



# DON-o-SAUR 59

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*Front cover: Detail of Brian Cooper monochrome; back cover by Terry Jeeves  
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# Fear and Loathing

## Scaring up a little horror

It's no secret, I guess, that I have weird tastes in a lot of ways. I didn't even realize it, but I seem to be the only SF fan my age who likes rock music. In the mundane fields of journalism and education in which I circulated for so many years, it was considered weird enough that I liked science fiction. I haven't encountered many people in fandom or in real life who share my fondness for the most bizarre forms of artwork. I brought home from Horrorfest a few weeks ago a monstrous (32"X40") Brian Cooper monochrome that I thought was spectacular and, in its own way, gorgeous; Carolyn took one glance at it.

"That's hideous! You may not put that on the living room wall. Get it out of sight!"

Her reaction disappointed but did not surprise me. I've gotten used to it. Anyway, she didn't make me hide it in the garage. It's hiding in a corner of the study.

Carolyn tolerates but neither understands nor sympathizes with my liking for horror fiction; but at least I don't generally have to search far to find other horror fans, of whatever age.

I found some, though not as many as I'd expected, at Horrorfest, the theme of which was "Misery Loves Company."

This is not exactly a con report, or at least it's going to be a very brief one. Horrorfest was May 11-13 in a remote Holiday Inn in Aurora. It didn't seem to be well attended, even though among its attractions were such celebrity guests as Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, Dan Simmons, Steve Rasnic Tem, S.P. Somtow, Ed Bryant and Simon Hawke. I met Robert Dunbar there, and I'll have at least a mention of his book, "The Pines" a little further on.

I spent most of my time at Horrorfest in the Huckster room because there just didn't seem to be much else going on. Not that there were any bargains in the sales room. The young dealer offering a 1961 issue of *Fantastic* for \$25 was perhaps not typical, but he was not alone in his apparent confusion of values. I left the donation auction when it was announced that the minimum bid on paperback books would be \$10. I never heard if anything sold.

There probably were panels discussing the nature of horror or speculating about the future of the genre, but I didn't hear about them and probably wouldn't have attended anyway. I didn't notice any panels that would have provided an opportunity for anyone to say something new about horror.

I'm not sure there's anything new to be said, so I won't try.

What I'd like to do--because if Horrorfest accomplished nothing else, it got me to thinking--is examine the sources of my own attraction to the literature of horror (or Dark Fantasy) and try to determine what standards I apply in judging it. I'm going to mostly avoid the subject of horror in the visual arts but I don't see how I can avoid book reviewer two and some comments on effective writing.

## Could we start with some definitions?

I'm going to be using such terms as fear, fright, scariness, shock, terror, horror, revulsion, loathing, etc., and sometimes it will be simply to avoid repetition of the same word too often, and sometimes it may be because I have a specific connotation in mind. I hope I can make the distinctions clear in context, but a few simple definitions to begin with could be helpful.

We all know the difference between horror and terror, right?

I was pretty sure I did, but I looked up the words in Webster anyway and was glad I did because I found this useful little discussion under "terror" that makes the distinction as clear in a few words as I could have in a few paragraphs:

TERROR, HORROR, PANIC, FRIGHT, all imply extreme fear in the presence of danger or evil. TERROR implies an intense fear that is somewhat prolonged and may refer to imagined or future dangers: *frozen with terror*. HORROR implies a sense of shock at a danger that is also evil: *to recoil in horror*. PANIC and FRIGHT both imply a sudden shock of fear. PANIC is uncontrolled and unreasoning fear, often groundless, that may be prolonged: *the mob was in a panic*. FRIGHT is usually of short duration: *a spasm of fright*.

The separate definition of horror is also useful:

Painful emotion of fear, dread and abhorrence; a shuddering with terror and loathing; a feeling caused by something frightful and shocking.

It's worth noting, too, that the original meaning of the word horror was "to bristle, shake, be afraid." So horror is that which makes you shudder, or which makes your hair stand on end.

The next logical question, then, is WHAT makes you shudder? What horrifies you? What do you find abhorrent?

Consider those all one question, and you'll get your chance to answer it (or them, along with the related question of how anyone can consider horror a form of entertainment), but first I want to back up and briefly trace my own love affair with horror.

Long pause.

This isn't going to be as easy as I anticipated.

Somewhere in here it is necessary to make a distinction between REAL horror (and terror and shock and revulsion, etc.) and the just-pretend, just-for-fun, essentially harmless scariness of the amusement park House of Horrors and Roller-Coaster ride variety. There IS a big difference.

So I guess I'll start with some of the things that I find genuinely horrifying, revolting, monstrous and not at all amusing. Nope.

I'm changing my mind again. I'll begin with the easy ones: the phony fears, the stock revulsions, the stereotyped phobias that even untalented writers and film directors so often use to arouse carefully calculated shivers from their audience, and which even I (if certain other values are present) can sometimes pretend to be afraid of for the sake of entertainment.

This is a purely personal list, of course. It's understood that other people may place some of these things on their own personal list of genuine horrors.

Ghosts, demonic possession, the power of Satan and other manifestations of supernatural interference in human life.

I can't take any of that stuff seriously; I don't have a shred of belief in any form of supernaturalism -- well, maybe a miniscule shred, lurking way back in the dark recesses of my reptilian brain, left over from early childhood. At least I do find it fairly easy to temporarily suspend my disbelief for the sake of appreciating a good story, if it's well written and has convincing characters.

In retrospect, I can see all kinds of things wrong with *The Exorcist* (the novel), including some clumsy narration, but when I read it, before the flood of public and critical reaction, and long before the movie version, I got totally caught up in it. I cared about Regan and her mother, and I was able to believe, while I was reading the book, that evil demons exist and have valid reasons for

occupying human bodies. The doctors and psychiatrists in the novel seemed terribly stupid and narrow minded; couldn't they see that the kid wasn't just suffering from some form of neurosis? That she was possessed? I found myself silently yelling at them: "Call in the Exorcist, you idiots, before it's too late!" And it wasn't until a day or two after I'd finished the book that I began to see the humor in my own reaction to it. I'm an atheist; I've never even been much exposed to Catholic theology and certainly don't believe in any aspect of it. Nevertheless, something about "The Exorcist" got to me. As far as I was concerned, it was a damned effective novel; and I can think of very few with the same theme that have had the same effect on me.

The movie was a different matter. I waited too long to see it, maybe. I'd heard too much about it--how people had freaked out and left the theater screaming and gagging. Anyway, I knew how it was going to come out; it didn't have the same suspense that the book had. I didn't care much for the movie.

Most other books and movies based on supernatural manifestations have failed to involve me on a visceral level. I can enjoy the story, empathize with the protagonist, enjoy the suspense, but my disbelief is in only temporary suspension.

Snakes, spiders, rats, maggots, worms and other creepy-crawly creatures.

Well, I've never had any personal experience with maggots, so maybe I shouldn't have included them, but even the thought of maggots crawling around in dead bodies doesn't horrify me. I find spiders and most insects fascinating rather than horrifying, and I think I could develop a real fondness for snakes, especially the larger ones such as pythons and boas. I'll keep my distance from rattlers and copperheads and cottonmouths (and have no difficulty doing so), but I have strong moral objections to any attempts to exterminate them.

Same applies to insect or rodent extermination. I've read some really bad books and seen a few absolutely atrocious movies about various mutated insects, arachnids, rats or other repulsive creatures trying to take over the earth, but I've never heard of a story depicting the real horror that would follow the disappearance of such species.

Think about it.

Standard phobias, such as fear of heights, fear of enclosed or wide open spaces, fear of crowds, fear of flying, etc.

I do have a strong aversion to the telephone, and it always astonishes me that so many otherwise normal people have such a fondness for it. I can and often do use the telephone, of course, but I'd rather not. I've been known to drive miles or walk many blocks or write long letters to get information that could more easily and quickly have been obtained via telephone. "Sorry, Wrong Number" was a movie that came close to cruel manipulation of my own particular phobia; but "Vertigo" was at least as effective in temporarily scaring me. I can sympathize and to some extent identify with characters who have fears that I do not, but it's by no means automatic. It takes some story-telling skill.

What else? Some of the other stock terrors: Blood and violence, slashers, serial killers, rapists, homicidal maniacs?

We're getting into a gray area here, for me. Yes, of course I fear mindless violence; I'm horrified at newspaper stories about crazies with private arsenals blowing away 7-Eleven customers, or madmen stalking innocent women; I know such things do happen; they're in the papers and on the TV news all the time. And they do lend themselves to commercial exploitation in books and

movies. As to whether the depictions and descriptions are becoming more frequent or any more cynical, as many media critics claim, I have my doubts. More graphic, maybe, but more frequent? Violence has always been a standard ingredient of literature and drama. There's at least as much grue and gore and malicious murder in Shakespeare and the Bible and *Le Morte d'Arthur* and the *Iliad* as there is the latest Rambo movie.

And what is the nature of my fear of these things? Is it based on personal experience, or is it all second hand? Well, maybe I've led an unusually sheltered life, but I don't think so. True, my military career did not involve combat (though I came in contact with a few highly combative types), and I didn't grow up in a ghetto, and the range wars were long over when I was growing up in Wyoming.

However, particularly during my drinking years and while I was working on morning newspapers, I spent a good deal of time in squalid bars or wandering around on foot in notoriously dangerous neighborhoods. I was even mugged a time or two (once in the "Combat Zone" in Boston, at least once in Denver. I'm hedging on the exact number because in a couple of cases I simply don't remember what happened; I was in blackout).

In all that time, no one ever pulled a knife on me, or a gun, and I never once saw a gun or knife used or even displayed in anger against anyone else.

Once, in Denver, during my evening lunch hour at the *News*, I walked past an office building not long after a worker had been shot, and I got a glimpse of him sitting on the floor against a wall, holding his stomach, blood seeping from between his fingers, while the ambulance attendants rushed toward him with a stretcher. I heard later (it was a slightly longer than usual newspaper story, since it took place only blocks from the *News* office) that he was recovering and that a suspect had been arrested, and I felt a sense of relief and of personal involvement. In a sleazy Denver bar one night about 1:30 a.m., I saw a drunken woman bite the tongue of a drunken man (who happened to be sitting next to me) hard enough to make him scream and rush to the men's room with blood streaming from his mouth. That was shocking enough to make me decide it was about time to get home.

Once, while Carolyn and I were separated, in about 1979 or '80, as I was walking home late at night from the *News* to my rented house in the largely Hispanic neighborhood nearby, I heard what sounded like a gunshot from the upstairs of a two-story house I was passing. I learned later (from the newspaper story) that a man had been fatally shot during an argument at a party.

Many years before that, when I was with the newspaper in Mauston, Wis., I arrived with sheriff's officers at a farmhouse where a man had blown a huge hole in his chest with a shotgun, and I had a glimpse of his body, limp on the barn floor.

All these were memorable events in my life; I felt a vague shuddery sense of horror, more than personal fear--even with the muggings, from which I felt curiously detached, being too drunk to fully comprehend what was happening at the moment. I felt chagrined and ashamed later for having so stupidly put myself in a dangerous situation, but I never felt that the assailants had anything against me, personally.

All of those events were far too tame and bland to be usable in fictional treatment.

Where have all the mass murders and mayhem been in my life? Absent. Perceptible only in newspapers, on TV and in novels. Valid material for fiction, but almost on the same level of personal believability as ghosts, werewolves, vampires and demonic forces.

So, now, what are some of the things that arouse genuine horror and revulsion in me (other than the telephone)?

Human cruelty, casual or conscious, toward human or non-human.

That sounds like the same kind of generalization as mass murder, homicidal rampages and other forms of violence, but I have a different set of memories under this heading.

Here's one, from early childhood (probably age 5):

I'm playing alone in my backyard, and then I'm joined by two other boys, Hugo and Frankie (brothers, and I even remember their names! Hugo is about my age, maybe just a little older; Frankie is a year or so younger.) They have a tin can, lid still attached, in which they've imprisoned a small frog. I'm fascinated. I watch in puzzlement and bewilderment and then with growing horror as they arrange the can on a pile of rocks so there's space under it, and then start lighting wooden matches and holding them under the bottom of the can. The tiny frog begins to jump frantically, thumping against the sides and lid of the can, making the noises that a frantic frog makes. Then it begins to smell. I feel vomit rising in my throat. It's as though I'm in the can, like I am the frog, trapped, helpless, cooking.

I don't remember if I screamed; I guess not. I don't think I even threw up. My agony ended when the boys' mother came looking for them, saw what they were doing and chased them home with a stern lecture about playing with matches.

I didn't hear her say anything about torturing frogs, and to me, in retrospect, that seems as horrible as anything else about the episode. (I also don't remember what happened to the frog.)

I've seen plenty of examples of human cruelty (both verbal and physical) to other humans--kids tormenting other kids, parents tormenting their own children, children tormenting their elderly parents, husbands tormenting wives and *vice versa*, but I can't think of a single specific instance that aroused the same sense of utter revulsion in me that the frog episode did--and still does. (I've read of worse, certifiably true, examples, but they might as well be fiction for all the impact they have on me. I'm talking personal experience here.)

The random violence of nature. (As opposed to the deliberate violence that humans inflict on each other and on other creatures.)

Floods, forest fires, earthquakes, tornadoes, blizzards, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, lightning strikes etc., have the power to horrify me, in an abstract sense, but I've had (again) remarkably limited personal experience with such violence. Let's see... I've felt relatively mild earth tremors, seen forest fires from a distance, the results of fires, floods and tornadoes, and I saw the splintered tree in my father's yard that lightning hit a few years ago. Never been caught in a flood or fire, never seen lightning strike, never been near a tornado or hurricane or a volcano... I've been in a car during a bad hail storm and my little Honda bears the scars still, but I wasn't hurt.

I've been in blizzards--too many times, trapped in my parents' house for a week in January '49 in Laramie, but snug and secure while the storm raged outside. I've driven in blizzards where visibility was near zero, but never been stranded in a car, as my parents once were for a couple of days. Robert McCammon's fictional rendition of a Wyoming blizzard in *Mine* impressed me with its authenticity. He'd been there.

I was out in Denver's Christmas blizzard of 1982, not just once, nor twice, but three times. I had to walk several blocks through it to catch a ride to work, arriving at the News office to learn that publication of the next morning's paper had been cancelled. The trapped employees were housed in the nearby Holiday Inn, no more than a block and a half away, but which was almost inaccessible through shoulder high drifts.

For myself, I wasn't content to reach the shelter of the hotel. This was during my alcoholism period. I was in drinking mode. I knew I was going to be away from home for at least three or four days; I suspected that work at the newspaper would be limited to no more than a few hours a day during the next few days in which I was scheduled to work.

I felt that I would need a bottle to get through the empty hours away from the job. The nearest liquor store was a mile away, uphill on Colfax, and I knew it was probably closed. The storm was at the peak of renewed fury, but I went for a walk at 9 p.m., reached the liquor store in about an hour, and of course it was closed. The bars on the other side of the street were open, and so I survived.

(Have I mentioned that human stupidity is among the most horrifying of all horrors?)

**I'm sure** I'm overlooking a number of other sources of horror. I haven't said anything about biological deformity, mutation, simple ugliness. I could list a lot of books and movies that have made good use of such elements. I experience no particular feeling of horror or revulsion about them apart from their use in fiction.

I've neglected the fear of plagues and pollution, creeping poison in the air and water, the release of deadly contaminants into the environment, again because the threat seems, to me, more abstract than personal. Powerful material for horror fiction, however. *The Stand*, especially in the new, uncut and expanded version, is one of my all-time favorite novels; but Stephen King is perhaps the only writer in the world who could convince me, even briefly, that any kind of disease, artificial or natural, could wipe out 99 percent of the human race.

I have a feeling here that I'm making some damaging admissions. There probably are a number of things that normal, civilized beings should be horrified at but which leave me essentially unmoved.

So tell me about it. Rub my nose in it. Horrify me.

(I have to say, though, that the prospect of the extermination of the human race does not in itself horrify me; I tend to take the long view. It could be that the development of intelligent life on Earth requires the absence of humanity.)

**I wanted** to talk a little about the sources of my attraction to horror fiction and perhaps hazard a few guesses as to why I love it so. I may leave the guesses to you; or the reasons may seem obvious after a while.

It goes 'way back--perhaps not as far as the roasting frog episode, but almost. Even when stories were being told or read to me, the ones I preferred were the ones that could send little chills down my spine, that could safely scare me just a bit. (My cousins in Virginia had some genuinely creepy ghost stories that they seemed to take seriously; I wasn't sure, despite my mother's assurance that they were just making stuff up.)

The awareness of gloom and doom and danger somewhere out there, in someone else's life, somehow gave me an additional sense of snugness and security. I suspect I'm rationalizing; I didn't know then what it was about the Hansel and Gretel story or Little Red Riding Hood being eaten up by the wolf that appealed to me, but it sounds like a good guess. Or maybe the fact that I was a weak, skinny, sickly, shy and lonesome kid in real life seeking the extremities of adventure in my fantasy world had something to do with it.

When I started reading, I seemed to gravitate to the dark and grisly tales, along with the generally fantastic. Hated Dick and Jane (actually, their mundane



dullness was reserved for a later generation, but they had their earlier equivalents which I've mercifully forgotten for the most part).

I loved Grimm's grim fantasies, and the Greek and Roman and Norse myths and folk tales. Lots of genuine horror in all those. There was one about a Norse woodcutter whose axe turned against him and cut his leg that I recall as being particularly bleak and dismal. For that matter, I found "Alice's Adventures Underground" pretty disturbing when I first read it, with its strong nightmare elements.

Oh, I read plenty of the cheerful, harmless stuff too, including some of the standard boys' books (not the Hardy Boys, but some of their clones). I particularly enjoyed the Penrod and Sam books by Booth Tarkington, along with Tom Sawyer (though I preferred Twain's genuine horror novel, Huckleberry Finn, even then.)

I loved Oz (but some of the Oz books have their sinister aspects, too. The Nome--or Gnome--King is not a harmless villain, and the Deadly Desert is a formidable obstacle). I read all the Charlemagne and King Arthur material I could get my hands on--over and over again--drawn, I believe now, more by the tragic than by the heroic elements. There are no happy endings in any of those stories, you know. A lot of human stupidity. Much horrible slaughter. Stuff I could somehow identify with, really believe.

I don't recall exactly when I discovered Poe. I was maybe 12 or 13 when I checked out the illustrated edition of the Collected Tales and read the whole thing in a single day. I was weak and trembly inside for a week afterward, morosely digesting "The Pit and the Pendulum," "The Masque of the Red Death," "The Conqueror Worm," "The Tell-Tale Heart," etc.

Lovecraft followed not long afterward, though it was only gradually that Lovecraft emerged as a distinct personality from the other *Weird Tales* authors such as Robert Bloch, August Derleth, Frank Belknap Long, Seabury Quinn and Carl Jacobi. After all, Lovecraft was already dead, a fading legend, when I first came across *Weird Tales* in about 1940. But some of his stories were being reprinted, and he was mentioned frequently in the letters over the next few years, so when a volume of his works became available to the general public, I had to have it. By 1945, when I spotted the *Best Supernatural Stories of H.P. Lovecraft* in Woolworth's--Tower edition, Introduction by August Derleth--I no longer had to ask my parents for the money. I could scrape up the 49 cents out of my own savings. (I think I was aware of the Arkham House edition of *The Outsider and Others*, but the \$5 price was far beyond my means.)

I remember reading "The Outsider" and "Pickman's Model" and "Cool Air" aloud to my little sister and scaring the daylights out of both of us. Polly never cared at all for Lovecraft thereafter, but I was hooked for life.

Obviously, I haven't subsisted on a steady diet of horror fiction for the past 45 years. I've read far more general fiction, SF and fantasy than I have horror. For one thing, there was a longish period when it looked like horror was a vanishing genre and was definitely in short supply. *Weird Tales* curled up and died in 1954, its brand of horror made obsolete, perhaps, by nuclear disaster SF, to say nothing of the "realism" of Faulkner and Tennessee Williams. (I could get much the same shudders from reading them as I could from Lovecraft.)

**Is it a** purely rhetorical question to ask what happened and when and why to bring about the resurgence of horror fiction? I suppose so. The obvious answer is Stephen King; I don't have a better one, at least as far as the what and when are concerned. I'm not enough of a psychosocioanalyst to tackle the "why."

I consider myself fortunate to have read *Carrie* in a review copy, before it even appeared in the book stores--and I wasn't even doing book reviews at that

time, in 1974, working part time on the copy desk of the *Rocky Mountain News*.

Books arrived in such a flood from the publishers, and the *News* allotted so little space to book reviews that once a week the surplus was piled on a table for employees to select from and dispose of as they chose. I picked out *Carrie* along with three or four others (all totally forgotten.) I read *Carrie* with absolutely no preconceptions (other than the publisher's blurb, which I routinely disregarded). It struck me as an obvious imitation of the kind of psi stories that John W. Campbell had favored in *Astounding/Analog* for far too long, with the one significant difference that the character of *Carrie* herself was far more vivid and three-dimensional and sympathetic than anything I could recall in *Analog*.

I held on to *Carrie* rather than donating it to the library, and made a mental note to watch for other books by the same author.

At that, I almost missed *'Salem's Lot*. It was an SF Book Club selection, but I didn't read it until the paperback appeared. My reaction was mixed. I was personally not in the mood for yet another vampire story, and I thought some of the writing was a bit careless--King used the phrase "fell upon him (or her)" repeatedly in describing the vampire's attacks. Nevertheless, and still... There was something about the book that held me. I had to finish it, even with some sharp quibbles about the ending. The junkyard and several other scenes (including the early description of the community of *'Salem's Lot*) engraved themselves indelibly on my memory. And I had come to care about the characters.

I paid little attention to the movie version of *Carrie* and have never yet seen it in its entirety. I was mildly pleased, in an abstract sort of way, that this promising young writer had achieved a measure of commercial success, but I thought there were many other more promising writers who deserved it as much.

I said I was fortunate to have read *Carrie* in the pre-publication copy, and I don't mean just because that book is now worth several hundred dollars (though I must confess to a warm glow when I think of that). What I meant was that I'm glad I read Stephen King while it was still possible to form an objective opinion and an unbiased appreciation of his writing ability, before he had become a cult figure, a larger-than-life legend.

Stephen King opinion has now become polarized. I know people who refuse to read anything he's written for the same bigoted reason that I refuse to read anything by Sidney Sheldon. He writes formula best sellers, and we all know that formula best sellers are mindless, superficial crap. Anyway, I tried to read a Sidney Sheldon book once and formed an instant distaste for him. How often have I heard almost exactly the same thing: "I tried to read a Stephen King book once and decided I just don't like that sort of thing." There's no arguing with that attitude. You can't make people read enough of someone to see for themselves whether it's good or not. And nobody has time to read everything that somebody else assures them is worth reading.

At the other pole are those who have read everything by King at least once, hunger constantly for more, will read anything about King, and are willing to read anything carrying a cover blurb by Stephen King.

My position is not quite that extreme; I think King is too willing to write blurbs for bad books. He's often too kind, too eager to say something good about anything he's too easily persuaded to read.

If he wouldn't read so much crud by imitators he'd have time to write more genuine Stephen King classics. That's how I feel about matters.

**I am by** no means a Stephen King scholar; I don't try to read everything that's ever been written about him. I've never had a subscription to *Castle Rock*. I don't collect Stephen King first limited autographed editions; I've never sent books to him to be inscribed.

However, I do vastly respect and admire his story-telling gifts; I've read all his books and enjoyed most of them.

I do consider Stephen King one of the most important writers of our time.

I didn't say one of the best. Certainly not one of the most original. I have never yet come across a Stephen King idea or theme that I hadn't encountered previously in science fiction or fantasy--or in mainstream realism. He borrows freely--and admits it freely; it's no crime.

King's primary strength is the creation of characters you can identify with, and he has learned (or invented) so much about plotting and narrative technique that he keeps the reader involved from beginning to end. The sheer energy of the writing, at its best, is unsurpassed. I'm tempted to compare King's writing to that of Robert E. Howard, but it might take too long to explain what I mean. He's a better writer than Howard ever was.

King is important. He introduced a whole vast new audience to some of the stock SF, fantasy and horror concepts that had previously been confined to a relatively small number of fans. King has been as influential as Star Trek.

I don't consider it entirely to his credit that he's made it possible for a host of bad and mediocre imitators to make a decent living.

But I'm willing to forgive him the John Sauls and John Coynes and Graham Mastertons for the sake of the Peter Straubs, Clive Barkers, Ray Gartons, Joe Lansdales and Dan Simmons who have a far better chance of making it big in the wake of King than they would have had without him.

Well, Peter Straub would probably have achieved literary acclaim (and possibly even greater respectability) without King, but it might have taken longer. The same may be true of the others; we'll never know for sure. Dan Simmons may be a special case. He's written more straight SF than anything else --brilliant stuff--and he might not have gotten into horror at all if it hadn't been made such a lucrative field by King & company. We'll never know for sure.

Anyway, even some of the bad horror writers may be getting better, learning their trade through trial and error; I may never know about some of them for sure. I've never been tempted to read another John Coyne novel after howling, growling and snarling my way through his first atrocity... *The Searing*? Was that it? I thought I'd held on to my copy because it's such a perfect example of how bad a story can be and still get published just because it's labeled horror, but I can't find it right now.

Don't ask me about Whitley Strieber. I liked his first couple of books --*The Wolfen* and *The Hunger*--and *Black Magic* was okay, if not special. But he lost me with *Communion*. I felt betrayed.

When a fiction writer starts telling me about his true encounters with aliens and UFOs, I get embarrassed for him. I don't want to talk about Strieber; I don't like to think about him. He has problems that don't concern me.

**I will talk** a bit about Robert Dunbar, whom I mentioned previously that I'd met at Horror Fest.

Dunbar is an amiable and energetic young man from Pennsylvania who shares my enthusiasm for the artwork of Brian Cooper. He expressed envy over my acquisition of that huge Cooper monochrome that Carolyn detests. That in itself gives me some sense of kinship with Dunbar. In our brief conversation, he mentioned, not at all shyly, that he is a novelist whose first book had recently been published by Leisure Books. I looked for a copy of *The Pines* in the Hucker Room, but none was available.

However, Dunbar (who may succeed if only because of his skill as a self-promoter) had previously presented *Blood Review* editor Ruben Villegas with an inscribed copy and persuaded him to have someone review it. And guess who was chosen to do the review? So I did get to read *The Pines* and to form a clear

opinion of it. I'm going to print my review here (I don't know when or if it will see print in *Blood Review*) because I think it illustrates as well as anything the standards that I have for judging horror fiction (or any kind of fiction, for that matter.)

**THE PINES** by Robert Dunbar (Leisure, \$3.90)

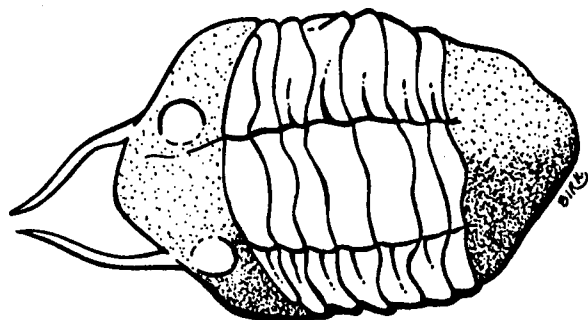
In a few years, after Robert Dunbar has written a half dozen or so more novels, he will undoubtedly look back on "The Pines" with some embarrassment but also, I hope, with the tolerance and affection that a parent automatically has toward a first child.

Dunbar will see flaws in the novel that, in the glow and excitement of creating it and introducing it to the world, must have been easy to overlook. In retrospect, they'll seem glaring, and he may even wonder how the book got published at all.

That part's easy: It got published because it's a genre horror novel, and there seem to be a growing number of readers who will buy and read, with remarkably little critical insight, anything labeled horror.

Look, I don't want to give the impression that *The Pines* is a piece of trash, totally unworthy of publication. It isn't that bad. It is worth reading; but in my view anything worth reading is also worth reading critically.

The overriding positive quality of *The Pines* that sets it apart from the earliest works of (for instance) John Coyne or John Saul, is its setting--the pine barrens of southern New Jersey--and its exploitation of the regional legend of the Jersey Devil.



You can see and smell the twisted, stunted pines and the rank undergrowth; you can feel the grit and the stifling humidity of the decaying ghost towns.

The book has atmosphere; you've got to grant it that.

The smell of the twisted and decaying humanity is equally vivid and just as unpleasant. The natives of the Pine Barrens--the Pineys--as presented by Dunbar, are ingrown, inbred to the point of decadence, with a high rate of retardation and worse physical and mental ills, suspicious of outsiders, inhospitable, intolerant, and generally disagreeable.

One of the big problems with the book, as I see it, is that it has too few characters that the normal reader can readily identify with. But maybe Dunbar and his publishers are assuming that normal people won't be reading this kind of book anyway.

The strongest, most competent character in the book--the individual with the most integrity and inner strength--is Doris Compson, a former coroner, leader of a paramedic team running a private ambulance service into the pines. But the ambulance is burned by some of those nasty natives about half way through book, and Doris's role is of diminishing significance thereafter.

Primarily, Doris serves as mentor and moral support for Athena Monroe, her most reliable and competent assistant who is also the mother of a severely retarded son, Matthew.

Athena has strong guilt feelings because of her secret loathing for the boy. (But he really is a revolting, wild, filthy little creature; I'd hate to have to deal with him myself.)

Matthew is important to the plot of the novel, such as it is. He has some kind of telepathic relationship

with the monster. Athena has a sexual relationship with Barry, a cop married to Cathy. Barry's partner, Steve, is secretly in love with Athena. He snoops on Barry and 'Thena --actually indulges in window-peeping, but still turns out to be the good guy-- depending some on what your idea of "good" is.

As soon as Barry is dead (mysteriously mangled by the monster), Steve and Athena are in the sack together. Go figure.

Oh, Athena has a bad leg and walks with a limp. The fact is emphasized so much and so often that it probably has some significance, but I missed it.

All this might be fairly dull, but there's some other horrible, grisly, gory stuff going on at the same time, keeping the ambulance crew jumping and sopping up blood. (Dunbar really seems to enjoy describing the stench and stickiness of profusely flowing blood.)

Right at the start of the book we get to see a young woman lost in the woods being mauled to death by something powerful, vicious and mysterious. The ambulance crew gets to attend an increasing number of victims of similar attacks.

There's some attempt to blame everything on the wild dogs roaming the area, but we know practically from the start that it's more likely to be a manifestation of the Jersey Devil, a legendary winged, clawed, nightmarish creature.

And that brings us to the greatest weakness of the book--the aspect most likely to irk Dunbar in later years, after he has mastered the techniques of plotting, pacing, narration and suspense-building.

The book is about 100 pages too long. The story could have been told with much greater effect if Dunbar could have gotten to the climax sooner. He spends too much time with repetitious incidents and descriptions.

Frankly, I had a tough time plowing through the middle section of the book, waiting for the author to get to the point that I knew was coming.

My impatience was exacerbated by Dunbar's irritating habit of cutting off scenes at the crucial point and then skipping ahead and telling us through dialogue or interior flashback what's happened.

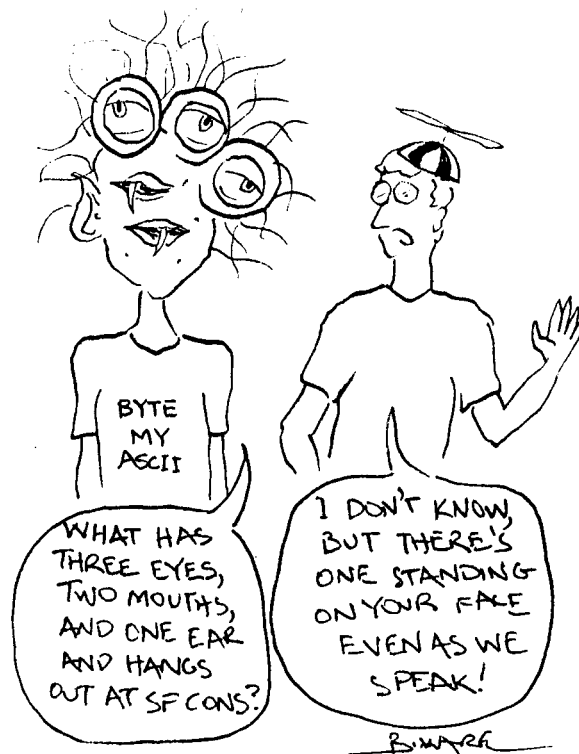
That can be an effective device for increasing suspense, if used judiciously, but that's the point: Dunbar uses it all the time, indiscriminately.

The weakness is particularly glaring at the end of the story, when we learn--in dialogue-flashback--of a disastrous, devastating fire that has ravaged the area, leaving at least 12 dead and 31 missing. The event is barely hinted at in the previous, poorly visualized, too hastily concluded, too awkwardly contrived climactic scene.

Dunbar is certain to read those final 40 pages in future years and groan aloud, wishing he'd spent more time on them and less on the interminable buildup.

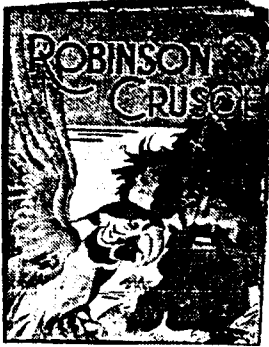
All I'll say in conclusion is that I WILL be looking for Dunbar's next book.

In spite of this one.



# Typographical & Grammatical Horrors

858633 ROBINSON CRUSOE. Jonathan Swift's popular tale of a castaway, retold for young readers and vibrantly illustrated by the French artist, Felix Lorient. Fully illus. in color. 72 pages. Chancellor. 8 1/4 x 12. Import \$6.95



E.R. Hamilton  
catalog 7/6/90

## Palestinian peach march turns violent

Associated Press

RMN ALLENBY BRIDGE  
Jordanian troops  
yesterday

## Bush's backsliding either shows lack of vision or valor

RMN 7/15/90

### Madonna cancels show



Madonna  
Rock star Madonna canceled a concert last night in Worcester, Mass., on doctors' orders because of lingering throat trouble. Two physicians told her that unless she took several days off, she risked permanent damage to her voice and vocal chords, promoters of her current tour said.

## appen if moon house leaked?

chambers at different atmospheric mixtures and climates.

The design appears simple. But so do the instructions for a new pup tent — until you get into the wilderness.

Whether they can be easily assembled in one-sixth of Earth's gravity on a rugged surface by robots or astronauts wearing thick

gloves will be a difficult task.

Also, CSU engineers must solve safety problems before NASA would consider using inflatables. Among the problems remaining to be solved: What would happen if the structure were to develop a leak, and how could it be sealed? What would happen to the occupants if a leak developed?

RMN 7-9-90

### RELIGION

## Mormons drop womens' pledge of obedience

In a rare revision of Mormon doctrine, the church has dropped

DUDLEY MOORES' IN A STICKY SITUATION

# LOVESICK

7PM WEDNESDAY ON DENVER'S 2

FOLLOWED BY CHANNEL TWO NEWS

ve.  
Japan.

One choice isn't as unusual here as it might be in America: In Japan, there are thousands of vending machines. A common site on even the most obscure streets and in nearly all public places, vending machines here sell everything from telephone cards to golf balls.

But for Hamilton, vending beef hasn't been easy.

## The Inside Dope on Dealing

### Special Guest Essay

by Ted White

*{The following was submitted as a letter of comment; for reasons that should become obvious, I decided to use it in this format instead--with Ted's permission.}*

It was interesting to see my name come up in conjunction with the discussion of death to dope dealers, and, as you might expect, I do have a few thoughts on the subject.

To begin with, let's define our terms. Who's a "dope dealer"? Is he/she anyone who sells anyone else an illegal drug? That's the broadest possible definition, and one which has been pursued in some quarters. It includes everyone who, having bought a small amount of marijuana, say, turns around and sells part of it to someone else.

The phrase used to be "pushers," but you know, I've never met a "pusher" in my life. Every dealer I've ever known was satisfying a demand.

Then again, what's "dope"? The Law defines virtually every illegal drug as a "narcotic"--this definition explicitly includes marijuana and the several psychedelics (LSD, mescaline, mushrooms...), as well as cocaine. None of those drugs are, in fact, narcotics; the word "narcotic" has become legally devalued into the actual equivalent of "dope." Real narcotics include the opiate family and none of the stimulants.

I began my history of drug use with a (then) legal drug, mescaline, in the form of peyote. I recall the hysterical response of some fans of that era (c. 1959): that consumption of peyote would lead inevitably to the "worst" of all drugs, heroin. Drugs, you see, and especially the illicit if not illegal drugs, were all linked in some horrible way, and it was supposed to be like Pandora's Box: if you tried one, you'd end up trying them all, and hooked on the worst, the ultimate Bad Drug.

Oddly enough, it took nine years for me to try an illegal drug, and I was virtually the last among my friends in fandom to try marijuana. Those who remember those days are unmerciful in teasing me about my anti-marijuana paranoia in the middle-late '60s. And to this day I've never tried heroin.

I like marijuana. I enjoy it. I'm not hooked on it, but giving it up is like asking someone who loves a rare steak to give up meat. (During my stay in jail, and during my subsequent period as a parolee, I gave up marijuana without a problem, even when it was readily available. What I found far harder to give up, while jailed, was Pepsi. I craved Pepsis every day of my incarceration.) I've tried a variety of other drugs, including nicotine and alcohol, and I don't care much for most of them. Cocaine I found useful for dealing with those rare occasions when I had too much to drink, but it cancels out the marijuana high as well, which recommends against it, to me. We all tried PCP in the late '60s (it was all over the 1968 Worldcon), but I ODeD on it in 1974 and haven't touched it since.

I don't think I have a "normal" metabolism. When "straight" I am nearly as wired as a speed freak; marijuana mellows me out but does not incapacitate me.

The only other group of drugs which I favor is that of the psychedelics. I consider them "profound" drugs, with which one can do important things with and to one's own head. I haven't done peyote since the '60s, but I've consumed hundreds of hits of LSD, and tripped scores of times on morning glory seeds or mushrooms. The last time I tripped was in 1986, but I expect I will again some time, when the moment arises.

My approach to these drugs is, I think, essentially a stfnal one. I see the intelligent use of drugs as a way of tailoring oneself to better fit one's desires and needs. Phil Dick used to pop pills to control his mood. I wouldn't go that far. But I notice that schizy people tend toward drugs which focus their thinking in more linear ways (amphetamines, stimulants, cocaine), while we linear, uptight types prefer those drugs which open us up, de-linearize our thinking, and allow us more direct contact with our creative unconsciousness.

I'm hardly alone here. Most of my oldest and best friends in fandom have had similar experiences and reached similar conclusions.

The fly in the ointment--and it's a big one--is that these drugs are illegal. Why are they illegal?

There is no valid reason. None at all, and none that has even been argued. The argument offered by the government to its citizens is that these drugs are harmful, and that the populace must be protected from them.

Some drugs are demonstrably harmful, of course. Aspirin, for example, is deadly to a hemophiliac. Accutane causes birth defects when used by women for acne. And, yes, cocaine appears to damage the heart muscle and may cause sudden death--although Freud used it for a long time without expiring from it--and heroin is addictive, albeit not as addictive as is nicotine. Etc. Once anyone of intelligence examines the actual medical literature one is struck by the random, arbitrary and capricious way in which drugs are classified (by "Schedule") and ruled legal or illegal (or "prescription", that gray area of drugs we're not allowed to use on our own but which are necessary for the practice of modern medicine anyway). Marijuana, after all, was legal until 1937, and was made illegal for purely political reasons (it was used only by minority races, and therefore safe to ban; making it illegal allowed the creation of another fiefdom in the federal bureaucracy to compete with J. Edgar's FBI). The psychedelics were made illegal in 1966, in conjunction with media scare campaigns (remember that episode in Dragnet?) that labelled LSD "worse than heroin." Timothy Leary testified in favor of this, thus demonstrating the depth of his principles. The government is still racing to keep up with new drugs: MDMA ("Ecstasy") is the latest to be made illegal. (No, I've never tried it, although I'd like to.) Why?

Because a whole industry within the state, local and federal governments is dependent on the illegality of these drugs. Take away the "war on drugs," and you'd throw thousands of people out of work, and eviscerate the budgets of scores of bureaucratic boondoggles.

The "war on drugs" has the same moral stance and justification as did McCarthy's red-baiting witchhunts of the '50s. It's popular with the people, because it allows everyone to ignore the underlying problems in our society. (Why is crack such a serious problem in the minority ghettos?) It's popular with the politicians because it's an easy way to score points and sound morally righteous. (Most of them have problems with alcohol, but, hey, that's a legal drug and we all know how popular the "war on alcohol" (Prohibition) was.

If all drugs were legal, we might still have serious problems with those whose abuse of a drug is self-destructive; we might still have "crack babies" being born (even as we presently have hundreds of thousands of brain-damaged babies born of women who drank during pregnancy, a largely unacknowledged problem), and so forth. But we have those problems now.

If all drugs were legal, what we would not have is the huge illegal and untaxed industry which has built up around the distribution and sale of drugs, and the crime it spawns.

Prohibition gave us organized crime. Local criminals organized themselves into quasi-corporations in order to handle the logistics of distributing and selling alcohol. When Prohibition ended, organized crime continued, a permanent cancer on our society.



The prohibition of heroin, cocaine and marijuana has given us new criminal organizations, many international in scope and some (the cocaine cartels) handling a greater cash flow than most countries. Many of these organizations (the Jamaicans, the Peruvians, the Colombians) have a reputation for extreme violence: typically a dispute is settled by killing all the members of a perhaps large family.

Equally, the prohibition of these drugs has given us, in the DEA, a government agency of incredible amorality, very closely linked to the criminals it pursues (many drug runners are ex-DEA agents, and vice-versa), and perfectly willing to set aside as much of the Constitution as it can get away with. The corruption has spread, via its South American adventures during the Reagan era, to the CIA (which imported cocaine here while shipping guns the other way).

So, is Bill Bridget (a man who has never met me and knows me not at all) correct when he says I regard myself as "above the law"?

No. I dislike the law. I disapprove of the law. I think it's a bad law with bad consequences and I think those who uphold it most zealously are the rejects of humanity, but I don't regard myself as "above" that law. I regard myself as a reluctant law-breaker.

I came to that conclusion long before I ever tried an illegal drug, however. I realized I was a law-breaker after I committed my first sex-crime (oral sex). And it bothered me a lot that many of my favorite sex acts (and those of my wife, as well) were illegal. The law struck me as equally capricious and bad. Once again, the government is telling us how to behave in private, something it has no business doing.

I did not, when I was arrested, bluster or pretend I was innocent. I entered a plea of "guilty." I was sentenced and served my time in jail. Looking back, the three months I spent in jail was not much time to be behind bars; during those three months, however, and not knowing for most of that time how long I would be imprisoned, the days were endless. It was the longest three months I ever spent. It was not that my circumstances were that unpleasant (the sleep-deprivation hit me the hardest, I think), but that they were not under my control except on the smallest level. For someone as anti-authoritarian as I am, that is never easy. But it is no worse, and indeed perhaps not even as bad as, Army bootcamp. (The food is remarkably similar.)

Finally, just what kind of "dope dealer" was I?

To begin with, I became one more or less by accident. I had always bought my drugs from my friends, some of whom did it for a profit ("dealers") and some of whom just passed along a share of their purchases at or near cost. In the '70s, when I had a lot of private land available to me, I grew my own marijuana, and sold the excess (at prices below the prevailing market standard). In the '80s the price of commercial marijuana, long stable at around \$35 an ounce, began skyrocketing at the same time that the quality began falling off. \$65 for an ounce that was 50% unsmokable (seeds, stems, occasional bits of gravel) seemed like a bad deal. I tried to organize a cooperative among my friends, to buy larger amounts at better prices. Everyone liked the idea, but no one wanted to help fund it. Ultimately I put together the funding myself and began to buy by the pound.

My customers were my friends, but none of them spent a lot of money on marijuana, and at first I found turning over a pound a slow process. I had to sell it all before I had the funds to buy more, and I had to pay off the initial investment as well. So I branched out, largely by selling to my friends' friends. (I would have preferred it if my friends had bought for their friends, but it didn't work out that way. The result was increased sales but increased traffic as well--which is what led to my ultimate arrest.) Most of my customers were professional people in their 30s or older. One was a Pentagon systems analyst. Another was a Redskin. Several were doctors at NIH. A number were businessmen.

In the course of time I became known for the quality and variety of the marijuana I sold. I guaranteed it on a satisfaction-or-your-money-back basis. All of my customers were satisfied.

After several customers requested it, I branched out and began selling LSD and mushrooms. (I offered my friends the opportunity to invest in these ventures with a return of 25% interest; several did.)

One of my non-fan customers was a lawyer, a very successful man with a wife and a new baby. He was primarily a coke-head, very aggressive and paranoid, intensely uptight, who bought marijuana as a secondary drug--something with which to unwind and something for his clients. I found him a basically nice guy who was often unpleasant in his manners.

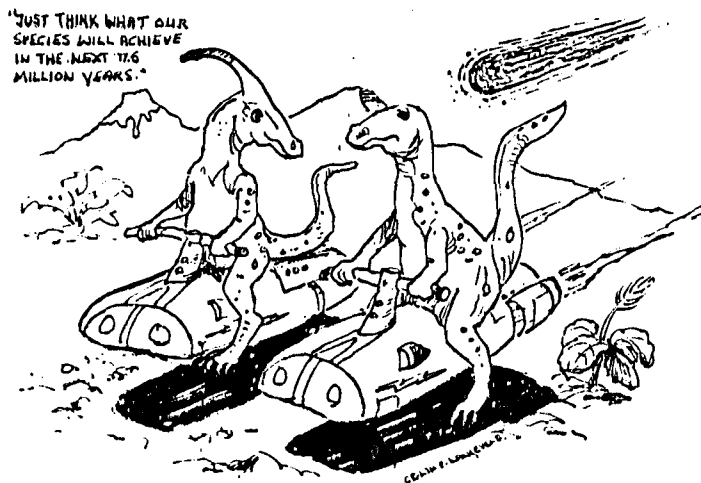
One day he bought a few hits of LSD from me, just to have, I think. A few days later he came back, a changed man. Relaxed, smiling, in the best mood I'd ever seen him in, he told me he'd taken half a hit of the LSD that morning and had skipped the cocaine he usually used. The results were staggering. On this sub-tripping dose (vaguely speed-like), he had cleaned up all the business he'd put aside at the office, straightened out his relationship with his wife, and was generally putting his life back in order. "And you know what, Ted?" he said, almost incredulous, "It's so much cheaper!" He kicked cocaine completely, and went on a regime of one quarter-hit of LSD a day. Instead of spending over \$100 on cocaine, he spent less than a dollar on acid.

I was busted a week later. One of the last things I did before I went to jail was to put him in touch with a good source of LSD.

Am I ashamed that I was a "dope dealer"? No. I sold only the drugs in which I myself believed, and I sold them to people who felt the same way about them. And in the process I discovered a "business" at which I was good.

My regret is that those drugs were (and are) illegal, and that in dealing in them I became a criminal. I do not think of myself otherwise as a criminal, and I regret that political insanity has made anyone who associates with these drugs a criminal.

I am far from fandom's only "dope dealer," of course. One of my "associates" whose name I can now reveal (big deal; it was never much of a secret, but now he's dead and it doesn't matter) was Jerry Jacks. We were close friends, and I admired his success in the marijuana business. (San Francisco is a better climate for such dealings). Marijuana has been at various times ubiquitous in fandom and I make no apologies for enjoying it with a wide variety of people. It was a pleasure to get high with Elmer Perdue and listen to his stories of finding and smoking it in the early '40s. And it was fun to get high with my coeditor and put out all those issues of PONG.



## Fanzines In Review

This is, after all, a sort of fanzine review column. I haven't been able to confine it to a simple list of the zines received in exchange for DON-o-SAUR, with no comments, and I'm also too lazy to pick out only the best for review.

**AGA #128-129, 130, 131;** March, April, May-June '90) Francis Valery, French Space Academy, c/o Frederique Pinsard, 11 rue des Vignerons, 33800 Bordeaux, France. Attractive 6X8 1/2" French language fanzine, and that's about all I can say about, being illiterate in French.

**ATOM:** A Tribute edited & published by A. Vincent Clarke, 16 Wendover Way, Welling, Kent, DA16 2BN U.K. A sort of memorial to the late fan artist Arthur Thomson. Collection of his artwork plus tributes from his friends. \$10.

**ATROCITY Vol. 14** No. 4; edited by Hank Roll, 2119 Greensburg Pike, Pittsburgh PA 15221; \$8 for 12 issues, \$16 for two years, plus 2 free back issues. If you figure out the format of this zine, you'll probably enjoy it.

**BARYON #45** Spring 1990, Barry R. Hunter, P.O. Box 3314, Rome GA 30164-3314; eight pages of generally intelligent book reviews (meaning that Barry often has the same reactions to specific books that I do. An exception is that he liked "Grumbles from the Grave" edited by Virginia Heinlein, and I thought it was a waste.)

**BCSFazine #204, 205, 206** (May, June, July 1990) British Columbia SF Association, P.O. Box 35577 Stn. E, Vancouver, B.C. V6M 4G9, Canada. Available for "the usual." An impressive 28-page combination of clubzine and genzine. Issue 206 comes with the third **FICTIONS FREE FOR ALL** supplement, the third.

**CONVENTION LOG #57,** May 1990, R. Laurraine Tutihasi, 5876 Bowcroft St. #4, Los Angeles, 90016-4910. Combination diary and letter substitute, with emphasis on cons attended, but anything that happens is grist.

**DE PROFUNDIS #219, 220, 221** (May, June, July 1990); Newsletter of the Los Angeles SF Society, 11513 Burbank Blvd, North Hollywood, CA 91601, Jeni Burr, Editor. Available for the usual.

**DOXY: The Sheet of Shame;** May, June, '90, John Foyster, PO Box 3086 Grenfell St. Adelaide South Australia 5000. Reports on a con called Danse Macabre, at which the Ditmars

were awarded. Doxy is accompanied by **DOXA1**, edited by Roman Orzanski, PO Box 131 Marden, SA 5070. Four-page May issue contains a more detailed report on Danse Macabre. June, a single sheet printed on both sides, is letters.

**ERG #110, 111,** Terry Jeeves, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough YO12 5RQ, U.K. Erg enters its 32nd year of publication, featuring personal essays, fanzine reviews, articles about unusual fighter aircraft, locs and a two-page appreciation of the artist Wesso, in 110 and Howard V. Brown in 111, PLUS a lot of very brief book notes. All this in 24 pages, published quarterly, available for locs, \$1 per copy or trades (but not for fanzines. Inquire.)

**FACTSHEET FIVE #36,** Mike Gunderloy, 6 Arizona Ave., Rensselaer, NY 12144-4502. THE catalogue (132 pages in the latest issue!) of fanzines and small press publications--of all kinds. \$3 per copy or trade.

**FANTASY COLLECTOR #217-19** (April, May, June 1990) C.E. "Cazedessus II, 7080 Highland Road/Bayou Fontaine, Baton Rouge LA 70808-6632. "A first class magazine for serious collectors of SF and High Adventure in books, pulps, paperbacks and movies." Subscriptions \$18 for 12 issues, \$10 for six. I've been getting this since its resurrection in Dec. '88 but hadn't reviewed or listed it for the same reason I don't list **LOCUS** and **SF CHRONICLE**, which I also subscribe to. My sub to FC has expired; I'm getting it now in exchange for DoS. I liked FC in the olden days because it carried a lot of ads for rare pulps. It's had too few in its current incarnation. Contents now are primarily articles about the pulps.

**FILE 77 #85, 86;** Mike Glycer, 5828 Woodman Ave. #2, Van Nuys, CA 91401. Best fanzine of 1988 (1989 Hugo winner), edited by world's best fanwriter (Hugo winner for several years and prime candidate again). This is the only newszine that focuses on fans rather than pro. financial woes are forcing Mike to raise subscription rates to \$8 for five issues, with other arrangements possible.

**FOSFAX #149, 150** (May, July 1990); clubzine of the Falls of the Ohio SF Association (FOSFA); edited by Timothy Lane and Janice Moore, published bimonthly by the Committee to Publish FOSFAX (Grant McCormick and Timothy Lane) P.O. Box 37281, Louisville, KY 40233-7281; \$2 per issue, \$12 a year. As always, an impressive array of news, reviews, locs and artwork.

**FTT #9,** April 1990, Judith Hanna and Joseph Nicholas, 5A Frinton Road, Stamford Hill, London N15 6NH, U.K. The editors say the initials will remain the same but the title will change each issue (this is "Flat-ten the Toads; it used to be "Fuck the Tories" and the sentiment is unchanged. 26 pages available for usual.

**GEGENSCHWEIN 57,** Feb. 1990, Eric Lindsay, 6 Hillcrest Ave., Paulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia. It's a relief and delight for me to see this again--Eric's first fanzine since 1988, he notes. I've missed it. 14 pages of personal history and book reviews.

**THE GEIS LETTER #2 & 3,** May & June 1990; Richard E. Geis, P.O. Box 11408, Portland, OR 97211. The first two issues were entirely book reviews, incisive, insightful, provocative and fun. Issue 3 has an editorial column, "Thought Crime," with views on horror fiction and gun control. Eight pages, available at \$2 per copy or \$20 for 12 issues.

**HERMIT CRAB #5,** May 1990; Carl Ray Bettis holes up at PO Box 32631, Kansas City MO 64111, and this 10-page poetry-oriented personalzine (this issue handwritten!) is available for cash, correspondence, SASE, trade or marrying into the family.

**LAN'S LANTERN #32,** George "Lan" Laskowski, 55 Valley Way, Bloomfield Hills MI 48013. Available for the usual. This is the giant (172 pages) issue, with essays, articles, memoirs, art and locs. Topics range from serious to silly.

**THE LEIGHTON LOOK** May '90; from Rodney Leighton, RR 3, Pughwash, Nova Scotia, Canada BOK 1L0. Rod is rather tentative and apologetic, expressing his hopes of pubbing more and more regular-

ly. He'd also like to make a little money. 5 pages this time, including survey sheet.

**NEOLOGY** #70, June 1990; quarterly newsletter of the Edmonton SF & Comic Arts Society, Box 4071, Postal Station South Edmonton, Alberta T6E 4S8. Current editor, Catherine Girczyc. 34 pages of club news, reviews, locs, articles, artwork, etc. \$2.50 plus postage. Attractive and readable.

**NOTES FROM BOB PETERSON** #38 June '90. Bob Peterson, 2045 S. Gilpin St., Denver CO 80210. Just what the title says, this is a letter substitute to keep Bob's friends abreast of his world travels. He goes everywhere, most recently to Japan.

**OBSCURED BY CORFLU** #2, Johan Schimanski, 5518 Sogn studby N-0858, Oslo, Norway. Format looks vaguely familiar--like the controversial Dos 56 but about half-size, and mimeoed. Most interesting is Johan's account of his visit to Madison, Wis., for Corflu and his general impressions of the U.S. Send a couple of ICRs for a copy.

**PERSPEX PARROT** #1, Bob Shaw, 66 Knutsford Rd., Grappenhall, Warrington, Cheshire WA4 2PB, England. This should be front-page news. After some 40 years in fandom and almost as long as a pro, Bob Shaw is publishing his very first fanzine! A modest little 8-pager but crammed with good reading, as you'd expect. I particularly enjoyed his defense of his right to smoke a pipe. Available for the usual.

**POUTNIK (PILGRIM)** Bulletin of the Jules Verne Fan Club, Miroslav Martan, Pocatecka 12, 140 00 Praha 4, Czechoslovakia. With the end of dictatorship, Czech fans are seeking contact with the rest of world fandom. They need help, especially contributions of fiction.

**PROBE** #79, March 1990. Quarterly clubzine of Science Fiction South Africa, PO Box 2538 Primrose 1416, edited by Neil van Niekerk. 82 pages of club news, reviews, articles, fiction, art, etc.

**PROPER BOSKONIAN** 27, May 1990; semi-annual genzine of the New England SF Association, c/o NESFA, Box G, MIT Branch PO, Cambridge, MA 02139. Editor D.T. Mann says this is actually the "Fall of '73" issue, since it is technically a quarterly first published in the late '60s. A highlight of this 44-page issue (available for the us-

ual) is "My Life as a Fan" by Leslie Turak and a picture layout on redesigning the Hugos to fit the winners. Some great artwork throughout.

**036I** June 1990, Marc Ortlieb, P.O. Box 215, Forest Hill, Vic 3131 Australia. That "I" is the letter, not a Roman numeral. The long-ago last previous issue was H. Next one will be J. I think. Available on editorial whim, "a lazy sort of creature...known to respond to free fanzines, letters, articles, cover artwork or a naughty in the bushes. (The latter must be particularly circumspet in order to avoid being caught by the editorial wife.)"

**RADIO FREE THULCAN-DRA** #21 (February 1990), Marty Helgesen, 11 Lawrence Ave., Malverne, NY 11565. Published for Christian Fandom, "an interdenominational fellowship of Christians and Science Fiction Fans interested in the courteous and accurate representation of Christian viewpoints in the fannish community." 52 neat and readable pages, mostly locs, with a few articles.

**THE RELUCTANT FAMULUS** 10, 11 May, July 1990, Thomas Sadler, 422 W. Maple Ave., Adrian, MI 49221. "Available for trades, locs, art, fiction, articles, poetry, \$1.50 cash or stamps." 34 pages of fannish stuff, including a fine fanzine review section. Tom has acquired a good new printer (HP DeskJet), and utilizes it to full capacity in #11.

**SCAVENGER'S NEWSLETTER** #76 (June '90), Janet Fox, 519 Ellinwood, Osage City, KS 66523-1329. THE magazine for small press editors, writers and artists. Sample \$1.50. Subscription rates are \$10 a year bulk, \$14 first class. 30 pages (8 1/2 x 11 folded).

**SFSFS SHUTTLE** 62, 63, 64 (May, June, July 1990); official newsletter of the Southern Florida SF Society, P.O. Box 70143, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33307-0143. Gerry Adair, Editor. Club news plus reviews of books and fanzines. The book reviews are good, but the fanzine listing is of little value, failing to give addresses.

**SGLODIN** #2, April 1990, Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU England. Largely an account of how Dave's obscure little 1979 semi-hoax book, "An Account of a Meeting With Denizens of Another World, 1871" (by one William Robert Loosely) was taken seriously and used

without credit or compensation by Whitley Streiber in his latest novel. (I have a copy of "Denizens" and am abashed to say that I didn't recognize it as a hoax at the time.)

**SPIRITS IN THE NIGHT** #1, edited by Leah and Dick Smith, 17 Kerry Lane, Wheeling, IL 60090. This is actually an 8-page (spirit duplicated, of course) flyer for Ditto 3, fanzine fandom's alternative to Corflu. Sent as a trade for DASFax, which I no longer edit, but I'm adding it to my Dos trade list. It's been too long since I've heard anything from Leah! I enjoyed her article on "What Is a Fanzine Fan?"

**STUFF YOUR FACE, LOSE YOUR MARBLES** #2, "the journal of senile obesity, a fanzine for dinosaurs," edited by Pascal J. Thomas, 7 rue des Saules, 31400 Toulouse, France. 12 pages, available primarily for trade. Has an editorial on the joys of dishwashing (in English) a "Fanzine for Dinosaurs" article (in French) by Jean-Bernard Oms, another piece in French by Francis P. Valery, and a concluding "Lament" for French SF in English by Pascal.

**THE TEXAS SF INQUIRER** #31, 33 c/o The Fandom Association of Central Texas, Inc. (FACT) PO Box 9612, Austin TX 78766, Dale Denton & Alexander R. Slate, editors. Clubzine with book and fanzine reviews. #31 has an interesting article on the future of SF art and a proposed schedule for "SF Radio" and runs 20 pages. #33 is only 16 pages. Price is \$1.50 per copy, \$2 Canadian.

**TRASH BARREL**, Fanzine Reviews by Don Franson, 6543 Babcock Ave., North Hollywood CA 91606. An unfortunate title for this 4-page reviewzine. Do you want YOUR zine to be found in the Trash Barrel? You do, but... An N'F project.

**WEREWOMAN'S REVENGE** #38 (March 1990) Jean Weber, 7 Nicoll Ave., Ryde, NSW 2112 Australia. The excerpt from Jean's diary tells about the new (1914) house and its problems and promises. Roger Weddall has a piece on fan funds, Gordon Lingard reflects movingly on the suicide death of his brother at age 24, and an anonymous reader remembers 1969. 16 pages, with some good artwork. Cover by Sheryl Birkhead.

**WEIRD CITY** #1 Dave Szurek, 1311 Tower Ave., Raymond, WA 98577. An eccentric but entertaining 25-page personal zine with an emphasis on horror flicks.

# LOC CER ROOM

## Part I: Up in Smoke

Dale Speirs  
Box 6830 Stn. D  
Calgary, Alberta  
Canada T2P 2E7

DON-o-SAUR #58  
is at hand, and I  
enjoyed reading it  
here in my thank-  
you-for-notsmoking

house. My parents are non-smokers but used to keep ashtrays for visitors. Not any more though. I have never kept an ashtray in my house. My smoking friends know that when they visit me they will not even be allowed to sit on the front steps and smoke because I don't want cigarette butts all over my yard. When I first started work with my current employer ten years ago, I was one of a few non-smokers, and any request from me not to smoke stood a fifty-fifty chance of being ignored. Now smokers are few and far between, and when I took charge of a new office, I put up no-smoking signs everywhere with only a little muttering heard. One thing that I have noticed (has anyone else?) is that people who quit smoking are often more militant than lifelong non-smokers about others lighting up.

Is smoking a vice that will make it into space? Clean air is not just a trendy issue on spacecraft, so I suspect that even in L5 habitats or lunar colonies there will be no tolerance for smoking. It is amazing how far and fast tobacco has fallen in the past decade. Extrapolating the trend may not be a good idea but some reports have suggested that smoking will soon be confined to the lower classes. A visit to any bingo barn supports this idea; it almost seems a condition of running bingo games that the air must be blue. Conversely, the better crowd seems to patronize places where no-smoking signs greet one at the door.

If some graduate student hasn't already thought of it for a thesis subject, how about someone doing a study on how the non-smoking lobby was successful over the big tobacco companies? If we knew the exact techniques in greater detail and practical specifics, then why not apply these techniques to booze and other drugs. Alcohol is in a similar situation as tobacco. Checkstops and advertising have had some effect on reducing drunk drivers where I live. The day could come when drinking alcohol is the same sort of social blunder as lighting up a cigarette. As for drugs...

Just think, if Bush had the exact knowledge of how to reduce the drug

problem by social pressure, then the boys could come home from Panama. Not only that, there would be no need to spend money eradicating the root causes of the drug problem, such as the slums, joblessness, etc. All that would be required would be "Thank you for not snorting" signs and "This is a crack-free workplace." Decal makers would be doing steady business churning out such signs, thereby helping to reduce joblessness by several tens of people across the country. When the human race goes into space, the DEA agents would be left behind, as any problem could be controlled by ostracizing those who indulge in what shouldn't be indulged in.

Terry Jeeves  
56 Red Scar Drive  
Scarborough  
YO12 5RQ England

Nice cover and  
a lovely bacover  
illo by Stephen  
Fox. I like his  
work, but he will

send photocopies to different fan eds without telling them he is doing so. As a result, his cover on an issue of ERG appeared on another fanzine a few months later. Sorry you have so little art in DoS; can't you coerce somebody into supplying some? If you can use any from me, just holler.

{I did}

On giving up smoking, I gave up in 1959 after smoking for about 15 years. I quit "cold turkey," no pills or whatever, but for my money, that's the way to go. Tapering off by gradually reducing the daily intake is a total no-no as there's always the yearning going on and on, plus the temptation to indulge on special occasions.

Drinking has never been a problem for me. When in the RAF and the opportunity presented itself, I would get well kettled (never incapable), and in civilian life, at one period I would drink about three pints a night. However, since getting married and not going out with the boys, I just never bother. I play snooker once a week and then drink a pint and a half, but otherwise I just don't bother. I have a beer and spirits in at home but rarely touch 'em. I guess I'm lucky at not getting hooked.

*{I don't think luck has much to do with it; it really does seem to be a matter of genetics. If you're not among the 10 percent or so with the alcoholism susceptibility gene, there seems to be little to worry about. If you've got it, you gotta be careful.}*

On rock and roll...erotic? You must be kidding. It just makes me want to shove plugs in my ears. Re the tax man, I've declared my cartoon and writing income for some 30 years, and still have trouble with the IR men's stupidity. The year I got a royalty cheque from Mike Ashley for my part in THE COMPLETE INDEX TO ASTOUNDING, I duly declared it along with my usual average take and was taxed on the total. BUT, comes the next year, and the IR men again levied me on the same total, so I had to write and point out the book royalty was a one off. This year they have levied me on my gross take, so I have had to write and point out they forgot to deduct my expenses. Twits.

Buck Coulson is the naive one ignoring the fact that as we DO have gun laws in the UK and whilst they don't 'solve the problem,' they sure as hell limit it. Armed crimes and muggings with guns are far less common over here. If everyone over here could get guns, far more villains would get 'em, even if only by stealing 'em from licensed holders. Nor do I see how the 'intellectual European tradition' began the last two wars--any more than one might say 'U.S. militarism' caused the wars of Independence, the Civil War, Japan's attack on America, or the participation in Korea. It's very easy to make such glib generalizations, not so easy to make sure they're sensible.

Vinç Clarke                      The question of  
16 Wendover Way              how much smoking and  
Welling, Kent                  drinking shorten your  
DA16 2BN England              life is complicated  
   by all sorts of fac-  
tors but I think it's statistically  
proved that they do. People who smoke  
would be entitled to shrug and say "Well  
it's my life, it's a free country"...  
except that it's obnoxious (and danger-  
ous) to those they are in contact with,  
as well as there being such minor mat-  
ters as fires caused (our King's Cross  
subway fire a couple of years back was  
thought to be due to a dropped cigar-  
ette). On a common sense level, I  
worked some years in an open-plan office  
--desks arranged in rows rather like an  
adult school --and it was noticeable  
that those places most often vacant in  
the winter, when pulmonary ailments are  
more common, were those where an ashtray  
showed the occupant's addiction.

I've never smoked--partly because I  
preferred to spend my cash on sf maga-

zines and books, partly because through  
circumstances I escaped peer pressure.  
If I weren't an atheist I'd give daily  
thanks for that.

The Gloomier and Doomier section was  
pretty awful (tho I think 'inrwnly' is  
a good Martian word -- you should check  
these things), but you don't give the  
province of the papers concerned. You're  
obviously not going to get the same  
proofreading from the Backwoods Gazette  
as you are from the New York Times. Over  
here I get 4 or 5 free advertising news-  
papers delivered every week, one of them  
90 pages long, and there's always some-  
thing to be picked up--'Dalmations' and  
'Alsations' are regularly offered in the  
Pets for Sale columns; in this week's  
editorial "But in the back of people's  
mind..."--but I shrug and think of the  
pressures involved. Keep your blood  
pressure down and don't worry!

*{Catching typos and other errors in print, especially  
in the Rocky Mountain News and the Denver Post, are a  
form of relaxation for me! I did it for fun and profit  
for 25 years. Now, in retirement, I do it just for fun.}*

In the letters, fascinating as usual,  
I home in on Buck Coulson's assertion  
that the "intellectual European tradi-  
tion" began the last two world wars,  
into which the U.S. was dragged because  
England was getting its intellectual ass  
whipped, and the intellectual Europeans  
were screaming for help." Putting aside  
that little Japanese war maneuver known  
as Pearl Harbour, if Buck starts to  
think in analogies he'll better under-  
stand the situation.

Let us suppose, Buck, that Illinois  
was at war with Ohio, with Indianapolis  
stuck there in-between. So the heavies,  
Illinois, bomb the hell out of Hartford  
City because it's in the way, and occupy  
it. Buck lays low--this is between in-  
tellectuals. Then one day a truck full  
of armed soldiery rumbles down his  
street, stops next door, and the family  
are beaten up and carted away. What  
have they done wrong? Well, they happen  
to have been born of the wrong parents -  
Negroes or Jews. Does Buck just shake  
his head and go back to disliking rock  
music? Or does he join the Resistance  
and pray that some other country --any  
other country--will come along and help?  
And does that make him an intellectual?  
Here at 16 Wendover we had the roof  
blown off twice in the War and an incen-  
diary bomb through the tiles (it pene-  
trated the attic floor and the bathroom

ceiling and ended ignominiously in the lavatory pan); my Dad was in a surface shelter with 35 other when a bomb hit it --he got out alive with seven others. You didn't have to be an intellectual to hope the U.S. entered the war, Buck... just a common, scared human being.

Mike Glicksohn  
508 Wendermere Ave.  
Toronto, Ontario  
M6S 3L6 Canada

There's not much I can say about your medical problems. I watched my mother die of cancer when I was 22 and I can only hope that your one-day-at-a-time philosophy will enable you to cope with this potentially terrifying situation and that you'll be one of the lucky 15%. My father would say that your mental attitude will have a lot to do with what happens to you and if he's right then you should be fine. The sense of quiet dignity and strength that permeates this piece indicates that you've certainly got the right attitude about things. Good luck, old friend, may you beat the odds one more time.

Oddly enough, despite the fact that I obviously have an addictive sort of personality, I've never been a smoker. Very early on, in one of those important decisions that I've never understood how it was made, I decided that smoking was a filthy and obnoxious habit that I wanted absolutely nothing to do with. When I was about 16 I had one puff of a cigarette when two friends I was with one afternoon lit up, and that is the only single time I've ever smoked tobacco. I still think smoking is a disgusting habit and by and large I find smokers to be extremely inconsiderate and obnoxious about their addiction. (There are notable exceptions, of course.) I'm addicted to alcohol but I don't litter the detritus of my addiction all over my neighbour's lawn and I don't sneak off while at work and break the clearly stated rules so I can feed my addiction, nor do I drink in areas where drinking is clearly inappropriate. One the other hand, I've never been addicted to nicotine, so it's too easy for me to be condescending about the nauseating and obnoxious frailties of others. I have to admit, though, that every time I read or hear of a small victory for non-smokers over smokers I can't help smiling and feeling good about it. (Does this make me one of those nasty drunks I read about?)

Do you get the idea that education

in Yugoslavia is a tad more demanding than it is in North America? Not only is the curriculum Pavel describes more rigorous than what my senior students have to do to graduate but they often get what is known as "early admission" to University (without any qualifying exams) in mid-April and hence stop bothering with the last six weeks of their senior courses.

When I was in college I actually studied quantum mechanics in several courses, but I never thought of myself as a "quantum mechanician." I had a neat Letraset sign on my residence door that read QUANTUM MECHANIC PROBABLY ON DUTY. Well, at the time I thought it was cute...

Ian Creasey  
Leeds Univ. Union  
P.O. Box 157  
Leeds, LS1 1UH, U.K.

I found your article describing your experience with tobacco very interesting.

I don't have time to write a proper loc, but in December I wrote a piece for The Organisation apa which is at least tangentially relevant. In a slightly edited form, I am reproducing it here:

I think most people will have a memory from their schooldays of standing behind the bike shed or football pitch and being invited to 'take a drag' from a battered cigarette produced from some bizarre hiding place. The situation must rank as a prime example of a kid's burgeoning realization that Life's Not Fair. After all, if you refused you were laughed at for being a wimp; and if you accepted, you were laughed at even harder if you sucked on the thing as if it were a straw and then coughed like a bronchitic dragon.

It didn't take me very long to succumb, not being particularly resistant to peer pressure. I must have been 11 or 12, and soon I began buying my own supplies from the 'Woggy' or 'Paki-shop' as we called the place. I still remember the prices we paid for a packet of 20: 94p for JPS, or 97p for the preferred B&H. The proprietor would also sell singles at 6p each. In Britain it's illegal to sell tobacco to anyone under 16, and today I find it incredible that he could get away with selling the huge quantities of cigarettes he did to such blatantly under-age kids. Didn't anyone notice? (Mind you, it probably wasn't very profitable for him, since we all used to shoplift as well. But that's another story.)



However, I quickly made my own accommodation with expected behaviour. Although I smoked, I didn't actually inhale. This enabled me to keep up appearances and meant I didn't have to go through all the nasty business of coughing my guts up every time I took a drag. I went on like this for well over a year, until I left that school, an expert in mimicry rather than activity.

Nowadays I'm a non-smoker who feels physically sick when breathing in stale smoke. But plenty of my friends smoke. "I can give it up any time I like," is the constant refrain. One of them tried it once--it was a New Year's resolution, and f5 rested on it. He lasted 40 minutes.

A short free-association test -- keyword: addiction.

First response: drugs.

The popular mythology is that cannabis is not addictive. Having seen the effect of it on some of my friends, I am inclined to doubt this. They began with the occasional joint every fortnight or so. Nowadays they have four or five joints almost every night.

I rely on observation because I cannot vouch for the effect myself. This has little to do with rectitude and a lot to do with inability. Never having learned to inhale, I cannot smoke a joint; neither can I use a 'bong.' So when with this group, I am the odd man out. There is not much fun in being stone-cold sober when everyone with you is wrecked out of their head. We used to have a lot of good times together. Nowadays I see them as boring people who, unable to make their own fun, get it externally.

This, of course, contains its own escalation. The first step is from tobacco to cannabis. The next is from cannabis to LSD.

LSD is probably not addictive. The reason for this is simple. When smoking tobacco or cannabis, the hit is almost instant, reaching the brain in just a few seconds--this reward response promotes habitual action. On the other hand, LSD takes around half an hour to have any effect, and then the initial 'body buzz' stage is rather unpleasant. Only about 20 minutes after that does the trip begin.

I have taken LSD a couple of times purely to see what it was like. The word 'weird' does not come anywhere near to describing the experience.

Although interested in experimenta-

tion, I'm not reckless--there are a large number of drugs that I would refuse if offered. But the point is that it is inaccurate to lump together all prohibited substances under the term 'drugs' and assume that they're all the same. They aren't. Some are addictive, others aren't; some are dangerous, others are less so.

*addict n.* a slave to a habit or vice, esp. drugs -- *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary.*

We all have our habits and vices, but are we slaves to them? Make a list of purely sensual pleasures, and it would probably include alcohol, sex, food...

The first two receive quite enough attention already, but the latter is also an interesting subject, even neglecting the extremes of anorexia and bulimia.

About 18 months ago, I became a vegetarian. For a long time I had become increasingly disgusted with the revolting processes of meat manufacture to which most people prefer to turn a blind eye, and I finally decided that being bothered by meat and still eating it was sheer hypocrisy, so I gave it up.

The surprising thing is how little I miss the stuff. People say, "Don't you miss eating a nice juicy steak for dinner?" No, I don't--the thought makes me feel sick.

The one thing I really do miss are McVitie's Digestive biscuits. They contain animal fat so they had to go. I never realized giving them up would be so hard.

That's the point. You often don't realize what your real vice is until you stop. And then it's so deep-rooted that it tends to get replaced by another.

From McVitie's Digestives I went on to McVitie's Plain Chocolate Hobnobs. They're ideologically sound, but unfortunately a lot more expensive. I eat more than a packet every day. That's 300 to 400 grams of biscuit, much of which is sugar.

The sugar's the kicker, no doubt about that. It also helps account for the fact that I eat three or four bowls of breakfast cereal every day, too--you'd probably be surprised to know how much of a Weetabix is sugar.

I don't put extra sugar on cereal or mix it in drinks--in fact, I hardly use raw sugar at all. But it is added to so many processed foods that the stuff is



insidious. It's cheap and bulky: the ideal ingredient.

And it's addictive. It's also necessary, of course, but how many people manage to restrict their sugar intake to the essential minimum? Very few, and I am not one of them.

Thesis: some substances commonly thought of addictive aren't.

Antithesis: some substances not commonly thought of as addictive are.

Synthesis: addiction is a complicated and confused concept.

By now you may be thinking that I'm working up to some argument in favour of decriminalization of all drugs. It is true that from a purely libertarian standpoint, all substances should be freely available--we should be allowed to choose our own lives and go to hell in our own fashion if that's what we want. And abstractly I favour that idea. But, as usual, the knee-jerk right-wingers don't think it through.

We all know the long and shameful history of the tobacco industry, how it never did any research into the effects of its products, how it blocked independent findings for as long as it could, and how even now it still refuses to admit that smoking is not just dangerous, it is lethal: the major cause of death in the Western world. (Giant tobacco combine BAT's official position is that "smoking had not been established to be the cause of disease.")

Now, imagine that situation multiplied by x currently illegal drugs, rendered freely available and marketed by giant corporations. "Of course heroin isn't dangerous!" "Ecstasy addictive? Ludicrous!" "There is absolutely no evidence to suggest that LSD has any adverse effects whatsoever." Imagine the adverts: COKE IS IT. And of course, the end of the libertarian road is the free-market sale of cyanide, gelignite and thermonuclear bombs.

"Bugged if I know"--*Dead Penguin Dictionary of Apocryphal Quotations.*

So what's the answer? What am I trying to say? There is no easy solution, no fixed code to apply to life. Well, there were the Ten Commandments, but thankfully few people in Britain pay attention to them. How many of you even know them?

This is one of the many reasons why all religion is bullshit: it attempts to give simple answers when there aren't any. It is also the biggest single cause of misery, evil and suffering on

Earth. But the subject of religion is a whole new diatribe in itself, and before I get onto it I think I'd better stop.

P.S. A couple of months after writing the above piece, I gave up biscuits altogether. However, I now eat rather more chocolate bars than I used to...

R.I. Benefiche  
Box 13092  
Denver, CO 80201

Since I'm probably the individual you refer to with the button saying, "Smokers, Please Die," please let it be noted that the button reads, "If you Smoke... PLEASE TRY SUICIDE," and is patterned after the similar Carlton ad. I also make (and sell) buttons that say such things as "The Only Polite Smoker Is a Dead Smoker," etc., etc. I plan to have a catalog of nearly 1,000 buttons available sometime this summer (1990), and if any of your readers would be interested in this, they should send \$1 to cover postage &c, refundable with any order.

So far as I am concerned, if anyone has a "right" to smoke, I have a right to kick their teeth in. I had to quit a fairly decent job with the phone company in 1981 because the smoke in the office was making me cough up blood, and was perpetually unemployed for the next five years, living on student loans, sponging off my parents, and occasionally making \$100 here or \$200 there huckstering. I am now paying \$86 a month to Sally Mae, and if any of these assholes who talk about smokers' rights would like to cough up a few bucks to pay me back for the five years they cost me, I might be a little more sympathetic.

For now, I am quite happy that the tobacco companies are murdering 500,000 of these idiots every year in this country, and I only wish they could kill more of them faster. I also wish my tax dollars didn't go to pay for their medical expenses. If I asked you for \$50 so I could commit suicide, would you give it to me? I think it is immoral of the government to use my tax money to finance the murder/suicides of smokers without my consent.

But don't think I'm an extremist or anything. I only want smoking banned in two places: indoors and outdoors. As for nonsmokers who say, "It doesn't bother me," your problems don't bother me either, so kindly keep them to yourselves.

Oh, and by the way, I'd just like to

say to all those who wrote in to say they prefer classical music, etc., to rock... Beethoven was INCREDIBLY weak in the lyrics department. Give me Warren Zevon any time over that stuff:

*Michael Jackson in Disneyland*

*Don't have to share it with nobody else  
Lock the gates, Mickey, take my hand  
And lead me through the world of self  
Splendid isolation, I don't need no one*

**Wayne Hooks**

Route 4, Box 677  
Nicholas, SC 24581

I am not sure what you mean by my decisions being influenced by the

"Tobacco Subsidy Program." I assume by "subsidy program" you are referring to stabilization, but in its strictest sense it is not a "subsidy" like the grain programs but is a cooperative operating at no net cost to the government. I guess what I need to know is what you mean by "Tobacco Subsidy Program" and why that would affect my business decisions more than the Tax Reform Act of 1985, recent Tax Court decisions, the ACR program, the grain program, reforestation program, Wetlands Act, interest rates, municipal bond returns, the stock market or any number of other factors in both my day-to-day and long range planning.

*{My real question, in response to Wayne's complaint that "I have even the Surgeon General trying to put me out of business," is: Does the Surgeon General's pronouncements about the evils of tobacco really have much impact on its production? Has anyone stopped growing tobacco in response to those pronouncements?*

**Joseph Nicholas**

5A Frinton Road  
Stamford Hill  
London N15 6NH U.K.

I hardly know what to say in response to your admission is DoS 58 that you have cancer,

not least because anything I say will sound quite inadequate. I do admire, though, the quiet, matter-of-fact way in which you release the news, which seems to me both not to expect and to refuse if offered the automatic sympathy of others, and I hope that if ever I contract such an illness I'll have the courage to do the same. I admire, too, the way in which you describe the cancer as a cancer instead of taking refuge in the euphemisms people habitually employ -- as Sean French, one of its columnists, remarked in a recent issue of *New Statesman & Society*, this refusal to confront by name such as cancer and

AIDS, and resorting to prissy circumlocutions like "a long illness, bravely borne" in the obituaries of those who've died from them, only blocks our understanding of their nature and effect. In other words (and to use an old British epigram that perhaps has a different meaning in the U.S.A.) one should always call a spade a spade. Beyond that, you of course have my best wishes.

Let us therefore change the subject --to Robert Coulson's snappy rejoinder to my letter in issue 57. I assume, from the belligerence of his tone, that he expects me to dispute his claim that but for the direct U.S. intervention in both World Wars "the European intellectual tradition" would have been beaten--but, although he might be surprised to hear it, I quite agree. British strategy in both conflicts was to hang on for as long as possible until the U.S.A. could be persuaded to declare against Germany, while engaging at the same time in a variety of diplomatic and PR initiatives to hasten the date of that declaration. In the First World War these initiatives took so long to work through and seemed so unsuccessful that in early 1917 the British Cabinet secretly decided that because (a) the rate of attrition of men and material was so high France's commitment could not last beyond 1 November that year and (b) Britain could not thereafter hold the Western Front alone, then if the U.S. had not entered the war, peace negotiations would be inevitable. (And if the U.S. had not entered the war? Here's one for the alternate history enthusiasts: if peace negotiations had commenced in early November 1917, then it is just possible that the Kerensky government, overthrown by the Bolsheviks because it had continued the war against Germany, might have survived. In other words: no Russian Revolution.) Similarly in the Second World War: even as the Luftwaffe was being repulsed in the Battle of Britain, Churchill knew that Britain lacked the resources to defeat Germany on its own, and the propaganda offensive to get the U.S. into the war got rapidly under way. Roosevelt's response was the Lend-Lease Act, but at the price of permanently cementing U.S. economic superiority over Britain and thus an ability to dictate the terms of any post-war settlement without having formally entered the conflict. In the event, British diplomacy was overtaken by Pearl Harbor, and Germany once again

went down to defeat. (Alternate history scenarios of German victory, with or without the U.S.A. having joined the Allied cause, ignore the point that, as in the First World War, Germany lacked the economic and military resources required. Without the U.S., the conflict would by 1943 have settled into a war of attrition that would have eventually forced both sides to the negotiating table--perhaps to emerge, given the tenor of the British establishment of the time, in an Anglo-German alliance against the Soviet Union.) More would be known of all this were many Cabinet papers not still locked in the vaults, not to be released to the Public Record Office until well into the next century --presumably because of the embarrassment they'd cause the immediate descendants of the pro-appeasement and even pro-Nazi factions extant in the government of the day (never mind the damage they'd do the "Little England" myth of the plucky British bulldog facing down the evil Hunnish hordes alone, etc.)

But while Coulson's image of the U.S.A. riding to the rescue of a besieged Europe was true in 1917 and 1941, it provides little clue to the present and none at all to the future behaviour or expectations of either. The question is whether Europe (East or West) still needs armed American assistance, and if not what the U.S. should do instead. The justification for the presence of U.S. forces in Western Europe for the past 40 years has been to defend it against an alleged Soviet "threat," but as increasing numbers of Western military experts now admit there has been no time since 1945 when the Soviet Union was either likely or even able to invade--and in any case everyone now agrees that if there was a threat it's fading fast. The lurid suggestions of some hawks that a continued U.S. military presence is necessary to prevent a reunified Germany embarking on another round of territorial acquisition ignore the deeply imbedded folk memories of what happened to Europe in the last war--whole cities destroyed in a single night's aerial bombardment, entire populations transformed into armies of refugees, sophisticated industrial economies reduced to feudal bartering for scarce foodstuffs. The idea that anyone not completely deranged would wish to recreate all this, particularly given the lethality and destructiveness of modern weapons, is quite absurd. (I sometimes wonder how

much the U.S.A.'s apparent readiness to resort to force of arms might have been affected had its domestic population been subjected to the same assaults as Europe's, and suspect that had your cities been similarly destroyed your politicians might place a higher premium on first exhausting all other means to solve international disputes. As it is, one can't escape the realisation that all the 20th century wars in which the U.S.A. has been engaged have taken place "overseas," and so had no direct physical effect on the domestic U.S. population.) So what role, if any, does the U.S. still have in Europe?

In my estimation, none at all. As I'm sure Coulson has noticed, Europe and the U.S. have been moving steadily apart of late--a process set in train years before the fall of the Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe but which those events have accelerated. Our agenda is now oriented heavily towards the East, and especially to the post-Cold War reconstruction of our continent; while the U.S.A.'s future lies in the Pacific, and in particular a need to compete for their trade and industry with the "tiger" economies of Southeast Asia. The question is whether, after 40 years of Cold War in which defence spending has taken an increasing share of the nation's GNP and sucked in large quantities of its most advanced scientific endeavours, the U.S. is in a good enough position to compete with Southeast Asia and Japan, or even to take a primary role in exploiting the mineral wealth of Siberia. I suspect that the answer is no--in which Coulson's predilection for an armed citizenry supposedly able to defend itself against aggression and thereby win the respect of others won't help very much. It has a certain historical legitimacy, inasmuch as the U.S. was founded on armed revolt against the British and then built on a drive to "tame" and "civilise" a wilderness, but these imperatives clearly no longer obtain. What use is a Colt .45 against the Japanese lead in research on fifth-generation computers? Or, to push the point further, what role has a Stinger anti-aircraft missile in the development of coal desulphurisation technology or the salvation of the rain forests? Taking the comparisons to the limit, how can one use a Trident D-5 to expand one's export markets for consumer goods? An obsession with a strong defence, and the favouring of military technology

over other technology is the logical end-product of a political credo that desires guns or gun-training for everyone and believes that only thus can a nation be kept free. Coulson would doubtless condemn these attitudes as naive, but I have to say that to me he looks more and more like a dinosaur, out of touch with what's going on around him and in danger of being left behind by it all. And, too, the desire to remain armed as global priorities shift will appear to the rest of the world less like political prudence and independence and more like an attempt to hang on to what the U.S. already has, even if taken from others by force. Not, I would have thought, the impression that Coulson really wishes to generate.

Richard Freeman  
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Yellow Springs OH  
45387

It's good to know that though you'll be leaving other zines, you will still be

putting out DON-o-SAUR...at least I hope this is true. I know there is always that internal need for a bit more fame through writing...publishing with a publisher & that sort of thing. But it can keep us from doing the things we do well ... writing as an equal to other equals, for one.

One of the reasons I stopped smoking cigarettes was that Ann is allergic to the smoke--so I would go out on the steps to smoke. These were indoors but would still be cold in winter. We used to pile our empty soda bottles on the sides of the steps till we had a few hundred & no more space...then we'd take them back. But often enough, at 2:30 in the morning, I'd stand up, still stiff from the cold, attention lost in the book I was reading...and I'd fall down the steps, taking a hundred or so bottles with me. We'd all sort of water-fall down the steps together, though being heavier (and not being a vacuum) I generally reached the bottom first & stood there while the bottles shattered on the stone floor around me. This generally woke the downstairs apartment & they would come running out to see the world come to an end--in their bare feet. So, eventually, it became easier not to smoke. (I did take a pipe to grad school in order to keep awake--library science & ed courses being what they were. I started to smoke a pipe when I was in high school...as well as havatampa wood-tipped cigars. Cigaret-

tes had to wait till I was in college. My first co-op job was adding numbers for UPS. I found my consumption of candy bars was not only costly but potentially dangerous to my teeth--while ciggies were a longer term hazard. So I went from nothing to a pack a day of Chesterfields in a week. Later I smoked Camels. I liked the taste. I did. I don't like the taste of alcohol. Tastes are strange.)

I don't know about having will power --but I have strong whim power--and was able to give up easily (did I wait till I had bronchitis to stop? That's a good way of getting over the nicotine addiction. You don't even notice the added discomfort).

Now I can't stand the smell of cigarettes either. Smells are as strange as tastes, I guess.

Rich Dengrove  
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Alexandria, VA 22306

Great DoS 58.

Concerning ad-  
diction to

smoking and drinking, I don't have either--maybe but by fortune. I couldn't get beyond the nausea with smoking. I never did it enough and no one saw fit to initiate me into it. With drinking I don't think I can become an alcoholic. If I drink too much, I feel lousy; and even if I drink just enough to feel good, it doesn't make me feel that much better than reality. Still, I'm an addict and I've been an addict all my life. I'm an addict to situations. No one has ever thought of establishing Situations Anonymous, but it's a problem. I stay in situations that are destructive because I'm too afraid of what will come after them. I stayed too long as a student: a masters too long, maybe too masters too long. I was afraid to go to work. Even when my father would support my education no longer, I had problems searching for a job. I could not retype my form SF-171 when looking for Federal jobs. I would use the same one--to my detriment. I often would forget to take my resume along to interviews. Likely interviews, I would somehow end up not going to. I still can't see how I got a job. And when I did get a job, I wouldn't try to change from a bad job to a better one--even when they were putting the screws on me. Even when I was being written up for taking two pieces of cake at a party. Finally, some would say I should have been divorced several years ago. How did I get out of these situations?

At least you know how you stopped drinking and smoking; I don't know how I stopped my situations addiction. I did it at moments of inadvertence. I all of a sudden wound up in a different situation after I had moaned, bemoaned and be-be-moaned my situation and done nothing. I guess being unconscious acted like a painkiller so I could get something done. I admit I remember I was hired in the Federal government because I was the only one on that particular civil service register. And I remember I changed jobs when my agency started a library and I was the only trained librarian the bigwigs knew about. But for the most part I have to be unaware to get out of a situation addiction.

About guns, I take a middle position between those who advocate unlimited guns and those who advocate unlimited no guns. A friend of mine was an editor in a place somewhere in Idaho. There everyone had guns. He found plenty of instances where kids got their parents' guns and shot themselves while playing. And he also found plenty of instances where couples fought and one took out a gun and shot the other. He never was able to find any instances where someone stopped a crime with their gun. On my own, I did find out about an instance like that in Texas. But let's face it: as far as I can see, the gun opponents have it hands down. The problem is in some parts of the country, guns are a way of life. A good friend of mine from the South was taken by her father to the firing range when she was five. The reasoning was so she could protect herself. She never goes anywhere without a gun. And the strange part is she's not especially violent: in fact, she's actually quite gentle. Guns are what you did in her part of the country. Now she might be having some doubts after her niece was shot dead by the niece's husband; but I don't think she's quite ready to get rid of her guns yet. And if you can't get rid of HER gun, how does anyone expect to get rid of the guns of people who are actually crazy?

Harry Warner Jr. Best wishes for  
423 Summit Ave. for your full re-  
Hagerstown MD 21740 covery from your  
latest physical  
problem and for a future of complete  
freedom from recurrences. You sound re-  
markably brave and self-controlled and  
I hope that attitude helps you like the  
problem. Just the other day I saw a

fanzine reference to Darrell Richardson, the famous collector and fan, having been at some con or other. It must be almost a quarter-century since he feared the end had come from cancer. He attributes what followed to prayer, and physicians term it a complete remission, but the wording doesn't matter: it can and does happen no matter how it's put into words.

Since I've never smoked, I can't add personal experiences to the replies you'll receive on the lead article in DoS 58. I was strange when I was growing up for my refusal to do things just because everyone else did them. That's why I didn't experiment with cigarettes despite the example set by my friends. I didn't feel, as they did, that beginning to smoke symbolized the attainment of manhood or made me somehow more important. There were good reasons not to start smoking, mainly the fact that I didn't have much money and couldn't have financed regular smoking if I'd liked the experiment. There wasn't much smoking in my home. My mother never smoked a cigarette in her life. My father smoked but usually outdoors, except when we had company who smoked and he did it indoors for social reasons. In his final years my father was told by his doctor to give up smoking altogether because of high blood pressure. After his death, I found a few cigarettes in his dresser. They may have been left over from before he stopped (he and I were alike in inability to throw away anything after it was no longer needed) but he may have continued to smoke when I wasn't around so it wouldn't worry me, and that might have been a contributing factor to his death from a stroke, another reason I hate the tobacco industry. He respected science very much and I'm sure he would have quit smoking if the Surgeon General's report that provided the first clear link between smoking and bad health had been issued in his lifetime.

I felt much the same shock as you did on learning of Arthur Thomson's death. I'd known his health had been growing worse but he continued to create those wonderful illustrations that were just as inspired and firm in line as they'd ever been and so I'd thought he couldn't be too badly off. I had a special reason for feeling sorrow about this particular fan's death. He was the only fan artist who had been repeatedly inspired by me, so I felt I had a micro-

scopic part in his fanac. Bill Rotsler had occasionally mentioned me in a caption to a drawing and I suppose there have been a few illustrations done specifically to go with fanzine articles by me. But ATom did those wonderful postage-stamp sized sketches to accompany the letters in Ethel Lindsay's Scottishe which related to whatever the loc writer said, and I had locs in many issues which Arthur had illustrated. That made me feel very proud even though my inspiration to him was inadvertent.

Many thanks for continuing to use this superbly legible typography. If a few other fanzines followed your example I would be tempted to start feeling a trifle less hostile toward computers and what they've done to fandom.

**Robert Coulson** I suspect that  
2677W-500N the ease or diffi-  
Hartford City IN culty of quitting  
47348 smoking depends more

on physiology than on age. For the record, I started smoking jimson weed (essentially that, anyhow) for asthma at age 6 or so. The "inhalers" looked much like cigarettes, but certainly didn't smell like them, which provided some amusement over the years until they were banned. I'm not sure when I began smoking tobacco, but probably not until I'd graduated from high school. I never did smoke much, since it did absolutely nothing for me and I didn't have the money to waste on a habit. Mostly I would drive up to Canada for a period every summer and stock up on Canadian brands, to startle my fellows; I recall that "Black Cat" and "Winchester" were favorites, not for their taste but for their impact on other people. I also tried pipes and cigars. I'm not positive when I quit, either, but probably when Juanita and I got married; I was 26 then, and we had much more important uses for our money. It could be that the asthma inhalers, being more powerful (their active ingredients were stramonium and belladonna), simply made cigarettes seem wimpy and tasteless by comparison. But I wasn't addicted to the inhalers, either, and had no problems when they were taken off the market.

The asthma medicine may have also prevented me from getting drunk--something did, because I'd get sick and throw up before I'd lose my mental or physical ability. And of course there's nothing to promote sobriety like being

the only sober person at a convention party and watching everyone else turn into jackasses. So I never imbibed alcohol to excess, either. Which is what makes me consider psysiology as the clue to overindulgence or the lack of it. (The first time I got sick was at a Midwestcon, with a galvanized bucket of Detroit blog on hand. As I recall, it included sweet wine, dry wine, vodka, a quart of medical alcohol, lemonade, and probably a few other ingredients. It was a hot night, and I have five or six glasses of the stuff and went out and threw up in the bushes. Had no problems in walking or talking, just in keeping the stuff down.)

Enjoyed the "Gloomier and Doomier Section." I'm particularly fond of "enrichens."

David Smidt doesn't feel that women are being dominated when they're compliant about putting out? Grow up, David. Domination is standard behavior and has been for centuries; as I previously pointed out, the violence begins when the women refuse to accept dominance. There's nothing new about that, either; it's just become more common because more women are rebelling.

A good many U.S. youngsters leave school at 16, too, though not 85%. And if it's taken for granted that DoS readers go to university, what am I doing here?

The possession of guns did a lot for the Yugoslavian partisans during WWII. I've read that in the later years the Germans controlled none of the countryside, only the cities. Of course, terrain helped.

The cause of the Great Depression can be argued over, but it was ended, not by any new system of energy, but by World War II. Tooling up for military production provided the necessary jobs and wages to get the world's economy moving again. In the U.S., there were as many or more people out of jobs in 1938 as in 1932, but when we started building weapons for England, there were jobs for everyone.

**Heidi Lyshol** I enjoyed your  
**Sandakervn. 81** essay on non-smoking.  
**N-0483 Oslo 4** As an active non-smo-  
**Norway** ker, I'm pleased to  
hear from a former  
smoker who understands both sides. Personally, I've managed to keep my lungs relatively free of fumes by cultivating a mostly psychosomatic asthma, disliking

pubs, bars and discos, and behaving in a very offensive manner towards anyone who tries to smoke near me in any area not marked "smoking is permitted." Smoking friends, when visiting, are compelled to take their nasty habit out of the house when wishing to indulge -- our tiny balcony can accommodate up to three skinny or two well-rounded smokers, left out in the cold till someone bothers to let them in again. I also quote statistics at them. Did you know that children of heavily smoking women in general have IQs up to 10 points lower than children of mothers who don't smoke at all? This may of course have nothing to do with smoking but rather be explained by inherited intelligence, postulating that smoking women score lower than women who don't. But I rarely mention that.

"Good news and not so": I hope you keep from slipping on rugs, that your body stays free from melanoma, and that you will attend Confiction as planned. I'm looking forward to seeing what our Dutch friends make of the convention-- I will probably be gophering and should be able to describe in graphic detail everything that went wrong. What does "loyalty" mean?

Sally A. Syrjala  
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02632

A very interesting editorial on the drugs that most don't like to admit are drugs-- alcohol and nicotine. My father both smoked and drank and died at the age of 54.

As for me, I never could get into the smoking habit. I tried a few times, but I could never understand why anyone could LIKE smoking the stuff. It just seemed to be so disgusting.

I remember my Auntie Grace. She smoked heavily. People would point out the risks to her. Emphysema being one of them. Well, she would never succumb to such a thing. Of course her final days saw an oxygen tank never far from her side.

I would show my father slides of the lung tissue of smokers. I would sicken at the sight of the curtains that reeked yellow from the Camels he smoked. But then, I also told him about how the Chlordane he used as a pesticide in his flower garden could get into the ground water supply and inflict dire consequences on it. You see, I had read Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring" and taken it to heart. I often wonder how I would react

to a child such as me. But then...

As to drinking, I have never consumed a beer. Hard liquor I have managed and every so often I will take a drink just to show that I can do so and not be "addicted." However, every time I tried to drink beer, I would see a glass of ale on the windowsill that my father had put there. I could even smell the contents of that glass. I would see myself as a 7-year-old who could not bring herself to try that concoction. As an adult, I have never been able to drink beer. When I have tried, my throat closed and refused to swallow. I can't say that I even know what beer or ale tastes like. There is too much psychological baggage from my father's addiction to allow me to know the sensual taste of the beverage. I think this has been a very good thing. There have been enough hangups in my life and I do wonder at times at what would have happened to me had alcoholism been added to the list of problems that I had to overcome.

My husband used to smoke. His mother used to harp at him to stop. I remember once upon a time telling her to stop telling him to stop. As soon as everyone stopped harping at him, he stopped. You have to want to stop something of your own accord. No one else can do it for you. As the old spiritual goes, "You got to walk that lonesome valley. You got to walk it by yourself..."

As to cancer. Who knows? Twenty years ago my mother-in-law received a certified letter from one of her doctors stating that if she didn't do exactly as he dictated, she would soon die. She did not do as he dictated and she is still alive. I think this ties in with the alcohol addict learning to quit trying to control. You have to trust that what will happen will be as it should. We cannot control life, nor should we. Somehow things will work out as they should.

Steven B. Fellows  
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Golden, CO 80401

I tried cigarettes a few times. I could never smoke more than three in a pack. I could not taste anything. I remember my friend and I when we were little had sneakily bought a pack from a vending machine. In the woods we tried them. We agreed that they did make us look like adults and made us very cool. Now that I think back, all it did was make an 11 and 13-year-old look very stupid. I have smoked a few



cigarettes since then but they never held any real attraction.

I tried a pipe once; it lasted for one week. I didn't have the patience to keep drawing on it to keep it lit. Eventually I broke the stem.

Cigars are a different story. My father used to chain smoke them; fairly cheap ones. He developed high blood pressure and the doctor suggested that he quit. He did, "cold turkey," and has never touched them since. Now, they make him a little nauseous when he smells them.

I have also tried cigars. The real cheap ones are disgusting, but I must confess I like the better ones (read "more expensive"). The fact that they are expensive (65¢ to \$2 each!) keeps me from smoking them constantly or even often. Also, I would not and could not work while puffing on a cigar. More important, I don't smoke every day because I am revolted by the idea of being addicted to something.

I stopped drinking coffee for the same reason. It made me sick to think that I might need a cup of coffee to get me active. I was drinking tea heavily but after I came down with heartburn I stopped having a cup or two every night.

As for alcohol, I never drank it a lot. In undergraduate school I would get drunk out of my mind, but I never felt good about it afterwards (not referring to the hangover.) My parents never minded me drinking as long as I didn't get drunk or need a drink. (I never told them about the times in college.)

rich brown

508 N. Highland #B4  
Arlington, VA 22201

I was a 2½-  
pack-a-day man  
for much of the  
30+ years I smoked;

I most recently gave it up in December 1988 and hope I never go back. I phrase

it that way ("most recently gave it up" and "hope I never go back") because I once gave it up for two years, found myself thinking, hey, one more probably couldn't hurt--and wound up getting re-addicted for close to three more years.

Before I put my arm out of joint patting myself on the back, I must admit that, for at least the past quarter century, I've had a substitute for smoking cigarettes (and drinking alcohol) which, as far as I'm concerned, has but one minor drawback: it's illegal. Yes, that's right--I use a mildly euphoric, beneficial, non-addictive, smokable herb that never leaves me incapable of making love, that puts me about on a level of drinking half a bottle of wine or a six-pack of beer but in all the years I've used it has never left me to "pay" for my pleasure with so much as a headache or hangover or a feeling of nausea. On the other hand, regular use does mean that I will never have asthma, ulcers or cataracts and probably never have high blood pressure.

And yet the government--which (I'm told) has my best interests at heart--would rather that I choose, in its place, a poison that eats away brain cells, as well as the liver and kidneys and, for some users born with the wrong kind of genes, an addiction that, if unchecked, will almost certainly kill them; and/or a non-useful, non-euphoric herb that is highly addictive and, if unchecked, will kill me if nothing else kills me first.

Now I see by your fanzine that 'ol "iron butt" Robert "Buck" Coulson would not be bothered if my friend Ted White were murdered by the state for having helped provide me with this herb. But I cynically expect no better of Coulson or the government, and so have never paid either of them any more attention than they deserve.

## Part II: ROCK LOCS

Ruth Berman  
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Minneapolis, MN 55416

I enjoyed your  
article on rock  
music. It made  
me feel what it

would be like if I liked rock music. You're probably right that one thing about it that turns people off is a dislike for having orgasms in public. I think in many cases, though, that even more important is a physiological sensitivity to loud noises. Rock is made

to be played loud--so loud that its fans tend to suffer from deafness--and for someone with good hearing, it is painful to the ears. I think you may be reaching too far in the argument to suggest that rock ought to have a special appeal to sf fans because it sounds alien. On that basis, all contemporary music ought to be interesting to sf fans and the work by non-popular composers more so, because it goes further away



from predictable sounds. There are quite a few stories which involve depictions of what symphonic music might be doing in the future, and quite a few about what popular music might be doing, but you don't often get the feeling that the future has both in a single story. I don't think Isaac Asimov is particularly interested in any kind of music, is he? At least I can't recall any stories of his offhand in which music is an important element.

*{Nor can I, but Asimov's one known music passion is for Gilbert & Sullivan (one I share with him), but his massive Annotated G&S concentrates on the lyrics, with very little mention of the music.}*

I had some fun one time in a story set in an alternate universe of Ptolemaic astronomy ("Ptolemaic Hi-Jack," in Worlds of Fantasy, a short-lived companion to Galaxy and Worlds of If), having the characters tranquilized by accidentally turning their radio in to the Music of the Spheres, which of course is about as non-modern as you can get in fictional uses of music, unless someone has made use of the recent theory that the dinosaurs with hollow-horned crests of no other discernible function used them to honk warnings to each other of predator dinos ("Honk in you hate tyranosaurus?"). A sort of self-propelled do-it-yourself live contra bassoons.

Gordon Eklund  
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Seattle, WA 98188

People who like rock 'n' roll without having grown up with it are almost as tough to find as people who can't stand it and did. It's one of the few areas in which the old original generation gap still seems to exist. I'm not sure where the dividing line lies. Rock 'n' roll first got really popular in 1956 (that's when I first started listening, about the time of "Heartbreak Hotel"), so assuming that anybody already out of high school would be too old to be caught up in it, that gives us a birth date cutoff point of 1938 or '39. In actuality, in most instances, I think the line falls somewhat later than that. My impression is that the original proto rock 'n' rollers were mostly in junior high school or even (like me) not quite there yet. Which is to say that it's pretty hopeless on your part to try to convince Asimov that he

ought to become a rock 'n' roller. For me rock (along with science fiction and movies) has always formed a major backdrop to my life even during those times when for various reasons I wasn't listening to a whole lot of it. Currently, happily, I do listen to a fair amount (mostly in the car driving to and from work and at work itself, where personal stereos are permitted part of the time), though it's gotten tougher in recent years to ferret out the good from the crap. One of the nice things about rock used to be that what was popular was almost always what was worth listening to. (Singles in the '50s--albums in the '60s.) But the field has fragmented so much in recent years that this is no longer the case and a person has to really hunt in order to find the good stuff, way too much of which never even gets played on commercial radio. (Which is mostly full of the greatest hits of the '50s and '60s. Yawn.) In spite of this, the best albums of 1989 stack up well against the best of 1979 or 1969--and against the best singles of 1959 too. The fact that at least three of 1989's best albums were made by artists closer to 50 than 40 (Neil Young, Lou Reed, Bob Dylan) is one indication of how much rock has evolved over the years and why it's not apt to dry up artistically any time soon. (Another indication is that most of the rest of the best were made by people in their 20s.)

*{From SHEET JANE #2, in FAPA 211}*

Russell Chauvenet  
11 Sussex Road  
Silver Spring, MD  
20910

When you say you have no stupid friends and don't associate with dolts, can your friends say the same? It has been my impression that rock music consists mainly in an attempt to deafen the audience with the laudable intent of making them unable to hear any more of it. Yet you write about it for no less than seven pages that might have been better used to wrap fish. Truly amazing. My low opinion of the stuff is due to my ability to hear some of it. Otherwise I hear only nearby thunder and bass drums in the vicinity...

*{From DETOURS #35, FAPA 211, and I think I should mention that even before I'd received the FAPA mailing, I got a card from Russ explaining that he was merely being flippant. We ARE still friends}*

John D. Owen  
 4 Highfield Close  
 Newport Pagnell  
 Bucks, MK16 9AZ U.K.

It takes some-  
 thing to strike  
 close to home to  
 get me to loc, and  
 this you managed  
 with your "Notes for An Open Letter" in  
 DoS #57. Your description of your growth  
 in awareness and appreciation of rock  
 'n' roll was a marvellous evocation that  
 tallied strongly with mine, even though  
 I came from a post-war generation (born  
 1946), and was thus closer to the front  
 lines of the explosive growth in popular  
 music. Until the late '50s, the only mu-  
 sic I heard was very bland, light pop  
 stuff, plus old semi-music hall material  
 that my parents had on aged 78s. It was  
 radio that got me intrigued with the new  
 music, too, on a channel called Radio  
 Luxemburg, which broadcast from Luxem-  
 berg in English every evening (I think  
 it did more domestic broadcasting during  
 the day), and was a fair imitation of  
 what I would imagine an American commer-  
 cial station would have been at the  
 time.

Now, British broadcasting at the time  
 was dire: old fashioned, very narrow  
 minded in musical tastes. There were  
 basically three channels: Some Service,  
 which was largely current affairs and  
 talking head shows; the Third Programme,  
 which was all classical (and which I  
 avoided like the plague); and the Light  
 Programme, which had light music and  
 comedy. So the only place to hear any  
 'rock' music was on the Light Prog, in  
 request shows, and then generally with  
 pretty limited coverage. So Radio Lux-  
 emburg, which at that time ran many  
 programmes sponsored by the big British  
 record companies, was the only place to  
 hear new record releases. Reception was  
 often lousy (it wasn't that powerful a  
 transmitter), but there were probably  
 thousands of us music-starved youngsters  
 avidly listening in every evening with  
 a fervour that an evangelist station  
 would envy. It opened up a new world to  
 many of us, and I suspect was almost  
 directly responsible for the huge beat  
 boom of British groups in the mid-'60s.

And of course you are right: the  
 thing that attracted all of us pre-pub-  
 escent kids to rock'n'roll was the fact  
 that it was sexy, and that was the very  
 thing that made the strait-laced BBC  
 look down upon it for so long. (It was  
 the late '60s before the Beeb got around  
 to launching its own channel for modern  
 pop music.) The songs were about being  
 young and wanting it real bad! Since

then, of course, the audience that was  
 turned on by Elvis and Chuck and the  
 Beatles et al has grown up and has, by  
 and large, retained their love of that  
 kind of music. Many of us might be a  
 bit scathing about our offsprings' cur-  
 rent choices, but at heart they are  
 rockers, too, and often end up raiding  
 our own record collections to listen to  
 some of the "golden oldies."

Only recently this was brought home to  
 me when I discovered another SF fan in  
 the Biology labs below my new offices at  
 the Open University. He's a mere strip-  
 ling of 23, grew up with flower power as  
 a dead thing, was first turned onto  
 music by punk, plays guitar in a group  
 here at the OU, yet seems to have more  
 interest in the sounds of the '60s than  
 anything new generated in the '90s. So  
 I'm feeding him tapes of stuff from the  
 '60s and early '70s, and he seems to be  
 delighted. But then, I can remember  
 when I first started work having a  
 friend 10 years my senior who loaned me  
 copies of great rock'n'roll tracks from  
 the mid-to-late '50s, so I'm only keep-  
 ing the ball rolling, so to speak.

And if you think you can see a hint of  
 an analogy between rock music and SF  
 fandom, well, you wouldn't be wrong,  
 would you? That self-same rock'n'roll-  
 ing youth is also loaning copies of old  
 fanzines from the '70s and '80s, reading  
 himself into fandom (Ghod knows when  
 he'll get his research project done!),  
 so I guess it's all part of life's great  
 adventure, eh?

Harry Warner Jr.  
 423 Summit Ave.  
 Hagerstown, MD  
 21740

My memory of  
 the 1930s has much  
 more music than  
 you recall. Almost  
 every young person  
 had and often used an easily portable  
 instrument like a harmonica, kazoo or  
 ukelele. In most houses there was a  
 piano and at least one family member who  
 could play it well. All the large pat-  
 riotic organizations had either a band  
 or a drum and bugle corps. The YMCA had  
 a huge children's band. Most churches  
 of any size had an orchestra to play for  
 Sunday school and to give concerts for  
 religious holidays. There were at least  
 a half-dozen large choruses in Hagers-  
 town either attached to a fraternal or-  
 ganization or independent, in addition  
 to all the church choirs. Some business  
 and professional men had an informal  
 chamber orchestra to play classical  
 music solely for their own pleasure,

never giving a public concert or permitting non-musicians to attend their weekly sessions. But the biggest difference between then and now is the fact that so many people made music for the fun of it a half-century ago. Now music is mostly something to be listened to, not made.

There were some popular songs that dealt with sex or social issues. Ring Lardner, of all people, started a campaign against "Paradise" because paradise is used in the song as an obvious euphemism for copulation. "Petting in the Park" was another that described foreplay quite detailedly. "My Forgotten Man," which referred to the lost generation and World War I veterans who had turned into bums, attracted much attention when it wound up a Busby Berkeley musical. "Got the Jitters" dealt with the tensions of fast-paced life, and "Let's Have Another Cup of Coffee" was a proposal for dealing with the Depression.

I'm a lover of science fiction and I don't like rock. Rock (generalizing, of course) is abysmally infantile in its nursery-rhyme type melodic snatches, its harmonic limitations, its shortwindedness, its failure to utilize such basic musical resources as contrast in dynamics or tempo, its formlessness, its maddening repetitions of phrases that are too banal to have been played once, and its monotony of instrumentation. I don't like rock because its lyrics encourage violence, promiscuity, illegal drug use, unmotivated rebellion against authority, and illiteracy. I don't like rock because it has been circumscribing more and more of my activities: I dare not go to a movie in a theater unless someone has assured me it doesn't include a rock score performed at a deafening volume; I've stopped patronizing record stores because they play rock over the public address system at a level which could do more damage to my hearing. I must switch channels on the TV set every time there's a commercial break to avoid rock fragments that accompany the pitches for this or that product; I rarely attend baseball games because of what comes out of the loudspeakers between innings; and when I stop for a red light, I may be unable to hear an approaching emergency vehicle's siren because the idiot who is halted beside me has a radio or cassette playing overwhelmingly loud.

*(From HORIZONS #201. Now that Harry mentions it, I do*

recall having a small harmonica and a "Jew's harp" when I was 6 or

7 years old; and even my parents, when I was in my early teens "took in" the neighbors' piano when they moved out of town for a while. I recall trying to coax music from the various instruments, never succeeding to my own satisfaction. As for the generalizations about rock... well, I can accept that *Harry* doesn't like it, but I'd have to say his analysis of *what's* wrong with it is based on obvious and acknowledged incomplete information.)

**Pavel Gregorić Jr.** Rock music seems  
**Tuškanac 22** to be one of those  
**41000 Zagreb** topics about which  
**Yugoslavia** everyone has an opinion. My modest life experience has taught me not to discuss five things if I want to avoid verbal and other fights. These are: politics, religion, sports, other men's women and music.

However, I'm inclined to agree with Rich Dengrove who says nobody can like or dislike all of a genre. Thus I like some rock, I like some pop-music, some Rap and disco music, some jazz and most of classical music. I indeed love classics like Beethoven (Symphony #6 is for me an embodiment of true, genuine harmony, and nobody has ever achieved a greater degree of musical perfection), Mozart, Paganini, Schubert, Tchaikovsky, Vivaldi and others. True, I don't like most of the recent, 20th century classic composers, as they claim to be, but I nevertheless think classical music is the highest achievement of man in his endeavor to produce something Beautiful. The proof for that is time itself. How many rock, jazz, blues and other songs are forgotten? But people have been enjoying Beethoven's Fifth Symphony or Mozart's 41st Symphony "Jupiter" for almost 200 years, and there's little doubt that they will continue doing so for the next 200 years.

Another kind of music I'm into is what's known as New Age. It started long before Jean Michel Jarre, who stands in front of the others in popularity. I like all of his music and I have all his records. The other composer is Kitaro, whose music is in the West considered an absolute of meditative tunes. All I've heard by him was indeed delightful. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to find his records over here. That's why I have only a tape recording (from CD) of his latest LP, "The Light of the Spirit." Vangelis is a fairly popular New Age composer. His most popular work is the soundtrack from

the film, "Chariots of Fire." Vangelis is quite a prolific composer with 15 LPs, of which I've heard less than half. The next one who deserves to be mentioned is Vollenveider, with his specialty, electric harp. Then there are Tangerine Dream, Gandalf, Froese, Individual Sensitivity and others.

I have never been disappointed in this music. I always enjoy it.

There isn't much for me to say about smoking. I'm a sworn non-smoker and don't like the smell of smoke in my vicinity. My Dad smokes, but in rather small quantities--four to eight cigarettes a day. He's a cultivated smoker; he enjoys smoking. He never takes a cigarette before having breakfast and dinner. My mother has been a hard-core smoker for many years, but she has dropped the deadly average of two packets to 15 cigarettes a day. Being a non-smoker does not make me unable to admire those who quit smoking. I think, Don, that quitting smoking was the healthiest decision you've ever made...er...well, there might be one even more healthy.

Vance Aandahl                      Like you, I'd  
1016 Oneida St.                    like to read Asi-  
Denver, CO 80220                mov on rock, but  
   I'd rather read  
Blish, Bester, Sturgeon or Dick... four  
cool cats... cats cats cats... alley  
cats and Persians, Siamese and Sylvesters,  
Toms and Pegleg Petes, Krazys,  
Captain Wows and Burmese, the Maine Coon  
Connection, calico kittens and something...  
something so soft you'd never guess it  
hides a retractable stiletto: help! I'm  
trapped inside Cordwainer Smith's right  
frontal lobe without a pinset! I propose a  
postal match, to be monitored by the Mother  
Superior Cat of the Cosmos and also  
published in DON-o-SAUR.

{Challenge accepted. Here are the games thus far: Vance  
white)      Don black: 1. Nf3, d5; 2. g3, c6; 3. Bg2 Nf6  
Don white, Vance black: 1. c4, e5 2. Nf3

Ted White                              I was startled  
1014 N. Tuckahoe St.                by Mike Glick-  
Falls Church, VA                    sohn's confes-  
22046                                    sion that "I've  
   never cared one

way or the other about music. In any form. (On the other hand I care passionately about such things as fandom, baseball, scotch, poker, etc...) I can accept this in Mike, because I've come to accept it in others I've known, but

I don't understand it.

To me there is no comparison of music with those other things Mike does care passionately about, even fandom. I mean, I've been a fan for 39 years, the vast majority of my life, and I expect to remain a fan for the rest of my life, and I have on occasions spoken passionately on the subject. But.

Music is basic. It's pre-verbal and non verbal communication. Music has been with me, surrounding me and part of me, all my life. I sometimes wake from dreams with melodies running through my head (usually remembered real tunes), and I often dream music and dream of music (once I dreamed I jammed with Thelonious Monk...playing an instrument with which I had no familiarity at all, learning it as I went, a very scary thing to be doing when jamming with a Real Musician; unsurprisingly, I wasn't very happy with what I accomplished). And while I am awake I am either listening to music or "listening" to music in my head, a kind of ongoing subliminal soundtrack to my life.

The great thing about music is that it exists in so many forms -- there's bound to be something that you like, that you respond to (or so I would have thought; Mike confounds me on this point). I believe that deep in my soul is something primal, a basic music perhaps unique to me (but I suspect this is true for most of us, each of us in our own unique way). Had I greater talent and greater skills I would try to bring this music up from the depths and realize it (or a shadow of it) for the rest of the world to hear. As it is, I recognize other shadows and suggestions of it in the music of others, and on a few occasions I've touched it and evoked it myself (my "Slow Mingus Shuffle/Goodbye" which I recorded in 1979 came closer than anything else until the late '80s when I recorded "Crimson Tide," "Unanswered Questions" (a bow to Charles Ives) and "Spring Song," the latter a collaboration with Matthew Moore and Dave Chandler). But nothing I've ever heard fully encompasses that basic music, that ideal music that exists incoherently within me. (Music that came close: "April in Paris" by Sauter-Finegan; a variety of pieces by Ellington; Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring"; much of Bartok, Poulenc and Janacek; Teo Macero's '50s works--now out on a Stash CD, amazingly; a great deal by Charles Mingus, including his posthumous "Epitaph"

CD; Brian Wilson's Beach Boys; King Crimson; scores of Italian progressive rock bands now newly reavailable on Italian and Japanese CDs; SFF and early Tangerine Dream; each contains hints and echoes and if somehow all could be combined and reconciled maybe it would be close...) Each time I hear something new that I like I recognize in it a quality that strikes home; an aspect of that basic music at my core. Does this happen to others? I assume it does.

As various letterwriters note, we all have our individual preferences in music. There's no arguing taste. But for some people it's not enough to dislike (or fail to respond to) a particular form of music: they have to put it down. This too is hard to argue with. But when someone uses "facts" to accomplish this putdown, argument is possible.

Dale Speirs says, "I consider opera and ballet to be fossilized artforms intended more as an opportunity for rich folks to preen and display in public rather than as a source of good music. (Add jazz to that as well.)"

He had me in vague and partial agreement until he got to his parenthetical inclusion of jazz, and then I started questioning the whole lot. To begin with, his criticism that opera and ballet exist for the rich to show off is a narrow one: it applies at best only to performances, and specifically concert-hall performances. It ignores PBS television and all the opera and ballet music recorded and listened to via radio or recordings in the home--the audience for which is vastly larger than that for concerts. And it applies not at all to jazz, which has rarely attracted "rich folk" and rarely been performed in venues where the rich might "preen."

But are they "fossilized artforms?" You might make a case for this with opera, but only if you stay with the warhorses (which I have never found very listenable--but that's me). Contemporary opera is still being written, and ranges from post-Berg to kitsch. The offspring of opera is the musical theatre, which seems to be enjoying a renaissance in recent years and isn't at all fossilized. Then there's ballet. I suppose some would find "Swan Lake" fossilized; classical ballet bores me too. But how about Stravinsky's ballet scores? Going on 80 years old, and still lively. There's much more modern ballet, of course--modern both in sense of the dance and modern in sense of the

music. Modern ballet uses jazz, rock, serial music, you name it. It's very much a living artform.

And jazz? A creature of this century, jazz has enjoyed a very fertile evolution, producing much excellent music. Whitney Balliet called jazz "the sound of surprise," and that it is, hardly a quality of a fossilized artform. Indeed jazz is still evolving. I can only conclude that because these forms of music don't push Speirs' buttons, he has lumped them together and condemned them as antiquated out of his own ignorance.

Richard Freeman exhibits a similar kind of ignorance, out of which comes his pronouncements that "jazz would be dead by 1967" and "classical music was as dead as jazz and folk," meaningless statements which rank on par with that famous statement made by a patent office official in the late 19th Century that everything had now been invented. He claims to know the music field from the inside, but his statements confound that claim. He doesn't even know who "had" disco ("each social class had their own brand of rock--lower class had metal... uppermiddles slummers had punk... I don't know who it was had disco..."): it was the yuppies and the rising gay culture, Richard: people who frequented singles bars. And the notion that "rap is set to Sousatime" and this is "proof that blacks do not have a natural sense of rhythm" is offensively ignorant. How does he define "Sousatime"? March rhythms? 2/4 rhythms? That's not rap--not even close. Rap/hiphop and musical cousins go-go and house music are all based, primarily, on dance rhythms, usually in the disco-range of 120 beats per minute.

As an amateur musician I have discovered that when you get down to it, it's just music. While some musicians are partisan and scornful of types in which they aren't involved, most musicians I've known are appreciative of skill and talent no matter what form of music it's manifested in. Learning to perform music on a level that an audience will find it listenable is in itself demanding of skill and talent, irrespective of the category of music. Put two musicians of any form or culture together and they will find ways to make music together, to dig each other, to enjoy each other.

## Part III. Arms and others

Clifton Amsbury  
768 Amador St.  
Richmond, CA  
94805

"The proper re-  
spect for personal  
arms which I advoca-  
ted does not imply li-  
cense for any gun  
nut to play with the toys. It does imply  
the right of refusal to use them, but  
not to be ignorant of them.

*{I'm still not sure I agree. Should we also have mandatory instruction in respect for switch-blade knives, brass knuckles and other types of personal weaponry? If kids can refuse sex education, surely they can refuse weapons classes? Some people demand the right to remain ignorant of certain things.}*

Roy Lavender  
2507 E. 17th St.  
Long Beach CA  
90804

Vincent Clarke,  
you may as well  
comment on gun  
laws. Everyone  
else does, as  
though legislating against something  
would make it go away.

Probably the most restrictive laws  
against private ownership of guns in  
this country are those of the District  
of Columbia (Washington, D.C.) And it  
is the murder capital of the world.

California has fairly liberal gun  
laws (by current standards). A private  
citizen, after a background check and a  
waiting period, can buy a gun. You  
might think that would lead to a more or  
less uniform murder rate in California  
cities, since all are under the same  
laws. No way. Cities of comparable  
size range from 0 murders per 100,000  
inhabitants to figures close to Washing-  
ton.

In case you think it is the proximity  
of a large city and that the low rates  
are only in quiet rural towns, Compton  
is among the deadliest in the state,  
while Culver City and Torrance rate  
among the safest. All three are within  
Greater Los Angeles and are only minutes  
apart.

There are many strange things about  
the anti-gun crowd. For example, they  
point at England's laws as a shinging  
example, when 78 out of 99 cities in  
California are safer (1987 figures).

Yes, the smaller, rural communities  
tend to be safer, but not in a uniform  
manner and there is no apparent connec-  
tion with number of guns owned.

In other states, I know of cities  
where guns are commonly worn on the  
streets. Again, no visible relationship  
between number of guns and violence.

People do seem to be a little more  
polite there.

Alex Gilliland, read me a little more  
carefully. I do not approve of the  
concentration camp approach to housing  
criminals. It's a lousy answer, but one  
we can afford.

Nor do I approve of housing three  
quarters of a million felons in reason-  
able comfort at a cost of over \$25,000  
each per year. That's well above the  
average citizen's income and more than  
twice the average income of our elderly.

We simply can't afford to house,  
clothe and feed able bodies men in bet-  
ter conditions than our homeless and  
elderly.

In addition, most of that number will  
be out on (court ordered) early release  
because of overcrowding. A majority of  
them will be back. In terms of time  
served, murder is way down on the list.

We also store our murderers on Death  
Row or on life sentences. We can't af-  
ford that either. Execution is a lousy  
answer, but it does cut down on repeats  
and is a lot cheaper.

When it comes down to it, how would  
you feel about mandatory execution for  
the drug dealer who sold the stuff to a  
kid who then died of an overdose? Say  
by hanging, in the same neighborhood.  
Not later than daybreak the next day  
after conviction.

I'd have to think a while about what  
to do with the CIA official who author-  
ized an "off the shelf" (self financing)  
operation that moved guns to the Contras  
and cocaine on the return flight.

As for your prisoner/acreage numbers,  
the prisoner eats a similar amount  
whether he grows it in his own garden or  
some farmer grows it, sells it to the  
prison, and then contributes his taxes  
to help pay for it.

There is not likely to be a shortage  
of Federally owned land, in case someone  
takes my suggestion to heart. There is  
plenty. The U.S. Government controls as  
much acreage west of the Mississippi as  
the total acreage east of it.

As for that "enormous and expensive  
wall," you didn't read those words in my  
loc. I mentioned razor ribbon, which is  
cheap enough that it is used around  
parking lots and back yards of small  
manufacturing plants. Barb wire is even  
cheaper. Farmers put up miles of it.

Neither will stop a determined man,  
but two or three lines of it will slow

him down until the guard dogs get there.

All of these are crummy answers, but we can afford them, and saving \$15 or \$20 billion here and there has its points. As for losing my temper and "blowing away an intruder," temper has nothing to do with it. When it comes down to thee or me surviving, I have definite preferences. And even in California, killing an armed intruder is still considered acceptable. I can't say about New York subways.

John Thiel  
30 N. 19th St.  
Lafayette, IN  
47904

I thought when I looked at the opening cartoon that I'd seen it before. I don't think you need to worry that Alexis will sue or plot revenge. He never did either to me when I saw him at his wood-burning, when he lived in Lafayette. I have DoS #57 but am unable to trace the origin in it of the discussion of Ted White to which Bill Bridget contributes in his letter published just after mine in #58. I know I missed the original comments and I apologize for asking about it, but DoS is so full of arguments that it is intolerable trying to scan back letter columns simply looking for a reference. Would you spell out the origins of this?

I'd like to mention the similarity of what is being described of Ted White to what happened to the mayor of Washington, D.C.

*{It's no easier for me to scan back letter columns than it is for anyone else, but... I think it was Ruth Berman who asked if the death penalty for drug dealers, previously suggested by two or three different loccers, should apply to Ted. What similarity?}*

Alexis A. Gilliland  
4030 8th St. South  
Arlington, VA 22204

Well, yes, I noticed the mis-attribution of my cartoon; no big deal. Wreaking vengeance on some poor hapless fanned for incompetence is surely about as productive as mopping the beach at high tide. If you need some sort of penance, try reading Moskowitz's *The Immortal Storm* again.

People in the letter column talking about their minimal experience with firearms. In the U.S. Army ('54-'56, as the Korean War was winding down), I got to qualify with the M1 and the carbine, as well as familiarization firing with the .45 pistol, the BAR, the .30 caliber machine gun, .50 caliber machine gun, the 105mm howitzer, and some light mortar or other. Plus, of course, cleaning

all those weapons after using them. I don't own a gun, and doubt that a stash of weaponry will make you safer.

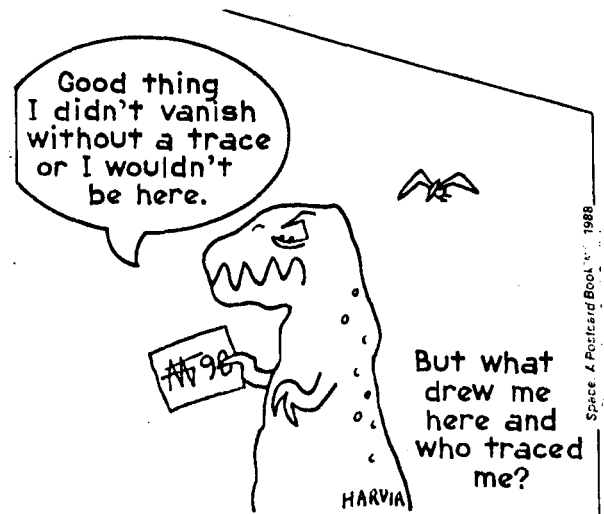
Clifton Amsbury says that the right to bear arms was "linked" to a well-regulated militia. Well, not exactly. The Second Amendment says, "A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed." The right to bear arms was justified by invoking militia, but the right is explicit and as specific as anyone could wish. To be sure, the matching duty has withered into nothingness but the right is alive and well in the heart of America. Don't comment that a child has the right not to bear arms is true, but misses the point: a child needs to know how to handle arms, even if they choose not to bear them.

*{And I still disagree, as noted above.}*

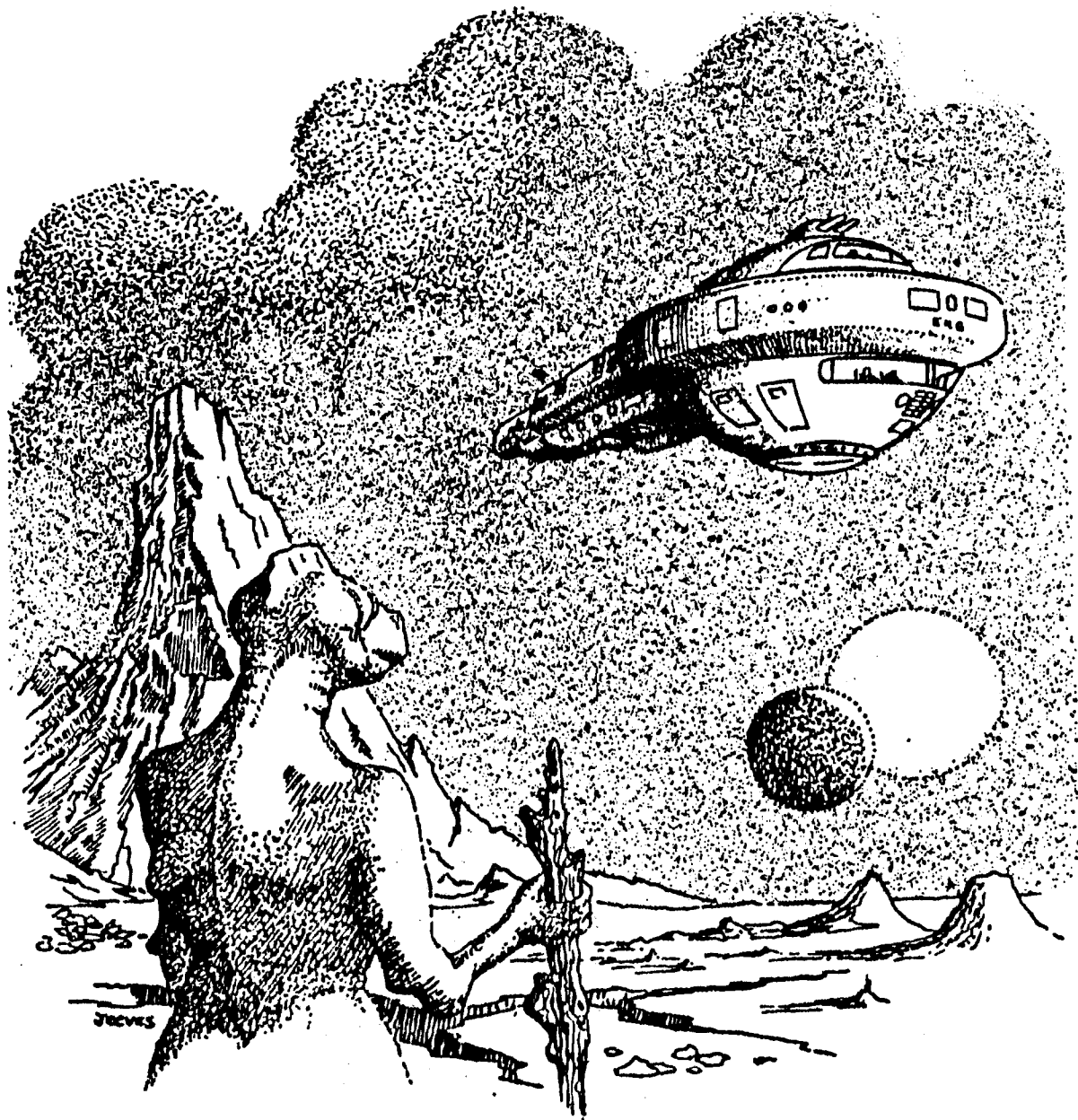
Sorry to hear you aren't totally benign. Buying time is fine as long as they continue to keep selling it to you. Interesting the way you were able to slip the habits of alcohol and tobacco. When I was 3 or 4, my Aunt Connie lit up a Lucky Strike, and I asked if I could, too. She gave me my very own cigarette, and lit it for me. Two drags were all it took to get me off smoking for life.

#### Also Heard From:

Sheryl Birkhead, Bill Bridget, Camille "Caz" Cazedessus, Brad Foster, Ann Greenberg, Teddy Harvia, Colin Langeveld, Stan & Lin Nestel, Berislav Pinjuh, Jerry Pournelle, Christine Ryan, Jack Speer, Alan J. Sullivan, Mitch Thornhill, R Lorraine Tutihasi, B. Ware, Lee Howard Nylie.







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