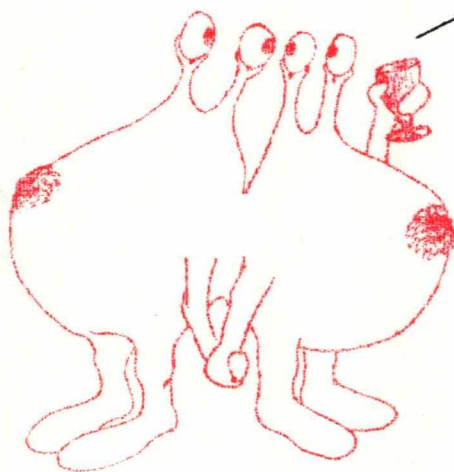


# KNOCKERS FROM NEPTUNE



"There's one advantage to being Siamese knockers... we get to Bangkok a lot."

SKEL 16-3-75

Two knockers were well known to tipple.  
Cried one, with an undulant ripple,  
"We've got belly buttons there  
and they've grown pubic hair!  
What the hell did Skel do with my nipple?"

THE HISTORY OF THE  
CITY OF BOSTON  
FROM 1630 TO 1800

By JOHN GARDNER  
Author of "The History of the  
City of Boston from 1630 to 1800"



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This is the fifth issue of KNOCKERS FROM NEPTUNE, the fannish imposition that everybody expects. This peach of an issue, the apple of my eye, is dated October 1976, and I'm stoned, as usual. It's enough to make a man go crazy. It is edited and published by Mike and Pat Meara of 61 Borrowash Road, Spondon, Derby DE2 7QH, England, and is available for letter of comment, agreed trade, accepted artwork, \$1 U.S., or any other reason I may deem appropriate. Print run this issue: 170 (Rather more than usual, but I have to use up this crappy paper somehow.)

"Captain, the colophon is failing to generate maximum power. In this condition, getting the fanzine off the ground may be highly dangerous."

"Asterisk we're going to have to take, Mr. Spock."

Art: by Skel throughout, except pl72 by Taral Wayne MacDonald  
 Cover limerick: Pauline Palmer  
 Cover illo captions: Mike Glicksohn (front); Bruce Townley (back)

"I'm getting a positive reading on this box-like object, Captain."

And talking of reading:

Piers ANTHONY	CHTHON	N	1967	3A	63
Richard COWPER	KULDESAK	N	1972	4B-8A	93
Gordon R. DICKSON	THE OUTPOSTER	N	1972	3A-3C	77
Irving A. GREENFIELD	THE OTHERS	N	1969	3A-4C	35
James GUNN	THE IMMORTALS	'N'	1962	1C-7D	75
Joe HALDEMAN	THE FOREVER WAR	N	1974	2B-3A-3C	94
John JAKES	SIX-GUN PLANET	N	1970	3A-8B	53
Gerard KLEIN	THE DAY BEFORE TOMORROW	N	1967	2B-2C-3A	15
Anne McCAFFREY	RESTOREE	N	1967	3A	43
David McDANIEL	THE ARSENAL OUT OF TIME	N	1967	3A-3C	55
J. T. McINTOSH	SIX GATES FROM LIMBO	N	1968	3A-4C-8D	68
C. L. MOORE	SHAMBLEAU	C6	1953	3A-6A-6B	28
Larry NIVEN	INCONSTANT MOON	C7	1973	3A-7B	45-82
Alan E. NOURSE	BEYOND INFINITY	C9	1962	8X	45-75
F. POHL/C. M. KORNBLUTH	GLADIATOR-AT-LAW	N	1955	4C	77
Eric Frank RUSSELL	DREADEFUL SANCTUARY	N	1953	7E	36
Bob SHAW	SHADOW OF HEAVEN	N	1969	4C	82
Robert SHECKLEY	PILGRIMAGE TO EARTH	C15	1957	8X	36-77

Robert SILVERBERG	TO OPEN THE SKY	'N'	1967	1C-3A-4C-7C	76
Clifford D. SIMAK	TIME AND AGAIN	N	1951	1B-2B	82
Clark Ashton SMITH	OUT OF SPACE AND TIME VOL. 2	C11	1941	8X	45-55
Norman SPINRAD	THE SOLARIANS	N	1966	5	53
Theodore STURGEON	A WAY HOME	C9	1955	8X	55-75
Thomas Burnett SWANN	GREEN PHOENIX	'N'	1972	6A	77
William TENN	A LAMP FOR MEDUSA	N	1951	2C-6A	72
E. C. TUBB (Gill Hunt)	PLANETFALL	N	1952	3A-3C-8A	35
Wilson TUCKER	THE CITY IN THE SEA	N	1951	1C-4B	72
Jack WILLIAMSON	SEETEE SHOCK	N	1950	3A-3C-4C-5	44
Gene WOLFE	THE FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS	'N'	1972	3A-8X	62

The figures in the last two columns refer to Gil Gaier's subject classification and PPEN rating respectively. For further details, see Gil's PROJECT fanzine, GUYING GYRE.

"Message from Starfleet Command, Captain. In code. Shall I tran—"

"Bud id through, Uhura. I gad tradslade id im my head, eved iv I ab ill."

"I told you you had a head-code, Jim."

"I dode wish do doe dat, Bodes. Kaidly leave de bridge!"

This issue of KfN, like all the preceding issues, is being mailed out with Paul & Cas Skelton's INFERNO. We do this co-mailing to save money, since we object to paying exorbitant postal charges merely to subsidise the GPO's inefficiency and huge profits. To you, the recipient, there is almost no difference between receiving the two magazines together and receiving them separately. To us, the editors, however, there is a great deal of difference between receiving our respective locs and trades separately and receiving them c/o one or the other of us. So those of you who have been sending two locs in one envelope, or worse, joint locs, and those of you who send both trades copies of your zine to either Skel or myself.... PLEASE DON'T DO IT ANY MORE! Ta.

My policy on trades is this: I will generally respond on an all-for-all basis to unsolicited trades for a couple of issues or so, then review the position and let you know if I don't want to continue. If you publish fanficzines, comiczines or poetryzines, don't bother - I'm not interested.

I will repeat my plea for cover illos: please, if you have an idea for a KfN-type cover illo, whether or not you can actually draw it yourself, send it along. Any idea accepted will get its originator free issues of KfN until actually used. Message ends.

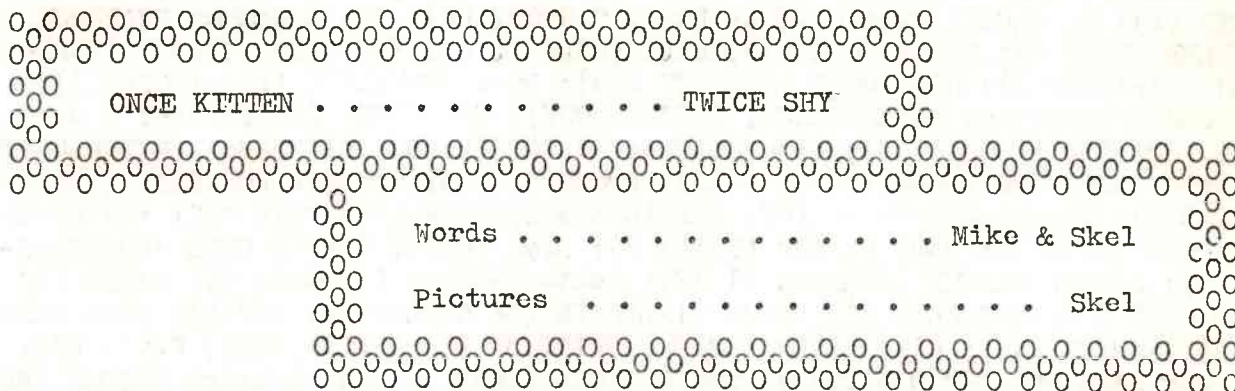
OH, I'VE GOT A LITTLE LIST... (...are you gonna be missed, next time?)

Alyson ABRAMOWITZ; Merf ADAMSON (L/THE NEXT BEST THING TO PERFECT LEGS 1/SUB 1); Simon AGREE (ABBA ZABBA 777); John ALDERSON (L); Bruce D. ARTHURS (GODLESS 12 13); Mike BAILEY (NEW DIRECTIONS 25/REFLECTIONS 26); Frank BALAZS (PARENTHESIS 11/PALPatations 1); Doug BARBOUR (L); Rich BARTUCCI (TREPONEMA PALLIDUM 7); Steve BEATTY; Harry & Irene BELL; Carl Eugene BENNETT (THE USELESS DIATRIBE 2/SCINTILLATION v3n3); Eric BENTCLIFFE (TRIODE 23); John BERRY (HITCHHIKE 26); Sheryl BIRKHEAD; Gray BOAK (CYNIC 9); Pamela BOAL (L); Bill BOWERS; Mike BRACKEN (H/KNIGHTS 15 16); Richard BRANDT (L\*); Bill BREIDING; Dave BRIDGES (ONE-OFF 1 2 3); Ned BROOKS (IT COMES IN THE MAIL 20 21/THE MAE STRELKOV TRIP REPORT); John BROSNAN; Brian Earl BROWN (L/BROWNIAN MOTION 4 5/BACKFIRE); Bill BRUMMER (STRANGE DYSTOPIAS 1 2); Linda BUSHYAGER (KARASS 20 21); Ian BUTTERWORTH (X); Ed CAGLE; Mike CANUEL; Larry CARMODY (X); Pat & Graham CHARNOCK (WRINKLED SHREW 6); Stuart & Rosie CLARK (EGLADIL 4); Ron & Sue CLARKE (FORERUNNER QUARTERLY 3); Rich COAD (L/SPICY 2 3); Dave COCKFIELD (L\*/ATROPOS 3); David COHEN (MORTIMER FRANKENBAUM, PRIVATE GUY); Eli COHEN (KRATOPHANY 8 9); John G. COLLICK (PROCYON 4); Lisa CONESA; Ed CONNOR; Don D'AMMASSA (MYTHOLOGIES 8); Garth DANIELSON (BOOWATT 7 8 9 10); Frank DENTON; Stephen DORNEMAN (WELTANSCHAUUNG 3); Andrew & Ruth DUNLOP; Martin EASTERBROOK (OUR FAIR CITY 4); Kevin EASTHOPE (LOGO 3); Gary FARBER (DRIFT 2); Bryn FORTEY (SUPER CRUD '69/RELATIVITY 5); Jackie FRANKIE (DILEMMA 11 12); Keith FREEMAN (KE-WE); Gil GAIER (P/GUYING GYRE 5 6/PHOSPHENE 4); Bruce GILLESPIE (SF COMMENTARY 44/45); Mike GLICKSOHN (L\*/XENIUM 2.6); Mike GLYER (SCIENTIFRICTION 5); Bobbie GRAY; Kevin HALL (L\*); Ray HARRISON; John HARVEY; Fred HASKELL (RUNE 46 47); Patrick HAYDEN (ECCE FANNO 1); Jackie HILLES (HILLESIAN FIELDS 6); Liese HOARE (THE SOUTHERN VOLE 1); Terry HUGHES (MOTA 15 16 17 18 19); Ben INDICK (L\*/RAPPIN' 6.76); Jonh INGHAM (L); Alan ISAACSON (NESFIG NEWSLETTER 11); Rob JACKSON (MAYA 11); Terry JEEVES (ERG 54 55 56); Dave & Mardee JENRETTE (TABEBUIAN 27 28 29 30 30.5/FLAMENCO v10 n7); Chris JONES (BOOKWORM 1); Ken JOSEPHANS (WYKNOT 4); Arnie & Joyce KATZ (SWOON 3 4); Jerry KAUFMAN (SPANISH INQUISITION 7/8); Leroy KETTLE (L\*/TRUE RAT 3); Pete KNIFTON (XYLAC 3); Mike KRING (L); Dave LANGFORD (TWLL-DDU 2 3 4); Eric LARSEN (IN THE SHADOW OF THE MONOLITH 54 55 56 57 58); Gerald LAWRENCE; Denny LIEN (X); Eric LINDSAY (L/GEGENSCHEIN 26 27 28); Ethel LINDSAY (SCOTTISHE 71); Jim & Marion LINWOOD; Dave LOCKE; Sam & Mary LONG; Hank & Lesleigh LUTTRELL; Shayne McCORMACK (SOMETHING ELSE 5); TaraL Wayne MacDONALD (L\*/BLUE JAUNTE 1); Barry Kent MACKAY; Richard MacMAHON (INVERTED EAR TRUMPET 4); Don MARKSTEIN; Wayne MARTIN (X); Ian MAULE (CHECKPOINT 67 68 69 71 72 73); Jeff MAY (L); Eric MAYER; Jim MEADOWS III (L\*); David MERKEL (ERED NIMRAIS 2 3); Don MILLER (SOTWJ 191/TJS 195 196 197 198/THOTM 199/TSP&FN 1 2 3/TSP&FJ 86)((phew!)); Tom MORLEY (X); David MOYER (BIOYA 2); Joseph NICHOLAS (P); Will NORRIS; Jodie OFFUTT; Marc ORTLIEB (MAD DAN REVIEW 3 4); Philippe PAINE (CALCIUM LIGHT NIGHTS 3); Pauline PALMER (L\*); Darroll PARDOE (STULTICIAE LAUS 5); Brian PARKER (PARKER'S PATCH 3); Brad PARKS (X); Dick PATTEN (ZYMURGY j); Bernie PEEK (K 3); Bruce PELZ (PROFANITY 11 12); Tom PERRY (QUARK 13); Greg PICKERSGILL & Simone WALSH (STOP BREAKING DOWN 2 3); Dave PIPER; Graham POOLE (SPACES 1/SPI 5/HOT POT 1/CYCLOTRON 1); Pete PRESFORD; Denis QUANE; Sandra RICHARDSON; Geoff RIPPINGTON (TITAN 3); Peter ROBERTS; Dave ROMM (IMPRESSIONS 2); Dave ROWE (L); Paul RYAN (L/O'RYAN 3); Jostein SAAKVITNE; Jessica Amanda SALMONSON (L\*); Alan SANDERCOCK (DREAM VENDER 1); Stu SHIFFMAN (X); Al SIROIS (X); Paul & Cas SKELTON (L\*/C/INFERNO 11 12/ATACON 1); Jeff & Ann SMITH; David & Jean STAVES (THIS DAY, NEXT DAY, SOMETIME, NEVER 1 2); Andrew STEPHENSON; Philip STEPHENSEN-PAYNE (L\*); Wally STOELTING (L/FAN'S ZINE 8 9); Mae STRELKOV (TONG 2.76 3.76); Roy TACKETT; Don C. THOMPSON (DON-O-SAUR 44 45); Paul THOMPSON (THE ICHNEUMON FLYER 1)...continued on page 193

The happenings of the Skelparty are now past and gone lo these many moons.

That which follows was originally created for the then embryonic Kitten group zine to be coedited by Dave Rowe and Bernie Peck. By the time Skel and I had actually got it finished, Dave had decided on a no-artwork policy for K. Neither of us wanted the piece published minus the art, so.....

Having considered and rejected the idea of publishing it as a one-shot, it was finally agreed that I could use it in KfN if I helped Skel on another piece for INFERNO. So here, after some delay but still as fresh as ever, is the piece to which Skel gave the almost inevitable title.....

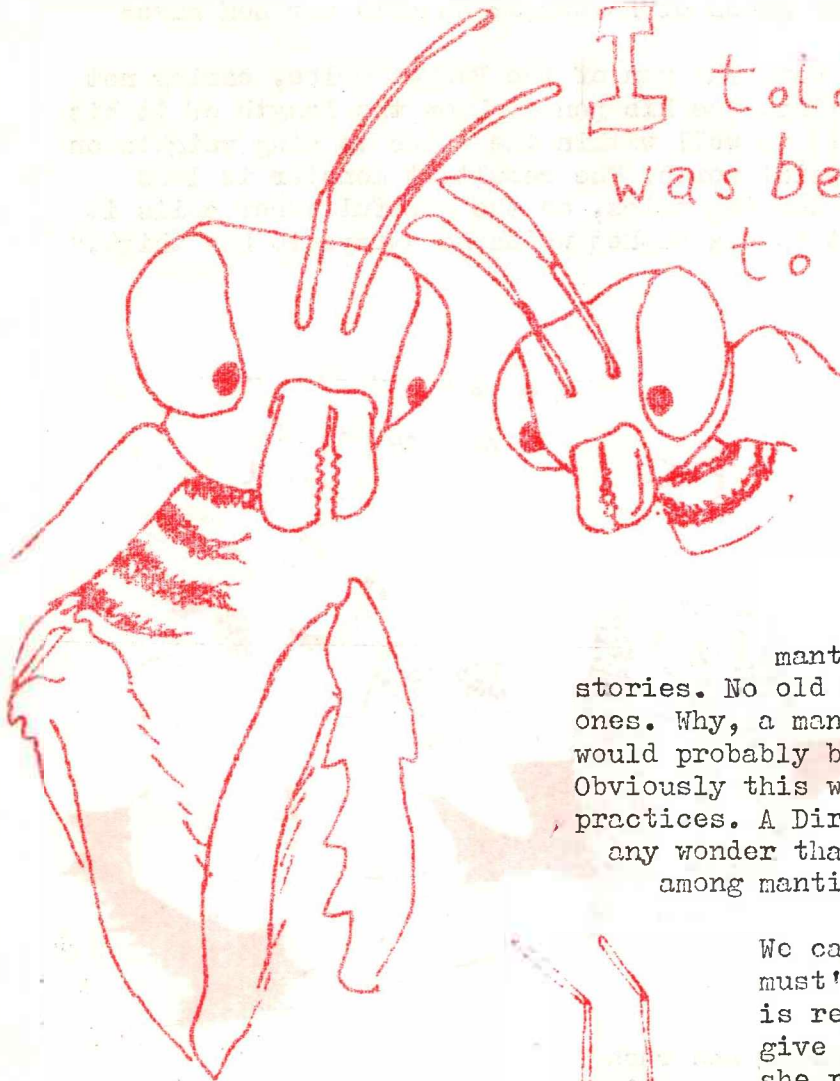


It wasn't really a Kitten meet, it's just that Kittens were thicker on the ground than anyone else. A Kitten meet by default, you might call it, although default was all Skel's, he having invited them up for a weekend booze-up. Yeah, the Kittens may have been thicker on the ground, but he was definitely thicker in the head.

How to share that evening with you, without just recounting in detail yet another fan party? How's about if we take that whole evening and build upon it, shuffling things around, adding new bits and generally inviting all of you to one of the happiest fan evenings we've ever spent?

Seeing as you've just arrived, perhaps first of all you'd like to meet the CoH: a book called 'Would You Believe It?' Quiet but interesting, he's a veritable mine of strange and humorous facts, and he circulates well. Then we have Mike (that's me, with the glasses and the short fat hairy legs) and Pat Meara; Paul (that's me, with the glass eye and the short fat hairy .....well, that's me, anyway) and Cas Skolton; Gerald Lawrence; Brian Hampton; that's Dave Rowe and Janice Wiles over there; Roy Sharpe; and that's Bernie Peck over there, currently explaining how the whole of South-ern England would go up in nuclear smoke as the inevitable result of a snapped elastic band in the very next office to his. Ask him about it the next time you've got a fortnight to spare. On with the party.....

<sup>u</sup>The female praying mantis is quite likely to bite off her mate's head before, during or after mating. This does not, apparently, affect his performance.<sup>u</sup> (p20)



I told him it  
was better  
to go  
blind!!

That's pretty interesting, GoH. Just think, a race without sexual hangups. There are no experienced male mantises to swap locker-room stories. No old ones to psych up the young ones. Why, a mantis' idea of pornography would probably be a photo of an old male. Obviously this would mean unnatural sexual practices. A Dirty Old Man indeed. Is it any wonder that homosexuality is rife among mantises?

We can even see how Joanna Russ must've been misquoted when she is reported to have said "You give me a pain, Man." Obviously she really said "You give me a praying mantis." Here she must have been expressing her idyll.



Sik!  
She loves me!!

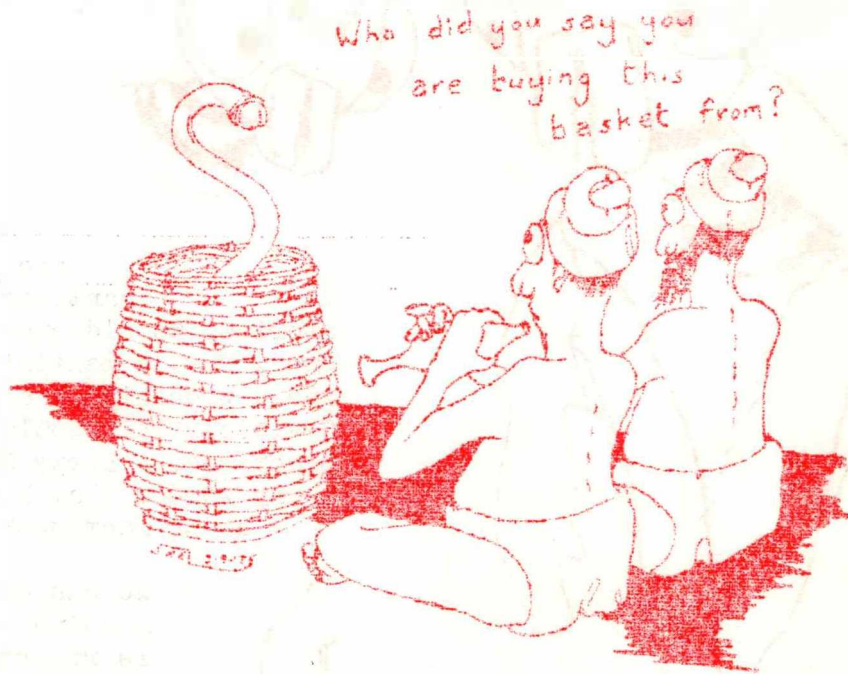
Unfortunately for Ms. Russ, it is the praying mantises which give the lie to the ideal of blatant female domination, the ideal held by many extremist members of Fem-Lib. Put at its simplest, why aren't the mantises running the world?

\* \* \* \* \*

Something to eat? Another glass of homebrew? On p119 our GoH says:

"Western man has his car. The man of the Basket Tribe, caring not a fig-leaf for symbolism, has his penis. Upon the length of it his status depends, and it is well within the rules to hang weights on it to increase its social worth. The resultant monster is less than an advantage on hunting trips, so the careful owner coils it up neatly and pops it into a basket which he straps to his thigh."

Strange that our otherwise knowledgeable GoH should be mistaken about the Basket Tribe's hunting customs, which are quite unique. Instead of staying home and looking after the chores, as is the case in most other tribes, the nubile young women of the village always accompany their menfolk on hunting trips. Then, when the prey is sighted, they hastily remove what little they are wearing and rush out in front of the hunters, cavorting erotically and making suggestive gestures. (Well, it's easier than trying to say it.)



Nature then takes its course and.....the unfortunate animal is rapidly overcome by a hail of fast-moving baskets. What a way to go! And if that's not quite enough, there's always the backup system (so called because it's now back up rather than coiled away), the rampant organ itself, complete with weight. Just a gentle tap from this - a glancing blow, as it were - is usually enough to make even the most ferocious of beasts come quietly. Though sometimes, in the case of really large victims, such as elephants, the baskets are rendered virtually useless, and then it all hangs on the backup system. That's how it feels anyway, I'm told.

Anybody foolish enough to feel like hunting on the morning after an orgy usually plays it safe and takes a bow and arrow as well.

Before we leave these fascinating people we should perhaps make some brief mention of their literary talents. Indeed, one of their 'New Wave'



writers, Jehjeeb Alahd, has just sold his first science fiction story, entitled 'The Weighting Grounds', to Silverberg's NEW DIMENSIONS series.

"Australian earthworms  
can grow up to 10ft.  
in length" (p37)



"If all the methane gas which a cow generates while chewing the cud were piped together, it would inflate an airship in 144 minutes." (p78)

This would tend to support the statement, made by Brian Hampton, that an alien visitor, observing Earth from some distance via his spectroscope, would only be able to infer the existence of life on our planet from the presence of this methane in the atmosphere.

This gave rise to the notion that a viable method of interstellar communication could be devised by attaching a cow to a balloon and allowing it to ascend (under its own methane-power) to the rarified upper reaches of the atmosphere, where it could, if sufficiently trained, fart a suitable message in morse code.

A study of certain early Renaissance aphorisms reveals how long-standing is man's desire for communication with extraterrestrial beings. Obviously the early pioneers realised that the Earth's atmosphere would have a masking effect on the signals, hence the higher the signalling device (i.e. the cow) the...er...purer the signal would be. This concept is embodied in one of Isaac Newton's early speculative essays, which began:

"Hey diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle,  
The cow jumped over the moon."

The actual code embodied in the first line has yet to be deciphered. An

early version of Morse code, perhaps?

However, cows are notoriously stupid. In the event that such training should prove impossible, it would be necessary for each cow to have an attendant, or cow-drey. This cadre, of hand-picked (as distinct from nose-picked) Interstellar Communications Operatives (men with bungs) could convert the random bovine emissions into a type of interstellar communication far superior to the primitive and complicated methods now in use at the Aricebo Centre. It is no wonder that no response to this latter venture has yet been forthcoming; obviously the more sophisticated races in the galaxy are already attuned to the bovine communication network.

Possibly the reason why our own primitive efforts in this field (or any field in which there's a good supply of grass) have not met with success is that our level of technology may not yet be high enough. Possibly the answer lies in a new development of the laser principle, whereby the brain-waves of a couple of thousand cows are sensed and regulated by a device which makes them fart in unison.



On the other hand, it should be borne in mind that the oldest and hence most sophisticated and intelligent races in the galaxy will long ago have used up their material resources and have returned to the horse-and-cart, or cow-and-fart, stage. Possibly, then, the real solution is that in addition to the spectroscopic emanations of the methane, some of the gas itself escapes and travels across interstellar space. Thus, advanced races with a highly developed sense of smell would still, eventually, get the message. Who nose?

There is an eentsy possibility, however, that visiting aliens might get entirely the wrong idea about just who is the brains on this here planet. Unlikely, though ..... I mean, no species that just sits around eating and farting all day could possibly be intelligent ..... could it?

000000000000000000000000  
000000000000000000000000

IT'S POSSIBLE TO BE TOO LEVEL-HEADED.....

4 Sep 76

Yes, you see, there I was, trying to finish the design of my first level, at the same time ensuring that work on the second level didn't get too far in arrears, meanwhile also fitting in the occasional expedition into other people's first, second or even third levels. In other words, I've been spending most of my free time since KfN4 dungeoning, which has certainly put a drag on my fanac. Like some plague, D & D is both virulent and highly contagious, and there's no known cure. At the recent Silicon I was surprised to see that the infection had spread as far north as Newcastle, with Ian Williams, Dave Hutchinson and Brian Rouse being the most seriously affected of the Gannets. Even Rob Jackson is not immune.

However, the urge to fanac is like malaria: it lies dormant for a while, then one has a relapse and comes down with another bout. This seems to be a bout time, and coincidentally it's also about time for another KfN, so letters begin:

RICH BARTUCCI, Box 369, KCCOM, 2105 Independence Ave., Kansas City, MO64124:

"A long time ago, on her deathbed, my sainted Aunt Lucrezia said unto me, 'Richard, someday you will receive a fanzine from Derby; ignore it.' She gave her death rattle at that fateful moment (which instrument have I kept faithfully by my bedside) and expired.

"Unfortunately, Aunt Lucrezia could never have prophesied that the day would come when I'd ignore her injunction (she being a Circuit Court Judge) to turn up my nose at these publications originating in Derby. Nor could she have predicted that I would get into a medical school (she used to say to me, in that winsome way of hers, 'Richard, you boncheaded little blood clot, you're a loser', she did), so I figured that she might have been wrong about her other foresightings.

"That was until I received KNOCKERS FROM NEPTUNE, of course. I know now that the old biddy had more than a kernel of truth in her corn muffin of wisdom. I should have overlaid it with the margarine of mumness, but the salt of articulation intervened, which means that I'll probably need a

Bromo-Seltzer after I finish this LoC.

"Clinically speaking, I detected hard, indurated masses within your KNOCK-ERS, which proved upon biopsy and H&E staining to be skirrhus carcinoma (extensive cylindrical-cell growth). Colophon and bacover dissection produced evidence of metastasis. Five-year survival with this type of cancer is minimal, mitigated in this case by the fact that brain involvement should be a minor complication, as this zine is anencephalic anyway. I recommend morphine SO<sub>4</sub>, methotrexate and copious amounts of corflu-7, all administered topically and intranasally. ((Wot, no malto singularium?))

---

"All the world's a stage, and all my relatives are critics."

MORGAN D. GANZEWELT (Again, Dangerous Quotations)

---

"Here in Missouri, Armpit of the West, the grocery stores, the pharmacies, the supermarkets -- everybody -- will have a liquor department. The first time I stepped into a Missouri grocery store-cum-fruit stand, I was fresh from Pennsylvania-New Jersey (in the former case, the State runs the liquor stores; in the latter, liquor licenses are few and far-between) and stunned to see six-packs of bheer and bottles of Boone's Farm cuddled up next to the milk and eggs in the refrigerator case. Scotch whisky and Vodka sat side-by-side with corned beef hash and canned pumpkin. Ghu only knows what the incidence of alkies happens to be in this state of easy booze.

---

"If the world were my oyster, I'd probably be allergic to oysters."

MORGAN D. GANZEWELT (In Defense of Pedcrasty)

---

"Why doesn't somebody make a film entitled DORK SALVAGE, ORGANLEGGER, based loosely on Larry Niven's Known Space universe? A sort of far-future BONNIE AND CLYDE, showing tall, tough-but-ruthless Dork Salvage trooping about the megalopoli of Earth kidnapping and disassembling luckless victims for spare parts... It could be enormously successful, linking sf and the JAWS phenomenon, where people enjoy the vicarious fear of dismemberment and death. If Leonard Nimoy could be persuaded to play Dork, we could have a real winner on our hands.

---

"You lay down with fen and you get up smelling like corflu and cheap paper and mimco ink and stencil cement and blog and..."

McFARLAND ALLISON (from the film The Hugo)

---

"Experience with matema medica seems to lead me to the conclusion that women, rather than men, are the inferior subspecies. What with an endocrine axis that fluctuates over a 28-day period, an increased incidence of carcinoma, menopause, pregnancy, and what-have-you, the female of the species

is hellishly ill-designed if she's going to claim superiority to the male. True, she doesn't get prostatitis and she has much less trouble zipping up the fly of her pants, but he doesn't menstruate and needn't rely on the pill to keep from getting ~~pregnant~~ pregnant. Also, he's stronger, damnedly tougher-minded, and more aggressive. Put this all together with the fact that males dominate in the majority of cultures (especially those more advanced than others) and we see that something besides his winning smile and rigid member is keeping the male on top in the great fuck of human history.

((Ooboy. Have you any last requests, apart from 'Please don't hit me'?!))

---

"Through an oversight, I left the plastic vagina, a simulator designed to help externs learn how to insert vaginal specula, on the work table when I went to lunch. I returned to find one of my students deep in thought -- and deeper into the plastic vagina, with his pants around his ankles. Banality overcame me, and I asked him what he was doing. He pointed to the Dow trademark on the instrument and said, "Better living through chemistry."

MORGAN D. GANZEWELT (Sodomy, Plain and Simple)

---

"Being as I am in close proximity to Minneapolis (probably the most fannish city in the US and home of the redoubtable Denny Lien), I can safely say that the nude typing fad is not the only one in which these most bumptious representatives of fandom have taken up an interest in the past few months.

"It was sometime in January that I received reports of strange rituals, in which the organs of small birds were wrenched from their still-warm bodies and scattered across a Gestefax to produce covers for Minneapa's satanical fanzines. Stories reached me, speaking of wierd dances and covens, whereat dozens of intoxicated fen subjected themselves to the fumes from a smoldering pile of Minneapolis Yellow in the center of a closed room.

"I took the matter up with Ken Keller, SMOF for the Midwestern Region, but he was incapacitated by an attack of existential angst (something he's fallen prey to ever since he attended the first Byobcon) and could not give me any valid or detailed information. I must therefore leave it to you, Mearae; does that letter -- that tale of nude typing, of wanton sex and typer-swapping -- sound like the words of a trufan?

"You betcher ass; when's the next bus to Minneapolis?"

---

"A chicken is just an eagle who prefers to walk."

MORGAN D. GANZEWELT (Naked Supper)

---

It sure is nice to get a letter from someone who provides his own interlineations. Thanks. Judging from the similarities in style, I'd say that Morgan and John Haft could be one and the same person. I notice also that you signed your letter FIAD (Fandom Is A Disease), thus maintaining the medical tome of this

issue. Talking of sickness.....

SPOT THE BRAIN CELL

5 Sep 76

No, this isn't about a brain cell called Spot. The whole concept of naming brain cells individually is quite ludicrous and totally impracticable, for most people anyway. Possibly not for me though, as I shall explain: y'see, I had a great (well, terrible actually) feghoot-type-thing lined up to ~~be spot~~ introduce this issue. It was based around the title of that old 'standard' THE SONG IS ENDED (BUT THE MEMORY LINGERS ON). Remember the one? I was thinking that if Jack Vance and Joanna Russ were to collaborate on a new 'Dying Earth' story, Ms. Russ would doubtless insist that the men had to become extinct before the women did. Then they could call the story THE PRONG IS ENDED (BUT THE MAMMARY LINGERS ON). See? Okay, you can stop laughing now. Then I remembered that the word in the title is MELODY, not MEMORY.

The realisation that one's carefully worked out piece of fanac has gone down the drain, all because of one little word, is truly sickening. So I decided to use it anyway.

My memory had better smarten itself up a bit if it hopes to linger on around here much longer, though.

Hmmm. Get me outta this, willya, Leroy?

LEROY KETTLE, 43 Chesholm Road, London N16:

"One advantage of a fairly eclectic fanzine like your own is the enormous amount of comment-hooks - even Mike Glicksohn occasionally finds something to write about and that's not like him. And what's he writing about this time? Why, 'eclectic' of all words. What a superfluous person he is, doubtless full of horsepuckey. Not cardboard, indeed! Having watched the way Guinness soaks into him I know different.

"Which brings me to page 141. The varying intermissions in THE TOWERING INFERNNO obviously relate to the fascinating problem of what projectionists do when they've pressed the 'Go' button and what ice-cream persons (but really ladies) do between intervals. Previously, when cinemas were huge buildings in which films were shown large as they were meant to be -- as opposed to in cramped pseudo-sitting-rooms -- projectionists and ice-cream ladies would rush from ABC to Odeon to Ritz increasing their earnings, like cinematic strippers, by covering several different shows. These days they merely have to stroll from Gaumont 1 to Gaumont 2 to Gaumont 3 and consequently they have so much time left that they fill it in by engaging in an occasional screw. ("Come upstairs and see my projection." And just think of the interesting, if cold, positions made possible by leaving on the ice-cream tray.) Post-coital depression accounts for the haphazard choice of intermissions -- who cares about the audience when in the clammy grip of limp despondency. And it's a fact that 1.36 projectionists every year die from exploded seminal vesicles -- obviously showing FLESH GORDON AND THE KNOCKERS FROM NEPTUNE in a cinema where the ice-cream lady is a man (and not a very accommodating one at that.)"

Your mention of post-coital depression calls to mind the fact that the theory behind it was first postulated with regard to the Grand Old Duke of York et al., of whom it was said, if you recall, that 'when they were up they were up, and when they were down they were down.' Hardly surprising really. I expect I'd feel the same way if I'd just had ten thousand men.

"The thing that amuses me most about this business is in the West End where just prior to watching a  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -hour film I am reminded that there will be no intermission so over-priced confectionery must be purchased immediately or starvation will gnaw at my vitals during the sexy bits. I'm sure I can remember  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -hour films never having intervals before. Perhaps the intervals they don't have in the West End are of a different length or for different reasons.

"In fact, I could do without an intermission in any film up to about four hours long -- but I concede that some people can't. Except for those who have bizarre and frequent intestinal disturbances or know not the Innermost Secrets of Sphincter Control, these people probably are the same ones who sit behind me with a minimum of three bags of popcorn which they carefully shake for several minutes as part of some esoteric pre-consumption ritual, before crunching each little piece while leaning forward so their mouths and my ears are as close as possible. It's conceivable that these people could also be the Lithuanians who translate furiously next to me. Or the 'seen-it-before-this-is-what-is-about-to-happen' cretins. Or the 'look-he's-got-a-gun-look-I-bet-he'll-shoot-her-look-the-door's-opening' morons. Or the old men loudly muttering about their disenchantment with modern films and the obscenities and violence therein as they make use for the fifth time that week of their cheap passes. Or the drunks farting and belching, and occasionally shouting as dreams more vivid than the film penetrate their stupor. Or the knowledgeable "Bergman used a razor blade of exactly that kind to cut off the protagonist's left testicle in PERSONNA" pseuds. Or the stupid "Why did he do that? What does that mean? Who's he writing that letter to?" thargs with half a brain and that left at home. Or the red-faced buffoons who laugh like old lavatories at one line for long enough to drown out the next six. Or the twitchers who produce violent disconcerting rhythms in my row of seats for reasons known only to their psychoanalysts or my anti-God. Or the tit-stoppers, ignorantly discussing both football and fucking until a naked breast appears on the screen to hold them in its glandular thrall. Or.....

"But I could go - and have gone - on. You may gather I'm not wildly keen on audiences -- I seem to find at least one of the above types too near for comfort every time I go to the cinema. Perhaps I'm too sensitive to relatively minor disturbances. My ability to concentrate is not a great one -- tough luck on me, eh? Perhaps it's not fair to expect everyone else to conform to my standards of cinema-going i.e. watching the bloody film, full bloody stop. And, actually, misplaced intermissions don't please me any either. My emotions are often easily swayed by the most pathetic bit of tension or romance or humour and I like it that way. I don't want to be disturbed by a projectionist with bollock-ache or an audience on loan from the local mong-factory. Oh for the days of Saturday Matinees when I could hear perfectly through the screams of a few hundred other excited kids. It's all this sofistickation, in'it?"

The only trouble with letters like that is that they're difficult to follow, so, like Julius Caesar, I'll just concur, and for the further delight of the readers, reprint your postscript on the back of the envelope, just visible amid several crossings-out and layers of sticky paper:

"This envelope has been sealed by the Messy Method. Guaranteed to shock the postman. Reduces postal bills and loses letters and friends. Stick with the Messy Method. (As demonstrated in FANZINE FANATIQUE.) Write now for some of your first envelope and a bit of old chewing gum."

Sounds like an offer I can't reuse.

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"If Mount Everest raped the Grand Canyon, would it have a fit of peak?"

JOHN HAFT

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Jim Meadows III wrote expressing surprise that THE TOWERING INFERNO had an intermission at all. Apparently in the States you have to go and get your own Supachokowafers -- no delectable young ladies with trays over there. Barbaric lot --- I'm glad we lost.

Mike Kring, in passing, mentions his fondness for a group called ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL: good on yer, matey! I heard a couple of their things -- CHOO CHOO CH' BOOGIE and (I think) BACK TOWN BOOGIE -- on the radio once and have been a fan ever since. However, my attempts to actually get my sweaty little paws on their recdrds have so far been foiled by what must be a new type of economy drive on the part of the issuing company, which consists of deleting the buggers before they're actually released. Curses etc. However, in the meantime I'm making do with a very passable substitute going by the name of Chilli Willi and the Red Hot Peppers, on an LP entitled BONGOS OVER BALHAM. This too has a version of Choo Choo Ch'Boogie, plus numerous other goodies. Anyone else got this one?

RICHARD BRANDT, 4013 Sierra Drive, Mobile, AL 36609, U.S.A.:

"Have you heard of the STAR TREK fanzines with nude centerfolds? I heard this direct from Gene Roddenberry when he visited my campus. Seems George Takei (Sulu) was represented in one foldout -- "And he wasn't using his hand, either," as Gene pointed out. There was also speculation as to whether anything else of Mr. Spock's was pointed.

"Caption for a STAR TREK centerfold: "Kirk to Enterprise - beam me up.""

I can think of at least two characters that I'd rather see in such a centrefold (if I had to look at all, that is) but since the overwhelming majority of Trek-kies are female I suspect I'd be outvoted.

Um.....there aren't any PLANET OF THE APES fanzines, are there?

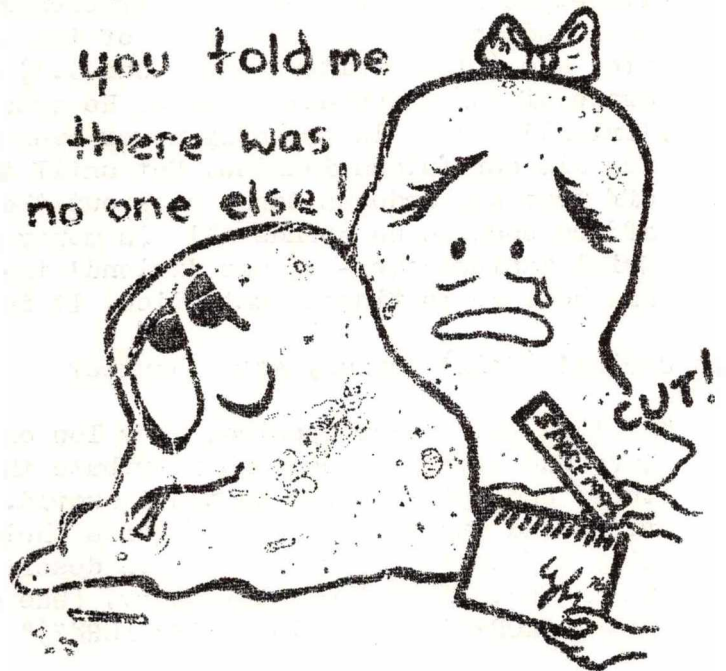
Got a note from Paul Ryan, in which he seemed somewhat aggrieved that I'd called O'RYAN a SFM-inspired zine. Sorry mate, it wasn't meant as an insult, honest. Looks like SFM wasn't too keen on the implications either, but deciding to fold



because of it was just plain spiteful.

TARAL WAYNE MACDONALD, 1284 York Mills Rd, Apt 410, Don Mills, Ontario M3A 1Z2:

"The first, and, with luck, the only Bertram Chandler I've read is an abomination called CATCH THE STAR WINDS. In cezee-eye font on low contrast paper yet. It is one of the few sf books I've rid my collection of without intent to replace with a better copy. The gimmick is an STL ship travelling a fraction below the total speed of light. A dumb broad type asks why the ship can't just accelerate and go faster than light, and is told it is just plain impossible. She can't believe this, so fires a cannon, yes a cannon at the rear of the ship to speed it up. It works, and reality turns inside out. ((Not only that.....my stomach doesn't feel so good either.)) Then, with slightly rearranged ship and people, the whole thing starts over again. This goes on about three times before somehow Chandler tacks an ending on it. Why at that point he ends it instead of going on forever I don't know.



"Who has a better right than I to add a third to the series of kinky, nau-seating illos?"

True, true. Hey, have you contacted the Andersons? They might want to use the idea in a script.

And now, over to my favourite fortune-teller, Gypsy Rose Lee (The One Who Reveals All): "You will receive a letter from a tall, dark, handsome one-eyed fanartist who is somewhat pissed off with the way you fouled up his cover illo for KfN 4."

Pshaw! What rubbish! Good ol' Skel? Never! My faith in you is shattered. But... but wait.....what's this? It's.....

PAUL SKELTON, 25 Bowland Close, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire SK2 5NW:

"What is an artist? An artist is a sensitive soul, especially a fan artist for he is not only sensitive, but also insecure and in constant need of egoboo to bolster up his feeble self-image. Yes, an artist is a sensitive

soul. He is not the coarse type of man whose feet smell, who gets vast amounts of beer down his neck and who farts lots. No, no, the artist is a sensitive soul. Let us take a look at what the artist does and see if we can discover why this is so.

"The artist creates. He sits there, amid reams of screwed-up paper, lavishing love and effort upon something. He does this because some coarse, clumsy editor-type has threatened him, or because that same editor-type, with a bestial and instinctive knowledge of the artist's psychic needs, has manipulated him ((I deny it! Honest, Cas...)) in some marionette-like manner. Unaware of this, the artist arts. He arts long and hard for his unfeeling 'friend' who would probably never even speak to him did he not need covers for his scrofulous fanzine. Not until the artist is satisfied does he leave off from his arduous task, blow out the candle (the only lighting he can afford because he spends all his money on art materials for the benefit - O Eviol Manipulator - of his 'friend' the Fan Editor) and stumbles weary to his bed. He is finally satisfied. It is done. It is finished. It is complete!"

Oh Christ! (Snif) Anybody got a hankie?

"Editors are a poor species, very low on the evolutionary scale, but they do have one saving grace, one attribute that enables them to survive within their ecological niche in the fanworld. This attribute is known as 'integrity' and manifests itself towards their contributors. Without this integrity a faned's contributors soon desert him and his fanzine becomes extinct, falling even from the race-memory. (Who can honestly recall NEANDERTHAL NEWS? DIN-O-SAUR? JURASSIC JOTTINGS? LURK?)"

Are you ever going to get to the point?

"No faned would dream of taking a written contribution and altering it. No Sir!"

Ah.

"But, just because you have found yourself a new, local, ~~better~~ young artist you suddenly develop the chutzpah to fuck up my wondrous covers? Fout Mears. Double fout even. Not only that, but I assume you have a vast readership in China (3 Suomo wrestlers) because they are the only people who would have read the cover dialogue in the correct order. But let us get back to our hero, the sensitive artist. When we left him he had just sent off a finished piece and had it accepted.

"Oh, imagine the mental wounds inflicted upon such a sensitive soul when he sees what has been done to that upon which he lavished so much of his tender designing. Woe, oh woe! Is it any wonder he is shattered by the experience? Can we be surprised that his faith in faneds is destroyed? Who could blame him for deciding to ignore the subtle pleas for artwork contained within KfN 4 and deciding never again to submit any artwork, at least to that particular faned? No Sir!

"Actually I was a little miffed. Next time you display your instinctive knowledge of my psychic needs, it will have to be a double! Alternatively, you

could translate all the foregoing as follows:-

"Skel left the cupboard door open. Skel is a fool. Bethany is not a fool. Bethany went groping about in the cupboard. Bethany went very quiet for some considerable time, denoting much mischief in the wreaking. Bethany had a go with one of Skel's Rotrings, namely the 0.25mm one with which Skel does almost all of his drawing. Bethany dropped it on the floor and bent the ink tube. WAAAAAAAAitdoesn'tworkanymoreWAAAAAAAAandISOBcan'taffordanewoneyeta-whilesoIwon'tbedoinganydrawingatallforabitWAAAAAAAA!!!

"This may be much nearer to the truth, but doesn't make as much interesting reading as the alternative reason. ((Yaaawwn.)) Besides, I'd rather not draw for you on principle, than not draw for you because I can't afford it. We sensitive souls have our artistic integrity too you know. Before I leave the cover I can inform you that you've won the bet you must have made with Pat, that some fool would trot out that age-old song pun, "Fangs for the Mammary". Normally I would have more sense, but I do this only because I think that maybe even Glicksohn wouldn't sink so low ((you're right)), and I wouldn't want you to lose even such a low trick."

Gez thanks. I'm touched. (I must be, to be printing this.) Getting back to the vexed question of alterations, let me say that although the execution of the addition to the KfN 4 cover illo may have left something to be desired, I stand by the principle. This applies to all contributors, and to written material as well as artwork. Normally I'd check with the artist/author first, but in this case the unmodified art was already on stencil, and there was no time to restencil the modified version. (Though had there been, I would have done so.)

"I see even you are suffering from 'creeping adman-ese', a disease of the brain and vocal chords. How could you? How could you refer to KfN as a 'product'? A 'product' is something artificial. Something dead and finished and cold. Something wrought for a purpose. A zine, especially KfN, is not like this. It exists for the joy of existing. It is not measured for a specific purpose, not artificial. It is an extension of yourself. ((You mean, like those condoms with a built-in projection that you can buy in sex shops?)) It glories simply in the joy of being. A product? A product? More like a work of art, Mr. Meara, a work of art or, if you think that too pretentious, ((well, just a teensy bit, yes)) certainly an example of craftsmanship. Something upon which has been bestowed much individual attention to detail. The modern connotations of the term 'product' are alien to KfN, Mike."

Creeping adman-ese is obviously very contagious, since you seem to have got it pretty bad yourself. Your paragraph above sounds like an ad. for Wilkinson Sword razor blades, only more so. You're just playing with words; I produce KfN, therefore it is a product. Simple. Full stop.

"Since last Tuesday there hasn't been a thing to drink in the whole house. Obviously this is affecting my letter writing. However, Cas' parents came today. They brought with them a part-cooked chicken. This was my saviour, a veritable Jesus Christ of the Chickenworld. The Chicken is our shepherd, I shall not want.....He leadeth me to lotsa booze..... Let me explain:-

"Cas' parents brought a chicken for our dinner. We had simple roast chicken

(and chips). Cas had already bought what we were having for tea. We were having simple roast chicken (and fuckknowswhat). Upon Cas' return from work this very Saturday morning I told her how events had transpired and explained that we now had to have the chuck-a-luck cooked in some vastly different manner. The easiest method (selected by Cas and honestly I had nothing whatever to do with it) turned out to be 'Chicken in White Wine'. Guess what we had to go out and buy? Oh, you guessed. Fortunately the recipe only required a quarter of a pint, which left a whole pint still in the bottle, to be gotten down my neck with only slight assistance from Cas' mother.

"Of course, whilst at the supermarket from which the wine was being purchased I pointed out to Cas that INFERNO was suffering from a dry spell and somehow managed to include a stack of cans of 'Watney's Party Seven Bitter' in the conversation, all the while praying to Jesus Chicken, a god who had already worked once for me, remember? Well, needless to say I am now right through that pint of dry white wine and into my second pint of bitter ((and on your way to a kingsize hangover)). This loc has nowhere to go but up. ((Just what I was thinking.)) Then again, some would say that this loc has nowhere to go, period. Sod them, they probably haven't got a drink themselves and are just consumed with jealousy.

"As I mentioned to you last time we met, I am totally mystified by that quote you used, namely, "At least once a year everybody is a genius." Why? I don't believe it, but if it's true then, if they could only find some way of capturing that instant, once every year, in which everybody is a genius, and storing it, then eventually we would have five minutes in which everybody is a genius. Just think what mankind might accomplish during those five minutes of massed intellect. Why, we might even invent a fanzine that Keith Walker could produce properly.....or is that simply too much wishful thinking? Come to think of it, I know it is. I haven't been a genius since 1963, which indicates that the whole idea may just be sheerest fantasy. Damn! Still, being foolscap, FANZINE FANATIQUE does have one advantage: each page wipes off more shit."

Quite, but since FF is really only A4, your proposed end-use could make this a rather embarrassing error of judgement. Shorter sheets shirk shifting shit.

"I notice, bye-the-bye, that you still haven't managed to include all those puns on THE RUUM which we came up with when you first mentioned the story you had to evaluate for your sf course.....you know, about the fact that if, when he tried blowing it up, he'd succeeded in blowing a hole in it, he'd have had a 'Ruum with a view'. Or even 'Ruum at the top' or 'The L-shaped Ruum'. Surely you have not forgotten that novel of interplanetary ~~fit~~ interaction (and porn) 'Make Ruum, Make Ruum'? ((No, but I was trying to.)) However, I seem to have written myself into a corner, and couldn't get myself out of it even with a tale of an alien defeated by homo sap and his technological cleaning gadget. That's right, I've left myself 'No Ruum to Man Hoover'.

"I would have written more, but when I blew up the balloon the fanzine burst."

Thank Christ for that. (The real one, not that fakeghod Jesus Chicken.) Three bloody pages, with hardly a word in edgewise for me. Remember me, the editor?

And here's another Madman with a complaint. The woods are full of them. Or the woodwork:

KEVIN HALL, 74 Rydal Avenue, Chadderton, Oldham OL9 0QU:

"I agree with Kettle, you've either got the talent to be interesting or you ain't and if you ain't you might as well grow raspberries. Clearly I just ain't got a talent. Thus you see I'm engaged in a totally pointless exercise. I write a letter which will clearly bore you stiff merely to get the next issue of KfN. Why the fuck should I waste my time?"

Presumably because you're interested enough to want to get the next issue. This is all I require. Being in addition interesting in what you have to say is a bonus for me. Fortunately there are enough people providing this bonus to give me a goodly amount of material for KfN, but they're not all the same people all of the time, and I don't hold it against you if you're not one of them.

"I reckon you're onto a winner. What a great idea for any fanzine. About 75% is supplied by others in the form of letters. All you have to do is sit back and read the letters as they come in, wear out your blue pencil rejecting any signed Kevin Hall and think up the odd (!!) comment to intersperse the letters with."

How perceptive. You have defined almost exactly the format that KfN has evolved into, and will probably remain in for the foreseeable future. As I pointed out on the faneditors' panel at Silicon, KfN in its present form represents the most efficient way for me to utilise my limited talent and even more limited time for fanac. It gets me fanzines in trade (objective number one) and is a vehicle for letter-response (objective number two); any bits of 'original me' will appear if, as and when I can get around to writing 'em. Thus, the original order of priorities has got shuffled round a bit, so that I now have this more negative, but more realistic (for me) approach to fan-publishing.

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"I look at it this way: the Sun, the Earth, and all the other stars and planets are just the balls in a giant, three-dimensional pool game, and it's only because God is such a lousy player that we haven't all been potted into a Black Hole somewhere."

JOHN HAFT

---

Ah, but here we have a Gannet with taste:

DAVE COCKFIELD, 31 Durham Court, Hebburn, Tyne and Wear, NE31 1JX:

"Full of determination I tackled KfN 4 today (during working hours, naturally) and I must say that it has left me with a nice comfortable 'full-up' feeling. Rather like half a dozen pork pies, a few pints and a pickled egg, minus the indigestion."

And what taste! If that's flavour-of-the-month I'm on a starvation diet as of now. 'Fess up now...Pat put you up to this, didn't she? The lengths to which that woman will go to get me to lose weight.

MIKE GLICKSOHN, 141 High Park Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M6P 2S3, Canada:

"I observe that a staggering 68% of the people whose letters are printed in this issue are other than British. (Well, to be truthful I can't say that all of them were staggering when they locced but I'm pretty sure I was and I'm 4% of that total.) That should dispel the image that British fanzines are insular!"

But that's because the quality of paper we get over here has absolutely no resistance to sea-water, my dear. /// '...other than British...' - what a charming euphemism! "Hi Mom, this is my friend Mike Glicksohn, he's an other than British person."

"The TAB I got certainly didn't have any art studies of young ladies and their puffies! As a matter of fact, the last issue I got had a TAB trading card of Mike Meara in it and I think I've got grounds for complaint to the Unfair Fannish Practices Board! Imagine being stuck with a bearded and clothed Mike Meara instead of a naked lady! It'd be like expecting to get laid and getting hay-fever instead. Although I admit that's a pretty feeble anallergy. Hell, a naked picture of Brian Burgess would have been an improvement over yet another Meara."

Considering the amount of weight I've put on recently, I doubt if you'd be able to tell the difference. Not that I'm likely to allow you the chance.

"Kindly scotch the rumours that I'm a string and elastic powered fan; only one substance powers my two flying fingers as they double-handedly drag me kicking and screaming back into the morass of fanzine fandom. If it weren't for the delightful OH molecule which displaces a hydrogen from the ethane people like you and Skel and Rob and John and Leroy (blessed be his name) and Greg wouldn't be wasting your time reading all this Canadian drivel."

Wot, no eye of newt? An essential ingredient in the alcohol-making process, as all good chemists know. (And you don't qualify, for a start: 'OH molecule' indeed! Chemistry has obviously been through some radical alterations since you were at school.) Whilst on the subject of newts and their contribution to Science, I don't suppose you're aware of the Newt-onion laws of motion either? Namely, that if you drop an onion on a newt, it runs like hell to get out of the way. Even when they're pissed you can only hit 'em about one time out of ten. And if you yourself are equally and oppositely pissed, you have a hell of a time even deciding which one to aim at. Best thing is to rip the eyes out of the little buggers and get another batch of alcohol on the go, then they're easy meat. Sitting newts in fact. Anybody got a recipe for newt and onion soup?

"I'm surprised Paul didn't notice one of the other Neanderthal arts that have been lost since the Good Old Days when men were men and a club for women wasn't a women's lib discussion group. I refer of course to their amazing ability to keep all bodily hair removed from their females. Probably this was a result of a short annual snooze in a pyramid of some sort or possibly merely running all day long to avoid dynosaurs and film crews wore the hair off them. And of course they died young: in one million B.C. or so in a fight between two cavemen only the victor matures, of course."

I suppose it's always possible that their witch-doctors or whatever had a 'Smoo-o-ooth!' ritual even in those days, except it had nothing to do with alcohol. Well, only rubbing alcohol anyway.

"Skel has a point about the joys of cuddling but I'd have to say that the culmination of that cuddling is the highlight for me. Of course, I'm no longer married and don't have regular female companionship so possibly I'm not as blase as he has become. (Nor as drunk, it would seem.) However, I'll happily investigate his hypothesis that cuddling with Cas is more fun than fucking with her: I expect to be in England again next summer and will work out the details of the experiment at that time."

Actually Mike, you're not alone in your experience: scientific research has shown that marriage has no effect on the length whatsoever.

"US piss of the so-called beer or ale variety sells for anything from 10p a ten-ounce can to possibly 20p, depending on where you are and how carefully you shop. It's all rubbish, of course, and doesn't even stop to tip its hat to the kidneys as it dashes directly from the esophagus to the urinary tract in a time so short you'll have trouble believing it. Most American beer-drinkers of any sophistication drink imports when they can afford them: Heineken, Tuborg, Guinness, etc. are all quite popular and recently Foster's lager from Australia is becoming a hit, mostly from the novelty of its massive can I suspect. And while most hotels are officially against residents bringing in their own booze I've never had any real trouble with either my own personal supplies of beer and scotch or even the smaller quantities I'd be bringing in for a party of sixty or seventy of my friends."

I only sampled Foster's once, and I must confess it to be among the more unpleasant experiences of my drinking career. (The fact that Harry Bell has a photo somewhere, depicting myself clutching a can of the stuff with evident delight, is quite irrelevant; it was the other two drinks I was holding at the time that were responsible for my expression.) The height and permanence of its head only served to confirm the impression of my taste-buds, that a goodly proportion of the brew consisted of washing-up liquid. Now at the recent Siloon in Newcastle I had the opportunity to sample the legendary Theakston's Old Peculier, straight from the wood; a veritable liqueur among beers, and an experience definitely not to be missed. (Note that I never actually said that I enjoyed it.) From the flavour and texture I would judge that the wood was somewhat reluctant to let go. However, they say it grows on you, and I wouldn't be at all surprised.

"I note another gratuitous slur at me in Leroy's latest letter. I'm going to have to do something about that second-rate, cheap imitation John Lennon, as I mentioned to Skel. I'm all the time saying neat things like "Kettle was superb" and "Kettle is the best there is" and "Kettle deserves fame, glory, riches, Hugos, groupies and a case of Listerine" and in return he makes derogatory remarks about me, casting aspersions on my writing style, my humour and my loccing fervour. When I win TAFF, I think I'll piss on his elevator shoes."

'Spect you've already seen page 169. \*snirk\*

"Dave Locke shouldn't loc because his letters make most other writers seem so insipid that they'll be discouraged from trying again. Luckily I taught him everything he knows (not a lot, he forgets after a week or so and doesn't remember until next time I happen to be passing through Los Angeles and can retrain him) so he'll always be a pale imitation of me. (That's a very subtle joke concerning height, smog, scotch, and various other esoteric fannish things. I don't even understand it.)"

It's always good to finish on an enigmatic note. Any relation to the Lost Chord, d'you reckon?

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"A stitch in a time-warp saves nine awful sf stories.....at least."

JOHN HAFT

---

Rich Coad sent a note about going bats. No, that can't be right.....going after bats, that was it. Chasing them around while somebody took photos of the women in the bathroom. Something like that, anyway. Funny feller. Incidentally Rich, it occurs to me that since you live in California, you could very well be the original 'Coad of the West'. Would you like to confirm that, or would you rather quit throwing up first?

Ah...here's a New Bruce, but speaking with an American accent. Explain yourself:

BRUCE TOWNLEY, 2323 Sibley St., Alexandria, VA 22311, U.S.A.:

"Just folded up and prepared a copy of LE VIOL for you two if that's what you wanted. And here I am writing a letter of comment if that's what you wanted. If you want some drawings (or abominations as some people choose to call 'em, even though according to what I've heard and my dictionary (Oxford No Deposit-No Return Dictionary of the Ingfish Langwich with American Fold-out Supplement, Elizabeth Ray on the Fold-out Supplement, pretty supple and not bad, suggest that Skel check it out if he needs visual matter as a variation from the printed word in getting it up, now where was I? Oh yeah) the two words shouldn't be so easily confused, blame it on the poor quality of North American shcools, I guess) I'll send you some once I can ever scrape up the cash to ever use airmail ever again. Can't help you much with anything else, I'm afraid. For anything else (or none of the above) you have to either check in with your local religious representative (MP or Member of Providence) or Jessica Amanda Salmonson, whoever, ahem, comes first.

"I didn't get any art studies along with TABEBUIAN 26. I did, however, get some along with 28 and also have a colored one, though of the Caucasian persuasion (apparently), drawn by the same hand, apparently, hanging on the wall next to me as I sit here. (Did you think I was standing?) The caption to the drawing on the wall is 'Greetings From Florida'. I once dug up a postcard with a similar caption (Tahitian Beauty Unadorned or somesuch) and intent but less clothing at the Nadi Airport and sent it to the son of an Episcopal minister after he sent me a postcard with a picture of the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington DC with a message scrawled on the back indicating he thought it was a swell hotel and "you should have



seen the towels!" He immediately conceded defeat in the postcard battle.

"Cheech and Chong are two hippies (unfortunately they didn't all die in 1969) who get paid for getting all doped up and then stumbling and mumbling around on stage in front of people. They also apparently do this in recording studios because they make records too.

"The most interesting thing about Oklahoma is that they have oil wells all over the state capitol grounds (or, at least, they did the last time I looked, over ten years ago)(real fancy too, the wells are painted gold, white and light blue). The second most interesting thing about Oklahoma is that I can't (or won't) remember the second most interesting thing about Oklahoma, which probably sez something about that flat and dusty state."

You are but one of many people who have attempted to enlighten me about Cheech and Chong and/or The Firesign Theater and their respective work. Suitably encouraged by a majority in favour, I determined to purchase a Firesign LP as soon as I could find one reasonably cheap. (The only previous one I'd seen was an import in Virgin Records at £3.70 or some such ludicrous amount, and that was over a year ago.) Soon after receiving all these favourable reports and making this decision I happened to come across not one, but two Firesign LPs in a junkshop at only 60p each. I bought. "We've had those in since we opened" said the man in the shop, and having played them I can see why. Admittedly I've only played each once through, but I found them so devoid of anything that I could recognise as humour that I don't feel like investing my time in a replay to see if I missed anything. There's nothing I can add to that. Zilch.

Totally undaunted, and gullible as ever, my next find was a Ch&Ch LP, this time in my favourite s/h record shop in Burnley, at the inflationary price of 65p. I think it's called LOS COCHINOS, but I can't be bothered to go downstairs and check. This is much more promising, even made me chuckle in places, particularly the drive-in routine and the cop lecturing the class on drugs, but the 'Basketball Jones' track was just one big yawn. So, the first person to send me £2 in crisp new fivers can have this one, plus the Firesigns' DON'T CRUSH THAT DWARF, HAND ME THE PLIERS and I THINK WE'RE ALL BOZOS ON THIS BUS, all in a nice strong cardboard box. All are in reasonable nick, except for a bad jump on side 2, track one of LOS COCHINOS.

But then, I wonder what an American audience would get out of Blaster Bates or Fred Wedlock?

And speaking of blasting.....

JESSICA AMANDA SALMONSON, P.O. Box 89517, Zenith, WA 98188, U.S.A.:

"If I'm to tell people of my feelings and emotions and express my varying moods of anger or fondness, and deal frankly and honestly with my own sexuality, I suppose I must remain forever braced to deal with the sort of ignorant witticism and degrading misinformation such as Dave Locke (and, apparently, you) find humorous.

"What can I say to this sort of shit? That I had vaginoplasty long ago and my sex-reassignment is complete? That I never, for crysake, appeared before

the draft-board wearing a dress? That my gynecologist is sufficiently aware of my history to never have fainted? That I lived in a menage a trois not because I couldn't decide what I wanted to sleep with, but because I fell in love with a beautiful couple, and the pain of losing them is still hard and not to be made light of? That if I have any 'cause' it is feminism, not lesbianism, as lesbianism is my primary sexuality and nobody's 'cause'? Dave Locke had better beware, lest I saw off his old cod and shove it down his vulgar mouth. It makes no difference whether I try to correct his misconceptions, because he wasn't trying to state facts at all. He was trying to be a clown, and that he is, unfortunately at my expense.

"I responded to your earlier issue, but apparently the letter never arrived. ((Correct.)) I saved a carbon of that response, though, and will retype it, not verbatim because some of the information has changed in the last several weeks. I wrote to you, Mike:

" 'I do wonder where you keep your head that it jumps to such fool conclusions as these. You say I must have been through "A lot of bad scenes with men to hate them so" and I have "pain and bitterness" in my soul. Now, you base these assumptions largely on my comments in Eric Lindsay's fanzine (comments made, by the way, because Eric asked specifically for something controversial about Jackal Wodhams.)

I've already stated my objection to Eric's editorial policies re 'controversial' material, and material containing known errors of fact. However, I was not misled by your remarks in GEGENSCHWEIN to any great extent, as these were just a more extreme version of comments you've made in various other places.

The comments in Eric's zine were reactionary sexism — that I could make such comments, you say, makes me a man-hater. But the trigger of those reactionary statements was the pure unadulterated piggish sexism of men against women, and yet no one ever accused them of being woman-haters! You judge hatred by your double standard. Your sexism, spread rampantly in KNOCKERS (the "girls with shapely legs..." pun, for instance) ((Jec-zus...)) is all good clean fun. My reactionary sexism is all male hatred.' "

There's a page and a half more, mostly consisting of a number of well-presented and powerfully-written examples of discrimination against women in America. But it's late, and I'm tired, and the most important parts of your letter — to me, anyway — are printed above.

And what can I say? That in many of the things you say you're right, absolutely right, but that your ridiculously extreme attitude will never win you support from this quarter? That I just can't see anything wrong in printing puns about girls' legs, and that I'd just as soon print puns about men's legs, if anyone sends me some and they're funny enough? That my original comment about bad scenes, pain and bitterness was made when I wasn't aware of your history, and that it was a genuine attempt at kindness and understanding?

Well I'll tell you, Jessica, that I don't feel so kind and understanding tonight. It seems pretty obvious to me that any future correspondance between us is just going to result in a lot of flak heading east, and it gets pretty tiring after

awhile. So I'll make a deal with you: you make this your last letter to me, and I'll make this my last KfN to you, okay? That way my pure unadulterated piggish ignorant sexism can't possibly offend you any more, and your paranoia and extremism won't get up my nose either. I'm safe and happy in my little chauvinistic world, and too scared and insecure to accept your challenge, so I admit defeat. Put it down as another victory for women, I guess. Shucks.

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"Let off steam if you have to, but be sure you don't boil dry."

JOHN HAFT

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Let's move on to something more cheerful before I burst into tears. What's next in the letter file?

BEN INDICK, 428 Sagamore Avenue, Teaneck, NJ 07666, U.S.A.:

"Your rating on that list of books is tough, veryyyy tough. Only one in the 90s (Stewart's well-known and tiresome account of the survival of nonentities in a post-cataclysmic world; no doubt how things would really be, but who could care?)(You could, clearly.) Only one in the 80s ((THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH)), a book I haven't read or movie I've seen, hence no comment. Only 4 in the 70s...who're you comparing these to? Shakespeare? Dickens? Dostoevsky?"

Who? (But seriously though, folks...) No, just to my hypothetical ideal of the perfect sf novel (i.e. one with truly imaginative ideas, a gripping plot and believable characterisation, competently written in a style I can come to grips with), such as I would like to pick off the shelves every time I select my next reading matter. I'm sorry you're not impressed by EARTH ABIDES; I consider it to be the finest sf novel I've yet read, but even so it had faults and hence didn't get the maximum rating. At the aforementioned Silicon I had several long chats with Rog Peyton of Andromeda Books, and was pleased to learn that he too rates EARTH ABIDES as his favourite. I was able to find out something about Stewart, who has always been a mystery man to me. Apparently he wrote about a dozen books, of which only the last, EARTH ABIDES, was sf. He died in 1955 or thereabouts. Just imagine what other masterworks of the genre he might have produced had he lived! I have one other, as-yet unread, novel of his; FIRE, published in 1948, is about a forest fire and is also excellent, according to Rog. My edition is a Ballantine reprint from 1974, which may still be obtainable.

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Every so often, in a dull moment, I amuse myself by compiling lists of the fen I'd most like to meet, if and when we get across for SunCon. Jim Meadows III will be included henceforth: anybody who can conceive of the idea of writing a TV comedy show around Pat and I has got to be interesting and/or nuts. In the Mike 'n' Pat Show (sponsored by Clandestine Cigaretts, the intimate smoke) I am played by Alec Guinness (not Alex, Jim), a suitably fannish choice of name

, and Pat is played by Helen Hayes who I've never heard of, but whom THE FILMGOER'S COMPANION assures me is a distinguished American actress. Jim quotes a short example from the script he's written, and concludes: "I don't

know if this sort of thing is really funny or not, but at least it's out of my system." It's difficult to tell from the short excerpt you gave, Jim, but it certainly looks as if it could be. However, it sounds rather too similar to THE GOON SHOW, especially with your choice of Wallace Greenslade as announcer. (Poor old Wal -- he really was an important factor in the success of the Goon Show, especially when he was given an actual role to play, and I feel his contribution is often overlooked today. I can only recall seeing one photo of him; certainly he appeared to be vastly overweight, as Harry Secombe would frequently point out. He died in 1961, quite soon after the last series ended.) Many thanks for all the other interesting stuff in your 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ -page loc, Jim; I presume it's merely a faulty memory that's impelled you to loc the last two KfNs twice?

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I suppose any faned who was even halfway to being shit-hot (shit-warm? Ugh.) would now be able to choose from at least four or five dynamically witty anecdotes with which to bridge the gap between one letter and the next. As you're stuck with me, however (and don't complain - I'm stuck with me all the time), we'll just have to press on regardless. Hope you've got something funny to say, Richard.....

RICHARD BRANDT, 4013 Sierra Drive, Mobile, AL 36609, U.S.A.:

"Many mystifying quotes I find in this issue; all I've seen of THE TOWERING INFERNO are glimpses while driving past the Plano, Texas Twin Drive-In, and I had no idea it featured footage of Paul Newman 'dangling from the railing', as you so quaintly put it. I won't ask what a 50 year old man was doing in such circumstances, unless he was attempting a last-minute resort to extinguish the conflagration - in which case all those stories must be true!"

What stories? And to speak of it in terms of footage is rather inappropriate, like measuring atomic radii in yards. And it wasn't like that anyway. And.

"Believe it or not, a local radio station played a complete Goon Show on a late-nite comedy show - first time I'd heard the grand old group together, especially maddening as I came in a couple of seconds after it started and had to figure out what the hell was going on. It was the old spy story, having to do with flying bangers or something, and with the most outrageous puns - 'What are you doing in the piano?' 'I'm hidin'.' 'Don't be silly, Haydn's been dead for years.' - all at a breakneck pace, which makes it amazing that people had time to think before laughing. Did they, by the way?"

Although all the shows were pre-recorded, I'd guess that the earlier ones had much less in the way of rehearsal, and perhaps none at all. Possibly the audiences were hand-picked for their rapid reaction-times to jokes. Incidentally, now is as good a time as any to mention that all of next issue's interlineations will be two- or three-liners from the Goon Show, like the one you quoted.

"For a minor gross-out, try eating a liver sandwich while reading the first issue of SIMULACRUM. My life is so full of minor gross-outs that it's sometimes a wonder that anyone can swallow their breakfast in the morning. Major gross-outs we usually avoid by not thinking of them often - like cockroaches in your food, especially if when you spit them out they're still

kicking.

"Dave Locke's 'Ballad of Jessica Amanda Salmonson' (just let any country singer get hold of it and you'll see) is hilarious in its wording, but unfortunately it is probably uncomfortably close to the truth. Which just goes to show why Dave is a great humor writer, and why I avoid a lot of fans.

"I've never taken 20,000 leeks under the sea, but I used to wet my shorts a lot at Indiana Beach. I was just a kid at the time, of course, but I suppose it was some kind of premonition. That or the Coca-Cola, I guess.

"So, in shot, don't take any wooden Indians and never play with a fool's pair o' dice."

You betchum, Red Ryder.

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"Dalton's Atomic Theory is a load of balls."

JOHN HAFT

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PAULINE PALMER, 2510 48th., Bellingham, WA 98225, U.S.A.:

"I've heard, by the way, rumor of an impending shortage of that vital substance Scotch. If I remember rightly, this is projected to occur about 1980 or so, and the cause is a supposed 'shortage of materials' (as they say about so many things these days). All of which seems to mean that if the world food situation continues to develop along its current path, in the near future we'll all (except the wealthy of course) be eating our barley instead of drinking it. Sad."

Damn right it's sad. A sobering thought, in fact. However, looking on the bright side, it could be regarded as a ghu-given opportunity to start stocking up now, hey Skel? Talk your way outta that, Cas!

"My office building has been swarming with flies the past several weeks. We all began coming to work armed with cans of Raid and Black Flag, etc., but all this managed to do was give us headaches and get the damned flies high. They're friendly flies, too -- the kind that land on top of your head and stroll around casually, safe in the knowledge that you're not likely to squish them into your own hair. Nothing quite like a dozen or so friendly drunken flies dive-bombing between you and what you're trying to work on. It got so bad we finally had the entire building sprayed by a professional but that didn't work either (at least not for more than a couple of days.) So in desperation we went out and bought good old-fashioned fly paper which we then hung all over the place. What really amazes me about this is the number of people we've had visiting our offices who are totally grossed-out by the sight of a bunch of dead flies hanging from the ceiling of an otherwise normal-appearing (notice I don't claim that we actually are normal) office. And they generally think the way we count the bodies ("Got five new ones just this morning, Wilma!") as well as the way we tend to herd new flies toward the fly paper is not only gross but also a bit weird. (So what is this anyway, be kind to flies week?) Anyway, the most popular fly-strips are, for

obvious reasons, the ones in the coffee-cum-lunch room. It's bad enough to have flies walking all over your sandwich, for instance, but finding a drowned fly doing the dead-man's float in your coffee cup is a bit too much. We all tend to be a bit vindictive about this sort of thing and have decided when we've caught enough flies what we should do is use them for raisins in a batch of oatmeal cookies. Now, the only grosser thing I can think of off-hand (since you DID ask) would be if we used them for raisins in peanut-butter cookies made from (of course) Ed Cagle's recipe for gross-out peanut butter.

"Invasion of the POPPY Snatchers, indeed! And you didn't even mention The Forbidden PLANT ... The Incredible Shrinking VIOLET ... or WYSTERIAS Island. What about Beauty And The BEETS? Phantom Of The OKRA?"

Ah, you see, this is where you gardening types score over us non-gardening types. I would be a gardening type (with a little persuasion), but unfortunately the garden seems to have declared UDI and won't let us in. At the moment it rather resembles an African rain forest without the rain.

PHILIP STEPHENSEN-PAYNE, 28 Woodfield Drive, Charlbury, Oxford OX7 3SE:

"I presume you'd seen WHO? has been filmed with Elliot Gould and Trevor Howard? The question is, where is it? I've seen no reference to it in FILM REVIEW and yet I have seen a poster advertising it as 'coming soon' - in a grotty suburb of Lucerne! Yet, weeks later, there was no sign of it in London."

Well, now we all know what happened to it, don't we? I can only presume that it went straight to TV because none of the circuits thought it was good enough. If that is the case, I can only agree. Apart from very good performances from the people who played Martino and Edith (neither of whose names I can remember) the whole thing was a big floppo. Trevor Howard was grossly miscast as Azarin (and played the part as though he thought so too) and Elliot Gould was just WRONGWRONGWRONG as the FBI man Rogers. The alterations made in the plot were unjustified and unnecessary. Mind you, WHO? is one of my very favourite novels, so perhaps I'm being hypercritical. Still, it's a story that just begged for a good film treatment, and now they've blown it. Shame.

"I'm more inclined to agree with Gray Boak ((that one can get too involved in fandom)). Last night I went to a party organised by a friend I had not really met for six years and so naturally we've drifted apart in interests and pursuits. I spent the evening, somewhat tongue-tied, listening in succession to four people doing B. Phils at Oxford, one on 18th century watch-cases, one on Experimentation in Social Psychology, one on Fraudulent Accounts of the Trojan War, and one on International Diplomacy. And it came home to me then, as it has before, that there is so much outside of sf and fandom to be learnt/seen/felt/understood."

I'm sorry, but I really find it hard to believe that any truly intelligent person could want to devote a sizeable chunk of his time (and presumably the taxpayers' money) to something so futile and irrelevant as Fraudulent Accounts of the Trojan War. It sounds like a Monty Python sketch, for crysake! I think that many people, including myself, use fandom as a haven from the insanities of the

Outside World, and the more insane that world becomes - whether in small things, like B. Phils on 18th century watch cases, or in the larger things that fill the news bulletins every day - the less they want to be a part of it. That's my own viewpoint...and I think it's really a matter of personal choice and personal satisfaction. There's little to be gained by debating the point.

"I'm glad someone else in the uncivilised world was sickened by the violence of ROLLERBALL. Have you tried DEATH RACE: 2000 which I found remarkably good?"

Well I'll tell ya. After having seen ROLLERBALL and felt ill for days afterwards every time I thought about it, I decided, sf film fan that I am, that I would NOT under any circumstances go to to see DEATH RACE: 2000. My resolution held, despite various favourable reports from friends, until you, whose opinion I respect, wrote me the above paragraph. So I gave in and went to see it. By comparison, ROLLERBALL is tremendous. DEATH RACE has even less background than ROLLERBALL, the plot is just too corny and cliched to be true, and the violence, though less graphic than that of ROLLERBALL, somehow seems worse because the film is so incredibly shallow.

This has put me off sf films for some time to come. Normally I would have trotted along quite happily to see GODZILLA VERSUS THE SMOG MONSTER when it came to Nottingham a few weeks ago. BUG is playing at the local re-run cinema this week. By the time you read this I shall quite happily have missed them both.

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"He who laughs last is merely trying to draw attention to himself."

JOHN HAFT

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If you remember, I offered a free drink to anyone coming up with a caption I could use for the knocker illo on page ii last time. Fortunately both winners are thousands of miles away and, I hope, unlikely to remember my promise in 1977. Roger Waddington suggests that those failing to come up with a usable caption should have to buy me a drink. A thirst-quenching idea, Roger, but hardly enforceable, I fear. However, since you suggested it, mine's a double scotch, thanks.

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HONEY JUST ALLOW ME ONE MORE CHANCE

10 Sep 76

For some time now, fanzines have been arriving faster than I have been able to read them, with the result that I now have a rather alarming backlog of three months' (or nine inches') worth. All this frenetic (or phrenetic, as the C.O.D. has it ... obviously I have the phannish edition) dungeoneering hasn't helped, of course, and I'm reluctant to do much skip-reading (as some fen apparently do) as it's a very rare fanzine that doesn't contain something worth searching for.

Recently I've been making determined efforts to catch up, but nevertheless I still have to make the shameful admission that I've only just got around to reading STOP BREAKING DOWN 3, and specifically Malcolm Edwards' excellent Mancon report therein. (You can quit smiling now Edwards, it's all nasties from here on in.) My own conrep, which I discarded as outdated once I'd missed the July dead-

line for KfN 5, seems very pedestrian in comparison with the stuff Edwards and Dave Langford have turned out. Even in comparison with someone walking along the pavement it seems pedestrian. Two good reasons for not boring you with it.

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Q: Why did the pedestrian cross the road? A: Because he was chicken. ....

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However, Malcolm's report does raise a general point, which is that I'm surprised how many fens, and particularly Ratfens, seem to feel that an essential prerequisite for a good con is a nice comfy hotel. Each to his own, of course, but I would have thought that most people went to cons to drink, socialise, discuss matters fancish, and take in some heavy stuff - not necessarily in that order - and not to contribute towards hotel owners' holidays in the Bahamas. As long as the essential sleeping and toilet facilities are around in some form, does it really matter that one cannot exert one's paying-customer rights over the menials by demanding refreshments in the early hours of the morning? To some people, apparently, it does. (Having long ago decided that anyone who pays hotel prices for such commodities must have more money than sense, Pat and I now take our own supplies to all cons. This gives us one quick, cheap meal per day, usually at lunchtime, plus snacks and drinks whenever we want them, plus the financial capacity to eat out in style for the second meal whilst still making an overall saving.)

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Q: Chicken? A: Yeah...chicken to see what was on the other side! ....

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Don't get me wrong: I'm not trying to defend Mancon and Owens Park specifically (most of the criticisms made have been quite valid), just the concept of the campus-con in general. To suggest, as some people have done, that the somewhat-less-than-total success of Mancon is reason enough to drop the campus idea for all eternity is rather silly, and smacks of mere self-justification of an anti-campus bias. "I fully admit to having been prejudiced against the idea of a campus con from the beginning, but I would have been happy to have been proved wrong", said Malcolm Edwards in his conrep. Sorry Malcolm, but I just can't believe you. The whole tone of your report gave me the impression that you went to Mancon quite determined not to enjoy it, and that you took a perverse pleasure in being proved right. I agree with David Bridges, in his letter in the same issue, when he says that every effort should have been made to ensure the success of this major innovation; the way things turned out is very unfortunate in the long term, as fans will undoubtedly be prejudiced against the campus-con idea for years to come. This doesn't mean, however, that nowhere in this country is there a university hall of residence with better layout and facilities, and a more amenable staff who can be made fully aware of the requirements of the convention, which the right committee, in the light of the Mancon experience, could use to stage a cheap and successful convention.

But where is the committee with the nerve to try it again?

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Gil Gaier sent a pocsacrd thanking me yet again for using the PFEN system to evaluate my stuffal reading matter. No trouble, Gil; it is, as you suggest, a handy way of recording what, when and how much I enjoyed.



WETTING MY WHISTLE, or, INTO EACH PIPE A LITTLE RAIN MUST FALL

The above title has got absolutely nothing to do with anything at all, but is morely typical of the sort of thoughts that ~~pass~~ pass through my brain at around this time on a rainy Friday evening. Wishbone Ash are on the stereo, a track called LADY WHISKY. That reminds me.....

So the title was relevant after all! (Good stuff, this Glendronach.)

Next track's called ERRORS OF MY WAYS. I may appreciate this better in the morning.

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"You can get Newton's steel balls for fifteen books." (A prize of almost inestimable value goes to the supplier of the most likely/unlikely context for this quote of Pat's.)

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John Alderson sent a very serious letter refuting Don D'Amassa's criticism of his article in GEGENSCHWEIN. As this is turning out to be a very silly page, though, I think any quotes would be misplaiced, like a fish out of water.

Bob Webber writes to say that the thing about Selectrics only lasting for seven years is true, on average. Fortunately, that average includes a good proportion of office models sabotaged by secretaries who throw their shoes into the works. That's one way of getting them to toe the line, I suppose. Keeping them instep, as it were. I bet they feel a bit of a heel afterwards, though. (And thinking up puns even as bad as those was no mean feat, I can tell you.)

Wally Stoelting concludes his letter with: "I will now show my stupidity by asking who Biggles is." Okay then, I will now show my stupidity by attempting to answer you despite the fact that Leroy's done it better in TRUE RAT. Biggles is a British-style fictional hero beloved of small boys and vice versa. (See BIGGLES FLIES UMDONE.) Invented by Capt. W. E. Johns - appropriate enough, since so many of the books had FLIES in their titles: BIGGLES FLIES EAST, BIGGLES FLIES WEST, BIGGLES FLIES OFF THE HANDLE, BIGGLES FLIES BACKWARDS FOR CHRISTMAS, etc. (There was also a little-known short-short story entitled BIGGLES FLIES DOWNWARDS.) Biggles' full surname was Bigglesworth, but his chums couldn't keep a straight face so they shortened it (the name, not the face) to give them something they could call him without busting a gut every time. This showed what a worthless character he really was. Don't ask me what his first name was, because I can't remember. He made his first appearance in WW I, flying Camels (Sopwith Camels, that is - he wasn't that good.) Pretty soon, like all good heroes, he acquired this retinue of incompetent hangers-on, with cretinous names like Algy and Ginger. They can't have been that thick, though, since they'd obviously spotted that Biggles aged only one year for every five that passed, and presumably hoped that some of this magic would rub off, as it were, on them. Despite Biggles' attempts to get rid of them (he could never seem to pull any decent birds when they were around) they followed him into WW II, where they flew Spitfires, Hurricanes and Mosquitoes (BIGGLES FLIES MOSQUITOES, geddit?) against the nasty rotten Germans, and won. Then, fresh-faced as ever (the old ones kept falling off), he joined the Special Air Police, but soon got

fed up with flying boring slow civilian planes with no guns to shoot people with, so he quit and went off on various adventures, including several in the remote Wan King province of China. (See BIGGLES PULLS IT OFF; BIGGLES FLIES BLIND; BIGGLES GETS IT ON AGAIN.) (There is another Chinese adventure, BIGGLES FLIES LICE, but this one was cooked up by some friends after the author's demise.\*\*) Soon afterwards, however, the quality of the stories, like Kay, began to decline.\*\* For example, there's the one about the Matto Grosso: Biggles hears about this giant carpet, hidden somewhere in the depths of the Brazilian jungle, and wonders if the stories about it being a flying carpet are true. By this stage in his career he's flown everything there is to fly, but never a carpet (though he'd come pretty close: see BIGGLES FLIES THE FLAG.) Anyway, he sets off into the jungle, along with the inevitable Algy and Ginger, and after many adventures finds the carpet. And guess what? It really is a flying carpet! However, owing to its extreme age, the web had become somewhat warped, or possibly vice versa, and on its first flight it crashes, hurling Biggles to the ground and causing severe brain damage. Algy and Ginger manage to get him back to civilisation, but he's never the same again, and spends the rest of his life making model aeroplanes and going BRRM BRRM NEEEEAAOUW! A-A-A-A-A-A-A-A at his old pals Algy and Ginger when they visited him and brought him chocolates and things. Very sad, really.

Hope this has been of some help.

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"We British have the gift for producing good crap."

PETE PRESFORD (letter in SPICY 2)

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LAURINE WHITE, 5408 Leader Ave., Sacramento, CA 95841, U.S.A.:

"If Jeff May enjoys using 20-year old unrepaired typewriters, he should try my mother's. How she can type on the one she has now, I don't know. It skips spaces, smears, is too dark or too light. I'm afraid I broke her old electric typer the last time I was visiting and wanted to type locs. After a while it wouldn't co-operate, but just sat there going "whirr-whirr"."

Probably it was trying to communicate with you, to tell you what was wrong with it. I'd guess it was really trying to say:

'Oh whirr! Oh whirr! Has my little cog gone?  
Oh whirr! Oh where can he be?'

And if, after that, you are thinking 'This man will use any excuse to make a pun, however feeble', you are completely correct. You are receiving KfN, not because of Terry Whittier, nor because of your presupposing membership in the British Worldcon bid (they have much worse in store for people who do things like that), but because I like to add a few new names to my mailing list with every issue, and yours was a name I'd seen around in several locals.

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\* Whaddya wanna make demise at me for?

\*\* Well who does not know Kay decline?

Work had been hanging heavily for both of us, so it was an easy decision to lengthen the August Bank Holiday weekend further and set off for Newcastle on the Friday morning. It took us exactly three hours to cover the 160-odd miles, including a break for coffee at the Leeming Motel, a dismal place in which the hordes of paying customers were outnumbered by bigger hordes of non-paying flies. In the circumstances, a Danish pastry was possibly not the ideal choice of refreshment.

We arrived at the Imperial at about 1pm to find the bar populated only by sundry Gannets, including Alan Isaacson and Brian Rouse whom we hadn't met before. I ordered my first-ever pint of Newcastle Exhibition, decided it was a brew very much to my taste, and fairly rapidly sank another three. Harry Bell arrived with the badges, strange yellow things printed with a lino-cut of a gannet. I complained that mine had a left-handed safety-pin, to no avail. Rob Jackson arrived with the programme ~~leaflets~~ booklets. Various other people began to drift in, and as the numbers grew, so did the atmosphere. Members of the strange hybrid Sheffield/Birmingham group arrived en masse, including the cloaked figure of Paul Thompson, who was already stoned out of his mind and proceeded to prove it by falling asleep on the carpet. The crazed loon had even brought his 'ray gun', an assemblage of rods and tubes with chunks of army surplus electronics dangling therefrom. Various people took advantage of Mr. Thompson's condition to examine this thing gingerly, and were most disappointed when they couldn't actually make it do anything.

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"If the river was whisky and I was a diving duck (repeat)  
I'd know for sure the distillery was all fouled up."

JOHN HAFT: 'Blues with a Failing'

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It was about this time that things started to go wrong - for some of us. Pat and I were both keen to sample one of the fabled Newcastle curries that the Gannets are always going on about, so accordingly, after the obligatory period of waiting for all those concerned to be in the same place at the same time, seventeen of us adjourned to the Bangla-Desh restaurant where we had an excellent meal. Within hours of returning, however, the first symptoms became apparent, and eventually about half the diners were suffering from various unpleasant intestinal disorders. Pat was iller than I was, but recovered more quickly, whereas I, appropriately enough, had all the life and enthusiasm of a piece of used toilet paper until well into the Sunday. Bob Shaw, a fellow-sufferer, later confided that he had been to the same restaurant twice before and had suffered similarly on each occasion. Perhaps he feels he's addicted to curries and that regular visits to the Bangla-Desh will eventually cure him, on the same principle as those patent smoking cures. Eric Bentcliffe, when told of the incident, opined that obviously we all had a dose of hindu-gestion. I think we'll have to muslim if he's going to come out with jokes like that.

During that evening my profile was lowish and nauseous. Thus it was that I missed the mysterious appearance in the bar of an anonymous fanzine entitled STOP PUKING UP 2. Visually this was a good imitation of the style of layout

used by Greg Pickersgill and Simone Walsh in STOP BREAKING DOWN, and the contents were a parody of items which had appeared in SBD's second and third issues: a Mancon report by 'Malformed Eddie'; a poem by 'Semen Squelch'; fanzine reviews by 'Groggy Piggyswill'. Yes, it really was that bad; juvenile name-calling without the saving grace of even a trace of wit. What made the whole thing worse was that apparently someone had handed the barman a stack of these things with instructions to distribute them to all present in the bar, which he duly did. Presumably this mong didn't realise or didn't care that several mundanes would thereby also get a copy. Not that it really matters what mundanes think of our little games - but I'm just glad I wasn't there when it happened.

Naturally Greg and Simone were less than pleased with what had transpired, and quizzed several likely suspects, including me. As it happened, when Simone approached me I had only just returned to the bar, having been flaked out for several hours as a result of the initial assault of curry-poisoning, and I didn't know what she was talking about. Pat had saved a copy of SPU 2 for me, and having read it I should like to say now, Simone - since I didn't get round to it at Silicon - that I am somewhat miffed that you should think a man of my talents capable of producing such drivel. Tut! Hah!, even. Actually I do have my suspicions about the identity of the guilty one(s), but I shall say nothing until START OWNING UP 1 or some other definite evidence is produced.

But what of the programme?, I hear you cry. Well, the fanzine editors' panel - consisting of Greg Pickersgill, Rob Jackson, Ian Williams and yours truly - was an undistinguished flop, as these things usually seem to be. A pity, as the idea has a lot of potential which invariably leaks away in the formal atmosphere of us-up-here-'n'-you-down-there. Certainly the sight of a sea of faces (well..... okay, a pond of faces, then), each apparently afflicted with terminal lethargy, is not conducive to the generation of witty and insightful remarks....and the state of my guts didn't help any either. There was another panel, with Eddie Jones, Bob Shaw and others, but as I missed it I can't tell you anything about it. Fair enough?

The game of Chaos was - very much so. The object appeared to be to pile (almost literally) a large number of people into a rather small swimming pool, taking care to leave room for a little water, whereupon the ball was squabbled for and occasionally (when they remembered) hurled at the 'goal', a tasteful nude sculpture modelled, apparently, on the sculptor's four-year-old son. All very Freudian, I'm sure. Spectator interest centred mostly on Jean Staves' swimsuit, a 'special' made out of two T-shirts sewn together, which got larger and more shapeless as the game wore on...and on...and on. Possibly a few rules in addition to 'the one with the ball is the other side' would help. (Miraculously, the statue remained undamaged during the game. It was only afterwards that someone succeeded in breaking an arm off. "I just leant on it a bit" quoth he. All good 'armless fun. )

Rog Peyton brought along a selection of Andromeda Books' recent stock. I bought several items, including the latest ALGOL, the 50th anniversary issue of AMAZING, and Philip Strick's new book, SCIENCE FICTION MOVIES, which at £2.50 must be the big-book bargain of the year - incredible value. Actually I seemed to spend a fair amount of time talking sf, with Rog and others. (Gosh, there's my credibility blown even further, eh Bryn?) Rog's stories of life in an sf bookshop would make a good fanzine article, if he could be persuaded.

The film, DOC SAVAGE, was well received. A gentler parody of its original than FLESH GORDON, but still done with affection. Good fun.

I suppose the two Dungeons and Dragons sessions I ran on the Saturday and Sunday evenings could be classed as programme items also, since most of the attendees seemed to be either playing or watching at one time or another. Oddly enough, one of the exploring parties found...the broken-off arm of a statue. Hmm.

Then there were the endless games of bar-billiards and electronic football, at which I demonstrated my usual total mediocrity. (Though in the football tournament organised by Dave Bridges I did manage to beat Rob Jackson 11 - 0 in the first round, only to be hammered out of sight by Rog Peyton in the second. The eventual winner was....hrrmph....Dave Bridges.)

On the Sunday evening Kevin Williams brought in his guitar, with the inevitable consequences that Malcolm Edwards loves so well. Now there's nothing like a good sing-song to bring out the worst in a bunch of drunken fen; this was certainly nothing like a good sing-song, so perhaps the quality is irrelevant. The fact that I can't sing a note only deters me when I'm sober.

Later in the evening we fell into conversation with an extremely intoxicated Geordie and his friend, who first of all criticised us for not knowing anything about sf (!), and then had the temerity to make disparaging remarks about Seaham, Irene Bell's birthplace. My ghod, but she's a terror when she's roused! No wonder Harry is such a quiet lad.

By this time Superstomach was definitely winning its battle against the Curry Creature, and the convention was getting more enjoyable by the minute. On the Monday, the proceedings were brought to a memorable conclusion by the visit to the Emperor restaurant, where nine of us partook of a superb banquet. This was one of the best Chinese meals I've ever eaten - and with no after-effects, either.

When we returned to the hotel shortly after 4pm, it was deserted. Whilst we were out pigging ourselves, everybody else had up and gone. That old post-con depression settled over me like a blanket. We said our goodbyes and left almost immediately.

So.... generally speaking, SILICON 1 was a success, although I feel the hotel was a little pricey for the standard of service we got. (With the notable exception of the under-manager, who worked his balls off and was unfailingly polite and helpful.) The one non-breakfast meal we ate in the hotel was almost as expensive as the meal at the Emperor, and nothing special qualitywise; there was also some difficulty in keeping the bar open during reasonably fannish hours. I also felt the convention was perhaps a little too long for the light programming, but that may have been due to my general malaise and the small numbers attending. Around fifty people turned up, which was not as many as had been hoped for, but Silicon is intended to be a regular feature in the British convention calendar, and the Gannets hope that it will grow and eventually fill the hotel. Certainly I see no reason why the attendance should not double, since many established faanish con-goers were notable by their absence this time: the Kittens were represented only by Brian Hampton and Janice Wiles; the Rats only by Greg, Simone and Ian Maule; several Brum group notables were missing; the MaD group weren't represented at all - post-con gafia? Conversely the LiG group were well

in evidence (Eric Bentcliffe, Norman Weedall, John Owen, Eddie and Marsha Jones) and of course every Gannet in the known universe, plus several non-affiliated fen.

At Mancon, several people said they were missing Silicon because the high cost of travel was putting a strain on their annual con-going budget. (Somebody mentioned that British Rail were asking £22 for an ordinary London-Newcastle return; true - I just phoned up to check. Keerist!) The answer to this may be to hire a van and have a carefully worked out set of pickup points for, say, London-area fen travelling north. Even if it costs £50 to hire a van for the long weekend (and I'd think that estimate over-generous, though I haven't checked lately) that's still only £5 per person in a group of ~~eight~~ ~~twelve~~ ten, plus a small amount for petrol. Plus there's all the jolly fun of travelling together, .....isn't there?

Still, if Greg and Simone can travel 300 miles each way in a ten-year-old Viva with a dodgy dynamo, I don't see why some of you other buggers couldn't have made it!

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(...continued from page iii): Suzanne TOMPKINS; Bruce TOWNLEY (L\*/LE VIOL 10); Laurie D. TRASK; Bob TUCKER; Victoria VAYNE (L/SIMULACRUM 2A/NON-SEQUITUR 3); Roger WADDINGTON (L); Keith WALKER (FANZINE FANATIQUE 17/18 19 20); Chris WALTON (X); Harry WARNER Jr. (X); Bob WEBBER (L/PANTEKHNIKON 2); Elst WEINSTEIN (DANGEROUS CRUDZINES 3); Art WESLEY (X); Don WEST (L); Peter WESTON (SPECULATION 33); Robert WHITAKER (THE HUNTING OF THE SNARK 4); Laurine WHITE (L\*); Terry WHITTIER; Janet WILD; Ian WILLIAMS (GOBLIN'S GROTTO 3); Kevin WILLIAMS (BLAND 1); Bob WILSON; Susan WOOD (AMOR 10); Peter WRIGHT. (Listing completed 17 Sep 76.)



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