

2071

...accept no excuses: This is a 1985 Issue of OUTWORLDS: The Timely Fanzine. Barely.

The date way down there is legitimate; for this stencil. One final task to compile; the "Index".

But that won't be until next year...tomorrow. You see...in 2½ hours the Fourth...the Finale of The 9th Annual Cincinnati Floating New Year's Parties...commences. And I'll be there. ...after a fashion!

After all, I am Responsible [at least partially] for the Parties... ..if not for too many other things at the moment. 'So many people to write to; so many books to read...so many tapes to watch/listen to; so much To Do Around Here. Time...? ...never enough; but I'm hardly unique in that, am I?

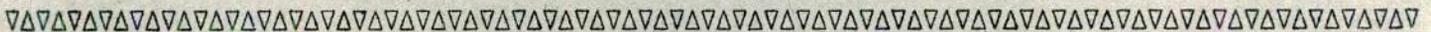
It's been Rough...since Austin: Physically, the "worst" fall of my life. The allergies, the asthma...the normal. I am taking Measures: I've had the patch tests [I'm not allergic to any food or tobacco; to virtually everything else...I am] and am taking the shots--three a week. One shot is solely for the cats: my Thanks and My Love to Leah and Marla! And in retrospect, Poly's owner! I really don't want to complain: so many others have much more serious medical problems...and I am surviving. It's just that I've accomplished so little of what I'd planned for this fall...and even less of what I'd promised others. *sigh*

Other than that...it's been a Pretty Good Year. True, a couple of things didn't Work Out quite the way I would've have preferred...but I Handled It all rather gracefully...for me; and both are my Friend. ...a scattering of Issues; a handful of cons. ...a few new people encountered; a few Old Friends seen all too briefly. A few Mistakes; a few Extendings.....and a Sequel or two. Life is ever...

I'm not much for Formal Resolutions...but I do Have Plans for 1986. ...for Health, Wealth, and Love.

...and even for this Humble Little Fanzine! It is again the Pruning Season...my way of keeping it viable for me...so Pay Heed! Yes, I do 'require' a level of response perhaps 'higher' than the norm...but I seem to get it by and large. My Duty, as I see it, is to respond to that Response in a more prompt manner: like getting LoCs printed within two issues of what they are commenting on. I'm working on it...

My Thanks to all who've been a part of This...and the rest of my Life! ...drive carefully. ...Bill

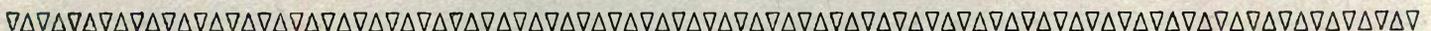


OUTWORLDS 48

...from: BILL BOWERS § 2468 Harrison Ave. § Cincinnati § OH § 45211-7928 § [513] 481-3826

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20 November 1985

...it is time:

----- WALT WILLIS -----
Loved OW44/45...my favourite line too, that one of Dave's about Buck never having killed anyone worth knowing. Also liked Bob Shaw's idea of the real problems of life in the western world. My nomination, labels on the backs of pullovers which females are always tucking down.

Meanwhile I leave you with this graffiti from the last Fianna Fail Convention in Dublin: "Reality is an illusion caused by alcohol deficiency."

----- WAYNE ALAN BRENNER -----
Eppie, whose full name is Epiphany and who has never forgiven her parents for that although she loves them dearly, looks at me over her scrambled eggs and asks, "Why the smile?"

"Bill Bowers," I reply.

"He does?" says Eppie.

"Huh?"

"Since when," says Eppie, innocence aglow, "has Bill been bowering?"

It dawns on me then, the way a roaring Camaro dawns upon a slow toad on the interstate, that Eppie has assumed that, one, I am talking about our good friend Bill Ivey and, two, I am declaring his recent interest in the art of bowering, whatever the hell that may be, may we all sleep better for not knowing more than that a few house-gimmicky birds do it as part of their nesting habit. Such are the tribulations of dealing with a neo.

"No, no," I tell her. "Bill Bowers. Pubs *Outworlds*, right? I just got the latest ish and there's this really brillo article by Skel in it. That's what's got me smiling."

"Oh," says Eppie. Just like that: "Oh."

It's enough to drive one—he said, first glancing about to confirm the lack of a nearby Ellison—bugfuck. It's almost, in fact, as infuriating as Skel's brillo article. Skel. His article. He's certainly got the nerve, hasn't he? Complaining about how he's fallen into the habit of tagging comments with "as they say in Cleethorpes." As if he doesn't realize his fannish influence, particularly as it affects a neo like me. As if he never gave a thought about how many unwary readers he would infect with his abominable suffix of a phrase. I mean, *I'm* certainly infected. It's my own doing, sure: but on another level, I had no choice. Having been left at the mercy of the man's wit and style and erudition, I could do little more than repeat his own habit, just a few times, to Eppie, for humorous effect. And now it's gotten stuck. And Skel thinks *he's* got it bad, the damned self-pitying plague vector!

Me, I have to say "...as Skel says they say in Cleethorpes."

Oh, the agony of it all...

Sigh. I wish I'd learned about/did something for *Outworlds* earlier. It's one of the nicest fanzines I've ever received—if one can use the word "nice" and still impart meaning with it these days. *Outworlds* is as intellectually stimulating and entertaining as many of the zines pubbed by various Sophisticated Mavens Of Faanishness, yet also, to echo Eric Mayer's comments, more accessible, somehow. (Its accessibility may spring from your relaxed, flowing comments [as well as your relaxed, flowing layout] or from your having used my coverillo on #44, I'm not sure.)

I find it hard to buy, though, that folks actually send zines to Eric in order to let him know that he's being excluded from their group. And even if it is true, Eric, you're surely reacting to it the wrong way. Hell, it's easy for someone to insult or fling a Nyaaah at a group-member; but a person's got to be pretty impressed—with or worked-up-over someone out of the group to go to the trouble of snubbing that someone long distance, nu? It's not as wonderful as acceptance, of course; but don't you think there's a place, in the backroom of the fannish psyche, for such blatant negoboo?

Bill, I must thank you for using my full name in the art credits. I sign all my locs and illo-notes with all three names, but the other faneds—even the otherwise kind and accomodating Charlotte Proctor—invariably truncate the group down to Wayne and Brenner. Great Ghu in Heaven, how is one supposed to be pre-tentious when such Evil Forces will conspire against him thus???

Ohwell. I must be off again. Eppie wants me to explain to her about, ahem, "Ted Bergeron and Richard White". I have the feeling this will take a while...

[7/29/85]

----- STEVE GREEN -----
I'd really like to take this opportunity to say how enthralled I was by OWs #44 & 45. Honest. But I'd be lying if I did. Maybe something gets lost in the transAtlantic translation (countrymen of yours such as Chris Sherman seem enraptured by the superficial dialogue, whereas I just found the majority bland and, to be frank, numbingly boring). Part of the problem for me is a sense of non-interaction (the way you bother to include such disposable lines as Al Sirois' query about the Curry illo, for instance, then fail to answer it), both between yourself and the readers, and also between the readers and the subjects they claim to be addressing. Sorry to be such a downer (maybe these issues aren't representative), but I figured you'd prefer the true course of my feelings rather than some two-faced pat on the back or, worse, total silence.

[9/23/85]

You're right, Steve: any response is better than total silence. § [Just out of curiosity: since you question whether 44/45 are 'representative'...does that mean that you never received Issues 36, 38, 39 & 40—which I sent you last year?] § I am sorry that you didn't find these issues 'relevant'; were #s 46 & 47 any more so? Or would you rather I didn't send any more...?

The response to my efforts was encouraging, indeed. And today being one of those rare low-humidity ones that find me at home, I want to answer a couple of readers who asked me direct questions.

Buck Coulson: While I no longer remember any of Lon Williams's stories specifically, I do recall that I enjoyed them all heartily. Most of them (perhaps all of them) were on the humorous side; I'd forgotten that some included fantastic elements.

So far as I know, Lon Williams was Lon Williams—not RAWL, and not a pseudonym.

Bill Bowers: Since you ask, I prefer to read my name as Robert A. W. Lowndes, rather than Robert A.W. Lowndes. I've noticed that running extra middle initials together that way has become more the custom, but I still don't like it.

Debbie Notkin: That's a meaty question, probably good enough for a full column of the type I write, but I'll do what I can to give you an idea right here.

First of all, we have to remember that, as of January 1926, science fiction did not exist as a genre. That means two things: you couldn't go into a newsstore and ask for the kind of reading you wanted, with any hope of assistance, unless the proprietor were also an enthusiast who kept track of what was appearing in the magazines. (The same applies to a bookstore or the town library.) And what did you ask for? Well, such stories were called "different", "impossible", "fantastic", "scientific romance", etc. If there were time to browse, you'd look through the magazines that had published that sort of fiction before, to see if anything looked like what you wanted. There were no authors whose output was exclusively that kind of story.

And by 1926, you didn't find it any more in the "slick", "respectable" type of magazine. You found it only in the pulps. So, we see right away, that Hugo Gernsback did not drag "science fiction" down into the "pulp ghetto" (a phrase I consider absurd); it was already there.

The second thing is that, since there was no such thing as a "science fiction" genre, there was also no body of general practice about writing it. Writers who were inspired to do one of those "different" stories, started out with a new idea (or one that seemed new to them), and then constructed the story the same way they would have written a conventional story. In the days when "different" stories appeared in the magazines slanted toward educated, middle-class people, that meant that the story would move rather slowly; that characters would be introduced and characterized by the author before we saw them in action; that they would speak a certain type of book English if they were educated, or some sort of dialect (brogue, Scottish, Italian, Cockney, Negro, etc.) if they were not.

In the pulp magazines, the stories moved a bit more quickly; descriptions were shorter; characterizations more simplified; and plots became tighter.

Hugo Gernsback's aim was to make *that type of story into a genre*; he had a name for it, one that he had coined himself: "Scientifiction". He also had two underlying ingredients, without which a story could not be called good scientifiction, or could not be called scientifiction at all. He wanted (a) a charming story (b) rooted in *plausible* extrapolation upon correct science. The over-all effect was to be entertaining instruction. But that was the minimum; there was no ceiling to limit how excellent a story could be in addition to the entertaining and educational elements.

We could spend the rest of the year talking about what constitutes a charming story—both according to today's conventions and those of the past.

When Gernsback lost control of *Experimenter Publications*, *Amazing Stories*, and the added *Amazing Stories Quarterly* did not die. On January 1st 1929, we had those two titles only. By September 1929, we had three more titles: *Science Wonder Stories*, *Air Wonder Stories*, and *Science Wonder Quarterly*. The number of titles had more than doubled.

And that alerted at least one other publisher: William Clayton, of Clayton Magazines, and one of his editors, Harry Bates. *There was money to be made in scientifiction publishing.*

But not the Gernsback type: Clayton published a chain of fast-action pulp magazines. *Astounding Stories of Super Science* was to run stories differing from the stories in the western, adventure, and detective magazines *only* in the fantastic element.

Thus, when the first issue appeared in December 1929 (dated January 1930) we saw a one-page editorial telling readers about this brand new type of magazine *as if* nothing like it had ever happened before.

It was Bates, whose success with *Astounding Stories*, would lead others to bring out pulps like it, who should be charged with dragging science-fiction down to "crude, cheap" levels. Gernsback continued to run his titles according to his principles; and Dr. T. O'Connor Sloane, who now handled Gernsback's former titles felt very much the same way about it. (Sloane was less concerned about what he termed "poetic license" than Gernsback; he would run stories that Hugo Gernsback would never have considered—unless as the basis of a "fundamental error" contest.)

Nothing above is to be taken to mean that I considered either Hugo Gernsback or Dr. Sloane as saintly or infallible, or Harry Bates as a scoundrel. The first two brought out wonderful magazines, for all their faults;

Bates brought out a memorable fantastic adventure pulp (with *some* good examples of science fiction), for all its drawbacks.

Two things began to happen in the 30's. First, a larger percentage of the stories in the magazines were written by writers who had begun to specialize in that type of story; second, many new writers, who had started out as readers of the early *Amazing Stories*, began to appear.

Most of the old "name" writers were pulpeters; and the way they wrote and characterized their stories were closer to the pulp convention than, say, the highly popular tales and novels by A. Hyatt Verrill (in *Amazing Stories*, monthly and quarterly), who wrote in the manner of H.G. Wells, and other 19th century authors.

By 1936, when Gernsback finally sold *Wonder Stories* to a competitor (who promptly retitled it *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, issued bi-monthly, all stories complete—which meant that no idea could be considered and developed at length) science-fiction was a genre, however small. But the money men had taken it away from Gernsback. Science-Fiction was now a form of pulp writing, and only a few of the writers who shared Gernsback's visions, paid any attention to the educational aspects of it.

To F. Orlin Tremaine, science-fiction was inspirational speculation on scientific possibilities—well, more or less. Tremaine's ideas of "science" were not Gernsback's or Sloane's; he didn't hesitate to present occult ideas in the science-fiction manner, nor was he much concerned with scientific accuracy or plausibility. Gernsback hit the nail when he called the Tremaine type of story, particularly as exemplified by the brainstorms of John Russell Fearn, "fairy tales for grown-ups".

How dedicated writers tried to raise the level of science-fiction writing, both relating to scientific plausibility and replacing stereotypes with believable characters; how various groups of fans became science-fiction book publishers, and succeeded in convincing the money men that science-fiction was a profitable line (whereupon they suffered the same fate as Gernsback) is a story too well known to do more than mention here. It has become a successful genre; what is needed perhaps is more qualified critics who are ever-ready to argue with success.

You ask me about how I feel about style and characterization today as compared with the old-old days of H.G. Wells, and the old days of Gernsback, Sloane, Tremaine, and the early John Campbell.

I can read and enjoy any type, but there are two things I insist on: (1) That the story be rooted in some sort of science, to the extent that it couldn't exist were the science taken out—and that the science be plausible to me; (2) That I find the characters interesting enough so that I want to finish the story to see what happens to them. I am *not* interested in anti-geros, anti-science science-fiction, the monotonous whines of born losers, or slices of common men's lives. (I want to read about *uncommon* men and women in fiction, and I don't confine that to science fiction.)

I hope this answers your question at least partly.

[August 12, 1985]

BUCK COULSON ~~~~~

My typing restriction has been lifted, but don't expect a long loc. Interestingly, the doctor said the stress wasn't in the actual pounding of the keys, but in holding the arms up to get the fingers in position. I hadn't thought of that, at all.

Jean Weber commenting on the "Dialog"; I note that I mentioned that my columns kept me "too busy" to write fiction. Wrong again; DeWeese and I wrote and sold a novel in June. (Well, actually, Gene sold it in May and we wrote it in June, after we got a decent contract. Took awhile on that.) Of course, my original comment might still be correct; I did have a heart attack at the end of June. But I suspect other causes of that, such as asthma medicines of the 1930s thru the 1960s. A combination of 1 cc of adrenaline and $\frac{1}{4}$ gr of morphine couldn't have done my heart any good...

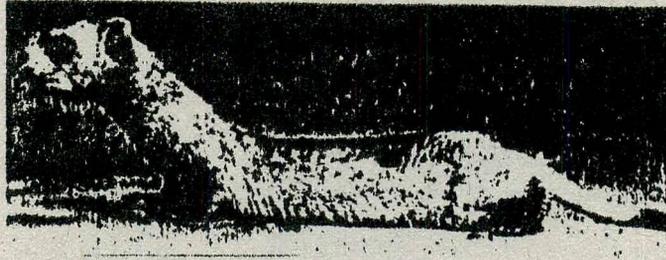
Skel has the wrong dictionary. "Fout" is obviously a corruption of Fouta Djallen, "A mountainous area in northwestern Guinea, the source of the Niger, Gambia, and Senegal rivers." (Am. Heritage Dictionary.) (Thus the fannish exclamation "oh, fout!" is obviously a synonym for "oh, piss!" but with more force behind it.) And a ferret is a "weasel-like mammal"; therefore Skel's preoccupation with ferrets in prose and conversation relates to his fear that he's being weasel-worded. Once more, psychology explains everything.

I don't have any problem with Ian's concept of a typical human. Though I'm not sure that his solution of 1 male plus one female is precisely correct. I believe there are more females than males in the world, so the "typical" would be something like a 1.2:0.8 ratio, but I suppose that's hard to get in reality. It's not really applicable to a fanzine discussion anyway, because *no* fan or group of fans is/are typically human. Or close to it.

Dialog. Hell, Dave, I'm straighter than you are; I don't even drink much. (Probably not at all, now....) But mundanes don't consider any fan straight. We have too many weird activities, like reading. And there are too many living entites in Yellowstone. I'll take White Sands Monument, any old day. No people, no animal life, no plant life. Great.

Roger Waddington's letter. I actually received some Argentine coins in a hollowed-out stf mag, years ago; the system does work. (At the time it was illegal to send money out of the country; probably still is...) [8/7]

MAYER'S NEW YORK STATE FERRET LAW IN A NUTSHELL



Use of ferrets.

The use of ferrets, fitch-ferrets or fitch in taking varying hares is prohibited.³ Also prohibited is the use of ferrets in the taking of cottontail rabbits, except as the conservation department has designated counties or towns in which they may be used for such purpose.⁴ It is expressly provided by statute that the possession afield of ferrets, fitch-ferrets or fitch is presumptive evidence of their use in hunting hares or rabbits.⁵

Criminal prosecutions.

A conviction of violating the game laws relating to the hunting of rabbits with ferrets is proper where there is the testimony of an eyewitness, a disinterested party, and the testimony of another disinterested witness, that he saw the accused with rabbits in his possession and that he saw blood near the burrow where the alleged killing is said to have taken place, and both identified the accused and that he had a ferret, and the defense attempted to prove an alibi by interested witnesses. *People v Chamberlain*, 92 Misc 720, 157 NYS 535.

Co. Ct. 1917. An information filed in a Court of Special Sessions, charging that defendant hunted rabbits with a ferret, in violation of Conservation Law, § 170, as added and amended, *held* to state an offense, in view of reference in such section to the article in which it is included, and the fact that section 190, as added and amended, which specifically prohibits hunting rabbits with a ferret, is in the same article.—*People v Chamberlain*, 157 N. Y. S. 535, 92 Misc. Rep. 720, 34 N. Y. Cr. R. 105.

Under Conservation Law, §§ 32, 170, 182, 190, 203, as added and amended, *held*, that a sentence that defendant be fined \$85 or stand committed until paid, not exceeding 85 days following his conviction of "hunting rabbits with a ferret," was legal.—*Id.*

Evidence *held* to sustain a conviction of hunting rabbits with a ferret, in violation of the Conservation Law, § 170, as added and amended.—*Id.*

ART 11 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION LAW

§ 11-0511. Possession and transportation of wildlife

2. No person shall possess, sell or breed ferrets, fitch-ferrets or fitch except under license issued by the department revocable at its pleasure. The fee for such license shall be five dollars. The license shall expire one year from the date of issue. No person shall dispose of a ferret, fitch-ferret or fitch except to a licensee under this subdivision, and such disposition shall be reported by the disposer within ten days thereafter.

§ 11-0523

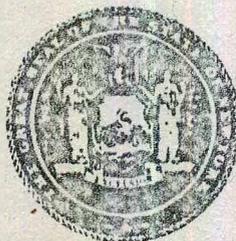
4. Varying hares, cottontail rabbits and European hares which are injuring property on occupied farms or lands may be taken thereon, at any time, in any manner, except by the use of ferrets, fitch-ferrets or fitch, by the owners or occupants of such farms or lands or by a person authorized in writing by them and actually employed by them in cultivating such farm lands.

§ 11-0901

5. a. Varying hares shall not be taken by the use of ferrets, fitch-ferrets or fitch.
b. Cottontail rabbits shall not be taken by the use of ferrets, fitch-ferrets or fitch unless permitted by order of the department or unless a permit for such taking has first been obtained from the department.
c. The possession of fitch, fitch-ferrets or fitch shall be presumptive evidence of their illegal use.
d. The department may by order specify towns or counties in which ferrets, fitch-ferrets or fitch may be used to take cottontail rabbits. Whenever cottontail rabbits are injuring property on occupied lands, the department, on request of the owner or occupant of such lands, may issue a permit to use ferrets, fitch-ferrets or fitch to take them if it is satisfied there exists sufficient damage to warrant its issuance.

§ 11-0919

Live ferrets, fitch-ferrets and fitch shall not be possessed or sold, except under license issued by the department as provided in section 11-0511.



You will see from the enclosed that Eric Mayer sent me some direct response to my article in *Outworlds* 44, which I figure I should share with you, just in case he didn't copy you with it.

I am amazed! Apparently I am not the only one obsessed with ferrets—the entire State of New York would appear to be equally deranged. Laws yet?!? And what laws.... I particularly liked good old 11-0901:5c—how does it go now? Oh yes, "The possession afield of ferrets, fitch-ferrets, or fitch shall be presumptive evidence of their illegal use." Ah, such poetry. They simply don't write laws like that anymore. And that's without mentioning 11-0511:2, namely that "No person shall possess....ferrets....except under license...".

"What's going on here?" I ask myself. I mean, we are talking about the Land of the Brave here, The Home Of The Free, aren't we? You know, where the Saturday Night Special comes from? You don't need a permit to buy a gun that will blow people away, but if you want to keep a pet ferret, you've got problems Sunshine. The hell with protecting *people*, we gotta make this country safe for *rabbits*.

But how safe is safe? I mean, article 11, section 0523, subsection 4, clearly states that you can kill the fuckers any way you like providing you don't use ferrets. Surely here the paranoia of the anti-ferret lobby has gone too far. In essence, you can shoot them, trap them in painfultraps that cause a lingering death, you can blow cigarette smoke or abestous dust at them, you can in fact torture them. You can stretch them on a rack until they snap. It says it right there in black and white, "...in any manner, except by the use of ferrets...". Why, you could even *shudder* play Barry Manilow records at them. But if you try and go the ecological route, and let something eat them, they won't wear it. I get the distinct impression that in your country the National Ferret Association doesn't have quite the political clout of the NRA.

I can see it now. The police break into the suspects apartment. They smash the door down and burst in. They search. They rip that fucking pad apart. They find guns. They find lots of guns. Christ, they are arse deep in bleeding guns. They find pistols, automatics, and rifles. They find M14 carbines. They find bazookas, small tactical nuclear devices, the lot. All perfectly legal. It is the inalienable right of every American citizen to have, in his home, enough weaponry to fight a small, low-budget, World War. They can't touch the bastard. Why then does he look so nervous? Suspicious, they search on. Suddenly they find it. Pushing aside the tanks they stride triumphantly around the polaris submarine and confront the now quaking miscreant. "Excuse me sir," they say, with chilling politeness, "...but do you have a license for this ferret?" Of course they find it difficult not to let their jubilation show, because now they have him. Dead to rights! And this is the big one. Why, even Al Capone copped a plea on those Income Tax charges because he knew that otherwise they'd get him on violation of The Ferret Law. This poor sucker never stood a chance. There are eight million ferrets in The Naked City—this has been one of them.

Let's face it, the New York State Ferret Law is a license to print money, or to be more precise, to print citations. I mean, what if poor old Joe Q. Public does have a license for his pet ferret? Does this mean that he's safe from persecution? Does it buggery! All the feds have to do is stake out the poor bastards apartment. Eventually, that animal is going to get sick. All animals get sick, usually the day after you spend 200 bucks on a new cage for them. So eventually, that ferret will get sick. So what can he do then? Does he find a vet that makes housecalls? You must be fucking joking, squire! Even plumbers these days are beginning to insist that you take the leaking sink in to their office. No, if your ferret gets sick, you gotta take it to the vet. Mohamed must go to the mountain (and let's face it, most vets are about as much use as a pile of stones—why when Cas's pet cockatiel got sick the vet gave her a tube of medicine. 'Gave', hell, he charged her an arm and a leg for it. It didn't help much, which wasn't too surprising because when we finally read the label on the tube, after laying the poor bird to rest, we discovered that the medicine was for 'Mastitis in cows'). So, imagine you are sitting there with a sick ferret—what do you do? Do you sit there while it passes peacefully away? Do you watch it pining for the fjords? Of course not. You dash out to the car with it, plonk it down on the back seat, and drive off for the vets. Well let me give you a wrod of warning, if you've got a pet ferret. DON'T! Don't do it. That's precisely what they're waiting for. That's when they'll pounce, the Ferret Squad.

"What's that you've got there, sir?"

"It's a ferret, officer, a sick ferret. I'm taking it to the vets."

"Oh no you're not sir. Where you're taking it, is to the station."

"But it's sick, sick I tell you!"

"That's as may be sir, but I'm adraid we are going to have to arrest you under article 11 of the New York State Laws, specifically under section 0901, subsection 5c. Surely you were aware that the possession afield of ferrets, fitch-ferrets or fitch shall be presumptive of their illegal use? Read him his rights, Lieutenant."

Sob—"It's a fair cop, officer, and I'd like these 423 stoats to be taken into consideration." [10/14/85]

...in this, the year I stopped playing runner-up to a series of horses...and, more recently, found out that one of the three shots I take weekly is designed solely to allow me to live with my cats...I suppose it's only appropriate that ferrets become the "Ofical Critters" of OW... (Beats having had dogs, I think!) [And Thanks to Eric, for having reconstructed & sending along the supporting data...]

SHERYL BIRKHEAD ~~~~~

Somewhere there is a paperback book dealing with "unusual" laws that are still on the books in various places—such as it being illegal to wash your horse in a public watering trough—or against the rules to eat pickles in public eateries... and so on. Unfortunately I don't remember the name and author, but if I happen to stumble across it, I'll pick up a copy. I DO have a copy of ABSOLUTELY MAD INVENTIONS—and that is interesting and hilarious in detail and ridiculousness.

Outworlds is *Outworlds* and an extension of you—it should reflect that, and just as you are not always the same, OW shouldn't be the "same" (as much as that would be possible).

Not knowing any ferrets personally, I can only relay one "fact"—that I assume is true... when the female comes in heat, I'm told she must either become pregnant, or be spayed—otherwise she will die. I never had the nerve to ask the whys and wherefores, or even to ask if it was really true—doesn't seem too productive for the species to kill them off when one cycle isn't going to result in an offspring (heck, I assume they have litters...don't say it—maybe they use chairs....), but.... I only saw one up close—an albino named Penelope—and was told she was a sweet little thing. But, when she yawned and all those lovely little pointed teeth came into view, I changed my mind about wanting to pet her.

Atom... toy company... yeah, sorta fits, but not something I would have thought of on my own.

Yes, some names do turn up over and over (turn over and over?) in fandom. I was surprised when my Christmas card from Donn said he had retired! I can't picture him in that role—or at least not without taking a stab (?) at reviving *Title*.

Thanks for the OWs—they are always a pleasure to read—old friends and comfortable— [8/85]

JEANNE BOWMAN ~~~~~

So I'm driving in my car with my friends who live in Eureka. Jesse starts in with "When are we going to be in Myreka hehehe" and our resident of the town protests. "No Jesse, no." He begins expostulating "It's not Myreke. It's not Youreka. It's A-re'a. Can you say that? Just plain aReka." Into higher levels of semantic accuracy by age seven then is.

We went down to the creek the other day & found a big tadpole. One that was too large for a boy (or his mother) to hold in one hand. Well, the body would fit but the tail hung over considerably more; big sucker about 10" long. Figured it was a bull frog tadpole. As we returned home, Jesse began speaking of the Bull Cow Frog Tadpole. He made up some story about how Bull Cow Frogs are THIS big and eat the Moon for lunch & you don't see em much anymore cuz they lived a long time ago when everything was big. Bull Cow Frogs come out at night but often after reporting a sighting Jess will say "Aha. But I TRICKED!!"

Well and that's *all* for keeping ~~implied threats~~ promises.

Skel's piece... I very much enjoyed & had only just finished it when a friend showed up from a visit to Texas & began talking about ferrets. They were one of the endearing features of her visit to the state. She was claiming that she wanted to just run down to the store & acquire one for a pet. "They do that in Texas, you know", she informed me. "I could have bought one for \$80.00." I wondered exactly how long she had been in Texas & quickly ~~dropped the dishes~~ went to fetch my *Outworlds* & had her read about ferrets. She did. She grinned. She shut up about the Goddamn ferrets. I had to tell her why I couldn't abide her speaking of them in my kitchen tho (having ascertained that she had no intentions in fact of "Going Ferreting" with one, but professed sincerely that they could become lovely house trained companions as they do in Texas, *really* Jeanne, they do. It's quite common even.). As I have personally met ferrets & am singularly revolted by them. It being no coincidence that feral & ferret are much the same words. It may be coincidental that my friend would expound the ludicrous concept of making pets of an animal I did meet in Australia. I went ferreting as well, which perhaps put too much of a businesslike patina into my relationships with the critters. Something to do with witnessing blood lust in an animal for the first time, they don't stop to clean themselves up after a first taste you know and were rather ticked off that the humans killed the rabbits first, yucko bucko, and quickly at that. Then the people wouldn't allow the ferrets to eat the rabbits. The ferret handler did in fact wear quite thick gloves, but the less said about this all the better & who in the midwest would be having psychological fits about a name of the place any way?? What about the throbbing heart of northwe st California ~~Widge~~ Fandom, Glen Ellen? Now that's a doofussy name for a town. After a person has never heard of it, I say I'm from Sonoma, or for real city ingnoramus, I say north of the Bay & south of Santa Rosa.

But this is boring & Skel's bit wasn't. Needless to say, I don't want to go where people *enjoy* the company of ferrets, so am regrettfully not coming to Austin.

The Dave Locke bit provoked much thought—goshwow, does everyone in fandom try out Aikido?? I don't cuz there ain't a Dojo within 10 miles. There is a Zendo however & I really ought to go back & do some more of that quit meditation (or so I amuse myself thinking). It too provides a pleasant support group...

Heck, I'm falling asleep.

I want to tell you how much I enjoy your voice & what Robert refers to as "presence" in your fanzine. When I ask him what he *means* by that, in particular, concrete incremental terms he waffles & says, "You know. You

do it all the time." Huh?? OK, so, I say the same to you & I like it. I get the feeling it's not effortless, or without practice & a well developed sense of timing, if such can exist upon paper. (It does, it does.) Good conversation at least.

And I'll send Denise P. Leigh some dollars—it's got to be better than the experiment I tried yesterday: buying & consuming a cherry coke. I drank the whole thing, after seeing how flat it could get after I shook it up good & let it get properly warm. Nothing helped. I won't do it again. It had enough caffiene tho. I always know cuz my jawbone can't set still, and I get the giggles. [8/21/85]

...I like that...about my "voice" and "presence" & all, and yes, sometimes it's 'easy'...and sometimes it ain't...tho, overall, I am still perhaps 'more at ease' in this guise, than any other. I do have the feeling that this will have minimal editorial presence. Partly because it has now been a month-and-a-day since I 'started' with Walt's note...and partly because I may have 'worded myself out' earlier this year. So if I don't respond to every query and nuance in the letters this time...it doesn't mean that I don't care or don't appreciate them [if I didn't, I wouldn't be sitting here typing your words instad of mine]. It's just that at the moment I have little to say. Enjoy it while you can...verbosity may return anytime at the drop of a typo...

ROBERT LICHTMAN ~~~~~

...I should say that while I neglected to write comments on a whole rash of OWs previously, I did receive and enjoy them, even (and perhaps especially) the 15th Annish which you dutifully handed to me at Corflu. And, by the way, it was a gas to "meet" you at both Corflu and LACon. I don't think we'd ever met before, unless back in the 60s at Baycon or somewhere. Having this policy which I've kept over the years of, so far, not going to any convention outside of California, I don't have the opportunity to run into you at Midwestcons, Confusions, or even East Coast worldcons. So it goes. This is the compromise which has allowed me to pub my ishes, which for me has been the point of fandom perhaps more than congoing.

I too have recently started a job, my first "straight" (9-5) job since 1970 when I was fired from Columbia Records for the heinous crime of smoking a joint in the office with one of the secretaries the day that Clive Davis (then-president of Columbia, later indicted in a major payola scandal) was perhaps going to drop by. (He dudn't.) I always considered this ungrateful on the part of my superiors there, for—after all—it was me who so assiduously provided them with suitable smokables for their hot acts when they would come to town. But so it goes. Now I'm a legal secretary, kind of an amusing position and one I hope I don't hold forever. But for now it puts more money on the table than the combination of welfare and odd scams had done since 1982 when the "recession" put an end to full-time employment at Entwistle Books, Paul Williams' house.

Naturally this has cut seriously into my time available for fanactivity and my letters of comment, always few and far between, have become even more so. And at this very moment, I'm trying hard to get together the next issue of *Trap Door* (see, it's true, a faned always *does* drop his fanzine's title into his letters!) together in time to hopefully get it in the mails by the end of October.

It was indeed revealing, and we can all be grateful, that Walt Willis saved the Magna Charta from being unceremoniously dumped from the annals of active history. The things you learn from fanzines! Sometime in years to come, when the Magna Charta crops up in lawyerly conversation, I can say that I knew the person who saved it from the ash heap of history.

A nice long letter from Norman Hollyn... It is definitely true that the US is a collection of separate countries connected by a national tax code. The set of assumptions you have to learn when living in a state different than the one you were living in before is truly amazing. Tennessee, and the South in general, is quite different than California, or even Ohio. There is a kind of cordiality built into the ethos down there that is liberally mixed with a sardonic sort of humor that takes a while for one to realize is there. I used to go off The Farm a lot to do business with the Tennesseans and it took me a little while to catch on to that level of things. I've been off The Farm and back in California now nearly half as long as the time I spent there, and so my memory is fading a little, but I remember one interesting incident. I went into Lawrenceburg one afternoon in search of something that I thought I could find at a farm supply store. Oh, yes, it was some parts for a wood stove. Farm supply stores in Tennessee carry a wide variety of goods and wood stove parts are among them. It turned out that they didn't have what I wanted, which was okay, but then one of the owners came out and started getting on my case about the debts of another arm of The Farm with his store that were long overdue. He seemed to think that if he got on me about it enough, I could somehow Do Something, like maybe write him a check right then and there. It got a little hot on his side, while I kept insisting that I knew nothing of those bills and was not in a position to do anything about them except let the parties involved know of this interchange. That didn't really satisfy him much, but it was the best I could do. As I readied myself to go elsewhere, he was still kind of haranguing me all about it, but then as I walked out the door, he changed completely and said to me, as all storekeepers say in Tennessee, with a big grin, "Y'all hurry back now."

Ian Covell's comments about men and women certainly did stir up a storm in your pages. I agree with Norman that relationships come in all configurations.

[9/15/85]

←XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX→

If there is one thing that fans like to go on about (other than sex) -- it's their typers. I went on about my new beastie last time, and shortly thereafter received a letter from Brian Earl Brown...written on his new machine. In the same timeframe, I received an apazine from Jodie. The subject matter seemed so appropriate, that I asked for permission to re-run it here.

←XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX→

MY BIG RED MACHINE
BY JODIE OFFUTT

LOTS OF PEOPLE name inanimate objects--cars, bicycles. Fans name their typewriters and their mimeos. Kids and pets are about all we've ever named. One of the children named a particularly well-loved pair of shoes. And our ice maker is Louise. One night I heard a noise from the other room shortly after we'd gotten the new fridge and said, "What's that?"

"That's Louise," Andy said, and the ice maker had a name.

I've always thought it was kind of neat to name cars, but never was motivated to do so. We've had some VWs over the years; they carry their own name along with them.

When I got my Selectric--now that was a different matter. It was a symbol, representing a major change in my and my family's life. Acquiring me a typewriter was the beginning of changes that we had no idea of at the time.

As a child I loved to play office. I'd gather papers, pencils, notebooks and set up a "desk" on the dining room table. I'd get the telephone book and some carbon paper--that magic, important stuff--and typewriter erasers, a little wheel with an attached brush. Paper clips, rubber bands, Scotch tape, and lots of different kinds of paper. Office stuff. The best part of going back to school in September was buying school supplies. A new loose leaf notebook that wasn't sprung, a ruler, long, new pencils with unworn erasers. Transylvania Printing Company in Lexington, Kentucky (where I grew up) devoted two full tables in the middle of the store to back-to-school supplies and it became my favorite store. By the time I got to the seventh and eighth grades I needed tabbed dividers for the notebook and graph paper, a protractor and a compass. Oh boy! Office heaven!

In the Morehead State University book store not long ago, I picked up and put down a half dozen notebooks of different sizes.

Missy said, "Mom, I think the only reason you decided to go to college is so you can buy school stuff!" She may be right.

My mother worked in an office. She was a very good typist and worked for an accounting firm. She didn't *always* work when we were growing up, but she always worked during tax season. A couple of years ago when my grandmother was sick and Mother couldn't go to work, they'd bring the work to her. Her typing table sat beside the dining room window and it was always a comforting feeling as I came in the back door to hear Mother typing. (I suppose it told me she was home.) I was mystified that she could listen to me, answer me and yet not lessen her typing speed or make any mistakes.

Mother never let me "type" on her Royal; I was to learn properly when I got to high school. I grew up, learned to type properly and went to work in a real office. I got married and had babies and *they* began to grow up. (My, how time flies!)

When it became apparent that they needed braces, I told Andy I thought this was important enough for me to work to help pay for. (We had been married 12 years at that time and it was the first thing I wanted enough to be willing to work for, which was a compliment to both of us.) Andy had an insurance agency then and wrote at night and on weekends. He had just sold his first couple of sex novels to an outfit on the west coast as John Cleve. We had a long discussion about the cost of orthodontists, my working, baby sitters; two of the children were not yet in school.

Here's what we decided to do: Andy spent three weeks writing a book, then three more weeks on the final draft. If I could type the submission manuscript, he could start on the next one, and we could turn out books twice as fast and probably make enough money so that I wouldn't have to take an outside job. It worked! The first book I typed sold for more than anything else had, and our lives had changed!

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JOHN A. CORTIS ~~~~~

Thank you for sending me *Outworlds* numbers 44 and 45. I am still not quite sure what to expect when opening one of these things (zine), this being only the third title I've seen. Silly me. I thought that a science fiction fanzine would have something to do with sciffy. So what am I finding? People! And Real People at that! Not that I know who any of these people are or what they are talking about, but how could I, entering somewhere in the middle like this? Open a book in the middle (or as Eric Mayer said in OW44, be a stranger walking in on the middle of a party) and it would be a piece of deductive logic to rival the best of Holmes to know what was going on.

I was able to grab the gist of one or two ideas, though. I take it that there is a faction trying to persuade you to move from a typewriter into computer word processing. You mentioned your bad experiences with a CAD/CAM system as one reason to stick with the typer. In my limited experience with computers I have found that many people have unreasonable expectations of computers. If you give the village idiot a t-square and a pencil you don't expect him to design a bridge in half an hour (or if he does you don't expect it to stand if built!). A computer is merely another addition to a long line of ever more complicated tools. Without skill in the use of the tool, or if the tool itself was made by the village idiot, only the village idiot would trust it. I gather you have a long association with these thingies and probably understand this, but in OW45 Harry Warner, Jr. finds it significant that material composed on a word processor reads exactly like material composed on a typewriter. He has missed the point. It is supposed to. Tools do not add to the creative process, they are merely the means through which creative people express themselves. Give one master carpenter a hand saw and a pile of wood, another a power saw and a pile of wood and they each will build a well constructed, sturdy house. However, the guy with the power saw will be done first, and with a lot less effort (unless he cuts his extension cord in the process). Give the village idiot a power saw and he will probably cut off his hand. Computers are not magical no matter how magical what they do may seem. (There is a great deal of fiction being produced with this theme, the magical computer. [*War Games* and *Weird Science* are two films which come to mind, and I remember one story in ASIMOV's last year the title of which escapes me...]) I don't think this is a Good Thing. It only reinforces a mistrust of computers which is founded in ignorance. Reinforcing ignorance is not a Good Thing.) Some computer types seem to forget this when recruiting converts to their obsession. The person who rejects the new tool in favor of the old has every right. WHAT is created is important, not HOW. [8/23/85]

...I couldn't agree more. And I certainly have nothing against new 'tools' or upgrading systems: that would be a bit too much to ask as I sit here in a hundred-year-old house, at my fancy new three-pitch electronic typer [which can be linked as a printer]...while re-recording a movie I already have off cable, in SuperBeta & HiFi...and listening on headphones as I transfer a FLEETWOOD MAC 8-track to cassette via the fancy sound system I bought last year. [Of course I refer to them as 'toys' rather than 'tools'...but they get the job done. Most of the time...] I think the thing right now is that everyone is talking about their systems, and programs for them...and not outputting much. But then I've been surrounded by writers who have yet to write in fandom for years now... (far be it from me...). Yet as much as I go on, it's inevitable--unless I do something like get seriously involved again--that within the foreseeable future I, too, will fall prey to a word processor. But only after a CD...and after I can be convinced that there is such a thing as a letter-quality dot matrix printer. ...that also will cut stencils. I don't want much. Not really.

ERIC LINDSAY ~~~~~

Don't accept a promotion to only a checker, demand a promotion to chess piece. I would, but that might explain why I never reached the top in business.

I've always thought that some form of conservation should be practiced on laws, just as with other natural resources. Perhaps something along the line that a new law can only be produced if an old law is repealed, thus keeping the total number of laws constant. This way lawyers would be more easily able to keep up to date, citizens might have a chance to understand more of the law, and people might generally only introduce laws when they really care about having them exist.

One reason I'd heard of the CAD/CAM system you were using was that I'm one of the only people in Australia who appears to read the 2000 pages of *Data Sources* for pleasure. Well, perhaps I'm not the only one, but when Ken Ozanne was trying to get a copy recently, the only place that had ever bought it was the State Library of Victoria. Mind you, I wouldn't have copies of it either, had not Joyce Scrivner been catering to my computer junkie habits by sending me mailbags of slightly obsolete magazines on the topic (which generally meant I was reading about gear that hadn't reached this country).

I suppose I should remark upon Skel's outburst on single volume dictionaries, however all my decent ones are at home, and Jean very sensibly refuses to allow me to gain shelf space at my place by bringing one of the monsters here. I used to use "perlustration" and "supernacular" as my test words for dictionaries. Never thought of using "twee", because I'd have thought they would all contain it.

You'd better watch that Al Sirois character. There he goes spouting all the stuff about being careful with diskettes and how they are unreliable compared with phonograph records, when every one knows the proper solution

is to make the damn things more reliable. My own experience is that nothing short of a decent bar magnet at short range can affect large areas of disk—certainly putting them on TV sets, leaving magnetic screwdrivers near them, and touching the disk surface don't totally kill them. Why, once you write yourself a decent set of routines to rescue partially wrecked disks, you hardly ever have trouble!

I was delighted to see Dave Locke interviewing Denise Parsley Leigh. Does this suggest that, having seen her name in print again, we might hope to see another *Graymalkin*. Even if it is a little late. No, with Megen I guess Denise has more than enough to do. [10/31/85]

I initially had some doubts as to the validity of this LoC...there was no note/p.s. from Jean, after all! [But then, she's sending me her fanzine...for which I am properly appreciative--if unresponsive so far.]

MARTY KLUG ~~~~~

I haven't really had the free time to keep up with fanzines so browsing the letters was a bit like eavesdropping at a class reunion. Probably more interesting than a class reunion, but then most things in the known universe are.

Waddington made an interesting remark about accumulating paperbacks. It's almost as bad as the Curse of *National Geographic*. Once you get the damn things they're too colorful to trash. I've got my paperback buying under control but am now splurging on videotapes. Seems to be a common affliction. Are there really that many movies worth seeing more than once?

Certainly not *Rocky Horror*. The best scifi movie of all time? **Honestly!** I hope you were kidding. It's amusing the first time but its only redeeming quality is it keeps *Rocky Horror* fans off the streets for a couple of hours every weekend.

Don't suppose you'd know anyone who was interested in buying a Rex Rotary mimeo. Mine's collecting dust. No one seems to have time for the Old Ways anymore. A few weeks ago I saw a videotaped fanzine from some guy on the west coast. Is this the shape of things to come?

Walt Willis' jab at lawyers was cute, though I think my favorite lawyer joke is: "What's the difference between a dead skunk and a dead lawyer lying in the middle of the road? The dead skunk has skid marks in front of it." [8/13/85]

DON D'AMMASSA ~~~~~

The comments on videotaping struck a chord here. We finally bought a VCR in April and, in the four months since then, I've taped nearly 200 movies. The typewriter sits in front of the tv and I manage to kill two birds with one stone. In fact, I'm watching a Woody Allen movie as I type this letter, and will shortly switch over to taping an old Vincent Price horror movie, *The Tomb of Ligeia*.

Actually, I get more accomplished now than I did before, because the fact that I can watch all these movies whenever I want causes me to sit in front of the typewriter, and as long as I'm there, I might as well be doing something. So the current *Mythologies* was just mailed, the next is partly typed, and so are some of the articles for the next three. I have caught up on my correspondence, sold a few articles, wrote a few short stories, and I'm no farther behind in my reading than I always am. It's also a comparatively pleasant way to accomplish a number of more mundane chores, like folding laundry, peeling potatoes, reconciling the budget, and so on.

Roger Waddington asks a good question. What is the mystique of books? We have over 35,000 here, a good chunk of which (primarily the non-fiction) might never be read. Even much of the science fiction I would never want to read again. So why do I keep copies? I'm not sure I can answer that. It's a collection of course, but why do people collect in general? Maybe it's an indication that I am basically a materialistic person, which is admittedly quite true. I've always been very stingy with my money, preferring to buy long term goods (records, books, etc.) rather than perishables, like moviegoing, entertainment, fancy foods and restaurants, etc. Maybe I'm just a capitalist at heart and derive secret satisfaction from concrete evidence of my financial success, such as it is. [8/11/85]

...well, it was a Woody Allen movie that I was re-taping a page back. In fact, if for no other reason than I could, at this moment, watch any one of 15 Woody Allen movies...the VCR has justified its cost. \$ I have no idea of the number of books I have; it's probably not 35,000...but then, after 25+ years of the habit, the number is probably closer to that figure...than not. Add to that the magazines, the cassettes, the records, and the unknown (but substantial) number of videotapes...well, my 'collections' may not match yours...but they are definitely a result of a lifetime of going for the tangibles. But then, I've also spent a fair amount of my income, and myself, going for the intangibles also...but, hey!, who's keeping score? \$ Yet...all too many segments of this 'collection' remain unexplored: never, ever, enough time!

BRIAN EARL BROWN ~~~~~

From all I've heard on the subject, computers seem to be the most time-consuming way to save time yet invented. Maybe computers are a communistic plot to undermine the morals of western civilization. I wonder if anyone's told Jerry Pournelle about this yet?

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Good letter from Norman Hollyn, and fascinating weirdness from Skel. I remember reading about the midwest getting misplaced. I suppose we do need a new name for the lands west of the East and east of the midwest. Judging from the Reagan administration's action towards this region you & I share, Bill, they must think it's "fuck off and die" land. Others call it the Rust Belt. But we all know it's The Wimpy Zone.

Norman Hollyn gives another reason for getting a computer. I could save all my "correspondence" without having to use carbon paper or dash off to the Xerox shop all the time. All the best fans seem to keep copies of everything they've ever written. How will I ever aspire to greatness if I can't endlessly quote from myself?

My test word for dictionaries is nephelococcygia, i.e. Cloud-Cuckoo Land. A good unabridged like the Webster's 2nd International (circa 1930) has it; more recent, hence worthless, dictionaries don't.

I understand Bob Shaw's feeling that putting words on paper tends to seal them in cement. I find it hard to revise what I write for that reason. And like Shaw, I doubt that having a word processor would get me to write in any more "polished" a form than I already do. But I'd still dearly love a word processor because I am such a sloppy typist that cleaning typos out of my zine is easily the hardest part of fanzine production. I'd love to be able to slop in material then leisurely go back and change commas to periods, capitalize words that I meant to capitalize, insert spaces in all the correct places, etc. All sorts of stuff that I usually don't do because it would involve retyping a whole line just to add one space or missing letter. Putting words to paper on keypunch may set them in cement, but at least with a word processor I'd be able to trowel the cement smooth before it sets.

Shaw's complaint about getting uniform ice cubes reminds me once again that it is the little things that get to us worse than the big ones. I'm not afraid of a nuclear holocaust unless I happen to be out of town at the time and stupidly survive. No, Armagedden doesn't bother me, it's the thought of all the COAs I have to track down before I could mail out the next issue of my fanzine. I hate updating my mailing list. And do you know what's worse? There won't be any aspirin to take for the headache all those COA notices will cause.

In a sense I can see what Ian is saying about a "typical human" being a man and a woman. I don't think any alien would fail to recognize that these are two separate beings involved who think different thoughts, have different, if some similar goals and objectives. But the world does tend to divide up into couples. And sometimes, as Trudeau's showing in DOONESBURY, this urge/social conditioning to pair up sometimes leads to the need for a declaration of solitority. Even your final words, about your sudden lack of engagements, seems half boast of your freedom and cry to lose that freedom. Ian's metaphor for this urge to pair off seems to me to be over-drawn, but there is a certain truth to it.

It was interesting to learn that ATom manages a tool & die firm, something we wouldn't have guessed from his cartoons. I am impressed that he originally wanted to get into commercial art because there always was something professional to his art. It's a lot more sophisticated work than a lot of fan art now appearing.

Has it only been four years since the last *Graymalkin*? Seems longer. And it is definitely time for Denise to put words to stencil once again. If only we can convince her that this is indeed a worthwhile thing to do. Aikido can suck up a person's free time. Children can also suck up time according to Eric Mayer and Mary Long. I wouldn't know myself.

How straight is Dave Locke? That's an interesting question. There are all sorts of straight/non-straight groupings. Denise is very hip with a surface bubbiness. I tend to think of myself as being fairly straight. Tony Cvetko also affects a very straight persona, but underneath he's pretty perverse—oh, I see that's the word Dave uses to describe himself. It's a good choice of words. Dave always stands in contrast to his surroundings.

Actually I wouldn't have been surprised if you'd ran around in '77 or '78 with a tape of the soundtrack album since *Rocky Horror* was a pretty popular movie—at least in fandom. A ConFusion disco/masquerade isn't complete without at least one playing of "Time Warp". But you, Bill, went whole hog, as we ex-farm boys are wont to say. You had a tape of the actual movie, from first *crackle* to final *pop*, with every bit of dialog in between. That, Father William, was devotion bordering on obsession.

True you never joined "The Transylvania Connection", The Rocky Horror Apa, like Denise and I did...so it's a tossup as to who was the more obsessed about the movie.

It's debatable whether RHPS is the best SF movie of all time. I suppose it depends on whether you call it a *science fiction* movie or a *science fiction movie*. *2010* is a good example of the former: a movie about a science fiction story. RHPS is a movie that attempts to transfer a science fictional sensibility to the movie medium. It's a movie that makes us question our psycho/socio/sexual feelings.

Back To The Future is another film that gets close to the sense of wonder which is what science fiction is all about. There's a good feel to the characters and a nice twist on the old killing-your-grandfather cliché—playing matchmaker to one's parents. We've only seen the movie once but it seemed really substantial.

Urinals. I once thought about writing an article about urinals met during a busy, urine-filled life. But what's there to say except that urinals come in more varieties than toilets, and as long as they work who cares. (It is weird bellying up to a literal horse trough, tho.)

[8/2/85]

RICHARD BRANDT ~~~~~

What do I think of OW44? Well...

Norm Hollyn talking about "cycles" got me thinking about a particular phase that seems to be striking everyone in my circle of friends just now...perhaps calling it a "plague" would be more accurate. This time in our lives is starting to be known as Brakup Summer. Couples with relationships of long standing are falling apart all around us; and it looks, from the outside, pretty tough for those who are deciding to weather it out together. I was at our local hangout the other night, with a couple of friends and another I'd just met, and it developed that all of us were either separated or divorced or in the process.

My new best friend and crying-shoulder, Katy, advances the theory that no one in our generation (I'm 28, and most of my friends now are just a little younger) will be able to put together a long-lasting relationship. As another friend points out, most of our fathers were able to save up enough to buy a house eventually, after years of being the sole wage-earner. Putting aside the changes in women's work rights for the moment, it seems today both members of a couple relationship have to work to accomplish such a feat, or among my circle, just to keep things going. Simple economic realities have an effect on the roles the man in woman (in these cases) have to fill, as far as who brings home the bacon and who cooks it, and whether little pitter-patterers come along, and if so what arrangements are made for taking care of them. My friend Katy suggests we're caught in between the traditional roles of "husband-and-wife" and whatever new roles are going to develop for men and women as a result of the changes in our social system. (Was Karl Marx right for once, after all? Is economics molding history?)

This makes great theory, but I'm still at a loss to understand why, in one particular season, everyone I know is heading for Split City. In my case, having spent seven years with someone, I'm not particularly anxious to give up on relationships just because the economic odds are against me.

Say, I just realized that my comment is printed on the front cover of OW45—wow. What a long way I have come. And you spelled my name right, too, unlike those bastards at the *National Lampoon*. Oh, I haven't bragged to you yet—along with everyone else in hearing or postal range—about my True Fact sale to NL? Yes, the piece about the exotic dancer arrested for beating a customer about the head with her breasts, that was mine. And they dropped the goddamn "t" off the end of my name. Just like asshole copyeditors at *Galaxy* did to these many moons ago. This is my comeuppance for making Ted White think I was an old fart a decade or so ago when I pointed out in the lettercol to *Fantastic* that one of his all-new stories was a reprint. From 1938.

If Ian Covell thinks "the mixture of the sexes is a racial type" obviously translates into "the human race is a set of mixed sex couples", he has a lot to learn about how to choose words that mean what he is trying to say. Also, for someone who admits he doesn't "know the majority of the male or female population", he has a lot of balls making blanket statements [blanket statements] like "the human race is a set of mixed sex couples", which can in no way be construed as true, leaving out of his set as it does quite a few couples of my acquaintance who were undeniably human. Clean up your act, Mr. Covell!! ("A racial type" = "The set of the human race as a whole"? Poor math, I must say.)

More or less of a coincidence, but Dave's dialogue with Denise resonates with my situation more than once; as I said, I'm 28 now, faced with a turnaround of my entire life situation, and never before, after now seeing five years vanish down the drain, have I so acutely felt time slipping away from me; oddly enough, I was using those very words in a conversation a few nights before reading the piece. And, not unlike Dave, I seem to be a little too straight for the freaks and a little too odd for "normal" folks; of course, I'm accepted easily enough by either group. I don't know if I'm exactly a "social chameleon", but after a little while with a group you know which opinions you can violently dispute and which you can just smile and nod at when you hear them, and still "fit in"...

By gum, Bill, haven't you read PJFarmer's DAYWORLD yet? Holographic projections over urinals, yessiree.

Did I ever mention how I came across my first prozine? I knew they existed, of course, as legendary objects mentioned in the acknowledgements page of anthologies; but I finally saw a shelf full, and bought one (Mar. '71 IF), when we happened to be standing outside a downtown bookstore in Mobile, Alabama to see then-President Nixon and the kids drive by. I mentioned this a good 11 years ago, I think in my first ish of any fanzine, prompting the good Mr. Warner to comment that this was one more thing Mr. Nixon could be blamed for, and perhaps if I hadn't bought that prozine, a secret service man might have been sent in to buy the President some reading matter, he might have discovered fandom, and...No, Harry, it looks like the title of "Fandom's Saviour" shall elude me forever.

[rec'd 8/17/85]

AL SIROIS ~~~~~

I find computers interesting, alright, but more interesting are the uses/abuses to which people put them. And the attendant frustrations—judging from the response to Graphic Violence, it's clear that we are indeed in the Dark Ages of personal computing. I don't know much about mainframes but I gather they are as quirky as the small machines. With all that power, in fact, there are more things to go wrong. Saint Murphy save us! People like Eric Lindsay who build their own computers are clearly alien lifeforms, to be viewed with

awe and fear. I'd imagine that problems with a home brew machine could be at once more easily dealt with (because the builder knows his/her creation) and infinitely more frustrating (because the simplest things are always the ones first overlooked).

Norm Hollyn's remarks about allergy testing brought back memories. I had a mess of those sub-cutaneous tests when I was a kid, too. Twenty needles in one arm, twenty-one in the other. Not a nice thing to do to a ten year old kid; but there has been one positive result which I have carried into adulthood: I am no longer intimidated by injections. You could probably shoot me up with battery acid and I wouldn't utter a murmur of complaint. Unless I knew what it was beforehand.

I got a kick out of Skel's stream-of-consciousness "article". It so happens that I have had some unpleasant experiences with ferrets. Well, with one ferret.

My ex-roommate Neil had a girlfriend named Chris. One day Chris moved in, filling this neat little apartment with a vast assortment of clothes and furniture. Chris, you see, was a natural packrat, who could not pass a tag sale without buying something—almost indiscriminately, or so it seemed to me—and bringing it home to the apartment. It got so crowded in here that you literally couldn't walk through the dining room. You had to *insinuate*.

In addition to her other charming quirks, Chris loved animals. She owned two cats and a ferret. I never minded the cats; I've owned several. But the ferret—!

First, they are kind of cute, endearing little creatures—as long as they don't live with you. Ferrets smell bad. Sure, they can be de-smelled; but Chris's money went into tag sales so she couldn't afford to have the little bastard deodorized.

Well, that really wasn't so bad. I mean, you only noticed it if you handled him. And the musky odor wasn't nasty—just a little rank. But what really got me about the fucker was that he was *not*, despite Chris's claims to the contrary, housebroken. And he liked to shit in my room.

Not that he had anything against shitting anywhere else in the apartment. After Chris and Neil moved out, into their own apartment, I was finding ferret turds everywhere for a good two months. [Actually they weren't good at all.] Ferrets are certainly able to wriggle into any little space. And when they do, they shit there. There's a fair gap under the door to my room, so the animal could get in there even with the door closed. Once in, he always (a) knocked over my trash can (and like any other writer/artist, my trashcan is a veritable cornucopia of discarded ideas), and (b) shit *somewhere* in the room. Once he peed *and* crapped on my bed.

I was Not Pleased. In fact, the animal precipitated a screaming argument with Chris and Neil. I was very ill with a cold at the time, and the mere *sight* of the ferret was the straw on my back. I had demanded that he be banished from the apartment. Chris agreed. But she fucking *lied*. So when I saw the ferret ambling about, I flipped out.

Subsequently Chris, Neil, furniture and menagerie all departed for other regions. Chris and Neil later split up, and this enabled Neil and I to repair what had been, prior to her advent, a close friendship.

Ferrets. Irk. Don't talk to me about fucking (or doing anything else except murdering) ferrets.

Skel mentions putting a ferret down one's pants. IS HE INSANE? Surely he can never actually have done this. If he had, he would not have said it so lightly. The phrase "tenacious as a ferret" is NOT an idle one. I have had a ferret try to climb up my pants-leg. I damn near lost a leg getting him out of there.

Bugger ferrets. I hate ferrets.

Actually, I see now that Skel doesn't think highly of the idea of putting a ferret in one's pants. Good. There's hope yet.

Ferrets. Yuck.

Crap. I now realize that the Curry cartoon in question actually depicted Al, not Glicksohn. And for some reason I mixed up the placement of the two figures, somehow concluding that you were on the ladder and Mike (or Al, as we have now concluded) on the ground. Goddamnit, Curry, what's wrong that you can't draw Glicksohn? He looks just like your own self-caricature. The geek in question was of course ~~penis-necked~~ Bill Bowers.

Don't let Chris Sherman talk you into a Macintosh. Buy an Amiga instead. It's a much better machine.

I actually have a few more things to comment on, judging by my marginal comments: comics fanzines, urinal entertainment, cockroaches; all things near and dear to my heart. However I biked twenty miles today and besides sweating in the current heat, I am pretty tired. So to hell with it all. You're lucky you got *this* much of a loc. [8/11/85]

Don Carter [Cincinnati's "answer" to Eric Lindsay] also sez to go with the Amiga; we'll see. § Hmm... In the 'old' ['70s] OUs, the lasting topics were teddy bears and the joys of peanut butter. Now we have ferrets...this is progress? § Glad to hear you're planning on going to Corflu; see you there!

SKEL ~~~~~
The highpoint of the issue has got to be Ian Covell's letter and his introduction therein of the bold new technique that he's invented. I forecast that it will be taken up by fans everywhere and its use will spread

like wildfire. Henceforth when someone makes a fuckwit statement (as I have been known to do), or fails to express himself clearly (as Ian did the issue before), they will respond to any criticisms with a bit of shameless 'covelling', thus deservedly enshrining the name of the technique's inventor for all time. They will be able to say something like:

"You cretin! You have misunderstood. What you have failed to realise is that I wasn't answering you at all when I responded to your remarks, but was in fact talking to an invisible Martian who goes to the movies with me. How could you have failed to understand this, you dimwit?"

And it will work too—pretty soon people will stop writing and criticising. People will stop writing period. And you will get visits from people in white coats who will try to persuade you to visit with them! 9/20

IAN COVELL ~~~~~

In order (why not? I don't mind logical order, it's imposed political order I hate): I thank Walt Willis for his defence of British law(—repealing)...tho' I did have two qualms on his letter: 1, that Magna Charta only survived because *one man* felt it should; what if he had decided otherwise? (Matter of fact, I was once told that none of the MC liberties now apply)... Second, I *don't* think conspiracy should be a crime; taken to its logical extreme, let's suppose a gang base a robbery on the details in a work of fiction—isn't there a case that the author is liable for prosecution for 'aiding' their conspiracy? (Of course it's extreme; the question is: how far is too far?)

I won't go deep here, but Norman Hollyn's early comment that people are made up of male and female elements is—does anyone believe I'd say this?—a misdirective. Personally, I *don't* believe there are exclusively male and exclusively female elements. This may take a bit of explanation; give me a couple of paragraphs. OW first.

No, why wait. I'll just ignore my response to... This gets convoluted. Thought:— What is human? Detail: what elements make up 'human-ness'? Corollary, which elements should be assigned to the female of the species, which to the male? Since I can't myself define those elements, I can't answer my own questions, but I don't see shared elements as somehow assignable to one sex. (A thought: this mirrors the French way of defining certain words 'male' or 'female'; I have always thought this was patent nonsense, and I feel the same way about spurious 'elements'.)

(Hm, this is going to lower my stock with Skel, but I was brought up in Grimsby, of which Cleethorpes is essentially the sandy extension [the rd. connecting the two is called Cleethorpes Road while in Grimsby, then becomes Grimsby Road at the boundary... and Grimsby Town's football club is based in Cleethorpes...]. Actually it's quite a nice place, from what I remember, when it wasn't being dull.)

Outworlds 45 (first time I read it, I missed that headline; confusing). Re the Bob Shaw letter—I've just recalled that his pre-latest novel was about spontaneous combustion; soon after the tobacco incident, maybe?

I feel an urge to explain yet again what I mean by 'typical human' but on reflection, my letter really does say it all; that Martian friend simply asked me a question I had to find an answer for; the answer is, humanity is double-sexed, and a representative of it must consist of a paired man and woman. Beyond that, the social, political, and ethical questions are—of course—problematic. I don't like my Martian friend at times, but then I've gone down as saying that a *totally sane person* would be the most *alien* creature any of us can encounter; we all live with lies. Even me.

Now I come to *Outworlds 46*. I mean O*U*7*W*O*R*L*D*S 4*6!! Great, great issue. ('Luv'd it, kid, yagodennymawlargit?')

[I'm *not* going to explain this comment—sorry in advance—but I understand perfectly how Bill Breiding could comment on your literature by using music; there's no way I could do it myself, but I know someone who can do it as swift as hearing, accurately, completely, totally, with all the possible shades in each song included in the choice; I *know* it can be done. (My tape reduced me to tears; I haven't felt so good for many years...)]

If it matters, the woman I love is older than I am; if it matters, I have felt attracted to women of all ages, and girls down to their early teens. I'm sure there are plenty of explanations, even accurate ones, but I just view it as normal attraction to the opposite sex. In a world that still portrays the early pubescence of sexuality as its most enjoyable time, I am sure many people feel the same way. Why else Brooke Shields? [Having just seen *Blue Lagoon*, and putting the nude-double shots from my thoughts, I'm prepared to say Ms Shields must be among the most untalented 'actresses' on the screen; what made her—I presume—'sexually attractive' was her flushed youth, her lithe energy, her clear and clean features, her long hair (bit sticky I thought;tended to glue itself to her breasts), pouting lips—the (media proposed) elements of female attractiveness. We all learn lies.]

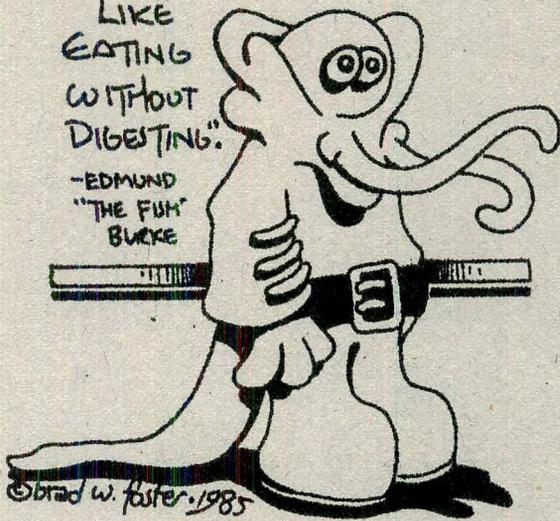
Joe Christopher's limericks are clever and inventive but, I'm sorry, they aren't that funny. I can't write them myself, of course. From what I can see, it's the tortuous restructuring of English that halts the humour. By the time you've altered your mind to understand what's *happening*, the *shock* of recognition, which is the core

[...concluded overleaf...]

"TO READ WITHOUT
LOCCING IS

LIKE
EATING
WITHOUT
DIGESTING."

-EDMUND
"THE FUM"
BUCKE



BILL BOWENS
246B HARRISON AVE.
CINCINNATI, OH 45211-7928

of humour, has gone. I'm sorry about that because I can see how much effort went into them, but.

...and then people start talking about OW 44/45, and I'm now in the position of just having read them, of reading responses to them before I read them, of then commenting on them (PTO) and their sequel containing... You know something... I've got a funny feeling I'm about to meet myself coming down the timeline...

"Hi!" / 'Do I know you?' / "Did you?" / 'I knew I'd say that.' / "You did, or you're going to?" / 'Say it, or know I'd say it?' / "Yes." / 'No, did you?' / "Will I?" / 'You did, am't I?'...

(I've just had a thought: suppose you took two FIL radios, and set them a yard apart in a field, and put one person at each, and got them to talk to each other... who'd hear what, and what would an observer hear/sec...?)

I can't really argue with Naomi Cowan because I've been trying to say [in recent times] that sf fails because ... that much current sf fails precisely because some writers (usually avowed feminists) are portraying some of today's conditions as universal to all human societies (Men Will Always Oppress, Because Men Are Natural Oppressors) whereas I came into sf seeing the examination of universality as the throwing out of preconceptions. For her now to say I talk of reality, today's, rather than how it 'ought to be' proves I really haven't managed to make myself clear even in my OW45 letter. Since I think it perfectly clear, I will not argue further. Our common ground is our humanity, Naomi, but I think it's a level plain and you think I hold the high ground (for sniping?). We don't see eye to eye because you're looking in the wrong direction.

I have to admit at this point, I did know my comments on feminism/humanity would cause problems; I knew it because Joy Hibbert slagged me off in a personal letter, and I knew I'd never be able to put things the way they should be put, so there'd be other slaggings, disagreements, questions, and so on. I do not feel put upon and hope nothing I've said sounds nasty or angry; I am distressed the notion doesn't seem to appeal to anyone except myself, but nobody said life was perfect. We all live lies.

I think the sentiment of *Bohemo*, three happy endings, and impotence cured by desire, is superb. The acting, plotting, ludicrous final sexscene ('See, I told you we'd reach ecstasy!') can be ignored--by me--for that sense of romantic upbeat joy. I never said I was sane. [10/10/85]

I should probably mention that I mailed Ian's OW46 airmail--and he received it before 44/45. § Other than that--since we all seem to have agreed to disagree with Ian on his concept of humanity...well, why don't we find a new topic...or two? § ...this pretty well wraps up the commentary on OW44/45; next issue will probably be slightly larger--in addition to being the Annish...I'm going to catchup by getting in all the response to 46 & 47. Somehow. No matter what it takes! § Have a Happy! 12/31/85.

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