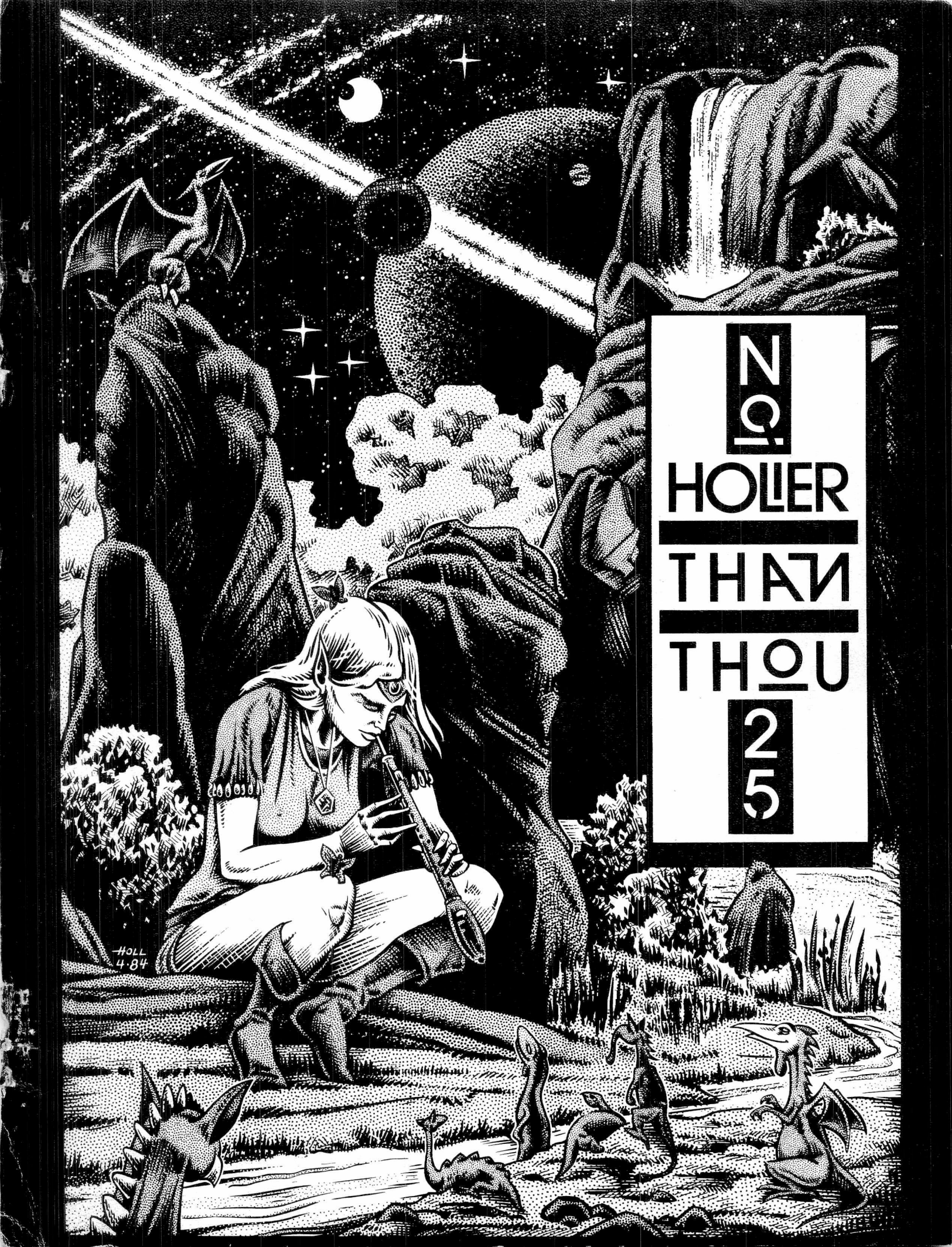
NO HOLLER THAN THOU
25
HOLL
4·84

I would like to thank Harlan Ellison and Bill Warren for their obituaries.

A long series of commercials has been running on American television; sponsored by the makers of the American beer, Bud Light *ick* ((that *ick* was an editorial interjection which is made whenever I think of the very concept of 'light beer' *ick*)). In these commercials there is an unending (and quite inventive) series of vignettes (usually about three per commercial) about some person going up to a bar and asking for "a light" - and, instead of the asked-for light beer *ick*, receiving some sort of item related to light (in the bright, visual sense) such as dogs running through flaming hoops or any number of differing kinds of flashing lights. Ad nauseum. Actually, they are usually quite clever (with their message being that one should never ask for a "light" but should always ask for Bud Light *ick* by name) and they are commercials which I enjoy seeing as they are often amusing.

Being the wiseass that I am, I have turned this commercial around in the shop (and I expect that those of you who know me well have already guessed what I am going to say next). For the rest of you: when a customer asks me for a light I reach under the counter; instead of producing the expected match, though, I bring forth a can of Bud Light *ick*.

There are those, upon the revelation of the can, remain bemildred until I explain the reversal. Most customers, though, laugh; some, right away, the rest at varying intervals. At a guess I would assume that those who laugh earlier are those who can more easily comprehend how I have twisted reality.

And that is the theme of this issue of HTT, twisted reality. To be more precise,

Welcome to the Alternate Universe HOLIER THAN THOU, #25 in the series (but this one more than any of the others). In actuality, there will be several Alternate Universes presented in this issue, some directly contradictory to the others.

But, before we begin with the fun and games, ∉ ***ψσɾ∂ ɾ†σ⊕ σ#ɾ ∉ρσ⋔∉σɾ*** let me get a few colophonish things our of the way. Such as telling you that HOLIER THAN THOU #25 is by Marty Cantor of 11565 Archwood St., North Hollywood, CA 91606-1703, USA, and whose telephone number (were you desirous of calling him) is (818) 982-1746. This is Hoo Hah Publication No. 354 and is a production of the Renegade Press. Produced in the Winter of 1987 (a bit later than wanted, but that is explained much later in the zine) and is available (after being produced twice-yearly) to both Allen Sundry and the rest of you for the faanish usual (or, and also, typeballs which fit IBM Selectric I's). Copies *are* available for US$5.00 each, but only the first one to anybody (after which you may get copies *only* for the faanish usual (or for typeballs).

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For the curious amongst you I should explain that the lino which started off this page is a quote from DE PROFUNDIS #173, the newsletter of The LASFS. What the editor really wanted to do was to thank Harlan for providing an obituary of Mike Hodel (and the same to Bill for providing an obituary of Dave Fox). Mike Hodel was the host of Hour 25, a Science Fiction talk show on non-commercial radio

station KPFK-FM. Dave Fox joined LASFS back in 1934 or 1935 and was a more-or-less regularly attending member until his death in mid-1986.

But the editor of DE PROFUNDIS had a most interesting way of expressing his thanks and the reality-distorting result was the perfect way to begin an issue of this zine which will have many more of them in its pages.

For example, which reality is the "correct" one - the one described by Harry Warner in his column installment which begins later on this page or the one written by Marc Ortlieb (which immediately follows Harry's contribution). Or are they both correct in their own Alternate Universes. One thing is certain, though - they both seem to be mutually exclusive. Maybe. You be the judge. Better yet, just sit back and enjoy.

ALL MY YESTERDAYS

BY HARRY WARNER, JR.

Nobody had ever heard of a loc when I wrote my first locs. The term was invented long after fans had fallen into the habit of writing letters of comment to first the prozines and then the pioneer fanzines.

I'm pretty sure it was just a half-century ago when I wrote my first letters to Brass Tacks, the name of the loc section in Astounding during the Tremaine and Campbell eras. I hope so, at least, because I've been telling people that this is my golden anniversary as a fan in the sense that it was in 1936 when I first did more about science fiction than read it and save the prozines I bought. Fortunately, there's no way anyone can disprove my memory, unless Sam Moskowitz' research into old science fiction has even extended to finding and preserving files of letters from readers.

As I remember the sequence of events, the first loc to Astounding didn't get printed but the second one did. Finding my stumbling prose in Brass Tacks was an enormous thrill to my 13-year-old self, even though it wasn't the first time I'd been published in a periodical. Several years earlier, I'd been precocious enough to have a book review accepted by St. Nicholas, a wonderful but long-defunct children's magazine. But I have no idea today why I wrote those letters to Astounding instead of to Wonder Stories or Amazing Stories, which I liked just as much. I believe I managed to get one or two other letters published by Astounding, and in one of them I mentioned the fact that I'd like to hear from any readers who might be interested in corresponding. This produced a half-dozen or more letters from all over the nation and one from England, so my pioneer locs launched me into another major form of fanac in the 1930s which has become quite secondary in importance today, corresponding. The appearance of those letters resulted in my receiving sample copies of a fanzine or two, but for some reason I didn't find them very interesting, perhaps because they weren't very good fanzines. It was two years later when one of those correspondents persuaded me to co-edit with him a fanzine and this decision thrust me fully into the fanzine phase of fandom.

Someday, perhaps, someone will have the patience and energy to publish a big volume on the golden age of the prozine letter sections. I gave next to no attention to this phase of fandom when I wrote my two fan history books, partly because my manuscripts were dreadfully long without that added material, partly because I

didn't know how to go about tracking down the individuals or corporations capable of giving me permission to quote from The Ether Vibrates and Discussions and The Reader Speaks and the other famous loc sections in prozines. Many fans became active by using prozine locs as their ports of entry into fandom, some fans became as prozine letterhacks without doing anything else of note in fandom, and you could create a wonderful guessing game by quoting sections of prozine locs by fans and pros who later became famous and asking players to identify the writers of those untypical excerpts.

I don't remember the first loc I wrote to a fanzine. I doubt if it was written before 1938, perhaps it didn't come into existence until 1939, because the first fanzine I published was distributed late in 1938 and only then did trades begin to bring me a substantial number of fanzines published by other people. But I occasionally run across my copies of fanzines published by various people in the late 1930s and early 1940s, and I find myself in their loc sections with fair frequency. Those early fanzine locs were written out of sheer desire to inform fanzine editors of my reactions to their publications, because fanzines weren't traded for locs at that time. One of fandom's all-time mysteries is exactly when and how the free-issues-for-locs custom began. I have seen one or two speculations about the identity of the fanzine editor who started the practice but there seems to be no general agreement on the matter. I grew less and less active in fandom during the 1940s, and when I resumed full fanac around 1956 I found the new method of encouraging locs had sprung up during my hiatus.

But even back in the 1940s, someone occasionally claimed I wrote a letter about every issue of a fanzine I received and I attributed it to imagination, the familiar mental quirk of imagining that something frequent is something inevitable. In just the same way, even oldtime fans often fall into the habit of remembering Astounding during the early years of Campbell's reign as an uninterrupted succession of stories that were masterpieces of science fiction. The clinkers in almost every issue have vanished from recollection because of the generally high level of most of the contents of those issues.

It was in the first years following my degafiation that I became best known as a loc writer. There were several reasons for this. For one thing, I did manage to write a loc on most issues of most fanzines I received during the late 1950s and early 1960s and most of those locs got published in whole or in part. Then, too, I cut back sharply on the number of articles I contributed to fanzines during that period and so my fannish image gradually became equated with locs rather than with formal contributions. Meanwhile, I was a member of only one apa and I rarely attended cons, two other reasons why fans began to associate me with locs. It was also during this period that I settled on a two-page loc as my standard. There were times when I wrote a longer or a shorter loc, particularly when a fanzine was particularly fat or thin, but most of the time I filled two pages. This seemed to me to be a reasonable response to a free fanzine without consuming an unreasonable amount of my typing time and the fanzine editor's reading time. When this or that fan asked me where I found time to write all those locs, I could only tell the truth: practice had enabled me to write a loc in less than a half-hour in all but the busiest days. Fortunately, I had taught myself to be a touch typist and I involuntarily got a lot of typing practice every day because of my newspaper job, so I was able to create words and sentences and paragraphs on a typewriter faster than many other fans.

This was the greatest era of fanzine publishing, I believe. There were enormous quantities of fanzines appearing in the United States, ranging from chatty two- and three-sheeters to the enormously plump publications of Bill Donaho. Irish Fandom was at its zenith and fandom in England was also publishing great fanzines. Even certain European nations with other native languages were the

source of good English language fanzines, particularly Germany and France. Mimeography had become a fine art for many fanzine publishers and some artists were doing things with a stylus and shading plate that are unsurpassed to this day. Never have fans had a greater incentive to write locs that kept those fanzines coming into their mailboxes.

But the years continued to come and go and loc writing gradually became a burden for me. For one thing, I suffered two accidents in the 1960s that made it impossible to type for many weeks in each occasion, throwing me far behind on loc obligations each time this delicate balance of fannish nature was disturbed. Then there was the foolish decision to write a couple of fan history books, research for which required endless letter-writing in search of information, long sessions of leafing through ancient fanzines for facts, even desperate efforts at several cons to find an old timer or two who was sober enough to answer questions dependably. The percentages of fanzines locced compared with the number of fanzines received began to sink gradually. Nobody in fandom seemed to notice the defections I was involuntarily committing and I remember such incidents as an argument with one fan over statements he claimed I had been making in locs to Yandro. I didn't receive Yandro which wasn't available in exchange for locs and I never appeared in its letter section.

When the 1970s arrived, I found myself switched from reporting and editing duties at the newspapers to column-writing. This also had a bad effect on my loc output. I had hoped when the change occurred that I would have more time to read fanzines and write letters commenting on them, now that I no longer needed to be in the office or at events at specific times on specific dates and could instead more or less make my own working schedule, provided I grind out five columns every week. But it didn't turn out that way. The need to think up subject matter for columns became a dreadful compulsion that was never entirely out of my thoughts, and I would find myself driving around through Hagerstown or leafing through books and magazines at the public library in hopes of coming across something I could use as inspiration for a column, when I would have been much happier engaged in fanac. Even after I'd completed my week's quota of newspaper columns, I couldn't consientiously forget the job and relax with fanzines for the remainder of that week. Instead I would continue the quest for column ideas and try to get one or two extra columns written so I would have a backlog for the occasional awful week when I couldn't get five columns written. The percentage of fanzines locced again dipped.

Fortunately, this gradual breakdown in meeting fannish obligations didn't reduce the number of fanzines arriving at my home. Except for a few fanzines like Yandro that didn't include locs among The Usual, some local club bulletins, and an occasional fanzine from someone who didn't like me, I received virtually all the fanzines being published in the English language for non-apa purposes. And something peculiar began to happen around this time. I would find once in a while a loc from me in a fanzine's letter section which I felt pretty sure I hadn't written. I wondered if the fanzine's editor had put my name on a loc from someone else because of force of habit, the habit of having a loc from me in each issue, or if I had misread the loc section and had imagined I saw my name over the letter I didn't remember having written. I never complained, for fear I would look silly if the latter explanation was the true one.

By this time, fanzines were beginning to experience the problems that have become more acute during the 1980s: most younger fans were interested in comic books or television or the movies instead of prozines and books, and their favoured forms of fanac were going to cons and forming local clubs and partying instead of reading and publishing general interest fanzines. I hated to make the situation worse by cutting back sharply on the number of locs I wrote, at a time

when so many fanzines were having trouble getting feedback from readers. But my eyes began to give me a great deal of trouble, an operation prevented me from typing for several months one year, I couldn't resist the urge to watch all the baseball games that suddenly became available when the Hagerstown cable took Ted Turner's Atlanta superstation aboard, and then the local newspapers switched to computer operation which forced me to use a terminal whose screen created almost daily headaches that left me unfit for much reading or typing when I got home. It seemed impossible to continue to write locs at even my reduced level of output and I felt I should cut back drastically, perhaps even retire completely as a lochack. But I didn't know how to go about it. If I told this fan I couldn't loc his fanzine any longer and I continued to write locs on another fanzine, I would create immense amounts of ill will for myself. If I told all fans I wouldn't be writing any more locs, I would no longer receive some fanzines I very much wanted to read regularly because they weren't availalbe for money. For several months while I tried to decide on a course of action, I wrote very few locs, and something strange happened. Fanzines continued to arrive at their usual quantity rate and most of them contained locs from me.

I consulted two or three older fans whose knowhow is vast, on a dnq basis. They agreed with my hypothesis. Decade after decade of excessive loc writing on my part had established a sort of mass hypnosis in fandom. Everyone engaged in fanzine fandom expected to receive a loc from me after publishing a fanzine and to read a loc from me in each fanzine published by someone else, and they continued to think they received locs and read locs even when I didn't write them. Every year since the 1960s there had been at least a half-dozen statements in fanzines every year that I wrote a loc on every issue of every fanzine I received, even though anyone unfamiliar with fandom could have disproved the statements by looking through a stack of fanzines chosen at random. The current belief I was still writing numerous locs was nothing more than an intensification of the old truism caused by the passing of still more time. To make sure, I gave some fanzines to a mundane friend. He reported finding locs from me in just two or three of them. Presumably they had been written by fanzine editors who assumed they'd lost a loc from me and tried to reconstruct the missing letter from memory or were invented by the editor to prevent his fanzine from being the only fanzine published this year without my loc in its normal place. Fans were obviously imagining they read locs from me in those other fanzines because they had never experienced the concept that I would stop writing locs.

I believe it was in 1979 when I wrote my last loc to a fanzine. The legend that I am fandom's champion loc writer doesn't seem to have suffered since then and it is even strengthened from time to time when a fan in Australia or Manhattan writes a fantastic article alleging to explain how I achieve such epistling feats. I still receive most of the non-apa fanzines being published, and I think I enjoy them more than ever, now that I needn't think while reading about what I'm going to say about them in a loc. I confess that I've stopped reading loc sections, however. If I thought I found comments from me in them, it might confuse me.

---Harry Warner, Jr.

There has not been much hi tech discussion in Irish Fandom since George Charters complained of a sore neck brought on by watching tv in bed. "You should turn the set on its side," I advised. "You mean to tell me that when you turn a tv on its side the picture comes out sideways?" "Yes," I said, "why do you doubt it?" "Well," said George, "when you turn a radio on its side, the music still comes out the right way up." ---Walt Willis in PYROTECHNICS 38

VISIT TO A SMALL FACTORY

BY MARC ORTLIEB

Physicists are often too deeply engrossed in their work to use their common sense. They spend years working on their GUTs (Grand Unified Theories for those of you who have let your Scientific American subscriptions lapse), not realising that the essential clue is under their very noses, or would be if they spent more time in the bar and less in musty laboratories. Carruthers was expounding on that very subject at GrogCon Three. He was, of course, in the bar, while, in the function rooms, the sercon fans were holding a panel on the exact composition of Chromatic Dragons, Spayed Gerbils, and Pangalactic Gargleblasters. I'd had my fill of arguments over the comparative merits of aging that old Janx Spirit in PVC or in Styrofoam coolers and had retreated to the sanity of the bar.

As I entered, Carruthers nodded in my direction and said, "There's further proof for you. The weak force that attracted him to the panel was overcome by the strong force attracting him to the bar. Talking about drinking's all well and good, but the real thing just can't be beaten."

"That's easy for you to say, Carruthers," interjected Patrick, "but you can't call it a Grand Universal Theory. If it was universal we should note an increased concentration of fans in the bar, but it seems to be an equilibrium situation. Individual fans diffuse in and out, keeping the average concentration of fannishness constant. I wouldn't mind hypothesising that fannishness is inherently repulsive, so you'll never get above a certain concentration without some external pressure, holding fandom together."

"You mean like musk oxen herded together to keep out the blood crazed wolves?" said Ursula.

"Yes. Something like that. I mean, look at the atomic nucleus. The bigger it gets, the more neutrons need to be there to keep the thing from flying apart. That's why there are so many filkers, media fans and SCA types at worldcons, and even then the larger worldcons are hellishly unstable, like uranium nuclei."

"While I hate to disagree with you," said Carruthers in a tone that almost had us believing him, "I'm afraid that your analogy is quite false in this case. You see I know why there are fewer real fans at conventions now-a-days, and the reason is far more prosaic."

There was a lull in the conversation. The assembled fans were too well acquainted with what happened when someone responded to Carruthers' cue lines. Then, from the back of the room, a voice, suspiciously like Carruthers' own, asked, "And what is the reason?" Fortunately for Carruthers, I was the only person in the bar who knew about his recent correspondence course in ventriloquism, and I wasn't saying anything. His teaser had me hooked.

"I'm glad you asked me," he said. "You see, a few years ago I was sent to Maryland on business. I don't think I can describe the business - several of the people involved are still alive - but it left me with some time on my hands. I did what any fan in his right mind would do. I found a delightful little in, checked its cellar, and settled in for the week.

"It was four days later, I think, that I found myself reading the local newspaper over breakfast. Out of habit, I had turned straight to the letters' page. It was a thoroughly mundane journal and in any other part of the state my chances

of finding a name that I recognised would have been phenomenally low. Today was different. There, emblazoned at the bottom of a letter was a name that I could not possibly have overlooked - Harry Warner, Jr. I knew I was near Hagerstown, but I hadn't even considered looking up Harry. It just didn't seem the done thing. The letter made all the difference. It was a strongly worded missive urging the city fathers to adopt more liberal licencing laws. Try as I did, I could wring no hint of sarcasm or ironic humour from the letter. It was written dead straight. There was something seriously wrong here. Harry would no more consider condoning broader bar hours than he would accept an offer of GoH at a SPACE 1999 Convention. I determined there and then to visit the Hermit of Hagerstown.

"Somehow I hadn't expected Summit Avenue to be as industrial as it was. I'd pictured it as a genteel slope populated by wooden two-storey houses couched in abundant greenery. Instead I found myself on a dingy city block, surrounded by large warehouses. The only thing that made me certain that I was approaching the residence of a fannish legend was the local graffiti declaiming the lousehood of Yngvi, and asking, of no one in particular, the identity of the being who had sawed Courtney's Boat. As I got closer to the address I noted the rusted out hulks of postal delivery vans that had attempted one bag too many in their run to the Warner household. I saw numerous deepetched tyretracks in the bitumen, showing where the semi-trailers of opera libretti had passed.

"I had no doubt of the moment that I arrived at 423. There ahead of me was the gaping maw of the largest postbox I had ever seen. As I drew up to the curb, a fully laden mail truck pulled up to the orifice, and three burly postal officials leapt out and started hurling mail sacks into the beckoning void. I heard one gasp urgently, 'Hurry up! The next three vans are only minutes behind us.'

"I made my way along the driveway that led to a tatty factory side door. On it was written, 'To gain entry tap out *the* room number.' With scarcely a thought, I rapped seven hundred and seventy times. The door swung open, and I nursed my skinned knuckles.

"There, in front of me, was a slight scholarly figure dressed in neat casual gentleman's lounging attire.

"'You must be a fan,' he said. 'Welcome. I don't get many visitors here.'

"'My name's Carruthers,' I said . . .

"'Oh yes, Carruthers. Three times winner of the S.M.O.F. Award; editor of REALLY SECRET FANZINES THAT ONLY REAL SMOFS GET and bar-fly extraordinaire. Your reputation precedes you Mr. Carruthers. Would you care for coffee?'

"We were soon seated in a remarkably comfortable study, sipping brewed coffee and munching on delicate biscuits. I took in the oil paintings of airships and the faded photographs of old-time fans. Warner turned to me. 'Well, Mr. Carruthers, what brings you to my humble abode?'

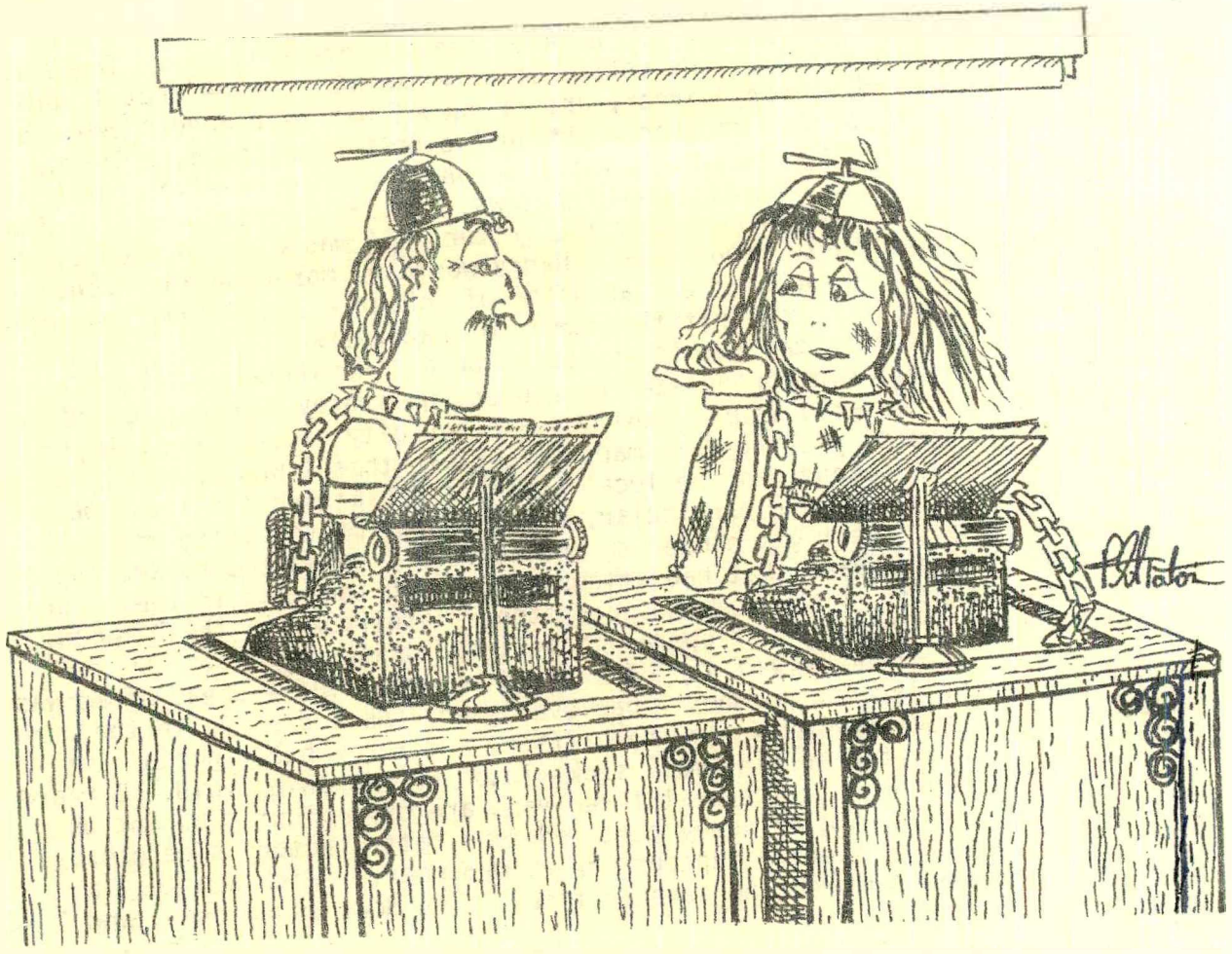
"I explained my business visit, and the letter in the paper. His face became ashen. 'Mr. Carruthers. I fear you are in terrible danger. You must leave immediately. It's him . . . Martin . . . he's done it again. Quickly, to the door.'

"I had barely time to grab my overcoat as he pushed me through the door. I turned to speak and, as I did, the floor below me gave way.

"I woke to find myself chained to an ancient Victorian typing desk, with a bookstand at eye level, and an antique typewriter at my fingers. Stretching out from me in all directions were rows of similar desks, and to each was chained a person. The girl to my left looked over in my direction. 'Oh good. You're awake. I hope you aren't feeling too bad.'

"The voice was strangely familiar. I'd heard it over the phone years before. 'Aren't you Linda Blanchard?' I asked.

"'That's right, Mr. Carruthers.'



"'But you gafiated years ago.'

"'I'm afraid not, Mr. Carruthers; no more than you have.'

"She was interrupted by a deep voice from the front of the room. 'You! Blanchard! Stop the talking. You're not at a bloody convention now. Get typing. There's another five sacks to get through before morning.'

"Linda's face twisted despairingly, and her hands started to flex on the keyboards. On her bookstand was a copy of a badly dittoed fanzine, its print barely visible in the dim lighting. My heart leapt out to her as I recognized it as a copy of James Styles' CRUX. Whatever was going on here was cruel and unusual punishment.

"There was no such fanzine on my bookstand, and I allowed myself the luxury of looking around further. We were in a large warehouse and, having discovered Linda, I was now prepared for the shadowy features of hundreds of fans long considered gafiates. Between the rows of desks scuttled lesser creatures, taking typed papers and exchanging fanzines. The clattering of typewriters wasn't quite the soundtrack that I'd have associated with a Dantesque vision, but the screams as knotted typing fingers surrendered to R.S.I. fitted ideally. A stooped figure paused by my desk and cackled.

"'You're a new one, aren't you? Well, you'd better get your two pagers done, else you'll find yourself here with Poor Mike. Poor Mike couldn't write 'em pro-

per, could he? Couldn't get the phrases right, could he? Kept trying to put bits of cockroach wing in with every letter, didn't he? Poor Mike!' The remains of a once proud fan looked up at me, and added, 'You'll tell me if the Chivas Regal arrives, won't you?' and then scuttled on, thrusting a tattered slouch hat onto the mass of lank hair that plastered its skull.

"I'd scarcely recovered from this apparition when my desk was thumped by a horny fist. 'Well Carruthers, nice to see that the master has snared another one. We'll get plenty of work out of you, and we need it. Bloody Bergeron just cracked. Said if he had to write one more nice letter to Avedon he'd puke all over the typewriter. We'll have to demote him to gofer. Still, sooner or later we'll get her too.

"'Now the routine here is nice and simple. You write your share of two pagers and we feed you. If you don't, we don't feed you.' He smirked and then added, 'Of course you'll be working on the slush pile at first, but, if you do a really good job you'll get promoted to writing letters to HOLIER THAN THOU.'

"So saying, he placed a copy of a tattered fanzine in front of me. It was called TAANSTAAFL. It had been typed straight to stencil using a $25 Coles typewriter, with the ribbon in, and featured three stories by the editor plus artwork from his thirteen year old sister. 'The boss says that you've got to write a positive and encouraging letter to that one, concentrating on the time you found a collection of obscure player piano rolls in the outhouse of a macrobiotic garlic freak.'

"I shuddered and started the letter.

"It went on like that for weeks. At night we were allowed to slip to the floor and sleep a good five hours. Every six hours gofers who had fallen into disfavour brought around bedpans. Every twelve hours gofers in even worse standing brought around take-away chicken from McDonalds. I determined to get away.

"My first plan failed abysmally. I'd collected loose staples for months, and had fashioned them into a rough file with which I'd hacked through my chains. Then, under the cover of the dim lighting, I'd secreted myself into a mailbag full of completed letters. But I'd failed to consider the extra weight I'd added to the bag. After a suffocating, jolting trip to the post office, the bag was stamped 'Insufficient postage' and was retured to the workhouse. I suffered the indignity of writing replies to TREKzines which had asked Harry for contributions to the 'Bring back the Enterprize' Fund and the pain of an 'Insufficient Postage' stamp on my butt.

"It was only once I'd won my way back into the good books, and was writing replies to MAINSTREAM and FUCK THE TORIES that I got to put my second plan into action. I carefully incorporated passages of SMOFish code into my letters and, in a matter of months the Surrey Limpwrists, led by Comrades Hanna and Nicholas, in their helicopter gunship 'Kill the Fuckers', liberated the workshop.

"The Yanks were all enrolled in a re-education programme to help them to overcome the effects of their incarceration, in the most ideologically sound manner, you understand. I gather that the process has taken rather longer than expected, which is why you just don't get that many fans at conventions nowadays."

Patrick frowned. "But I got a letter from Harry just a month ago."

"True," Carruthers replied. "The Comrades found it expedient to keep the workshop going for a while, until the re-education programme could get into full swing. They even kept Harry on, for his signature. They assure me that they're gradually winding it down. I guess the prices they're getting from the paper recyclers might have a little to do with how slow the winding-down process is. Harry's little business keeps three paper mills supplied, you know."

Carruthers took a long swig of his drink. "In the meantime, should you ever get the chance to visit Hagerstown, avoid it, however attractive it may seem."

---Marc Ortlieb

THE CONSULTATION COUCH

BY HERR DOKTOR BONEYARDIUS

Very much tied in with Alternate Universes is the World of Psychiatry and psychiatric journals. Bernadette Bosky found this piece in an old psychiatric journal (and I will refrain from commenting about people who peruse old psychiatric journals and the kinds of Alternate Universes which *they* must be inhabiting) and obtained permission to reprint this piece. She then offered it to HTT. Well, we all know about Bernadette and *her* mindset, do we not?

This month I will discuss with you one of the most interesting cases of my long and interesting career. His name was Joseph B. When asked if he had any last name he answered no, only a last initial, and I knew that this was a case sent to me from that father-totem figure in the sky and tailor-made for the psychiatric journals. Joseph B. had one overwhelming obsession. Now, as background you must realise that man has, at various times, isolated many different periods as "the Golden Age of Man." Diverse cultures have designated the Classical Greek Era, the 18th Century Age of Enlightenment, the Middle Ages or even the Pre-Civil War South as such. But to Joseph B. the exact identification of the Golden Age of Man and, as an unspoken but certain correlary, the return to it became an all-consuming drive. He quit his job as a key-punch operator, much to the distress of his wife (who, it appears, later left him for that reason) and devoted full time to his studies. He read, collected demographic and sociological studies of all sorts, even gained permission to work with the MIT computer and charted weather, population, income, costs and even mental health statistics.

It was a process which was long and arduous but, to Joseph B.'s mind at least, one which seemed to bear fruit. One night, twitchy after nights of black coffee and cigarettes, he burst up the stairs to inform his Kerry Blue Terrier (his wife had, at this time, not only gone to live with a pimp in Nicaragua, but also had started divorce procedings by international cablegram) that the Golden Age of Man occurred on August 14, 1892, probably around 6:00 pm, in the area of Teaneck, New Jersey.

Now that he was certain, his mania only increased. He slept two hours a night, and then only to dream about his beloved time. He would talk to himself. "Those were the hours," he repeated endlessly. "Men were men, the weather was fine then and no one wore earth shoes or watched I Love Lucy re-runs on TV." He would collect August 14, 1892 memorabilia--an understandably rare commodity, but he had a rather sizeable collection.

This is when he came to me for treatment. Joseph B. had been arrested for trying to steal the August 14, 1892 Teaneck Herald Picayune from the Chicago Public Library. He would have gotten away with it, too, since no one gave a fig, except that this particular newspaper was on microfilm--thus necessitating that he try to smuggle out a microfilm projector, also, under his coat. He was arrested and a friend of mine on the police force (for a nominal fee) suggested that I be called in as consulting alienist in the case.

The more Joseph B. talked, the more I realized that this was not a normal case. After months of effort I realized my inability to break him of his delusion. His mind, like that of many intelligent psychotics, clung to his preoccupation and defended it tenaciously. I half found myself wondering what things were like back then. I continued to see him on an out-patient basis, but as much as I was happy

to have his money I had to admit that it was useless.

One day Joseph B. was quite late to his appointment, and when I phoned B.'s residence, a police official informed me of Josehp B.'s death. He had, just that evening past, been slain in an illegal duel with a man who was convinced that the Golden Age of Man was on July 9, 1920, in DesPlaines, Illinois.

A most curious case.

NEXT MONTH: David D. and the case of the Homicidal Chocolate Poodle Delusion.

---Herr Doktor Boneyardius

Psychiatry is a branch of medicine (it says here), and medicine is an Alternate Universe of its own, especially when experienced by Taral.

MEDICAL PRACTISSEL

BY

TARAL WAYNE

Several years ago an experience in my life made a deep impression on me. I had a kidney stone. Such experiences are a once-in-a-lifetime thing, and when a rare repitition occurs, one is left with all the inconvenience and bother of being boxed in a canyon again by wild Indians or losing a second small fortune on the stock market, without any further enlightenment.

My second kidney stone left me feeling much the worse for wear and none the wiser.

At least the stone waited a couple of weeks after the finish of a convention I was involved with before it decided to block the flow of my urine at its source. The symptoms of a consolidated deposit of trace calcium moving a few tiny millimeters are dramatic. Within minutes a backache compels the victim to put down his book, pen, or earphones and give the matter his full attention. Now that he's attentive, the backache developes into rhythmic contractions of abdominal muscle. Stomach muscles syncopate and nausea follows. And then, lest there be any doubt that something is physiologically very wrong, the victim's testicles hurt.

"Renal colic" is what the scientifically detached inhabitants of the rubber

and tile world call it. But it's so much more than a technical term to the person suffering it. To one friend of mine, who grew an acid stone in his renal infudibulum, "colic" meant screams, convulsions, and bending the steel bars of his bed, (he says). For me it meant gradual erosion of patience, strength, and will, leading to loss of control and perhaps the screaming surrender of my friend. The doctors do tell their patients that kidney stones are among the most painful of ailments. I believe I was lucky in being one of the most naturally relaxed of people, and practiced in a casual sort of way in secret oriental techniques. Usually learned at the foot of a master in Tibet, I gained control of my body's involuntary functions over several years while riding to and from school by bus. (It took an hour during which there was nothing better to do than practice self-hypnosis and the like.) A famous Yogi whose name I forget upholds his place in The Guiness Book of Records by his ability to hold his metabolic processes to an astonishingly low two breaths a minute. I am a mere amateur, and cannot slow my bodily functions to less than three. Any degree of control helps with pain though.

I was taken to North York General Hospital on the last day of May, and immediately began frightening doctors and nurses. All the while repeating to myself, "there is no pain, there is no pain," and "Spock is an ass, Spock is an ass," people kept coming up to me and asking if my face normally looked like that... I had no idea what they meant, but thought fatigue had probably made me look more dissipated than usual. (One doesn't do one's best thinking while metabolizing morphine.) Next morning I got a look for myself, and gave myself a scare. Perhaps I hadn't bent any steel bars, but in the mirror I saw that tension had burst all the minor blood vessels of my face!

Taral Wayne is my name...
The stars my destination?

I was shot at dawn, or more precisely, at about 11 am by a ponderous overhead projector of high energy rays. I had been through all this before, including the injection of a bromine solution that turned one's circulatory system opaque to radiology. The cold liquid sensibly rose up my arm and I tasted nickles in my mouth A nurse's hands positioned me for every shot. "Breathe in please. Hold your breath." No zap. "Breathe out." At my request a big square of film was brought in, with the smokey ghosts of my tissues lingering on it. The only seemingly real, solid object in the picture was an invisible presence in my body. A clear white ellipse lay in the shadow of my left kidney. Surgery -- a mysterious performance called a pyolithictomy -- was scheduled for the day after.

The province of Ontario has limits to its generosity, and without premium payments its hospital insurance plan entitles the beneficiary only to a ward. At NYG, a ward is a room with four beds, which isn't too bad. My experience, however, is that the other three beds in the room will generally be occupied with never less than two undesireable wardmates. During my stay, six other people passed through the room. We all snored after surgery, but three snored the rest of the time too. One was depressingly dying of cancer. One didn't seem able to keep his gown over his genitals when he sat. Two had a minimum each of six visitors at once, all day, every day. The sign on the wall said two each. It was like living in a lobby, but how do you complain about a dying man seeing his relatives... All you could do was look sympathetic and curse him under your breath. One of my wardmates -- I never knew which one -- left mysterious wet spots that weren't piss in front of the toilet. Another rented a ceiling TB but pulled the curtains between us so I couldn't watch. I could hear it when I wanted to sleep though... I don't think I did anything more offensive than jerk off in bed when I thought everyone else was asleep.

(Anything for a laugh in an article.)

On the day I was scheduled for surgery, I was two hours late being admitted to the operating theatre. I worried every minute of those two hours, not about the surgery, but about the unpleasant recovery. Surgery itself was not what one experienced when they wheeled you away... Recovery was. And recovery, I remembered, was particularly unpleasant. The only thing that could be said for it was that it was better than not recovering. (Do you like waking up with a tube in your nose?) At the end of the elapsed two hours a nurse and orderlies came for me. The journey, while lightly sedated, was a tour of the hospital ceilings, accompanied by swaying motions and occasional bumps. Faces leaned over the railings of the bed, or stood beside and talked to other faces as if I wasn't there. Once or twice I was deposited in the hall and moved on after five or ten minutes. Finally I was rolled into a large room with a table in the middle of it. This was the operating theatre, unlike the technological marvels seen on television, this one looked more like a public lavatory. A few wheeled trays, an oxygen apparatus, and the operating table were about all the modernistic decor this rubber and tiled room had. The table itself looked like a fixture of a rather seedy masseur's parlour. While the anaesthesiologist worked on the plumbing of my left arm, my right kept falling off the other side. Then a rush and

thoughts fading as awareness grew of laying in a bed, uncomfortable, with a plastic mask over mouth and nose. Cold. So cold I began to shiver violently, and every shake brought a pulse of pain from a new wound opened in my left side. I shivered and hurt for several minutes until I began to warm up. A nurse looked at me at some point, but decided I wasn't dying and went away. Eventually I was moved back to my ward from the recovery room. All of that is a little fuzzy. I knew it would be, and tried to remember everything I could. Ane one thing I clearly remember is that I was dreaming just before I woke up.

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I shouldn't have been. If I was capable of higher mental processes such as dreaming while under anaesthesia, then I never truely escaped the trauma of having my side opened up and surgeon dissect my living organs. Human vivisection!

This should come as no surprise to anyone who knows that anaesthesia only deadens nerve endings and produces unconsciousness. No-one ever claimed that it supressed subconscious activity. To say, though, that anaesthesia stops pain is misleading. Stimulation of the nerve endings that cause pain is not the only means by which the mind is informed of violence to the body. Hemostats and coagulants shunt blood to other parts of the circulatory system, increasing the relative flow. Vessels are more heavily taxed, and the load on the heart may change subtly. Changes in the circulation of the blood excite chemical responses in other parts of the body. Electrolyte balances may alter, further disturbing body chemistry. The autonomic nervous system begins to feed back the disturbances to the tissues that regulate heartbeat, breathing, secretions of hormones, and other metabolic processes, causing massive disequilibrium that would result in shock and death if the patient were anywhere other than on an operating table under the constant observation of specialists.

Ultimately, the centers of the brain that have the job of systems analysis notice that something terrible is happening to the body somewhere in the neighbourhood of the lower left lumbar region. It is easy to imagine the neurological equivalent of a security leak in the neural organization. The brain is too complicated and subtle for clear-cut, need-to-know compartmentalization. This probably means that the elusive locus of the brain known to psychologists as "the subconscious" catches a whiff of panic...opening the possibility that we all have terrifying nightmares while undergoing surgery.

Thankfully, we don't remember our nightmares unless awoken while having them. During surgery this is fortunately rare.

In All That Jazz, Bob Fosse's alter ego sees a recurrent image during his surgery and (unsuccessful) recovery. He goes down a tunnel at the end of which is a light, and a lady dressed all in white who is Death. Christians who survive "clinical death" report similar experiences. There is a hall or tunnel at the end of which is a bright light, and Jesus with his arms open to welcome them. Invariably they wake up before Jesus gets his mitts on them. Otherwise we can presume they died and were in no position to describe the sensation. Curiously enough, users of mescaline and other alkaloid drugs sometimes see spiraling tunnels. The underground cartoonist Dave Sheridan drew his impression of just this trip in Mother's Cats Comix #1. Researchers have also taken note of the drug-user's vision, and an article on visual perception in Scientific American rips off Sheridan for an illustration. The article attributes the moving tunnel of geometrical patterns and imagery to direct stimulation of the visual cortex. Drugs, lack of oxygen, distress, or madness can all do the trick.

Is it any wonder, then, that while recovering from the shock of major surgery that I should dream of a darkened hall, with a light at the end?

A hall with a light at the end and a waiting Jesus, for the ordinary soul, because this is the most sensible thing that can be made out of a poorly remembered dream of an otherworldly experience (the perception of a sub-routine in his own mind). There was no Jesus at the end of my tunnel to take me into paradise. Naturally not -- I'm not a Christian.

Why not? I gave it and other matters that unfolded from my mind a lot of thought as I patrolled the hospital corridors after lights-out.

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I was given the best chance at salvation and inexorably lost whatever childhood faith I might have ever had. At one time I believed in God, there's no doubt. When I was very young -- young enough to have a night-light and sleep in a crib -- I thought I saw an angel. As an elderly man of 30 and vast experience, I look back on this incident as the natural product of a gullible mind and a night-light shining on a wall. Why the reflection should so impress my 3-year old mind one night and not the one before, or the one after, I couldn't say. But it's either that or The Lord took an uncommon interest in me at an early age, and I'm not that much of an egotist.

A couple of years later I prayed to God that He'd find a plastic airplane that I'd mislaid. He didn't, but I got the sudden inspiration to look outside in the garden dirt and turned up the tiny injection molded single engine monoplane in the first place I looked. I should have looked there before, I reasoned, and tried to test God by praying he'd let me ride my tricycle on the ceiling. God wasn't in the mood for frivolity any more that day, though.

Several years later I remembered God again, when someone at school stole an entire pack of bubble-gum cards from my coat pocket while it was hanging in the cloak room at the back of class. My father came through with the cash to buy 30 new packages of gum at 10¢ each, but I was clever enough at the age of 12 to know that I had a statistically poor chance of finding the entire set of 96 in a random selection of 120 cards. Already beginning to doubt that there was a God, I gave Him a last chance to establish Himself. When the last wax paper flap was unfolded, the umpteenth stick of aromatic powdery gum chewed, and the cards sorted out in order, I realized that I was a pagan.

It wasn't just that God hadn't fulfilled a mercenary bargain with me. As I said, I already had serious doubts about an All-Powerful, All-Knowing being who had created the universe and who wanted me to behave in a totally arbitrary fashion or suffer the most agonizing consequences. Much of my reaction was aesthetic rather than logical, I have to admit. Religion was Sunday television at my grandmother's. She used to watch the most vulgar of all religious exhibitionism -- TV faith-healing. I remember Oral Roberts laying his hands on heads and shouting, "Hee-yee-ul"! My grandfather would fart, and my grandmother would angrily insist that he'd done it deliberately. She thought everybody did. Knowing "Mac", he probably had. But it was never any use. The old girl would soak in mass media communion for another three hours.

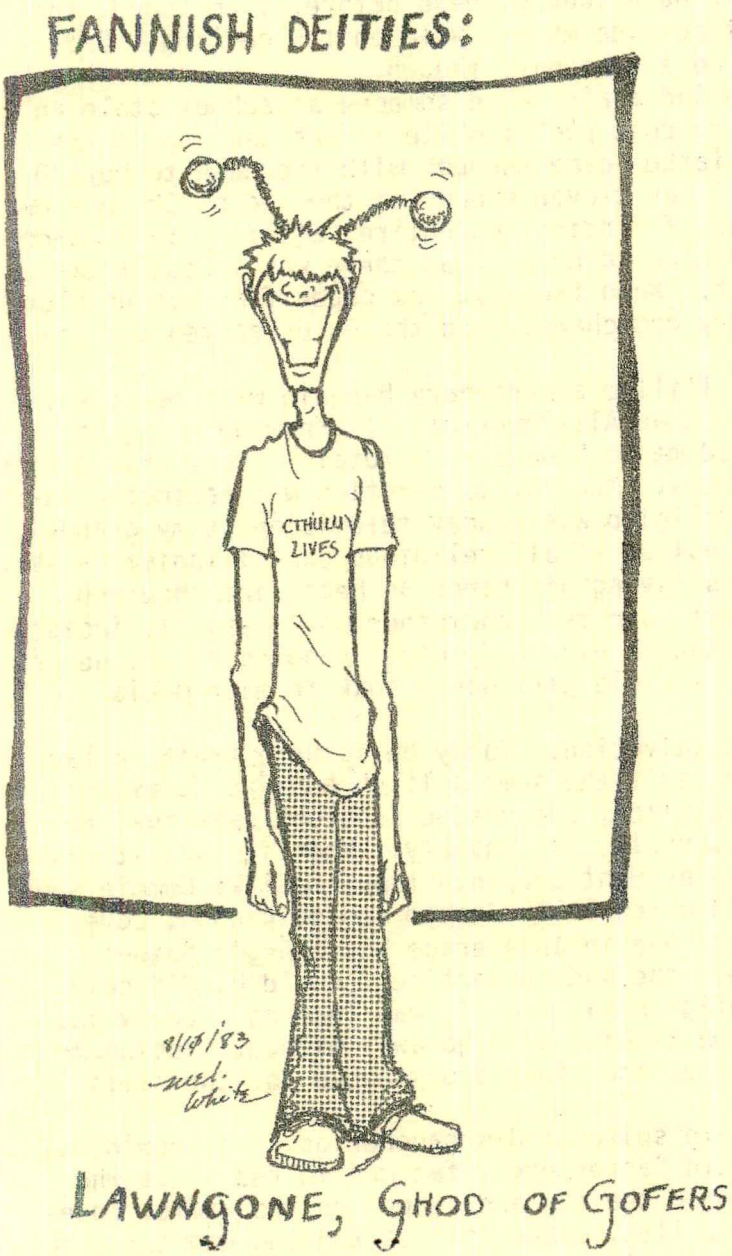
Religion was my father's sporadic salvation. Today he is Born Again, a lay minister, and I've no evidence that he isn't the same selfish bastard he always was. But when I was a kid he would backslide, and needed constant spiritual renewal. This happened at infrequent intervals, fortunately. When it did, it was usually inspired because television had brought God into the Home like Commie subversion. For a week the old man would watch Billy Graham and talk about Love. Since normally no-one ever talked about Love in an average White Anglo-Saxon middle-class emotionally repressed home, the sudden sentiment could hardly have struck me as other than insincere. Religion was the old man leaning over my bed at night, talking about miracles, and me wishing he'd go away without kissing me.

Religion was my aunt giving me bibles and bible story-books for Christmas instead of what I wanted.

But at one time I believed in God in spite of His gaucheries. The world was full of strange things -- bunnies who hid Easter eggs, fat men in red suits who climbed down chimneys, stars that moved in the sky and beeped on the radio, bones that were all that was left of giant reptiles, ducks that talked and had three cubic acres of money, three guys with funny haircuts who hit each other on TV without

getting hurt -- God wasn't any more likely. There was no reason to suspect that in some cases a systematic network of deceptions drank the milk you put out for Santa and that in other cases there really were giant clams that could drown Lloyd Bridges. It is especially difficult to decide what to think about God. Here's a case where it looks to children as if there has to be a God, or the adults are putting themselves on as well.

At some time very early in my life I was sent to Sunday school. There was a bible at home, but like most homes it was never much off the shelf, and my religious instruction was far from thorough. Just about all I knew came from the picture books my aunt gave me instead of what I wanted. They were the glossy hardcover kind, whose covers were thicker than the paper between, and that had titles like The Golden Book of Bible Stories. The pages were printed on something like construction paper, and the printer was apparantly an Italian decorator in his spare time, for the illustrations -- invariably a small child in a bath-robe carrying a lamb -- were printed in pastel primaries like yellow or blue or pink. No one had gone to any expense to make a pocket edition of Hawthorne's Tanglewood Tales attractive to kids, but I reread it constantly, while only looking through the bible stories once and relegating them to the bottom of the toy barrel. The Hawthorne Tales, which I still have, went on the shelf with other real books. I had at least seen pictures of Jacob's coat of many colours and Daniel in the Lion's Den, though. So when I went to Sunday school for the first time, I wasn't altogether unworldly.



My first time is a hazy event. I remember a few things, such as a felt-board for the teacher to stick biblical figures onto while telling stories. I remember picture books like the ones at home, with Jesus suffering the little children to come unto Him. I remember a couple of songs were sung, Onward Christian Soldier and the like. And I remember my intense distaste of the entire atmosphere. My first visit to Sunday school was separ-

ated from my last by only a few Sundays.

It wasn't that I didn't believe, precisely. But Jesus seemed about as real to me as Zeus, and had a great deal less class. What did Jesus ever do except evade tricky moral questions? (Hermes would have outwitted the Roman centurians and made off with "that which is Caeser's".) Kiss beggers and heal their sores? (The golden fleece of Colchis could cure nations and was a wonder to behold.) Forgive when he had little power to punish. (Zeus forgave from a throne, from where he could have done anything he liked.) The old testament had class that the new didn't. The story of Perseus is probably no more fantastic than the story of Moses. I would be just as astonished to see Lake Ontario part as to see the person next to me turn to stone. But whereas the Greek gods were merely capricious, the old testament God was downright malicious, and would punish people for commonplace or harmless things that he had arbitrarily forbidden, and sometimes for nothing at all. He was mean minded where the Greek gods had human frailties, patronizing where they were generous, pompous where they were funloving. Mt. Olympus ran with laughter and song -- heaven dirged with worship and hymn. I wouldn't choose to live in either world today, but is it any wonder that an imaginative kid of four or five would prefer the colourful life of the mythical Greeks to the moral astigmatism of Christianity?

Besides, unlike Jesus, Zeus never gave kids big soppy kisses. (Little did I know.)

Having never won my heart, God eventually lost control of the thinking part of me as well. I was emotionally as much a pagan as Euripedes, and needed only think myself free of the intellectual confines I was born to. This I did. I suppose even well before the age of 12 I didn't believe in God very much. I would have been too embarassed to admit it. Atheism was not, after all, something you talked about in 1959. It was not even something most people wanted to even think about, though I suspect now that their faith was as weak as mine.

The aversion people have to thinking about their religion is the trump card of Christianity. Like the vampire, whose greatest weapon is that you shall not believe in him, the weapon of the Christian is that you are ashamed unless you *do* believe in Him. If you didn't, it was like admitting to Communism, Homosexuality, or Drug Addiction. Atheism was an abberation of normal wholesome society. At the very least, if you went around freely saying that you didn't believe in God, you would hurt someone's feelings, and more likely infringe upon their freedom of worship. Freedom of speech didn't mean you could just say anything you liked, you know. The unbeliever apologized for his lack of faith, though the burden of proof was on the Christian. He should have made whatever apologies were necessary.

Ultimately, religion is put into a special category of Things Not Governed by Reason, (unlike everything else). If someone asks you to believe that the moon is made of Swiss cheese or that ancient astronauts built the pyramids, you can show evidence that the moon is in fact made of brecciated igneous minerals similar to ocean floor basalts, or that tomb paintings clearly show how armies of slaves built the pyramids. The existence of God, however, is not a question that admits evidence. No amount of logic, no application of Occam's razor, no demand that Christianity shoulder the burden of proof will ever get an agnostic to admit he is an atheist. In spite of a case that would cause the instant dismissal of quarks, black holes, or relativity for sheer lack of proof, the non-commital hesitate to accept the lack of proof of God as *exactly the same argument*! There is no difference. But they remain agnostics -- they prefer to hedge their bets I suppose. Score one for the vampire.

Every religion has its revelations, and from the model-building of science sprang science fiction. Its sense of wonder is merely a variety of religious impulse. You look up into a night sky full of stars and think to yourself, holy

shit! Then you pick up an SF book about a spaceship falling through a black-hole and coming out in a negative universe and think, holy shit! Fans are attracted to SF essentially because they are religious people. We seek sense of wonder in building models the same way as scientist-priests.

Had I thought about it before the operation, I might have expected something more than an existential void at the end of the tunnel. I had my beliefs, and a right to project them from my subconscious!

Still, I would scarcely have been happy to have seen Mr. Spock at the end of my tunnel, arms open to welcome me to the bridge of the Enterprise (or give me a Vulcan nerve pinch). But why wasn't a gleaming robot there, and Albert Einstein, to tell me all the secrets of the universe? Where was the mile-long spaceship that should have been waiting to whisk me off to a technological paradise? There was not even a sign of my private fantasies, let along the generalities that I had every right to expect.

Why was there nothing there? I felt very alone.

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Then, I think, I bumped into a gurney, or tripped over my IV stand, not quite knocking it off its wheels but coming perilously close to pulling the needle from my arm. I didn't fully notice. But it was enough to derail my thoughts, and I began debating with myself the morality of carpet bombing...

One of the nurses, who'd mostly become used to my night-time wandering, noticed that I looked particularly lost in thought that evening. "You have a far-away look in your eyes," she said, "like you were a thousand miles away."

I was over Dresden, I replied, truthfully. She seemed skeptical.

The first night after the operation was a little vague. I was coming up out of anaesthesia, but my mind was so saturated with percodin, demerol, morphine, and Lord knows what other narcotics that it was a couple of days before the world seemed all there. Unlike the Freak Brothers, whose drug-highs seem as intense as electroshock, I only felt content to let the days drain out of my window, and the nights drift by. When I was awake I was fully conscious and able to hobble around the 3rd. floor, and make intelligible conversation with visitors. I preferred to doze. I couldn't sleep, though. All night I'd hover on the brink of deep sleep and half-awareness, never dipping into the one or emerging into the other for very long. Once I awoke wondering if this was the second time I was in the hospital or if I was reliving the first time. As simple a questions as it was, it wasn't easy to decide, and several times I lay in bed feeling sure I had had all the same dreams again. It's an indescribable sensation, not knowing whether the past, the present, and the future were one and the same.

However, a bit of confusion doesn't seem worth becoming a drug fiend.

The nurses punctuated the first night with frequent visits. The routine was always the same. A thermometer goes in. You hear the ripping sound of velcro as the sphygomanometer collar is unrolled. The nurse asks you to raise your arm and wraps the collar just above your elbow. She pumps the rubber bulb attached and the rubber constrictor begins to inflate. When it feels too tight, she stops, and pushes the end of her stethoscope under the collar to listen to the pulse. She watches the sphygomanometer dial while the collar deflates, unwraps it, and jots vital functions on her clipboard. She takes your wrist between her thumb and finger like a dirty hankey and stares at her watch. Last, she removes the thermometer from your mouth. Three times a night after lights out (10 pm), and several times during the day.

The procedure grew lax as time went by. Presumably I and my fellow wardmates were in less critical condition and were submitted to the ritual once or

twice a day. The only alteration of ritual was the substitution of an electronic thermometer for the old glass and mercury kind. It was much better, the nurses said. Truly, it cost more and was even more uncomfortable in the mouth. The nurses met a more diversified demand than merely filling a bit role in the medical drama, though. They shamed us into leaving our comfortable beds to take showers, brought us fresh blue gowns that tied at the back, made our beds, and nagged us to exercise. They were like mothers.

One nurse I particularly liked, and if I didn't know that nurses were professional charming people I would have been attracted to her. It was nice to think about, at least, while she rubbed my back. I'd dealt with fandom too long, where you often can't see the person for the persona. As T*A*R*A*L I'm expected to behave in certain ways just as I expect other fans to live up to their images. We are all like fan-cartoons of ourselves. Without my beanie it was a pleasant surprise to learn that I could be a likeable person. She was a student nurse, and was soon given another shift than mine. The other nurses, hardly a faceless lot, seemed just nurses in comparison. "Lovesick," I never showed any of the others the drawings I had with me that I somehow never did any work on.

Another chore the nurses did for me was the frequent replacement of my IV bag. The needle was in my hand from the moment I woke in the recovery room. A snaking transparent tube doubled back from the needle and was taped firmly to my wrist. It ran from the bandage, not to a fish tank, but at least to water. The sugar-saline solution that dripped about three drops a minute into my vein was suspended from something that looked like an aluminium hat rack, but was an IV stand. It was on wheels at least, and whenever I wanted up to use the loo I had to push the stand with me. ...after first figuring out how to pull the sleeve of my housecoat on over the needle in my hand. I wouldn't have mentioned the interveinous at all, except for three things.

It made me feel like a cyborg to push my clanking, unsteady prosthetic with me wherever I went. Not as bad as Hitler's Brain in a glass jar, but that contraption was a part of me until the doctor said otherwise.

The bloody drip bag that watched over me from its hook above my head was my only source of nourishment for three days. I was not even allowed water, and consequently felt nearer death at the end of the three days than at any time while wrestling with the kidney stone, or since the operation. Even after the doctor grudgingly consented to feeding me, the IV provided me with half my calories. As if I hadn't been on one, he put me on a liquid diet. Tea, broth, and jello for two more days.

I graduated slowly from one diet to the next, but never got put on the general diet until the day before I left, before I could order bacon and eggs for the first time.

Easily half the other patients doing their rounds on the third floor wheeled their IV's with them. Most, like mine, fed nutrients through a vein in the arm, and, like me, the other patients also seemed to have solved the topological problem of getting their robes and housecoats on. Their bags were two-pint size, but one woman in a pink robe pushed a stand supporting a bloated bag holding two full quarts! Moreover, the drip tube led under the rim of her frock and up into terra incognito!

"Where does that go?" I asked the first nurse I could stop. (Who happened to be my favourite.)

"To the bladder," she said with a smile.

"The bladder? What on earth for?"

"That's what I wondered when I first saw one," she said. It was to irrigate an infection, it turned out.

Before the operation I paced out the floor. My room was 313, (coincidentally

the license number of Donald Duck's flivver), and from there to the elevators and back the other aisle was so-many paces at one and three-quarters feet each. Thirty-eight times around should be a mile I figured.

Although I was on my feet briefly a few hours after the operation, just to see if I could, I made my first lap the next morning. But only one. I made a few more in the afternoon, and the second day racked up about twenty. By then, though, the effects of starvation began to set in, and I did only twenty more on the third day. On the fourth day of my fast I did about five and refused to leave my bed until I ate solid food again. For lunch I was given over-salty chicken broth, ghastly whipped jello, and tea (which I prefer somewhat to dish-water), and I resumed training. Long before I was released I was able to walk a couple of miles, and all that limited me was my boredom with the too familiar corridors.

There were sports to liven up the walking. Thinking for one. When that palled I could wait for the lunch or dinner trays to be collected, and pinch unused pepper from the cart. (I wasn't allowed it on Soft Diet.) Or I could fetch juice or toast from the pantry. There were showers. I didn't like taking them since I was afraid of shipping water through the gash in my port side, but I took them. There was a lounge area with magazines, where I read all about Gombe National Park and guerilla tactics. A little before noon a cart was pushed around the floor with magazines and candy for sale (which could be bought without anyone knowing you were ruining your diet). One could even talk with the other patients, though that was by and large unrewarding.

My favourite time for walking was about 11 at night. Since everyone in my ward was well on the way to recovery, lights-out had progressed an hour, and we could read later by our own bed-light. The others were usually asleep by 11 at most; leaving me in semi-privacy for the first time of the day. Out in the hospital corridor the lights were dim. The only sign of life was down the hall where the nurses' station and the pantry was. That was when I liked it best. The darkened halls were the strongest memory I had of the first time I was there. That time, the floor ended in a separate sitting room with windows that looked out on a chimney. It was lit with flourescent purple, and was nicknamed "the purple penis". (I never heard it called that in North York General, of course.) I used to sit and look at the penis every night, walk by myself and think. The penis was visible from this wing, too. There was no sitting room, but a couple of chairs did almost as well. I'd walk from there, the darkened end of the wing, to the lighted desk at the other end, and back, the way getting lighter and darker in turn. Dark at one end of the hall, light at the other, over and over.

On D Day + 6 the IV attachment was removed. The dressing was for the first time changed, exposing a scar that Conan the Barbarian would have been proud to have inflicted. It ran from about six inches widdershins of my naval and followed the pelvic girdle to nearly the spine. There were 20 crude stitches an inch long each, and the whole looked like a lace tieing a shoe. The skin was undisturbed as if it no more felt being cut open and sewed together than a side of bacon. Two inches below, in the middle, was a raw opening out of which ran a hose like a finger cut off a surgical glove. It drained blood and other effluvia from the internal work into a bag stuck over it, and was kept from disappearing inside by a big safety pin! The bag was clear plastic and filled with black-red fluid that smelled like old tampons. It was drained every day through a stop-cock that had to be closed *right*. *Usually* it was, but all the same the smell seemed to ooze through the impermeable plastic. Showers helped a little.

D Day + 7, and the rubber drain was eased out a couple of inches. It felt like nothing at all. In two more days it could be removed entirely, and sometime after that I could be released. If the doctor would commit himself.

D Day + 8, and the rubber drain came out entirely when the nurse pulled a

little too far. The pin was rusty. No one had seen the doctor recently, or knew when I could go.

D Day + 10. The doctor shows up about 8 am Saturday, June the 12th, and tells me to leave before 11. After three days of uncertainty and dashed hopes, I'm thrown out! The first thing I have to do at home before I can resume my rest is move a bed...

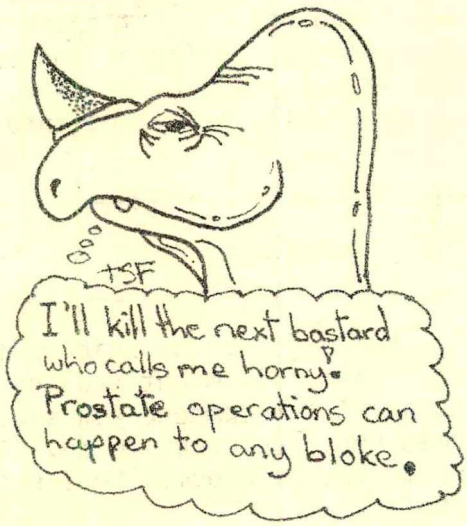
So I'm older by six or seven years since the last operation, and I have a much more impressive scar. It was minor surgery on the ureter the first time but it was major surgery to remove a centimeter long stone from the kidney itself. I have the stone this time, in a plastic specimen bag. I later got a bladder infection I hadn't had the first time either. But I am no wiser. My stock of experience was in no way increased by repetition. I have even written this article before. There is, in fact, only one happy thing that has resulted from this whole unnecessary affair. This time I wrote it a little bit better.

Practise does make perfect.

(1982)

---Taral Wayne

Whilst we are on the topic of medicine I guess that we should let John Purcell er, show us, why he is sort of an ass-hole. Somehow I do not think that I have phrased that quite correctly. Wotthehell.



my problems are all behind me

BY JOHN PURCELL

One thing that has always annoyed me about the medical profession is its habit of calling things by names that none of us ever use. They employ a completely different language -- I'm not even sure it's Latin, either -- in an attempt to confuse and annoy us mere English-speaking people. In reality, I suspect that most members of the medical field are prudes, or at least they try to be as scientific as possible. To them everything possesses a scientific name: guts are called intestines; breasts are called mammary glands; a penis is known as a penis instead of schlong, dick, hose, or peter; and a piece of shit is referred to as a stool.

This last one really confused me as a child. When I was six years old and

our family doctor, William Jefferies, asked to see a stool sample of mine, I couldn't understand why he wanted to examine a piece of household furniture. He then explained to me -- as politely as possible -- that he meant one of those nasty, smelly things you unload into the toilet. Grossed me out, he did. But, if that's what he wanted to do...well then, fine. Let him. It ain't my nose!

Why they call it a stool is beyond me. After all, you can always step on a stool to reach something in the kitchen, but you don't willingly step on a pile of shit every day. If anything, you go out of your way to *avoid* it. I guess calling it a stool is about the pleasantest term devised for an essentially rude bodily function.

It was one of those "stools" that did me in back in February of 1982. I remember it vividly, as if it happened only four and a half years ago.

Most of you, I am sure, have experienced at least once in your lifetime, a morning when you're sitting on the throne, with this pressing urge to shit like you've never shit before, and suddenly it feels like you have a porcupine stuck up your ass. Your asshole explodes in pain as you grunt and groan, trying to ease this prickly thing out. Then, taking a deep breath, you fire away and blast it out, leaving yourself immensely relieved and you wipe the sweat off your brow. All turds that follow slip easily into the bowl and that's usually that. You wipe and flush, feeling safe and somehow braver for the effort.

But on a frigid winter morning in February of 1982, it didn't end there for me. Just before flushing I noticed blood in the bowl. I freaked. Nothing like that had ever happened before. For the next three days I had perfectly normal shits -- no pain -- but there was always blood in the bowl water. Concerned, I approached Dr. Jefferies and explained the problem. He said come on in and let's check it out. I did, he said, "Drop your pants, John," and then instructed me to bend over while he peered into my anus.

Medical science marches on: the newest breakthrough - hemorrhoid transplants.

"Well, John," he said while I dressed, "you have a tear in the lining of your rectum. It might heal by itself, but I doubt it. Here's the name of a specialist I recommend you see." The thought of having surgery done on my butt seemed very ludicrous to me, however I didn't want to pass blood every time I went to the bathroom. So I set up an appointment to see Dr. Schottler -- a proctologist.

If you have never visited a proctologist, consider yourself fortunate. You do not want to do this. As it turned out, Dr. Schottler, MD, was a very nice man in his forties and quite professional. We talked over my problem, and then for the second time that week I was told to drop my pants -- and for purely medical reasons, too! (I would have felt better if another part of my anatomy was being personally inspected by a woman, but no such luck.) Turning around to ask the doctor a question, I stopped in horror. Schottler had washed his hands, donned surgical gloves, and was lubricating this "gun" with petroleum jelly. It had a pistol grip with a screw-handle that opened and closed barrel-like metal jaws. I think it's called a speculum, and it looked like it could do wome real damage. Instinctively, I grabbed my butt, knowing fully well what he was going to do with that, that...*thing*!

"Okay, John," he said, brandishing the device like a weapon, "bend over the examining table and spread your legs." I did as commanded and gritted my teeth. His greasy fingers touched and probed my anus... and then I felt cold metal in my rump.

The next thing I knew my asshole was on fire. The pain blew straight through my body and exited from my mouth. "Aaiieecchh!!!!" I screamed, clawing for the ceiling. If I could have reached the walls I surely would have climbed them. Schottler referred to it as "Exquisite pain." Hell, my entire fanny was throbbing. Waves of pain shot through my rump like aftershocks. Eventually it subsided, and I calmly accepted his prognosis that minor surgery was needed to patch the hole in my rectal lining. Apparently, one of those ~~porcupines~~ hard, prickly stools tore the lining and left a nice-sized hole behind. Schottler scheduled me for surgery the following Monday, and suddenly I could physically envision my butt in a sling. He told me to check into Admitting at Methodist Hospital at 4:30 in the morning (an ungodly time for *anything* except convention partying), since I was due in Operating Room #2 at 8:30 am. Which made me feel a little better, knowing that it would be over relatively quickly.

Monday morning I did as instructed, which also meant wearing one of those god-awful hospital gowns that tie in the back. At 7:45 am the prettiest nurse I have ever seen in my life came into my room. Schottler had already been in to tell me that since I was young and healthy he was going to put me completely under anaesthesia. Fine by me; I didn't want to watch them carve up my butt. As part of "prepping" me for the operation, however, the area under construction had to be "clean." And that's why that lovely nurse showed up - her job was to give me an enema. How embarassing. Hurt like hell, too, but it sure felt good to flush out the old system. Then at 8:20 they came to Take Me Away. I got onto a gurney, and was wheeled onto an elevator and then into O.R. #2.

Five people were in the room. All were clad in baby-blue gowns and masks. I felt as if I was about to die; they stared at me like vultures waiting to feast on my carcass. Christ, I was scared. Then Doc Schottler came in promptly at 8:30, and cracked a joke about the 'rear-end job' he and his 'mechanics' were about to do. Amused, I was not.

Finally the dreaded moment came. They told me to lie still, injected something into my IV tube, and Schottler then said, "Count backwards from 100." This has always puzzled me. Why in the world do they always'count backwards from 100" when they know damn well you're gonna be out cold in two seconds?!? It doesn't make any sense. At any rate, I started the countdown: "100...99...98..." Suddenly my arms felt like lead weights and my head separated from my shoulders. The room rotated backwards before my eyes, and my mouth felt like a worn-out overshoe as I attempted to say "gosh-wow!" -- then lapsed into unconsciousness.

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Bright lights burned my eyes. For an instant my ears didn't work. Then the post-operation room came into focus. A dozen occupied beds were set around the large room. A busy morning. It then dawned on me that I had survived. I lay there for maybe ten minutes before Schottler appeared. He told me everything went fine, that the graft was stitched neatly in place, and so on. It was the classic 'good news, bad news' schtick: "The good news is the operation was a success. The bad news is you won't be able to take a crap for three days!"

Which is exactly what happened. They wouldn't discharge me from the hospital until I had completed "a successful and normal bowel movement." Translation: taken a shit. They pumped me full of the worst hospital food imaginable (guaranteed to make you barf or shit), gave me muscle-relaxant drugs (for the pain), made me drink orange-flavoured Metamucil (do you know how awful that tastes? I'd rather eat refried beans smothered with onions), and *still* I could not take a dump! Visions of the worst kind of hell ran through my mind, like being condemned to an eternity of not being able to empty my bowels. Spending the rest of my life like that, with fecal matter building and building, never to relieve myself. Christ,

it was like the most ungodly ending from one of H.P. Lovecraft's worst stories. The thought was unbearable.

Three days after the operation, I felt pressure building at the backdoor. With a whoop I leaped out of bed and rushed to the bathroom. Expectantly, I sat on the toilet waiting for the moment of my dreams. Then, painfully at first (my anus was still very tender from the operation), out came the initial plug. *plunk* It was like a dam bursting from under intense pressure. I must have sat there for forty minutes shitting like a demon. The stench was gut-wrenching, but I didn't care. God-Almighty, but it felt so damn *good*!

I was so proud. The orderlies had to wear gas masks whenever they came into the room. The silk flowers sent by my co-workers were wilting, and the wall-paper was peeling off in long strips. But I didn't care. I had TAKEN A SHIT and that meant I could now go home!

All did not end there, though. For the next few weeks I could not sit on any kind of chair or couch without pain. So, wherever I went -- to the dinner table, a friend's house, restaurants, and *work* -- I had to bring along this twelve-inch diameter inflatable donut to sit on. The ridicule I got was incredible. But once I was able to throw the donut away, eventually the bad jokes died out. It was an incredible joy to proudly proclaim that my problems were now all behind me.

THE LIVING END

---John Purcell

One would not normally think of a fanzine review arkle as being about Alternate Universes (except for the fact that many people seem to think that fanzines themselves seem to inhabit a variety of Alternate Universes). Mike Glyer, though, in this Pied Typer installment, reviews (of all things) a fanzine which concerns itself with con running, a very improbable topic for most fanzine fans.

THE PIED TYPER

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MIKE GLYER

At Loscon, I was presiding over the LA in '90 table full of t-shirts and buttons. Truthfully, I was staring with a glazed expression at the Registration desk. Then Dennis Miller sat down next to me, fresh from the Dealer's Room where Scott Dennis had handed him the latest issue of JANE'S FIGHTING SMOFS: THE MAGAZINE OF SF CONVENTION BIDDING. He devoured it cover to cover. Then I devoured it cover to cover. And the person who relieved me did the same. That was when I realized that JANE'S, in its fifth issue, was a critical success. It had lasted over a year, and built an audience -- including me -- who was excited to read every new issue cover to cover.

Being a good idea isn't enough. Every major achievement must have a champion, someone who overcomes frustration and resistance. The present example is Scott and Jane Dennis' fanzine about the techniques and gossip of convention-running

science fiction fans.

The original attempts at publishing a convention SMoFs' fanzine were destined to fail. Their creators were motivated to try by a vision of the prestige they would command as professors of con-running, and as the conduits of learned articles by the Secret Masters. They lacked an obvious requirement: they were not particularly interested in publishing a fanzine. They were interested in running conventions, not duplicating, collating, and mailing. Simultaneously, the expert convention runners viewed as potential writers were also being asked to do something out of character: reduce their knowledge to writing, and do it under a deadline. This was a particular problem because the abortive con-running zines of the mid-1970s lacked strong editors, with provocative written personalities.

Every couple of years a self-effacing neofan reinvents the concept of a zine without an editorial presence. He is willing merely to preside over a fanzine full of other contributors' opinions. He immediately discovers that unlike nature, fandom ignores a vacuum. Empty pages are not seductive, they are every writer's bane; his enemy, not his friend. Contributors are attracted by a strong editorial presence. They see the editor at a trough full of egoboo, and shoulder in to get a share. Bearing this in mind, you will understand that it was a fatal flaw to start a con-running zine thinking that someone besides its editor would fill the pages.

Specialty areas of fandom like con-running or filksinging have enough popular support to keep a fanzine going, but the zines only survive under a champion who combines special knowledge of his field with the editorial savvy and writing skills of a faneditor. In the case of JANE'S FIGHTING SMOFS, Jane Dennis' extensive congoing experience and editorial talents merge with the writing skills, conrunning expertise and tireless gossip-mongering of Scott Dennis, and yield a fascinating zine.

In the beginning I thought JANE'S would go away. It is offset on good paper, with some photos. At $3.00 a copy it is more expensive than LOCUS. And its target audience is a couple of hundred sf convention-runners. I thought it was too specialized to attract enough subscribers to defray its production costs. But it appears that a significant chunk of JANE'S target audience has subscribed, pleased by the zine's quality, and just as important, actively solicited by Scott and Jane in dealer's rooms around America.

Issue #5, the latest one available, runs 20 pages. Generally speaking, it has three types of contents, and all three types are extremely well done. First, there is the "Bids-At-A-Glance" feature which revives a concept created in the forgotten days of Craig Miller and Milt Stevens' SFinctor ("The Fannish News Release"). The concept is to index all existing Worldcon bids by year, and present information comparing their sites, committees, and facilities. In "Bids-At-A-Glance", the concept is made more "user-friendly" than ever before through a draftsmanlike graphic design.

Second, there is knowledgeable discussion of technical convention-organizing topics. In JFS #5 the editors present "Focus on Facilities' Availability", which summarizes the unhappy fate of people attempting to secure hotels and convention centers to bid for the WorldCon against mundane meeting competition. There follows a highly perceptive discussion of how would-be bidders should approach hotel management, and the factors they should assess as part of the decision to launch a bid. (The first of "Six Questions To Ask Before Bidding For A WorldCon" is: "How many members of our group have worked on a Worldcon in more than one area? That is, do we really know what we're getting into?")

As good as the technical material is, instructive lists and well-intentioned advice are not the foundation of JANE'S success. That credit goes to the detailed

fanpolitical gossip, JANE'S third kind of coverage. Scott and Jane huckster all over the country; at the same time they collect and trade conventioneer news, pollinating the scene like honeybees. But they are not done when the have collected this news -- JANE'S is not rip-and-read fanspeak. The key to their success is presenting the news with a distinctive and fair editorial point of view. The editors' knowledgeability and precision enables them to wed news and analysis with no loss of credibility. Just a taste of this effective mixture is contained in the following paragraph of an article on the 1988 Site Selection: "Surprising some fans was the strength of the vote for the SS Norway, the Cruise Con bid. Having run much of its campaign proposing an alternative, more relaxed WorldCon, the Bermuda Triangle bidders, as they were also known, began to offer more of the traditional WorldCon circus events in an effort to woo voters. Still, it was widely perceived as a clear alternative to the 'three ring circus' Worldcons of recent years which, in their efforts to be all things to all fen, have been criticized for having too much fringe and media emphasis." The genius of such writing is how the editors make their personal opinions evident without prejudicing the facts under discussion. The reader comes away knowing that the editors feel a certain way about encyclopedic WorldCon programs, but he is placed under no rhetorical duress to adopt their opinion as his own. The reader's predominant emotion will probably be fascination with the Dennis' insights into the political symbolism of the Cruise bid.

For all that JANE'S FIGHTING SMOFS is devoted to a narrow field of interest, it is a field that absorbs a very large amount of fannish time and treasure. Anyone who would subscribe to an sf newzine would be well-rewarded if he supplemented it with JANE'S, because that demonstrates sufficient interest in the realm of fandom to make JANE'S content meaningful, while JANE'S style and quality distinguish it in the field of fanzine publishing.

JANE'S FIGHTING SMOFS: THE MAGAZINE OF SF CONVENTION BIDDING. Quarterly. $3.00 per issue; $12.00 per year. Jane and Scott Dennis, 347 W. Second Street, Paris, KY 40361, USA.

2. False Distinctions

The theme of this installment of "The Pied Typer" is a warning not to miss out on some very good fanwriting in places not reputed for publishing it: newzines and clubzines. (Heh, I think I just saw the author's bias streak past.)

Two years ago when I wrote a narrative in FILE 770 about what were in my opinion the best fanzines, writers and artists of 1984, there was some shock expressed about the presence of several clubzines on the list. Well, I'm not going off on a tangent about whether ANVIL is *really* better than somebody's cherished genzine. But analyzing the response to my position, I began to suspect some fans have hardened their hearts against service fanzines to the extent that not only don't they look for good things in them, they don't believe others when they claim to have found good things. What a silly attitude. The presence of service features hardly precludes the publication of fine fanwriting. The presence or absence of of qulity writing in *any* zine depends on its editor and contributors. If there are lame clubzine editors whose boring issues are naked of anything but meeting minutes and a calendar of events, there are also outstanding clubzine editors -- Charlotte Proctor, Craig Chrissinger, Pat Mueller, Claire and Dave Anderson; and others, who've had a hand in WESTWIND (Seattle) and INSTANT MESSAGE (Boston) -- who are imbued with fannish creativity.

In fact, two of the three fanwriters whose work I want to highlight in this column edit their local clubzines.

Spike (Just Plain Spike) edits the Madison, WI, clubzine CUBE. She produced

her eighth issue in November, and is already singing the old, keening faneditor's lament: "Now it's time for me to come back into contact with solid ground and ask the readership what they want. What do you like and dislike about CUBE? I realize you might not think a clubzine is worth the trouble of a letter ('It's pubbed regularly and carries the event calendar, that's all I expect.') But if you have ideas, or advice, or This One Thing That You Can't Stand, this would be a good time to let me know. Anything." Why, that's easy to give two answer to. A lot of your readers only want the calendar, though they're willing to turn a few pages of fanzine material to get to it. The rest of your readers want you to keep weaving that intensely interesting fabric of zany humour and well-written news and service features. And if you've found 22 people to help you produce the zine during the past year (as it says in CUBE #22) you can rely on that being 21 more than some club editors I know have found!

Spike seems to be able to handle a full range of writing chores, but the most universally accessible talent in her repertoire is her humour. Promoting the next WisCon Fan Guest of Honour, CUBE #21 ran a verbal sketch of Avedon Carol. Spike's mini-bio of Avedon included: "Avedon currently lives in London, where she has been studying what it means to be an American. She is also making notes for possible future essays with titles such as 'Would Men Have Jobs In A Meritocracy?', 'Ronald Reagan: Communist Dupe', 'Why Are Monetarists So Bad At Capitalism?', 'How Industrialism Destroyed the Family', and 'Why Do Conservatives Hate Trains'." At least I hope that was subtle exaggeration intended to be humour. After seeing some of Avedon's letters since she moved to England, Spike wouldn't have to stretch the truth any great amount to come up with these titles, and it might just be that Avedon's leftward political momentum kept on going... But seriously, folks.

The halo effect of Spike's excellent sense of humour was the coup of bringing to American print Kate Solomon's "An Open Reply To Dennis Virzi." Virzi's wonderfully funny "An Open Letter To British Fandom" appeared earlier this year in THE TEXAS SF INQUIRER, needling the Brits by posing questions to them about what American fans might expect at next year's WorldCon in Brighton.

For example, Virzi wrote: "I don't think of the sheep as a food source (and neither do our Aggies), and the only fish I'm likely to eat is the fried cod that goes into fish'n chips. I have no idea what *basted eggs* consists of. And us Texans drink a lot of iced tea, too. We like hamburgers and steak. Can British food be as *unusual* as I've heard?"

British fan Kate Solomon gave Spike permission to print her even funnier reply to Virzi. Kate's riposte to Virzi's questions about British cuisine read: "No need to worry about having to eat sheep: meat is a luxury commodity over here, and is only sold in special shops at exorbitant prices. Do be careful with cod, however: the Chernobyl disaster, together with radioactive dumping from our 'home-made' nuclear power stations mean that most fish is irradiated. British people rarely touch any kind of seawater fish now, and the main part of our famous 'fish and chips' dish is jellied eels. In practice, you'll probably find yourself eating 'chips' most of the weekend, which are the staple food in Britain. ....You must also boil any tapwater before drinking it; electric kettles are provided in hotel rooms for this purpose." The rest of Kate Solomon's lengthy "open letter" is at least as funny.

CUBE. Sort of bimonthly. Available for the price of an annual membership in SF^3, the minimum being $3.00 for the nonvoting associate category. I'm sure a Patron Membership at $48.00 would impress Spike enough to send you a copy of #21... SF^3, PO Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701-1624, USA.

Another clubzine star deserving a wider audience is FOSFAX editor Joseph T. "Readsalot" Major. He occupies a different segment of the writing spectrum than the inventively fannish Spike. Major takes his nickname from being a voracious

reader. He is also a prolific, impressively well-spoken and fair sf book critic. Not many like him around anymore. Earlier this year when I started obtaining FOSFAX in trade, I was pleasantly surprised to find in its pages an unpublicized fanwriter of such high quality.

Even devoted sf readers find it difficult to keep up with the field when there is so much product. (Product. For using such a word in this context I should be made to wash out my typewriter with soap.) The fact remains, fanzine book critics are pressed to cover the field. To appreciate the achievement of a Joseph Major, you have to stop and consider how many words of fiction, and how much background information about writers and publishers, he copes with to produce the quality of reviews that he publishes in FOSFAX.

Major does both discursive reviews, and brief recommendations. He handles about 16 books per issue in two long and 14 short reviews. Besides being an impressive statistic, the volume of reviews helps the reader discover rather quickly what Major's critical orientation is, and conclude that Major is a fair critic with extensive sf historical knowledge. In his reviews, Major turns out a plot synopsis that can hook you on a good story without giving it away, or delving into excessive detail: a facility which likens him to P. Schuyler Miller. Short or long, every Major review refreshes a reader's memory about the context of past works in which the present subject belongs -- a series, a genre, a legacy of achievements. He feels free to mete out praise and criticism, and he always gives just grounds for either verdict. He is sometimes funny, occasionally sarcastic, but never abusive, which is rare in a field where so many critics behave as if Rickles-style abuse was their reason for existing.

One thing that personally delights me about Major's reviews is that somewhere in almost every one of them is a little gem blending insight with personal opinion in a way unique to sf fans. For example, reviewing Katherine Kurtz' THE QUEST FOR SAINT CAMBER, Major says, "I also ought to mention that as always, the rituals and procedures shown in the book add to it by their presence and solidity. So many fantasies today have characters who just don't seem to believe in their gods; it is good to see one in which belief is real." At least for me, that comment had the quality of being a truth that, as soon as someone else articulated it, I realized I felt that way, too.

Virtually all the material in FOSFAX is sercon, including the letters of comment. The Falls of the Ohio SF and Fantasy Association (FOSFA) meets in Louisville,and appears to keep in good communication with midwestern writers like Lawrence Watt-Evans, Judge "Honest Joe" Hensley, andrew offutt, Buck Coulson, and others. FOSFAX thinks it is published monthly. It is plain in design, for being so well reproduced -- xeroxed in 11 x 17 format and saddle-stapled. The text is neatly presented, but the interior art is bland, and the cover art is atrocious on a monthly basis. You probably drew better than this in grade school. But don't judge FOSFAX by its cover: hold your nose, turn the page, and enjoy the contents.

FOSFAX. Monthly. Subscriptions $1.00 per issue, $9.00 per year. Make cheques payable to FOSFA, and send them to PO Box 37281, Louisville, KY 40233-7281, USA.

The third fanwriter overdue for our attention habituates one of the zines already mentioned this time: THE TEXAS SF INQUIRER. Ferk is the name. (Just Plain Ferk). Yes, plans are in the works for a Fanthology of monosyllabically-named writers, featuring Spike, Ferk, and Chuch, with a forword by Alter-Ego, and a cover by ATom.

Ferk attends a lot of conventions, and distills the experience into marvellously acerbic, anecdotal reports. Ferk's bullshit detector is set on max, with phasers set not on *stun*, but on *kill*. In TTSFInq #18, Ferk's report of InConJunction described a lot of programming very well, in a tone like this: "A panel called 'Witchcraft: Dispelling the Myths' was delayed for two hours because the

scheduled witch, Myrrish, was not available. Four other pagans were produced. The audience didn't bring along a supply of myths to be dispelled, so the panelists spent a lot of time defining and explaining witchcraft. This involved a mixture of shoddy logic, glib platitudes and polite lies: change the platitudes and these pagans would have been born-again Christians."

Ferk, come to think of it, uses some of Joseph Major's techniques: like, knowlegeably setting the subject in a larger context. But Ferk's prose is more hardboiled, playing Chandler to Major's Christie. Nyclone is harshly disposed of: "This son of Empiricon was stillborn -- lots of dead space, very low attendance. Nonetheless, Robert Sacks and the Metropolitan Fantasy, Wargaming and Science Fiction Association Incorporated seem determined to reanimate the corpse and hold a Nyclone 2. There is a quaint local assumption that: (1) the East Coast needs a major midsummer convention, and (2) New York fandom is capable of creating it." Ferk finishes cutting sometime later, averring, "But enough of the horror: this is a con report, not the BOOKS OF BLOOD."

The savage lightheartedness of Ferk's convention reports has not been equalled in Ferk's movie reviews, which are dectn, but seem burdened by the writer's own realization that this is more "serious" stuff than conventions. If Ferk really believed that THE HIGHLANDER is "trash, but it's good trash", we readers would probably be spared such a belaboured account of the plot and action of the film. When Ferk learns to home in on a few key points of a film, and recognizes this is enough to support the reviewer's analysis, the quality of these film reviews will improve. Right now, there is informational overkill. Come on, these are *not* cultural landmarks -- a lighter tone is required. Not only is there overall too much detail about story lines; individual sentences convey so much information that they become awkward, and almost ungrammatical.

But don't take the criticism too hard, Ferk. This is a weakness I struggle with in my own writing: the unconscious attitude that certain subjects are Important, leading to complex and turgid prose. Remember one of Mark Twain's rules for writing: *Eschew surplusage.*

Since I picked up INQUIRER #18 to review Ferk's writing, I couldn't fail to be reminded by its cover editorial that THE TEXAS SF INQUIRER failed to receive a Hugo nomination as Best Fanzine. Editor Pat Mueller concluded her long essay on the question with a modest admission, "It hurts when you lose a popularity contest, especially when your peers are your judges. But it doesn't hurt...when the contest is one of Excellence, and you're merely good -- not the 'BEST'." In a universe where ANVIL can get a Hugo nomination, I don't really think that's an adequate explanation for THE TEXAS SF INQUIRER's omission from the ballot, but I do believe I know what the reason is.

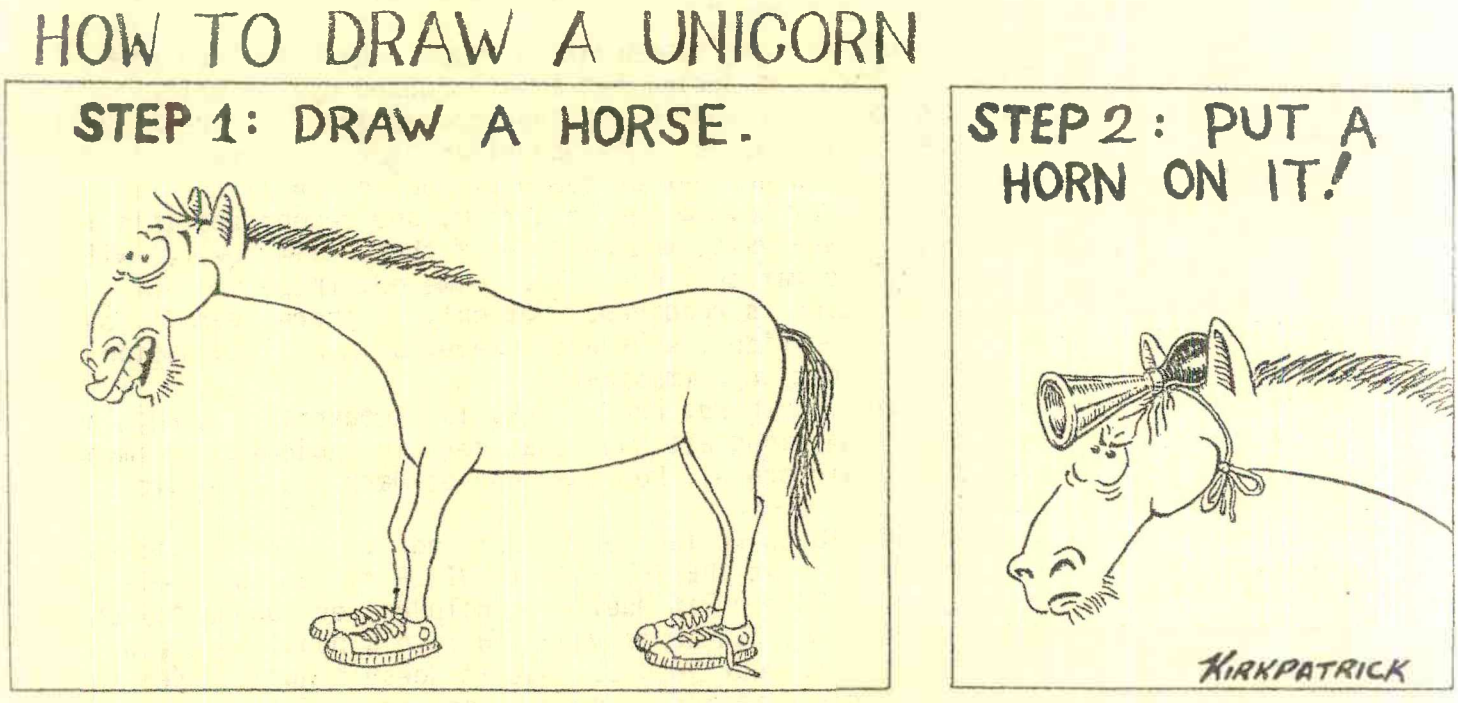
INQUIRER, though mimeo, has prozine-quality phototypeset text, graphics and layout. Pat has at her command some of the finest fanartists of the day: Brad W. Foster, Teddy Harvia, Mel White. There is an enthusiastic staff of contributors who all write well. Pat herself is a brilliant faneditor: you know whose zine this is when you pick it up, an obvious sign of a vital editor. There isn't anything deficient in INQUIRER that should prevent the zine from outcompeting ANVIL or HOLIER THAN THOU in a popularity contest. What does, I submit, is that INQUIRER doesn't fulfill its self-defined role as 'the best little newzine in Texas'.

As much as anyone, I recognize the formula of a superstar fanzine in INQUIRER. But the zine is so unwieldy, that it has never been produced on a regular and frequent schedule. There are late issues; there are catch-up "double issues." Unfulfilled expectations may be playing a crucial role in preventing the zine's hometown supporters from recognizing the zine as a worthy Hugo nominee, and sendint in their ballots. Issue #18 is 46 pages. It's an outstanding fanzine. If Pat could do that every two months, she'd be on the right track. Alternatively,

she could recharacterize the zine as F.A.C.T.'s genzine, meet a quarterly schedule, and change people's expectations to something she can meet. INQUIRER is much more a genzine than a newzine: about 25% of its space is devoted to news, the rest is features. While accepting the risk that I may be totally wrong, I wonder if Pat's potential voters subconsciously view the INQUIRER as a struggling overachiever, and whether a slight adjustment to the zine's mission would bring more Texans on board as Hugo voters.

THE TEXAS SF INQUIRER. Sort of bimonthly. $1.50, or 6/$6.00. To: F.A.C.T., 618 Westridge, Duncanville, TX 75116, USA.

---Mike Glyer



Bernadette Bosky reads old psychiatric journals and Mike Glyer reads fanzines. In some way they seem equally as weird. In the same category (of doing weird things) we find Milt Stevens - he reads old pulps. *Old* pulps. *Very* old pulps. Talk about time-binding in fanzines - following Mike Glyer's review of recent fanzines we move to Milt's review of a 46 year old pulp magazine.

Those younger fen who are familiar only with the science fiction of recent years (oh, say, since the mid-60s or so) will consider the science fiction pubbed in the early pulps to have been written in a *very* Alternate Universe, barely related to that of recent years.

To get an idea about that which I am writing, move on to Milt's arkle on the next page.

ALL IN BLACK AND WHITE AND FOR FREE

BY MILT STEVENS

Back in the old days, the average pulp magazine paid 1/12th of a cent a word payable on the abduction of the publisher's children. However, not all pulp magazines were that affluent. Don Wollheim has mentioned that he edited two professional science fiction magazines that paid absolutely nothing at all. One can imagine the young Wollheim approaching fellow members of the Futurians with the plaintive cry of "Spare manuscripts, spare manuscripts." It might not have been so easy, since fellow Futurians Fred Pohl and Bob Lowndes had started editing science fiction magazines at about the same time, and they even had editorial budgets.

At Confederation, Wollheim was on a panel on old time science fiction. During that panel, he added some background material on the brief histories of Stirring Science Stories and Cosmic Stories. Both magazines plus some other publications were the products of two promoters, who didn't have any other connexion with the publishing field. They did everything on credit (as many businesses do) and when the bills finally came due they were nowhere to be found.

Wollheim also mentioned that years later he discovered that Stirring Science Stories had been the first science fiction magazine that Philip K. Dick had ever encountered. Wollheim did not speculate as to whether this might have been a partial cause for Dick's later being a few numbers off in his mental balance.

For a better idea of what you can do with absolutely nothing, let's go back to those impecunious days of yesteryear and take a look at STIRRING SCIENCE STORIES, Volume I, Number 1, February 1941.

The first thing you notice about Stirring Science Stories is that it was a True Pulp. This means that even forty-six years after publication you still get itty-bitty bits of paper all over your lap when you read it. Back in the pulp era, fans who suffered from unsightly flaking didn't know whether it was dandruff or just their hobby. The second thing you notice is the cover. The cover was by Leo Morey and is a black-and-white sketch depicting two men in futuristic garb (which strangely resembled the interior of a submarine). The next thing you notice is the advertisements. Pulp magazines usually included a fair amount of advertising. In this particular issue, there is the standard Charles Atlas ad and also an ad for a correspondence school that offers to train people for government jobs that pay from $1260 to $2100 *a year*. The prize ad is for a product called "Pyro". Pyro is supposed to be good for bleeding gums, pyorrhea, and trench mouth. If you used Pyro and your teeth fell out anyway, the manufacturer offered to refund your money.

You're probably wondering about the fiction in Stirring Science Stories. Well, the table of contents was as follows:

Dead Center	S.D. Gottesman (C.M. Kornbluth)
Lunar Gun	John L. Chapman
Golden Nemesis	David A. Kyle
Resilience	Damon Knight
Citadel of Thought	James Blish

Strange Return	Lawrence Woods (Donald A. Wollheim)
Thirteen O'clock	Cecil Corwin (C.M. Kornbluth)
Bones	Donald A. Wollheim
Key to Cornwall	David H. Keller
Out of the Jar	Charles R. Tanner
Devotee of Evil	Clark Ashton Smith
The Abyss	Robert W. Lowndes

"Dead Center" shows a very strong E.E. Smith influence. The basic premise of the story is that whoever (or whatever) controls the center of the universe can control the entire universe. (The opportunities for a shopping mall in that location seem obvious.) The protagonist is your typical run-of-the-mill super human who cooks up super scientific gadgets at ten times the rate that even an E.E. Smith protagonist could do it. The villain is an old and evil capitalist who has been kept alive for centuries by a variety of eldritch mechanisms. The villain is rather similar to the old and evil capitalists who appear later in "Gladiator at Law". The hero and the villain naturally make it to the center of the universe where they encounter extra-dimensional aliens who are evil and rotten and use the wrong mouth wash. Through great effort and super human intelligence the hero wins the day for truth, justice, and the correct choice of mouth wash.

In "Citadel of Thought", we have more of the E.E. Smith influence. At the beginning of the story, a space privateer crashes into the oceans of Neptune and is rescued by the residents of the Citadel of Thought. These folks sit around and think a lot. Mainly, they think about why they built their citadel in such an utterly dumb place. But aside from that, they have come into telepathic contact with an alien race that is evil and rotten and may even want to marry your daughter. Obviously, you couldn't let aliens get away with stuff like that.

In "Lunar Gun", the Moon Folk build an H.G. Wells style space gun but get shot down in the process. "Strange Return" features some astronauts who have apparently returned to an alternate history but who have actually landed on the counter Earth. "Golden Nemesis" deals with a substance that raises your intelligence but unfortunately also gives you conscious control of your autonomic nervous system. "Resilience" was Damon Knight's first published story. It dealt with some little green men who invaded the world with a metal destroying ray and who also have the ability to bounce back from almost anything.

The first half of Stirring Science Stories was science fiction, and the second half of the magazine was devoted to fantasy. Korbluth's fantasy story uses a clock that strikes thirteen and dumps its owner into a comic fantasy world. I rather liked the volcano nymphs being hot mamas. They even wore their skirts an inch above the knee. (Gadzooks!)

In "Key to Cornwall", we shift from the E.E. Smith influence to the Robert E. Howard influence. In this story, Cornwall was previously ruled by the frog men, who were evil shape changers. They also delighted in causing warts. The current dynasty had defeated the frog men and driven them back to the pond from whence they came. Unfortunately, the crown prince is a quadruple amputee. He eventually tires of playing second base for the local ball team and decides to marry. Inadvertantly, he marries a frog person. (Pulps just couldn't have situations like the prince marrying a frog man in drag.) He manages to put the bite on the frog person, and Cornwall is saved from a reinfestation of warts.

The featured character in "Devotee of Evil" is living with a mulatrix. You probably wonder what the heck a mulatrix is. From context, I figured out that Smith meant that the guy was shacked up with a black gal. This guy is also using various arcane means to contact the essence of ultimate evil. As they say, everybody needs a hobby. He succeeds but dies of heart failure when he discovers that

Ultimate Evil has reversed the charges on a 23 hour long distance call.

In "Bones", Wollheim used the idea that you can't revivify something that was never living. This inability produces bad results in an attempt to revive a mummy. Wollheim was apparently unaware that bones are living tissue. In "Out of the Jar", we have the genii in the bottle situation, and in "The Abyss" we have eldritch critters doing evil for the sake of evil.

I've always had a certain fascination for reading old prozines that possibly nobody on Earth has read for the last twenty years. I imagine it must be something similar to the pleasure one might get from opening an ancient tomb. In this case, Stirring Science Stories is sort of interesting as an example of some of the early work of some writers who later became quite important in the field. It certainly proves that they wanted to publish at any price or at no price at all.

---Milt Stevens

Running a WorldCon, unlike sex, doesn't necessarily feel good even if you're doing it right.

--Mike Glyer, FILE 770:62

Mike Glyer reviewed a fanzine which concerned itself with conrunning; here is our British correspondent, Steve Green, writing about the Alternate Universe of British cons (specifically, Novacon 16). I cannot help but wonder if he is trying to prepare the Americans for the reality of what they will experience at Worldcon later this year.

FEAR AND LOATHING IN THE FIFTY-FIRST STATE

BY STEVE GREEN

SOCIOLOGY: 'Party is the madness of many, for the gain of a few.' (1)

"Hello," bubbles the bouffant blonde with the fibre-glass cleavage, "I'm Countess Krak."

Her smile drips with well-financed sincerity and I stare into it for an eternity before deciding to drown my embryonic giggles in one of the numerous pints of Real Ale being distributed by her Scientologist employers. It doesn't pay to make your contempt too obvious, even when surrounded by wall-to-wall lunacy.

And anyhow, we're talking Friday night at Novacon here, legendary zenith of interfannish harmony and a red-circle highlight of the British calendar for more than a decade.

Even in Coventry.

HISTORY: '...is merely gossip.' (2)

The first Novacon was organised as a one-off in the winter of '71 by the erstwhile Aston Science Fiction Group as an adjunct to the national shindig held in a variety of locations over the previous thirty-five Easter weekends. This unassuming alternative proved a huge success, instantly dispelling fears that British fandom simply wasn't large enough to support two such events, and prompted the newly-resurrected Birmingham Science Fiction Group to take the reins from '72 onwards.

Novacon's niche in the convention hierarchy has remained largely unchallenged ever since, even if in terms of sheer scale it was overtaken by Scots fandom's Albacon a couple of summers back -- an anomaly which owes as much to this country's love affair with tradition as to its extortionate transport system.

The 'Brum Group' has maintained its grip throughout, despite having to continually draft in new blood for its committees (Novacon 14, for instance, was completely staffed by members of the neighbouring Solihull Group), and for the majority of its life Novacon has been mounted within a few minutes' stroll of Birmingham's city centre.

LITERATURE: 'The English don't raise their voices ... although they may have other vulgarities.' (3)

"The problem with fanzines like *Larrikin*," I tell Ian Sorensen as we make for the corridor outside New Era's promo party, "is that they're so fucking boring. They've got nothing to say, and they take forever saying it."

Ian nods, the corridor sways and Novacon 15 pours itself a nightcap as dawn approaches behind the landscape of decay.

ANTHROPOLOGY: 'One has no great hopes from Birmingham. I always say there is something dreadful in the sound.' (4)

The original Birmingham Group was set up in the early '60s by, among others, Pete Weston (later to edit *Speculation* and the ANDROMEDA anthologies before joining the ranks of industrial management), Vernon Brown (subsequently to found the aforementioned Aston Group) and Roger Peyton (now a partner in Britain's top sf bookshop). Even in its infancy, the Brum Group had a peculiarly formal structure, going so far as to crib its constituion from a local branch of the Conservative Party (indeed, with female sf fans conspicuously thin on the ground in those less enlightened days, that selfsame branch proved equally fruitful in providing both Pete and Rog with marital companionship). How much the group's longevity is indebted to this formality is debatable, ditto how much it is to blame for the uniquely unfannish nature of the bulk of its membership.

On the other hand, the reborn group has had an impressive guestlist over the years, even discounting honorary presidents Brian Aldiss and Harry Harrison -- Chris Priest, Fred Pohl, Rob Holdstock, the late Frank Herbert, Garry Kilworth and the ubiquitous Dave Langford to name but a few of the authors who've graced its monthly gatherings. Not to mention editors like Toby Roxburgh and Malcolm Edwards, sfx wizards such as the BBC's Mat Irvine or artists like David Hardy (himself a group member) and the late Brian Lewis. On this alone, no other British group can match it.

And yet there remains this hollowness at the core, this bizarre detachment from the rest of fandom. The majority of the group's three-figure membership are certainly aware of its existence -- past editors of their monthly newsletter, Martin Tudor and myself among them, have made every effort to bridge the gap -- but they never evidence any wish to quit this secluded backwater for the stormier waters beyond.

Which is where the 'Birmingham Renaissance' comes in.

GEOGRAPHY: 'So they sent him to Coventry. And in Coventry they worked him over. It was just like what they did to Winston Smith in 1984, which was a book none of them knew about...' (5)

Moebius strip city: a half-mile walk to cross a one-way street. Pedestrian limbo: lighning bus strike. Thatcher's wasteland: a skyline of post-industrial collapse.

And at its twisted heart: the DeVere Hotel.

THEATRE: 'Right, stop that! Silly -- and a bit suspect, I think.' (6)

It was Lilian Edwards, I think, who first coined the phrase and even though it was rooted in a profound misinterpretation of the events of '83 those of us involved so enjoyed the pretense that we willingly maintained our roles 'til the final curtainfall.

Our playwright, ironically, was Pete Weston, his born-again enthusiasm fueled by cummulative contempt for the Brum Group's isolationism. His company was culled from the ranks of the fannish resistance which had already led to the creation of the Solihull Group: Martin Tudor, Paul Vincent, Eunice Pearson, Cath Easthope, Phill Probert, Tony Berry, Kev Clarke, Joy Hibbert, Dave Rowley, Chris Suslowicz. And yours truly.

Thus the 'Renaissance' and its simple plot: inject fandom into the Brum Group's bloodstream like some evangelical virus. Props: group-sponsored room parties at major cons, an internal apa, a proposed group fanzine (the first since a one-off back in the fall of '77), informal meetings, more experimentation with the choice of speakers for the formal ones, group outings, et cetera, et cetera.

Of course, it didn't work. The steady stream of fanzines from the Midlands (*Calaban*, *Abdump*, *Sic Disintegraf* and *Ritual Echo* to name a few) continued, with only Martin's *Empties* a direct result of the experiment. The apa failed to spark the fanzine revolution Pete had set his sights on, eventually breaking away from the group to become the Organisation.

In retrospect, the entire venture was doomed from the beginning. Martin recently pointed out how often Pete used his 'chairman's report' columns in the group newsletter to virtually apologise for any upset his proto-reformation was causing the sonambulistic readership. In effect, he engineered a group-within-a-group, sustained only as long as its faith in the facade could be propped up with self-delusion. Soon as we all sussed there was no way it could succeed, the pack of cards collapsed and we took our ball elsewhere.

Which brings us to the MiSFiTs, but that's another story, for another issue.

CHEMISTRY: 'What two ideas are more inseparable than Beer and Britannia?' (7)

Ironically, Novacon 16's faults provide the key to its overall success. The hotel's disjointed layout -- remarkably similar to that of the surrounding city -- polarises the convention between the bar and main hall, whilst the run-of-the-mill programme (always the weakest feature of a Novacon) persuades most to choose the former alternative. Even the low turn-out proves an unexpected boon, fostering an even closer atmosphere than is the norm at Novacons, no mean feat.

As usual, of course, the Brum Group's involvement is negligible, merely a financial safety net in case of some highly improbably fiscal disaster. Not that this insurance is without its premium -- Novacons regularly make around $500 profit for the group, one of the reasons Pete Weston launched the (since abandoned) programme of room parties in '83. Novacon wouldn't have continued past that first weekend had it not been for the Brum Group, but that same unmerry band wouldn't be

able to survive without their annual close encounter of the fannish kind.
Yet more irony.

ECONOMICS: 'It contains a misleading impression, not a lie. It was being economical with the truth.' (8)

Novacon 16 was held at the DeVere Hotel, Coventry, England, 31 December - 2 November, 1986. Ted Tubb was guest of honour, Chris Evans special guest.

ADVANCED ECONOMICS: '(Novacon is) organised by the Birmingham Science Fiction Group." (9)

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(1) Jonathan Swift, THOUGHTS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS
(2) Oscar Wilde
(3) Lillian Hellman, PENTIMENTO
(4) Jane Austen, EMMA
(5) Harlan Ellison, "REPENT, HARLEQUIN !" SAID THE TICKTOCKMAN
(6) Graham Chapman, AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT
(7) Rev. Sydney Smith
(8) Sir Robert Armstrong
(9) Fifteencon souvenir booklet, 1986

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(c) Intelligence Ltd 1986

---Steve Green

Goodonyer, mate! That installment of your regular column should *really* be of much help to the Americans who will be attending their first British con this next August. (Sorry, Steve, just a little of my usual terminal smartass coming to the surface.) But this example of a 'different' con report points out another way which I am using the theme "Alternate Universe" in this issue of HTT. In fact, there are a multitude of ways to view the use of that phrase. For example, most of you are comfortably ensconced in the laps of Western, middle-class luxury and values (or are at least quite familiar with that lifestyle even if not currently directly enjoying its benefits (down, Joseph)). Most of the readers of HTT are not aware of the day-to-day life of a fan in a communist country, at least not first-hand.

HTT goes to only one fan who lives in a communist country (and that country is not typical of the breed).

I met Krsto Mazuranik (who lives in Yugoslavia) at Chicon IV and he has been sporadically on the HTT mailing list since then. I say sporadically because Krsto Does Something only once in a while. The latest thing which he has done is to describe a typical day in the life of a typical fan in an atypical communist country. We will get to that which he has written as soon as we finish filling up the space at the bottom of this page with a lino.

I don't know why they had to put Canada way up here.

---

how to run your electric typewriter on micework

BY KRSTO MAZURANIC

Ever since typewriters went electric people I know worry about how to employ their house pets to help ease the general shortage of energy in the world today. Since people I know all have white mice for house pets, the problem boils down to employing micework. The third "since" deals with my utter lack of imagination: since I utterly lack imagination I can't invent problems of my own but must solve other people's ones.

To use micework in running your electric typewriter you need:

1 White mice, live, agile, two.
2 Copper-wire cage, revolving, one.
3 Copper wire, conductive, lots of.
4 Magnets, four.
5 Slide projector, functioning, one.
6 Screen, good condition in, one.
7 School globe, cast iron, at least 150 kilos mass of, one.
8 Telephone booth, old Irish, condition optional, one.
9 Transformers, do-it-yourself type, home use, two.
10 Anna Karenina.

Now you fit the four magnets around the copper-wire mice cage and connect the contraption to the slide projector through one of the transformers. You put your two white mice into the mice cage. Cajole them into running to make the cage spin. The spinning copper-wire cage, inside magnets, will induce electric current which will power the slide projector.

Now magnetize your cast-iron school globe and coil lots of copper wire around it. Connect the contraption to your electric typewriter through the other transformer.

Now use the slide projector to project Anna Karenina on the screen. If you haven't Anna Karenina, Segal's Love Story will do.

Now what's Anna Karenina if not the greatest love story ever? And what's the globe if not a kind of a world? And let me ask you, isn't it true that love makes the world go around? And what's the meaning of "going around" if not "spinning"?

So you set your magnetized cast-iron globe spinning inside a copper wire coil. Electric current is therefore induced to power your electric typewriter!

This setup has some highly interesting side-effects:

Firstly, it's very humane for it fights the alienation rampant in modern production-line industry. Mice's work brings them great joy and a sensation of fulfillment for apart from being boring drudgery it produces great art.

Secondly, it's a very clean method of obtaining energy for wastes/mice's droppings are very easy to dispose of and store. Even more, once stored, those wastes can serve as an excellent fertilizer used to reclaim devastated areas.

Thirdly, by this method you can produce your own energy and therefore fight the murderous grip all those oil-producing countries have on the free, oil-consuming world.

No, I haven't forgotten the old Irish telephone booth! It will be very useful to you when you nerve yourself into building this very clever method of producing your own do-it-yourself energy. You see, there'll be lots of heavy things to carry around -- the 150-kilo globe, for one. So whenever you have to carry something heavy, you simply DON'T add the telephone booth to your burden, thereby making it that much lighter! It will also serve you as an excellent consolation when, upon completing the work, you wipe the sweat off your tired brow and sigh blissfully, "Think of how much harder my work would have been if I had to carry the cursed booth all over the place!"

I would tell you a lot more but I can't. I must go and feed my mice.

---Krsto Mazuranic

"A snail goes through life doing only 3 things: eating, sleeping, and mating. Sort of like college students."

---overheard on a TV report about snails

Terry Carr returns, this issue, with his Entropy Reprint column. This column was originally meant to be in HTT #24 but it got to me as the stencilling for that issue was mostly complete. Besides, it really fits more into the theme of this issue, as the arkle he is reprinting is concerned with an Alternate Universe of sorts (a world where a different hobby attracts the same kind of people who become sf fans in the here-and-now), one which I was part of at the time. More on this (on a personal level) after Terry's introduction and the arkle itself.

TERRY CARR'S ENTROPY REPRINTS

Lee Hoffman is a Living Legend in fandom, a position she attained just a little over one year after she entered this microcosm, which you have to admit is a bit unusual. But Lee was fast and full of fannish energy in those days. On June 9, 1950, a friend showed her a fanzine; she liked it and asked what it was, so he lent her a copy of the original FANCYCLOPEDIA. She immediately went out and bought a copy of *Amazing Stories*; she read Rog Phillips' fanzine review column "The Clubhouse" (believe it or not, the professional magazines in those days often published such columns), and published QUANDRY #1 on July 23, just 44 days after her initial exposure to fanzine fandom. She was not yet eighteen years old at the time.

I was only thirteen then, but when I received my copy in the mail I decided it was a crudzine, so I didn't subscribe. Lee had sent it to me because I'd had a letter or two published in *Fantastic Adventures*, but despite my youth and having

seen only about a dozen fanzines at the time I was unimpressed by a fanzine that couldn't even spell its own name correctly (later Lee said she'd misspelled it because she figured that would draw attention, i.e. locs, though that term wasn't invented yet). The first issue of Q consisted mainly of her own neofannish writing plus that of Heck Torrie, a local fan whom she'd met at the Public Library. Possibly the best thing in the issue was a full-page abstract drawing by Lee (who signed it QAZ) titled "A Mental Impression of Two Gostaks Distimming a Dosh."

That reference to a 1930 sf story by Miles J. Breuer probably came from Lee's earlier reading of sf and ghost anthologies, which her mother had checked out for her on her (her mother's) Adult library card. Though Lee has often characterized herself as a fakefan, she spent her grammar school days reading such anthologies, and listening to the radio program "Lights Out".

QUANDRY #1 wasn't much good, as I've said, but not long later Lee acquired as a columnist the young Walt Willis, who began writing "The Harp that Once or Twice" for her. Other active fans of the period also began writing for Q, responding to its regular monthly schedule and the development of Lee's personality in writing and artwork, and by the time of the 1951 world sf convention, the NoLaCon in New Orleans, she was a well-known fan whom everybody wanted to meet. When they did meet her, they were surprised, shocked, bedazzled -- because Lee (whose birthname was Shirley) had told practically no one, and then only under strict DNQ, that she was female. In 1951, hardly any fanzine fans were female, so when fans met her, just nineteen and quite pretty, they were rocked to the seat of their preconceptions. Bob Tucker, who had been showering when Lee and others rang the doorbell of his room, wrapped a towel around himself to answer the door -- and when Lee was introduced he was so surprised that he dropped the towel (or so he claims).

Thus Lee became a Living Legend. But it wasn't only the revelation of her gender that made her such: within a month she published the First Annish of QUANDRY, which ran to 100 pages (seeing its reviews, I finally subscribed), and she continued publishing it monthly, more or less, for over two years more, featuring the best writings of the best fanwriters: Bob Bloch, Richard Elsberry, Bob Tucker, Rick Sneary, Walt Willis, Bob Silverberg, F.T. Laney, Jack Speer, Vin¢ Clarke, James White, and many more who appeared in the letter-column. QUANDRY was the focal point of Sixth Fandom, one of the best eras in fannish history, and when Lee finally lost interest late in 1953 and quit publishing it, fanzine fandom was left with none but lesser fanzines that were published much less frequently. The mid-fifties was a fannish period of doldrums, 'til finally fanzines such as Boyd Raeburn's A BAS, Dean Grennell's GRUE, Willis's HYPHEN, and several others again raised the fannish banner high.

In the meantime Lee had almost entirely gafiated from fanzine fandom, confining her fanpublishing mainly to FAPAzines. Periodically she returned to publishing for general fandom such short-lived fanzines as EXCELSIOR and FANHISTORY, but for the most part she kept busy riding horses and then being married to Larry Shaw for a while, and very occasionally, even as now, writing articles for this or that fanzine. She was by 1960 living in New York City, where I met her at Towner Hall in 1961. (Peter Graham, by then an old and cynical fan, met her at the same time, and I still remember the look of reawakened goshwowness on his face as he whispered in awe, "*Lee Hoffman....*" Lee smiled and said, "Yah".)

In the twenty-five years since then, Lee has very occasionally appeared in fanzines with letters, drawings (she is also an excellent artist/cartoonist, and would be remembered for her "lil people" cartoons even if she'd never done anything else in fandom), and sometimes casual articles. In the late 1960s she began writing professionally -- it's a point of pride with me that I commissioned, when I was first an editor at Ace Books, her first novel, a comedy-western titled *The*

Legend of Blackjack Sam. She also wrote a few science fiction novels and stories, several westerns (she won a Spur Award, the equivalent of a Nebula, for *The Valdez Horses*), and more recently a number of historical novels.

But despite her relative lack of activity in fanzines for decades, Lee is well remembered in fandom (as befits a Living Legend). In 1982 she was the Fan Guest of Honour at Chicon IV, that year's world sf convention, and in honour of the occasion The NESFA Press published a collection of her fanwriting, *In and Out of QUANDRY*, and Joe Siclari began reprinting her most famous fanzine in Xerox edition under the title THE COMPLETE QUANDRY.

Among the occasional articles that Lee wrote for fanzines after the days of QUANDRY/EXCELSIOR/FANHISTORY was the one you're about to read, "My Days in Folknikdom", which was originally published in Gary Deindorfer's fanzine LYDDITE #3 early in 1963. Actually it wasn't originally an article, but rather a letter which Deindorfer considered too good to publish in his lettercolumn. He had written to Lee saying he'd heard that she'd been a Big Name in folk music fandom in the late 1950s and asking her to tell him about that; in reply Lee had told him the entire story in this letter/article. The piece is not fannish, boys and girls, though it contains a few references to our fandom...or maybe it *is* fannish, because it tells of the creation of an "other fandom" centered around folk music. In any case, you're likely to enjoy it, for Lee always tells a good story.

I don't think folk music fanzine fandom survived Lee's departure from it -- there were no GRUEs or HYPHENs to replace it -- but folk music itself hasn't died and probably never will. Just last month I heard Mike Seeger at a concert in Berkeley, and I'm told that from time to time he still gets together with his cronies from the New Lost City Ramblers and they sing out at a gig here or there.

As for Lee Hoffman, she has remained active as a fanpublisher with one of the longest-lasting regularly scheduled fanzines of all time, SCIENCE FICTION FIVE-YEARLY, which began in 1951 and has appeared on its rigid schedule ever since. Its eighth issue is due this year, and I for one of many am looking forward to it.

---Terry Carr

MY DAYS IN FOLKNIKDOM

BY LEE HOFFMAN

YES, IF IT IS NOT too immodest for me to admit it, I was a BNF of folkmusicdom... or folknikdom, if you prefer. However, the memory of folknikdom is shorter than that of fandom and I have passed and been forgotten with the rest by now.

Anyway, you being a stuff buff and odd information enthusiast I will tell you about it all.

First try imagining a fandom which is not at all oriented toward the written word. (That is the distinguishing feature of our fandom, you know. Bloch did something on the subject once that was quite acute. All about us having one thing in common---not stf, but words.) Well, there was this fandom consisting of little groups around the country, and lots and lots of individuals isolated from each other, all enthusiastic about records (the way early stfans were about stf-zines). Most of them played and/or sang. Where they existed in groups they gathered to play and sing together or at each other, and to talk about folkmusic--its origins, its destiny, its forms, and (mainly) each other -- as singers/musicians and just simply as people engaged in gossip about others in the field. (Like fanclubs.)

Now, for the scholarly folklore buffs there were lots of publications -- folklore journals and such -- running scholarly (i.e., sercon) articles about folkmusic. And there was one current zine catering to the folknik class (though they weren't known by that label then). This was *Sing Out*, which ran non-scholarly articles, bits about Big Names in the field, and mostly songs -- old folksongs, newly composed topical songs, parodies, etc.

Into the Greenwich Village hotbed of folknikdom I came with my fannish-fanzine orientation. Through Dick Ellington (a peripheral folknik) I met one of the local ingroup. Dave Van Ronk -- folksinger (non-professional), anarchist, and so forth. DVR introduced me to various other folkniks and I found myself on the periphery of the scene.

There I was, a buff of folkmusic, an enjoyer of sitting around breezing and a general would-be ingrouper. Only I didn't play an instrument and I didn't sing. What was my natural talent? I operated a mimeograph.

DVR, being a young man with a lot to say about anything, particularly politics or folkmusic, took a stub of pencil into his grimy little hand and started writing; I started stencilling; and out came a folkmusic fanzine (labeled just that -- "*Caravan*: A Folkmusic Fanzine").

I ran a hundred copies of this -- about ten or so pages, mimeod, featuring DVR's writing, and some gossip and small talk and reports of small local concerts (written by me somewhat in the way I used to do convention reports). I mailed copies to everyone I knew of who dug folkmusic, took a load down to a Village Shoppe specializing in the stuff (The Folklore Center) where I gave them to the proprietor as counter giveaways, and took the rest to Wash Square where I handed them out freely.

Folknikdom went ape. There were loads of cats around with lots they wanted to say, but since there hadn't been any place much to say anything (excepting the somewhat politically oriented *Sing Out*) nobody put anything on paper. With the advent of *Caravan* they started writing.

Also, the proprietor of The Folklore Center came begging for more copies. It seems as soon as the thing got into circulation people had been jamming the store for copies. He offered to pay me for 100 copies of the next issue.

The next issue, by then, was in the works, also as a giveaway, but in an edition of 100. I went back to press and ran a second edition of 100 for The Folklore Center (taking out the cost in trade -- records).

Soon, I had to put a price tag on the book.

I was running it monthly. It grew to some twenty plus pages, full of goodies -- concert reviews, record reviews (the small companies specializing in folkmusic discs were sending me free review records). John Brunner did a column about the British folknik scene. People from other states wrote and told what was happening around their parts of the country. A California shop asked for copies to sell. I wrote a gossip column about the local characters. I ran pages of What's Where, which listed all the concerts, radio and TV shows, etc., I could find out about, who had instruments for sale, and even listed those people who wrote in advising that they'd welcome the travelling folknik to drop in and stay overnight (with food).

Like, there I was with a fandom all my own -- and the fans were going wild for the fanzine.

Eventually, I discovered myself with multilithed covers on the thing (courtesy of Ellington, who worked cheap) and cash advertisers. And an edition of 800. That was when I decided it was too big to mimeo and hand-collate. So I located a cheap offset printer, and consulted with prospective advertisers. Contracted enough advertising to pay the printer, set the whole thing up on a basis of covering costs at a newsstand price of 35¢ a copy, with the contracted advertising,

and went offset, bi-monthly. It was being sold by subscription all over the U.S. and in several countries abroad, and in folkmusic shops in four or five states. It had the potential of becoming a full-scale little magazine, and even could have netted a bit of profit. But it was a hell of a lot of work. And one of my charming advertisers, a rather well-known record company in the jazz field as well as folkmusic, finked on their advertising. Namely, they sent in copy but didn't pay bills. If I could have collected the accounts receivable I'd have shown a rather nice little profit.

But not being the pushy type, instead of trying to turn it into a paying proposition, I got tired of the work involved and decided I'd rather do the sort of small scale fanzine it had been in the beginning.

Well, there was this cat who'd come in recently from the West Coast who'd long had ambitions of a folkmusic magazine of some sort. He told me one day that I was doing it all wrong -- that he had learned more about editing a magazine from reading *Caravan* and seeing my mistakes than I knew. So I made a deal with him and turned it over to him lock, stock and barrel.

He immediately went class. Whereas I'd used all sort of tricks in editing and makeup to save a penny wherever possible, he went artistic in layout -- upped ad rates, went to a classier printer, etc. He turned out, I think it was three issues, and then disappeared completely. And as far as I know nobody's heard of *Caravan* since.

Meanwhile, I started putting out a folkmusic fanzine, mimeoed, entitled *Gardyloo*. But, as with *Celsy* /nickname for *Excelsior*, the fanzine which LeeH published three issues of in late 1956 and early 1957 - ed./, I found the muse wasn't with me, and after about six issues, folded my zine and quietly stole away.

In the first few issues of *G'oo*, however, I had fun. And, according to a friend, I "Made" a folkmusic trio. (Not the Kingston, however.) You have probably never heard of them, but this is what happened:

There were these three folkniks...(1) Tom Paley, who'd been around for years and was sort of a Bob Tucker of the ingroup -- he'd been on the scene since almost the beginning, but not quite; he was much admired by the inner ingroup and practically unknown elsewhere, and he made real fine music. Also, he was a comic.

Then there was (2) John Cohen, who hadn't been as i*n as Tom, but was long around, was part of the same Folkdom (if there were numbered folkdoms) as Tom, more or less, played music I liked, and frequently played with Tom.

A newcomer arrived (3), Mike Seeger. Mike is half-brother to the famous Pete Seeger (folkmusicdom's #1 Face), the Seegers being a family of folklorists and folkmusicians. Mike had turned away from his brother's field where he was continually labelled "Pete's brother," and played country-western stuff.

Somehow the three of them fell together and began entertaining themselves by playing old-timey music from the 1920's and '30's. The semi-folk, semi-hillbilly stuff which is hardly Great Music, but which really can be jolly fun.

During *Caravan*'s heyday, the local folkniks had organized a group called the Folksingers Guild and had sponsored a number of small concerts with various semi-professionals. (As if a bunch of fans got together and published a small *pro*zine with their own material in it.) These had been fairly successful, so it was proposed that they sponsor one with the trio, which was called the New Lost City Ramblers.

Somehow the Guild flubbed and decided not to sponsor the concert, so six of its members insurged, formed a temporary group and produced the concert. The leader of this insurgent group was Dick Greenhaus (also in it was Jock Root -- New York fan). I was not one of the group (nor was I a member of the Guild, though I was a voting non-member).

Tom and John being friends whose music I liked, and being a couple of guys about whom one could make up stories, punch-lines, etc. (like the likes of Tucker, Keasler, et al), I got in on the pre-concert publicity. For some time I had been planning to do something about the old NRA Blue Eagle -- use it in a fanzine or something, and it suddenly struck me -- NLCRA, New Lost City Ramblers Appreciators, with a Blue Eagle clutching not lightning and spears, but a banjo and guitar. I presented this idea to Greenhaus. We had Ellington print up a mess of hundreds of tags about 3 x 4 inches, with the Blue Iggle on one side and the letters NSCRA and motto, "we do our part", and on the other side, "I am lost, please return me to 1932". Each tag had a piece of string attached, and shortly everybody was wearing one and every instrument in the Village was adorned with one. We were distributing them prior to any other concert publicity, and half the people who had them didn't know what they were about (like Courtney's boat) but for a moment they were the "in" thing. While we gave them away by the handful in Wash Square, The Folklore Center had obtained a bunch and was *selling* them for a nickle apiece. (I was busy telling people NLCRA sttod for National Labor Council of Russian Anarchists, as I handed them tags which they proudly put on.)

Meanwhile, I was filling *Gardyloo* with Tom Paley stories, John Cohen stories and Mike Seeger stories.

Tom had long had a reputation for tuning. It seemed to be a sort of nervous habit with him on stage, but he did it. Whenever he played he spent ages tuning, and it was sort of a joke with people, and an embarrassment to Tom. Well, *G'oo* filled up with Paley tuning stories. The fictitious record company, Obscure Records, announced an album, "Tuning the Five-string Banjo" by Tom Paley, with a booklet, "1001 Witty Sayings to Use While Tuning Your Banjo in Front of an Audience", which *G'oo* was serializing, one saying at a time (each being an exact quote from some banjo picker who'd been tuning on stage and talking to cover).

There were Paley Tuning Songs: "Tune on, Paley, don'cha tune so slow;/How the hell can I tune when the E's too low..."

Paley's tuning rapidly became a Living Legend.

And there were various other things.

Anyway, when the concert finally came off, the house was sold out, including the standing room. And the audience was primed; the whole thing was a set-up. Almost every member of the audience had been reading about the Ramblers in *G'oo*, wearing a NLCRA tag, and felt like he, personally, was part of the ingroup.

When Paley stepped out in front of the audience and tuned, there was a standing ovation.

With an audience like that, any performer had to respond, and the boys did. They were at their best. The whole thing was a blast.

After that the boys made a half dozen lps, gave numerous concerts, did a national tour (and reported finding the Chicago area flooded with NLCRA tags, which apparently had been bootlegged in) and played the Blue Angel.

Our publicity campaign had not only made the first concert a whopping success, it had given the boys the shove and confidence to really go out and sell themselves.

Since *G'oo* had been the primary medium in our campaign, Dick says I, personally, am responsible for the New Lost City Ramblers. But I refuse to take the entire blame. It happened to be the right time, place, and people. It jelled.

So that is the story of me, BNF of folknikdom.

There is sort of a tradition that on the first really nice Sunday of summer when Wash Square is open for folksingers, the old-timers who are around drift down and look over the scene. I went down this time, and ran into a lot of the old gang. First Fandom is Not Dead.

---Lee Hoffman

3000 MILES AND 25+ YEARS

BY MARTY CANTOR

I did not discover fandom until1975. Most of my life before then was as that of a loner-reader of sf. However, from the mid 50's through the early 60's I was (aside from being a poet who published in the little magazines of that time) a very committed folknik (as LeeH calls them - I called myself a folksinger and a follower of the folk scene). Out here on the West Coast a large part of the "folkmusic happening" occurred in the coffee houses that were then proliferating. I played 6-string and 12-string guitar, gut-bucket, jug, and washboard. Guitar I played mostly solo (and that was always fun, carrying two guitars strapped to my motorcycle as I travelled from coffee-house to coffee-house) and the other instruments in jug-band and bluegrass groups. Much of the time I palled around with Mark Spoelstra (a twelve-string folk and topical music person who later recorded 4 or 5 albums). I still own Mark's first 12-string - with an NRA Blue Iggle rubber-stamped onto its front (yes, LeeH - you brought back some fond memories).

I did not personally meet most of the people mentioned by LeeH unless they visited this area (although I knew their names either through the grapevine or from the infrequent issues of SING OUT which I perused). Dave van Ronk I knew personally as he visited out here several times (he taught me a very unusual open-C tuning for the guitar). A most unusual person - I think that he once said that at one time he made a living painting the eyes on Mickey Mouse watches, he knew a vast storehouse of labour songs (amongst many other kinds of music), and he said that he had a roomful of mindrot (sf books) - but he never mentioned sf fandom that I can remember. I believe that I own a copy of every recored which he ever made including the ones he made with a Dixieland Band and his jug-band recording. Dave was a very impressive person.

At one time or another I jammed with most of the folksingers who passed through this area. To my knowledge, though, except for the New Lost City Ramblers (with whom I just tallked at a coffee-house in Arcadia, California), only two of the people with whom I played the folk scene ever went on to become known (or better known) in wider circles. Local resident David Lindley (a mister-everything instrument player in the local folk scene)became a mister-everything instrmentalist with rock muscian Jackson Brown. And Jim Kweskin and I played duo for a few weeks until he went back to Boston to form his jug-band.

Hmph. Jock Root? I did not know that he was a New York fan who also liked folk music. I know him as a computer-type person with fringe-sf-ties to some local fans - he buys English cigarettes from me at the shop. I think that I will have to reminisce with him some time if I am not busy at the shop. Sensawonda - 3000 miles and 25+ years later, here is a connexion, in fandom, with my non-fannish past.

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And now we come to Skel (who always seems to be inhabiting an Alternate Universe of his own, one only tenuously connected to the rest of Britfandom). I mean, how else can you explain a column which seems to start out as a loc on HTT #24 before it gets up a head of steam and travels elsewhere. There is not much else to say about Skel or his column; as he is one of fandom's premier writers he says it all best, himself.

Sins You Been Gone

BY SKEL

I am really looking forward to HOLIER THAN THOU 25. Of course as I write these words I am going to have to eagerly anticipate for quite some time yet because issue number 24 only arrived at the skelhouse yesterday. In fact it is issue 24 that has gotten me all of a dither with expectation. This is because I think the new HTT is a damned good fanzine - a coherent whole in a way that none of the previous issues ever managed.

Of course I knew it was going to be good as soon as I saw the cover. What an intriguing piece of artwork (he ~~hissed~~ exclaimed)! I don't know who this Nick Stathopoulos bloke is, but if he ever decides to give away the original, then bags I first dibs on it. Of course you can see that Marty is trying to keep on Nick's good side, to encourage him to submit more covers, because Marty went to the trouble of spelling Nick's surname correctly. Marty does not always do this. Anyway, like I said, I knew immediately that HTT 24 was going to be some hot shit issue, so I poured myself a pint of sipping bitter and stopping only to grab the zine and a second bottle I made my way forthwith to bed. I do this quite frequently when Cas is working nights and I have a good fanzine to look forward to. I find bed a highly congenial place to read fanzines and sip beer. It's an even more congenial place to read fanzines and sip malt whisky but I'm afraid my finances will only stretch to homebrew at the moment. Then at the end of the evening, suffused with two warm glows - one from the fanzine and one from the drink - I can switch off the light and drift content out into the ocean of night. After I've made the obligatory trip to the bog of course, which is one of the reasons why sipping whisky is more congenial.

Even though HTT 24 was a coherent whole I didn't read it in strict cover-to-cover sequence. Well I couldn't, it didn't have a back cover. Even if it had though I'd have charted my own course through it. I always do. For instance I invariably start with the locs. This is not something unique to HTT I hasten to add. Whatever the fanzine I invariably start with the locs. Well, it seems the logical and sensible thing to do. I have after all read the previous issue. I then read the locs first, which are a link with the previous issue. before moving onto the other contributions which generally have nothing to do with the previous issue, but which will form the raw material for the locs in the next issue...and so the progression goes. It has always puzzled me why editors don't see things in this light and start their fanzines with the letter column so that you *can* read straight through from the front and still maintain the temporal logic.

This approach meant of course that I plunged first into the CRUISECONtroversy. I never stuck my two-penn'orth in before because as someone who can't afford to attend the Worldcon when it is only about 250 miles away (CONSPIRACY in '87 - and no, Marty, I will not be there) it occurs to me that my opinions are hardly those of an interested party. Now it has been said that if you don't involve yourself in a particular area or aspect of fanac, then your opinions are meaningless and should be ignored on that topic. This always struck me as a strange outlook which, if followed to its ultimate would result in all juries being comprised, in equal parts, of only criminals and victims. To me my lack of involvement merely means that I have no personal bias to discount. Mike Glicksohn is my good friend, it is true, but then this is appearing in Marty's fanzine.

As usual I disagree with everyone. Marty is obviously wrong in declaring the bid to be illegal. 'Legal' has to do strictly with tecnicalities and I would bow to Mike Rogers' ruling in this regard. I do however view it as immoral. The Worldcon goes overseas partly to benefit foreign fandoms, as Marty pointed out, and partly to benefit itself. If it didn't go abroad then it would be in danger of becoming a 'worldcon' in no better a sense than baseball has a 'world series'. To maintain credibility it must move outside the continental U.S.A. from time to time. As far as credibility goes, cruisecon is not an overseas bid.

If the people doing the bid had opted for a site in, say, Scandinavia, then it would have been an overseas bid, and hence we see that the location of the bidding committee is irrelevant in this regard. However, having said all that I am not too bothered by whether it is morally a US convention, or legally a US convention, or whatever. I like the *idea* of CRUISECON. It is different, it is an alternative, a genuine alternative, and whilst I accept the concerns of many fans that it could end up disenfranshising the less wealthy fans (and there are few fans less wealthy than I), I think it is a reasonable choice and one that is quite rightly up to Fandom to make. If Fandom votes for it, then it will be what Fandom wants. It's called Democracy In Action. That's how we pick our governments, it ought to be good enough for selecting our worldcon. I dislike the crusading tone, the hectoring, the missionary zeal that I see in the anti-CRUISECON arguments. It's a bit like the pro-censorship brigade who want to ban things because they don't think the public competent to make their own decisions. The bid *has* been ruled legal, therefore let's get off its back and let the fans decide. It will give them something else to think about besides TAFF and the standards applicable to fanwriting.

In this latter regard I was particularly tickled by Darrell Schweitzer's comment that "There are some basics: do the sentences say what the author means to say...". As a sometime author myself let me tell you that this is not always as easy to accomplish as you'd think. Let us take an example. Let's not cheat, let's use a good fanwriter. Let us take Avedon Carol. In fact let us take a sentence from her tremendously moving letter in HTT 23, wherein she responded to Eric Mayer's 'Cafe Fandom' piece in HTT 22. Here's the sentence in question: -

> "I don't know about the small handful of people who had 'never even heard' a song by John Lennon, but the rest of us had already suspected that the man might be human, and simply hoped that the condition wasn't permanent."

Of course few if any of us would even consider second-drafting a letter so it isn't really a fair example in that sense, but it is such a delicious example that I thought to share it with you anyway. At least Marty didn't insert any typos into it. He sometimes does that, you know.

Mind you fanzines aren't really any worse than the professional press when it comes to typos, as I'm sure Steve Green would freely admit. Why, there is one national British newspaper, The Guardian, that is so notorious for its typos that Private Eye magazine invariably refers to it as The Grauniad, which name has become almost as widely recognised as its more official cognomen. Steve of course did not work for that Newspaper, but rather for an element of the local press. There are two types of local newspapers in this country. First there is the free newspaper. These are 98% advertising, with the occasional 'article' inserted in an attempt to get you to waste your time looking through the adverts. These are delivered free through our letterboxes (or alternatively dumped behind some bushes if the delivery people can't be bothered actually *earning* the miserable pittance they're paid). When they are delivered these go straight on the bottom of the rabbit hutches here at the skelhouse without the benefit of eyetracking. Then

there are the local newspapers you actually have to buy. These are only 88% advertising and obviously have to make up the difference in revenue somehow. These do not go on the bottom of the rabbit hutch...simply because I refuse to buy them. Why should I pay money for rabbit hygiene products when some competitor will deliver them for nothing? Those who would claim that local newspapers fulfill functions unrelated to rabbit hygiene do exist, but they are obviously barmpots and can safely be ignored.

Accordingly I have no idea if our local newspaper has a Theatre Correspondent doing the job Steve did. Unlike Steve I still have had virtually no contact with the theatre in any form. The keyword here is 'virtually'. I have been to one performance. It was an amateur production, put on by the Group that Gerald Lawrence is involved with. In fact Gerald was doing the lighting for that production. I was down in London for a User Group meeting of a payroll package which, for my sins, I support. "Are you the person who supports our payroll?" they ask, ringing up with yet another of their almost infinite cockups. "Yes", I reply. "Truss me." It goes right over their heads every time. Anyway, there I was in London, so I decided to spend the weekend visiting with Gerald afterwards. It's an ill expense account that blows no good.

Unfortunately Gerald wasn't entirely free that weekend. Because he was doing the lighting that meant he had to be there. London may be a mecca of innovative theatre, but I don't think North Finchley will ever be ready for mysterious voices emanating from a pitch-black stage. Gerald however takes his duties as host seriously and so he found himself in a bit of a quandary. "I know," he said as if struck by a blinding inspiration..."why don't you come?"

"Do I have to pay?" I hissed suspiciously.

"Of course not." he replied, which effectively settled it. I would not even attend my own funeral if I had to pay, but if it's free I'll attend any old cock. Truth to tell I was pleasantly surprised. The play was Alan Ayckbourne's 'Absent Friends', and I thoroughly enjoyed it. It didn't seem 'amateur' to me in the slightest. By way of comparison the BBC recently repeated their production of the very same play, featuring such talents as Tom Courtney, Dinsdale Landen, Hywel Bennet, and Maureen Lipmann amongst others whose names I forget. We made a point of watching it. I'd told Cas it was a good play, which shows you what a good impression the 'original' version had made upon me. I have to admit that the BBC version was better (well, it was better lit for a fucking start!), but at no time whilst watching these consumate actors and actresses go through their paces was my memory of the amateur performance ever held up to ridicule.

So of course the coverage that local newspapers give to the amateur theatre is very much a public service and, as Steve pointed out, they do try to get the names right. Even names like 'Brzincowicz'. If they get it wrong, it's because their source got it wrong. I cannot conceive of a single local British newspaper that would get the name of one of its regular contributors wrong. Not in a byline. Not especially if that byline was only four letters long (or rather *supposed* to be only four letters long). Even more especially not a regular contributor who has been described as one of the brightest stars, one of the hottest properties in that editor's portfolio. No, with the possible exception of The Grauniad, no British newspaper would do this, though I know of at least one fanzine that has displayed such ineptitude. I think Marty knows of one, too.

/Yah - that fanzine has also typoed the name of its editor/publisher.-ed./

It won't come as any surprise to you however, having been privy to Steve's sense of disillusionment, that British Newspapers are a bit of a joke. Not alas a good joke, but rather a bad one. They say a country gets the press it deserves. If so then we here in the UK must be a thoroughly undeserving lot.

I am reminded at this point of the recent visit to the skelhouse of Dave Rowe

and Carolyn Doyle. Carolyn has majored in journalism. She is a journalist. This was her first (hopefully only her first of many such visits) visit to Britain, and hence her first exposure to the British press. She was, not to put too fine a point on it, underwhelmed. What Carolyn found most diffucult to comprehend was the way opinion and news are intertwined in British newspapers. Apparently, or so she told us, US newspapers, whilst not eschewing editorial policy or opinion, at least have the decency to segregate it from their reporting of current events, and don't go paddling about in the news with it, muddying up everything whilst they're at it. Over here the newspapers editorial policy is not only reflected in the stories they choose to report, but also in the way that they report them. If you read the Tory press for instance it is impossible to understand why Arthur Scargill, the leader of the National Union of Mineworkers, wasn't strangled at birth, or at least exposed on the harsh and inhopitable slopes of some Barnsley coaltip. Conversely the Labour press, what little there is of it, spends its time justifying (or at least trying to explain away) the worst excesses of Trades Union lunacy. Of course these are sweeping generalisations and as such are suspect. It is for instance true that some newspapers over here, to this very day, still report the news with a minimum of editorial slanting...but they don't count because no bugger buys them. I certainly don't, which means I can't speak of them from personal knowledge. Rumour has it that they exist, and that their names are: The Times, The Telegraph, and The Grauniad. Each of them has a readership of between three and twenty-seven. The British public does not deserve them, does not want them and frankly, does not give a shit for honest reporting.

So what does the British public want from its national press? Why do they buy newspapers? It certainly isn't for their news content.

Perhaps it's a tribute to the unquenchable human spirit; to hope springing eternal in the human breast...and all that crap. Let's face it, a great chunk of the British public (and no, that is not a euphimism for Cas, despite the fact that she is on yet another diet) sits glued to the TV set and gets its news from that source. Over here the late news finishes at ten-thirty and is immediate enough for us to know that, if it happened before ten-twenty-five, then we already know about it. Global communications has its finger on the world's pulse. If it happened before twenty-five past ten British time, then we in the UK know about it at ten-thirty...before we trot off to bed for the night. And yet, the very next morning, we rush out and buy a newspaper in the eternal hope that something has happened somewhere that we don't already know about...that something of interest has happened whilst we slept. We are not geared up for rollover, fully scrolling, 24-hour wraparound days. To us the day still starts in all its parochial glory when we get up in the morning and stops when we go to bed at night. The events of last night's television news may only be a few hours old objectively...may even be only a few minutes old subjectively, but it's still yesterday's news - and yesterday's news is no news.

Well alright, that might explain why we here in Britain buy a nespaper, but it doesn't explain why we don't buy one of the decent ones. Perhaps then it isn't a thirst for novelty that drives us on. Mayhap it isn't a desire to keep abreast of what is going on in the world after all. In fact it might even be a manifestation of the very opposite.

Man is a territorial animal. Many animals are. The first thing they do of a morning is make a circuit of their territory, refreshing the scent markers that delimit it, that mark it off from the rest of the world. They also check for intruders. Sniffing the wind - no intruders means no change. Change is threatening, hence 'no intruders' means no change...'no threat'. If there is no threatening change, then that means that everything is clear for takeoff for another day. As far as survival goes, change is a pain in the arse. Perhaps therefore when we

go out and buy our morning newspapers on our way to work or have them delivered before breakfast, maybe all we're doing is touching a few bases - pissing against a few psychological trees on the boundaries of our everyday existence. In fact could it be that we don't so much want to know what has changed in the world, but rather do we not need to be assured that nothing has changed at all. Nothing of personal importance anyway. The world is as it was. That would explain why we in Britain keep on buying the slanted rubbish that merely panders to our own prejudices. It is very reassuring in a world that seems increasingly more complex, more difficult to understand...and hence increasingly threatening. Our newspapers may be our security blanket - they may be a wet and reassuring thumb.

When Carolyn first mentioned this she said "Good Lord! Don't they think you can make your own mind up about *anything*?" Back then I thought that this might be precisely what they were afraid of. They knew we could make our own minds up given half a chance, so they were determined to make sure we didn't get even that half-a-chance. But I was kidding myself. The fact is that most people have already made their minds up - about everything. They have made their minds up on fuzzy generalities, upon untried theories, and having to take each new, separate issue on its own merits is much too much like hard work. Most people merely want to be told how the new issues slot into and support their existing beliefs and worldviews - to be reassured that yet again they have been right all along.

They...me...we...us.

The main problem with issues is that to handle them properly you really need to think about them. You need to work out your own personal reaction and response, and then take a stance upon that specific issue based upon the mental and emotional work you've put in. This of course can be a lot of work. In fact it is quite often more effort than most folks want to make. Much easier instead to take sides over an issue rather than to take a stance on it. Taking a stance means you've thought it through for yourself, and only afterwards do you even look up and notice which stances anyone else has taken on the matter. The stances they may have taken are of interest because we are a curious people, but they are otherwise irrelevant to one's own stance. When you take sides though, where everyone else is standing on a subject is of paramount importance. You wander up to your associates and ask "What's going on here?"

"Oh, those bastards are doing such-and-such."

And of course, when they put it that way, you can go along with it. It is far easier to take sides rather than stances because the former means that you can let someone else do all the thinking for you. Too many British newspapers try to do the thinking for you. To steal the advertising slogan from the Manchester Evening News, they are 'a friend dropping in'.

"What's going on in the world today?"

"Oh, them bastards over there are doing such-and-such."

"Dear me. Not again. Won't they ever learn?"

And that's only the British daily newspapers. God only knows what Carolyn would have made of one of our Sunday newspapers. For one thing, they don't contain any news, other than that of a sporting nature - the previous days results and reports and like that. I think that the last item of real news they featured ran under the headline 'Dinosaurs Missing - Small Mammal Is Helping Police With Their Enquiries'. I don't know how the US Sunday newspapers compare, but let me give you a brief guided tour through a typical British Sunday paper. For a start most of it is holiday advertisements. Well, just at the moment that's fairly understandable - particularly all the adverts for UK holidays now that all those chickenshit American tourists have decided to stay home where Colonel Gadaffi can't get at them (they hope). This of course is known as caving in to terrorism before it's even happened. As I type these words there hasn't been a single

instance of Libyan terrorism in this country in response to Uncle Ronnie's air strike, yet the American tourists are suddenly staying away in droves. This contrasts most oddly with the attitude of British tourists in Spain where Basque terrorists have caused several explosions with bomb outrages so far this season. What is more yesterday's Daily Express had as its front page headline, 'Britons Face Spain Death Threat'. There has however been no drop in Spanish holiday bookings from this country and holidaymakers interviewed for TV say that they refuse to be intimidated. The British apparently are determined to enjoy their holiday, even if it kills them.

I guess that this is simply a case of the British having already made up their minds. The Americans have looked at the issue ('I might get killed') and have gone to Disneyworld instead. The British though have, as I said, already made their minds up on the matter ('You don't give in to terrorism') and realising that they are statistically more likely to get knocked down crossing the road if they stay at home, have gone ahead with their holidays. Perhaps I am just revealing my cultural bias here, but to me this latter approach seems eminently more sensible. Let's face it, if you had reason to believe that terrorists were really out to get you, in which would you pin your faith - in the capabilities of police and security forces experienced in such matters, or in Mickey, Donald, and Goofy?

But I am allowing myself to be drawn away from the subject of British Sunday newspapers. What else do they contain besides holiday advertising and sports reports? Well, there's always the motoring correspondent telling us how spiffing the new, top of the range Maserati is. You may not believe this, but I find such material strangely irrelevant to my lifestyle. Then of course there will be a travelogue...which will be totally indistinguishable from a holiday advert. These travelogues are where they actually pay somebody for the privilege of printing material that the advertisers would pay them to print anyway. I can only see this as conscience money. They feel responsible for all the poor suckers who have fallen for their advertising in the past, and so let one of the poor sods, a token representative, get some of his or her money back each week. They sleep better for it.

So what else is there? Well there's usually sections on TV, on Cinema, on Theatre, and on Books, although the books reviewed are invariably biographies of either Generals or Film Stars. There's also always some sort of 'Hollywood Gossip' section, on the remote chance that we haven't already had a surfeit of all this empty saccharine glop. Oh yes, and ther'll be a cookery section too, in which some ritch bitch will reveal the 'ebsolutely soopah' recipe for Lobster Claws in Retsina which she sampled at this simply delightful little taverna during their recent Sardinian holiday. Apart from the recipe itself this section will read just like the travelogue. Then there will be a gardening section where some cretin with a name like Percy Digweed will tell you how to grow for yourself those marvelous dwarf peach trees that you noticed covering the hills the last time you were holidaying in the Algarve.

Honest to God - sometimes I think that all the Sunday newspapers over here are secretly owned by Thomas Cook.

Of course the British Sunday newspapers also have a social conscience, which they display by printing photographs of some of the poorest people in the country. You can tell how poor these people are, they can't even afford clothes. By some bizarre coincidence all these poor people seem to be women. These photographs in fact serve to restore one's faith in the British Welfare State, because despite their abject poverty none of them look undernourished. In fact they usually seem happy and smiling, and appear to be in the best of health, their bodies bursting and thrusting with energy. What a wonderful country we must live in where even such impoverished folk display such joi-de-vivre!

Oh yeah, and there's the scandal. One must not forget the sinsationalism that actually substitutes for news items. In a way it is a relief to find the Sunday newspapers are still obsessed with this type of material. This relief is a personal thing. It's me going around and sniffing the markers of my life. No problems today - nothing has changed. The Sunday newspapers are still full of scandal. Our Sunday newspapers have always been full of scandal. Even the headlines seem, if memory serves, reassuringly familiar - large type screaming 'NUDE VICAR IN MIDNIGHT SEX ROMPS' or 'SECRET VICE DENS OF THE GROPING GP'.

I was young and impressionable when I first started reading the Sunday papers, not to mention naive. Not half. At the time it seemed to me that the only poeple who got to have sex were vicars and doctors. I recall this quite distinctly because it was about this time that I made my first career decision - I was going to become a doctor.

Well, unlike vicars, doctors always seemed to perform in more interesting surroundings. The vicars for instance always appeared to practice their pecadillos at the vicarage. This always struck me as being like having to do homework. Besides, from the evidence of the accompanying photographs, the women in question were always middle aged and looked about as enticing as all my aunties. Which is not very enticing, believe me. To this day I cannot understand why all aunties have faces that look like they were designed as bottle-openers by Mervyn Peake. Accordingly I had vicars figured as a hard-up lot, and easily pleased. Doctors on the other hand were different. They always seemed to have their 'Love Nests' or 'Vice Dens' in some exclusive seaside resort like Brighton, Bognor, or Hastings. I think this seaside connexion may also have swayed my younger self towards the Hippocratic. I suspect I figured that, after doing whatever it was that doctors did in their love nests, I could pop down to the beach for a bit of a paddle, or maybe even build a sandcastle or two. Besides, the photos in the doctor stories invariably showed young, pretty ladies. 'Nubile' would have been the perfect word to describe them, had I known it at the time. Yep, it was going to be a doctor's life for me.

Of course it didn't happen. Well, becoming a doctor is very hard work and fortunately I discovered, before committing myself to such an arduous course, that you didn't have to be a vicar or a doctor to have some fun. Well, it may have taken me some time to realise this but at least I did find out before it was too late. Apparently nobody told Rob Jackson.

So, the Sunday newspapers' obsession with sin is nothing new, and they pursue this obsession as valiantly and with as much vigour as they ever did. Now for instance they have Sunday supplements, glossy pictorial sections into which they squeeze all the advertisements that have nothing to do with holidays. In order to give the reader some sort of incentive to actually flip through the pages of these supplements before slinging them in the trash they stick an article and a couple of features in amongst the sales pitches. Sometimes there might even be two articles if the adverts have been slow to come in that week. Some time back one of our Sunday papers, The Mail, in a masterstroke of staggering obviousness, decided to make this article a feature on 'Sin'. Well naturally I read it. Strictly from an enquiring viewpoint you understand. No prurient interest here, just a commitment to research and a desire to increase my understanding of the foibles of my fellow man...and quite educational it was too, though I would have preferred it if it had been possible to include a practical or workshopping element. Theory is all very well, but I am a firm believer in the old maxim that you learn best by doing. Still, I did learn something.

We know the main sins of course. We're not interested in any fully comprehensive lists here, or even The Fifteen Most Naughty Ones. I'm talking here about the biggies - The Magnificant Seven. No, not Yul Brynner and his cohorts, I mean

the Deadly ones. Then again, Yul's mob were deadly enough...but let's stick to sins rather than sequels, although the two aren't always disparate.

The Seven Deadly Sins of course are... Come on, it's a test. You should know them - everybody knows them. Oh deary me, we are slow today. Look, think of a typical fan. *That's* right, they are:-

Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Envy, Gluttony, and Anger. There's another, but I can't be bothered looking it up. Ah yes, Sloth.

Now these, The Seven Deadly Sins, were first codified around the end of the sixth century, which I think explains a lot. Look, you have to remember that things were pretty primitive back then. Why, fandom hadn't even been invented. Obviously therefore lacking anything important in their lives to argue incessantly over, they had to find a substitute...and what they came up with was religion. Well, I told you they were primitive. One shouldn't mock them though because actually, as a fandom analogue, this religion business was fairly successful. Religion and Fandom have many close parallels. Later on for instance they had their own version of The TAFF Wars or, as they referred to it, The Reformation. But all that came much later, though there were still many similarities between religion and fandom as early as the sixth century. They already had for instance their equivalent of the Number One Fan Face, just like the fifties fans, only they called him The Pope. I guess the equivalent in today's fandom, now that we are too sophisticated to footle around with concepts like 'Number One Fan Face', would be the TAFF winner. And here the parallels become even more amazing because their then incumbent was Gregory the Great. The parallels don't stop there either, because Pope Gregory was also given to pontificating about the state of the fandom of the day, and telling folks what they should do and how they should behave. Also, he was a pratt.

Pope Gregory the Great it was who asked the race of a bunch of fair-haired, bedraggled slaves and, upon being informed that they were 'Angles' replied, "They are not Angles, but angels. For they have the faces of angels, and as such should be the co-heirs of the angels of heaven." Like I said, a pratt (though I must admit that as I shaved in front of the bathroom mirror this morning I could not fault his reasoning). I can only suspect that his failure to be English must have soured his outlook on life and led to his contentiousness. Yet another parallel with the present day.

Of course being English I am better looking than Pope Gregory was, though I would not have minded his wealth and power, not to mention a crack at some of those vestal virgins...know what I mean? I'll bet the lucky bleeder even ate better than I do. God, just thinking about it makes me so steamed up I am tempted to invent a time machine and go take his place. Real Soon Now.

At least however I don't suffer from any of his 'Sins'.

It's those Seven Deadly Sins of his for which he's most famous though, and it's those that give us yet another example of what a pratt he was. Let us hear what Pope Gregory the Great had to say about Gluttony:-

> "It is plain to all that lust springs from gluttony, when in the very distribution of the members, the genitals appear placed below the belly. And hence, when the one is inordinately pampered, the other is doubtless excited to wantonness."

They must have been made of sterner stuff in those days. I mean, I still indulge in gluttonly or, as it is known these days, Christmas dinner. One thing I can state with absolute certitude is that, when my eyes cross and glaze over, and I wave aside the offer of yet another mince pie, my 'other' is definitely not excited to wantonness. My entire being, with no dissenting members, is excited

only to abject torpor. I cannot even think about wantonness until about mid-March. Perhaps I'm just not a very good glutton, but then gluttonly is a bit of an odd sin really. It is the odd-one-out. All the other sins are basically states of mind, whereas gluttony is an act, a deed.

Now looking at that list of sins I am struck by yet another parallel with fandom, albeit this time a very personal one with a very narrow focus - here's yet another Gregory with whom I can't seem to agree. I don't know how you feel about them, but they don't look all that deadly to me. Hell, some of them seem perfectly reasonable. Pride for instance. Of course some pride might be a bit vainglorious, but it does not have to be. Taking pride in a job well done seems perfectly justifiable to me. A person who doesn't take pride in their work tends to be a person whose work is shit.

Then look at Covetousness. There may be four or five Indian mystics who don't suffer from this failing, but everyone else has it to some degree or other. Nothing which is so widespread can be properly classed in this context as 'deadly'. At its most basic, if you own anything at all that you could have lived without, that's the result of covetousness. You saw it, you covetted it, you bought it. Galling isn't it? No? No, it doesn't seem so terrible to me. Neither for that matter does Lust. Ah, lust. Good old concupiscence. Lasciviousness, sensual appetite, passionate desire...as one of my dictionaries would have it, not to mention the 'Animal desire for sexual pleasure'. Not only does it not sound reprehensible to me, I have to say I'm all for it. If you're not in favour of it too, I'd like to hear your reasons. Nope, I guess there is a reasonable justification for the manufacturer to call in his Gregory model on account of some having left the factory without having their sense of proportion fitted. A dangerous defect, this.

There's no getting around Envy - there's nothing good to say about this sin. I would not mind betting that of all the seven this is the one that most of us would feel most ashamed to have to admit. Oh it happens, but even when and as it does we know it for the petty thing it is, even in ourselves. I suppose that isn't too surprising because it isn't really a primary sin. Just as in colours we get secondaries like green from a mixture of primaries like blue and yellow, just so in sins do we get envy from a blending of covetousness and sloth. Covetousness can drive one on and actually result in a positive achievement, but envy is an empty thing. You don't go out and strive for what you want but instead simply whinge about not having it. You are pissed off because they have it and you don't...but you can't be bothered doing whatever it would take to get it for yourself. Empty, empty, empty. Envy is the ringing of a badly cracked bell - hollow and useless.

Anger is a bit like pride in that there are times when one is right to get angry. A righteous anger at injustice is often the first stage in doing something about it. Which just leaves sloth, and I can't be bothered going into that. It just doesn't strike me as any big deal. As sins go, a bit on the wimpy side.

In fact in looking at them, it strikes me that they are not in tune with the age we live in. As sins go, there's a kind of innocence about them. Apparently the Sunday Mail thought the same, because they commissioned a National Opinion Poll to find out just what the great British public thinks are the sins of the day. One of the things they found out is that the good old gBp are dimbos who can't tell the difference between crimes (ie Burglary, stealing, rape) and sins (ie Dishonesty, lasciviousness, etc.). What did tickle me though is this concept of sins by consensus. The original ones we had no say in, we were handed them and had to like it or lump it. Now though we effectively get to vote on them. Very democratic I'm sure. Mind you I suppose that's really what is required. The sins in any society are what a consensus says they are, so it's basically what

a society frowns on, shaded to a greater or lesser degree by hypocrisy. The effect of hypocrisy is evidenced by the fact that lust keeps its place in the top ten. You'd think that in this day and age everyone would realise that they are not alone, and that everyone else thinks bonking is good fun too, wouldn't you? Not so, apparently. Let's take a quick rundown of the current list and see what the great British public thinks the deadliest of sins.

Greed, Murder, Violence, Jealousy, Drug Abuse, Selfishness, Dishonesty, Child Abuse, Lust, and something variously described as Malice, Cruelty, and Hate.

You will notice that I've gone metric. Overlooking the mingling of crimes and sins there are some oddities of emphasis, don't you think? Greed is worse than killing people? It may be more basic, but is it worse? And that 'Drug Abuse' was a composite of drug-dealing and drug-taking, at least half of which is something you do to yourself, so is it really worse than Child Abuse, which is something you do to an innocent child? Of course being a modern poll, full of the 'more is bigger is better' syndrome, they couldn't stop at ten. They actually came up with, or so they say, a list of 107 deadly sins, but let us satisfy ourselves with taking a look at those now considered to be in the second division, naughtyness-wise.

Callousness, Adultery, Stealing, Vandalism, Rape, Materialism, Vanity, Laziness (poor old sloth, down in the second division), Apathy, and Drinking & Driving.

Hang on a moment, you say. Isn't stealing the same as dishonesty? Well no, because that first dishonesty was an amalgam of dishonesty/lying/deceit. So you see it's telling fibs that is really serious. By comparison abusing a child is a relatively minor pecadillo. But take a look in the middle of this second ten. Vandalism (abusing property) is more serious than rape (abusing people)? And isn't it perfectly ironic and in keeping with the hypocrisy of today's society for folks to then turn right around and say that materialism is the next most serious sin?

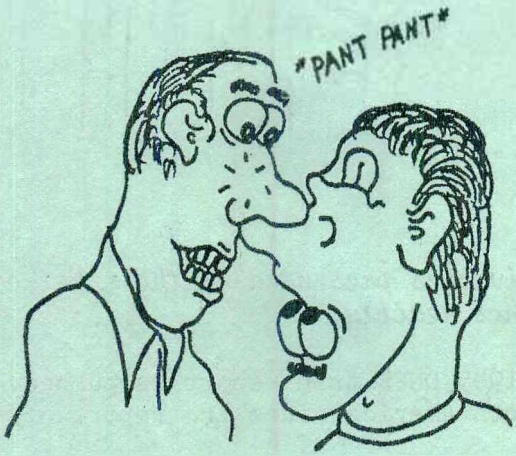
So what's happened to the Magnificent Seven? Will they ride again? Well pride, in the guise of vanity is down from first to seventeenth position in the charts. The only upward mover is covetousness which, as greed, has taken over the top spot. Still a biggy after all these years. Lust of course is hanging in there, down from number three to number nine. Envy has gone completely, not even in the top 107. That's a big drop from fourth, but at least it has company. Gluttony was fifth and has also disappeared from the frame. Anger, in the shape of rage is only just out of the charts at number 25, and of course sloth/laziness is still in there at number 18.

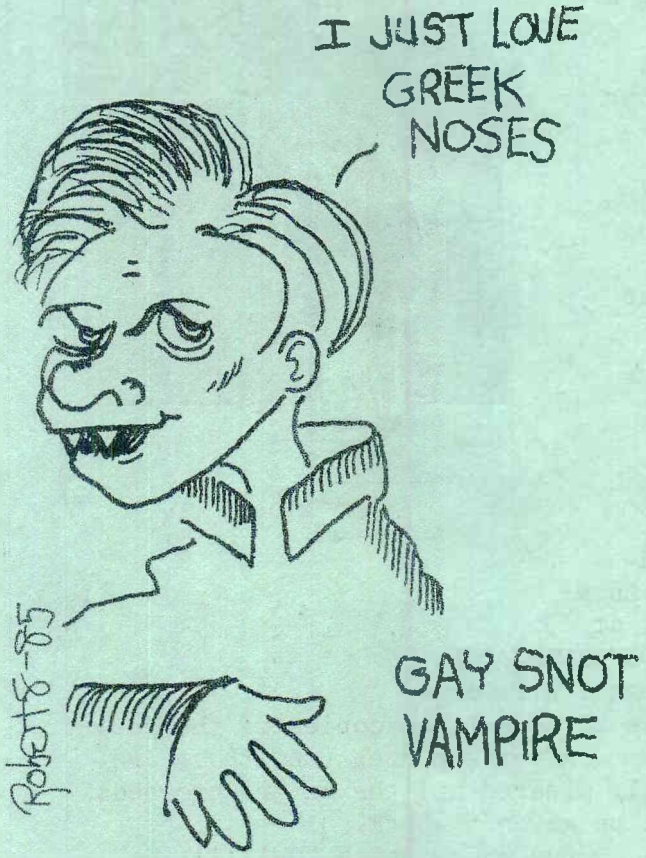
The big question of course is where are tomorrow's chart successes going to come from? Will they be the old favourites, or will some of the punk sins come good? Will tomorrow's hits come from the sins just bubbling under the top twenty? If so we should keep our eyes on Hypocrisy, Power, Abortion, Wickedness, and Perversion. My money's on Wickedness. After all, it's a bit of a sneaky, grab-all sin, isn't it? It covers all the rest. If you want a real outsider I understand that Queue Jumping, a peculiarly British sin, is in the running, one of the 107 starters.

---Skel

He's got a fresh pair of legs up his sleeve.
Football reporter on GOOD MORNING SCOTLAND (BBC)

We are not aiming these programmes at lawyers: we are aiming them at real people.
Trailer for LAW IN ACTION (radio 4)

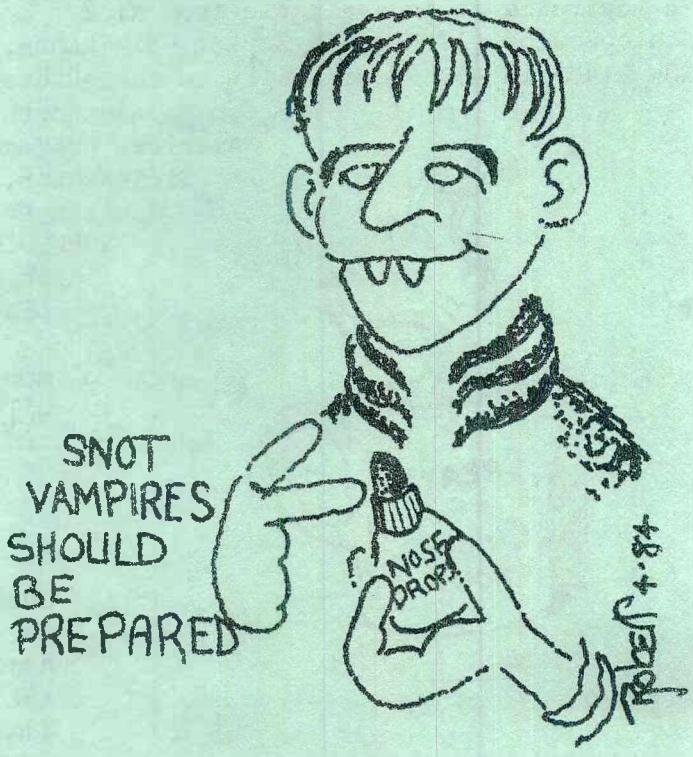




TWO ARTIST'S ALTERNATE UNIVERSE:

Darrell Schweitzer (top)

Robert Whitaker Sirignano (middle, bottom)



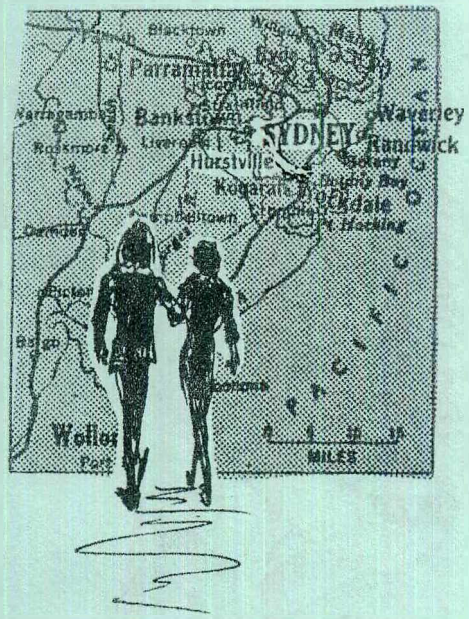
DUFF TRIP REPORT

by MARTY CANTOR

Wherein I return from the Alternate Universes presented in the first part of this zine to report on an occurance in this reality.

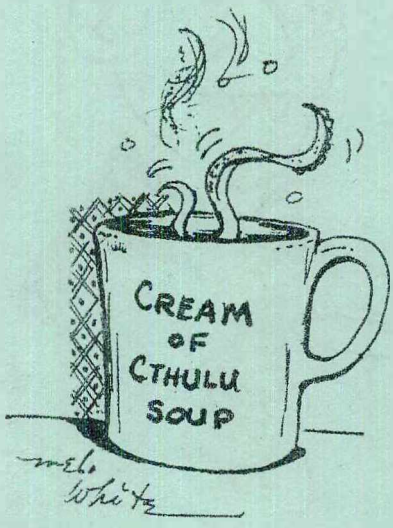
Truly, truly, I speak the truth: our 1985 DUFF trip report is pubbed. The first fully pubbed DUFF trip report from North America since the report of the 1972 trip report is now for sale. (The Aussies have done much better than the North Americans in this regard, having finished more DUFF reports than us.)

TALES OF DUFFBURY by Robbie Cantor (23 pages) and DUFFBURY TALES by Marty Cantor (45 pages), doublebacked (like an Ace double - with alternating staples so that you really can *not* tell which is first), in one volume, presents our separately written reports of our 1985 DUFF trip to Australia. Covers by Mel White - she also profusely (and tastefully) illo'd the interiors, mostly from photos which Robbie took on our trip. Although not all of the illos were from photos (and examples of that are the two illos on this page - Mel has a *very* fertile imagination).



The 1985 trip report is available from me for US$5.00 in person, US$6.00 by mail. In Australia it is available from Nick Stathopoulos (17 Norfolk Street, Blacktown, NSW 2148) in A$. Copies will be turned over to the new North American DUFF administrator, Lucy Huntzinger, at NORWESCON/ALTERNACON, although I will continue to be selling copies of the report. After expenses (and *those* are mostly cleared up) the entire proceeds will be given to DUFF.

Buy your copies NOW!!!!!



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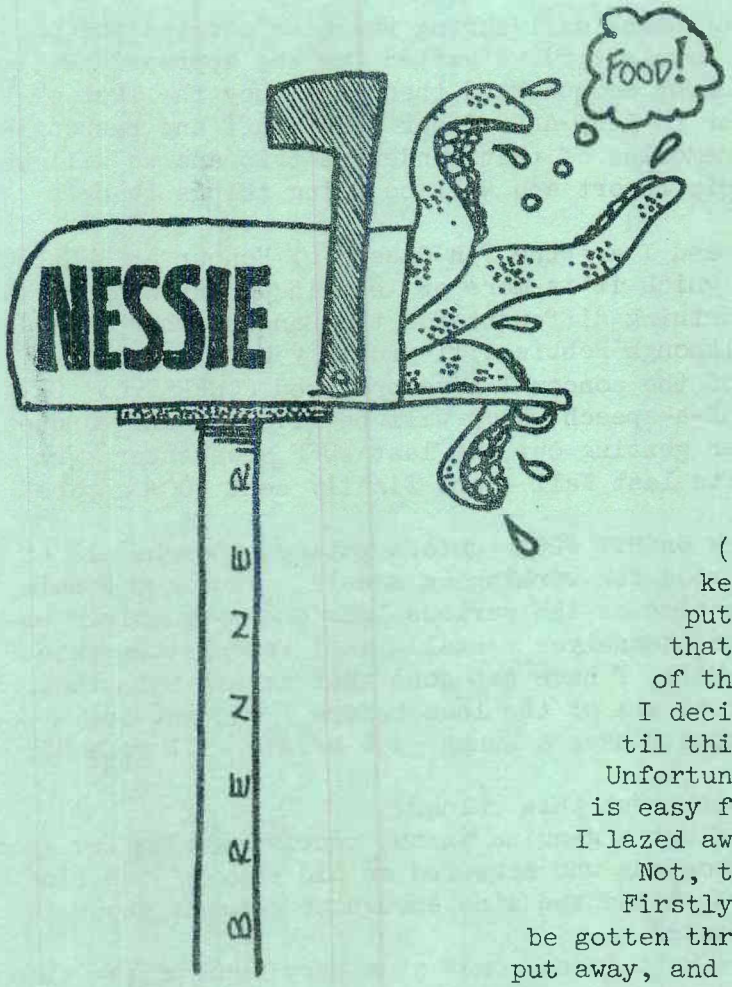
As the above information has undoubtedly indicated to those of you who are perceptive (and who else would be reading this zine?), Lucy Huntzinger won the DUFF election and is the new administrator. Huzzah, Lucy!



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THE LOC NESS MONSTER

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Last Fall I contemplated doing some preliminary notes on this issue of HTT (and, in fact, upon looking at the material at hand, decided upon the theme of the issue and got out some letters requesting specific items); however, with the upcoming large amount of non-HTT fanac soon to be falling my way (and not wanting to be mentally keyed to HTT whilst having to be putting away HTT for over a month so that I would have the time to do all of these other necessary non-HTT things) I decided to not do anything on HTT until this other work was out of the way. Unfortunately, this is a decision which is easy for my basically lazy nature, so I lazed away, HTT-wise, the end of the year. Not, though, that fanac suffered. Firstly, there was the DUFF election to be gotten through. Ballots were collected and put away, and the DUFF accounts were kept up to date. On New Year's Eve, as per a variety of pre-arrangements, several things happened. Robbie called Nick Stathopoulos in Australia around 6 pm (it was already New Year's Day Down Under) and started counting the ballots. I got home from work at about the time of the third run-through of the ballot counting process. At the end of the ballot counting it was determined that Lucy Huntzinger was the winner so we called her first to let her know the good news. We then tried to get ahold of Tom Whitmore (the second-place finisher) but there was no answer at his home so we called Terry Carr (at whose home both Tom and Lucy, amongst others, would be partying that evening) and told Terry's wife to try to get the news to Tom as he arrived so that he could sort-of know it semi-directly from us instead of having to hear it from those congratulating Lucy.

We then called the third and fourth place candidates, Laurraine Tutihasi and Kathy Sanders, to let them know the results. Actually we also saw both Laurraine and Kathy later on in the evening at the Niven's party where we were celebrating the New Year.

Immediately after this we had to wind up our DUFF administration. There was the production of our last DUFF newsletter to be attended to and then the packing up of simply many boxes of auction material which we had accumulated but had not yet auctioned off - and then sending these all up to Lucy. During this time we spoke to Lucy on various occasions, buying her her air ticket, sending her money, and doing all kinds of stuff like that. After paying the last of our DUFF expenses

(such as that for the Australian telephone call during which we counted the ballots and the expenses for our last newsletter) we waited for the appropriate time to close out the DUFF interest-checking account and then sent Lucy the last of the DUFF money. We have now turned over to Lucy ALL of our DUFF stuff and responsibilities - but we retain our fond memories of that wonderful trip and we will be continuing to sell copies of the trip report and will be doing things to help raise money for the fund.

Now for the secondly. Robbie and I are the Fan Guests of Honour at NORWESCON/ALTERNACON. In lieu of the speech which it is more or less incumbent upon me to give at the con I have prepared something different for the Banquet where the speech would otherwise be given (although Robbie will probably give a speech of some sort). With the concurrence of the concom I have prepared CONFESSIONS OF A MAILBOX JUNKIE, a fanzine-in-lieu-of-a-speech which will be given to all banquet attendees. I attended to this after getting out the last DUFF newsletter even though I had worked up several drafts last Fall - and finally sent 300+ copies to Seattle near the end of January.

This cleared the decks for work on HTT #25; unfortunately, though, all of this other fanac put me out of the mood for working on Nessie. You see, Nessie sort of festers in my mind for some time as the various locs and my possible replies to them arrange and re-arrange themselves mentally as I rework them into some sort of coherency and order. Well, I have not done that at all this time. This means that I will have to re-read all of the locs before I can put out a proper Nessie, and this I will do (but I have a hunch that Nessie will be a bit truncated this time).

But I do know which loc will start out this column.

One of the pleasures in putting out a genzine is the receiving of a loc from somebody not on the mailing list, somebody who acquired an old copy of the zine from a secondary source, somebody who liked the zine enough to comment about it in a *very* late loc. This is appreciated.

In fact, this loc from Lawrence Watt-Evans comes at a very appropriate time as it looks like a topic upon which he touches might be again surfacing as a topic of fanzine-wide concern - that topic, in the wake of the LAN'S LANTERN win of the Best Fanzine Hugo. LAN'S LANTERN is a serconish fanzine and the topic under consideration here is the role, if any, of the faanish fanzine. I recently had a letter off to Lan on this topic, but let us read, first, what Watt-Evans has to say in his letter which was written after he read HTT #18 and #19.

LAWRENCE WATT-EVANS One thing that strikes me is that there seems to be an implicit assumption that fanzine fans are the One True Fandom, and that any *real* SF fan will read fanzines, write for fanzines, and probably take a shot at publishing a fanzine.

Why?

After all, fanzines like HTT nowadays don't really have a heck of a lot to do with SF. They're about *fandom*. In the two issues I have here, totalling 192 pages, about sixteen pages, by my count, are actually connected with reading or writing science fiction. About a hundred, I'd say, are devoted to the history of fandom, or fanzines, or prozines (always discussing personnel or policy or economics, never content), or other directly fannish concerns. The rest is devoted to cultural imperialism, gun control, sexism, and other topics of general interest to alert people.

Sixteen pages, out of 192, is not a lot. And while I enjoy most of the rest (two articles in #19 I found unreadable), I don't see how an appreciation of anything like this is a requirement for calling oneself an SF fan.

This is not anything that concerns me personally, since I *do* read fanzines,

and write for them, and in the bygone days of my youth published two sort-of-fanzines under the names ENTROPY (about twenty issues; I numbered them in volumes, which makes a whole-number count harder to remember, but the last one was Vol.3, #2) and SKEW (one issue). I am in no fear of being excluded from the inner circles of True Fandom on that account. (I can be excluded in lots of other ways, if anybody cares, and I *don't* care, so it doesn't matter.) I'm just curious how fanzine fandom justifies its elitist attitudes. Or whether anyone admits to having them in the first place.

Fact is, it's been my impression that much of the hard core of fandom seems to get awfully involuted, working its way further and further into itself and losing touch with not merely the mundane world, but even the body of science fiction that's supposedly the reason for the whole thing.

Suppose we were to take a neo, a well read neo, familiar with the complete works of every author who ever sold to John Campbell, one who can list from memory every Hugo and Nebula winner without pausing to think, one capable of debating the relative merits of orbiting habitats or colonizing the moon, who had attended ConFederation and a dozen or so local conventions, and we sat this paragon down with HTT #18.

Would he get anything more out of it than a complete mundane who thinks H.G. Wells directed "Citizen Kane", and Heinlein drew the Buck Rogers comic strip?

Maybe he would, but damn little. If any.

In a recent letter to a person just getting into fandom I wrote several pages of material explaining the differences 'twixt sercon and faanish and I do not want to write all of that again right now. Briefly, though, let me boil it down to this: faanish (and this definitely includes HTT and a large segment of fanzines and likeminded fanzine fans) differs from sercon in that faanish fans have taken a further step into fandom than have sercon fans. Both sercon and faanish fans were drawn to fandom through an interest in science fiction. Faanish fans, though, have found that, once they have immersed themselves in fandom, fans and the things which interest fans (and the concept of fandom itself) are at least as interesting as the science fiction which brought us here in the first place. It is sort of a "schtick" to say (as do some faanish fans) that they no longer read sf but most of us do read the stuff whenever we can find the time to do so. Most of us in the faanish fanzine game, though, do not devote the pages of our zines to sf for a variety of reasons - and I will mention the ones which apply to me.

First, I still enjoy reading sf whenever I get the chance to do so, but I have always found the reading of sf to be infinitely more enjoyable than the writing *about* it to be (with the exception of the old wave/new wave debate, a debate which infested the pages of HTTs 8 through 15 or 16 in tedious length).

Second, I receive lots of interesting non-sercon material (with sercon being defined as serious material about sf) and much prefer to print that sort of stuff than the sercon stuff which I do not much like in the first place.

The sercon/faanish debate has been waxing and waning throughout fandom for simply ages; personally, I think that fandom is big enough to encompass both types of outlook and I object only to those serconish people who think that it is somehow wrong for faanish fanzines to not concern themselves with their serconish concerns. Bloody hell, that is why there are serconzines - they are there to absorb that type of boring material. I resent being told (although it is not Watt-Evans telling me so, it was others) that HTT is not a "real" fanzine because it does not concern itself with sf. Well, why should HTT concern itself with sf - sf is not the only concern of sf fandom, and I am just one of may who feel that these other fan concerns of sf fans deserve a zine outlet - and HTT is one of these non-sf outlets.

Besides, fans are more fascinating than their reading material, so why *not* concentrate (as does HTT) on these fans and the things which interest them (and their inter-actions) than on merely one of their interests - sf.

As for that neo mentioned by Watt-Evans: of course he is not going to understand faanish fandom right away. A few neos find their way to the heart of faanish fandom in a relatively short time but most never find us at all and that is a pity. I see no way around that problem but I am certainly not going to accept any proposal akin to that put forth by some book-burners (that being that books not fit for the tender sensibilities of the young should not be available). It would be terrible if all faanish fanzines were written with an orientation that all of their readers were neos, readers with no faanish orientation. After all, faanish fanzines are pubbed for the mature faanish audience. Neos can purchase copies (from me) of the NEO-FAN"S GUIDE TO SCIENCE FICTION FANDOM (6th edition, edited by Mike Glyer and myself), ($1 in person, $2 by mail) to help them get oriented in fandom. Beyond that, though, it should be understood that all of the rest of the faanish fanzines are not primers and are unlikely to be turned into such, so it is hoped by us faanish fanzine fans that the best and the brightest of the neos eventually find us. Aside from badgering cons to put comprehensive Fan Rooms in non-out-of-the-way places, we have no other suggestions for helping neos find our part of fandom. Well, not quite true. I *do*, after all, trade HTT with some club and college fanzines, hoping that exposure to HTT on a repeated basis might strike a responsive chord in some neos. I assume that editors of other faanish fanzines do likewise.

And most of us really do not care too much about what the rest of fandom does to and of and for itself (unless it affects what we are doing). Well, the fanzine fans invented fandom and we feel that it is now old enough to fend for itself. An elitest attitude? Possibly. But we are very busy enjoying ourselves and there is just no enough time in this world for us to worry about every other damn thing out there. It is not that we do not want to be bothered, it is more that we resent being told that our ways of enjoying ourselves are "wrong".

End of this part of toe-trouncing session.

LATE LOC WAHFS: *Richard Faulder, Diane Fox, Michael Hailstone, Marc Ortlieb, Mal Ashworth, Tony Davis, Craig MacBride* (from Australia, England, and South Africa), and *Bev Clark, Phil Tortorici, and Dave D'Ammassa* from the USA, all of these locs of varying grades of interest and all on HTT #23. So we shall leave them and move on to the locs on HTT #24.

It is now a day later than previously, a day spent mostly reading the pile of locs on #24 and also spent pondering them. My hunch that Nessie will be shorter this time will probably be right as, even though there is a lot of good material in these many locs, only some of it cries out that it *must* be pubbed. This probably has more to do with my current state of mind than it has to do with the actual contents of the individual locs. So it goes. Let us start off lightly - with a comment I threw off in #24s WAHF section.

D'ARCY SMYKE: "... about D'Arcy Smyke who has a name which looks like it escaped from a Randall Garrett novel."

When I read the above I rushed down to the village square to take out as many Randall Garrett novels from the library as allowed. Well, you can imagine my frustration when I found no books by him or his name in the library files. I asked the grizzled old librarian if she had heard of the author. She had dated a Randall Barrett back in '46, but he had gone off to Bolivia to teach a hockey clinic. He never came back. That isn't him, is it?

I really don't know what to think. Randall Garrett sounds like a detective or mystery writer. Have you, with malevolence linked me with one of his greasy, weasely, shifty-eyed thug characters? But then, Randall Garrett also sounds like an uppercrust, brilliant man of letters who with loving care wrote about brilliant, uppercrust men and women who when the mood came upon him then dazed and dazzled the world.

I do hope you clear this up. I am getting little sleep because of it.

O.K., sleepless one, here goes. Randall Garrett writes many stories about a character he has named Lord Darcy. These are set in an alternate universe (*shades* of the theme of this issue!) where a very vigorously controlled magic works. These stories are not *ick* fantasy - they are most definitely sf. Anyway, Lord Darcy *is* a detective of sorts.

JOHN D. OWEN: Of course the real epoch-shaking event of the last month has been my own personal transition from youth to old age: I finally went over the edge and turned forty! Oh gloom! I keep having this feeling that if I looked over my shoulder I'd find an old man with a scythe standing there: I'm getting a stiff neck ostentatiously *not* looking! I suppose I'll come to terms with it soon: it's just that I don't really *feel* forty (except on occasions when the asthma is bedevilling me -- then I feel ninety!), and feel a little bit miffed that the calendar isn't running at the same pace as my internal clock. If I was on speaking terms with Ghod I'd demand a recount!

Ah, forty. I discovered fandom a few months before my fortieth birthday. By the time that most people receive HTT #25 I will have just passed my 52nd birthday. Old is as old feels and acts, as it were. To hell with the years - onwards through fandom!

When the "Vote No Award" ad was placed in SF CHRONICLE I intended to have a lot to say about it in this issue of HTT. As it turns out I said what I had to say about it in my FAPAzine (commenting to Moshe Feder, originator of the ad and fellow FAPAn) and have decided that I really do not want to persue that topic overmuch at this time. However, as many of the loccers *did* write about this ad I would let the comments from two of them appear in this Nessie. Many of the loccers felt that the ad was a direct alap at HTT; whilst I feel that this *may* have been part of the motive of *some* of the ad signers (and *maybe* the sole motive of a few of them), I do not believe that it was the primary motive of most of them.

JOE RICO: Praise as usual for HTT 24. A loc on that issue will not, however, form the bulk of this letter. Rather I must comment about the advertisement which appeared in the July, 1986 issue of SF CHRONICLE (Vol. 7, No. 10) on page 26.

This advertisement, which urged fen to vote No Award for Best Fanzine Hugo, was a mistake on the part of its many signers.

For years fanzine fans were bemoaning the fact that true fanzines were not winning the Fanzine Hugo. Anguished cries of outrage were heard whenever this topic came up at a poolside or party suite discussion of what was wrong with the Hugos. But like clockwork, Charlie Brown would trot onto stage to collect his rocket to a chorus of applause and boos. Jack Chalker was quite right to note at CONSTELLATION that if all those who booed Brown had actually voted on the Hugo for Best Fanzine then LOCUS would not have been able to roll up its impressive string of victories in that category. But instead of taking this radical solution, i.e. people who complain actually giving a damn enough to vote, fandom

chose to create a new category to separate the Semiprozines from the true vessels of written fanac.

But now the purified category of Fanzine Hugo has been dealt if not a serious blow, then at least a severe criticism by a group of fans, most of whom are easily recognizable as fanzine fans. (I write "most of them" because a few of the signers, while being persons whose wisdom I would defer to in running a Con Area, are not the persons to whom I would listen about fanzines. Indeed, I doubt if one individual has read anything other than Instant Message in the fanzine category for years.) This group of fen apparently believe that none of the nominated zines were worthy of the Hugo award. They must be making a serious statement... though whether this statement is about the low quality of fanzines in general or the inability for the "good" fanzines to be nominated is a question not entirely answered by their ad.

Yet I cannot believe that the signers were serious when this year's nominees include HOLIER THAN THOU and ANVIL, two excellent zines that in my opinion are worthy of consideration. (A key question for the signers: in the past two years in which HTT was nominated, did they mark it higher than No Award? If they did, their ad stands on shakey ground.) LAN'S LANTERN appears from all reports (unlike the above mentioned zines, I have never read LAN'S LANTERN) possibly worthy of consideration.

In the past two years, FILE 770 has won the fanzine Hugo. FILE 770 is an excellent zine and Mike Glyer can take pride in making it an important part of fandom today. I don't want anything I write to be taken as a criticism of FILE 770, but it is, after all, a newszine. Would it have been so wrong to have the fanzine Hugo won just once by a non-newszine?

Perhaps instead of having an ad urging fen to vote No Award, a better effort the signers could have engaged in was to urge the elimination of the Fanzine Hugo entirely. For the message of their ad is that the category, stripped of professionally printed giants like LOCUS and SF CHRONICLE, isn't worthy of our honouring. Their message seems to me to be that I was wrong when I cast my hopeless vote for FILE 770 back before the creation of the Semiprozine category and the hordes were right. That may be their message but I doubt if the majority of your readers agree with it.

Perhaps this ad was merely backlash at the apparent campaign by a couple of editors to get their zines on the ballot. I have mixed feelings about this. Of course, I think it is a mistake for any editor to do it. Who wants a cheapened Hugo?

On the other hand, the Hugos are set up to be democratically voted on and if people are willing to cast their vote on the basis of a shallow appeal..well, there is no protection in a democracy from the voter who does not hold his vote as a precious asset. That especially includes those who didn't nominate/vote on the Hugos at all.

GEORGE FLYNN: I have rigorous standards for the use of "No Award" votes: I'd much rather discriminate between the top and bottom halves of the ballot...

George, that is precisely how *I* usually use my No Award vote. Last year I voted for 3 zines and put No Award in 4th place.

You're an intelligent woman - so is your husband.
Terry Wogan to Lady Longford on *Wogan* (BBC1)

Another topic of interest to the loccers was the change (or changes, as it were) in HTT. Most seemed to like what is happening with the zine, a few did not. And then we come to Joseph Nicholas' response: here is the entire letter.

JOSEPH NICHOLAS: My first impression of the so-called "new look" HOLIER THAN THOU is that it differs from the "old" model only in having far fewer interior illustrations. And, having read it (or most of it), that remains my impression. Overall it's still the mixture as before: a random and apparently unedited collection of articles on various different topics united only by the accident of its publication between the same set of covers. A typical genzine grab-bag, in other words.

You would perhaps argue differently, and say that it now has a "flow" that previous issues lacked. But "flow" is not something you achieve simply by inserting editorial remarks between your articles to provide some sort of bridge between them. If you look closely at the British fanzines on which you profess to have modelled this "new look" HOLIER THAN THOU, analysing the nature of their contents and examining how those contents are structured, you'll notice that they all have a thematic unity which HOLIER THAN THOU utterly lacks. DEADLOSS, EPSILON and TAPPEN, to name three obvious examples of the form, are clearly and unmistakably fannish fanzines which achieve their clarity and precision because they publish (or published) *only* material by and about fannish fandom. Indeed, much of their material, when not written by the editors themselves, is or was commissioned from specific individuals for specific issues, with the object of providing an even greater unity of purpose. The consequence is a cohesion of vision and direction not just from issue to issue but *within* issues.

The so-called "new look" HOLIER THAN THOU does not come remotely close to fulfilling this ideal. One wonders, in fact, whether you have understood it at all. Merely assembling the material into an issue as it is received, as you do, is quite insufficient. Where, after all, is the unity of purpose, the cohesion of vision, of a fanzine which publishes, in the same issue, fiction by Warren Norwood, autobiographical reminiscences by Linda Blanchard and Steve Green, and some jokes about the police by Richard Weinstock? And to say that it is unified by the fact that you chose to publish it between the same set of covers is not an answer.

Meanwhile, I found myself giggling a little when I read your comments about me in the WAHF column of this issue. "...I would add that I still see some things, which is a lot more than I can say for a person who wears 360° Ideologically Correct blinkers." Is this really the same Marty Cantor who wrote in his response to FUCK THE TORIES 2 that "a dull proletarian like Leigh (Edmonds) cannot be expected to appreciate the finer things the way which we aristocrats can" (syntax strictly *sic*), and then felt so unsure of himself that he had to add a postscript explaining his joke? Amazing how you can so manifestly fail to identify in others what you do yourself. Or perhaps it was the lack of postscriptual explanation which led you astray. One thinks back to 1978 and 1979, and the giggles grow. Literal-minded American fandom lives on still!

Joseph has been a very perceptive fanzine reviewer in the past; this time, though, he is dead off base. *Perhaps* the changes in HTT were too subtle for him; however, as the general consensus (there were a *few* exceptions) of the loccers was that there was a noticeable improvement in the zine last issue, I feel compelled to say that Joseph's opinion of the "new look" HTT is definitely a minority view.

I have admitted to being influenced by various British fanzines in this evolution of HTT. I have not, though, exactly copied *any* of them - HTT is still an entity all its own. I must say, though, that the vaunted "thematic unity" of

zines like EPSILON and TAPPEN (I have not seen DEADLOSS) are rarely as apparent in any given issue as Joseph would have us believe. Indeed, the thematic unity of many of the issues is on the same subtle level I am using. (Or used last issue - I do not believe that I am subtle in this for this issue.)

I must explain to Joseph that the only unsureness which I felt when I added the postscript to my loc on FUCK THE TORIES 2 "explaining my joke" was whether or not the ideologues at FTT had their humour button in the "on" position. True believers often have their senses of humour turned off when it comes to their monomania. I expect that they totally miss the humour of my statement that HTT is politically 'incorrect' to the very core of its being - it follows only its own shibboleths.

Anyway, here is a completely different view of HTT by Robert Bloch, a person with more experience of fanzines and fandom than both Joseph and I put together.

ROBERT BLOCH: I like the look of the "new" HTT and also its content. For reasons which defy my limited powers of analysis, you seem to have captured the essence of pre-New Wave Fandom's 'zines of the Fifties and Sixties (and isn't it morbidly interesting that the once-trendy term, "New Wave" now seems as dated as the things the New Wavers once railed against?). What you've done, I think, is to rescue fanzine content from the current emphasis on megabuck movies, big-money book-deals and upwardly-mobile media personalities and restored -- both in articles and anecdotes -- the sense of intimate communication which is what fandom really represents at its best. I like the personal flavour -- it's better than Baskin-Robbins!

The topic of Nessie also came in for some pro and con writing in the locs. For many years I was not a fan of the segmented approach; at the present time, though, it seems to suit me just fine. Of course, as it has been pointed out to me, this is my zine and I can do things my way in it (which I would do, more or less, no matter what others think), so those of you who do not like segmented loccols are going to either bear with me during this period when I like them - or they will have to go elsewhere. However, as most of you will be happy to note, I am giving up the "conversation" approach to Nessie as it is more work than the results warrant. And only a few liked it, anyway.

JACK HERMAN: How about renaming Nessie, The Texas Chainsaw lettercol: I don't think topic by topic lettercols work. They destroy the coherency of letters and when there are so many topics as HTT has, none is dealt with adequately. Nor do I like the way you dealt with Neil Rest's letter: this is the unfairest letter editing since your butchery of McKeer's letter on ACI. You cannot pretend that people responding to your column on Bermuda are in any way answering Neil's points. They are addressing your arguments and haven't had the advantage of seeing Neil's counter arguments. Anyway in the end you are quoting little bits out of large contexts so the bits might not even fully reflect the writer's opinion.

I do not agree that the "topic by topic lettercol" (what are often called segmented loccols) does not work; especially do I not agree with your assertion that they destroy the coherency of the letters. Almost all loccers move from topic to topic as they change paragraphs, so editing by the paragraph method (which is what I do whether or not I segment the loccol) does not destroy the coherency of any letters. Look, Jack, when a premier loccer like Mike Glicksohn write 4 pages of loc on an issue of HTT he may touch upon 10 or 15 or more topics during the course of his loc, with each topic having its own one or two paragraphs,

and these paragraphs are related to whatever else he wrote only by being in the same envelope with the other parts of the loc. In other words, unless a loccer writes a whole loc on nothing but one topic (like Joseph did earlier in this Nessie) there is no coherence to be destroyed by separating out discrete paragraphs for individual consideration.

As far as Neil Rest's letter goes, I have a few things to say about that. Firstly, nobody has any right to complain when their letters are fit into an editor's format - it is absurd to expect an editor to change the format of his zine to fit a loccers ideas. Secondly, Neil had already given me putative permission to cut his letter by the paragraph method, and he did this in two ways. He wrote his letter in the manner of responding to my editorial in the previous issue in a topic by topic manner with each topic having its own paragraph. He also said that I could not edit any paragraph and could use any given paragraph only if I used it entirely. It was to everybodies convenience that I handled each topic separately as this concentrated attention on each individual topic rather than having attention dissapated by leaving all of the responses to after his entire letter. Also - the inserted "dialogue" was, in almost all cases, the entire written commentary about that particular topic by the person being quoted; so, as far as I knew when I used those quotes, that was all that the quoted person wanted to say about that particular topic.

And now I am going to contradict myself. Sometimes a writer will use the last sentence of a paragraph as a bridge to another topic. You, Jack, have done this in your letter, bridging from your comments about Neil Rest to commentary about the Bermuda Triangle bid. Well, this is a case where my editing *does* do a slight injustice to the flow of your letter (but, except for you and me, nobody else would know of this except for my mentioning it here because I know how to edit a loc to make it appear as if this bridging were not necessary. In your case I will just leave out the words "Leaving all that aside...." and continue with what you have written.) because I prefer to have Nessie flow more than I prefer to have individual locs flow. And, in case you have forgotten it, at this particular point we are talking about Nessie, not CRUISECON (which is the next topic). Especially when the next loccer contradicts what you have to say about how a segmented loccol works in Neil Rest's letter.

BRIAN EARL BROWN: The segmented lettercol works for something like the CRUISECON debate but in general I don't much care for it. (I have done it in the past but sympathise with Harry Warner's comment in his "ALL MY YESTERDAYS" about tampering too much with letters.

RICHARD FAULDER: Your new approach to dealing with Nessie works as well as your old system, except that it enables one to jump over subjects that either don't have any relevance to one, such as CRUISECON and LACon, or which one feels can't be added to any further, such as all the complimentary things about your contributors. Consequently, by the time something turns up that you can donsider in detail, there's the feeling that the loccol is suffering from anorexia.

One last comment about Neil Rest before we turn to consideration of CRUISECON. Neil responded to the last issue with a letter which managed to mostly turn the factual points made against the CRUISECON bid into personal attacks against me. I would print his letter here - except that he did not send the letter to me. He sent it to another fanzine where it was printed and I only saw it when the fanzine in question was handed to me at Worldcon in Atlanta. I will not hold that fanzine and its editors up to obloquy by printing their names here (and they

really are very nice people) but I think that this tells us something about Neil Rest. This is the same Neil Rest who excoriated me for not sending him the issue which contained my anti-CRUISECON editorial (even though others on his bidcom were on my mailing list - and I pointed out to him that I could not afford to raise my copy-count to include *everybody* who would have some conceiveable interest in what HTT said). My editorial was not a personal attack on Neil Rest and the bulk of the commentary about the con in HTT #24 was an attack on the lack of merits of the bid, not an attack on Neil Rest. His response is an ad hominem attack on me. So goes fandom, nowadays.

Let us now get back to Jack Herman who is figuratively champing at the bit.

JACK HERMAN: I generally agree with your comments on the Bermuda Triangle bid, just not with your tone in the original editorial nor with your dealing with the response to your arguments.

"The intent of rotation is to make the worldcon more accessible..." you assert. Wrong. If it were so, the rotation would deal with the entire globe; but it deals only with the North American continent. Its intent is to make sure that no North American area dominates Worldcon, not for accessibility reasons but because you Americans don't trust each other and think one section might hijack Worldcon. For fans in Billings, Montana, every Worldcon is just about inaccessible: some are more inaccessible than others.

No, Jack, you are incorrect here. In several respects. It is not that Americans distrust each other so much as the fact that fans on the North American continent tend to exist in visible large clumps and it was the desire of fans of earlier days to see the Worldcon travel around a bit that lead to the zonal system, a system which prevents the hypothetical case of Worldcon being in a certain area with a large number of fans who might then vote themselves the Worldcon year after year. That is not distrust, that is just recognition of the selfishness inherent in people.

I grant that the fans who put on the first Worldcon were, by using the word "Worldcon" overreaching themselves (although there was the mitigating factor of the tie-in with the World's Fair then being held). But, as the years have gone by, more and more American fans have wanted Worldcon to become truly international in scope.

Now it is true that there are more fans inhabiting the North American continent than there are fans elsewhere. Naturally, with the Worldcon originating in the USA, it was natural that American fans (who are probably only slightly more insular than fans in many other countries) would think to hold the early Worldcons in the USA. At that point in time I do not think that fans anywhere on our globe were particularly internationalistic when it came to fandom or much of anything else (and in that way they were much like their non-fan contemporaries). In the 1950s fandoms in other countries began to become much more visible to each other, particularly the fandoms of English speaking countries. Worldcon went overseas, to England, to Germany - and it has since been to Australia twice. And do not forget that "our insular" Worldcon has been to Canada several times (or are you one of those many people /regretably I must accuse much of the English-speaking world in this/ who see no essential difference between Canada and the USA); so, even though the Worldcon has not been in foreign climes as much as it should have been it has still moved around more than some would admit. Especially in recent decades.

There is also a regretable tendency for most English-speaking fans to forget that there is a large body of non-English-speaking fans in the world (although many faneds in the English-speaking world have contacts with fans in these other

countries who happen to write English. And not just in Europe - Japan, for example, has a huge fandom and I fully expect a viable Worldcon bid to come out of there one of these years - and Holland has a viable bid going for 1990.

Granted, the size of Worldcon makes it something too large with regions without the facilities large enough to hold the number of attendees. Still, within the parameters of having the necessary facilities, (which means that fans living in areas without these facilities having to always go far to a Worldcon), the moving around of a Worldcon is generally intended to try to make the Worldcon as convenient as possible for different fans each year.

Oh, as an aside, Jack - I was one of the fans who voted for Sydney Cove in '88 as I felt that you had more con-running competence in your little finger than the whole of *all* of the other bidcoms put together. Pity you did not win. Also, I happen to like the rotation system you proposed some time ago.

Now let us hear what a Canadian fan thinks of CRUISECON. Like Jack, he also segues into the topic of Worldcons in general. Here is his entire letter.

GARTH SPENCER: I read with interest the debate over CRUISECON in HTT 24. First I'd like to deal with that; then I'd like to deal with broader issues about Worldcons which are raised in your loccol.

When I first heard of Bermuda Triangle in '88, I thought, "Great! What a gag." Now I see that you people are all taking it *seriously*, pro and con sides alike. (Heavens forbid! That isn't *done* around here!) The more I read your respective remarks, the more I appreciated your position ... and the more I began to see Neil Rest as a preppy, and a grandiose neo to boot.

If I am a typical fan -- late 20s, working-class antecedents, unemployed, stuck in an economic backwater, spent less than $300 on my last two cons (and only get to one or two a year), get there by begging rides and still spend more than I can afford -- then Neil Rest has no least notion what financial life most fans in North America lead. True Prep. (Mind you, I wonder that anyone can afford the preposterous fees Worldcons charge, even if they live within 100 miles of the site ...)

Furthermore, if the CRUISECON plans sound grandiose and exorbitant to you, so they do to *me*, also, for less personal reasons. We once had loony-tunes mediafans trying to put on something perhaps as big as NORWESCON, in *Victoria*, for Gods' sake, a rinky-dink provincial capital off the mainland -- and those people had no experience, no capital, no idea of contacting guests or confiming programming, no idea of how to gain local fan and business support; yet they expected to have 1500 - 2500+ members, eight pro guests, Sid Mead (whoever he is), and Lucasfilm presentations, etc., etc., all occupying two hotels. Oh, I forgot the charter flights from West Germany and the States, and the shuttle buses from the uptown hotels, etc., etc. What it eventually boiled down to was a one-day event in a Jaycee Hall, maybe 100 people, and certainly a lot of unpaid bills ... even at $25 a head. Now, those were grandiose neos. I wonder where Rest got his notion of Worldcons.

Rest is apparently not buying into the assumption that cons are, ultimately, social events where fans can meet fans and pros ... put on by fans, for fans.

You and I are not buying the assumption that fans are willing and able to pay for a Godalmighty ocean cruise, by way of having a con.

#

I'd like to shift the ground of discussion slightly, from CRUISECON in particular to Worldcons in general. Why have them? Or why try to make them huge events? That just makes them inaccessible, and eventually meaningless, to the

likes of me.

I'm not buying into your apparent assumption that a) Worldcons are, in fact international fan events, or b) that Worldcons, or any cons, should be huge. I believe rather the reverse.

I'm not buying into your assumption that Worldcons are inexpensive (ie. accessible) to *anyone* ... because I assume that a majority of fans are unwilling or unable to spend as much as $500 for the whole shot.

To take myself as an example again: all Worldcons are distant. Until one Ed Beauregard can be convinced not to oppose a Vancouver bid for Worldcon, Westercon or other perambulating regionals (which he does for good and sufficient reason, based on his experience), the closest Worldcon I could get to would have to be in Seattle. Now, correct me if I'm wrong, but Seattle isn't bidding for *anything* right now, is it?

Now, I live in your next-door country, and still I find Worldcons (mostly held in the States) to ge ungetatable.

Not that I'm complaining, mind you. Some friends of mine went to NORWESCON and, from their reaction, I gather a con of 2000 - 3000 was just a *zoo*. I already knew that NORWESCON's fees were high enough to freeze me out; but I've become more and more convinced, over the last few years, that a con is meant to be enjoyed, or there's something wrong with it ... and that enjoyable cons must necessarily be under 500, maybe 800 members.

The problem with the grandiose neos I see and hear about is that, without exception, they insist on assuming that big, expensive, flashy, and/or busy projects must be good. Like Star Wars. Like Star Trek cons. Like Worldcons.

So, on the one hand, even living fairly close, I find Worldcons inaccessible; this leads me to think that lots of non-American fans find Worldcons inaccessible.

The clincher for me is that the majority of Worldcons are held in the States; that the majority of fans who hear about, and understand, and participate in the Hugos (the ostensible *raison d'etre* of the Worldcon) are in the States; that the majority of fans and pros who receive Hugos are, again, in the States.

Wherefore I put it to you, o my brethren, that this thy Worldcon is like unto the American annual national convention, wheresoever it may wander.

To the extent that the Worldcon acts like an American national convention, it's all very well, but what stake in it has any non-American fan? Like Me?

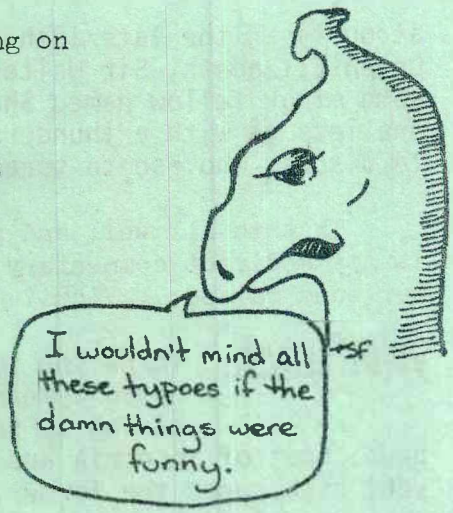
It will take the participation of international fans to make the Worldcon truly international; and you will not have that participation if the Worldcon is, or appears to be, huge, expensive, dominated by Americans, and inaccessible. The Worldcon gains nothing by size, daunting membership and room fees, still more daunting budgets, or the reputation of being a zoo.

You can justifiably pick apart the argument I'm building here. You can defend the decisions I see you have made about cons. You can specify who gets to Worldcons, and who doesn't, in demographic terms -- how many from the States and how many from Europe and how many in which socioeconomic strata, in different years. But until you do so, I'm just not convinced the Worldcon is more than an engrossing intellectual exercise, for me.

Besides, stuff like this has to be put into print sometime.

Garth, there is something which you do not understand about Worldcon - and you are in good company there as even most people who attend Worldcon seem not to understand it (and therefore often find it, like many large cons, to seem like a zoo.) Worldcon is the yearly gathering of the clan where like-minded fen meet. So it has to be large in order to have space for all who want to gather. At the same time it is also small and intimate as the various fans find those with their own interests. Worldcons, at best, are large gatherings of small groups.

Now let us lighten up for a bit with somebody picking on one of my regretably many typos.



BUCK COULSON: No, no, Marty; that's Beam's Choice in Joni's article, not Bean's Choice. Bean's Choice would be a pair of mukluks; the only thing Bean's even sells in bottles is mosquito repellent.

Beam's/Bean's, whiskey/mosquito repellent - in both cases it is a choice without a choice, a difference without a difference. I am certain that Mike Glicksohn will have something to say about my "taste" in this matter.

Now let us get to words about my favourite fanwriter, Skel. The ever-restless Jack Herman has a few words to start us off (leading elsewhere, of course - that is the fannish par for the course - but it starts about Skel and leads to a comment which I want to make).

JACK HERMAN: I liked Skel's article, but I am rather bemused by your assertion that it represents 'putridity' in any form. Most of us grew out of sniggering at fart jokes and sock jokes in primary school; and, apart from one or two regressive US sitcoms and a couple of British 'comedians' like Benny Hill, most don't find it really offensive at all. The Skel article is another well-written flight of fancy which satirises that sort of attitude, but you miss the satire. The real putridity in question in HTT thish is met by Darrell's unscanful limerick and Weinstock's badly written and unfunny series. I note very few comments on Weinstock in your loccol, and wonder what is the general reaction to the series, which seems endless. I think HTT would be better without it. And without Fiction. Apart from his name appearing in the contents column I haven't figured the reason Norwood's piece had to be included. It wasn't obvious to me.

Still, I liked Skel's piece and I loved Harry Warner's continued reminiscences, so it wasn't all bad.

In Skel's cover letter he indicated that his article was a piece of putridity written specifically for HTT. I do not believe that it was intended as satire; perhaps Skell will enlighten us next time.

The space in the above comment was inadvertant - I discovered it when I was checking for typos after finishing the page (well, a few lines above this) and I left it in because I did not want to corflu (and retype) some 12 lines. Sorry.

Most of the loccers do not seem to enjoy The Law and Order Handbook as much as I do (although there are a few who are quite keen on it). At the moment I have pubbed all of it that I have - if Richard Weinstock sends any more chapters I will pub them. If not, that series is now finished.

O.K., Darrell, you had something you wanted to say to Skel?

DARRELL SCHWEITZER: To Skel I recommend Mark Twain's "1601, A Tudor Conversation", which, prior to his own piece this issue, was perhaps the only extended discussion of the fart in English. Twain, trying yet again to deflate the image of Shakespeare (who was worshipped Bardol-

atrously in the late 19th century) supplies a typical fireside chat, featuring Queen Elizabeth, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Francis Bacon, and other worthies (plus some minor fellow named Shakespear). They begin very elegantly, but then someone lets go with a thunderous Wind, and the company continues, just as elegantly, to discuss who, so to speak, dunnit.

That is all well and good (and I have, myself, enjoyed "1601..."), but that is not a direct commentary on what Skel wrote. I think that Vicki Glover has her hand raised... Vicki? Did you have something which you wished to say?

VICKI GLOVER: Thank you for sending us (well, my husband, actually, but that doesn't mean I can't read it, too, and it saves you money not having to send us *both* a copy) HTT #24. The night it arrived, I had a bout of insomnia and a case of nausea (something like a case of Coors), and your zine cured the former, at least.

Speaking of nausea, I think Skel has it all backwards. Speaking as someone married to a very flatulent one, I think *men* are the aliens. I mean, if men had actually been on this planet all along, the skies would be brown and the entire ozone layer gone by now! And where do they get these Smells? They certainly cannot be contained within their bodies, even if the bodies are a little pudgy! I believe Skel had it right when he postulated the theory of the Black Smell, but he didn't tell the whole truth - i.e. who but an Alien would have access to his own Black Smell? Skel cleverly tries to deceive us with half-truths, and then uses the classic ploy of the guilty -- "I didn't do it, THEY did!" Well, it's not working. Besides, anyone who has a name like "Skel" and eats beans on toast has GOT to be an Alien! Thanks for the expose, even though that's not what you meant it to be. Providing a little fuel for the "war between the sexes" is not necessary, not when you men/aliens are stinking up the whole planet and then trying to convince we women that it's normal to do so and even getting some of us to do it! Well, some of us are not fooled one bit, thanks to this article.

Er, thank you, Vicki. Actually, it is probably the fanzines who are the aliens amongst us. At least some fans have mentioned HTT and odor in the same, er, breath.

We will now let Mike Glicksohn say this ish's last words to Skel. Take it away, Mike.

MIKE GLICKSOHN: Skel's article is, naturally, a marvellous piece of sardonic extrapolation but not even the immortal Skelton ("what's immortal in America is immoral in Stockport, thanks to the absent tee"... or something close to that) can make farting and smelly feet a subject I care to respond to. It's a shame to see Skel writing down to the level of the HTT editorial taste and one can only hope that in the future he'll raise his writing to a higher plane...say, an article on vaginal odour and crotch rot.

Eric Mayer and Paul Skelton have a lot in common: Both are exceptional writers, both are somewhat outside the mainstream of fannish fandom in their own countries and both are shy to the point of refusing to mingle with other fans (although I did manage to drag Paul to SILICON last year whereas I've never met Eric although I only live a hundred miles from him.) Perhaps we could work out a way of exchanging them so the Brits could have the pleasure of not meeting Eric while we North Americans never got to see Paul...no, I guess not...that wouldn't be any different from what we do now, would it? Oh well...big party at your house, Skel, the week before CONSPIRACY: better start brewing your home brew right now!

Sorry Mike, but it does look like you will not have, after all, the last words about Skel in this issue. It is, after all, difficult to not write about Skel, and Darrell Schweitzer does have a few more words about him. Well, Darrell does not so much comment about or to Skel; but, rather, he compares Skel's THE BALLAD OF GAINED S'MELL with Linda Blanchard's BEAR HUT. The topic is, of course, that old one - the difference between fannish and mundane writing. Whether or not Darrell makes his case is something which I will leave for the readers to decide.

DARRELL SCHWEITZER: I think I would make a distinction between fannish writing, which treats its subject matter within the context of science fiction or fandom (which all fans have in common) and mundane writing, which doesn't. Thus, Skel's "The Ballad of Gained S'mell" is fannish, and Linda Blanchard's "Bear Hut" is mundane. It isn't just that Skel is tasteless and putrid in the finest HTT tradition, or that he is a better writer (as he clearly is) than Linda, but that he has managed to make *his* collection of daily trivial and low-key humour resonate with the common contextualization ... er, excuse me for lapsing into academic there. I have just contracted to edit three more anthologies of critical essays for Starmont House, and have definitely *contracted* something. To translate into English: Skel is able to give his piece a more universal context of science fiction -- the familiar images, from the stories we've read, and his own witty comments on standard, absurd cliches -- so his article comes across. Linda Blanchard fails to convey what the experiences she relates really meant to her and her friends. It seems like a pointless anecdote because I don't know the people, and she didn't write well enough to make me know them. A reminiscence needs characterization as much as a story.

Speaking of Darrell Schweitzer (or, at least, of his artwork), let us pay heed to Richard Faulder.

RICHARD FAULDER: It was good to see Darrell Schweitzer's and Bob Lee's cartoons back in full force, especially as they broke up large masses of visually unexciting print. I know some people don't like your choice of artwork, but to me it has always been appropriate for what you do with it, and was arranged to give the zine definite visual appeal.

You and I may be the only two people in the world who understand what I do with art in HTT. For all that I know, the both of us may be wrong, but wotthehell.

Speaking of (or about) art, let us read what Eric Mayer has to say about HTTs cover art.

ERIC MAYER: Thanks for the new HTT. Not many editors can claim to have "cut back" to 70 pages. I liked Nick Stathopoulos' cover a lot -- in fact if he continues to produce interesting stuff like this I'll have to learn how to spell his name without checking the contents page. Something that's impressed me about HTT, and seems generally overlooked, is that you've made a habit of printing innovative cover art -- I'm not sure just how this cover was done, but it's certainly not run of the mill -- and, of course, you've treated us to the very different colour work of Bergeron and Schirm and Foster's foldout.

And how about the cover for this issue, huh? Krschan Holl is a German artist who should be better known in this country; and, I expect, with this cover, he will be. Krschan did the printing of this cover(FANEDS NOTE: it is too expensive for him to print your covers for you, so if you want covers from him (and

he will be only too happy to oblige with the artwork) just let him know - but you will have to print the covers yourself) and this cover of his is another in a very long string of good-to-excellent covers. *I* am proud to have been able to present fandom with the coverwork of some exceptional artists and I think that fanhistorians of the future may very well remark on them.

ROY TACKETT: I knew that a fanzine such as HTT would be expensive to produce but your admission that it costs around $500 per issue somewhat shocks me. I can see that a very large part of that is postage to mail it out. There has been all sorts of discussion about the decline of fanzine production (which may not be all it seems to be) and generally the largest contributing factor is said to be postage. I admire your devotion to the world of fanzines. There is no way that I could spend $500 to put out an issue.

Well, there is no way that *I* want to spend that much money on an issue and I am really trying to cut down on costs. If, after I get my print run down, I still have enough copies to qualify for bulk rate, I will go for the bulk mail permit. Oh, with all of my copies which go out-of-country, I will be opting for the 50-pound rather than the 200-copy qualifier.

Your bringing up the costs (as I did last issue) reminds be that there are people who can misinterpret one in the most amazing ways. When I mentioned the costs of putting out HTT I was, in effect, telling the world that I was a fool for spending as much as I do on HTT (and I am a fool doing this only for the love of producing this zine). But still a fool. Imagine my surprise (I was so flabbergasted that I was actually struck speechless) when, at a panel at CONFEDERATION, I was more or less accused (quite passionately) of being so much richer than regular fans that I was "bragging" about how much money I spent on HTT. Ye Ghods! I was on a panel concerned with the No Award ad (I believe that that I had just commented on how wrong I felt were the people who had signed the ad who had also not bothered to participate in the nominating process - somebody else then pointed out that not everybody can afford supporting or attending memberships so that they can vote - and then I was tearfully jumped on). Shit, folks - it costs me more than a month's take-home pay to put out two issues a year of HTT. And I used to put out more than two issues a year. I can certainly admit to having my priorities askew but I certainly can NOT brag about being any sort of rich fan. My hobby is expensive for me but I love it just the same - except when I am so egregiously misinterpreted. In fact, in an effort at cutting costs after I get HTT down to as low as I can will be the cutting out of my attendance at Worldcons after this year (and I am not 100% positive that I can even *get* to Brighton this year) unless they happen to be held in an area where I can get to them relatively cheaply. I am getting to an age where I no longer want to scrimp on necessities for the sake of some of my luxuries. I want to lead a more comfortable life *all* year long and not constantly scrimping and saving so that I can go on an expensive one-week holiday each year. For starters I want to have available more money for rent so that we can live in more spacious quarters in a better neighbourhood (I am sick and tired at having to call the police every few weeks or so because some asshole neighbour has hired a live and over-amplified band to play in their back yard).

But I really *do* want to get to Brighton, probably the only chance that I will ever have to get to Britain and see all of those nice people there in one place. I surely wish that Skel could get to the con as I really want to meet him in person. My time for seeing any of Britain will be nil (provided that I can afford to make the trip) as I will probably be leaving the States on Wednesday and having to be back on the following Monday so that I can get a nights' rest

prior to opening up the shop on Tuesday.

The reason why I am *that* time-constrained is that I am using a few of my holiday days to go to NORWESCON/ALTERNACON this year (in a shop as small as that in which I work neither my boss nor I take off many days each year) - and it certainly helps our money situation that, as FGoHs, it will not cost us anything to get to Seattle. Here is Vicki Glover (the Only) to write a bit about our FGoh selection.

VICKI GLOVER: I'm glad that you and Robbie are coming to Norwescon's Alternacon. You two were one of the most popular choices for Fan Guests of Honour, especially after the Concom took a look at the HTT with the centerfold cover (some of us spent about half an hour trying to figure out where everything went...).

I am still dumb-struck by being made FGoH - I hope that I (and Robbie) measure up to expectations. We shall soon see.

Anyway, here is Martin Morse Wooster with some pertinent observations.

MARTIN MORSE WOOSTER: Many thanks for HTT 24, which alm ost seems to be the all-Skel issue, what with Skel's column and Joni Stopa's. In fact, you have so many Australian and British contributors that it almost seems that you have set up an import-export egoboo firm. (I especially liked Nick Stathopoulos's cover, which is the first piece of work of his that I've seen published in the US.)

There are no definite plans in the works right now but I certainly hope that I get more cover-work from Nick sometime in the future.

Now here is Thom Digby being his usual Thom Digbyish self.

THOM DIGBY: Seeing my paragraph about cloning human skin reminded me of the rhetorical cliche about the Constitution being a "living document". Engineering details are left to the reader.

We come to the tip of Nessie's tail with this last loc.

NOLA FRAME: I was very distressed to hear that you've been forced to cut back the circulation of HTT. Oh, I can grudgingly churn out the obligatory letter, and your ultimatum did give me the push that I needed to write a letter to you, typed yet, but what has gotten me worried is this: As your circulation decreases, so does your exposure. And as your exposure drops off, so does your chance of getting a Hugo. And I do want to see that happen very much. Why? Because your zine deserves it. However, things are looking a little bleak right now, not only because of your new bad news, but your annoying habit of declaring perpetual open season on mediafen. I can't help but wonder how many would-be readers of HTT you are alienating with your attitude? Though I have to admit, I don't miss seeing the red-suited aliens of V, either.

Of course I am reducing my readership when I cut my print run, and of course I am thereby reducing my chances of winning a Hugo by doing this. But not all that much when you consider that no fanzine is going to be reaching all of the voters, anyway. Like all of the contending zines HTT has to win many votes by its reputation. Certainly *I* cannot afford to send copies to all of the voters and potential voters (although I always print a few extra copies of each issue so that I can make a few available to "new blood"). In effect, if not all of my

readers who feel strongly about HTT winning a Hugo get out and nominate it and then vote for it, with the anti-HTT animosity out there amongst some fans, HTT will never win a Hugo. Well, I *would* like to win a Hugo (*I* am very up-front in saying that I am not coy in liking egoboo), but I will be damned if I will do anything to win it except to put out the kind of HTT which I want to put out. If enough people like it, well and good. If not, so it goes. Whatever happens (or does not, as the case may be), I will remain my same irrascible self.

Now, as for my "annoying habit of declaring perpetual open season on media-fen". As Red Skelton used to say, "I calls 'em like I sees 'em". I do not change my opinions so that others will be less annoyed with me. I am honest in that respect. Besides, I am usually misinterpreted in what I say about media-fen, so no matter what I say about them I will probably not be correctly construed so I will not waste any more words on that topic this time.

But just remember that I am on record as believing that Worldcon exists for fans of *all* aspects of our hobby (a major reason why I came out against CRUISE-CON was that it was structured so that the non-rich majority of fans would have been precluded from attending it). I just feel that I should not be forced to participate in some of its more mindless forms. *Just in other of its more mindless forms!*

WAHF: This section will have more names than usual due to many reasons; and, in a way this is a shame as many of the loccers had a lot of good things to say about many topics, and they also commented upon the contributions and contributors to the last issue - but I have neither the space nor the time to handle that stuff here. Well, I will be sending Egoboo Express to all of the contributors to the last issue and they can read the pertinent comments.

Ed Meskys sent a late loc on #23 which arrived here just a few pages ago. And *Joy Hibbert* wrote that *Rob Gregg*, who had been locing HTT for a while had died. On this sad note we will move on to a not-too-obnoxious version of the WAHF column.

Tony Alsobrook-Renner, Harry Andruschak, T.K. Atherton, Richard Bergeron (who commented, "Last HTT looked great. Loved the cover. The layout is spiffy -- real good handling of graphic typographic elements. What happened?" Hey! I said that there would not be too much obnoxiousness here - cannot you read?), *Sheryl Birkhead, Linda Blanchard* (who sent a postcard with a wedding picture of her and her new husband, *Dave Bridges* - a happy life to the both of you), *Richard Brandt* (who wrote, "I really like Neil Rest's logic /top of p.55/ in that, since hotels know we do much less damage than other conventions, they'd be well rid of us."), *Ed Chambers, Bev Clark, Ian Covell* ("Your battle with the cop adds a whole new meaning to 'getting the finger' but it's certainly preferable to much police-public interaction..:), *Dave D'Ammassa* (twice), *Don D'Ammassa, Tony Davis, Cathy Doyle* (who wondered if we had purchased the Hyundai and, if so, how was it? - yes, we did purchase it /7000 miles ago/ and we are quite happy with it), *Steve Green, Hank Heath, Arthur D. Hlavaty* ("I think I finally understand your objection to SEASICKCON. It's jealousy; you don't think *anything* but HOLIER THAN THOU should make fans throw up."), *Cathy Howard, Malcolm Edwards* (who wrote of many things *of cabbages and kings* and ended up with, "Boring disclaimer: I speak here only as a fan writing to a fanzine. As Chair of the 1987 Worldcon I have no view." It makes one wonder about the state of our "*fun*" hobby when one of its major figures feels constrained to add that disclaimer to a letter.), *Ben Indick, Terry Jeeves, Jean Lamb, George "Lan" Laskowski, Craig Ledbetter, Bob Lee, Eric Lindsay, Mark Loney, J.R. Madden, Eric Mayer, Jim Meadows* (announcing his gafiation), *Jeanne Mealy, Warren Norwood* ("HTT 24 arrived this Saturday morning and so did LOCUS. I read HTT first. I think that means I've got my priorities straight..." -

nah, if you had your priorities straight neither HTT *nor* LOCUS would ever be in your mailbox), *David Palter, John Purcell* (who felt that I was against *any* kind of CRUISECON, which I am not /it would be fine for a con *other* than Worldcon as I believe that Worldcon should be open to *all* fans, not just those with lots of money/), *Vicki Rosenzweig, Leland Sapiro, D.M. Sherwood, Robert Whitaker Sirignano, David Thayer, Pascal Thomas, Edd Vick, Harry Warner, Jr., Jean Weber, Walt Willis,* and *David Wolff*.

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And, lest we forget, even though he is out of alphabetical order,

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We have outside toilets and other inconveniences.
Interviewee on *PM* (Radio 2)

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(all uncredited writing in this typeface is by the editor)

ARTISTS:

Krschan Holl - cover & inside cover
Phil Tortorici - 10
Randy Clark - 15
Mel White - 19, 58 (both)
Terry Frost - 23, 71
Kyle Kirkpatrick - 32
Darrell Schweitzer - 37 (top)
Robert Whitaker Sirignano - 37 (middle & bottom)
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Somewhere just under this paragraph is a square. In some cases the square will be empty; in other cases, there will be some sort of mark in coloured ink. The blank squares mean that the recipients can rest easy - they will be receiving the next issue because they have work in my files or are regular columnists or article writers or cover artists (and in any case are not required to respond to every issue). And those who have arranged trades will also have blank squares if I have received their zines within living memory. Those with marks in the square, however, had best Do Something if they want the next issue.

LAST WORDS OF THIS ISSUE:

The next issue of HTT will be out sometime next Fall. I will start working on it as soon as I return from Worldcon; or, if I cannot afford to go there, as soon as I get over the shock of not going. In any case, I would like contributors to have their material to me no later than mid-September.

A raise at work makes it more likely that I can get to Brighton (even though my projections show that I will fall a few hundred dollars short - more economies are in order, I see), so I hope to see many of the Britfen for the first time. C'mon, Skel, you just *gotta* be at Brighton. Please?