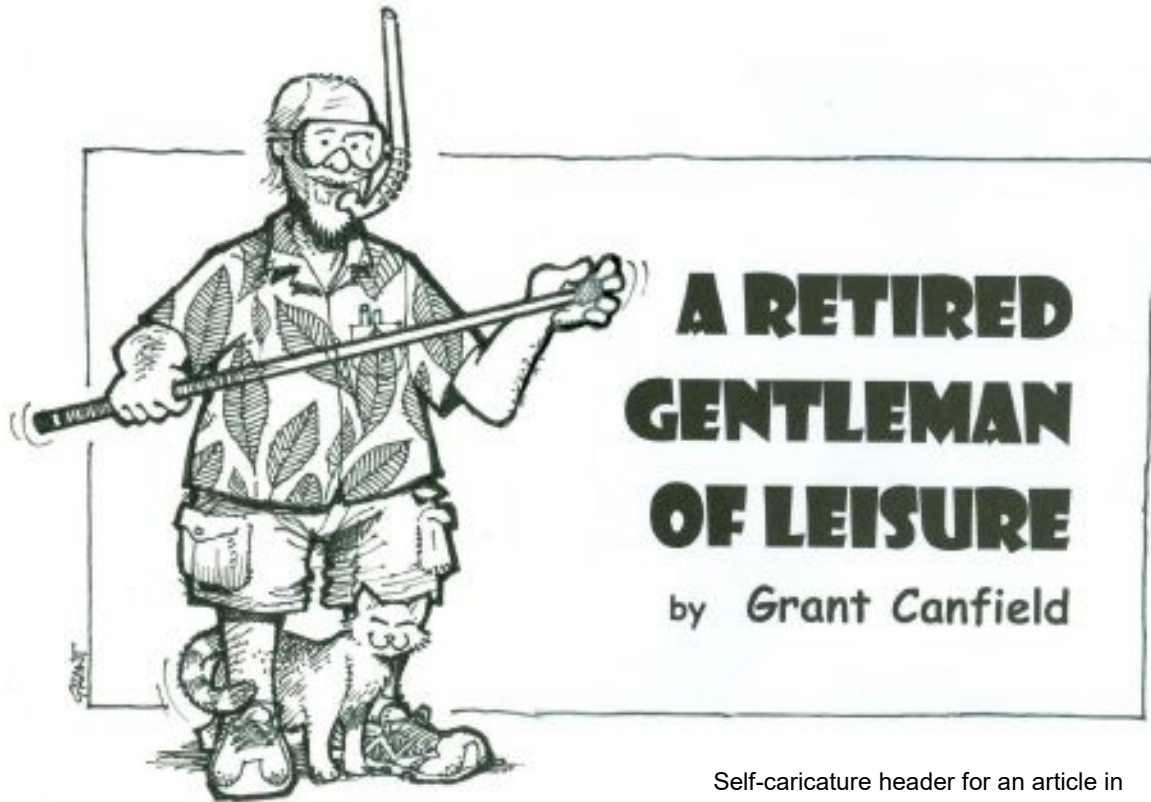
**File 770 #137**

(January 2001)

and front cover of Grant Canfield's

**Xenotect #1**

(May 2016)



Self-caricature header for an article in Robert Lichtman's **Trap Door #32** (March 2016)

#### THE 4 BASIC FOOD GROUPS

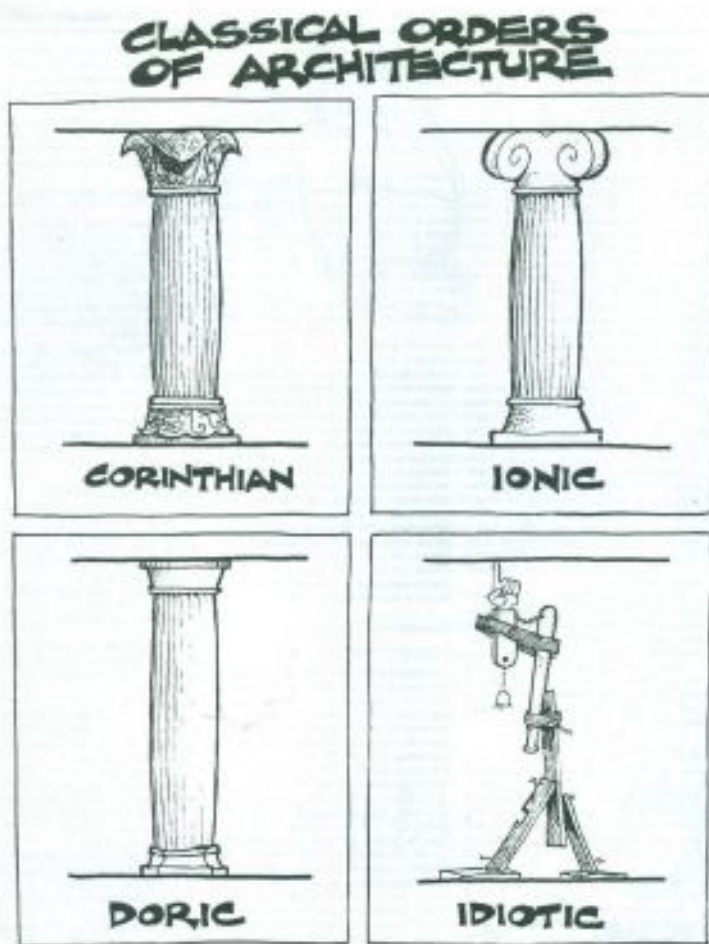


Previously unpublished (I think)



Cover of Dick Geis's **The Alien Critic #6** (1973)





Back cover of Mike Glyer's **File 770 #145** (May 2005)



Dan Steffan's **Blat! #3**  
(Spring 1994)



Dan Steffan's **Blat! #3** (Spring 1994)



Mike Glyer's **File 770 #144**  
(February 2005)



Dave Locke's **Time and Again #7** (November 2008)



Dave Locke's **Time and Again #8** (January 2009)





**Jackie Mitchell** (1914-1987)

*Pitcher*

Chattanooga Lookouts, 1931

House of David, 1933-1937



**Alta Weiss** (1890-1964)

*Pitcher*

Vermillion Independents, 1907

Weiss All-Stars, 1908-1922



**Toni Stone** (1921-1996)

*Second Base*

San Francisco Sea Lions, 1949

New Orleans Creoles, 1949-1952

Indianapolis Clowns, 1953

## Women in Baseball

3 of 12 illustrations by **Grant Canfield**  
from *Out of Left Field*, by Ellen Klages,  
©2018, now available in paperback  
from Puffin Books



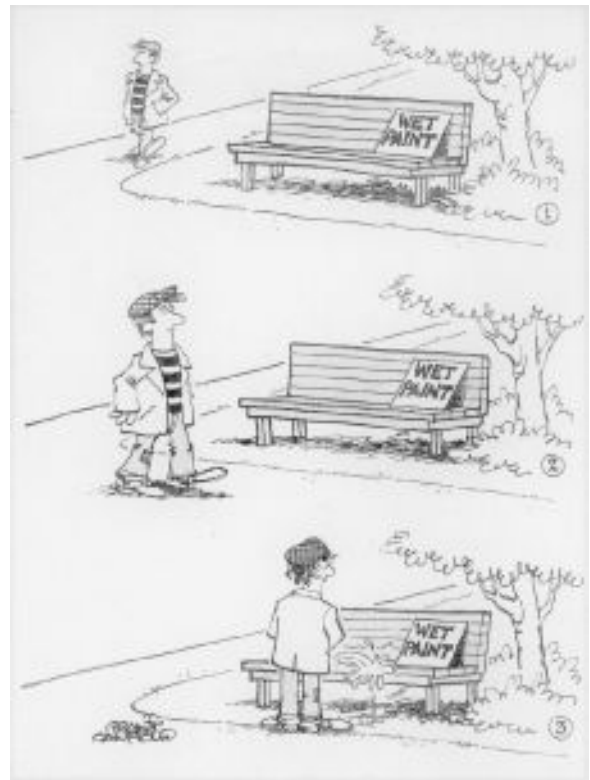
**Swank**, December 1975



**Swank** (date unknown)

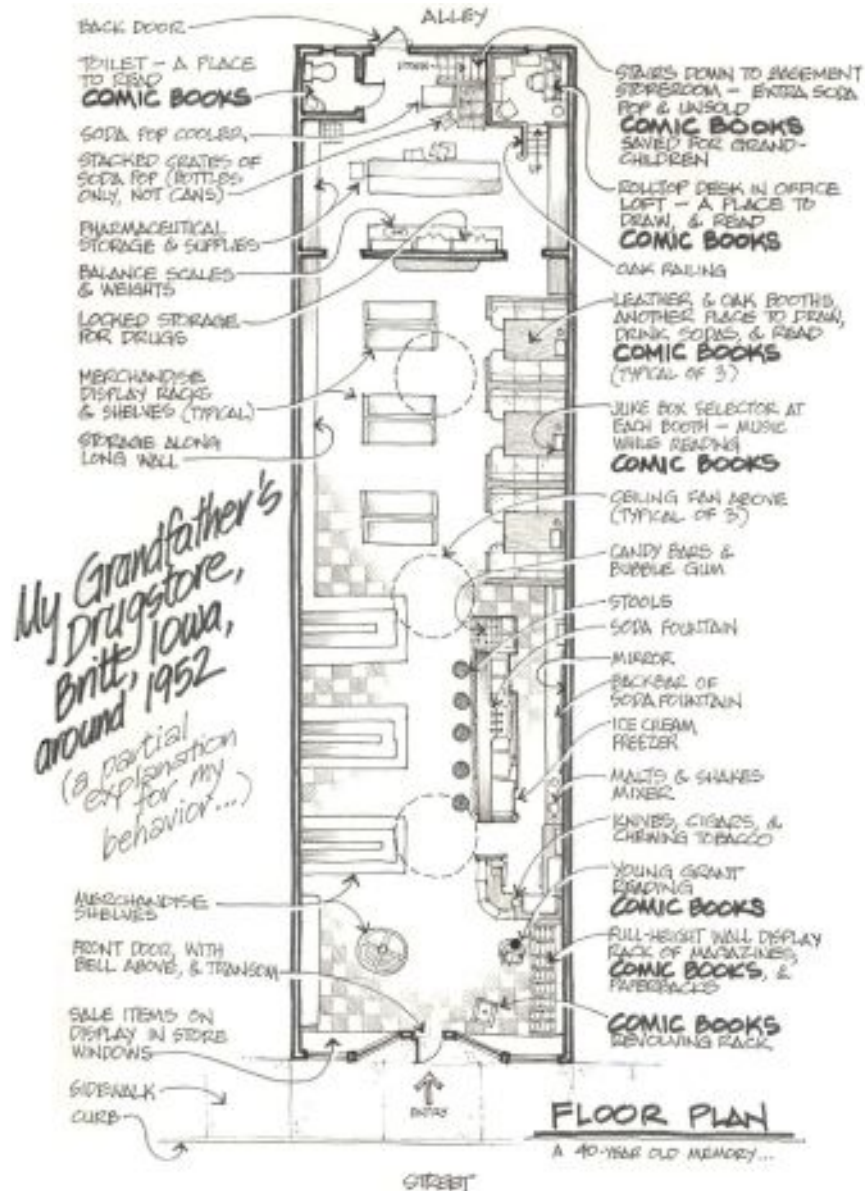


**Sir!**, December 1975



**Swank**, December 1976

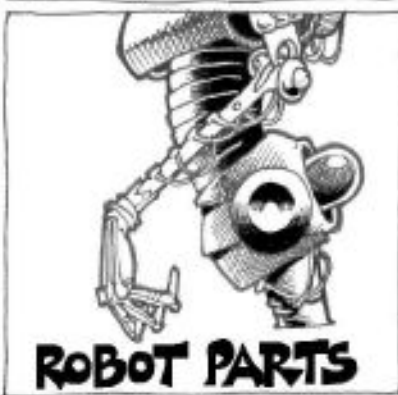
**No Caption Required**



**Nissen Drugs** (a memory, drawn in 1992)



# THE 12 ESSENTIALS OF CARTOONING



Previously unpublished (I think)

# The Dumbing of Fandom

Paul Kincaid (*Banana Wings* #6, Easter 1996)

Introduction by Nic Farey

What better subject for a Fanthology for fanzine fandom's annual convention than a fanzine review column (which also mentions Corflu)?

Paul Kincaid's "The Dumbing of Fandom" from *Banana Wings* #6 (Easter 1996) has much to recommend it, not least that several of those mentioned therein are still active and visible members of the community, prognostications of the demise of fanzine fandom dating back to 43BC (approx) notwithstanding. Its merits are also as a time capsule of the fanac of the day, a noteworthy piece from which to observe and deduce how some people have changed (or not) in the intervening 23 years, and whether such change has been for the worse or the better.

I'd always enjoyed Paul's perceptive critical eye and style, and when I asked him for permission to submit this was astonished to learn that he had not previously been anthologized. It's long past time to correct that omission.

[*Claire Brialey adds:* The files for that BW were in an early version of Word and never translated to PDFs so while they are readable the layout changes a bit because of printer drivers.

So here's the basic text where I've also taken the opportunity to fix a couple of inconsequential but still annoying typos. The artwork is by Anne Stokes. It wasn't especially commissioned for the piece but I seem to recall that we thought the banana's rather angry aspect fitted with the tone of Paul's article.]

# The Dumbing of Fandom

Paul Kincaid



I WAS WRONG. This whole column is wrong. I was told this in no uncertain terms at Attitude: the Convention during a panel on fanzine reviews. Lilian Edwards, a fellow panellist, asserted that fanzines are ephemeral, things to be read first thing in the morning, last thing at night, or ‘on the bog’ – times when she was ‘brain-dead’ – and then discarded. Oh, and any concern for such trivialities as layout, editing, proof-reading, spelling and grammar is ‘so seventies’ – a comment repeated several times and invariably accompanied by a dismissive giggle.

I would normally consider such comments to be glib, superficial, brainless crap, and treat them accordingly. But not this time. In the first place, although Lilian has not published a fanzine for some time, she has in the past produced fanzines of some significance. Moreover, she is part of the group bidding to bring the American fanzine-based convention, Corflu, to Britain – which is presumably the reason she was on the panel in the first place. Now, I find it disturbing that someone who seeks to promote and stage a convention devoted to fanzines and the people who produce them should have such a dismissive, not to say insulting, attitude towards fanzines: after all, if you don’t think that fanzines are worthy of your attention, why should you choose to make what is presumably a considerable investment of time and energy to giving them a convention’s-worth of attention? But maybe I’m being too ‘seventies’ – whatever that means – maybe this is how fanzines today should be treated, instantly dismissed even by their aficionados. After all, few members of our audience at Attitude (an audience overwhelmingly composed of fanzine editors, writers and readers) seemed to find anything wrong with what Lilian said, and a portion of the audience even seemed to agree.

*Illustration by Anne Stokes*



Where does that leave this fanzine review column? Or, come to that, the fanzine review panel where Lilian chose to dispense these pearls? To be honest, it leaves them as completely pointless exercises. If fanzines are only worth reading when the reader is not expected to engage the occasional brain cell, when matters of presentation and clarity and effectiveness of communication warrant no more than a flighty giggle, then there is nothing to talk about. Fanzines themselves would be emptied of content. Serious critical engagement with science fiction clearly has no place in this scheme of things, so we would lose M John Harrison's article in *Attitude* 9 or Maureen Speller's in *Banana Wings* 5. If we are not meant to think when we read a fanzine, then pieces designed to make us think about fandom are, by definition, redundant – which means losing everything from Caroline Mullan's tripartite convention report in *Attitude* 8 to Ian Sorensen's inventive take on Intersection as a Two Johns sketch in *Bob* 11. Even the very stuff of good fan essays, the personal perspective on one's own life, will have no further role unless they are reduced to no-brainers, which means that Dop's piece on his illness in *The Disillusionist* 4 or the *Götterdämmerung* crew's tales of life in Northern Ireland all get the boot. This is the dumbing of fandom.

If we follow such precepts, then fanzines can be no more than disposable purveyors of jokes and gossip, while legibility, clarity and sense will be irrelevant. Yet not even the hurriedly and often scrappily produced one-shots that proliferated at Attitude: the Convention could fit such a description. Judith Hanna featured fanzine reviews in *Year of the Cow*, Rhodri James spent most of his two issues of *The Interesting Times* apologising for the lack of a real fanzine, Bridget Hardcastle talked about fanzines in her life in *Obsessions* 4½, Bridget Wilkinson enthused about stone age technology in *Lo-Tec* which was produced on a jelly duplicator, Felix Cohen included bits about music and parents in among the gossip in *Bad Habits*. Even those which were overwhelmingly devoted to gossip and jokes – *Babes With Attitude* from Marianne Cain (with, one suspects, a little help from the PLOKTA cabal) and *Altitude* from Pat McMurray – did so with a degree of care that suggests they were at least meant to be read and understood. One-shots are by their nature disposable: the inevitable fate of the vast majority of these efforts was to be turned into paper aeroplanes by Noel Collyer. Nevertheless, in their range of subject and inspiration these one-shots read like cut down versions of the sort of fanzines I'll be reviewing below, expressions of the thoughts and interests of their writers, ways of communicating. Even at their most disposable, in other words, fanzines

are far from being no-brainers, and I cannot believe that any fan editor has ambitions to turn her fanzine into a downmarket version of *The Sun*. In hopes that this is not a presumption too far, therefore, I intend to continue writing fanzine reviews, and I shall do so in the belief that discussion of fanzines, of fandom, of any of the myriad things that interest we fans, has got to be more than chattering about gossip.

Lilian's remarks were primarily directed at *PLOKTA* – 'so lightweight it would float away' she described it, as if that were praise. Those of you who have defied the dumbing tendency and read this column with close attention may have detected that I hold no great brief for *PLOKTA*. Nevertheless, it deserves better than Lilian gave it.

The *PLOKTA* cabal do take great pains with the layout of their fanzine – so Alison Scott and Steven Cain assured me at great length during *Attitude*. To which I can only reply that it isn't always evident on the page: on page 12 of the current issue (vol 2, No. 2), the ' – to be continued...' that concludes one article actually dangles on its own at the head of the next column as the lead-in to a completely different article; their 'great pains' required about five minutes more thought. That said, their coverage of Giulia de Cesare and Steve Davies's wedding done as a spread from a *Hello!*-clone magazine actually does reveal a level of care, wit and intelligence in design that a) I found surprising (and pleasing) and b) has clearly taken far more work than Lilian would consider any fanzine warranted. It's a pity the text doesn't match up to the design – it should have been a much sharper and funnier pastiche – but then, with odd exceptions along the way, I've always had a problem with the contents of *PLOKTA*. This time round, for instance, the two best articles (at least in terms of the writing) are 'My Family and Other Animals', which is presumably by Steven Cain though it is uncredited, and Alison Scott's 'Marianne, the Midwives and the Malcontent Moose'. There is a sense of the personal and an attention to the apposite detail that should be the essence of good fan writing, yet somehow they don't actually involve or interest me. Coupled with the 'G'day!' pastiche, Steve Davies's pedestrian trip report that is as laboured as its title, 'My Journies in ye Antipodes', and numerous other asides and passing references, they add to an overwhelming and growing impression that the *PLOKTA* cabal has become more and more inward-turning, without the usual saving grace of making the personal universal.

On the whole, though, I found this issue of *PLOKTA* more coherent and more easily readable than *Attitude* 10. Now, I am not demanding instantly-disposable, brain-dead-friendly prose. Quite the contrary; I like interesting and informative pieces that make you think. Unfortunately, *Attitude* 10 starts with an excellent editorial by Michael Abbott about the nature and nurture of conventions; then it stalls. Nothing else in the issue has the challenge or the enthusiasm to carry the reader into any engagement with the article. There are decent enough attempts – Joseph Nicholas on belief really needed to be twice as long at least (the article ended before it got a proper argument going); Chuck Connor on Gibraltar was amusing but bitty, a series of vignettes that didn't quite cohere into a full article; Pam Wells's exercise in autobiography fell somewhere between these stools, too brief and too fragmented to really deliver all that it seemed to promise. It seems odd that in a fanzine as substantial (both in size and intent) as *Attitude*, so many of the articles fail to make it to two full pages, as if someone (contributor or editors?) was afraid to stretch pieces beyond the length of a soundbite.

Not that size is everything. Three of the four longest pieces in this issue are the articles that devote themselves to one aspect or other of fandom, and each fails not because it doesn't give its subject the attention it deserves, but because it never quite works out what to do with the space at its disposal. Steve Jeffery's fanzine reviews are wide-ranging and discursive; unfortunately his discussion of the contents of each fanzine seems to be based on an assumption that we will all be familiar with them. The size and idiosyncrasy of fanzine mailing lists make this unlikely in the extreme, yet the discussion is too allusive to allow any coherent impression of any of the fanzines you don't already know. Given that unstable foundation, it becomes very difficult to work out the basis for Steve's critical judgements – or even, in a couple of cases, to work out what those critical judgements are. But at least Steve does convey an enthusiasm for the notion of fanzines. I'm not sure what impression we are meant to gather from Pat McMurray's Novacon Report (other than his enthusiasm for another British Worldcon bid, which somehow seems to slip casually into the article on several occasions). The conrep falls neatly and with barely a splash into the trap that seems to have caught nearly all recent attempts at the genre: we learn in (often tedious) detail precisely what one person did in the course of one particular weekend, but there is no effort to capture the feel or the mood of the convention as a whole. Indeed, despite a fair bit of fairly predictable name-dropping, there is no real sense of a community, that this is a social

gathering. Michael Abbott comes closer to that with his piece on Beta fandom, which has enough anecdotes about Novacon by way of illustration that one suspects, if he had gone the whole hog and used Beta fandom as a hook from which to hang a convention report, it would have been exactly the sort of conrep that he, among others, has said we're starved of. Sadly, though, he does not go the whole hog. As a result, the article pretends that the divisions into Alpha and Beta fans is both revelatory and important for our understanding of fandom. It is neither and, where it would have worked as a tool for commenting upon fandom more generally, it feels both over-stretched and irrelevant when presented as an insight into fandom in its own right.

So, *PLOKTA* is irrelevant and *Attitude* is uninspiring. And while I am confirming everyone's worst prejudices (too serious, too negative – for gawd's sake, these are personal opinions; you don't have to agree. In fact, a lot of you clearly don't agree, and obviously someone out there considers irrelevance and lack of inspiration to be just what is needed when sitting on the bog), while I am in this cheerful, kill-the-fuckers mood, let's look at Kev McVeigh's latest whinge, sorry fanzine, *Adventures in Failure*. The heart of this fanzine is a brief article in which Kev reports on not taking his anti-depression medication, and that is clearly the key to the whole shebang. His last outing, *Second Coming? Slight Return*, was bright, lively, engaged and engaging; this time round the whole fanzine is about disengagement: the disengagement of Kev the barman from his cretinous customers, Kev the clubber observing and then disengaging from a stupid brawl, Kev the depressive disengaging from his medication. Throughout the fanzine, the rest of the human race is always 'them', creatures to be observed and despised; there is no sympathy, no humanity in this attitude, and so there is none in the writing. Only once do we get a glimpse of Kev as the enthused, humane and involved writer he used to be and hopefully will be again, and that is when he writes about music, compiling a list of his all-time favourite songs inspired by a book from Paul Williams. Music – despite his obscurantist taste – has always brought out the best in Kev, and here it does so again.

But you couldn't read any of this, even at its bloodiest and most downbeat, as lightweight and disposable; to do so would mean missing out on the sympathy for the writer that should be the thoughtful response to this fanzine.

I suspect that Kev would probably get on well with Kim Huett, at least to judge from the long article about music that takes up more than half of Kim's fanzine, *Existentialism's a Cruel Business*. I can imagine the two of them trading the names of groups no one else has ever heard of. At the beginning of the article, Kim reports crashing a dinner party at which the conversation turned to music: 'A hardly surprising development as music is one of those basics people like to use for verbal inspiration.' It's a good point and one that does at least answer my question: why do so many fans write about music? After all, they tend not to do it well. Kim's article is in two parts; in the first half he talks about music on Australian radio, which is interesting not for the insights into radio stations most of us won't have heard but for the sidelights it casts upon his life. But in the second half he resorts to that hoary old standby, the list – in fact, lists; three of them: station Triple-J's hot 100 for 1995 and 1996, and Kim's own 15 favourite tracks from '96. Since I recognise none of the titles and only a handful of the artists, these lists actually tell me nothing, and there is no accompanying commentary to put flesh upon this skeleton. Music may be a verbal inspiration, but it needs a little more than a roll-call of titles to actually be inspiring.

Kim is much more interesting in the first article in the fanzine, 'Do you come here often, or do you go home first?', a rather surprising piece which in the space of only a couple of thousand words manages to combine his entry into fandom, his discovery of fanzines, his discovery of Garrison Keilor's *Prairie Home Companion*, his support for the Minnesota Vikings and the Canberra Raiders, and the American TV programme *Mystery Science Theatre 3000*. It is, to say the least, an eclectic collection of topics, but somehow Kim manages to mould them all into one nicely controlled shape, which is the shape of his tastes and interests. Here we have the context missing from the lists of records, and the result is the sort of involvement with another person's life, that instant intimacy, that I think most of us are looking to get from good fan writing.

Kim brought *Existentialism's a Cruel Business* as his calling card when he visited this country, and Cheryl Morgan did the same with *Emerald City* 18. I have to say straight away that, lists apart, Kim's was the more instantly accessible. *Emerald City*, in its paper incarnation, seems to be only part of a story, as is demonstrated in the very first paragraph with its ominous closing sentence: 'Full explanation on my web site'. Rather like Steve Jeffery's fanzine reviews, there is a tendency to assume that the readers know more than they do, that explanations are unnecessary, that every passing

reference to Seattle or the Melbourne SF group will be instantly accessible to everyone. I found reading *Emerald City* as disorienting as walking into a convention bar for the first time ever, allusions and comments skittering past incomprehensibly, statements carrying a weight far greater than the words alone would seem to merit. Nevertheless, as with a good convention, there is something rather attractive in the mystery, a simple enjoyment of the circles in which Cheryl moves and the interests she shares with people that makes you want to join in the circle. There is also something pleasing about the sort of fan writing that can casually describe Massachusetts under snow as rather like Pepperland under the Blue Meanies. This description comes in the midst of a diary of a month in which her movements make my normal 140-mile-a-day commute seem like standing still: from Melbourne to Boston, for Boskone, to San Jose to Santa Cruz to San Francisco. The report on Boskone takes up the greater part of the diary; though she tends to concentrate on things that normally wouldn't attract me in a convention (although I like John M Ford's writing I have no interest whatsoever in his filking, which is the only thing about him Cheryl mentions and which gets as much attention as just about anything else at the con), there is still a lively sense of this as a place where a whole bunch of people got together and had fun, and that is an aspect of cons that so often seems to be missed out of convention reports. I also find it strange to encounter someone who still takes the Hugos so seriously that she will sit around with friends and draw up lists of recommendations for people to nominate (and go to some length to explain and encourage nomination). That said, I don't have much quarrel with her list of nominations, but it just seems a strangely old-fashioned intrusion into any fanzine. But then, there is something strangely old-fashioned about this fanzine as a whole; much of it, for instance, is taken up with book reviews, hardly deep analysis but full of an eager engagement with the genre that is supposed to hold us all together. Why is it, therefore, that so few other fanzines even mention science fiction, let alone talk so excitedly about books?

If *Emerald City* made me feel uncomfortably like I was encountering a branch of fandom for the first time, *Erg* 136 was even more disorienting. Look, here is a fanzine approaching its 38th birthday, which makes it older than the editors of this fanzine. It has long since settled into its ways and is presumably doing exactly what its editor and contributors and readers want it to do. It is, as far as these things ever are, safe and settled and secure. And it is totally alien. Opening its scrappily-produced A5 pages



(several different typefaces, old-fashioned illos or pictures stuck in from other sources with no real attempt at clear reproduction) it feels as if the last twenty-odd years have never happened, not just in fanzines but in technology, in science fiction, in just about everything. This is a fandom that was past before I went to my first ever convention, yet here it is, surviving still in its own little crack in the timestream. This is a world where the hottest topic of conversation is still the pulps – in one curious article, for instance, Terry Jeeves anatomises the first issue of *Spaceway* which appeared in December 1953, a magazine which, to judge from his dismissive comments about each story, was remarkable for its ludicrous plots and non-existent literary values, a magazine which he concludes ‘ran too many trite or pot-boiling yarns’; yet the article ends with what is surely a forlorn plea: ‘Anyone make me an offer for a full set of twelve issues?’ Here the modern world is viewed with more than a little alarm – there are three capsule book reviews included, one of which ends with the comment: ‘What sort of message are we sending to our youngsters these days?’ (Though it must be said that this is an understandable enough reaction when you realise that the book in question is *The Crow: City of Angels* by Chet Williamson.) There is even a short piece of fan fiction set up to conclude with an absolutely abominable pun, the sort of thing that mercifully disappeared from most fanzines with any sort of taste around the time humankind first began experimenting with such newfangled notions as the wheel and fire. Yet, for all that, this venture into the past contains one superb article, perfectly of its period and totally fascinating precisely because of that. ‘Your Future in the Cards’ reads like a sort of non-fiction version of William Gibson’s ‘The Gernsback Continuum’, since it is about the way the future was portrayed in 1936. A set of cigarette cards was issued then under the series title *The World of Tomorrow* which used stills from movies of the day such as *Things to Come* and illustrations from SF magazines to present a vision of the world to come. What Terry does in this article, neatly and simply, is to compare and contrast what was imagined then and what has actually come to pass, and the result is genuinely interesting, amusing and often astonishing. It is spoiled only by the abysmal reproduction of the cigarette cards.

About the only thing *Erg* has in common with *Götterdämmerung* is the size, A5. One can picture the two sets of editors reading each other’s efforts with complete incomprehension. Where *Erg* dwells cosily in a safe, pulpy past where the present is threatening, *Götterdämmerung* is confrontational, in-your-face, of the moment, a

fanzine that draws its life from the threat and violence of the world around it. Although in fact the one thing that is missing from this issue, 9, is Northern Ireland, and the oblique part that the troubles there have played in the lives of all the editors. It is an absence that may be responsible for the slight loss of edge that is notable in this issue. Nevertheless, this remains one of the best and sharpest fanzines around, a home for good, rough, lively fan writing. Irishness is there, of course, notably in a very fine piece by Brendan Landers, 'Tooralooraloo Tooraloorapaddy', about living with being Irish when you are daily brought into confrontation with the media, and particularly the Hollywood, image of the Irish cliché. More importantly, there is the sense of living in the real world that has been one of the abiding features of *Götterdämmerung*. Here, it is Canadian-based because co-editor Tommy Ferguson has emigrated to Canada, but the feeling for the place one inhabits, the picture of Canada in winter, is as precise and effective as – if less dangerous than – the usual portraits of everyday Ireland.

Maybe it's something to do with being Irish, with being part of the Irish diaspora, that has made trip reports such a regular part of *Götterdämmerung*. These 'what I did on my holidays' pieces have been more variable than anything else in the fanzine, sometimes rising to almost inspired heights, more often plodding and flat, and I've never quite worked out why the editors show such devotion to the form. This time is, of course, no exception with another return to that old favourite, Cuba, on this occasion in the company of Hugh McHenry. This is one of the better examples simply in terms of writing, although it doesn't really tell us much more than we gleaned from Tommy Ferguson's reports on Cuba a few issues back. Since the fall of the Soviet Union and the tightening of the US embargo a few years back, Cuba has been going through exceptionally straitened economic circumstances disguised by overblown propaganda, and I couldn't help feeling at the start of his piece that McHenry was seeing the propaganda more than the harshness. Certainly the rather blithe references to rationing, the black market, special stores for foreigners and the like seem to miss any awareness of what must lie behind all this for the people of the island. Still, in the end as he battles through illness and shortages it does work out as a straightforward and affecting account of coming to terms with everyday life in an alien land.

Best piece in this issue, though? Tommy's rant against media fans. It's short, sharp, funny, unreasoned, irrational, and I loved it.

What makes these good or bad fan articles? There are no hard and fast rules, there is no line clearly drawn across the page which allows you to shift with absolute confidence certain articles to one side and certain to the other. It is instinct, it is taste, it is prejudice, who knows? Maybe Eve Harvey comes closest in *Wallbanger* 16 when she introduces a contribution from Irwin Hirsh and defines why it belongs in the fanzine: 'It's a snapshot of your life ... through this we can get to know you better ... why else do I do a fanzine?' Yes, perhaps it is as simple as that: good fan articles open doors, reveal something of the nature of a fan so that through it we might glimpse something of the nature of all fans; bad fan articles present surfaces, illusions – they close the door and hide the fan behind it. If it is that simple, then Kev McVeigh, for instance, has slammed the door shut in his offering this time around, while everyone in *Götterdämmerung*, on the other hand, is swinging the door wide open, and the same is certainly true of *Wallbanger*. Two issues in less than a year is unseemly haste from Eve, but *Wallbanger* has certainly developed into an unpretentious and welcoming presence; perhaps it has a little of the same cosiness that Terry Jeeves presumably generates for his regular audience in *Erg*, but the generations are different and so it comes across as much more accessible.

What we get from Irwin Hirsh, for instance, is a diary entry for six days scattered through May. Things happen: meetings, memories, family outings, coincidences. They're as random as real life, they are not developed or explored in any detail, there is no overall shape or structure to the piece; but what does emerge, as Eve observes, is a picture of one fan that is in its way a picture of all fans. As I said earlier, in another context, he has made the personal universal. It is quiet and undemanding, but it works. Pretty much the same can be said about Rhodri James's account of a skiing holiday in Canada. It is not high art, but it is considerably more relaxed and hence easier to enter than the last piece of his I saw, the rather stiff and ponderous convention report he had in *Attitude* a few issues back.

The star of the issue, though, is Eve, despite a rather irritating habit she has developed of apologising for lack of ability, for poor writing. Her writing would be much better if she didn't downplay it all the time. And this brings us back to Corflu. Eve's editorial contains a brief mention of her trip to Corflu along with a montage of impressions of the trip to America. The stand-out image from those impressions is friendship: 'What keeps me coming back to fandom ... is the friendship.' Yes, and that is

the soul of any convention; they are all alike in that – if they work at all, that is. We’ve all experienced conventions which we enjoy despite the con, and what makes it work in those circumstances is the universal of friendship. (Which is also why one of the first things I demand of any decent convention report is some sense of the community, of the social life that comprises the convention.) Eve is good at bringing a sense of people into her writing, seemingly with little effort, but she also notes that beyond that universal there are differences also. ‘So what did make it different? I have no idea. There was nothing you could put your finger on. Maybe it was the conversation.’ And much as it has in common with other conventions, Corflu has these imponderable differences also.

In *Apparatchik* 74 Corflu also takes centre stage, with an article by Ted White on the arcane methods of choosing the next Corflu, prompted by a piece from Andy Hooper in which he explains the problems that have arisen as a result of the British Corflu ‘bid’. Two things emerge from this discussion – apart from the more general impression that *Apparatchik* is once again at its best when a fannish issue emerges to give them something meaty to get their teeth into. In the first instance there is the same difference that Eve senses – she believes that this difference would be fatal to any attempt to stage a British Corflu: ‘We can only copy the outward differences, not that essential something that makes it Corflu.’ Ted White appears more sanguine, but this might arise from a common attitude I find among American fans that Britons do things the same as them. It just ain’t so. But this leads us to the second thing to emerge from this discussion, the repeated comparisons between Corflu and Worldcon. ‘All of fanzine fandom is only a sideshow at modern Worldcons,’ Ted says. ‘Our center of focus as a community in fandom is now Corflu.’ This leaves me with a host of conflicting emotions. In the first place I can only agree about Worldcons, and the relative unimportance of fanzine fans in that scheme of things is something that isn’t going to change, at least not for the better. But if so, should we be pushing Corflu in the same direction as the Worldcon? I think again of what Eve said about copying the outward difference: I can’t help feeling that that is what non-American Worldcons have mostly tried to do, with notable lack of success, I’m not sure we’d be any better with a Corflu.

Andy Hooper explains why there has been confusion over this year’s Corflu bid, though I can’t help feeling he tends to gloss over or sidestep one or two of the issues. Pam Wells seemed to lay down the marker for a British Corflu entirely off her own bat, and there does seem to have been genuine confusion over whether this was announcing

a proper bid or not. Still, somehow it turned into a British Corflu to be run by Ian Sorensen, Alison Freebairn and Lilian Edwards, except that this group appeared to issue no formal statement of intent. So, in anticipation of the fact that there might not be a bid at all, Andy started setting in motion a possible Florida bid, thus breaking the tradition of Corflu as Ted White lays it out and prompting Ian Sorensen to finally announce an intention to bid. Suddenly there was confusion – and at this point Andy’s account is less than crystal clear; Ian apparently felt Andy’s machinations were hostile and promptly withdrew the bid, and lot of ruffled feathers were soothed and suddenly the British Corflu bid is up and running, and because of the way these things are done is looking like a sure thing.

All of which discussion is probably totally irrelevant because by the time this review column hits the streets the issue will have been decided one way or another, having prompted a strong issue of *Apparatchik* and some doubts from Eve Harvey. And, whether we have a British Corflu or not, at the end of the day we will still have the fanzines. We will have Terry Jeeves talking about old cigarette cards and a curious vision of the future, we will have Tommy Ferguson ranting about media fans and shivering in the Canadian cold, we will have Cheryl Morgan writing about books and conventions and Kim Huett writing about music and *A Prairie Home Companion*, we will have Kev McVeigh emerging from depression to enthuse about music, we will have Michael Abbott sharing his thoughts on conventions and Eve Harvey loving everything Australian, we will even have the Plokta crowd playing with design and babies. These things will survive to surprise us and please us and amuse us and make us stop and think. We will also, in all probability, have a Corflu, a ‘focus as a community in fandom’ as Ted White puts it, being organised by someone who declares that all of this is only for the brain dead.

Dumb!

— Paul Kincaid

## Fanzines Reviewed

*Adventures in Failure*: Kevin McVeigh: 37 Firs Road, Milnthorpe, Cumbria LA7 7QF

*Apparatchik*: Andy Hooper, Carl Juarez and Victor Gonzalez: The Starliter Building, 4228 Francis Ave. N. #103, Seattle, WA 98103, USA

*Attitude*: Michael Abbott, John Dallman and Pam Wells: 102 William Smith Close, Cambridge CB1 3QF

*Emerald City*: Cheryl Morgan: cherylmorgan@compuserve.com (no terrestrial address given)

*Erg*: Terry Jeeves: 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough YO12 5RQ

*Existentialism's a Cruel Business*: Kim Huett: PO Box 679 Woden, ACT 2606, Australia

*Götterdämmerung*: Mark McCann: 40 Deramore Avenue, Belfast BT7 3ER, Northern Ireland

*Plokta*: Alison Scott: 42 Tower Hamlets Road, Walthamstow, London E17 4RH

*Wallbanger*: Eve Harvey: 8 The Orchard, Tonwell, Herts SG12 0HR

All the above titles available for 'the usual' (trades with all editors on multi-editor fanzines). Additionally *Apparatchik* is available for subscription of \$12 annual/\$19.73 lifetime from the editorial address or, in the UK, of £10 annual/£19.37 lifetime from Martin Tudor, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarke Lane, Willenhall, West Midlands WV13 1HX.

[*Claire adds*: Most of the addresses are out-of-date — but if they're taken out, what look like editorial credits are wrong for a couple of multi-editor fanzines since they were actually postal contact points.]



# From the Files of FLAWOL

## Introduction by Andy Hooper

When Michael announced this potluck Fanthology, I warned him that I could easily fill three or four such collections. Over the past several years, I've made a daily avocation of describing old fanzines for online auction, and about once or twice per month I find a piece of writing that I like so much that I'm willing to retype it. I'm well aware that I could scan the pages and create new text files from them, but the act of retyping a piece also makes one really read every word.

I have re-published some of these articles and editorials in the tiny Turbo-Charged Party-Animal APA, still clanging away after nearly 400 monthly mailings. Others are simply lingering in my files, waiting for an opportunity to be shared again. Michael stopped me after just three submissions, but I have to admit, these are three weighty pieces of writing.

My first choice is the entire text of WHAT'S THE POINT OF CALLIN' SHOTS? a fanzine composed between September and November of 1978 by the larger-than-life Fred Haskell, and submitted to Minneapa, as well as a wider mailing list. I loved this piece for a number of reasons: It describes a variety of conventions and other events of in Fred's peripatetic life that took place during my first year in fandom, and features a lot of names well-known among fanzine fans. It describes the struggle to find a place to drink, smoke and play music at conventions, a struggle which goes on to this day. And Fred composed the text directly to stencil, giving a sense of reportage that can be missing from pieces massaged to perfection on a word processor.

The next selection is "On Suicide, the Son of Sam, and Where We Get Those Crazy Ideas" by Jack Chalker, published in his FAPazine INTERJECTION in February of 1978. I found it compelling on several levels, and relish the opportunity to publish something by a Baltimore writer from outside our usual faanish precincts.

Jack L. Chalker, (1944-2005) was a successful novelist, and also an enthusiastic member of science fiction fandom from the age of 13, when the Baltimore native joined the Washington Science Fiction Association. He was also among the founding members of the Baltimore Science Fiction Association, and a graduate of Towson State University with a Bachelor's Degree in English. He received a teaching certificate and taught in inner city Baltimore schools for 12 years, until he rather suddenly became a full-time writer in the mid-1970s. He was thereafter one of the more prolific writers in the field, with 60 novels to his credit. He edited the sercon 1960s fanzine. MIRAGE, and co-founded Mirage Press, a small imprint that began in 1961 with Chalker's bibliography of H. P. Lovecraft. He was twice nominated for a Hugo award, and was a finalist for the John W. Campbell Jr. award. He was married in 1978, and had two children. He died of complication from congestive heart failure in 2005, and his ashes were scattered in numerous locations, including a ferryboat between Hong Kong and Hainan, and Lovecraft's grave in Providence.

Finally, I offer "Shadowboxing the Blues," published by Lucy Huntzinger in her fanzine SOUTHERN GOTHIC #3, dated December 31st, 1994. Lucy is still active and recently declared her renewed love for fanzines, so she can generally speak for herself. But I found this piece of family memoir both affecting and illuminating, and it deserves to be read – or re-read – by the Corflu crowd. I hope that you will get as much out of reading these works as I did from retyping them.

## WHAT'S THE USE OF CALLIN' SHOTS?

( A Zine for Minneapa, with additional distribution elsewhere, from:

Fred Haskell  
7510 Cahill Road #118B  
Edina, Minnesota 55435

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Dave Kyle says you can't sit here

---

I wanted to go to Midwestcon. Perhaps my desire to go was made stronger by the fact that I hadn't gone last year, and by the fact that I wasn't sure I could go. Would I have the time? The money? I had gone to X-Con because Mark Riley had wanted to go badly enough that he had paid for the gas. I would be going to Archon II, since it would be the start of the next phase of my travelling. But Midwestcon was a question mark,

As the weekend of Midwestcon grew nearer, things got more confusing. Mark wanted to go, but likewise wasn't sure he would be able to. On Monday or Tuesday immediately preceding the con, he finally decided that he couldn't go, and I decided that I must go, regardless of the cost and the problems inherent in going alone. Thursday evening, when I was making my final preparations to leave, Mark called to say that he could go after all, and would share driving and expenses.

So early Friday morning (some would call it late Thursday night) found us travelling, as we had so many times before, across Wisconsin on I-94.

We arrived in Cincinnati in the mid-afternoon of Friday, and made our way to the Holiday Inn where the con was being held. We walked into the hotel, Mark went off to do whatever Mark does, and a fog descended upon me. I don't know - maybe it was simply that I was tired from the long trip, and had no room to go to relax or nap or freshen up. Or perhaps it was because I had built such high, but non-specific, expectations for the con, and now had no idea how to go about realizing them. Maybe it was something deeper, as this sort of thing has happened before and since. But whatever the cause, I spent the next few hours in this fog - wandering around, feeling disconnected, really having no idea whatsoever what to do with myself. I drifted in and out of a number of conversations with a number of people; all the while feeling awkward and out of place, even with my old friends. (In the course of one of these brief conversations, an interesting thing happened. I was talking with Sarah Prince, and a woman I had noticed earlier as looking interesting and like someone I would like to meet came over and said, "You must be Fred Haskell." I admitted that I was, and remarked that I was sorry I could not return the favor, as I had no idea who she was. She turned out to be Kathi Schaefer, and she has since said she has no idea why she was so sure it was me. Unfortunately, even a nice thing like that (and those two very interesting women) couldn't seem to dispel the fog, and I soon drifted away.) I finally bought a beer from the pool-side bar, sat down at one of the tables there, and started wondering what's left when one feels like they no longer fit in even in a society of misfits.

I now reach one of those embarrassing impasses which sometimes occur even in the best of con reports: I must confess that I have no clear recollection of the next few hours - being, as they are, clouded with the mists that time casts over memory in addition to the fog which was upon me at the time. I do recall that quite a number of friendly faces appeared out of the fog, and that I spoke with people who wore those faces (and they with me), and that I would occasionally get up and bump around in the fog by myself; but exactly who spoke to me when and precisely what was said is now obscured. All appeared quite bleak.

Then, as fortuitously as the wild coincidences in Tom Jones, Ken Josenhans approached me and inquired whether I might like to share the double room he had booked at the Inn (Holiday variant). A major portion of my fog rapidly evaporated when I heard Ken's offer - which makes it apparent that much of the fog had been due to really not knowing what to do with myself in a very literal and physical sense.

I agreed to share the Room with Ken (and with any crashers we might find). I had a very pleasant chat with Ken on the way up to the room and for a while after we got there - it was wonderful to regain my ability to communicate.

## WHAT'S THE POINT OF CALLIN' SHOTS, Page two.

And it was likewise wonderful to finally relax after the long drive and the earlier discomfort. Ken wanted to get back to the con and soon left, and it was then that the most wonderful thing happened – I rediscovered the simple joys of a shower.

So it was a much refreshed Fred who ventured out of the room some time later, seeking whatever the con might have to offer.

\* \* \* \* \*

Why does this sort of thing happen so frequently? That last stuff was written in Detroit, over a month ago. It is now around 11:00 pm, 30 September 1978, and I am in Phoenix. I wrote a couple of comments at that time which I was going to insert wherever there was a “break in the section,” and I guess now is as good a time as any to insert them, so....

(A couple of comments to Minneapans):

Ken Konkol – It seems you rub me the wrong way, both in person and print, for no specific reason I can detect. However, it seems that I have been overreacting to you – that you in no way deserve the amount of irritation I've been feeling toward you. For this, and for the words I've written as a result of it, I apologize. Also, if I do drop out of Minneapa, it will not have anything whatever to do with your presence there, despite my silly words in previous zines, and I apologize for those words also. I don't think we'll ever be friends, nor will I seek out your company, but I hope this will somehow reduce the amount of bad feeling which seems to have grown up between us....

To all Minneapans – I have been examining my feelings about Minneapa, and I have come to see that although I may well drop out, my dissatisfaction arises from things other than the particular people that are now in. One of the things that has been bothering me is simply that I'm so far behind, not only in terms of commenting but also in just reading, and the mailings recently have been so thick that I despair of ever catching up. I guess the whole thing is size-related, in that the other dissatisfaction seems to stem from the fact that Minneapa no longer seems to be the comfortable, intimate place it once was for me. (And, as I have mentioned to some people, the size has caused the egoboo-per-unit-volume to go down drastically – no one has the time or space to comment in the depth that things deserve.) So, you know, we'll see what happens....

\* \* \* \* \*

(More previously written stuff – written in the past few days as I tried to “gear up” to get going again):

I do not know as I write this whether I will append it to the material I've already written, or whether it will stand alone – I am currently at work, at Rio Salado Community College in Phoenix, Arizona. That's a lot to cram into one sentence, isn't it? I guess that's a problem I'm having lately – lots to say, and maybe little to say, but it's all scrambled up together, and it's now all just tumbling out instead of coming out in good order. I had suspected that would happen.

Start over. Presume that this will follow that which was previously written. That was written quite some time ago, when I was still in Detroit, and I was trying to write about the Midwestcon and Archon and Autoclave. I'd like to think I still will – there are some things about all of them that I'd like to say. But since then even more has happened. Iguanacon has come and gone, and I've been more or less trapped here in Phoenix until I can earn enough money to leave. Lots to say, and nothing to say. \*sigh\*

The problem is, I guess, in knowing where to begin. I'm somewhat reluctant to go back to my careful detailing of Midwestcon, because it has been quite some time, and it seems my memories fade rather drastically if I don't translate them into black (or other-coloured) marks on paper fairly soon after the event which is to be remembered. I know that I can never attain the depth of detail about Midwestcon that I was trying to convey when I first sat down to write about it.

And still, I'm driven to write something. Not only to get back into Minneapa (how many cotillions have I missed?)

WHAT'S THE POINT OF CALLIN' SHOTS, Page three.

Is there a waiting list these days?), but also to regain contact with people there, and in AZAPA and on my mailing list. To say, "Hi there, here's what I've been up to." And in a way, though not directly or on as personal a level as might be best, to say, "How have you been? What have you been doing?" (Of course, this is in many respects a sham. Because I got a large number of letters on my previous couple of issues, and I have yet to respond to any of them. Pretty shitty of me.) But, partly a sham or not, that really is what I want to do.

So what have I been up to? Aha! That's where the problem of where to start really comes in! Because for the last few weeks I've been doing nothing more exciting than working the jobs that Kelly Services finds me. A lot of reading, watching some TV (mostly football), and some visiting with people, but nothing really much to talk about. So to write something interesting, I have to wind back a bit further. So then, why not write about Iguacon? Two reasons: One is that I'm not sure I could do my experiences there any justice, the other is that I somehow would feel funny talking about one con that just happened when I still have unsaid things to say about previous cons. But I don't know if I can wind back as far as Midwestcon, since, as I just said, the memories are not really that clear or detailed any more, and besides, I don't know if I would ever get current if I tried to go back that far. It feels like it would be quite a task to talk about all that much time. And I'm not sure if I have the commitment at the moment to sit and do that much writing.

Start over. It is the early afternoon of September 28, 1978.

Feeling particularly self-conscious today, aren't we Fred? \*sigh\*

Fragments. Damnit, all I get are fragments. I must have lots to say, otherwise I wouldn't keep having fragments pop up to the surface, each of which immediately overwhelms the previous fragment, and so on. But they should get organized.

Black marks on paper. Fragments. Tenuous enough, even when a semblance of order is imparted upon them before their arrival on the paper. And how confusing, how worthless they are when they go spilling out randomly, without much order.

Sorry about that. I seem to be too disorderly today. Or right now. I'll be back to you when I figure out some way to start, somewhere to begin, so that there is some sort of order to this, even if it is merely the order of chronology, or even of wandering, but something. Anyway....

(8:30 am, 28 September, 1978. At work.) Ah, I see the answer now. Quit all this bullshit introspection and dive right in -

There is no way that I can actually pick up where I left off, covering all the details as I had previously intended, but there are still some very shining moments of Midwestcon that I do remember and want to share with you. Okay, so Friday evening I had the shower and so on, and went wandering out. At some point during the wandering, I came across Lou Takikow talking with a middle-aged motel security guard. Now, as many of you know already (either because you were there or because you've read or heard reports), the motel where they had Midwestcon this year had an enclosed pool/recreation area, and I thought this would be the perfect place for me to make some music - it would be open for people to wander by and join in, lots of room, and perhaps less chance of disturbing people than there would be in one of the rooms. So I went up to Lou and the security guard, and told them that I was thinking of singing and playing guitar in that area that evening, and asked if that might cause any problems. The security guard sad (and I know these aren't his exact words - it's been far too long for me to remember them exactly - but they taught me in Journalism school that the quotation marks were to be used when capturing the essence of what someone said): "Well, I personally don't mind. As far as I'm concerned you can play all night and make all the noise you want to. However, if someone calls down to the desk and complains, and they beep me and tell me to go and stop it, then I'll have to come around and tell you to keep it down."

This seemed like a very reasonable attitude, so I thanked him and wandered off. Okay, consider a couple of hours passed. I spent them in conversation, and very nice conversation at that. I then decided it was time to play, so I went and picked up my guitars. When I got back to the recreation area, I discovered a group of people already singing. Rather than trying to get up somewhere else and "competing" with them, I decided to join them, even

though they were playing a different sort of music than mine, and I wasn't sure how they and the other people would find my music. (I'm terrible at names, so I can't tell you everyone who was singing/playing, but among them were Wanita Coulson and the Passevoys. They were doing their usual thing – ballads, olde time stuff, filk songs, and the like. (To explain a bit, although I enjoy much of what they do (hell, Wanita, for example, is good, and I reckon good music is good music, period), I've always been a little afraid that the people who gather to hear that sort of music won't be very interested in listening to my mixed bag of rock and blues and "folk." I don't quite know why I have this fear, but I do. It was somewhat lessened by my pleasant experiences at X-Con (in Milwaukee) this year, but I still worry. But given the experience of X-Con, and given the situation, I decided to give it a try.)

When my turn came to play, I started with "City of New Orleans." I frequently start with "City of New Orleans, for a couple of very good reasons. One is that it is a good rousing song that usually gets people involved (and as far as I'm concerned, involvement is what music is about), and the other is that I'm always reasonably sure I can do it (which is a big concern when choosing a first song – if it goes well, the rest of the evening probably will, whereas if it goes poorly, the rest of the evening might be spent trying to get on track). About halfway through, I looked up and noticed that the security guard was standing there listening, and I thought "Oh shit – I just started and now he's going to tell me to keep it down."

Mark Riley, who had been standing nearby when I was talking to the security guard and Lou earlier, evidently thought the same thing, because when I finished, Mark Launched into a "gee folks, the security guard is here so that means we're going to have to keep it down" kind of thing. But before he could get too far into this spiel, the security guard said, "Hey, if it's all that good you can play as loudly as you want."

Blew me away. I had thought he was standing there patiently waiting until I was done to tell me to keep it down, when in fact he had been standing there grooving on it. And, in fact, for the rest of the evening, he came by and listened as often and as long as his rounds would permit! (How on Earth did Lou find a motel with a security guard like that? We could use a few more like him!)

(And it turned out that we never did get any complaints about the music, either that night, or Saturday night. We were sharing the motel with another group, but they were in town for a jazz festival, and were too busy with their own noisy parties to be overly concerned with ours.)

Ah...much good music went down (down? Up? Wherever...) Friday night and on into Saturday morning. Much good music, and from many sources. And some surprises too. A woman who, if memory serves, later told me she is somewhat new to fandom, Teresa Miñambres, was coaxed into singing by Curt Clemmer. The second time around she had to be coaxed again, and this time most everybody joined in the process of persuading her to sing, and meant it – she was very good, and quite entertaining.

As I was waiting for my turn to come around so I could do my last song (the time sequence of all this has not been very well conveyed, eh? Sorry), having decided that it would be that since it was quite late/early, Kathi Schaefer wandered by. Thinking that it might be nice to snatch a chat with her before retiring (I was getting tired of playing, but I knew I wouldn't be able to sleep immediately, and she was, after all, somebody I decided I should chat with), I got up and followed after her. If memory serves (which it might not, after all), when she saw me approaching she asked if I knew where Ken Josenhan's room was, as she had arranged with him earlier that she would crash there. Amusing. I told her that it was my room also, and would be glad to show her the way as soon as I finished my last song if she cared to wait, or I could just tell her if she was in a hurry to crash. She said she would wait, and we both went back, and I eventually did my last song when it came around to me.

As I was packing up my guitars, the security guard came over to me and asked if I played professionally. He seemed saddened somehow when I told him that I didn't. We then had a short, but very nice conversation, during which he told me that he always enjoyed seeing people that we good at expressing themselves in some communicative art form, and that he had enjoyed my playing quite a bit. He also told me that he and his wife had been into ballroom dancing for years, and, if I remember correctly, even taught it some; so he was into an expressive art form of his own, and could therefore better relate to what I was doing. He was a really beautiful man –I hope I get to see him again at next year's Midwestcon (presuming that I'm able to go to next year's Midwestcon...).



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Kathi and I went back to the room and had a very pleasant chat. However, I was more exhausted and able to sleep than I had thought, so that chat didn't last all that long.

Saturday. Saturday. Sigh. Well, I do remember that Kathi and I had time for a much longer chat when we awoke in the (morning? Afternoon?). And I'm sure I walked around and talked with other people. Went out to dinner with, lessee, Bill Bowers and Pat Mueller and Patty Peters and Kathi (was there anyone else? I don't think so, but I'm not sure). Had nice chats with them, and with Diane Drutowski. Saw Allen Curry, and spoke with him briefly, mostly to express a desire to hear some of his music again (when was the last time? I don't recall. Autoclave II, maybe?). And, I'm sure, scores of other people, some of whom I've probably now hurt and offended by not mentioning them. \*sigh\* Oh yeah, went out to lunch with Linda Moss. Or was that Sunday? I think I'll give up this train of attack....

That evening we played again. Teresa wasn't as hard to coax, and even Kathi was persuaded to sing a few numbers. Another very nice evening of music. Winding up around six in the morning or thereabout with survivors piling into Morrison and going off for food (or something resembling it) at the nearby County Kitchen. Back. To sleep.

Spent much of Sunday intending to Leave Real Soon Now, but kept running into interesting people and/or situations. Brought out my portfolio to show to Kathi (humm, maybe she saw it earlier, and I just brought it out to show her the last of it. I'm pretty sure of that - I have a memory of her and somebody else up in the room going through it. Diane Drutowski? I dunno. Sorry.). Ended up showing it to a bunch of people who wandered by. Got to see Sarah Prince's con slides, too. (Hummm. There's somebody I forgot to mention in the context of Saturday. \*sigh\*) I dunno. Sunday was great. Lots of people, lots of pleasant talk.

Regrets - I didn't get to talk nearly enough with Mary Mertens. Nor with Ross Pavlac. Others too, I'm sure, but those are the two names that spring immediately to mind when I go to think of who I didn't talk enough with.

Finally left, somewhat late in the day.

\* \* \* \* \*

I had run out of pre-draft and was winging it from about the middle of last page or thereabouts. Time has passed, and in reading over what I have written, I find I am embarrassed by the superficiality of it all. But let it stand, let it stand.

It is around 10:30pm, 10 October, 1978. I am still stuck in ~~Mobile~~ Phoenix (well, Tempe, but same difference...). Still working for Rio Salado Community College (and by most recent report probably will be until the end of the month or so - my boss, Ralph Horton, tells me that the College has put some sort of silly hiring freeze on, so he can't even interview people to try to find a replacement (or rather, a permanent replacement) for his secretary, who quit without notice about three weeks ago, which is why I'm there). I hope that by the time this job runs out, I'll have saved enough money to move on. I really don't like this place at all - much too dry, much too hot, no real city here, and very little interesting to do. (The other evening I was a bit depressed, and for a moment hit upon an idea of something to do to cheer myself up a bit. "Ah," I thought, "I'll walk down to the Salt River," (which isn't too far from where I'm staying), "and throw some rocks in it, and watch it, and like that." Then I thought it through and realized it wouldn't be quite what I was after, after all. Sort of like riding on the Second Avenue Subway in Manhattan to make oneself feel better....)

Ah, enough of this. I think I'll try to do some more con/trip whatever reporting....

\* \* \* \* \*

We left Cincinnati, as I said above, somewhat late Sunday. It was still daylight and consequently hot and sunny. About an hour out, the fuel filter gave out, and we had to stop and let the engine cool down and change the thing. Just when I had started to hope that I was finished with that particular problem.

Ah well, I guess bad gas is the wave of the future.

As we approached Indianapolis, I noticed the sky ahead darkening and making with the lightning routine. (Mark didn't notice this because he was asleep in the back.) As we reached the Interstate Loop around Indianapolis, we also reached the rain zone. And before we made it all the way around the city (or at least as far as the freeway up to Gary) we were in the midst of a bitchin' thunderstorm - the kind with high wind, lots of rain, exceedingly limited visibility, and green sky. Mark woke up.

We stopped for a short time and considered the idea of sitting it out, but I decided that I'd rather push on in hopes that we'd move out of the storm when we headed north. (What is it about Midwescons that I seem to always get trapped in heavy storms either coming or going?)

Well, it was some of that good old white-knuckle driving for a while, but we were eventually moving out of it. We got, oh, I don't know, quite a bit north of the city, and the rain was definitely letting up, and things were getting easier. It was then we came upon two lanes of stopped cars and trucks. "Hmmm, I thought, "maybe they're doing

some construction ahead." Fifteen minutes later I considered the possibility that there had been an accident ahead. Mark and I discussed this possibility, and decided that it was, indeed, distinct. Forty-five minutes later we decided that it was a goddamned stupid place to build a parking lot....

Then we noticed there was no traffic coming from the north and got really worried.

Mark went back to ask the trucker behind us if he had heard anything about the situation over the CB. All he knew was that the parking lot was about two miles long then, and we should've gone a different way. Great. As the trucker put it, "Now they tell us."

Okay. "...and the wisdom to know the difference." So I put on the tape of Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony and sat back for a listen. (Okay, Matthew, Szell & Cleveland, Columbia/Odyssey YT 34625. Obviously old, adequate, but not great. I can't wait 'till I can afford Herbert von Karajan and the Berlin....)



The tape played all the way through. We were there for a while. Later CB reports finally told us that a power line had come down onto the road. A little less than a quarter mile from where we were parked. (I later found out that Jon Singer and Lynette Parks, also coming back from Midwestcon, had gotten stuck somewhere between us and the wire. I hope nobody was under it....) Anyway, we were finally able to continue our journey.

We spent the night in Chicago. And it was a Good Thing, too, as driving all the way back to Minneapolis at that hour and after all that would have been a drag. Memory gets pretty fuzzy, but I'm pretty sure I went into the Loop Monday morning to have a chat with Jim Williamson about the possibility of working for Control Data Education Co. there in the near future. He sounded hopeful. I must have met Lynette (and Jon?) for lunch. I did, but just Lynette, I think. Damn this faulty memory anyway.... Wait - I took the El back with Jon, so he must have joined us for lunch. (I'm sure of that because I lost my checkbook in his car later that afternoon....) Enough! Enough! Move on the something you remember clearly, Fred.

Okay. Got a very late start out of Chicago, so that Mark could have the chance to visit with his father. Okay. Went home via Milwaukee so that he could check the place we thought it likely he had left his glasses. I fell asleep, and Mark drove much (all) of the way back to Minneapolis. Got in in time for me to get to work (I was still

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working at Control Data in Minneapolis through Kelly). Slightly late, but what the heck.

\* \* \* \* \*

An American, a Canadian and an Australian were sitting in a restaurant in Missouri. The Canadian turned to the American and said "Yes, Fred, it is a great opening line for a joke, but it's just not going to work...."

He was right, you know. Oh well.

I suppose that's the trouble with true-to-life situations. Or, rather, real situations. They may be nice (this one was). They may be interesting (ditto). But they're probably not going to be all that funny. Probably. At least this one wasn't. Anyway....

Mike Glicksohn and Eric Lindsay had been visiting in Minneapolis, and arranged to ride down to Archcon II with me. I had finished up my stint at Control Data, and got my affairs in as close to order as my affairs ever are, and off we went. And, except for the above-mentioned "incident," there's nothing much interesting I can tell you about the trip.

We arrived at the home of Mike, Barb and Jean-Michel Fitzsimmons and Mary Mertens in suburban St. Louis late Thursday night. Call it early Friday morning. As we pulled up in front of the house, Joe Haldeman got out of his van to greet us. He told us he was awake because the police had just come by, checking out a report of some suspicious-looking people in the neighborhood, and had noticed him sleeping in his van and decided to wake him to check him out. Joe somehow convinced them that he wasn't at all suspicious looking.

We all went inside. I shared a beer and a brief chat with them, and then went off to crash in Morrison. I'm told that they were up talking all night, and I really wish that I could have stayed up and talked with them, but I really did need the sleep....

Soon after the sun came up, Morrison decided that he had missed his calling - he decided he's rather be a toaster-oven than a van. Since I don't particularly wish I were an English muffin, I got up and out. \*sigh\*

They fed me breakfast (or, come to think of it, probably tried and I begged off and just had coffee, since that is my new habit pattern), we sat around talking for a while then headed off for the con hotel (which was quite close).

\* \* \* \* \*

Well, I guess one of the good things to be said about being stuck in a very dull place is that it makes it easier to do a zine talking about the interesting things that went before. That is to say, it is now 16 October instead of whatever it was before, and about the only new thing to report is that I am now sure I am going to be working until the end of this month at Rio Salado Community College, and I have decided that I can and will be moving on when this job is finished.

(Do you understand what I mean? Well, you see, if interesting things happening that I felt I had to write about, then I'd just be further behind with more to catch up on every time I stopped for a while. But as it is, I've now caught up to the present from when I started talking about being in Phoenix, and can go back to the reportage on Archcon. See?)

\* \* \* \* \*

Mike Glicksohn was kind enough to let me use the shower in his motel room, which made quite a difference, not only in terms of my smell and general cleanliness but also in my outlook. And I spent most of the early afternoon wandering around and chatting with various people. At one point, I had the clever idea of calling Jim Williamson in Chicago, to see how things were going with my possible job with Control Data Education. It turned out that they hadn't heard anything on the jobs they had been expecting, and wouldn't be needing me. (For those of you who didn't see or don't remember my last zine, I had learned to program on CDE's PLATO, and was trying to get a full-time temporary job programming. "Ah well," I thought, "at least I don't have to hurry away to be in Chicago Monday morning.")

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I then spent a large part of the afternoon restringing my guitars and setting up the equipment for Da Fred Haskell Song and Slide Show, which I was to do later that evening. I finished that with a lot of time to spare, and I went wandering around again. If memory serves, I took the opportunity to catch a few Z's before Da Show. (Tim Hays was kind enough to let me crash with him – thanks, Tim!)

A very funny thing happened in doing Da Show this time. It seemed to be getting off to a slow start, and throughout felt a little, I don't know, awkward or like I wasn't hitting my proper stride. Toward the end I thought, "Well, it's pretty near the end of the slides, so I'll do "Casey Jones" and have time for one more song after it to finish off." I did one of the finer jobs I've ever done on the song (one thing that really helped is that I noticed a couple of people in front who I didn't recognize really getting into it right from the beginning – like they knew the original Dead version and were enjoying hearing me doing it). And when I finished, I realized I had mis-judged, but that in doing so I had come out with the song and the slides ending at almost the same time, and that it was really a good finish. And that the audience had been really pleased and excited, and were giving me a really warm round of applause.

In looking back, I can see that I had actually built a very nice show – that I actually had hit a stride and that Da Show had developed well throughout the evening. The thing, I think, that had thrown my perception of it off was that I had hit a very different kind of stride, of pacing, than I normally do, and that had worried me. So, ironically, I had I was very worried throughout what may well have been one of the best performance of Da Fred Haskell Song and Slide Show that I have ever done!

Now, I must admit I don't remember anything between the completion of Da Show on Friday evening until Saturday evening, (And I just realized that when I make this sort of statement it is misleading. What I should really say is that I no longer remember how things fit into the time frame. That is, I know that at some point during the con I walked to the Denny's (or was sit the Sambo's?) with Gordon Garb, and had a pleasant meal and chat. And that at another point I had a nice chat with Pat Taylor in the hotel coffee shop. And at still another point I went for a pizza with Mike Couch and Linda Moss. And I was eating and/or drinking coffee and chatting with various people in the coffee shop. But I'm not sure when any of these things happened – how they fit into the time context of the con. See?)

So anyway, Saturday night, I walked out to the pool area and found Joe Haldeman playing and singing. I immediately went in to get my own guitars – I have "swapped songs" with Joe on a number of occasions and I always enjoy it. (Do you get the feeling that I remember the musical events of a con far better than anything else that happens? You do? Give yourself two points – you're correct.)

So we "Swapped songs" for a while, and then somebody (I don't remember who) suggested that we might go inside so as to not bother anybody, and somebody else (I again don't remember who) suggested that we might use one of the function rooms, since there had been noise complaints about the party suite last night even without music. (As usual, the hotel had violated the understanding, if not the actual contract, by booking airline crews near the party suite. When will they learn?) So we set up in one of the function rooms. And were joined immediately (if not before) by a number of other players and quite a few "listeners." Among those who played (I must admit I don't recall everyone and/or everyone's names) were Juanita Coulson, Marsha Allen, Neil Preston, Gordy Dickson, Marian Klein, and of course, Joe and me.

Now I quite frankly prefer to do "pass the guitar" with fewer people playing – three to four seems about right to me in terms of how long one has to wait between turns – but somehow I didn't mind the numbers this night. Everything was quite nice.

Around two o'clock Barb came in to tell us the hotel had to close down the function rooms soon for security reasons, and that she was working on finding us another place to play. There was some grumbling about this, but it was fairly obvious that she was indeed trying to find us an alternative and that she was concerned about it, so what more could be done? She came back in about half an hour to announce that the best she could find would be out in the parking lot in the front. This seemed rather strange, but when we got there and renewed our playing, it actually turned out to be rather nice.

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I knew this title would be appropriate when I chose it, but I had no idea just how appropriate. It is now Tuesday, 7 November 1978. I am in Tucson. I have finished my job in Phoenix, and I am "on the Road" again/ More up-to-the-minute news later, probably....

After we had been paying a while, one of the local policemen drove up and stopped his car. Barb went over to find out if he was going to object to playing music outside, and found they just wanted to sit and listen for a while. He must have enjoyed it, because he sat and listened for somewhere between forty-five minutes and an hour. We all waved when he left - he waved back....

We finally "called it a night" sometime after the sun came up. In fact, I'm told that it came up over my right shoulder as I was doing my last song ("Casey Jones"? "All Along the Watchtower"? One of my heavies, anyway.), and that it was a very nice effect. Everybody, including me, was wishing that I could do "Here Comes the Sun." Ah well....

Sunday. I don't know. Sunday was a pretty quiet day. Finished it up by playing for a while with Gordy at the Dead Dog Party. But not for very long - we were both burned out from playing the previous night, and Joe had lost his voice and couldn't do anything at all.

Monday afternoon found Mike Glicksohn, Eric Lindsay, "Denver" Don Thompson and Linda Moss (and me) sitting in the bar. Mike called Donn Brazier, who had been unable to come to the convention but did come and join us for a while. I am fairly certain than we "closed down the con" - that we were the last fen there. Ho hum. Don went home, we dropped off Linda at the airport, and went over to the Fitzsimmons-Merten's. (I forgot to mention that I decided that as long as I wasn't going to get the job in Chicago I might as well go to Detroit for Autoclave, since I'd have Mike and Eric along to help defray the expenses. And Don wanted a ride to Chicago. So....)

We spent a pleasant evening with the Fitzsimmons and the Merten and headed off for Chicago on Tuesday afternoon. (Or did we stay over Tuesday and go Wednesday? It's been such a long exposition....No, we left Tuesday.) Stayed over-night in Chicago and headed off for Detroit.

I was rather definitively broke when I arrived in Detroit, so Thursday morning I went to the Kelly office to see about getting work for the following week. They said they'd try, although they didn't have anything right then. I asked if they could perhaps find something for Monday through Thursday, as I noticed that the distance between Louisville and Chicago was about the same as the distance between Detroit and Chicago, and thought it might be nice to go to Rivercon with Mike and Eric.

Anyway, we got to the Autoclave hotel sometime on Friday afternoon, and found out that we were going to get to share it with convention of some sort of Fundamental Baptist, or some such. Ah well. I told somebody at the registration desk (of the con) that I was broke, and would pay for the membership as soon as I had some money (truth. The only cons I've ever gone to without paying were those when the con was providing my membership gratis for one reason or another. And I've been to some cons where it would have been pretty easy to get by without paying). Leah A. Zeldes heard the last part of this, and came over to ask me if I was going to pay. I repeated that I was broke, and that I would pay when I could. She started to rag on me, and I offered to just leave. She thought this over, and decided that it would be alright if I were to stay, but asked if she had my "word of honor" that I would pay. I assured her that she did. She then ragged on me for another five minutes or so. Now don't get me wrong - I think she was perfectly right to be worried about the money. And she would have been justified in asking me to leave. But it irritated the hell out of me that she couldn't just take my word on it and let it go at that.

I went to the art show room, made an arrangement with John Benson about the hanging fees, and entered three photos. Wandered around. I don't remember much else during the afternoon. Oh, except that I called Kelly and they had found a job for me starting Monday, but couldn't do anything about getting off on Thursday. Ah well.

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Okay. Skip to the party suite that evening. Sat around for a while, then decided that it was about time to play. Went down to Morrison and got my guitars. I ran into Leah in the elevator, and she asked if I might find somewhere other than the party suite to play, since she had just gone through a hassle with the hotel about people in the halls, and thought that more people might move into the hall if I were to play in the party suite. This struck me as a perfectly reasonable request, so I set out to find somewhere else to play. Linda Moss offered her room, so I ended up there, with Bill Colsher and Lonnie (I forget his last name) also playing. It was a reasonably small and cozy group, and was quite enjoyable. Sometime early Saturday morning, we all ended up sitting around the lobby, telling stories and trying to entertain ourselves as best we could at that hour of the day while waiting for the coffee shop to open.

Coffee shop opened. We ate, went to sleep. The usual.

That afternoon I stopped by the art show and found that Diane Drutowski had put a bid on one of my photos. Yippie! Got an advance from John so I'd have some "walkin' around" money (or, as my father says: "So the dogs won't piss on you"). I think I went out to eat with Bill and Michelle Colsher and Linda Moss (that is to say, I know I went out to eat with them at some point during the con, and I think it was for dinner Saturday).

Because of the problems of the preceding night, they had moved the con parties down to two function rooms (smoking and nonsmoking) on the mezzanine. But we decided the music had gone so nicely the night before in Linda's room that we'd just play there again. After about a half hour to an hour, a woman (who I think was with the other convention) stuck her head in the door and said that she hadn't really minded the music the preceding night, but that she wanted to get some sleep this night, so would we mind perhaps playing a little more quietly. It was a reasonable request, and very politely stated, so we decided it would be nice to comply. Unfortunately, I've never been able to play all that quietly, so we decided to find someplace else to play.

We went down to have a look at the party suites (or rooms). The non-smoking room was empty, but would have been rather impractical, since I smoke rather heavily when I play (or rather, I usually smoke while I'm waiting for it to be my turn again, and let the ash tray smoke while I play). The smoking room had about five people in it, and when asked if they would mind if I were to play there they said they wouldn't. Joe Wesson was tending bar, and when asked if he minded, he said that he would in fact welcome it. So we set up and began playing.

After a while (half an hour? an hour?), Leah came in and started talking animatedly to David Emerson. After a while I got up to get another beer and passed by her. She stopped me and told me that she didn't think I ought to be playing there. Again, let me make something clear. If someone, even a con chairperson, tells me that "they don't think etc.", I take that as a statement of personal opinion, and I answer by explaining why I think the opposite (or why I agree if that is the case). So I told Leah that I thought I should play there, and told her about the lady in the room next to Linda's. She then offered some other reasons why I didn't think she should play there. Like, the bar was in that room, and it prevented conversation in that room. I pointed out that there were more people in there enjoying the music than had been there talking. She asked if we might be able to move into the non-smoking room. I pointed out that I smoke. She suggested that I step outside the room to smoke. Since I tend to smoke while the other people are playing, this didn't seem to be too wonderful an idea. But I was so nonplussed at this suggestion that I didn't reply. (At this late date, I can't help but wonder why she didn't turn it into a "music room" instead of a "non-smoking room," since it wasn't being used anyway, but I wasn't able to think of it at the time.) She finished up by saying that last year had been different, since they had invited me there to do Da Fred Haskell Song and Slide Show, but that she really didn't think that the con had any kind of obligation to provide a place for me to play. (I must agree - a convention is certainly not obligated to provide a place for people to make music, but the contrast between that statement, and the actions of Barb Fitzsimmons (the Archcon co-chair) in working her ass off finding us a place to play the preceding week was amazing.) So I left it at that - she had stated her opinions and I had stated mine - and I went back to play. (Notice that at no time did she actually say "Please don't play," which I would have respected - she just kept saying "I don't think you should play.")

In the middle of my next number, Leah sent Anne Shoep aver to tell me to quit. In case you can't figure it out, what pissed me off about this was that first, Leah didn't have the guts to just come out and ask (or tell) me to



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quit, but had to send somebody else to do so, and second, that she did so in the middle of a song. So I quit.

I wandered around. I don't know. Chatted with some people. Ross Pavlac took me aside and asked if I would be the Fan Guest of Honor in '79. I thought that would be fine, and told him so. (After accusing him of doing it just as a cheap trick to get me to come to Columbus....) I continued to chat with Ross Pavlac for some time after that. I probably chatted with some other people too. I don't remember right off hand....

Sometime on Sunday they had the auction. John gave me the balance of the money (thanks John! Thanks Diane!), and I found Leah and gave her my membership money.

Went to the dead dog party and had an interesting chat with Avedon Carol. A bunch of New York fans asked if I would give them a ride to the airport, and I decided I might as well, as long as Avedon was willing to come along and give me some company on the way home. She was, so I did. It seems like Pat Mueller also drove out to the airport to see them off, and Anne Laurie Logan and Ken Josenhans also came for the same reason. Pat decided to leave right from the airport, and took Anne Laurie with her. Ken and Avedon and I stopped off to eat on our way back to the con.

Went back to the con suite and the Dead Dog party. Chatted more with people, interspersed with goodbyes. At some point, Mark Riley and some others started doing their drunken rendition of fifties favorites. Leah came out of the adjoining room and asked them to quit (amazing! She actually came right out and told them to quit!). Considering both the material and the singing, I was inclined to agree with her, but not so much so that I would have tried to interfere with their trip. Besides, I have a feeling that the quality, or lack thereof, had nothing to do with why Leah wanted them to stop. They ignored her. She fled.

They quit after a while and Mark organized a "pick up" - we got the room more-or-less straightened out. I sat around chatting with the remaining people until about eleven, then decided to split. I'm glad I did, because Leah came back around midnight and declared the con over and closed the party suite.

I don't think I'm going to bother to go to any more Autoclaves....

About the middle of the following week, I realized that not only could I not afford to go to Rivercon, but that I also could not afford to go anywhere else, either. I spent about three weeks in Detroit, working and visiting. I also managed to shoot some photos of Larry Downes, but unfortunately wasn't as successful as I had been with Michael Fitzsimmons. (The fault was mine - neither of us could calm down for some reason, and I wasn't able to give Larry very good directions. Ah well, I think a few of them were good enough to add to Da Show (that is, if I ever do Da Show again...))

I got to see and chat with everybody I wanted to in Detroit, though I didn't get to see enough of everyone. And so it goes....

Left Detroit and went to Chicago. Was surprised to find Jon Singer had moved to Boulder. Visited with various people in Chicago, and I had a really good time there. Was only there four or five days, though, so I didn't get to see everyone I had wanted to. \*sigh\*

Decided to visit Jon in Boulder, and decided to do so via St. Louis. Spent one very nice evening with the Fitzsimons-Mertens. Hit Kansas City at the wrong time to do anything but buy gas and eat. Kansas wouldn't be all that bad, except for the fact that it's interminable....

Got in to Boulder and discovered Jerry Kaufman there also.

A pleasant surprise! Spent what, one day?, chatting with Jerry and Jon et al. Headed off down the road. Crashed that night at a rest area somewhere south of Colorado Springs. Arrived in Albuquerque Friday early afternoon, all primed for Bubonicon. All I can really say about Bubonicon is that it was one heck of a good convention, and I hope I can go again some time. Finestkind!

## WHAT'S THE POINT OF CALLIN' SHOTS, page twelve

Arrived in Phoenix, uh, lessee, musta been Tuesday. I really enjoyed being there that early - having the chance to work into the Worldcon gradually and chat with the other early arrivals and watch people arrive. I hope I can do the same at future Worldcons.

There is very little I can say about Iguacon. I mean it was so big and so long and so much happened. One interesting thing - I was sitting on a ledge near the concom room with, I think it was Glen Blankenship, sitting next to me. (This was on Tuesday night, I think. A woman came up to Glen and said "Aha! I found you!" I said, "Congratulations!" She turned and looked at me and said "Oh! You must be Fred Haskell." She turned out to be Teresa Nielsen. Do you suppose there is something to the legend that she and Kathi Schaefer are clones?)

Another interesting thing. It seems that I knew most of the committee people and was finding myself continually in a position to give them a needed hug and a brief chat and moment of calm in between their frantic activities. So they made me the Official Teddy Bear of Iguacon....

I got a number of chances to play, and got to meet a number of people I had wanted to meet, and even got to meet some people I hadn't known I had wanted to meet but I was extremely glad to have met, and got to see and talk with any number of Good Old Friends. I had one hell of a good time, and consider it to have been a Very Good Convention. And it appeared to me that other people were enjoying it also. And that's really all I can say about Iguacon....

Afterwards. Of course, I was suffering from an acute lack of money, and went to Kelly to try to rectify that situation. And as you already know, they did find jobs for me. And ad you already know, I think that Phoenix is very dull. Screaming, bouncing-up-and-down and going stir-crazy dull. In a word: dull.

(After much searching, I did find a couple of good restaurants there, though. The Hunan Restaurant, though not so good as the Szechuan Restaurant in the Twin Cities and in New York City, is nothing to be ashamed of, and the various Lunt Avenue Marble clubs are all fine.)

But now it's over. I finished the job, have money, and am on the road!

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Leah Zeldes says you can't sing here

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So anyway, now I'm in Tucson. Probably for at least a couple of days. I am seriously thinking about sticking around and going to their party-meeting on Saturday evening. I was here a couple of weeks ago when they were having their "organizational meeting," and they seemed like a very interesting group. From here I'm still not sure where I'll go. The only thing I know for sure is that I'd rather not stop and work again until I get to San Francisco. We'll see....

(Hummm. Still a few lines left to fill. Aha, I know....) Went to LosCon this past weekend. 'Twas a mistake. Terrible choice of hotels (not within walking distance of anything, and the bars and restaurants were very overpriced). The local fans apparently didn't feel it necessary to show up for much of it. I guess some of them came to the Friday night parties, and few more came for the Saturday night parties. Friday night I was exhausted from the drive and from not being able to get into the room to sleep until later in the afternoon, and ended up sleeping instead of partying. Saturday evening I was struck with an inability to cope and ended up sleeping instead of partying that night as well. The only consolation that I have is that I guess I really didn't miss that much. We left Sunday afternoon, and none too soon at that. Chalk another one up to experience, I guess.

Well, not much else to say. So I'll quit. Be well.

Fred Haskell

*Confessions of an Over-Age Adolescent  
or, you, too can earn extra cash  
practicing psychiatry in your spare time  
through correspondence*

This is INTERJECTION, despite the above, and it's being produced for the February, 1978 mailing of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association and interested others. It is entirely typed, written, produced, directed, Gestefaxed, mimeoed, collated, stapled, etc. by Jack L. Chalker, 5111 Liberty Heights Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21207 U.S.A.

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#### ON SUICIDE, THE SON OF SAM, AND WHERE WE GET THOSE CRAZY IDEAS

On November 13, 1964, Philcon, that oldest and most venerable of SF conventions, opened with the usual bunch of people there, including an almost 20 Jack L. Chalker. They were better then; they were less stodgy and had pretty damned good parties.

Well, almost the usual bunch of people. The wild man of Philcon hadn't shown up as yet, but we all knew he'd make it. He'd said he'd be there as always, and that was good enough. But he wouldn't be coming, not that night, or the next, or ever again.

Late in the evening of November 11, 1964, Horace Beam Piper, the scion of two of the oldest families in Pennsylvania and a major science fiction author for over 15 years, finished dinner, took a couple of belts from the ever-present bottle of good whiskey, then went into that special room in his very nice, secluded home in Northeastern Pennsylvania where he kept what was considered the finest collection of antique weapons in America. He took down an old favorite, not too old as the centuries go, but a historical, battle-scarred veteran that was in perfect working condition, and he loaded it, cocked it, placed the barrel in his mouth, and pulled the trigger.

I knew him, probably better than most. As an impressionable 17-year-old I'd stood in that very room, with a strong sense of history, both for the collection and for the Beams and Pipers, and admired it. The man, however, you never really knew. He was

a deliberate cartoon, a crafted as **Little Fuzzy** or **Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen**. He looked like a comedian made up to resemble an old time movie villain, and he drank like a fish, sang great bawdy songs, and once had to be physically restrained from running down Market Street, shouting "Death to the Christian Infidels!"

When someone brought the news – Sam Moskowitz, I believe it was – we were all saddened, yet there was little surprise. His drinking masked personal agony, as it always does, and we knew it and sensed it although we never before discussed it. A messy divorce, the wife alienating the children, turning them away from him; a ruinous settlement that spelled possible doom for his beloved lifelong home. Intermittent ill health. It was sad, but not a shock.

Except that we were wrong.

The reason Horace Beam Piper took his own life was that he had sent a novel out that he considered to be the about the best he could manage to write. It went into his schlocky literary agency, which still exists to snare the unwary, and, after a while – quite a while, months – he'd heard nothing on it. He'd called the agent in charge of his account a number of times to no avail, and now he'd just gotten the message that "It'd been around" but "nothing yet."

How Beam must have thought about it! The very best he could do and nobody was interested any more. The history and heritage weighed heavily on him – he was always conscious of it – and now, after 15 years of increasing success as a writer, he couldn't sell anymore. He was no longer a writer, but an anachronism, a piece of past history and somebody else's heritage now. There was no alternative.

The most horrible fact was that the novel had not only sold, it had sold for more money than Beam had ever made off his writing in his whole life. The agent, an assistant, really, had simply been too busy to check and had begged off. It didn't matter to him anyway. Just one of the minor clients.

There are several kinds of writers; some will simply not understand why Beam acted the way he did, along with most readers and the general public. But there's a kind of writer who understands it, and I'm one,

although I was over 30 when I finally, truly comprehended the fullness of Beam's tragedy.

I had what might best be described as an uneven childhood. I was never an adolescent, going from kid to adult in one big leap. Reading at 3 probably had something to do with it. Along with a mild introversion that stuck me hard to people I knew well but made making new ones painfully difficult. The family was poor, but I was spoiled anyway. Being very big and very fat didn't make for an engrossing social life, either. Fat people are the most universally discriminated against group in all humanity; people who are fat because of physical imbalances not correctable without side effects that are pretty bad are the worst of all, since society calls them "ugly" "obese" and looks down on them as deliberately running down body and rotting out their minds with a "Curable" ailment. Girls – even fat girls, look down on fat men, and they're generally bullied and cruelly abused. Society is particularly cruel to the overweight (the only discrimination I can think of that comes close is the one against wearing glasses – ever notice what the plain girl in the ad does to turn into a beauty queen?). They don't get promoted, they get job rejections. They get social rejections. To be that way in a poor, extremely rough neighborhood is particularly nasty. I have a permanent limp from where a bullet tore a chunk of nerve and ligament out of my leg; I have several stab wounds, and I've experienced more concussions than you can count. That's the penalty for being less than physically appealing and at the same time a hell of a lot smarter than anyone you know.

You build defenses. You build a character that becomes everyone else's impression of you. Now, it might not come from obesity, but it might come from a trillion other causes. For whatever reason, you develop several characteristics as I did so that short or tall, fat or thin, ugly or not, there are identifiable characteristics common to all who grow up in this insular manner.

Thus was, at least, the personality – no, that's not right – the persona of Jack L. Chalker formed. Brash, loudmouthed, opinionated (Or is he? He's always the opposite of whoever's arguing), egomaniacal, and emotionally so stable that it's doubtful he needs anybody.

The parallel with obesity or any other physical problem is acute – people always judge other people by their outward appearance, so your persona becomes you to everyone else. But there you are, locked inside, finally unable to come out even if you want to, simply because you have no alternative. This fictitious person that's you is the only thing you've got.

Beam Piper dressed like a movie villain, told bawdy jokes, drank and leered a lot. I don't know what factors caused his persona to form, but it was locked in. Like mine is. Like yours, maybe.

When this is linked to introversion it develops into social alienation. You become the act, but you also lose the ability to relate to other people as human beings. You see yourself as something apart from them, a different kind of creature than they. A friendly alien, if you will, who likes people, and wants desperately to be one, but can not – and to whom other people at first do not and then, because of the persona, cannot, react to themselves. You are reduced to your self-created cypher.

But only externally. Inside, there is still a real emotional human being somewhere, and that human being knows what is happening to him, why it is happening to him, and yet cannot do anything about it. Psychiatric help? You try it, but the very act of going to an analyst automatically disqualifies you for various jobs and places you in another alienated pigeonhole. Worse, if you discover that the analysts you do try in desperation are generally more in need of help than you, or are more interested in developing themselves as crutches so there can be an indeterminate uninterrupted series of 50-dollar hours, then you tend to turn away from that avenue.

You are sinking, and as you sink, time makes you older. Hair recedes, teeth give problems, and you going toward death foreseeing only an endless series of presents, no past you can happily recall, no future. You see yourself a decade from now, older, less hair and teeth, in the throes of middle-age, and still alone, alienated and otherwise the same.

You are an emotional time bomb. The question is never whether you will go off, but how.

It's always through not the weakest link, but the first available one.

A currently prominent SF fan was once a student of mine. He had lots of problems. He was short and fat and half-blind; not only did he have no sexual outlets, his social outlets were limited by a freezing veneer - his persona - which made any close friendship impossible. At home he had a domineering mother who rolled over a weak father; he had a fairly attractive sister whom the parents doted on, lavished everything on while he was always told he was nothing, a little lump, a zilch better never known, this constantly from mother and sided by sibling rivalry. Outside, he was the cool, unemotional, intellectual type. Inside, he was a volcano. One night his mother got on a tirade and picked up a butcher knife, coming at him. He ran from the house totally wrecked, and I put him up for the night and arranged for him to get some money and a plane to distant relatives. Recently a former classmate of his who's a Mirage Press customer wrote me and asked what ever became of this fellow. I told him that he was now making a living on his own and very active in the Gay Rights movement. "Oh, thank God!" the former classmate exclaimed. "I was dead sure he was going to become a rapist."

Outlets. Given an alternative - and the classmate had surely pegged the other one - he's taken the course least harmful to him and to society and everyone is the better for it. Everyone understands it, why he is as he is, why he turned out as he did.

But suppose there was no way he could have turned homosexual - suppose that outlet was not available to this man?

I cannot conceive of being homosexual, even though I understand it. It's just not in me. Oh, sure, I can write a lesbian relationship. Such as *THE IDENTITY MATRIX* or *THE WELL OF SOULS*, but that's easy - I just assume that a lesbian sees women the way I do, add the capacity for multiple orgasm, and you got it. But I could no more write of a male-male relationship than I could about rape. I had that problem in *THE IDENTITY MATRIX*, you know. Writing for me is much like method acting - I have to get my mind into the part. One part called for the first-person female protagonist to face rape. I couldn't write

it. Rape is the one crime no male can comprehend from the female viewpoint. Terror, however, I can comprehend. , and that's the way the scene was written. And, no, the rape's foiled. Some women who read the book in marveled at how I could possibly write such an effective female-point-of-view scene as that. It was easy - I wrote the universal human emotions and avoided those I could not directly comprehend.

Which, of course, brings us back to the question - suppose that outlet were not available to that man?

Ever notice what everyone says when the newsmen interview the neighbors of the guy they just picked up as the axe-murderer of eleven little children? "Gee, he was always such a nice, quiet kind of guy."

Last year New York was terrorized by a series of bizarre killings done by a guy called The Son of Sam. He'd pick out young couples at random and blast away. He tried for the woman only, but sometimes got the man as well. When they finally caught David Berkowitz, a postal employee described by neighbors and co-workers as a nice, quiet sort of guy, he readily admitted it, although he said he got his orders from an evil spirit that spoke to him through his neighbor's dog. Of course it did. David Berkowitz was raised too strictly and normally to possibly commit those crimes unless other irresistible agencies were involved. WE knew that. So it had to be this spirit....

Why, oh why, would such a nice young man do this? And why those couples? Those girls who always went out with everyone but him. Who did in cars what they'd never do to him. He couldn't communicate with them. Never had. So he walked through New York streets, watching people do what he wanted to do, act like he wanted to act - have normal relationships. He had no other outlets. And he was such a nice, quiet guy....

When I was in my mid-twenties a friend of mine introduced me to this girl. She was beautiful. A fashion model. The kind of woman you see up there on TV all the time. She'd been through a bad marriage with a guy that was Mr. Handsome but nasty, brutal and sadistic as hell. She distrusted anybody who looked good. She stuck to home, and mother, and "safe" men. She was also, for all her beauty (and wealth - her

family had grown damned rich since her sister married a millionaire) extremely uneducated. Her vocabulary was lower class Philadelphia Italian, and she was acutely conscious of it. She was impressed by people with a lot of education and brains; she was doubly impressed when they came from poor beginnings and spent their adolescence working at every kind of odd job every spare hour to get enough money to keep at it.

But she was also becoming an alcoholic, unable to trust anything or anybody in society, unwilling to risk going out into the outside world on her own again – and thanks to her in-laws' money, she didn't have to. We had a six-year affair. It was emotionally wrenching to me, since I knew in the end she'd never leave her cocoon and while I was the person she liked the most she also got sexual gratification from a local fireman who looked like the Marlboro Man. It finally tore me apart, particularly since she was always announcing her engagement to this guy or talking about marrying him while at the same time playing on my emotions like a yo-yo. She was all I had, but finally they really did get engaged, and she made it plain that she wanted two husbands – one official, the other when he was working night shift or day shift. It blew the hell out of me to end it, for she was all I had.

On top of that, my teeth were hurting. I have a chronic fear of dentists, but finally the front one broke off. I had to seek help, and did – and the dentist did a thorough examination but didn't pull the offenders. Instead I was shipped off to a specialist.

I had a disease, akin to cancer, inside the roof of my mouth and it was microns away from the lymphatic system that dumps head waste to the kidneys. Once there it would have collapsed the kidneys in a matter of days or weeks at best, and been all over the body. They operated – not once, but time and time again. They had to remove part of the upper jaw to get to it and rebuild the inside with synthetics. No one knew. Not the local fans, old friends, people at work, not even my parents. I have only recently mentioned it to anybody. I don't know whether or not this is another one of those alienation things. A girl I was making friends with got me cornered with some people I knew well and they pressed me and I told them. She reacted

like I had contagious hydrophobia; I have never seen her again.

So, there I was – a disease that could still kill me, if not in weeks, then in months, and it might be five years before we knew if we'd gotten it all, just in the nick of time. Alone, nobody to talk to, nobody around anymore – my few really close friends had all moved to far-away places – and just coming off an emotionally shattering affair. Two weeks after the second operation, my partner in Mirage Press, the man who did the typesetting and whose family put up the money, went bananas from his own private demons and was institutionalized. He still is. He's wonderfully normal while institutionalized; one step outside and he's a vegetable. And there I was with all those bills and commitments and responsibilities and no money, no typesetting, nothing.

In a six-month period I had undergone an emotional wrench, been told I had a 50-50 chance of dying slow and nasty, and lost the heart of my business.

About the only thing left was my teaching, because that was how I made my living (still do, as of now). I love teaching. I teach in an inner-city ghetto school known for its high-risk student body and generally bad mortality rate. A month after the rest of my life collapsed I was struck on the head by person or persons unknown. With a cast-iron receptacle. My head required 19 stitches. The principal didn't even send a card, but, as I lay bleeding and waiting for the ambulance, he told me, "Chalker – you better damn well not let this get into the papers or it's your career." Real heart.

For the first and I think only time in my life I was at a point where the bomb had to explode. I considered suicide, but I have too strong an ego for it. I considered indirect suicide – that is, murdering all those I felt deserved it until somebody got me. More my style, but it might hurt, physically and emotionally, too many innocent people – and I was determined that, all things considered, I would not be responsible for causing others such pain.

I sat down at my nice baby-blue IBM Selectric II that belonged to the barely surviving Mirage Press and started to type. A JUNGLE OF STARS, it said. A novel by Jack L. Chalker. It wasn't whole-cloth. I'd



played around with the JUNGLE theme since I was in high school. It was kind of a game. I'd even written a little part of it in a 1963 fanzine. Old friends would bat it around with me and it'd be fun, an intellectual exercise. Now I wrote. The words were there, and they flowed – it was easy; I knew the whole story by heart anyway.

Ten days later I had 247 pages of manuscript. I sent it to Wolheim, who said he liked it but it wasn't his formula. "Don't worry, though, this one'll sell," he told me. "Try Judy-Lynn. She likes this type." So off it went to Ballantine, to that domineering little lady I'd known for 15 years and who had thrown me out of "pro only" parties three straight years at Worldcons. She hesitated to read it, kept putting it off. "Oh God, another fan novel." She said over and over to herself (this is from the horse's mouth). She didn't want to read it and she didn't want to reject me, because she'd known me so long and Lester and I went back even farther – and she'd have to see me at cons. Finally, she had to read it. Wolheim was right. She liked it, and called me to say that I had sold a book.

I was stunned and gratified at the same time. The money was so good that it paid the medical bills. I turned and tried to salvage what I could from Mirage Press. FEGHOOT got typeset manually by me, and out. It was a big success. Less of a success but just as important to the Press's continuity was the publication of BARSOOM, Dick Lupoff's book. This and the fact that the fall had brought me 5 really nice classes, lessened the pressure. Judy-Lynn pressed for more, even a short piece for STELLAR. I didn't have anything. I thought, I don't think short. But I did have a story that I'd knocked out in College for a creative writing course. And I hauled it out, sent it in, and "No Hiding Place" netted me \$650 and a place in her next anthology.

Still, it was the end of June before I started thinking seriously about a new novel. I had this idea, yes – a place built by a long-dead race that would be composed of small biospheres, like tiny planets, each with its own dominant lifeform and supporting ecosystem. I mentioned it to Ben Yalow and complained that my math was lousy, that I couldn't decide how big each octagonal biosphere would be and until I knew that and how many there were, I couldn't go any

further with it. "Could it be hexagons?" he asked. I said, "Sure, why not?" He pulled down Avalon Hill's BATTLE OF THE BULGE game. We counted. 1560 hexagons on the playing surface – a nice number, with the sixes abundant. Five minutes with a pocket calculator and a decision on the planet's size was and we had 365 km. per side, 614.4 kilometers across. The poles were dark. But what to do there?

After Westercon 1976 I went up to Washington state, alone, just to get away to the mountains. I discovered a tremendously isolated spot reached only by a daily boat up a 55-mile long glacial lake. Stehekin, it was called. No radios, TVs, telephones, nothing. Isolated in a cabin, me, the lake, the mountains. Couldn't get out if I wanted to, and suddenly, after hiking out to the Pass and seeing again the incredible sight of alpine zones, where one type of life just stops, and another starts. I saw what the "hex" borders had to be like. It all just rushed in, including a strange little character called Nathan Brazil. By the time I got back home I had it all. I started typing on July 24, and I proofread the manuscript at the huckster table at MidAmericon and sent it out the day after I got back to Judy-Lynn. She bought it four days later, published it the following July, and it became the leading seller of the line. I was made.

But it wasn't a business, it was an outlet. I had to write. In April, I wrote THE IDENTITY MATRIX, an extremely bitter and cynical look at the ultimate in mind control devices. Every emotion I had came into play there, and I knew it was strong and controversial. This one Judy-Lynn wouldn't like (but, fortunately, Dave Hartwell would). But how to keep in Judy-Lynn's good graces? So, the day after I finished MATRIX, I created a book that was just designed to keep Judy-Lynn happy (she's been paranoid since Joe Haldeman walked to St. Martin's). In nineteen days I wrote what I considered an entertaining but not important book, which I called WORLDS OF MIST AND SHADOW, a line from the book. She decided it was THE WEB OF THE CHOZEN, a terrible pun. It's getting a McQuarrie cover and major promotion, which makes me nervous. It's not that much of a book.

Now I couldn't stop. A short piece in the JUNGLE universe, "Forty Days and Nights in the Wilderness,"

off to ANALOG and back comes a check. An emotionally up-and-down trip west in '77 left me in a mood about as depressed as my worse, and out came **DANCERS IN THE AFTERGLOW**, my most brutally pessimistic and serious book about politics and social brutality. So much for October '78. An offer to do a **Well World** sequel. I detest sequels – they're always worst than the original. So I thought about it, came up with a new novel set on different parts of the **Well World** with different characters, also serious, brutal, and incredibly complex. Back came big bucks and a two-volume set, starting late '78 or early '79. I can't write them fast enough for the editors, and I can't stop writing.

And I wonder. Nothing else has changed. Only the writing. Only the messages that seem to strike some responsive chords. A story on suicide aboard a ferryboat based on a real person and a real ferryboat. Another \$410 from Asimov's. Incredible....

My agent is a young and attractive young woman who wants to be a millionaire on 10%. She has no assistants, and handles her clients directly, always accessible.

I wonder what will happen if the bubble should burst? Five years? Ten? Fifteen? Who knows?

Outlets....

On November 11, 1964 Horace Beam Piper took a gun out of his collection, loaded it, put the barrel in his mouth and pulled the trigger.

Only a handful of people really cared, and a lot less than that understood why....

A P.S. of sorts.... After four attempts to kill me this year, one of which put me in the hospital, and a political cover-up on the assailants by some local educational big-wigs which allowed the students involved to be free to try again, I have resigned from teaching, turning my back on 12 years of trying and some accomplishment. Luckily, with over \$35,000 in contracts already, I'm able to do so. I'm now a professional writer for a living rather than a hobby, and we'll see how it goes. Money is certainly no problem and production isn't either, my worst enemy is my own penchant for disorganization which can cause future problems with the IRS. Well, others have done it, why not I?

Best til next time,

Jack L. Chalker

# Shadowboxing the Blues

Lucy Huntzinger

(A column composed by Lucy Huntzinger for her personal fanzine SOUTHERN GOTHIC #3, postmarked December 31st, 1994)

In August, I went back to Seattle. I grew up there, but I haven't visited much since I left twelve years ago. I couldn't wait to get the hell out. You know the story: small town girl yearns for more than a series of dead-end jobs and lights out for the big city. Me, I headed for San Francisco and pitied anyone still deluded enough to stay in boring old Seattle.

It is consequently no small source of amusement to me that in my absence Seattle has become a mecca for the terminally hip. Destiny's a funny thing.

Anyway, now that I live in the center of the country (well, Nashville) I find myself looking back at my west coast days with some affection. At least I knew how to talk to people there without sounding like some weird over-educated dork. In Seattle it's normal to sound like a weird, over-educated dork. (Hi, my name is Fleur, and I have a liberal arts degree, will that be for here or to go?). Maybe it was a surfeit of iced tea or an aversion to 97% humidity; at any rate, I had a sudden yen to pop in on the cool Pacific Northwest for a long weekend. I didn't think of it as going home, though. Too much has changed, too many years have intervened.

My family was pleased I was coming, particularly since it would be my husband John's first visit. My father wanted my sister and me to sift through family photographs; anything left would be thrown out. Mary Lou, my wonderful step-mother, immediately began planning a party for the three of us who have August birthdays. My sister Sarah said we could stay with her in her new house in Redmond, just down the road from

Microsoft where she works. It all sounded pleasant and relaxing, the perfect vacation. Then some bright soul suggested we have a formal photograph taken since the whole family would be together. Even though this is a rare enough occurrence, as we're all constantly travelling or moving, I was immediately on my guard.

I probed cautiously for information. Did this mean my brother would be coming up from Portland? Yes, it did. Was he still heavily involved in his ludicrous religion, the Church Universal and Triumphant? Yes, he was. Did he still think St. Germain reincarnates every century and inconveniently dead Ascended Masters communicated through living channelers? No one had asked recently but presumably he did because he was still going to church several times a week. I was troubled by the news.

When we were children my brother and I were extremely close. We lived in a wonderful secret world of our own, peopled by elves and talking animals. We played and bickered and united against all outsiders including our parents with whom we had a combative relationship. I felt no one else understood me.

To compound matters, we were being raised as Christian Scientists and were deeply confused as to whether or not the world would still be there the next day if we didn't believe in it hard enough. An early diet of metaphysics did us no favor when we got to school and had to interact with other children. My report cards are unanimous in describing me as intense, oversensitive and unable to get along with my peers. My brother had similar problems, although he had a sunnier personality at first. We were both very anxious kids.

We had a difficult childhood. Even now that we're all adults and more or less on speaking terms none of us understands why it was so hellish. I think our emotional natures disturbed our phlegmatic parents and their attempts to control us were disproportionately severe. At the time we assumed we were being punished for being ourselves. In the war between adults and children our weapons were mostly passive. We learned to hide, to lie, to forget. Forgetfulness was a skill we sought eagerly. We became experts at it, so much so that to this day Mark and I have the same five-year gap in our memories.

Still, everything was okay as long as we had each other. Then it changed.

About the time Mark turned 14 he started hanging out with his male friends more often. He wouldn't take me along. He didn't want to play much anymore. We started to have arguments. I was upset by the distance I sensed in him. I thought I was being shut out just because I was a girl and I resented it deeply. On rare occasions he would ask me to sing the songs we used to love, and we would talk about Tolkien and science fiction with some of the old enthusiasm. But mostly he was becoming taciturn and unhappy. I felt deserted by him and betrayed by puberty. I had troubles of my own. We drifted apart.

Our interest in drugs momentarily reunited us in college. Having battled the "real world" for so long we turned to marijuana with gusto. It was a relief to find a relief from the vicious self-criticism that haunted us both. It was nearly as momentous as our discovery that aspirin really did cure a headache and we no longer had to suffer from minor ills (though we had to hide the aspirin bottle from our parents). Only a few friends were as dedicated to getting high as we were so once again we shared a secret interest. We smoked a lot of pot, listened to the Grateful Dead constantly, and tried to reconnect. It almost worked. Still, he was restless, constantly seeking spiritual truth. I wanted the world to be what it was and no more. Mark wanted enlightenment.

He was always experimenting with lifestyles. First it was tarot cards and psychics, a flirtation with the occult. Then he became a vegetarian and tried to convert everyone to the joys of wheat grass juice and fasting. He ate so many carrots his skin took on a yellow tinge. He found a book on the Breatharians and was greatly taken by the concept of being so spiritual that one could live on air alone. He worshipped Edgar Cayce. I scoffed, and the distance between us inexorably widened again.

I discovered science fiction fandom. Mark discovered Elizabeth Clare Prophet. Our paths diverged further. I eschewed all religion. He became a dedicated follower of a woman who preached a combination of Buddhism, Christian Fundamentalism and New Age woo woo. I said he was a lost person who needed someone else to think for him. He said I was blind to the unseen forces at work in our world. His religion didn't seem to make him very happy. I had many sad and terrifying dreams about his burning eyes.

We moved to California together and shared a household on and off for three years. I grew to despise his religious morbidity. He tried desperately to convert me, worried that

I'd be left behind when the Apocalypse came and took all the true believers to heaven. No logical arguments moved him, no reasonable discussion got very far. Finally, one night I lay weeping on my bed and admitted defeat. The twin soul I once knew was gone and in his place was a self-righteous fanatic stranger. I told my parents I would not have further contact with him. He moved up to Montana and my life went on. I grieved as though he had died. After a while I didn't dream about him anymore.

Thus, I was wary when Mary Lou said Mark was coming up to Seattle for the family portrait. My dad had indicated that Mark was slightly less fanatic than he used to be. Apparently, his guru's prediction that the world was going to end in October 1989 left him left him disillusioned when it didn't happen. He was working in Portland renovating historical homes which seemed responsible enough. Sarah was thoroughly disgusted by his non-materialism and evangelical tendencies, but she had a strong sense of family and she kept trying to "understand" him. She thought I should too, but I disagreed. He didn't want to be understood, I argued. He had his agendas and his value system in place. Why bother?

Mark showed up for the birthday party. We hugged awkwardly and stood looking at each other. I finished telling Mary Lou why I had just come inside. The wind whipped up the tails of the streamers attached to the flagpole, I said, and kept whacking me in the face. I laughed and so did Mary Lou.

"Hmm," Mark said, nodding his head wisely. "Now what do you suppose that was trying to tell you?" I looked at him steadily and replied that sometimes the wind was just the wind. He obviously disagreed but kept silent.

When dinner was served we all scrambled for seating. John and I sat at a card table and were digging into our steaks when Mark pulled up a seat. We got to talking about the weather, a generally safe topic of conversation in my family. I was glad the weather was so beautiful, I said, especially since last summer was so terribly wet. Mark looked up from his vegetables and rice.

"Well, I was reading about that," he said calmly. "You know the Russians have a weather machine and they control our weather. They shoot ray beams into the sky and cause it to rain. They were concentrating on the Northwest last year."



John was about ready to laugh at the obvious joke, but caught the serious look on my face. “Mark,” I said slowly, “the Russian economy is in collapse. They can barely feed themselves. They don’t control our weather, and they don’t have the money to spend on speculative science.” Mark pressed on.

“I suppose you read that in a newspaper,” he said pityingly. I allowed as how I did, in fact, obtain some information from newspapers. He shook his head. “The Communists control our media,” he confided, eyes dark and intense, radiating his zealotry. I felt a riff of fear lift the hair on the back of my neck and head. “You can’t believe anything you read. It’s all Communist lies,” he added with great earnestness. I looked down at my plate and felt sick to my stomach.

He continued to tell me all about his church papers. And communications with the Ascended Masters. John finished his steak and took his plate into the kitchen. I listened to the stranger with my brother’s face and tried not to cry. The evening was a success for everyone else; birthday presents and funny cards were exchanged, news and gossip traded, plans for the rest of the weekend discussed. The following day we sat for our family portrait and then John and I went into Seattle to visit friends and do some shopping. I didn’t see my family again except for Sarah.

Back in Nashville, I told my therapist about it. I had mentioned my brother’s oddities a few times, but we hadn’t gone into it much. She asked a few questions: when did the changes start, how long had he been paranoid about the Russians, and so on. She was silent for a minute and then gently said she thought he was not just a little odd or offbeat. He was most likely schizophrenic.

It hit me hard, the way the truth usually does when I’ve been trying to ignore it. The clues had been there all along. It explained why no amount of love or understanding could help Mark find an elusive peace, and why he needed to create an enemy to account for the sense of paranoia. It’s difficult to accept but at least it makes sense. The hard part is knowing he’ll never seek conventional treatment. He doesn’t believe in it. He just knows he’s miserable and he thinks it’s a lack in him, a spiritual void that can only be lived with if he concentrates on a life hereafter where all questions will be answered and all heartaches soothed at last.

So there will be no “cure” for Mark. Without medication he will live in his perpetual twilight world of enemies and suspicion and a harrowing sense that everything is wrong and he the wrongest of all. Long ago I lost my beloved brother to a chemical imbalance, a series of missteps and dead ends and bewildered cries for help that never came because no one knew how to answer.

I miss him with all my heart: my old playmate and companion, my pride and joy, my laughing baby brother. I only wish I could forget this too. But I can't.

And without him, I can't truly go home.

# So What Is Fandom, Anyway?

Sandra Bond

So what is fandom, anyway?

That's a question that isn't just impossible to answer; to even ask it in any meaningful term is quite ludicrous, nowadays. One tends to fall back on aphorisms like "Fandom is what I point at and say 'this is fandom'", which is glib but not exactly a useful answer, except that it demonstrates how tricky an issue it is.

Perhaps fandom has been impossible to define from 1940 onward, or thereabouts -- certainly within ten years of its coming into existence. There's just too much of it, sprawling around all over the place, pulling in different directions till the end of one pseudopod is out of sight of the end of another. Fandom is an anarchy, as essentially are all human endeavours with a membership of such a scale. (I exclude political organisations from this. On the other hand...

This isn't to say that close study of fandom does not provide a wealth of resource for sociological study -- although most external attempts to do so have only proved how difficult fandom is to grok, if you aren't inside it. On the other hand, a good many studies of fandom from the inside have shown an astonishing depth of thought and acuity of insight.

It is hardly surprising that Ted White should have been one of those to display those qualities. Indeed, the piece I'm presenting here was the first one I ever saw to define fandom as an anarchistic society (though I don't claim Ted was necessarily the first to reach that conclusion).

If anyone in fanzine fandom could be said to need no introduction, it's surely Ted. A fan since his schooldays, editor of STELLAR, EGOSCAN, PONG and BLAT, Void Boy,

Group Mind herder, editor of two prozines on a negative budget that somehow maintained quality -- and the only fan to have attended every single Corflu.

In 1981, Ted took time out from editing HEAVY METAL to write this piece (on the Heavy Metal typewriter in his office, he recalls) for Richard Bergeron's WARHOON, where it appeared in issue 29, dated October 1981.

WARHOON had been one of the topmost fanzines of the 1960s; its editor Richard Bergeron, a talented (and professional) graphic artist, fell out of sight for much of the 1970s before re-emerging with *Warhoon* 28, an astonishing hardback collection of Walt Willis's writing. It soon became clear that Bergeron intended to continue *Warhoon* very much along the same lines as he had run it up to issue 27 -- a plump, beautifully laid out and printed collation of some of the best fanwriters of the day -- and issues 29 and 30 were deservedly well received at the time.

Ted, of course, remains with us and active to this day. Bergeron sadly left fandom under a cloud a few years later, and has vanished completely from fandom's ken, so far as I can tell.

White's article drew a great deal of comment at the time, and as a kind of pendant to the piece itself, I've added a selection of the letters from *Warhoon* 30 (September 1982) regarding it, plus some other material from elsewhere. I hope that by doing so I am providing an already fascinating and well-argued piece with extra context and interest.

# THE POLITICS OF FANDOM Ted White



In the early fall of 1954 I finally screwed up my courage and attended my first sf fanclub meeting. I'd been contributing to fanzines for several years by then and had put out three or four issues of my own fanzine as well, but I was young and shy and afraid of personal contact with other fans, most of whom I knew were older than I and most of whom I assumed to be more knowledgeable and more able than I as well.

The fanclub in question was the WSFA -- the Washington SF Ass'n -- and it had been formed a couple of fannish generations earlier -- at least six years earlier, anyway. The club had been organized by people like Bob Pavlat, Bill Evans, Chick Derry and Bob Briggs -- fans who had been active in FAPA or SAPS and had attended their share of conventions; in a phrase, seasoned fans. When I attended my first meeting the only one of those founders who was there was Bob Briggs, and I think that was because I had phoned him (on Bob Tucker's advice) for details on the meetings and having given me that information he felt obligated to be there to meet me. Bob was by then largely gaffiated; he was still in SAPS but otherwise over the hill, fannishly speaking.

The rest of the half-dozen or so attendees were clubfans. They laughed uproariously when Harlan Ellison's name was mentioned (yes, even then!), but were otherwise ignorant of fanzine fandom. None of them had ever been to a major convention, and perhaps none had even been to one of the then-few regional conventions like the Phillycon. Bob Briggs spoke briefly but entertainingly about the car-trek west to that year's worldcon in San Francisco (in a car which included Harlan among its half-dozen passengers) and I was the only one there who recognized the names of the others he mentioned.

The club included an attractive young divorcee with two children, Dot Cole, whose apartment would, with the next meeting, become the WSFA meetingplace for the next year or two, and for whom I nursed unrequited lust in my heart; an old man whom I knew only as Mr. Morman, who carried a briefcase empty but for a fifth of Southern Comfort; Joe Valin, who was in his twenties and subsequently sold me for a modest sum a number of rare prozines (Stirring, Cosmic and the like from the late thirties and early forties), but whose personality was otherwise too bland to make much impression on me; and Phyllis and Bill Berg, whose newborn baby, Bettyanne, they brought with them to every meeting. Phyllis was fat and loud; Bill was thin and slightly less loud. They were WSFA's love-story, having met through the club. Both were heavy beer drinkers who tended toward maudlin garrulousness. They also fancied themselves the powers who ran the club.

Within a few months of my first meeting, the club had changed considerably in character. Bob Pavlat, who had not attended meetings for some time, but who knew of me through fanzines, started attending regularly again. Briggs attended semiregularly. Derry and Evans also became once again regular attendees. And, within less than a year after that first meeting I found myself elected club president.

Soon younger fans, fans of my generation like Jack Harness, John Magnus and Fred von Bernwitz were also coming to every meeting. The club became a genuine sf fanclub again, full of active fans who brought the latest issues of their fanzines, discussed FAPA and SAPS and Cult business, planned trips to conventions, and generally did what fans do.

As a direct consequence of this, I was never elected -- nor even nominated -- to another office in the club.

Dot Cole explained it to me: "Ted, you really shook the club up. The Bergs have never forgiven you. This used to be a little card-players' club until you came

along. That's the way they liked it." The Bergs might have lost control over the nature of the club, but not over its politics. I remained on their blacklist for the rest of my stay in the area, and nothing I ever said or did changed their minds.

That was my first exposure to fan politics.

When I moved to New York City, some five years later, I was no longer the shy neofan. I'd been a vocal and active fan on both the fanzine and convention level. I was putting out Void, which was one of the better fanzines of the era. I was hardly a BNF, but I'd been around; I was well known.

There were a number of fanclubs in NYC. The most prominent was the Lunarians, which held its meetings in the Bronx in the apartment of Belle and Frank Dietz. I knew them both, of course. Frank had been in fandom since the forties, and Belle was the Phyllis Berg of NYC fandom: fat, loud, opinionated and determined to run things. Belle had already precipitated the WSPS Inc. feud and lawsuits in the aftermath of the 1956 and 1957 Worldcons, and I was not fond of her. But moving to NYC made me the new guy on the block: all the fanclubs invited me to attend their meetings. So I tried a Lunarians meeting.

I did not attend another meeting of that club for five years, and the choice was mine. In the Lunarians of that time I saw the Bergs' WSFA writ larger. Meetings opened with formal business sessions, with minutes to be read and approved, old business and new business, reports from committees, dues to be collected, the treasury to be reported on, etc. Watching that meeting (I was a "guest"; I did not participate in the business session) was painfully boring. The "informal" part which followed was no better. An incredibly frumpy woman who dressed very badly cornered my rather pretty wife, Sylvia, to give her clothes advice. Milk and cake was served. People sat about politely. I felt as if I had somehow mistakenly wandered into a mundane gathering of some sort. I resolved not to return, and did not until after Frank and Belle had split up. Belle had dropped out of fandom, and I heard rumors about an attractive young fan named Robin Postal who had started going to Lunarian meetings because her parents (whom I then knew slightly) were members. (It is totally irrelevant to the point of this piece, but the first Lunarians meeting I attended in 1965 resulted in my taking Robin back to her home in Brooklyn, asking her for a date, and, subsequently, making her my second wife.)

I have played the fan politics game. I've been elected to office in various clubs and apas. I co-chaired a worldcon. I even attained office in the Lunarians at one point (simply by allowing them to elect me). But I dislike fan politics enormously, and I've played that game only when it seemed to me that it was absolutely necessary.

Let us consider a simple hypothesis: Fandom is a meritocracy, conducted anarchistically.

Working backwards, let's take the "anarchistically" part first.

Fandom is a hobby. It may become an avocation (and has, for many of us), but we enter it and participate in it because we want to -- not because we have to. Because fandom is always and essentially voluntary, it is virtually impossible to compel anyone to do anything that they don't want to do. Some fans assume obligations -- such as the schedule with which they intend to publish their fanzines, or a workload within a club or convention -- but only their own morality compels them to maintain these obligations. They must answer only to their consciences.



This was more obviously the case when most fans lived in isolation from one another and conducted their fanac on paper, through the mails. But it remains the case even today, when a fan may live only blocks away from another, and physical contact can reinforce obligations that have been assumed.

Since 1941 some fans have tried to organize the others. The National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F) was the first such attempt. There have been many others. A pathetic fan of the early fifties named Orville Mosher started up something he called Project Fanclub, which was supposed to compile enough data on all the then-extant fanclubs that not only could a directory be published (a moderately worthy aim) but the template for the Perfect Fanclub could be created. Mosher saw local fanclubs as only stepping stones to the Ultimate, Perfect Fanclub; a fanclub so complete and perfect in its every aspect that all fans would fall all over themselves to join. We haven't heard from Mosher for twenty-five years now, but he may still be laboring somewhere over his vast project.

In the early forties the notion of an organized fandom was not as obviously ridiculous as it is now. Memories of Gernsback's SF League were still fresh. The SFL was basically a circulation gimmick designed to promote Wonder Stories, which was vying with Amazing in the mid-thirties for last place among sf magazines (Astounding being the sole other SF magazine). But Gernsback had enough belief and conviction in the idea and his readers were sufficiently in tune with it themselves (being proud and lonely fans who desired a little social intercourse with others of their kind; fandom was still being invented then) that the SFL was modestly successful in setting up local, if not regional chapters. The LASFS began as the LASFL, the Los Angeles chapter of the SFL, for instance. A few other existing fanclubs affiliated themselves with the SFL and new fanclubs came into existence as SFL chapters. The SFL effectively died when Gernsback sold Wonder Stories and it was rechristened Thrilling Wonder Stories, although I believe it was kept up for a while in the new magazine.

When Damon Knight (yes, the very same!) wrote "Unite or Die" and called for a working national fanclub (the N3F, as it soon turned out), he must have been recalling the SFL. He might also have been thinking of the original idea behind FAPA when that organization was hatched by Don Wollheim in 1937: an amateur press association large enough to encompass all of fanzine-reading and fanzine-publishing fandom. Just think: if you joined one group you could get all the fanzines being published! (That didn't happen either. Fans joined FAPA and put out FAPazines while continuing their non-FAPazines.)

But it didn't work. And it never has worked. The attempts, like the N3F, either died quickly or became bureaucratically-clogged backwaters of fandom into which fans could disappear, never to be heard from again. (The N3F has been the laughingstock of fandom for at least thirty-five years now, and it still remains the home of the perpetual neofan, priding itself on the "services" it performs for fandom, few of which are needed and some of which are harmful. What Willis had to say about the N3F in the early fifties remains every bit as true today.)

Fans resisted being organized. And why shouldn't they? What was to be gained by making fandom over into an analogue of the mundane world in which they went to school or worked? Where was the enjoyment in trading one petty bureaucrat for another?

The attempts to organize fandom have always foundered on the simple fact that those who wanted to do the organizing were not people anyone else wanted to be organized by.



I think this became obvious to most fans in the mid-forties when the infamous Claude Degler and his 'cosmen' (most of them his own pennames) started up The Cosmic Circle. Degler was another fan who had Heard The Call and wanted to organize fandom. His ideas were semi-religious and semi-utopian: he saw fans (with their Broad Mental Horizons) as the leaders of the future. They were, according to this scruffy semi-literate fan from Indiana, the Next Step on the evolutionary ladder, only waiting to be told their True Purpose before going out and setting the world to rights.

Up until then some fans of a utopian bent had been thinking along similar lines. Naive, genuinely idealistic, politically questioning, and the products of the Depression and the social ferment of the thirties, many fans had espoused somewhat visionary causes, from Marxism to Technocracy. The explosion of the atomic bomb had a real impact on these fans. There were those among them who believed that it might be possible to build a genuine community of fans, a utopian town of some sort. In Michigan, in Battle Creek, the first Slan Shack was organized along such ideals. The very term, "slan shack," derived from the aphorism, "Fans are Slans"; van Vogt's Slan was still fresh in everyone's memory as a strongly compelling novel about mutants called "slans." Fans, paranoid about their position outside the mainstream of society and the general attitude about sf expressed by mundanes, identified readily -- if not entirely seriously -- with "slans."

Degler changed all that. By taking such ideas to their reductio ad absurdum extremes, Degler showed fandom just how inherently foolish they were. Degler was the embodiment of fandom's lunatic fringe. (He was also something of a beatnik/hippie who rarely bathed or changed his clothes, wandered nomadically from one fan household to the next, freeloaded and often departing with more possessions than he'd arrived with. Laney, among others, was aghast to discover the condition in which he left the beds he'd slept in, and years later, around 1950, fans were surprised to find Degler -- under another name -- huckstering their long-disappeared books and magazines at conventions.)

Today fandom is in some respects more organized. Large regional and worldcons require manpower; efficiently run conventions require organization. But fans voluntarily submit to this kind of organizing on a purely temporary basis. Although it's been twenty-four years since Dave Kyle first incorporated the World Science Fiction Society to run each year's worldcon, it's been twenty-two years since the WSFS Inc. was abandoned. It's my impression that some sort of umbrella organization presently exists to create continuity in the rules for worldcons, but it's been my observation that each year's con committee pretty much runs its worldcon as it chooses, accepting those rules as a pro-forma arrangement and ignoring them when convenient or necessary.

Because fandom remains a voluntary hobby, there is little likelihood that fandom will ever be anything other than anarchistic. As always, things will get done when specific individuals agree to do them and then act upon that agreement.

Fandom is a meritocracy.

One of the most common complaints of the new fan, fresh upon discovering fandom, is that fandom appears to be class-conscious -- that there are circles within circles, each conferring upon its members certain aspects of status. It used to be that one heard complaints about the exclusivity of BNFs, about supposed snobbery, and about closed, invitation-only clubs and parties.

I think we can understand the attacks upon people like Willis (who is, in my opinion, uniquely undeserving of such attacks) by people like Charles Platt and, several fan generations later, Don West, when we view them in this light. (The only

other ready explanation is that these are people who feel that the only way to Make A Name for themselves and advance themselves in fandom is to seek out the best-liked person and attack that person irrationally.) Platt and West are attacking what they wrongly perceive to be a class-consciousness -- like communist termites boring from within.

They are easily dismissed as individuals who have failed to understand either fandom or their perceived targets, but they are symptomatic of a general misunderstanding which equates the castes of fandom with mundane class consciousness.

I am not going to either excoriate or defend mundane class consciousness here, although I will note that fandom is probably not entirely free of it, and that this is especially true in Britain where it permeates mundane life. It is significant that both Platt and West are British, however -- or, more specifically, English, and their target was Irish. It's a safe bet that both individuals are more closely bound to their mundane culture than most fans are, whether in acceptance of that culture or in rejection of it.

The mistake many new fans make is in assuming that those who appear to have status did nothing to earn that status. A new fan finds it easy to equate the social structure of fandom with that of the world he or she grew up in. In the mundane world many people enjoy a status they do not appear to deserve, whether through inheritance or through connivance. It is this basic apparent inequity which has fueled most of the world's revolutions over the past one or two hundred years.

But fandom operates anarchistically. Being the progeny of a BNF does not automatically make one a BNF also. Money means little, since even in these more affluent times most fans are students and have relatively little money to spare. Nor is mundane position of much importance. Many fans are blissfully unaware of what their friends by correspondence do for a living.

Further, one's sex and race and appearance mean little if one conducts one's fanac on paper. Fandom has had its share of polio victims, cripples, hunchbacks (Ray Palmer) and others with handicaps. (Fandom even has its blind, although this handicap causes special problems for those who indulge in paper fanac.)

I caused a minor uproar in fandom a few years ago by pointing out that until recently fandom had no gender barriers; that women could as easily go as far in fandom as men, since the deciding factor was not who they were but what they did.

Fandom's present-day feminists, who seem unwilling to accept this idea (possibly because they are in fact trading on their gender rather than their intrinsic talents), have tried to import into fandom all of the wars raging between the sexes in the mundane world, betraying their own ignorance of the significant differences between fandom and the mundane world.

Fandom is a meritocracy.

I could be a thoroughly repulsive-appearing individual, perhaps dying of a leprous disease, my hair falling out and my skin flaking off. But if I can create something of intrinsic merit, a drawing or painting, an article or a story, a fanzine or a piece of music, my reputation in fandom will be based on that work -- not on my personal circumstances, whatever they may be.

When Lee Hoffman revealed herself as a woman in 1951, fandom was astonished. Not because "a girl!" had created in Quandry a fine fanzine, but because Lee had

successfully hoaxed everyone, even if the origins of that hoax were inadvertent. Nor did her reputation suffer when fandom found out the truth. Lee was, and for many of us still is, a BNF because of her evident talents and abilities. Quandry was, and remains, a high-water mark in fanzines. There were other female fans in those days (not many; women were enculturated in other directions for the most part and few admitted an interest in either science or sf in those days; those who became fans did so for the same reason we males became fans -- a 'loner' attitude and outlook which distanced us from all mundane society), each with her own talents and abilities.

"BNF" means "Big Name Fan." That's not a term you can take too seriously, any more than forties fans could take too seriously the appellation, "Number One Fan Face," the term applied to the major egoboo poll winners like Ackerman and Tucker. Self-ridicule lies just below the surface.

But it is a descriptive term, and what it describes is the way others see the individual in question. One becomes a BNF by acclamation. No one can simply assume the title. You are a BNF when people say you are. Your status is earned through what you do and how what you do is received by your peers -- your fellow fans.

BNFs are fans who are highly thought of by their fellow fans.

Fandom, thus, has no pre-ordained social structure. The social structure is created by those who make up fandom and the ways in which they perceive fandom and their place in it.

But some fans can't leave it at that.

One of the biggest problems fandom faces at present is the balkanization of fandom brought about by its increasing size. Where once fandom was analogous to a small town in which everyone knew everyone else (and worldcon attendance figures ran in the low hundreds), fandom is today a moderate-sized city, which because of its size has divided itself into a series of vaguely overlapping neighborhoods. It is now possible to be a BNF in one neighborhood and unknown in the next. Regional cons, like Balticon, have larger attendance (over 2,000) than worldcons did fifteen years ago.

This has caused some dislocation in fan traditions, and has resulted in an influx of "normals" -- mundane types who are not in any real respect distanced from mundane society and who bring normal mundane concepts and expectations with them into fandom. I already mentioned the feminists; far worse are the 'greedheads' who see fandom as a place to make a living. One such individual puts on conventions in California for a profit -- an idea borrowed from those barbarians, the Trekkies. This would be marginally acceptable except for the fact that he sees traditional west coast cons (like the Westercon) as competition, and has tried to put his competition out of business with both legal and illegal harassment.

Less immediately threatening, but perhaps more invidiously dangerous in the long run is the actual change in the character of fandom itself, as brought about through the change in the character of its component fans.

As already mentioned, fans until about fifteen years ago were, by and large, outsiders in mundane society. Often first-born or only children, readers, above-average in intelligence, fans tended to be those who had always stood outside the society of their mundane peers; neither jocks nor otherwise popular in school, they were from an early age the 'loners,' often shy and socially inept. Beset at once with superiority and inferiority complexes (they knew they were smarter, were convinced they were more foresighted -- who else believed in space travel before Sputnik? --



but they also knew they were outnumbered and subject to scorn and derision for the very foresighted views they espoused), they found themselves uniquely distanced from the society in which they were raised and lived.

Scornful of mundane values, fans found their own. Most of the early fan-values were intrinsically idealistic. A fan might be just an ordinary guy working in an ordinary shop during the mundane hours of his life, but his hobby could operate on a higher plane, a more idealistic plane. Conventions were deliberately structured to be non-profit (a position that is slowly but surely eroding as the potential for profit in conventions increases -- no one can convince me that Denver won't make at least \$100,000.00 in pre-con attendance fees, a sum the committee is very unlikely to find legitimate uses for), and fanzines were never expected to make a profit even if they broke even -- itself an unlikely event more than fifteen years ago. The basic currency of exchange in fandom was egoboo, and when Eric Frank Russell published his story, "And Then There Were None," in Astounding around 1950, the idea of social credits and obligations ("obs") immediately caught on with fans because it so exactly paralleled contemporary fannish practices -- something of which Russell might well have been aware.

In its imperfect way fandom had evolved a utopian structure based upon common human decency. Fandom is the only case I know of in which anarchy has naturally evolved and works.

Fannish anarchy worked precisely because it offered fans an idealistic alternative to the mundane world in which they still lived and worked. On another level, fandom was a place in which everyone was, or could be, an artist -- a creator. Maybe you drove a taxi to pay your rent, but as a fan you drew, wrote, edited or published. You had a creative outlet, and your creative work had value and could be exchanged via the barter system for the creative works of others. In fandom you could be your total self.

Today this is less true.

Fanzine fandom has fallen upon bad days. When the 'small town' of fandom was scattered over the continental United States and portions of the rest of the world, paper was what bound it all together. Now that fandom has grown much larger it is possible to be an active fan without either reading or contributing to fanzines; indeed, it is possible to be a 'neighborhood BNF' without any involvement in the paper world of fanzines, and many have achieved this state. Such fans attend many regional conventions, and are socially active in their own fancommunity.

Direct social contact emphasizes different values and virtues. Shy, socially inept people who can write brilliant sentences on paper but don't speak forcefully (or surely) are not going to be BNFs in this new social fandom. People who learned how to socialize well in school will do much better. But these people, by virtue of their success among their peers while growing up, are much less (if at all) alienated by and from mundane society and are themselves much more mundane in their values. They accept unquestioningly what we once did question.

Then too, science fiction no longer carries the social stigma it once had.

The success of "Star Wars" and its sequels point to this, as does the generally successful 'deghettoization' of written stf. (In passing, I might remark that one sure way to separate the old fans -- in attitude -- from the newer crop is to check out their opinions on "Star Wars" and similar 'sci-fi' movies. The newer and more mundane fans embrace 'sci-fi' unquestioningly, and even use the term approvingly.)

Thus, stf no longer symbolizes the distancing from mundane attitudes and values that it once did, and is increasingly attracting into fandom 'mundane' people.

I can't help viewing the 'mundanization' of fandom with distaste. More and more, fandom is taking on the attitudes and values of mundane society, and to the extent that it does it loses what made it both unique and valuable. The idealism is starting to disappear, for example, and mundane conflicts (like those surrounding sexism) are infiltrating inward.

But worst of all is the politics.

Fandom has always had its fan politicians. In the late thirties, a time of mundane political turmoil, fans brought some of that turmoil into fandom but they did so on an idealistic, utopian level. (Which is to say that Wollheim and the Michelists saw 'Michelism,' or Marxism, saving the world.) What disgusted fandom was the way this was translated into purely fan politics: the politicking in fanclubs, the Exclusion Act of 1939, etc.

New York City fandom was always particularly reprehensible in this regard: fan clubs were forever undergoing coups and schisms, reflecting the personality clashes of the participants. But NYC was hardly unique. It was just that there were more fans in New York City earlier than there were in most other metropolitan areas.

Early fan politics had a very juvenile cast to it which was not very surprising when you consider that most of the participants were still in their teens.

But by the time I became an active fan there were several generations of 'grown up' fans around -- people in their thirties and forties who had been fans by then for ten to twenty years. (It's sort of startling to me to realize that I myself have been in fandom now for nearly thirty years!).

Fandom to me was always a place which despite its idealistic underpinnings kept a sense of humor about itself and never took itself too seriously. But fandom always had its fuggheads, and I define as 'fuggheaded' anyone who takes himself too seriously and takes fandom too seriously. As a rule these are the same people who want to organize and run things, who feel that fandom has some specific "purpose" which it could easily achieve if only people would just do things a certain specific way.

Often a fuggheaded fan is simply a person who has seriously misapprehended the actual nature of fandom. I have met people who think that if only fandom was 'properly' organized it could do all sorts of good things in the world, as if fandom were simply another variant on the Elks or the Rotary Club or the American Legion, and its purpose were to Do Good Works in the local community.

But for some of these people fandom is a place to make up for their failures in the mundane world. Fandom is still, even now, a relatively small pond in which some people feel the need to be big frogs. These people seem to gravitate automatically into fan politics, just as their mundane cousins have made their way into mundane politics, whether it's the local school board or national office.

Choosing politics as a career is obviously something few of us care for. The very nature of the job tends to weed out those who would be best qualified to lead. People who are comfortable with themselves and confident in themselves rarely seek positions of public power; those positions are sought by precisely the sort of people who should never hold them. Power-trippers are insecure, emotionally unhealthy people who seek outside assurance of a power they inwardly lack.

In fandom the power-trippers are also insecure; one can measure that insecurity by the extent of their overbearingness. My antipathy to the Bergs in WSFA in the middle fifties and to Belle Dietz a few years later was born out of my own intuitive awareness that these were at root unpleasant, devious, manipulative, hypocritical and insincere people who wanted to have a hand in ordering my life and telling me how I should be a fan.

These people did not accept fandom as an anarchy. They knew that was "wrong," and that the mundane values by which they were raised were opposed to anarchistic values. They could not live and let live; they had to dominate. I can think of nothing good that has ever come about in fandom from the efforts of the fan-politicians -- only strife, conflict, and unpleasantness (including lawsuits).

Nor were these people who, for the most part, were willing to 'succeed' in fandom on their own merits and abilities. No doubt unconvinced of their own merits (as insecure people always are), they were unwilling to put themselves to the test. It was easier to thrust their ideas and opinions on others, convinced that bluster and pushiness would succeed and viewing fandom's anarchistic operating procedures as a chaotic vacuum crying out to be filled with their own 'leadership'.

One of fandom's most famous politicians wrote his own book-length history of "fandom," a book which detailed his own microcosmic battles in New York City fandom as if nothing else existed at that time. A man who never achieved genuine literacy, he next promoted himself as an editor and critic, although his victims (actual authors) rarely appreciated him in either role. Ultimately he appointed himself science fiction's chief historian, although he had not involved himself in the field until a number of years after the events he chronicled, and his "knowledge" was based on self-serving anecdotes from one of the principals recalled some twenty-five years after the fact. This "historian" clung to his version of history even when researchers (doing the research he'd never bothered to do) proved it false. Worse, he attacked the chief researcher for doing the research and not accepting the version he'd been promulgating for years unquestioningly.

It made no sense until one realized that for this person the "history" he'd been pushing was his own validation: it gave him the status he could not otherwise earn. That's a bit pathetic, and I can feel some real sympathy for the man. It's no fun being in a meritocracy if one's abilities appear to be mediocre. (Oddly enough, outside fandom and in his real, mundane job, the man has proved himself to be a genuine expert and earned wide respect. There's an irony for you.)

The worthwhile politics in fandom are not the make-believe transplants from mundanity, with business meeting, minutes, dues and officers. The politics of fandom which are worthwhile are to be found in learning to get along with a diverse and anarchistically-inclined bunch of people, learning to do whatever it is one wants to do within this context.

For fandom is, after all, really just a ghoddamned hobby.

-Ted White

.....  
ARTWORK CREDITS: Lee Hoffman: 6, 7, 12. (Note: these drawings are part of the Hoffman/Bergeron duel -- she does the illos and I have to make the context fit them -- which has raged across fandom in Fast & Loose and Telos and now has spilled into Wrhn.) John Giunta: 20 (reprinted from Spaceways 8, Oct. 1939). Jon Arfstrom: 36 (famed forgotten fanartist of the late 40s-early-50s -- a sincere acolyte of Virgil Finlay. Reprinted from a sheet torn from an unknown fanzine of the period. Perhaps Fantasy Advertiser. They shall not die). Bergeron: Covers, 14, 26, 32-33, 46.

# Letters on "The Politics of Fandom"

From Warhoon #30, compiled by S&ra

Walt Willis

As far as I'm concerned Ted should be asked to take another bow for his "The Politics of Fandom". This was full of interest and says things to me about fandom which I hadn't fully realised for myself. I think this is one of the best things Ted has ever written. It ties in very closely with my own feelings on finding that after all those years Taff was still going strong on exactly the same lines on which it had started, sustained by nothing more than the continuity of each Taff delegate arranging for the election of his successor. No Standing Committee, no International Governing Board, no Rules Council, wonderful.

John-Henri Holmberg

I find myself in agreement with Ted White, not only as regards his analysis of the essence of fandom, but also when he states in one of his letters that he at the same time feels resigned to an eternity of fanac and to an increasing disillusionment with present-day fandom (ca. 1975). Possibly some of this Janus syndrome is simply nostalgia -- of course friends were closer, fandom cosier and fannish writings less jaundiced ten or fifteen years ago when the arguments felt new, the fellow fen were more of an age and it was still possible to be enthusiastic when you joined battle over the new Heinlein novel or Star Trek segment. But I also give a large amount of credence to the theory that at least fandom is suffering from the surfeit of film fans, comix fans and pop culture sf fans now entering it in droves and clusters. Even chilly Sweden is beginning to grow blisters of Star Wars fanclubs, Star Wars fanzines and similar extraneous groups which all behave as though -- and seem to believe that -- fandom is something they if not made up themselves at least was made for them and their special interests. Thus the mainstream of fandom as I know it is even now dissipating in front of my disbelieving eyes, and what remains of it are scattered and dispersing fragments consisting of the individuals who

used to publish what I regarded as true fanzines, and to arrange what I used to believe were genuine conventions. But of course both their fanzines and their conventions lacked Darth Vader, Captain Spock and the rest of the paraphernalia nowadays obviously central to that almost unrecognisable sf enjoyed by the current consensus of teenage neos dominating Swedish fandom.

Presumably nostalgia is not the gleaming weapon with which to attack this frontal assault on the bastions of fannishness. But it comes automatically, and perhaps the most fascinating part of it is that the nostalgia myself or Mats Linder, who have after all been active twenty years, is echoed in a surprisingly convincing way by fans like Anders Bellis, a trufan indeed but one who entered fandom less than five years ago and who consequently is mourning the passing of a fannish epoch he never experienced first-hand. Perhaps this is not completely different from the sudden renaissance of Victorian novels in England a few years ago, when authors in their 30s and 40s started writing of London fogs, gaslights, empire and the Sepoy uprising; the yearning for a simpler and perhaps more pleasant age may very well be a general phenomenon, not just another bit of fannish silliness.

Chris Atkinson

Ted's article reminded me of one of the first occasions when I met a group of US fans. The meeting was held in a flat belonging to the parent of one of the group. When we arrived, we were hurried past the owner of the flat by her daughter, who said to us, "Oh, you don't have to talk to her, she's just a 'mundane'." I had never come across this term before, and was shocked by the fan's rudeness to someone who was, after all, letting us use her flat. Because of this I went out of my way to speak to the woman in question who turned out to be a social worker like myself, and to have a lot more in common with me than her daughter, who seemed obsessed with the finer points of duplicator design, a topic which has never fired me with a great deal of enthusiasm.

Ted uses the term 'mundane' (or variants of it) around 30 times in his article. It appears to be a dismissive term for non-fans, for activities outside fandom, for ideas which it is not thought appropriate for fans to hold or to discuss openly with other fans, at any rate. I am confused, I must admit. Ted has recently expressed a liking for an article I wrote, about social work and mental breakdowns. Presumably Ted would see



these as 'mundane' activities as I did not do them with fans. Maybe they become fannish if a fan writes about them? But what if I write about them in our social work newsletter, a duplicated magazine run entirely by volunteers, whenever they feel like it, which does not pay its contributors? Have I magically been changed from fannish to mundane overnight? Or does it depend on who reads the article? What if the other fan who works in my office reads the article? Does it suddenly become fannish again? The point I am labouring somewhat is that it is not possible to draw a dividing line between mundane and fannish activities in the way that Ted seems to want to do. They interlink. Fandom is a part of society, just like work, just like marriage. Some bits are distinct, some bits overlap, but it just doesn't work to think of them as completely separate worlds. Fandom only exists in the form it does because of conditions in wider society. Fandom needs a postal system... duplicating technology... mass literacy, for example.

Certainly I agree that the 'organisation' (or lack of it) in fandom is pretty unique. The only grouping that I can think of which is in any way similar is the womens' movement. (This is so, at least, in Britain.) This is certainly a very positive aspect of fandom as it does allow greater freedom for people of all types to express themselves and become involved. However, the snag to this is that we are all products of a wider society which does not work in this way. (Personally I think it would be extremely difficult for it to do so.) Just as Ted talks of women in the 50s being 'enculturated' away from science/science fiction/fandom, we are all affected by our society in ways that are bound to be evident in all our activities. For instance, research has shown that women qualify statements much more than men do, are more hesitating and self-denigrating when asking questions in public meetings and tend to apologise more. This evident lack of confidence is surely a handicap in any situation, fandom included. Presumably other subordinate groups may have similar handicaps. This would perhaps go some way to explain why, in Britain at least, the vast majority of fans are white, middle class, and male.

It seems to me that it is the artificial boundary between the 'mundane' and the fannish that has led Ted to another difficult area, that of keeping politics out of fandom. Ted is referring to two sorts of politics, internal power games, and politics with a wider focus such as Marxism or feminism. The former seems unavoidable in that in a variety of people there will always be someone who wants to take over, but the way fandom has

developed seems to gently dissuade such people -- thus far, at any rate. The second sort of politics however by its very nature affects us all, whatever our way of life or hobbies. Ted himself seems to be arguing for an apolitical fandom, but in his article implicitly criticises Marxism (referred to -- or its adherents are referred to -- as idealistic, utopian and naive, whilst the expression "communist termites" speaks for itself), thus taking up a political stance himself. Indeed, to determinedly not hold a political view obviously gives support to the status quo... and to be giving such support is a political act!

I find it difficult to unravel the different ways Ted uses the word 'political'. Sometimes, as I have mentioned previously, he means internal politics, sometimes a personal involvement with wider politics expressed within fandom. A further meaning to the word seems to be the use of the whole of fandom as a pressure group for a particular cause. This seems a fairly impossible venture knowing the diversity of political opinion amongst fans, although I cannot see the problem with a small group of fans getting together to say, express disquiet at the nuclear arms race. Surely that is their choice, and if they wish to call themselves the "Harringay Fans against the Bomb" then that is their choice also, although it seems a bit of a crazy choice as the majority of people would probably think they were football supporters or exotic dancers. Presumably being fans remains their central focus or they would forget fandom altogether and join the Harringay campaign for nuclear disarmament. Maybe they are equally interested in both activities. To discourage discussion on areas seen as non-fannish seems to be to encourage people to be insular and boring.

The relationship between England and Ireland is complex and is not always paralleled by the relationship between English people and Irish people. I find it hard to believe that D. West, at any rate, should have been motivated in his criticism of elitism by a dislike of the Irish. Maybe some of the appearance of elitism in fandom may stem from a desire to be as different as possible from mortals not blessed with the knowledge of things fannish. Things such as the silly spelling which Ted (I hope) makes fun of in his last line. Maybe it's also because a group of friends often seems exclusive to an outsider coming along -- until he is accepted. But maybe some of us are also just a little bit exclusive in our groups of friends/fans, because we are slightly worried that strangers might change things, with their newfangled ideas about politics or feminism...

Darrell Schweizer

One inherent paradox of fan politics which Ted White seems to ignore is that the organisers and power-hungry types are often the only ones willing to do the work in running a club or convention or publishing a clubzine. I've seen this happen many times. All the people you want to run things aren't interested and they spend a lot of effort avoiding getting elected to office. Some power-hungry incompetent can sometimes take over simply because there is no competition. The Philadelphia SF Society, which is a very old group (an original Science Fiction League chapter) and remarkably feud-free, seems to experience a perpetual power vacuum. Whenever some likeable or competent person can be found who is willing to hold a position of responsibility, all the other potentially capable people who are trying to avoid doing any work block vote him into office with an overwhelming majority and thus stave off disaster a little longer. When this person begins to tire of the position, a frantic search is made for another sacrificial victim.

As a general rule, though, putting on a convention is a lot of hard work, unpaid, and in these days of mundane fandom, increasingly taken for granted. It can involve personal financial risk (i.e. individuals being sued in financial disasters), and in order for someone to be willing to go through all that trouble, they have to be getting some gratification. Those who are not impressed by dizzy heights of secret masterdom probably don't think it worth the bother. So the fan politician is probably a necessary evil and will always be with us. The only alternative I see is the professional, paid convention worker, who is not going to help make things more fannish.

John D. Berry

I was touched by the dream that Ted White evoked: the small community of intelligent, lonely fans, many of them socially inept or crippled or simply undistinguished in their lives except for the paper world of fanzines, all of them gaining meaning from this community and what they create within it. I'm not immune to that dream. Indeed, it's part of what makes fandom special to me.

But Ted seems to be claiming that our warts are our crowns. He seems to have confused the fact that these outcasts created something worthwhile in fandom with the

conclusion that it's better to be socially inept or dying of a leprous disease. Ted is making a virtue of our alienation. Is it a virtue? I don't think so. When you live in a crazy society, as we all so, it would be crazy to be too well-adjusted, but that's not an excuse for not trying to be sane.

I don't believe in any division between fandom and the rest of the world. Fandom is part of the real world, as Malcolm Edwards put it succinctly in Tappen. It's quite legitimate for Ted to complain when people begin to participate in fandom and bring preconceptions to it that get in their way, but it's foolish to insist that fans don't partake of the faults of the world and should therefore ignore them. Feminists didn't "import" sexism into fandom; it's been here all along, an assumption that's been too seldom questioned. It's hard to imagine how an intelligent woman, especially an intelligent young woman, could not be a feminist today, or at least have underlying feminist assumptions that are bound to clash with those of many older male fans. It is, in fact, precisely that idealism that Ted eulogizes that motivates so many active feminists, in fandom and elsewhere.

It's the attacks on feminism that annoy me in Ted's article. He seems to assume that there's a "real world" somewhere and that fandom is somewhere else, when of course fandom is a community that exists in and of the rest of the world. It's worth looking at our assumptions (newer feminist ones as well as older sexist ones) in fandom as it is the rest of our lives.

But is fandom a meritocracy? Partly. I've never known the ideal fandom that Ted described, and I distrust ideals that rise into the clouds, leaving the earth's dirt behind. "All the heaven there is," as a poet I know wrote, "is here." "No ideas but in things," wrote a rather better-known poet. Fandom is not just the starry ideals cherished by its members, but the actual ways in which fans act among themselves. We all know people who have achieved a certain amount of fame and even prestige in fandom without deserving it (just look at the Hugos!) Probably the merit-based hierarchy is strongest in purely-on-paper fanac, for all the reasons Ted cites, but fandom has never been purely a paper phenomenon.

And yet... Ted is right. The heart and essence of fandom is in fanzines, and the many newcomers who take fandom as a purely social scene are missing the point. There is no

reason that the most socially inept should be the best writers, artists, publishers -- fans -- but it's certainly true that in a club or at a convention the person who is more socially ept and attractive will make out better. The smart loner may be drawn more to paper fanac than the more sociable fan out of compensation -- but fanzines don't have to be created just as a form of compensation. They're an artform, not a therapy.

I don't regard it as a bad thing that fans should be socially ept or competent people. I started out as a nerd, and I'm glad of the ways I've escaped my nerddom, and regret the ways I haven't; I don't glorify those nerdlly qualities. But I do regard it as bad when people get involved with fandom and fail to recognise its special nature, particularly its verbal nature, or to respect the peculiar kind of community that fandom is. In that I'm in agreement with Ted. And, while I don't think fandom is or should be immune to the kinds of considerations you bring to any other aspect of your life, I do value the way it cuts across all sorts of lines -- the way you may find something in common, through fandom, with people you would otherwise never know for reasons of age, sex, politics, social class, or geographic distance. And I value it as a sort of community based on literacy, on the printed word, on love of language and the creation of your own writing, publishing, and drawing... When Ted describes the typical fan's "superiority and inferiority complexes" for being smart but inept, he claims that "they were out numbered and subject to scorn and derision for the very fore-sighted viers they espoused". Nonsense. They were subject to scorn for being nerds, not for their ideas. Fans are not slans, and mundanes are not lower on the evolutionary ladder.

Alexei Panshin

In his article in Wrhn 29, my old friend Ted White concludes by kicking Sam Moskowitz around -- without naming him -- for his first book the self-serving fan history, "The Immortal Storm", published nearly thirty years ago.

Hey, now. I think Sam Moskowitz deserves a lot more credit than he has been given. He is not just a pathetic medocrity attempting to take on an undeserved status... as Ted intimates. The fact is that for twenty-five years or more Sam Moskowitz has been dedicated to digging up and printing the facts of the history of science fiction. He did it when it wasn't popular to do it. He did it even though there were no particular guidelines to follow.

Just look at Moskowitz's bibliography. He did two books of profiles of the major sf writers since Cyrano. He did research into the dime novel, into 19th century newspaper sf, into the sf produced by a coterie in San Francisco in the late 19th century, into the magazines of the turn of the century and into the pulp mazines of the teens. And much much more. Sam Moskowitz is not a trained scholar. He makes mistakes. And he is a clumsy writer. But when the trained brains, the mistake-catchers and the slick stylists want to talk about the past of science fiction, sooner or later they will find themselves relying on the help of Sam Moskowitz, for all his imperfections. He was there first. I think everybody who has sneered at SaM and laughed at him, and then gone off in private to use one or another of his books owes him an apology. Sam Moskowitz isn't a classy item -- but he is the real thing, and he should be loved and respected for that. He has served science fiction the best way he knew how. I think it is carrying fan politics too far to keep kicking Sam Moskowitz around for things he wrote in 1954 or did in 1939. If Ted can admit that Sam Moskowitz deserves respect as an expert in his day job in frozen foods -- well, let him look without blinking at what SaM has achieved as an amateur scholar and a true fan of science fiction, and give SaM the credit he is due.

Jerry Kaufman

We don't, as it happens, exist in a pure fandom restricted to fanzines. Personal contact has been important to fandom since the first convention in 1937 (or whenever). Certainly Lee Hoffman was a major fan despute, or because, or totally beside the fact of her sex, but in the story of her first meeting with Tucker (in which it is hinted he dropped the bath towel he was holding), the humor of a man inadvertently displaying himself to a woman would sorta disapear if Lee had been the chubby thirteen year old boy everyone thought she was. (Lee was my first hero in fandom, though I had no idea who she was when I first met her at Tricon: if I had a family tree, Lee would be my father.)

Much of Ted's analysis I find accurate, except that I think the change started a long time ago. I came into fandom at Tricon in 1966. "2001: A Space Odyssey" had just come out, and "Star Trek" was just about to begin its tv run (several episodes were premiered at the convention, to general approval). That was when it started. Do you remember the mass onslaught of Pittsburgh fans, Ted, at the 1968 Disclave?

Avedon Carol

Nowadays fandom is full of people who not only aren't interested in fanzines or even written sf, but they consider folks like you and me to be very strange indeed, with our perverted little fan magazines and nonsense like that. I have come to the conclusion that they are so far away from understanding what a fanzine is for that they see us as pathetic failures at putting out real magazines -- that is, they think we're aiming to put out something like *Algol*, but we just aren't up to it.

rich brown

Ted's "The Politics of Fandom", while a little out of focus in the middle -- it seems in part memoir, in part Article With A Point -- homes back in again at the end: even with the fault noted, it too deserves top honours.

Eric Mayer

Ted White's mention of the similarity of fannish writing of the Willis type to New Yorker material amused me since, years later, I thought the same. Indeed, Willis' early columns seem exact replicas of "The Talk of the Town". Reading Willis reminded me most strongly of reading E. B. White's collected letters. Although Willis' pieces were more carefully put together than White's letters they were, in a sense, informal, being for amateur publication, and the atmosphere was the same. In both cases I felt I had spent, and spent well, a great deal of time, covered a great deal of ground with, an almost painfully sane and thoughtful person.

Martin Morse Wooster

I suspect both you and Ted White are using the term "fandom" for two different classes of objects. On the one hand, there is "fanzine fandom", which has numbered about 200 fen since I discovered fanzines in 1975. Then there is, for lack of a better term, "fandom", the swarming hordes that cluster around Worldcons. The problem in fanzine fandom is that the part wishes to become the whole (or at least be considered the whole), and, since 1978 or so, has had its illusions shattered.



What I've read in fannish fanzines over the last five years corresponds in form and tone to what I've read in amateur journalism publications in the early forties -- nostalgia for the dead past, and rages against the uncertain present. Fannish fandom has attempted to reorganise as a closed elite, denouncing the vast world outside as being hopelessly mundane, while celebrating itself as beign the only true keepers of the flame.

The chosen survivors of fannish fandom do try to perpetuate themselves as an elite, trying to shelter themselves from the masses. What White claims is "supposed" snobbery is not supposed, but very real. The problem with this snobbery is that by maintaining fannish fandom as a closed circle, open only to veterans from the past or the rare newcomer who has steeped himself or herself in enough fannish lore to laugh at the injokes, no new talent can develop. As a result, the few new fanzines to have earned the respect of the killer elite are derivative, pastiches of the past. Dan Steffan may be perfectly sincere when he says that his chief goal in fandom is to create the perfect Sixth Fandom zine, but this is 1982! We don't ask that the science fiction we read be variations on what was popular 25 years ago; why is it the noblest and highest goal for fanzines to be static, pale copies of truer originals?

# A Jay Kinney Portfolio

Jay Kinney

The fan cartoons and fanzine headers collected in the following pages represent probably the peak of my fannish art production in the late 70's and early 80's. My original plunge into SF fandom occurred roughly around 1966 — which as far as my art skills went was the early Dark Ages. I had no access to decent art supplies, my draftsmanship was primitive and unschooled, and my sense of humor was (literally) sophomoric. The less said about that era, the better.

But times move fast when you are young, and by 1968 I had graduated high school, by fortunate happenstance I met underground cartoonists Jay Lynch, Skip Williamson, and Robert Crumb, and was invited to contribute a 4-page comic to the first issue of Bijou Funnies. This opportunity forced me to get serious about my cartooning skills, and largely under Jay Lynch's tutelage, I began to get my chops together.

The chops especially improved, once I relocated to Brooklyn, NY in the fall of 1969 to go to Pratt Institute, a storied art school whose reputation was greater than its more humble reality. Nevertheless, Pratt had some good teachers (generally working artists themselves) and I was assigned to keep a sketchbook and draw in it regularly — from life in the neighborhood. including local architecture, to life drawing classes (Wow! nude models!).

The move to Brooklyn also thrust me into the fannish universe of the local Fanoclasts, the Insurgents, and the remarkable fanzine explosion presided over by Arnie and Joyce Katz. My art soon tri-furcated into three parallel paths: 1) student art at Pratt, 2) underground comix, and 3) fannish art, most of which was done directly and spontaneously to mimeo stencils as a kind of performance art while the Katzes hovered around.

By the time I moved out to San Francisco in 1972, to dive into the epicenter of the underground comix movement while it still existed, I had upgraded my cartooning skills to a generally tight and professional level and mostly left fandom behind, at least for the first year or two in the Bay Area. But fandom still beckoned, most notably in the guise of Frank Lunney, who egged me on to do work for his fanzine Syndrome and persuaded me to not succumb fully to GAFIA.

This called for a retooling of my parallel art paths. These now boiled down to: 1) tight professional comix and magazine illustrations done to pay the rent, and 2) devil-may-care loose cartoons done for fanzines and egoboo. The cartoons collected here showcase the second type. Somehow — how it came about is still mysterious to me — I invented a loose, non-sequitur art style that was the opposite of my pro art. It was a form of carefree relaxation: art that had no requirements beyond my own amusement. Some of it was fannish, some was surrealistic, and some of it was just WTF? Alas, that era of my fan art emerged, thrived, and then rapidly faded away.

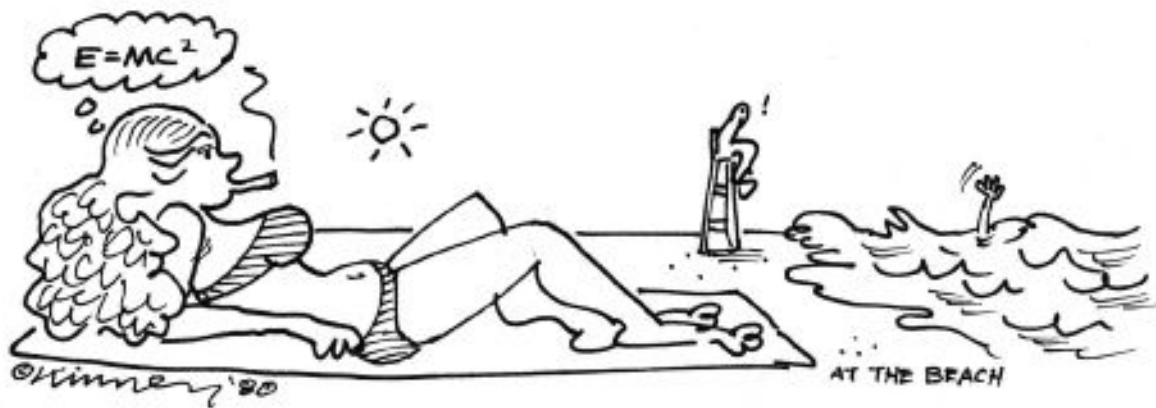
The underground comix movement came and went, though I stuck with it into the mid-80's. My concentration shifted to editing the Whole Earth magazine, CoEvolution Quarterly, and then my own magazine, Gnosis: a Journal of the Western Inner Traditions. My creative inspiration changed from art to writing and editing. Now and then I'd do an occasional comic story or edit a lingering underground comic, but my artistic chops became rusty and my attention was elsewhere.

So, enjoy these remnants of my most energized fannish art era. I wish I could still toss off cartoons like those gathered here, but that train left the station long ago. "Style" is central to a cartoonist's output: a way of looking at the world and transforming that vision into a consistent artistic slant. The style displayed here was purposely unprofessional, un-"tight", and naive. I still love these drawings and I hope you will too.



omphalopsychite





A RARE GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE...

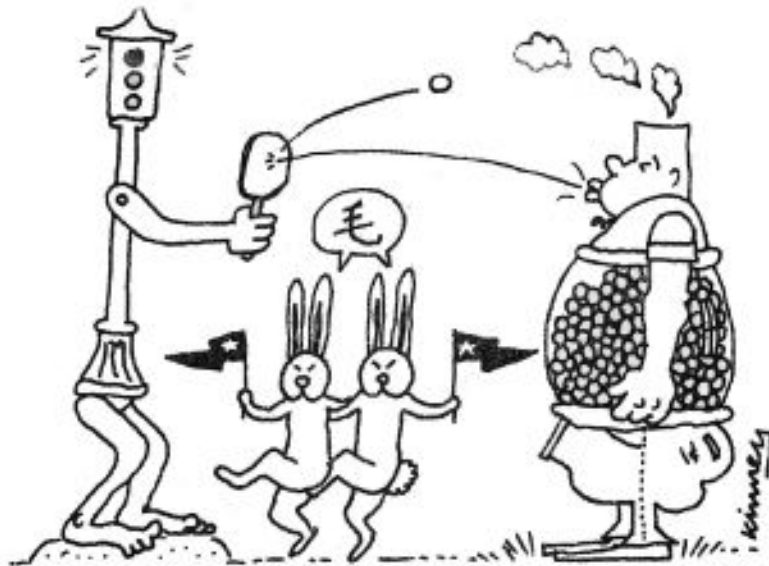


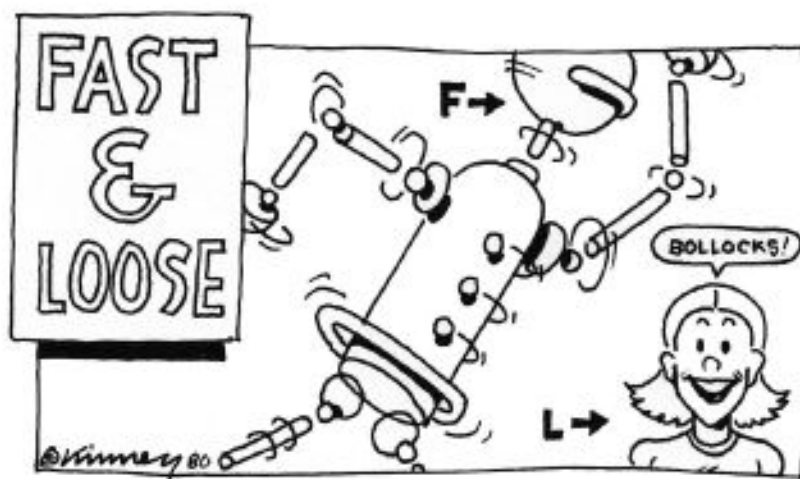
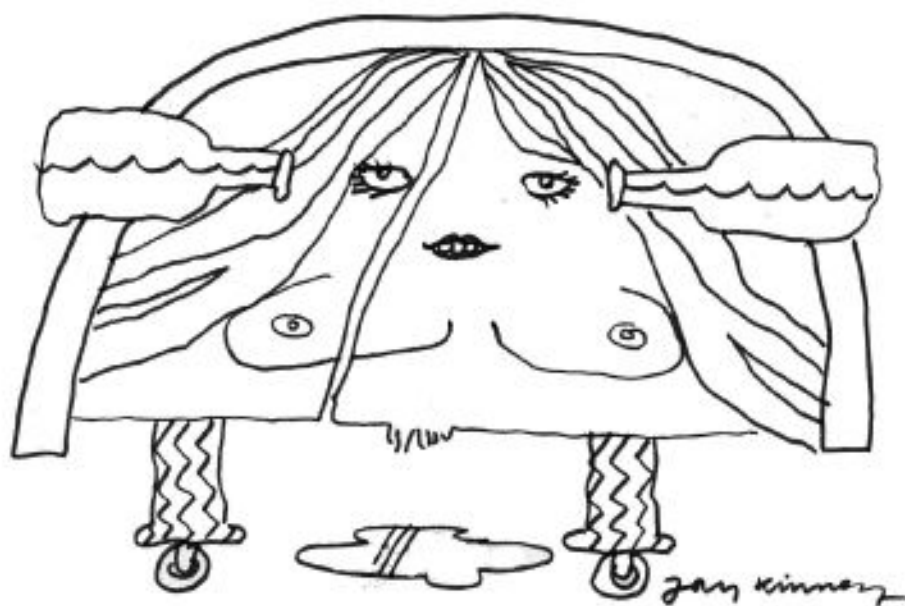












# "Mervyn Barrett Presents"

Introduced by Nigel Rowe

With the recent passing of my friend and New Zealand superfan, Mervyn Barrett in January, I think it only fitting to include something suitable in the Corflu Fanthology.

I have chosen a piece John Brosnan wrote many years ago, and that Kim Huett (and more recently Dave Langford) included in the Brosnan anthology "You Only Live Once".

Kim indicated that he has offered another item of Brosnan's for the Fanthology, but he gave his permission for this to be submitted as well.



Mervyn and John (Photo: Leroy Kettle)

This piece reflects Mervyn at a pivotal time in his fannish arc, and is written in an authentic voice. As a friend of Merv's for almost 40 years I think it's a fitting tribute that needs to be reprinted and read as widely as possible. The two photos to accompany it have not been seen in print before. Leroy Kettle provided permission to include his photo, and Mervyn's wife Janet for the MOMA shot.

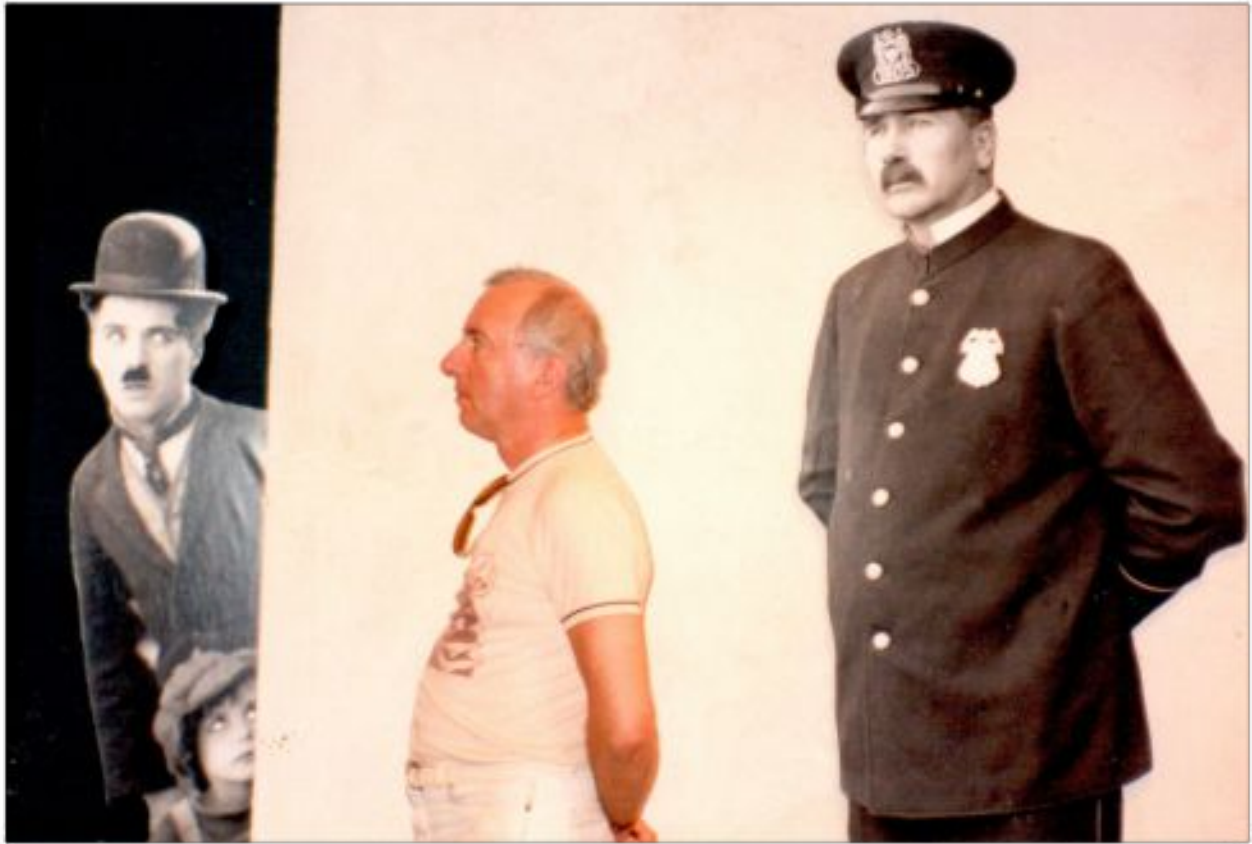
On the sixteenth of January 2019 a group of people received news we had been dreading for some time. Our friend Mervyn Barrett had succumbed to the lingering impact of a second stroke that had struck him some months earlier. This news hit like a bombshell, and after I heard, I sat dumbstruck at work, trying to make sense of this most unimaginable of events. That it had been a somewhat expected development only made it worse, we had all been hoping for another successful rally. It was not to be.

Merv had been an active, integral part of the fannish scene across three countries for over sixty years. Starting as a young New Zealand fan publishing zines in the early 1950's, founding and hosting the Wellington SF Circle in Wellington, before branching out to live in Melbourne, Australia, and later, London. Always on the move to bigger cities was Mervyn.

Once in New Zealand after approaching visiting satirist and famous performer, Stan Freberg for an autograph, Merv was startled to discover that Stan knew Bill Rotsler, when Stan recognized a Rotsler zine Merv happened to be holding! For many years he was the only New Zealand fan attending Worldcons and overseas cons and he became fast friends with fans and filthy pros alike. Especially if their common interests included not only SF, but jazz and films, his other passions.

Years later, after settling back in New Zealand, his doorstep was an essential stopping off point for foreign visitors of an SF persuasion. In 1979 he was the co-organizer and founder of New Zealand's first national SF con, Wellcon '79. Not only will 2019 play host to the 40th National NZ SF Con continuing his legacy, but Mervyn was pleased to learn before he passed, Wellington will also play host a year later to the 2020 World SF Con. A long held dream of many fans in New Zealand. Sadly he will not get to attend in person, but plans are afoot to commemorate his life and pivotal role in making Wellington the center of SF fandom once more.

Merv and John Brosnan were great mates in London for a time, and raised hell together during the Ratfandom era. It was a long way from the tranquil and genteel times of the Wellington SF Circle.”



Mervyn at MOMA (courtesy Janet Horncy)

“Mervyn Barrett Presents” is from *Why Bother Abroad* #3 (June 1972), edited by John Brosnan. Copyright © 1968-1979, 1983, 1993, 2016, 2018, The Estate of John Brosnan. Used with permission.

# Mervyn Barrett Presents

Something I've been meaning to recount for ages is the saga of Merv (the Shark) Barrett's underground movie. A singer friend of his came over from Australia for a brief visit last year, bringing with him a load of movie equipment, camera, editor etc. So they decided to make an underground movie for which Merv would write the script. I became involved via the Globe (that's the pub) when Merv asked me if I'd like to take part as the male lead. "I can promise you a really attractive girl for your leading lady," Merv promised. Oh yeah, I thought to myself as I signed the contract and put on a pair of dark glasses. Lo and behold he had been telling the truth! When I went round to Ron, the singer's, place the following Sunday I found myself face to face with a genuinely attractive girl whose name was Kerry. "Hi, I'm your co-star," I said, nervously wiping my sweaty hands on my coat sleeves (beautiful women always make me sweaty and things). We then spent several hours waiting for Merv to arrive with the script. While we were waiting Ron asked me what I did for a living. He was surprised when I told him I wasn't a professional actor. The next person to arrive was Ron's American girlfriend, an attractive but talkative girl wearing mind-boggling hot pants (my palms started to sweat again). Ron amused her by telling her what I had said I thought of American girls before she had arrived. Lots of laughs there.

Merv finally arrived looking terrible. He had been to a party the night before and had overindulged somewhat. "I feel very fragile," he moaned as bits dropped off him. He passed round copies of the script. More laughs. The film was to be a satire on dirty films. I played (or was suppose to) a producer who was suppose to be talking a girl into acting in one of my films. "Me, a producer?" I asked Merv.

"You should have worn something better than that," he said, pointing at the American flack jacket embroidered with flowers that I had picked up in Athens.

"You didn't tell me to wear my good stuff," I sulked.

Our first scene was to be on location at a cinema theatre that was showing a porno type film. So we all trooped into the city to look for one (except for Ron's girlfriend who had something better to do). We found one easily enough and for the next half-hour or Kerry and I walked in and out of

the foyer of this theatre while Merv and Ron filmed us surreptitiously from a traffic island. Eventually the manageress of the theatre came out of her office and asked us what we thought we were doing. At that point we decided that the scene was finished and moved on. They then filmed us getting on a double decker bus. It was hell getting off again a few hundred yards up the street and for a moment I thought we were going to be taken for a long ride. After that it was decided to call a halt to filming for the day as the light was beginning to fade (Merv had held us up too long). We had a meal together then parted our various ways, promising to all turn up again next Sunday at Ron's flat.

So next Sunday found us ready to shoot the interiors, as they say in the movie business. I was more than a little nervous as I didn't think I was going to be able to deliver a competent performance. Walking up and down a street is one thing but actual acting is something else. What made it worse was that the scenes were going to be shot in Ron's neighbour's flat as the lighting in there was better. His neighbours, a young married couple, were obviously looking forward to a show. Sweat oozed from my every pore as I tried desperately to look blasé. Unfortunately, the more blasé I try to look, the *sicker* I look.

"Look into Kerry's eyes deeply," said Ron, directing. "Look lustful ..."

"I'm trying, I'm trying," I croaked.

"He looks sick," said Kerry.

At this point, you may have gathered, I was supposed to be reeking lust. "Now we pan to your erection," said Ron.

"My what?"

Of course it was out of the question so the special effects department was called in. This consisted of Ron's neighbour's wife and a can of furniture polish. The latter I stuffed down my pants. "Is that me?" I asked on seeing the result. (I wanted to keep wearing it after the film but they wouldn't let me.) Then things got interesting. Ron asked Kerry to stand up and take her jumper off, which she did, revealing a pair of firm, gently up-thrusting breasts, as they say in the sort of books I read. Naturally I pretended to be blasé and picked up a newspaper, glancing through it idly. That's what I call blasé!

"Now your jeans," said Ron and Kerry complied. "And your pants."

"Oh Ron," she said, "you said I wouldn't have to," but she hooked her thumbs into the waistband.

"Ho hum," I yawned as I flick through the paper. Who said I couldn't



act?

Ron gave in, the mad fool. “Okay, we’ll do the final scene by the window. Kerry, you go and stand in front of the window, and John, you go up and take her in your arms and kiss her.”

Believe it or not I think I yawned again. “Sure,” I drawled.

I climbed to my feet and ambled over to the tall, beautiful practically naked girl standing in front of the window.

“Action,” said Ron and there was action. I don’t know about Kerry but I sure had a good time. “Cut,” said Ron. “You’ll have to do that again, this time out of the shadow.”

“Oh, damn,” I moaned, “do we have to?” Yes, they were my exact words. I swear. Talk about blasé! So we did it again but unfortunately this time was the last.

“Well, I’m glad that’s over with,” I said as I picked up the newspaper again.

“Bit of a drag for you, was it?” asked Ron.

“Yeah,” I replied, and wouldn’t you know it, the sonofabitch actually believed me ... because Merv and Ron made another film with Kerry a week later but seeing as I’d been so bored with the making of the first one they didn’t ask me to participate. And if you could have seen that second film they made! Oh, I can’t go on ... everything is getting misty. Sob. Choke.

I never did see either film on an actual screen but I did view them through the editing gizmo one night at Merv’s. But this had the advantage of allowing the watcher to slow down the action whenever you wanted to. My big scene by the window didn’t come out too well incidentally, too much shadow. Which is a pity, we should have done it again.

Ron returned to Australia last year but unfortunately the case carrying all his movie gear and the two films were lost en route, so Merv tells me. Though perhaps by now they’ve finally turned up. I certainly hope so. The world can’t afford to lose such works of art.

# Alabama Run

Robert Lichtman

"Alabama Run" is one of my earliest pieces of writing about my experiences living on the Farm commune during the '70s, and remains one of my favorites. A version of it was published in *Mimosa* #5 back in 1988, but what follows is -- as they say in blurbs on book covers -- Revised and Expanded. The original version is online if you want to have a look. (<http://www.jophan.org/mimosa/m05/lichtman.htm>) It doesn't have all the stuff that could be characterized as Farm Sociology that's in this version following the main narrative, which is also rewritten in other ways, too.

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After the obligatory stop at Tony Kidd's for Dr. Peppers and a big bag of barbecue potato chips, my driver and I headed south on Highway 43 towards the Alabama line. We were in a big bobtail truck and our cargo was ten empty 55-gallon drums. This was my job in those days: Robert Lichtman, Store Man. I bought all the groceries for The Farm. These drums had been purchased at the second-hand barrel yard on Second Avenue in downtown Nashville. They were all "food grade" barrels. Some of them had previously held the remains of Eskimo Pie topping. When those barrels had first arrived on The Farm, they had been scraped clean of all their tasty residue by people on the scene at the time. Many a chocolate cake or batch of brownies owed its vital ingredient's origins to these drums of chocolate manna. Small kids would climb inside the drums when no one was watching and spend hours eating clean every available surface. (Later, a Guilt Trip was launched to make all those individuals, young and old alike, Feel Bad. Chocolate, went the rap, was Bad For You; it caused zits and "made you speedy." Carob became the official substitute for many years, though many tins of Hershey's cocoa continued to be smuggled into the community. Very little carob was ever officially bought and distributed.

We were taking these barrels to Sheffield, Alabama, to get filled with table syrup. Our order called for five drums each of Pride of Dixie White and Pride of Dixie Brown corn syrup. This was late summer of 1972 and the community was halfway along the path to all-out white sugar use. Corn table syrup (this of the Karo type, to name a national brand) was that halfway point between guilt and acceptance of that '60s bugaboo: white sugar. It was a hell of a lot easier to sweeten anything with it than with sorghum molasses, the sweetener-of-choice in the earliest days of The Farm (along with honey, which was discontinued due to something Stephen said about exploitation of bees; when bees became an endangered species a few years later, he recanted wholeheartedly). But it took a lot of it to make anything very sweet. That was the era of sticky, soggy cakes and crystalline cookies.

It was late August or early September, a hot sunny day. The corn was as high as the proverbial elephant's eye and the soybeans and sorghum crops were doing their best to look lush and near ready for harvest. About five miles down towards Lawrenceburg, my friend Will, who was driving, got out a couple of mushroom caps about the size of half-dollars. He offered me one and began nibbling on the other. By the time we hit the Alabama line, past many more miles of those increasingly fecund fields, we were in no condition to deal with the cast of characters inhabiting the factory where Pride of Dixie was concocted. We went sailing across the border in more ways than one. George Wallace smiled at us from the welcoming billboard at the state line, encouraging us to stay a while.

After cruising through the boring town of Florence, home of such traditional southern sights as the Roy Rogers Roast Beef Sandwich franchise, we stopped at a little creekside park on the Jackson Highway near the north end of Sheffield, just a few blocks from the famous 2400 Jackson Highway recording studio of '70s rock & roll fame. It had become a very hot day. The sky was a deep southern blue with nary a cloud to be seen. We had brought brown bag lunches (soybean sandwiches on whole wheat bread with sprouts?) but first we visited the little corner grocery across the street from the park to get more cold drinks. Now that we'd stopped driving, the mushrooms were roaring like a freight train to their peak; everything seemed more than sufficiently surreal.

Eating took a long time with a lot of conversation and a lot of looking around at the beautiful surroundings of the park. Except that we were practically in the middle of the “Quad Cities” (besides Florence and Sheffield: Muscle Shoals and Tuscumbia) we might have been in the farthest reaches of the woods away from civilization. All this and Sundrop Golden Cola right across the street: to be able (while very stoned) to sink one’s hands into frigid waters to requisition the bottle fresh out of an old ice water cooler in the primitive country store.

We polished off our lunch with another item from the store, my favorite piece of southern junk food: the pecan pie. These items, which came in their own three-inch diameter pie tins, took us straight to our nouveau southern roots, far away from our humble origins as beatniks/hippies in San Francisco in the ‘60s. More than Sundrop or its arch-rival, Kick, more than fried pies, more than chocolate soda, these little pecan pies epitomized the Southern Culinary Experience. (Since we were vegetarians, the joys of items like “country ham” and “red eye gravy” were off limits.) Even the plentiful sacks of day-old doughnuts from the donut store in Columbia that were the staple of Farm in-town-for-money carpentry crews a few years later never replaced the simple joys of a store-bought little tiny pecan pie, y’all.

Much time had passed. We drove on soberly to the syrup factory. It was situated in an enormous old brick warehouse, very gone to seed, on a railroad spur in an industrial section of town. And yet, it was just blocks from the park paradise we’d just left. The corn syrup arrives there in tanker cars from Iowa or maybe Nebraska. It’s pumped off the siding into several large holding tanks. From there it’s pumped into the mixing area, where it’s blended with either white or brown sugar, plus maybe honey (old crystallized five-gallon tins of honey they have to cut open with metal shears), maple (plastic gallon jugs of Mapleine) or sorghum (also crystallized five-gallon metal cans). There are rooms full of 50- and 100-pound sacks of white and brown sugar. It arrives by the truckload. They buy it from jobbers further south. Another room holds their supply of honey, maple and sorghum. More areas are festooned with pallets holding cases of empty jars. Stacks of printed labels sit near the bottling line, to be applied during the process. Elsewhere, finished inventory awaits pick-up by various wholesalers and delivery by their own fleet of three old trucks similar to the one in which we’ve arrived.

The proprietor, a fat, elderly Alabaman, his stout son, and their “colored help” all pitched in together to expedite the filling of our barrels. First they were washed once again, using their equipment (better than our own), and then, still hot from the steaming water, they got wheeled on a dolly over to the edge of the filling machine, where a makeshift diversion from the filler swivelled out over the drums. Rich table syrup oozed endlessly into the waiting containers. One at a time they were filled and winched back onto our truck.

While this happened, we engaged in a curious ritual with the owner’s son. As had happened on numerous prior occasions, he led us to a dusty corner of the plant where “returns” were stored. These were cases of syrup in which one or more had broken, depositing syrup onto other bottles. The labels become discolored when the unbroken bottles were cleaned up, so they gave some of these “seconds” to us. These included exotic flavors of table syrup such as “honey,” “maple” and “sorghum,” which were much prized by those back on The Farm who were chosen (by Will and me) to receive a bottle of this bounty. The syrup factory owners had begun this curious ritual the first time I ever went to see them to set up our account. (I “discovered” them as a source by looking in the sweetener sections of several local grocery stores when the go-ahead came from the general direction of Stephen that it would be okay to start using corn syrup as a sweetener.)

The purchase complete, the special gift of returns carefully loaded, the requisite half-hour or so of hanging out with the owners and their help behind us (at those times, if we didn’t steer the conversation, it would always turn eventually to something like duck hunting, moonshining stories, or old racist tales), we headed back out towards the Tennessee line. As we crossed the border, my driver friend whipped out a joint. It was a perfect way to end an unusual day.

That following morning we’d begin the exciting adventure of unloading these ten barrels, each now weighing around 450 pounds, from five feet up in the back of a truck with only some long, heavy beams and a lot of people power to perform this challenging task. The cry “Monkeys!” would go out in those early days when muscle was needed for things like pushing trucks out of the mud and lifting heavy objects. The community agreement was so tight then that everyone within earshot who could be interrupted would reliably stop what they were doing and pitch in. The Farm’s roads were terrible in

the early years and sections of them could be traversed only by the most experienced daredevil drivers and then only in certain vehicles. The old mail truck in which my wife and I came to The Farm was, in later years, much prized as one that could make it through almost anything. Fortunately it was a dry day and we were able to drive the big truck with its heavy load down to where the ten barrels would be stored without incident.

The real bottom line here is that this is the sort of stuff I would try to do for “work” while I lived on The Farm. I was never one of those people, of whom there were many in the earlier years, who just wanted to “stay in the woods.” I counted it a good era during my stay if I could get into these positions rather than having to go do field work, cut firewood with chainsaws, or bang nails building other people’s houses and apartment complexes off The Farm. (I did all of these things at one time or another, and more.) In the early days of The Farm, especially, I was one of the few who would condescend to go out and take care of the community’s business. At that point in time, I was regarded by many as some sort of karmic thunder hero for my ready willingness to go out and shop for the community. (Most people just wanted to stay on the land. How boring, I thought.) I considered it an opportunity to spend some time, between and after the business of the day, to browse in the precious few bookstores in Nashville, perchance to find the latest Philip K. Dick novel or short story collection and buy it to take home.

Sometimes I’d get to travel to even more exotic towns and if I saw a used book store I’d check it out if I had time. My precious copy of *Our Friends From Frolix 8* is from The Book Rack, a tiny hole in the wall in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Later, it was the Howard the Duck comics I would have laid away for my irregular visits to The Great Escape, a comics and comix emporium in Nashville near Vanderbilt – down the street from the Sunshine Grocery, where the only copies of *Coevolution Quarterly* available in Nashville could be acquired. Sunshine was a hippie style “natural foods” emporium that even into the early ‘80s, when I last saw it, still retained much of its original ‘60s flavor. Yes, I see I’m rambling....

Later, of course, others caught on and I had to compete more for these jobs. Also, having this sort of access to spare change and/or the potential to recycle Farm castoffs for money and the world-off-The-Farm brought with its advantages certain undesirable potential side effects. A little history is necessary at this point. At all times in the

history of The Farm (at least prior to 1983 when the commune dissolved and became a land trust for the individuals remaining) there have been two basic “camps” of individuals living there. Not organized camps, mind you, for the community was always as anarchic as fandom in many ways (part of its appeal), but definite schools of thought. There were what you might call the Gaskinites (or maybe “Gaskinists”?) who were the True Believers in the word as put out by Stephen about how it Ought To Be. Then there were the others, myself included, who were just checking it out, in our own ways, and trying to decide where it all was at and if we were going to stay for the long run. You know....

In the earlier days of the community, the True Believers were the dominant group and us others were a small splinter group. The dynamic of The Farm over its existence had been the virtual reversing of these positions. By the time I left in 1980 the True Believers had become a distinct minority. At that time the community was at its all-time population peak (around 1,600). As I alluded to above, three years later The Farm stopped being a commune and became a land collective where everyone has to work for his own scene and pays a monthly share of the community debt. My most recent understanding of this move is that the old debt finally got paid off and now the community has only its current operating expenses to take care of, whatever that is. Of course, now there’s only about 300 people left. I think most of the non-True Believers have left.

Well, enough history lesson. The crux of the matter for me was that I was not a True Believer and my wife was. A mixed marriage! (Well, she wasn’t Jewish, either. Of course, I’m only technically so, franked in by my love for potato knishes, big juicy dill pickles, macaroni and potato salads, and in my carnivorous days the usual array of the obvious. Yes, bacon!) This was where the “undesirable side effects” would set in. More background....

Over the years of being an Assigned Shopper for The Farm, I learned where all the best deals for everything were in my part of Tennessee. It was literally my job to scout out deals of all sorts. I went out and made personal connections with scores of middle Tennessee business people – wholesalers of all stripes, bargain store proprietors, mills and factories, people sitting on their porches out on some old dirt road watching the world go by. For several years it was my responsibility to purchase all of the groceries

and sundry items (toilet paper, soap, other basic stuff) for the community. I kept track of the ever shifting prices at about half a dozen wholesale grocery warehouses and made my purchases according to the best available prices. When I'd run into closeout or odd lots of something good to eat outside of our "regular diet," I'd try to get extra money together to be able to treat the community to things like spaghetti, cocoa, shredded coconut, catsup, much etc.

In between buying the groceries, part of my job was to check out wholesale or discount purchase possibilities in just about everything you can think of: hardware, clothing, shoes, diapers, rubber pants and diaper pins, clothes pins, building materials, toothbrushes and toothpaste, paint, linoleum and so much more. This was so the community could do something along the lines of providing for the needs of its residents. It was never enough, because there was never enough money to buy a steady stream of goods. Of my activities along these lines, so many tales could be told. The Great Linoleum Scam. The 200 green and 150 red pairs of Keds men's and boy's tennis shoes. The free lumber available as "dunnage" at lumber yards and certain warehouses. (This was the wood that was used to hold the shipment in place. Typically 2x4's and 2x6's with lots of nails to pull out, but of sufficient length that one could actually build with them.) The time the front wheel came off the truck 150 miles out from The Farm with a 5,000-pound load of freshly stone ground flour onboard. It went sailing off into a pasture; I saw it in the headlights as I struggled to stay on the road. More people to remember than I even want to think of starting to list.

Along with this came the ability to recycle castaways from The Farm into money outside so I could avail myself of such things that would fix up my family as would float by. Certain useless, tiny potbelly stoves that I'd find in the community garbage dump would be worth \$15 to \$25 at a certain second-hand merchandise store along the highway to Lawrenceburg where they cleaned and polished them up and resold them to the tourists. I probably sold a dozen of them over the half dozen years I knew it was possible. It bought things like shoes or perhaps some socks for my kids, second-hand clothes for the kids and ourselves, a tube of often scarce toothpaste for the family, perhaps a few pounds of the cheapest spaghetti during the peak of tomato season so we could have spaghetti without having to make our own noodles from scratch, cutting them out on a board. Now, aside from the pasta, it was the official fiction that the Farm



was providing all this stuff to everyone and you only had to turn in all your money including all birthday and Christmas gifts and everything you needed would all drop in your lap. The reality is that it never just fell in your lap, and less so as the years passed, and often unless you took care of matters for yourself you went without. So after a few years only a True Believer or a fool would turn in such unofficial spare change as came one's way.

And that's where the trouble with my True Believer wife would come in. Sometimes, as she later put it, she would "look the other way" when I'd bring home new cheap shoes for my kids from my wood stove selling proceeds (or whatever) – new shoes for my kids who were counting footsteps day by day to the time when their tattered remains of footwear would disintegrate entirely. Or bring home whatever.... I wouldn't bring home anything that I hadn't observed someone else also buying at some time for their scene. This personal buying was a widespread phenomenon. At certain times of the day you could go into certain stores and be almost certain to run into other Farm people there, furtively making their purchases.

Now sometimes it would be okay with her for these extracurricular items to show up and other times it wouldn't, and one never could tell in advance what it'd be from one time to the next. It could even go either way on the same item. And then when you tried to Discuss It, it was you against the whole religion. ("You're trying to Cop My Head!") A rough match. This was what dealing with the True Believers was like. ("Hang on to your hats! Official reality has shifted again.")

I'm going to declare this a good spot at which to temporarily close the flood gates of this narrative. I hope no one minds if they reopen from time to time when I'm in the mood. It seems somehow appropriate for this to be appearing in a fanzine from Tennessee. This is sort of a painless way of gathering notes for an eventual book. Even in the above there are paths unexplored in order to stick to the main points. Once I get going, it's so easy to ramble on. Like, hey, remind me to tell you sometime about what happened when Certain People went to see a dollar matinee of "Star Wars" in Nashville and the word got out....

# My Origin Story

Dan Steffan

If you were to look in the pages of my baby book you'd see a note in my mother's handwriting that records the fact that I was drawing by the time I was four years old. But the truth is that I can't remember a time when I did not draw; it is just something I've always done. When I was a grade schooler my parents knew to bring a pile of paper and something to draw with whenever we went out to dinner or went to visit a friend's house--especially if they didn't have any kids. My mom would plop me down with some paper and my crayons in the corner of the living room and leave me to it. It was like having an imaginary babysitter. It kept me from being under foot and when it was time to go home they'd just have to collect me and my doodles and off we'd go. It was perfect, my parents didn't have to worry about me interrupting their card game and their friends all thought I was delightfully quiet and polite.

During those years my father embarked on a career in commercial construction which eventually led to his company putting up many buildings in our city, including banks, schools, and even the airport. As a result I became the happy recipient of all his old blueprints and site plans, which had been printed on huge sheets of paper, the backs of which were mine to decorate. I'd lay them out on the rug in front of the television--with a sammich and a glass of milk--and fill them up with pictures and maps and battles and races. My imagination was as large as those big pieces of paper and I'd get lost inside what I was drawing--lost inside the worlds that appeared at the end of my pencil.

Laying in front of the television might not seem to be the best place to inspire art, but for me it was my gateway to the things you could do with drawing. Being a certain age, I was perfectly situated to be influenced by early children's programming. For instance, I was a devoted member of Buffalo Bill's Peanut Gallery and was fascinated by the life of his puppet co-star Howdy Doody and his competition, Kookla, Fran, and Ollie. But it was animated cartoons that really got my attention. I became a regular viewer of the adventures of Tom Terrific and his dog Mighty Manfred (created by the brilliant Gene Deitch) on Captain Kangaroo's program, and then discovered the antics of Ruff and Reddy (the first cartoon Hanna-Barbera made for TV) and, a little later, other programs like The Flintstones and the eternally strange Clutch Cargo.

When we moved to upstate New York in 1958--I turned 5 that year--my access to animation grew exponentially thanks to two local kiddies programs, The Salty Sam

Show on channel 3 and The Magic Toy Shop on channel 8. Salty Sam was a cranky old sailor who was responsible for exposing me to both The Three Stooges and Popeye. I had never seen anything like either one of them and I became devoted to both, though it was the Fleischer Brothers cartoons that really changed my life. Compared to the limited animation I was used to, those Popeye cartoons were so alive, so cynical, so violent, and so very, very funny. Nothing stood still in those cartoons. Every character, especially my favorite seaman, was in constant motion, bobbing and weaving their way to places like Goon Island or the circus to see The Man on the Flying Trapeze. Ohhhhh!

Every day I plopped down in front of the set and let the unfettered anarchy and cartoon violence wash over me until I was in a state of bliss. Lost in that weird black and white world, I was inspired to recreate the characters I saw each day on the TV screen. But it was the other local children's show, The Magic Toy Shop, that really got me going. It was an oddly old-fashioned program that was populated by a cast of banal hand puppets and a group of very peculiar humans. There was the perky young blonde host, Merrily, the maternal Play Lady (played by the show's creator, Jean Daugherty), the dopey sailor-suited Eddie Flum Num (played by a guy with the unlikely name of Socrates Sampson), and his storytelling pal Mister Trolley. It was these last two who truly sparked my urge to draw more than anyone else in my young life.

You see, each day Mister Trolley--who was an actor who wore a cardboard trolley car on his head and a blinking light attached to his nose--would tell us a story. They were always little morality tales or abbreviated fairy tales that he delivered in a voice that was reminiscent of Disney's Goofy with a head cold. But he wasn't really that important. What was really important was that while he talked, Eddie Flum Num--who bore a striking resemblance to Arnold Stang--would draw cartoons live on the air that illustrated Mister Trolley's story. It was incredibly magical to actually watch him draw those pictures and it made me wonder if maybe I could do it, too, if I tried really hard.

So I'd lay there and practice. Even though Eddie's art was simply drawn, it had a lot of personality--in real life he gotten an art degree from Syracuse University--and he made me feel like I could do it, too. Many of my earliest influences, like Tom Terrific, were deceptively simple and perhaps that was the essence of their influence--their lack of pretention made learning to draw a possibility. Even though I showed little real talent at first, I was determined that drawing would be the way I expressed myself.

Around that same time I also discovered the existence of coloring books, which went on to have a profound effect on my understanding of the drawing process. You see, my friends and I were crazy for coloring and often competed against each other for the title of best colorer. There was just one problem: once a picture had been colored, the rest of

us lost our opportunity to see if we could have done it better. So we put our heads together to try and solve the problem. We knew we couldn't afford to buy multiple copies of each book—50 cent allowance went only so far, after all—but then somebody had a brilliant idea. Instead of coloring in the books themselves, we would do the next best thing: trace the pictures and then color the tracings. That way each of us would get a chance to color each picture, some of them over and over again if we wanted to.

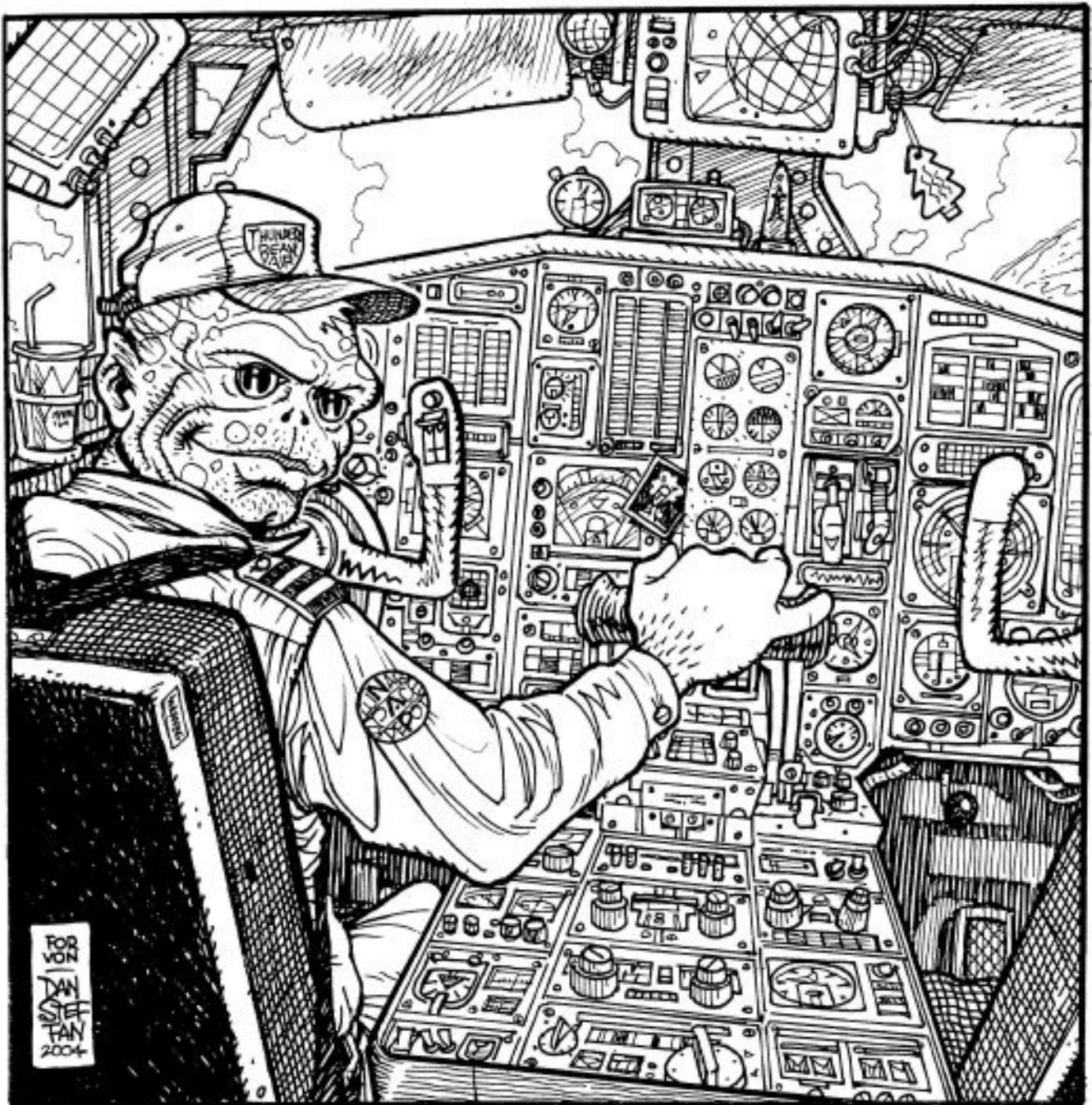
When it became obvious to my friends that I was the best tracer, they let me do all of the copying from then on. It taught me a lot. I learned something each time I traced Huckleberry Hound or Fred Flintstone or Donald Duck, and soon I could draw them without tracing. I was absorbing the vocabulary of cartooning from those coloring books and then using them to create my own characters. Once I'd gotten that far I lost interest in tracing. From that point on I went my own way.

By the time I was ten years old I thought of myself as someone who drew. By the time I was fifteen I was already thinking of myself as a cartoonist. It became a part of my identity. It was how I thought of myself. Even though my father objected vehemently to the idea that I thought I knew who I was and what I wanted to be, I was adamant. In college I had teachers who told me that my ambitions were false, that the path to true art could be found only in abstraction or in photo realism or in pop art, but I stuck to my guns and kept drawing cartoons.

I had already been living with Carl Barks and Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko floating around in my head for years at that point. I had discovered underground comix and I was reading Phil Dick and Bob Sheckley and Ken Kesey. I had already toked on some doobies and taken the LSD, too. Worst of all, I was already publishing fanzines. After that there was no hope for me, no hope at all. I went on to spend several decades drawing free pictures of aliens and robots for aging hippies and overeducated foreigners until, finally, I retired to a tick farm in the mountains of the Pacific Northwest where I grew a long beard and watch nothing but old black and white westerns.

Sometimes I wonder if I made the right choices and at other times I know that I did. I think it has all been worth it, even if it has meant that, like my buddy Steve Stiles, I will never own a yacht. Sure, I used to dream of fame and success, but life and the Rolling Stones have taught me that you can't always get what you want. Nevertheless, after all these years I can't help hoping that maybe someone will remember what I've done and that, if I'm lucky, my epitaph will say something like: "He was a good tracer and, unless he was feeling naughty, he colored inside the lines."

# DAN STEF FAN

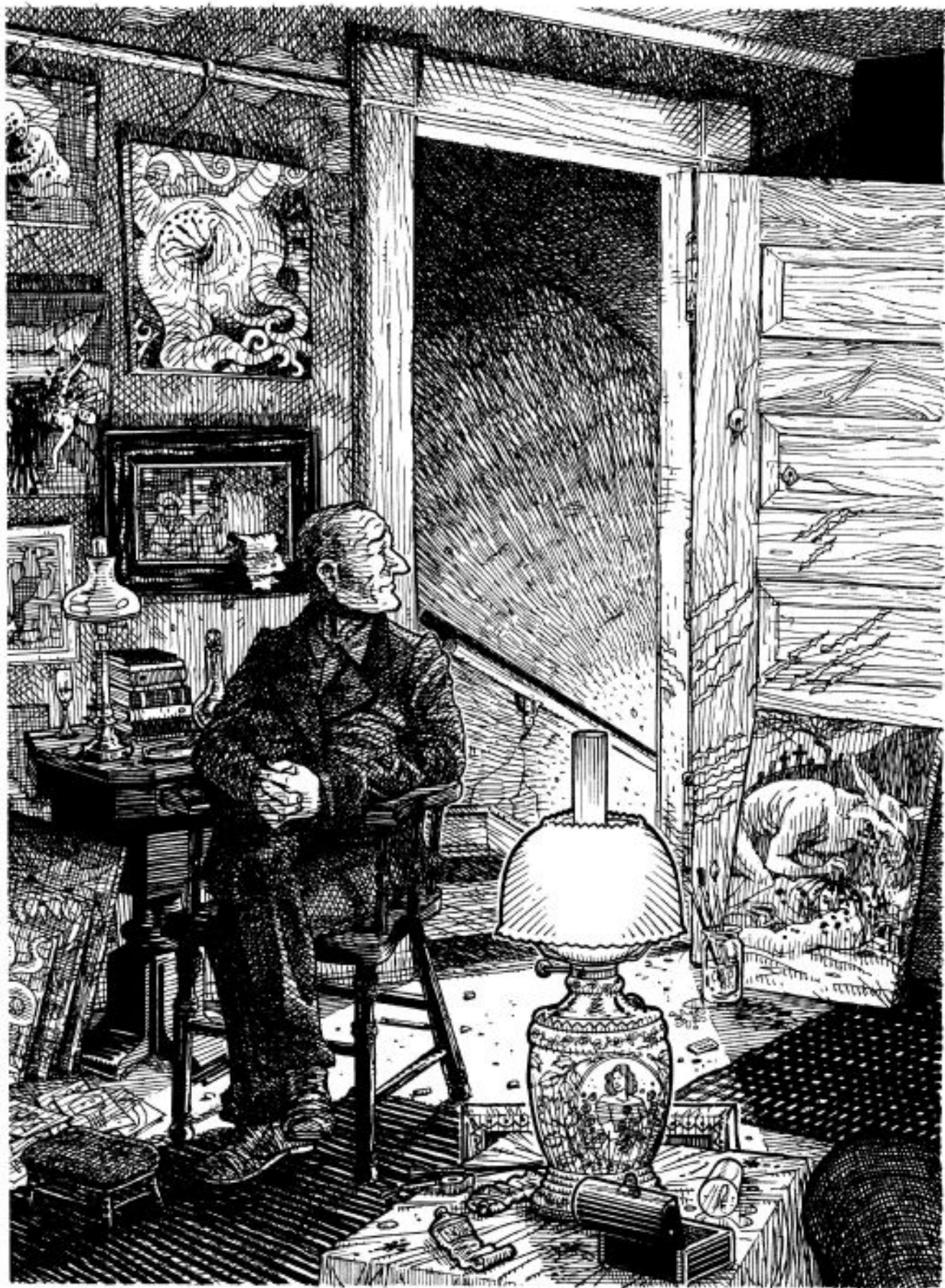




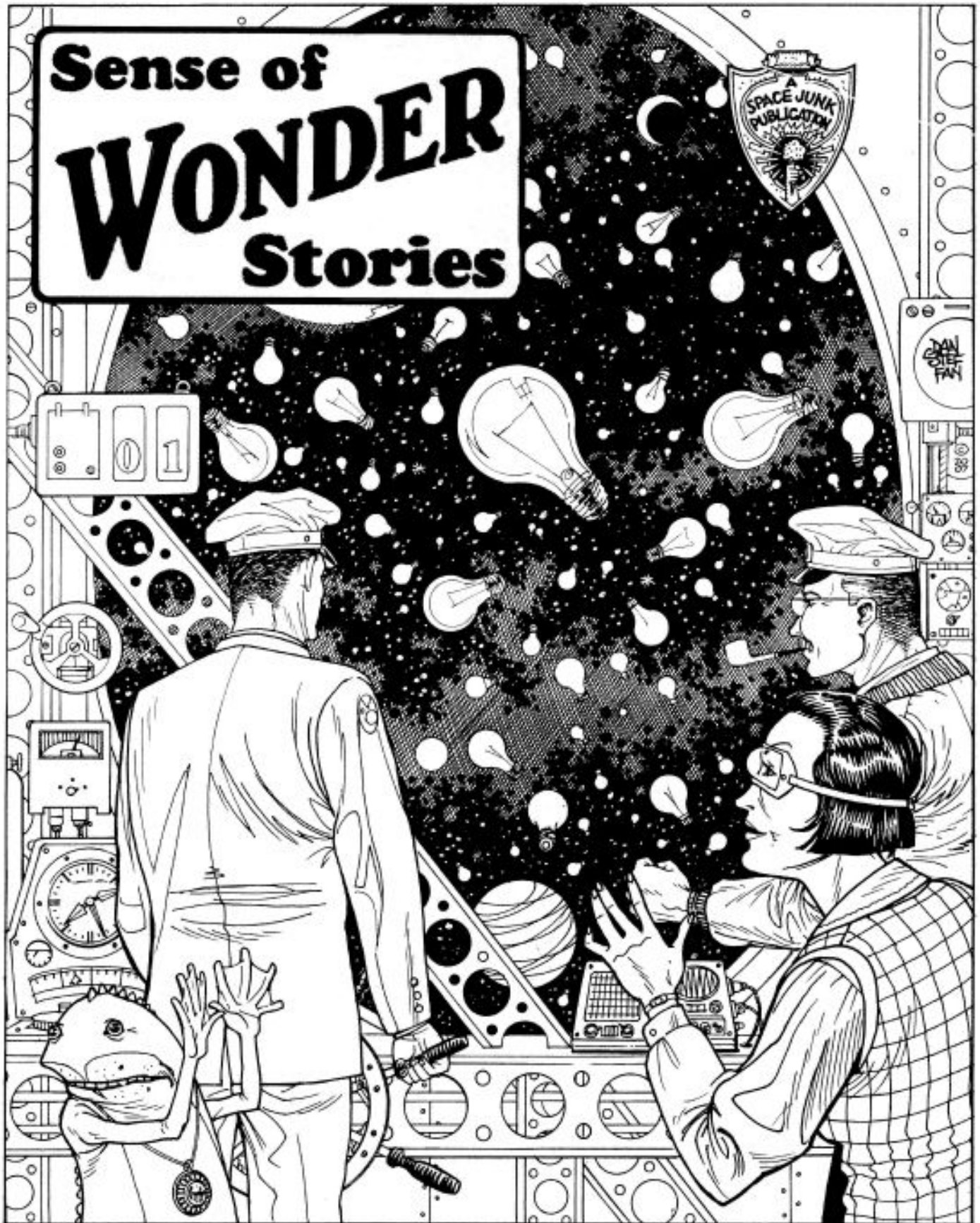
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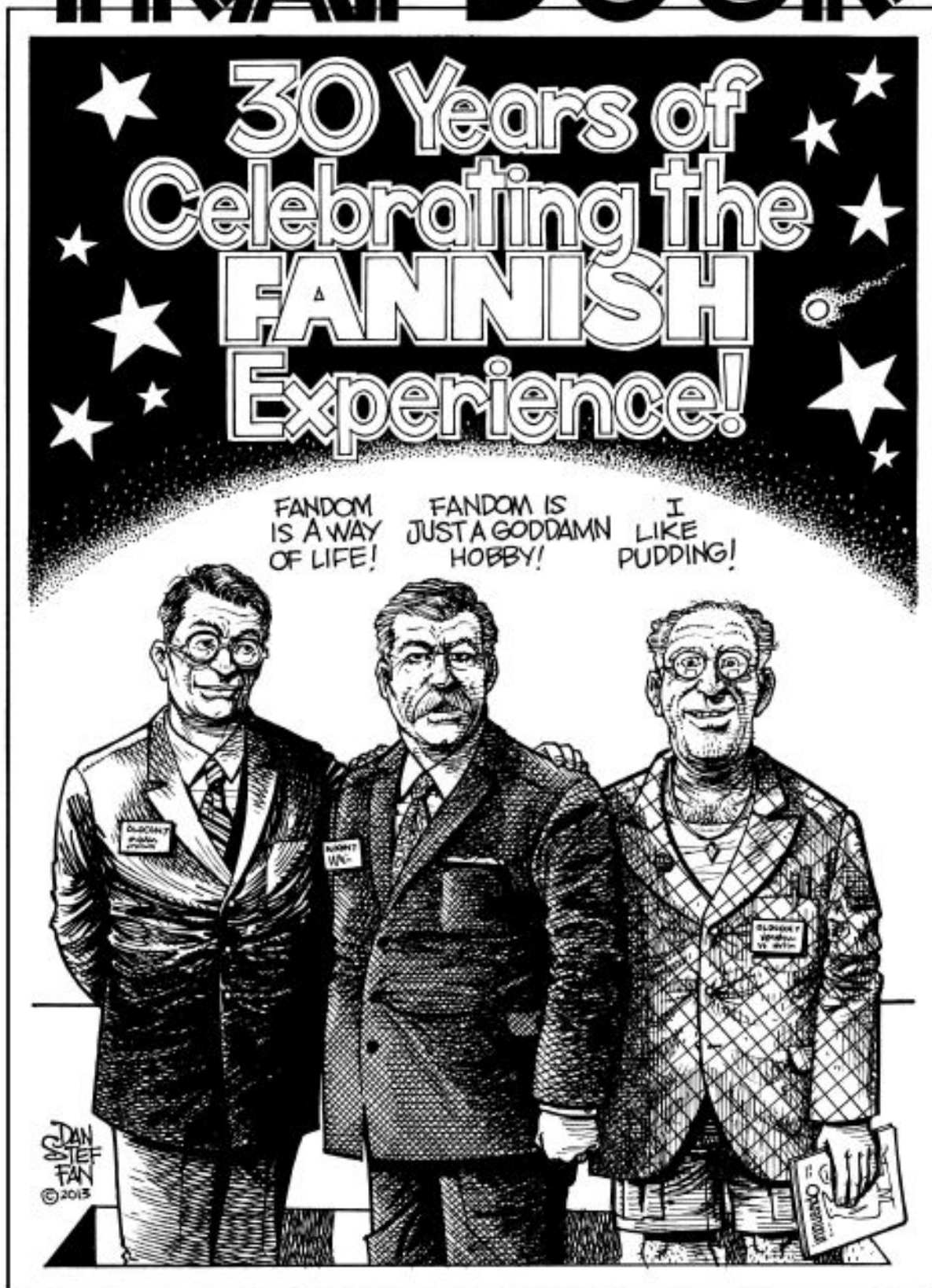




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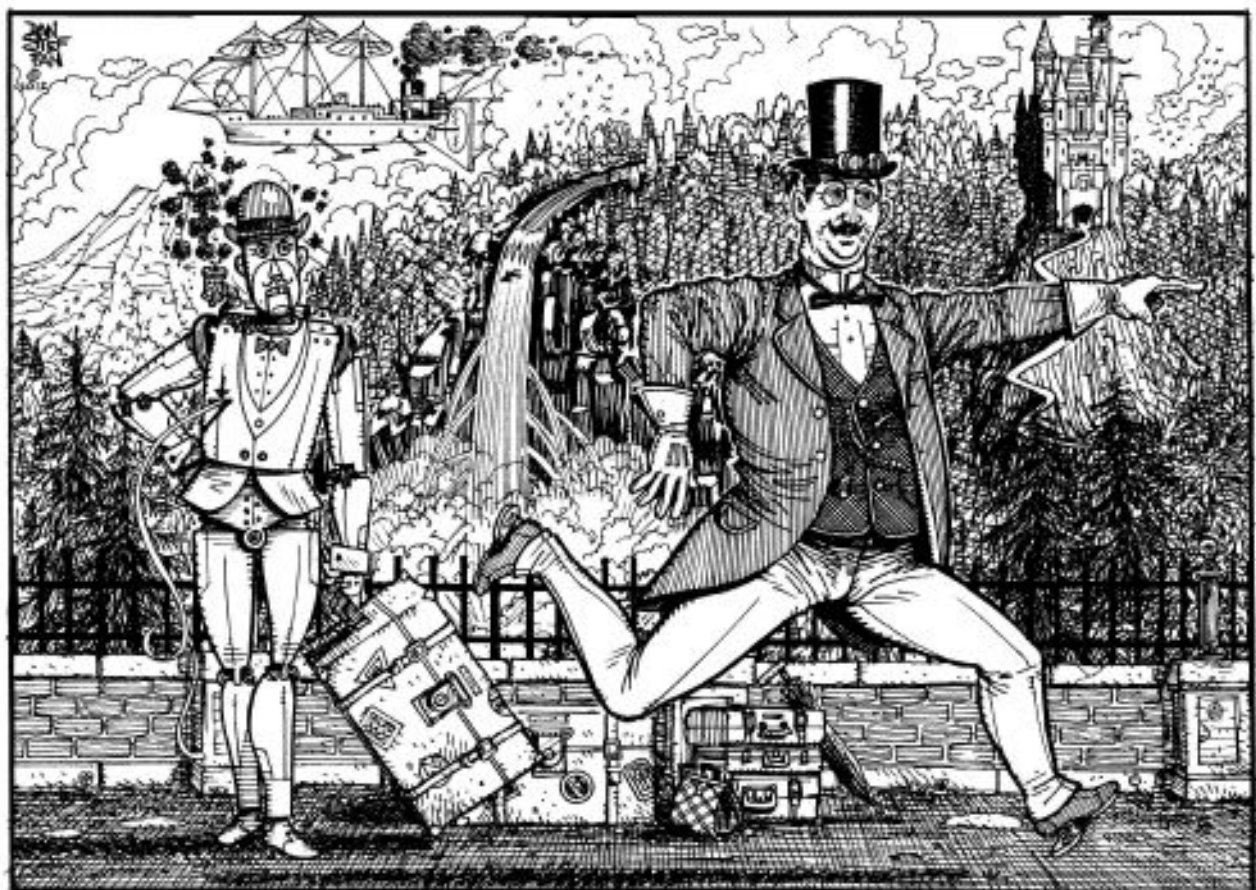


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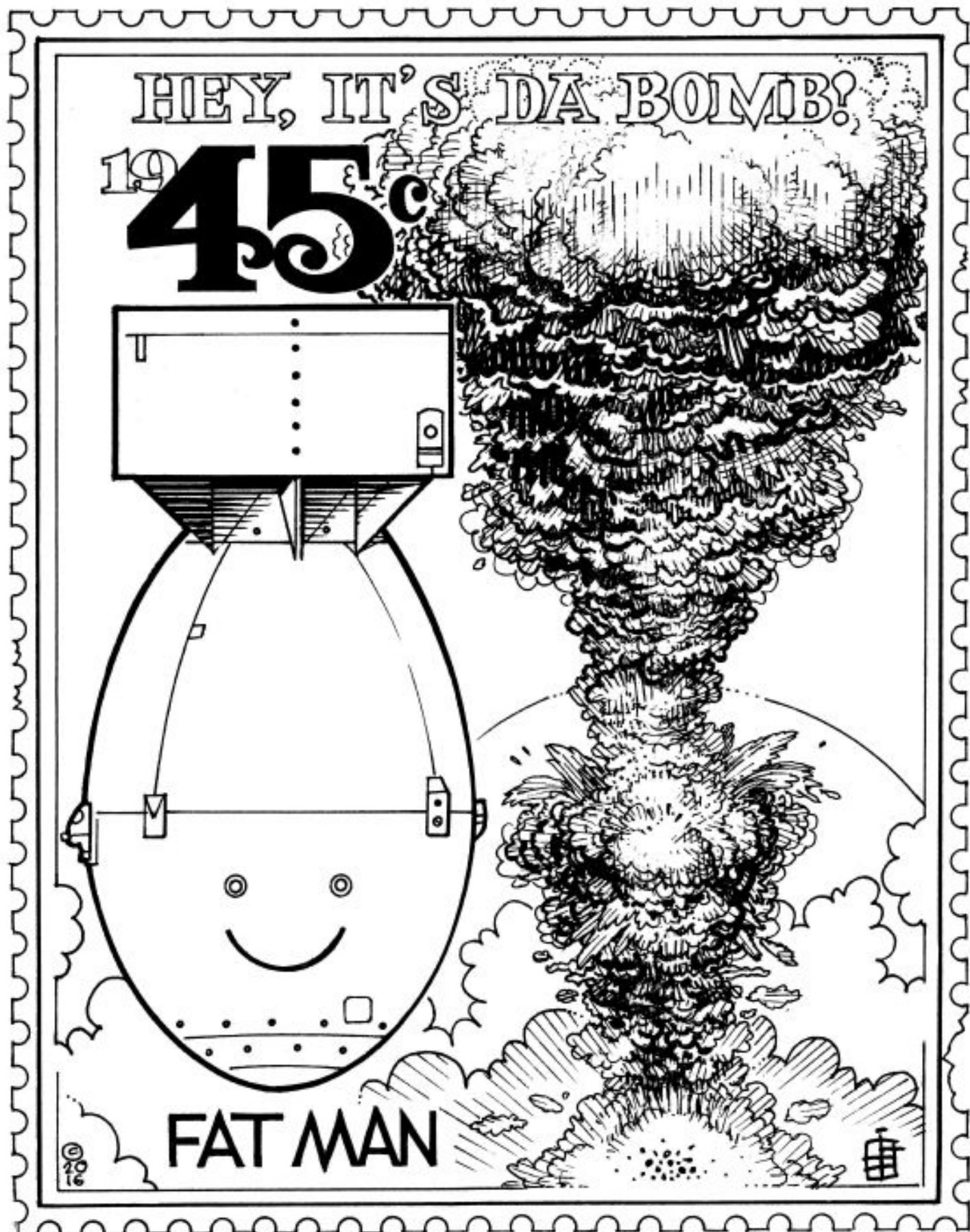
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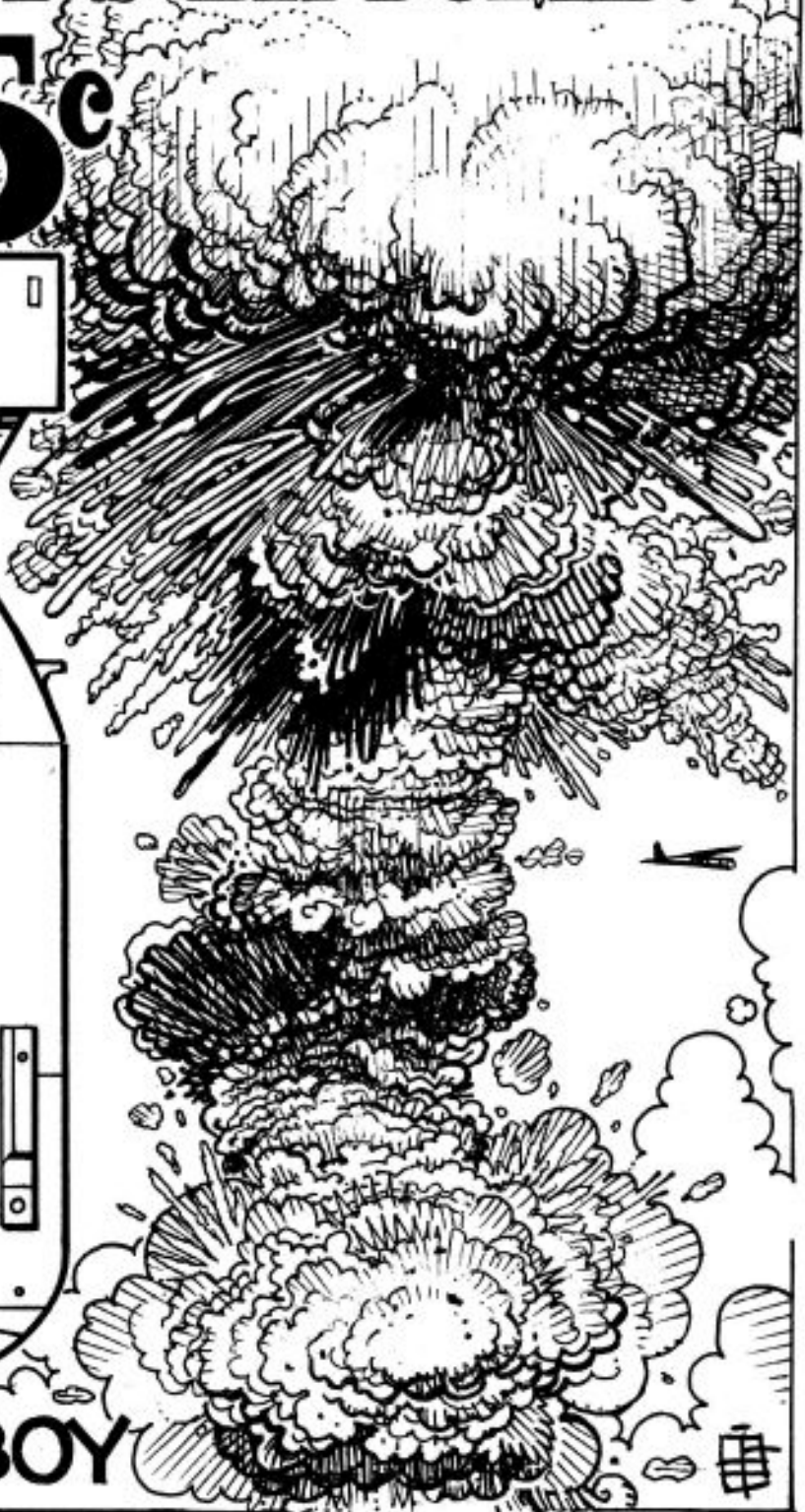
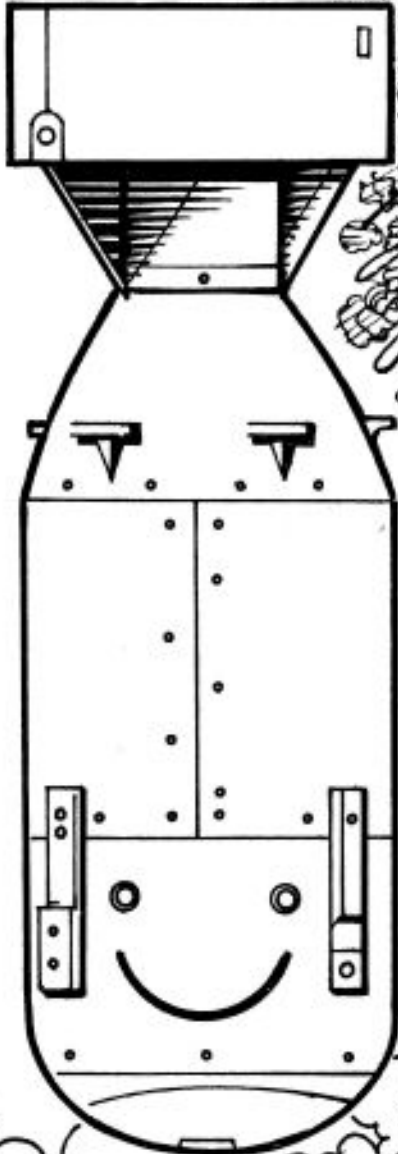
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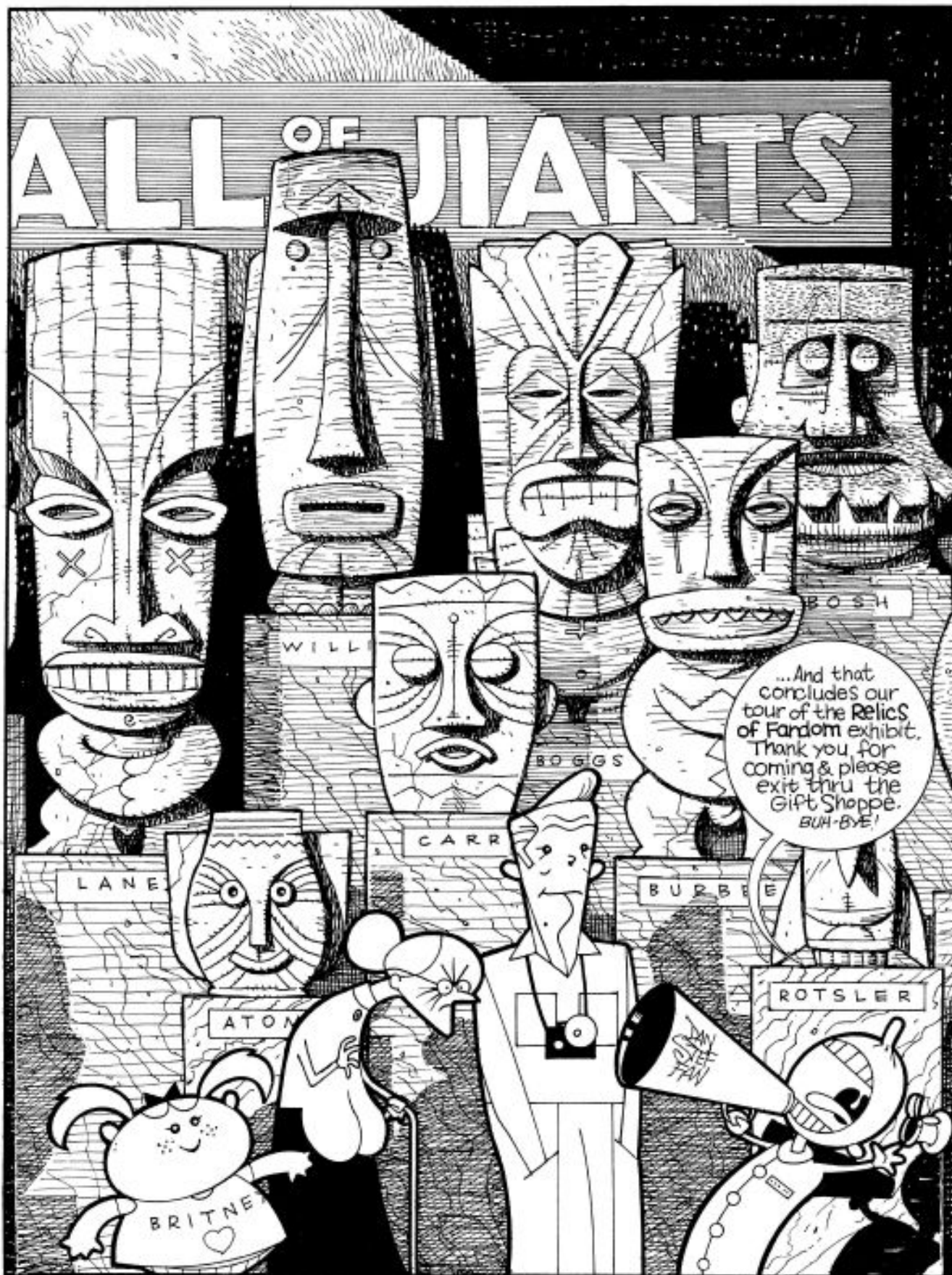


**LITTLE BOY**

# number nine Quasi Quote







TOUR GUIDE

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# Natterings (Ethel Lindsay)

Introduced by Claire Brialey

## **Natterings**

by Ethel Lindsay

from *Scottishe* #33, September 1963

A few months ago I read Ethel Lindsay's TAFF trip report (*The Lindsay Report*, 1963) for what I think was actually the first time; perhaps by sympathetic magic, I then found a lot of information about Ethel's fanactivity leaping out at me while I was researching other fans. I keep thinking that her fanwriting merits collection, and I wanted to share here some of what I like about it – not only for its own sake but for her perspective on the world as an active, engaged, intelligent fan and independent working woman.

This piece is part of Ethel's regular editorial column in her fanzine *Scottishe*, which she published from 1954 until 1981. Among many items of fannish and biographical interest, for this selection it came down to a toss-up between this article and a 'Natterings' from #57, at the end of 1970, in which Ethel discussed women in sf and fandom. Since female fanwriters have always written about a lot more than gender, I chose this, where the enduring relevance of the issues seem as interesting as its contemporary context.

33



It's not so very long ago that Brian Varley wrote an article about the stereotyped views we often have of the people of other countries. We all carry a trace of this, I fear, and it requires deliberate thought to eliminate them. For some time now at the sound of an anti-American statement I have found myself rising like a fish to bait. Yet once to me, America was just another foreign country, and I too made bland and sweeping statements about its peoples. Fandom changed all that. Gradually through the years I have formed a mental map unlike any seen in the geography books. Dotted across it are little flags that wave and have names on them: Busby, Economou, Donaho, Moffatt, Sneary, Trimble, Ellik, Coulson, Kujawa, White, Eney, Shaw, Lupoff, Wollheim. They range from one end of the USA to the other and when I think of Americans these are the people that spring to mind. Thinking of them, the many differences between them, generalisations become impossible. Also, of course, my recent visit to the States has left me filled with a warm pro-American feeling which I know must have biased my thinking.

Thus, when I came to write an article reporting on a film show about America put on by the local Young Socialists – I found my bias getting in the way of writing an objective report. I've just torn up the first draft... Let me describe the film show and then you may see my difficulty.

The film show was entitled *Democracy USA*. The films were – and I quote the programme notes –

*Operation Abolition*: 'Made by the House Un-American Activities Committee giving a distorted view of the student demonstrations in San Francisco in 1961, against hearings by the committee.'

*Walk to Freedom*: 'Featuring scenes of the struggle for Civil Rights in the Southern states – the "sit-ins" and the Freedom Elders.'

*Sunday*: 'This film is about an incident in an American park where the police have orders to stop any political meetings. A group of folksingers is told to move on. The next week, hundreds of sympathisers fill the park and refuse to move.'

About 50 people were present to see this show. I was mentally on the defensive and ready to seize upon any unfairness to the USA! I thought I had found it during the showing of *Operation Abolition*. Whilst this was under way I noted that every time someone in the film used the word 'communist' there was an automatic laugh from the audience. On thinking it over I realise that this was a type of stereotyped thinking that stems from stereotyped thinking! There are Americans who think that a communist cannot be anything but evil in the purest sense of the word; I should imagine they



equate it in their minds with the old-time 'devil'. But not all Americans think like this. This automatic laugh was assuming that they do. There are degrees in everything, and the one assumption was as bad as the other.

Before the showing of *Operation Abolition* mention was made of 'people with closed minds'. Trying not to have a closed mind myself, I watched the films carefully. I had no difficulty in identifying myself with some of the Americans in them – the students, the negroes walking to freedom, the folksingers arguing with the police and making sure with tape and camera that this attempt to interfere with their freedom should be recorded. I dimly remember reading about this happening and think that the outcome was that the folksingers were allowed to continue; perhaps some American reader can clear this point up. Although I had no sympathy with the communist way of life, I could not but admire the courage of the man who defied HUAC and said he despised them.

As I walked home I reflected that I should like to know what the Young Socialists themselves had thought of it all. So I wrote to the secretary saying I would like to know their reactions for the purposes of this article. Back came a courteous invitation to join them, and the following week I did so.

I found a much smaller group headed by Paul, the secretary. There were in all four girls and five boys aged roughly 17-24 years. I started off by asking them what they thought of America after seeing these films. Nothing very clear emerged at first – 'High-handed' – that 'HUAC was unconstitutional' – that 'Americans were apathetic' – that 'they thought everything left of centre was communistic'. One young girl spoke of 'their faces of apathy'. She said this was what she expected and that this was what she saw in a preliminary film called *Very Nice, Very Nice!* When I pointed out that this was a Canadian film showing Canadians, I felt by her expression she thought it was much the same thing. I was sorry I could not sic Boyd Raeburn onto her!

Another thought 'White Protestants are dim by our standards'. One young man volunteered that he thought America was the most backward democracy apart from France. Although I had not really meant to argue with them but rather record, I found myself often countering their statements; I also found to my surprise that I had soaked up quite a lot of information on the American scene.

I was most impressed by Paul; he was not only well-read and knowledgeable, but he also had the faculty of seeing both sides of a question. He approached all topics with clear thinking and did not have a right-left, right-wrong, black-white view of life. Across from him sat his opposite – a very voluble young man who spoke much in a highly excitable and, I thought, biased way. His anti-Americanism was of the emotional type

and, as he rather monopolised the discussion, tended to prevent me getting at more thoughtful statements.

Had there been time I should dearly have loved to get my teeth into the boy who started off by telling me flatly that he disliked Americans! I should have liked to have asked him how many of the 170 million or so people he disliked had he met, talked to, or even heard of. This specimen went on to admit that he kept his Labour sympathies quiet because he worked in a bank. I thought of the student who had faced HUAC with the courage of his convictions and the comparison made me feel ashamed of this particular young socialist.

My main question was: 'What was the purpose of showing these films?' To me they were showing only the worst aspects of political life over there, even if they were showing the people who fought against it. I firmly believe that Socialism stands for justice and peace and friendship between all nations, and these films could hardly be said to further those aims. Paul's reply was that it was to counteract the 'Glorious America' propaganda which was fed to us by our newspapers... to show the other side of American life! My feelings had been that over here there was too much emphasis laid upon these aspects and not enough publicity given to the many fine Americans who believe in free speech passionately and who do not fear to come out and say so. There is little 'glorification' in the fact that all our pop singers imitate Americans – that all our latest slang comes from there!

Finally, I made a point I had been hanging onto dearly – that these folksingers, these students, these negroes that we had seen – they were Americans too. By the startled expressions on some of those young faces I felt that it was a new point to them; that perhaps I had made a slight dent in their stereotyped view of what was an American.

I tore up the first draft of this article because I felt it gave an unfair picture of the Young Socialists; that it could tend to enforce the sometimes held view in the USA that our Labour Party is as good as communistic. To a staunch member of the left there is not more repugnant thought. When the Cold War was still very cold and Russian leaders visited this country, it was found that, whereas the Conservatives could talk politely with them, Labour leaders annoyed the Russians intensely by questioning them about political prisoners. Between our Labour Party and the Communist stretches a very wide gulf. The fact that some Americans do not believe this and will stigmatise everything to the left as communistic has no doubt the effect of stimulating anti-American feeling among such as the Young Socialists.

In other words – stereotyped thinking about other people is one of the worst ills that we have to bear. As an individual all one can do is to stumble to shed some light.

# Real Life in Haverfordwest

Introduced by Claire Brialey

(*Claire writes*, “You did say originally that we didn't have to restrict ourselves to a single piece...”)

## **Real Life in Haverfordwest**

by Greg Pickersgill

from *Rastus Johnson's Cakewalk* #6, June 1994

I chose this article because it was published in one of the fanzines that has a real case for being a focal point in British fandom, at around the time I was finally venturing towards fanzine fandom myself. *Rastus Johnson's Cakewalk* burned brightly and prompted a remarkable level of engagement for just over a year in the early 1990s; reading the full run a little later, I was prompted to my first retrospective letter of comment. That's part of it, anyway. I also chose this piece because it was taking itself, and its subject matter of fandom, seriously, and made the point that enjoyment and seriousness are not mutually exclusive.

Those qualities also mean that it couldn't have been written by just anyone. Greg Pickersgill should need no introduction, which is fortunate because he's contributed too much to fandom to summarise. Drawing on the last time we tried, it might be reasonable to say that Greg provokes opinions, not limited to people who've actually met him. He has a presence, which physically is a sort of morphic field that has loomed over UK fandom for over fifty years and jumps out at you from old photographs even when you can only see half of the back of his head; the psychological part of it makes me want to be a better fan, to write with more rigour yet with real thought and feeling, to do stuff because it's worth it and not to give up. Greg is also one of the people who makes me drop whatever else I'm doing to read a new piece of his own fanwriting, which sadly aren't nearly as frequent these days as I'd like.

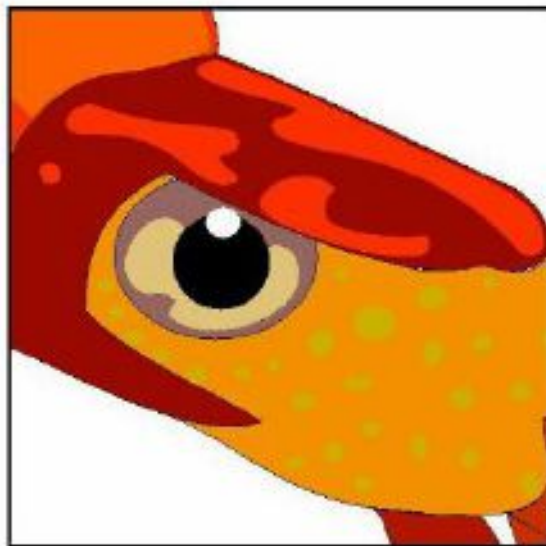


There are other good articles that meet those criteria; like this one, quite a lot of them are included in *Can't Get Off The Island*, the collection of Greg's fanwriting that Mark Plummer and I compiled when he was a Worldcon Guest of Honour in 2005. I considered trying to find another good piece by Greg, or an equally good one by one of the other contemporary fanwriters I admire, that hadn't already been collected elsewhere. But this current fanthology is being produced by and for Corflu FIAWOL; whether you take that seriously or with tongue in cheek, this article fits here – and provides as much food for thought now as ever.

**A comment, by Gregory<sub>2019</sub>**

This isn't one of my favourite pieces; I doubt I have re-read it since the middle-'90s, but I am sure I meant it then. Here in 2019 the reader should note that I was writing about the fandom of the 20th century, now for me a land of lost content, a Cantref Gwaelod where on particularly sunny days a shining spire may yet be seen.

**Rastus  
Johnson's**



**Cakewalk**

**6**

# Real Life in Haverfordwest

By Greg Pickersgill

It dawned on me for the first time yesterday that when we today talk about FIJAGH as opposed to FIAWOL, it is almost invariably in a positive manner, as if anyone other than a whey-faced loon should easily apprehend the idea that Fandom is not a Way of Life fit for fully-formed adults. Leaving aside the problem of finding any of those, I think it's useful to remind ourselves that as I understand it FIJAGH became current as a counter to those who thought, Degler-like, with antecedents in Michelism and all the other Communist-inspired notions that Wollheim and his gang propounded in the Thirties, that either a truly separate social construct could be devised around fandom, or that fans specifically held some particular understanding or ability that not only set them aside from the common herd but would in time place them in their natural position à propos it, i.e. in charge. (Both these ideas are at least arguable, given the current state of the world.)

But these days – certainly since the Sixties – FIJAGH has come more to mean that fandom and all its activities are not worth taking seriously, do not deserve the time and attention spent on them, and by extension do not demand to be done well, or to the full extent of the individual's abilities. An excuse for a load of slipshod rubbish. Well, realising that Fun isn't the same as Frivolous or Trivial shouldn't be beyond the star-begotten intellects who read sf in the first place. The other meaning of FIJAGH is that fandom is a temporary aberration that should be sloughed off with all speed and ruthlessness because, irrespective of how satisfying it seemed at the time, it is in fact a dangerous illusion and, well, stunts your growth, I guess, and grows hair on the palms of your hands too I shouldn't wonder.

To be honest I see nothing wrong with Fandom as a Way of Life, in the sense that it is the most important thing in life after food, shelter, and decent relationships. Why should people who would blandly accept an individual's fascination with gardening or archaeology find something incomprehensibly alien about the whole idea of FIAWOL? What's the difference? Is it merely because immersion into fandom gives less

commonality with the people you associate with at work or in the supermarket? But isn't that the case with any other than the most commonplace pursuits? This is all obvious – or should be. What perhaps isn't is why so many fans should contend that there actually is something pernicious about FIAWOL, and why so many bitterly renounce fandom when they have 'got free' of it – do they really, as some think Chris Priest does, think that it was all a waste of time, any more of a waste of time than anything else, that fandom somehow prevented them from becoming wonderful winged creatures sparkling high in the sunlight? Perhaps the fear simply is of being contented, of being quite happy to potter about with one's fan activities, rather than hard-charging towards Success.

Allied to this is the idea of fandom as Small Pond, in which one might be a Big Fish, which is of course a Bad Thing because... well, because people who aren't fans don't think it's important, that's why because. Oh right, I thought there must be a good reason. Well, yes, of course, once one leaves fandom all sorts of joyous successes and recognitions are there for the taking, aren't they... Of course not; this is drivel. Few people achieve or attain anything of any worth in any context of their life whatsoever. Virtually no one has power and influence anywhere. Leaving fandom does not guarantee success outside it, no more than staying in it does within it. A Big Fish in the Small Pond of fandom is virtually certainly an Infinitesimally Tiny Fish outside it, no matter what they subjectively think.

Success as what anyway – a telephone exchange supervisor? No, that's not what they mean at all, is it? Success as High Profile Author, International Publisher, Media Tycoon, that's what we're all supposed to get outside fandom. That's Success. Nothing dull and common and herd-like. Don't dwell on the fact that no matter what your achievements virtually no one will really know or care, except whichever other peer group you associate with. But for the love of god remember it's a peer group, not a fandom; that's really important...

The vast mass of us live small, impotent, infinitely replaceable lives within the world society; this is perhaps worth remembering when it next becomes clear that the person who is telling you to wake up and get your success outside fandom is someone who thinks of themselves as in control, someone who in reality is more likely to be your boss than working alongside you.

It's significant that it is more likely that people who believe, almost certainly wrongly, that they have limited but genuine control over their own lives and actions who

will tell you that fandom is such a tiny restricted space, where they could not function to the full flower of their ability. You will rarely hear much of the same from clericals, assembly-line workers, hired hands of all types. There's no control, no space for them in success-consensus world.

So is fanactivity an escape from the hard rigours of reality? Only if in some manner I can't quite comprehend this desk, these papers, this computer, you readers, my friends, are in some way less substantial than the electricity bill I got this morning or the people who live down the road whose names and habits I don't know and care less about as long as they don't throw their garbage into the street. Of fucking course fandom isn't an escape from the real world; it's an unbelievable conceit on the part of its detractors to claim that they have developed or matured into something better.

What's so damned great about consensus reality anyway that we should all cling to it like a lifebelt? There's something really primitive about a notion that says you've got to stay in a particular world-view no matter how stupid and tedious it might seem. Hell of a lot of self-determination there. Next stunt is probably the jam-tomorrow the Christians have been serving up for two thousand years. Yeah, great.

It's also a tacit acceptance of the classic Thatcherite con-game that tells us we can all be at the top of the heap at the same time, as well as affirming the prejudice that people who aren't like us, just aren't people.

I have the feeling everything went wrong when fans forgot that it was Other People who were supposed to think fans were malformed social inadequates fascinated by the playthings of children, deranged with impossible visions, and hopelessly out of touch with the things that matter most in life (i.e. what everybody else does). Too many fans took the wrong cues and started to have even greater contempt for fans than mundanes were believed to. They also developed the idea that the failings they perceived in fans were in some way unique to fandom and unrepresentative of the real world (which of course fans are presumed not to inhabit). A really incredible reversal of the Fans Are Slans theory; no longer better than the rest, fans are in fact worse. This became a perhaps subconscious desire to Tom it up, to be more scathing about fans than even the most unsympathetic mundane – to cleverly, perhaps, distance themselves from the worst excesses of fandom by being the first to loudly proclaim them.

The picture of fans, then, changed from a group united in interest in sf, space travel, the future, and a better world to one of ill-dressed malcontents distinguished only by their inability to dance and screw women who work in Woolworths, wear bright make-up, and white shoes. From the chrysalis of Beanie Boy should come Essex Man, perhaps.

Much of this, in Britain at least, had its roots in the quaintly anti-establishment activities of such cutting-edge fans of the Sixties as Graham Hall, Charles Platt, and Graham Charnock, all of them contemptuous of the past, be it fandom's or anyone else's. Strutting around conventions mumbling 'Goofbitl' (Get Out Of Fandom Before It's Too Late) and 'Cwof' (Campaign for Wiping Out Fandom) seemed a revolutionary act then, I guess. There's a case to be made that this layer of fandom's utter ignorance of its own inheritance is what separated later intakes (including myself and what was later known as Ratfandom) from the manifest treasury of talent that had gone before; as it was all they handed on was a tendency to scorn fandom's simpler pomposities and beliefs without offering anything else in their place, other than perhaps an idea that fandom is not for real people, is not Real Life.

There's not a damned thing especially new in much of the foregoing; this has all been debated off and on for years with no resolution. My point is that the question is wrong to start with; not Why be a Fan, but Why Not? Just think of it as Virtual Reality – is that modish enough; does that make it ok?

Richard Geis said, more than thirty years ago, that it is not the size of the pool that matters, but its relative – to oneself – quality. I know where I am Harry. FIAWOL sounds ok to me.



It occurs to me that I might be in a fanwriting rut. In the late sixties and early seventies, when I was young and new to fandom, I tried to write light fannish humor. Faanfiction. That was what I liked best to read in fanzines at first, so that was what I tried to write. It all seemed so friendly, and I wanted to join right in. Halfway through college, five years into fandom, my writing took an obtuse turn. I think it came from reading stuff like Jack Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums*, Baba Ram Dass's *Be Here Now*, Ted Johnstone's "LASFS History 1956-61," and T.H. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. That last one in particular laid it right out on the line to me. I began writing for fanzines what has become a series of transcendent travelogues, bits of my life and worldly observations overlaid with a cynical running social commentary. That last part is where I still try and sneak in a little humor.

But I have been wondering lately if maybe I'm lost in a monologue with my navel.

Coming up for air at age 42 it occurs to me that this can't be a mid-life crisis. Why? Because I'm not there yet. I hope to live well past a hundred. Most folks think it's too soon for that Buck Rogers stuff. Even a lot of fans. But I don't see how you can read the daily paper, let alone the weekly *Science News*, and not see what's coming. I've assumed most of my adult life that I would get an extra 40 or 50 years. Maybe more, maybe hundreds. Especially if I can stay healthy and physically active. A couple of grams of vitamin C every day since 1973 should be helping to keep those pesky free radicals at bay. So I'm just not in my midlife yet. Maybe never will be. I haven't been feeling any sudden urges to drop what I'm doing and head off in an unexpected direction, develop fantasized nonexistent talents, buy an impossible to tune sports car, get a tattoo. Actually, I do want to learn welding. Sail to the south pacific. Build a solar powered house. Finish rebuilding my Chevelle (which calls for a lot of welding.) Get really good at shooting pool. These are just steps along the way that I haven't come to yet. Like the books I assume I will write.

There is a focus that comes from being interested in nearly everything while accepting that there is only have time to do a few things well. I don't like the stress of tight schedules, but with loose ones, things sometimes need to get set aside, delayed, even strategically misplaced. My theory that things done at all should be done well screws up the schedule; something goes on hold so something else can get done right. You take a deep breath and make a Command Decision. Someone has to. The spirit of the '90's seems to be "There's too much to do!" It even made the cover of the *Utne Reader*. How did our industrialized ancestors, working 12 hours a day 6 days a week, get anything done at all? In any case, for me, this quest for quality has nothing to do with the international business community's sudden surprise discovery of it some time back, no, it comes from having been exposed to the guiding lights of fan writing at an early age. Fan writing and the better class of books that it often pointed me toward. To complete the circle, somewhat later I encountered the slushpiles of prodom. I read and wrote reports for several editors on a lot of slushpile novels

while I lived in New York. I have been to the edge of the abyss, I have seen the grimly pathetic side of how bad *bad* can be.

Meanwhile I stack up fanzines and magazines and little neighborhood newspapers to read in odd moments. I read all the time, but not much fiction these days. I stuff boxes full of clippings, take thousands of photographs and fill steno pads full of notes. Someday I'll need to sort all this out. It occurs to me that I could use an assistant, an intern, to do my filing, go to the public library to do my research, keep my darkroom cleaned up and stocked with chemicals, make my contact sheets and work prints. Such a person would also need to show a genuine interest in running a mimeograph, turning a compost pile, tuning a 1970 Chevelle. The scutwork of my creative province.

Maybe I could advertise in fandom, like Locus does.

Meanwhile, getting back to the cosmic travelogue. Back to New York in the '80's. I was on the downtown side of the 34th St. station one evening. An F train comes and goes and there is a large new-looking suitcase left standing alone on the platform, perpendicular to the tracks. It's like, oh, 11:10 PM on a fall weeknight in 1987, there's maybe a half dozen people around. No one goes near the suitcase or pays any attention to it. It occurs to me that a small nuclear bomb could be in a suitcase such as that. I move to the other end of the platform.

Lou Stathis gets off the arriving D. He doesn't want to hear my nuclear terrorism theory. Grunts and rolls his eyes at my dangerously non-native interest in subway oddities. Criminals know you're an easy mark from out of town if you notice anything unusual about the subways. I once saw people carefully ignoring a trackside electrical box billowing out clouds of oily black smoke. It eventually made a whump sound, sent out a 6 foot geyser of flame and people just stood around reading newspapers ten feet away. Wouldn't want to take notice and risk getting mugged! The suitcase was still sitting there as we got on the arriving F. Another story in the big city. We got off at the 2nd Ave. station and walked deeper into the Lower East Side. I'd never needed to go past Ave. B on foot before. The night my band played at 8BC, a defunct club on 8th St. between Ave's. B and C, I had my car.

This is a very unsettling area of Manhattan. I once dreamed I was walking the streets of the Lower East Side in my bare feet. I was afraid, in the dream, to put my feet down anywhere, everything was horribly dirty and littered with rusty metal and broken glass, and someone was chasing me but I was having trouble flying. I'd flap my arms but only rise a foot or two and then settle down again. Moon-walking through the wasteland. An unsettling dream. The area looks like Europe after WWII, portions of blocks are full of bricks and rubble from demolished buildings, many of the still-standing buildings are boarded up, windowless. The residents of the area are a mix of the very old and the very new, the woebegone and the terrifying. And then there's the artists.

As a breeding ground for planetary creative talent, this place gives the West Bank in Paris a good run for the money. The band we are on our way to visit is called "Swans" and they live in Scotland. Tonight, though, they appear to be living in a converted bodega on a corner somewhere around Ave. D. I am introduced to Michael Gira and the singularly named Jarbo. Couple of really intense customers. There's a practice studio in the back of the living space, keyboards and amps and stuff. Lou is working on a piece about them and he wants me to shoot some photos. No money, but probably the cover shot in his pal Rich Shupe's magazine *Reflex*.

I was told time was tight. I went straight home and made the prints and shipped them off by overnight express. I had the publisher's Federal Express account number and everything. His address was at a fraternity house at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Some days later Lou called to report that he was very late with his piece and that he needed to deliver it



immediately to the editor. Not even time enough for Federal Express. It was Saturday and it had to go *now*. As soon as he was done writing it.

To be truthful, he'd warned me earlier in the week that this might happen. And then the afternoon slipped by. Our window of opportunity to do the hour and a half drive, drop off the article, visit Frank Lunney and Catherine Jackson at their restaurant in Bethlehem or at their house way off in the boondocks and get back to New York before 2 or 3 AM was getting ever smaller. And we both claimed that we had piles of stuff we needed to be in town for on Sunday.

Finally, it's late afternoon and we're in Tom's Restaurant (the one in the Suzanne Vega song) having breakfast. Lou was still writing his piece while I read the Daily News at the table. It was still light for the first part of the drive. Soon after climbing the Palisades at Jersey City I went into my Saturday night road trip routine, playing tapes, drinking cans of beer and smoking joints. This was by far the best state of mind for maneuvering an old Chevy through the blasted industrial New Jersey landscape, over the Bayonne Skyway, searching for the poorly marked ramp to I78 West. The sky was cloudy, gray.

Lou stayed buried in his writing. When I was growing up, the parts I did outside of fandom, us Pennsylvania guys spent our nights driving around drinking, talking, listening to the car radio and smoking pot. We lived at home and were too young to drink in bars. There was nothing else to do but get in a car with a bunch of beer and stuff, drive a couple hours out I80, turn around and come back. That's the game. Over the years it turned into a bad habit. But that's how it generally happens, for those of you who have always wondered why anyone would deliberately drink while driving. You need to know that some people can do it a lot better than others. You only hear about the others.

On I78 now. We passed through the suburban sprawl of the piedmont lowlands and began climbing the second line of old New Jersey mountains, the extruded lava ridges of the Watchungs. These mountains saved George Washington's army. The British were unable to break through the passes, one of which we were now motoring effortlessly through up an interstate highway. The terrain is not unlike Bosnia. Hell of a place to fight a war. I am giving Lou my geohistorical travelogue as he continues to write but don't bother him with the factoid that we are passing the exit to the National Golf Museum.

After a rolling farmland stretch we hit the real mountains, the eastern rampart of the Appalachians. The geologists think these piles of rubble of an even older mountain range are relatives of the mountains of Ireland, Scotland and Norway. Sunrise Mountain is about 25 miles north of here. It has gotten dark and Lou is still scribbling by the light of the flashlight from my glove compartment. Near the top of Musconetcong Mountain the weather gets heavy. A thunderstorm has pushed up against the western flank. The summit is hidden in a cloud bank. Wind, wild lightning and sheets of rain try to push us back. I turn down the stereo, stop opening beers and put the joint in the ashtray. It's time to do some real driving. This is why I like big cars with 8 cylinder motors. Lou winces and keeps on writing.

Distances are far shorter here than out west, the mountains smaller. We break through the bad weather and descend into the river valley and it is merely raining as we cross the Delaware, the Pennsylvania border, and climb the big hill to Bethlehem, find the campus, pull in at the frat house. The frat boys are having a keg party. Lou sits down at Rich's Macintosh and keeps writing. I party with the fraternity and take a few pictures of Lou at the computer. We talk to Frank and Catherine on the phone. They are still expecting us to come out to the house, despite the lateness.

Lou finally finishes his article and we head out into the late night rain with a notebook page filled with back-roads instructions. No one, we're told, not even Dan and Lynn Steffan (who had to stop at a farmhouse for directions) has ever made it to Frank & Catherine's place on the first try without getting lost. I've now lived in New York a long time, 6 or 7 years, and have almost forgotten about driving rural Pennsylvania roads. They meander around a lot and don't particularly follow compass directions. Making one brief wrong turn (which counts as "a might bewildered" but not "lost" as Daniel Boone saw things) we drive blacktop roads that don't show up on regular gas station maps for 30 or 40 minutes before edging, slowly, through the bushes obscuring Frank & Catherine's rutted private lane. What a cool place! The little designer house is every bit as bohemian and cozy as I'd been led to expect. It was too dark to see the millpond and dam, but I could hear the spillway.

At 2 AM us mighty New York rockers try to leave (we'd be up till 4 normally anyway) but are convinced to stay, sleep on cushions on the living room floor, have some breakfast. So we stay up even later, sleep on the living room floor, wake up for coffee and get the daylight tour of the estate. Walking through the woods Frank says that people have been parking up by the road lately and coming down into the woods to party. I find a weathered cardboard box that once held a six-foot inflatable female sex doll and wonder what kind of party. Breakfast is at a classic Pennsylvania Dutch place and, yes, I know what scrapple is, thank you and no, I don't want any, thanks.

After that first visit I found my way back to Frank and Catherine's hideaway by the mill pond in Powder Valley several more times before moving to Minnesota. I think the reminder I got there that life outside the big city, especially New York, could be quiet and sane, helped remind me that it was time to get out of New York. That happened in July of 1989.

Before leaving I finally made it to the top of Sunrise Mountain. From my journal: "Tue. 6/20/89 Site 19 Lake Ocquittunk campground in Stokes State Forest, NJ. 5:11 PM No stinking Lyme ticks yet. Last day of spring, thought I'd like waking up in the woods on the first day of my last summer in New York. Hurricane in Gulf of Mexico has clouds overhead here. Thick green moss lines 2 creeks, campsite is little isthmus between them w/own driveway off from the other sites. Not too many others. Permanent rushing water sound, water meandering down to join Big Flatbrook. Yes, that was a raindrop. Pause to erect tent. Will sun rise earlier up on Sunrise Mountain? And who keeps leaving these flowers on my campsite picnic tables? Who's been doing this all these years? Mescalito himself?"

Next morning (having been awakened by the annoying alarm on my portable calculator/clock): "On top of mountain at last, wet cloud passing, hazy view (first!) out over valley, the Schooley Peneplain. Sunrise Mountain isn't very high! But steep. I've driven on that little road down there along the foot of the mountain, the first time an awful long time ago, with Cynthia Costa, an old girlfriend of Bill Kunkel. Her therapist suggested she grow plants, so she bought a bunch from a rural garden store down there and took them back to New York where weeks later I finally repotted them in a box and wired them to her windowsill. Some therapy. So what am I, Kerouac doing Hemingway? Just another wanderer getting a peek inside through the corners of my eyes while looking outside with all the intensity I can muster. I dream of windows looking to the inside, of actually being allowed to know who you are, what your 'name' is. The index to the brain's data, subjects and connections, kept elsewhere on RNA coded material — this is what gets passed on in reproduction, this is where the ancestral memories reside."

What a long strange trip it's been.

sequel to "Looking for Sunrise Mountain"  
originally printed in Robert Lichtman's *Trap Door* #14  
Minneapolis, March 1994



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The Canal Press

edited by MICHAEL DOBSON