

It's only your imagination. after all



SLEIGHT

...the impetus behind this particular issue --- is as a "celebration" of the past fifteen years. It is, determinedly, not a commiseration of the past few. Still....

Before I Went Away, I was aware of Irene primarily as a part of Wayne's World. Unfair? Yes; but back then I had my priorities....

Since the reemergence, over the course of a few quiet conversations, I've become aware of the fact that she is one of the more unique, and valued, members of the Cincinnati Fantasy Group.
...even if she had to marry into it.

L. I. RENKEN

First Thoughts to Bill on 15th anni

fandom
entire volumes from the edge
spiritual cellular overdrive

networks in networks
bonds and barter
and books

guy wires from being
to being keep us
from spinning into the void

firmly planted

in

Space...

---L. I. Renken
(a.k.a. Irene Perin)

...Joel wasn't the first to deliver for this issue; but he was the second. Just as, Long Ago, he was the second -- all the way from Kentucky--to greet me on my official arrival in Cinsanity. That story was told five years ago...so we won't repeat it here. [But you will note his placement in the conTEXT of this issue....]

Despite a few testy moments [my comments on a former prime minister of Israel; his on an age-old question that set me off at the time] ... Joel has been one of the more pleasant and stable constants in my decade and a half here. Even now I see him more often than I do several other contributors to this issue -- and they live within the I-275 perimeter!

"Ah, Marge. Nobody brags about having a lawyer in the family."

You'll run into that quote a bit later on ... but I'm quite pleased to have Joel as a permanent part of my fannish family. Besides, he's the only lawyer I know who doesn't bill me for talking to him!

But if he doesn't watch it, given the frequency with which he's been appearing in these pages ... he may end up being known as a fanzine writer, instead....

JOEL D. ZAKEM

All the Way From Kentucky II

Way back in *OUTWORLDS 51*, which was the first time that Bowers attempted this "all-Cincinnati (more or less)" experiment, I was the only contributor with a non-local address. Back then, I didn't think it mattered. After all, I had lived in the Greater Cincinnati area for most of my life and, while I had moved to Louisville in 1983 to attend law school and stayed after getting a job with the Commonwealth, I figured Louisville was only a temporary situation. Now, however, I am about to mark my ninth anniversary as a Louisville resident.

And, the way it looks now, I may be staying here a while longer. I've discovered that Louisville has a lot going for it (even if we are not getting a World-con). The city even has several advantages over the Cincinnati area, such as lower rents and a more vibrant local music scene, and I have made new friends here. While my current job as a staff attorney for the state Worker's Compensation Board is not overly challenging and/or exciting, I am good at what I do. Since my bosses seem to like me, I have no current plans to challenge the economy and search for a new position. Besides, if I leave, I might miss out on all the lawyer jokes I hear.

Q: What do lawyers use for birth control?

A: Their personality.

There is, however, one thing I miss. While Louisville currently contains at least two active fan groups, I have found nothing to replace the Cincinnati Fantasy Group. (I have volunteered/been drafted for the Rivercon committee, but that does not really count.) In the eight plus years I've lived in Louisville, I've never attended a meeting of FOSFA, Louisville's longest-running fan organization. While many of my fannish friends in Louisville are former or non-active FOSFA members, I cannot seem to get too excited about the current membership or their monthly meetings. I also have no interest in a relatively new group centered around the public library system, whose main purpose appears to be discussing books I haven't gotten around to reading. You see, I was spoiled by the CFG.

I attended my first CFG meeting about 23 years ago, when I was 16. While I had attended my first MidwestCon the year before, I mostly stood around the fringes of the conversations (a habit I kept up for my first 15 or so years in fandom) and therefore did not meet too many real fans. The CFG was different. Even though, with the exception of Brad Balfour and Frank Johnson (who also attended their first CFG meetings that night), I was by far the youngest person there, I never felt like I was being talked down to. The CFG accepted me for what I was. They were quick to tell me when I was being a fugghead, and they planted a growing and continuing interest in fannish history and traditions in me. I may be 108 miles from my former home, but I still consider myself a CFG member, even though I might only make one meeting a year.

Q: What is The Difference between a lawyer's boots and a cowboy's boots?

A: The cowboy's boots have the bullshit on the outside.

The current CFG is a lot different from the group I first joined, and this has not sat well with a few of the older members. I, however, relate the changes to the differences between 1969 and 1992 as well as to the differences within the current membership. Death has taken Lou Tabakow, who in many ways shaped the CFG that I first joined and therefore helped shape my early impressions of fandom. Whenever I felt lost or out of place at conventions, Lou was there to take me in hand and show me around. Death has also taken Bea Mahaffey and Dale Tarr, who drove me to my first CFG meeting and were always ready to provide friendly conversation and advice. Other long-time members have either moved away or become less active.

In addition, many of the more recent members to me appear to be more comfortable in the *Fandom Is Just A Goddamn Hobby* set than the *Fandom Is A Way Of Life* set. This, however, is fine with me. I joined the CFG in the midst of my adolescence and, while my social life has not been what would usually be classified as active, I often found other things to do on Saturday nights instead of attending the bi-weekly CFG meetings. Still, I knew that when I returned to a CFG meeting, even after a long absence, I would be around my friends.

To me, the CFG, and fandom in general, is about friendship. I've never considered myself to be the mover or shaker that you usually find in the pages of *OUT-WORLDS*, but I read every issue from cover to cover (even the ones that exceed 100 pages). You see, even though I may not see him more than a few times a year, I consider Bill Bowers to be a friend, and I am interested in what is going on in his world. The same can be said for the CFG. Looking down the current roster, I see some who have meant a lot to me in the past, many who still mean a lot to me, and even a few who I hope might mean a lot to me in the future. While there might also be one or two individuals listed who I would not normally choose as a friend, it's probably as much my fault as it is theirs.

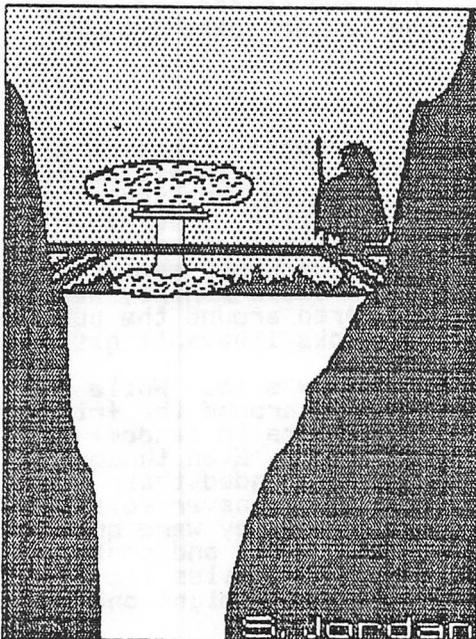
I also see addresses of people in places like Paris, Ky., Franklin, In., and Raleigh, N.C. They must have also realized that the CFG contains a special group of people and, like me, they want to remain a part. I think we've all been spoiled.

Q: What do you call a lawyer who is skydiving?

A: Skeet.

Well, I guess I've felt like skeet long enough today. This one's for you, Bill. Happy Anniversary!

---Joel D. Zaken



She signs herself "Sandra" these days...but she'll always be Sandy to me. With the possible exception of Paula and Rick, she is the youngest contributor to these pages. She is also the one I've known the longest.

Sandy will turn 31 in July...two days before I don't. It is no longer particularly frightening to realize that I've known her since she was simply one of the Franke-brats. It has been interesting.

Some dire predictions were made ten years ago when she married Greg. Still, as I've pointed out, her marriage has lasted more than twice as long as both of mine, put together...and it is still going as strong as any relationship I have knowledge of. (They are so disgustingly affectionate in public....!)

Sandy and Greg have been among the most understanding, and unquestioningly supportive of those aiding my Transition Back. I'll never forget.

Sandy does talk. More than any other individual I know.

...but she has never failed to stop...and simply listen to my Latest Traumas of Ups & Downs.

She is, simply, one of the Special People in my life.

Even if she can't write!!!

SANDRA JORDAN

Whatever Works

You can go write "He" said, I can't I said. But "He" can get so darn pushy when "He" wants to. Writing is the same as talking for others; for me writing is one of the most difficult things I can think of. It doesn't help much when my mother and several close friends are quite proficient at it, including you know who, and actually create fanzines.

I consider myself a half *fannish brat* based on the fact I was not born into fandom, but rather started attending cons at the tender age of 12 (wipe that smirk off your face). Unlike most of my friends at the time I actually liked going off somewhere with my folks. And again unlike my friends I got to travel to other states and even Canada. You see in 1972 we lived in rural Beecher Illinois, surrounded by farmland, where no one traveled much because they couldn't leave their fields for long. So here we were, traveling to other cities to stay at hotels, a wonderful playground for active young minds, attending conventions. I found it all totally fascinating, full of people from all sorts of backgrounds, and they got along relatively well with one another. Fandom soon became my other family.

Thanks to my folks, I was able to attend cons fairly regularly from 1972 until 1980 when I left home. Unfortunately, unlike my mom, I don't "do" anything in fandom, but I do enjoy being a part of it. I create art and sometimes even write, but mostly for me, and seldom are they seen by others. It was a miracle that I even wrote a LoC for "Him"; my own mom and others have put up with my being quiet and I hope they all have forgiven me for not doing the same for them. It's not that I don't read fanzines. I do--any and all I can get my hands on--but to tell them how much I enjoyed them in black and white, I find frightening.

But I have a mutual friend to some of you. Bill keeps trying to encourage me. I find this remarkable considering all he has to go through. He has given me pretty much the same reasons I have given myself to go ahead and try it; friendship is like that sometimes.

I'm not used to needing help, much less asking for it, but since an auto accident in '88 left me physically disabled, I have been left little choice in the matter. I have also found I need something to keep me occupied during the time my family doesn't need me, and at the same time I won't get hurt doing it, at least not physically. After all, if I had a seizure doing this, all that should occur is my computer screen freaking out because my face hit the keyboard.

Now, let's get back on track again. I have quite a few memories from that period of '72-'80. Like my mom giving my brothers and I plastic rings and such to sell at cons to help get Bob Tucker to Australia; my brother Kurt and I winning Best Fantasy Award, and my brother Brian Most Humorous in the Masquerade at Mid-American in '76; getting to meet and know some of my favorite authors and artists; getting to meet fans from other countries; meeting some really neat people; watching Alex Eisenstein explain *2001* to my brother Brian.... just to list some things off the top of my head.

I moved here to Cinti in '80 because of the people, hills, trees, and most important it being easier to attend cons and see friends should I be able to. I have never regretted it. Since then, for one reason or other, I/we have been financially strapped, and only able to attend cons once in a great while and then just the local ones.

We temporarily dropped out in '82 after Greg and I married and moved to Dallas Texas to find work. We got our senses back and in '83 moved back home to Cinti to stay. Greg and I have at least been able to attend a few MidwestCons, Spacecons, and Octocons either on our own power or by others' charitable contributions. We both share in the raising of two soon-to-be fannish brats. Our son Joshua, age 8, and daughter Michelle, age 5, already love reading and being read to science fiction as well as watching movies/thrillers.

Excuse me while I explain something. I have been asked before why it is I don't bring the Kids along with us to cons. My answer is this--I have enough trouble making sure I don't get into trouble without making sure they aren't as well. When they can more or less fend for themselves then they can come. It worked for my mom; it can work for me too--whatever works, as I have been known to say on more than one occasion. Don't get me wrong; I love my kids and want them with me most times, but I'm just barely ready to be out sociably myself since the accident, and it will take me a while until I'm ready to have my kids with me as well.

Well, anyway, to finish this beginning of something-hopefully, fandom has been good to me and if I have anything to say about it I plan on it being a part of the rest of my life. I would like to keep on doing something fannish besides watching and reading all the others doing it, even if I'm not witty or funny or whatever, like they are.

---Sandra Jordan

...I suppose it's self-evident, but I wish to point out that Dave's chronicling of our phone conversations fall totally within the realm of fantasy. I know I'm much more witty than he depicts--but I suppose it's only natural that he gets all the best lines ... since he's closer to the floor, and thus more readily able to retrieve them from where Jackie dropped them!!!.

Mr. Dave: ...I'm still pleased that you and Ms Jackie "followed" me here, to Cincinnati...!

DAVE LOCKE

Close Enough For Fanwriting #14

Ringgg. Ringgg. Ringgg.

Hello.

"Hi, Dave, it's me."

"Hi, Bill. What the hell do you want?"

"Cutting right to the chase, eh? Is this an example of your professional customer service demeanor?"

"I save the bullshit for the customers, and sometimes for my *OUTWORLDS* column. Most other times, I just let it all hang out. Generally, it touches the ground. So to what do I attribute the honor of this call?"

"Thank you for the segue about your *OUTWORLDS* column. How's it going? I'm ready for it now."

"A month ago I stuck a post-it note on the table. I set my mind to thinking about topics and figured it would be no time before I'd fill the note with all kinds of ideas. So far all it contains is the title of my column, but it has served a useful purpose."

"Uh huh. What?"

"I've been going through a spell of insomnia. One night I laid in bed with a million things running past my frontal lobes, and failed at every trick I could think of to get to sleep. Until, finally, after lying there from midnight to 4:00 in the morning, I decided I should at least make some decent use of my time. So I started thinking on what I might write about. Fell asleep in two minutes flat. Since then, as soon as I go to bed I immediately start applying serious thought to the column, and as a result my insomnia has been cured."

"Well, glad I could be of help. Now, when will your column be ready?"

"Unfortunately, I tried thinking about the column during a commercial interruption of a movie I was watching, and wound up missing the ending. I think they were headed toward the cowboy kissing his horse, but I can't be certain. As for the column, I still have this almost blank post-it note here on the table. Wouldn't have any ideas, would you?"

"No, I leave that up to the writers."

"You'll never be mistaken for the reincarnation of John W. Campbell."

"About the column..."

"Well, I'm working on it. I'm sorry that my inspiration and your deadline are not closer friends."

"Once you get your topics worked out, how long to write it?"

"An evening, or two."

"I'll call you back in two days, then."

"Call me back two days after I tell you I've got the subject matter worked out."

"April 10th is your next deadline. May 15th is the deadline after that. Think you can cope?"

"Inspiration does not respond to my week-at-a-glance calendar. A page from my filofax would not disclose an entry for "8:00 pm: Inspiration for *OUTWORLDS* column!"

"Well, do what you can. Oh, I do have an idea. You always do a three-subject column, right?"

"Well, yes. Creature of habit, and all that. A CEFF column has generally been a three-subject format. What have you got in mind?"

"This call is your first subject. Responding to Chris Sherman's shtick on your shtick about the average FLAP Zip Code being in Beaver Bay, Minnesota, would be another. You can come up with the third subject yourself. These two will get you started."

"I've already written the first subject."

"I don't understand. What is it?"

"This phone conversation. I wrote it just two hours ago, before you called. I'll add your suggestion about responding to Chris Sherman, and it's done."

"You're psychic."

"No, physic."

"April 10th, Mr. Dave."

I first met Naomi in 1978, when we were both working "in-house" at a contract design firm -- and she was continually leaving to take care of a toddler named William. I didn't "introduce" her to the CFB, but somehow she found "us"....

A couple of weeks after I started at Kenner Products in 1981, the supervisor called me in one morning. "I understand you worked with a Naomi Cowan before. How is she...?"

Nevertheless, we both went "direct" later that year--and both survived until the last Big Layoff, Dec. 1987.

At times, I provided the Bowers Shuttle for Naomi and off-spring. In return, she introduced me to various Mensa-women--who proved to be fascinating creatures...if even more alien than real women. ~~Myself!!!~~ Still, when I started bringing my own "discovery" around in 1986, both Naomi and Sandy unquestioningly accepted "her", provided us with endless babysitting -- and both were proclaimed by "her"...as now being "her best friend". In the end...both were thoroughly shafted. But they were among the first to welcome me back with their friendship -- unquestioningly.

----- NAOMI COWAN-BARKLEY -----

Dear Bill,

When you so thoughtfully suggested that I explain how the date for Easter is chosen, at first I scoffed. Upon further reflection, however, I decided it was just the thing. (Especially since I had no ideas of my own.)

I have always hated writing assignments. I managed grade school and high school English Lit classes, but in college I was expected to crank out six (6) (!) essays each quarter--plus a midterm and final. Let's face it, even I don't have that much to say (meaningful, that is). Apparently I wasn't the only one who had trouble getting all wound up over the burning issues of the day. The instructors always had helpful lists of topics for us.

Each essay was to illustrate some grammar/style lesson. My worst was always the "try to convince someone of something" style. I will never be an advertising executive, probably because I think most advertisements are dumb. What exactly is "real cola taste"? How on earth can anyone "come up to cool"? And so forth. I have never in my life tasted a real cola berry. The other example is too ridiculous to bother with.

The other day on the radio I was listening to a little program that's played once a week. It's called "The Right Brain Works". I usually like this show a lot. The guy who does it is some kind of corporate consultant who helps businesses and executives realize their creative potential--or something like that. Anyway, that week's topic was contradictions we use regularly. Naturally one of the very first pairs of words he used was one that really grates me. Doesn't anyone in the corporate world realize that the word shrimp denotes a form of shellfish? Therefore one can grade shrimp according to size as well as origin or any other applicable quality, which is to say that the term jumbo shrimp is valid, not contradictory.

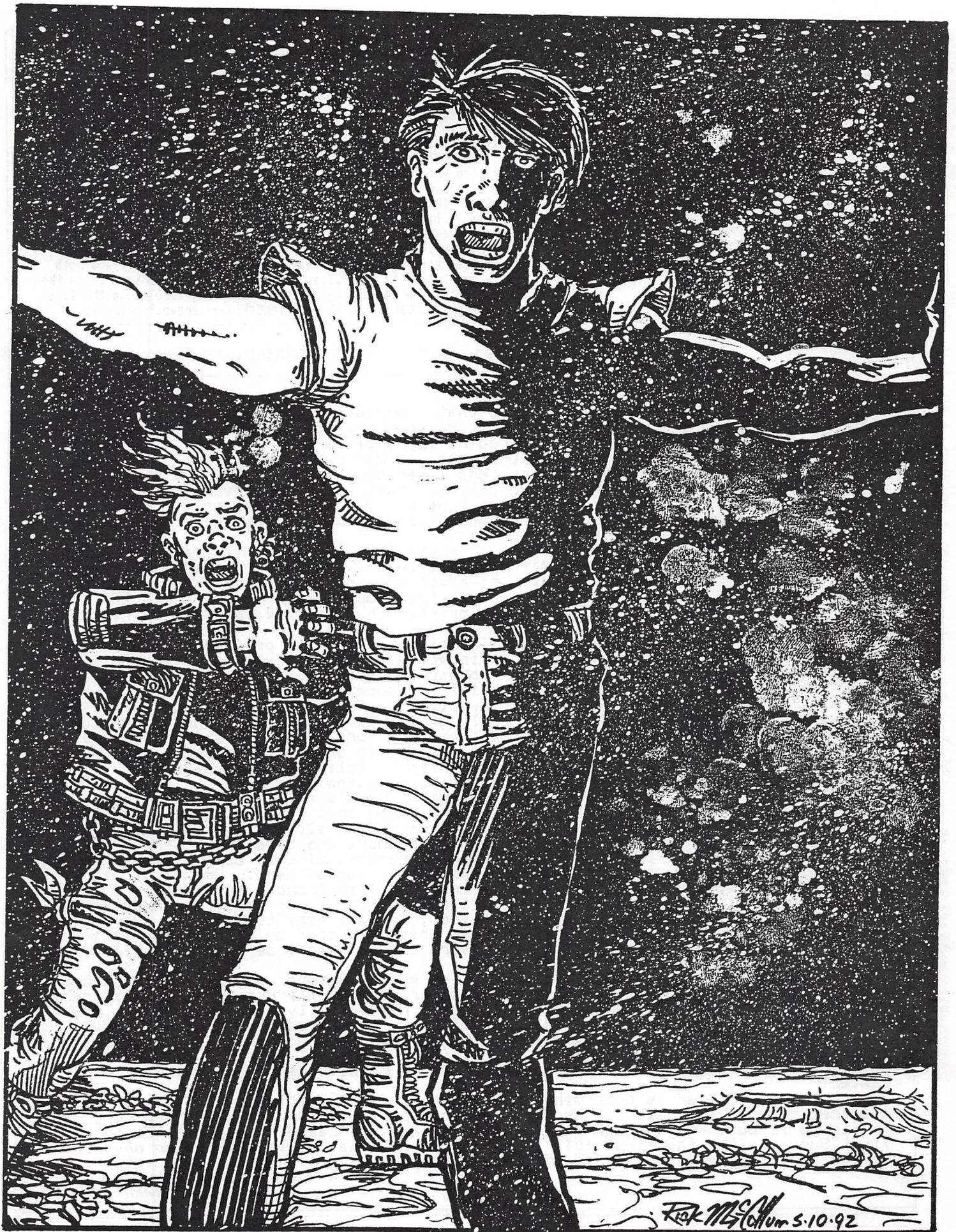
I must say that for a long while I agreed with the crowd that maintains the phrase "military intelligence" is an oxymoron. There's a lot that could be said in favor of this view. Nevertheless, any organization that can get huge numbers of people to agree to pay a couple quadrillion for common \$2.95 items, can't be all that stupid. We pay these people's cousins, brothers and buddies, at that. Of course, since it's for Defense and to stop the ravages of Evil Communism, we hardly ever question this practice, unless it really gets out of hand. Our local big defense contractor, G.E. jet engines, is once again in trouble for lying and cheating and, possibly, diverting some \$40 million dollars of our money to maybe Israel, maybe some else. It's kind of hazy, you know, and all very top secret. At any rate, someone is spending \$595 for a hammer that will cost me \$5.95 (plus tax) retail. Personally, I think it's just a very clever grandiose form of welfare. Done very creatively, too.

Thinking about some of my pet peeves led me to remember "my Uncle Toby's hobby horse". I found Uncle Toby and a host of other wonderfully eccentric characters in this great book called TRISTRAM SANDY. It's a hysterically funny book (in a dry British sort of way) that was a favorite of Thomas Jefferson and his wife. My favorite episode is the ecclesiastical gathering and the hot chestnuts, but you should read this book and judge for yourself.

You may well ask, "But what has this got to do with determining the date of Easter?"

Nothing. Easter is determined by a centuries old captive space alien, kept in a secret room in the Vatican, who uses a hyperspatial, quantum multiphase computer to figure it out. As a rough rule of thumb, however, Easter usually falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox. It can never be before March 22 nor after April 25. Now quit bothering me with silly questions.

Sincerely,
Naomi Cowan-Barkley



Frank Miller / 5.10.92

...not the strangest, but one of the more persistent observations of my Experience with Fandom...is the way you can be "aware" of the existence of someone for extended periods of time, years even, before some totally innocuous event allows you to get to know them.

I'd "known" Paula lived here -- her name was listed on the CFS roster -- but since she rarely attends meetings, I knew her only by virtue of last year's MidwestCon, where we were mutual members of the Bob Tucker Round Table, out on the terrace. In January, she needed a ride to Confusion, and I welcomed the idea of not driving to Michigan alone.

I've "shared" rides to conventions with a fair number of fans over the past thirty years. Some have been enjoyable; some were just looong; others were tolerable--they got me there! But Paula's gift of conversation, and willingness to simply listen to the musings of a total stranger...made this year's Trip North one of the most enjoyable I can recall.

It hasn't worked out that I was able to go to the past few cons Paula needed a ride to. But I'd certainly have no hesitation in doing it again. Whenever it works out.

--Paula is self-employed, with her own word-processing/resume service. She is also, perhaps, the most undersung member of Cincinnati's "pro's", having had five or six stories published in *ANALOG* over the past few years.

I'm particularly glad she consented to be a part of this particular perversion of mine. ...before she'd even seen a copy of *OUTWORLDS*!

I've only met Rick once, when I dropped Paula off, so I probably shouldn't (with my usual fannish tact) refer to him as "Mr. Paula".

Rick is a freelance illustrator, primarily specializing in comics, I believe. This is the first example of his work I've seen. Hopefully, given my well-known powers of persuasion, it won't be his last appearance in these pages!

PAULA ROBINSON

The Two Percent Solution

Illustrated by RICK McCOLLUM

The evening news had just gone off, and some movie star was trying to sell me deodorant soap. I was sitting on the couch next to my unbelievably pregnant wife, Marge. She was having another cup of the two percent milk I'd gotten for her at the corner store. Our baby was two weeks overdue -- not that we were worried. The doctor had just shrugged and muttered something about unpredictable events.

I looked at my severely expectant lady and smiled sympathetically. She and I had given up being impatient or frustrated. Instead, we just cracked jokes.

"The kid's bound to be a doctor," I told her. "They always keep people wait--"

I didn't get to finish the word because Marge had smacked me with a couch pillow. "John Miller! You have no right to predetermine your child's future. Besides, she's going to be a lawyer." Marge stroked her belly for emphasis. "I can feel it."

I don't know why, but Marge was stuck on the idea of having a baby lawyer. The doctor-lawyer controversy had been going on for a week now.

"Aw, Marge. Nobody brags about having a lawyer in the family." I pretended to be thoughtful. "You haven't swallowed any law books or anything to hedge the bet, have you?"

She smirked. I grabbed a strand of her long, blond hair and started making a macrame knot. She laughed and reached over her big belly for another pillow.

Then, well....

Things went black. Then Calvin Boyd's voice pierced my consciousness. Cal was a not-too-bright neighbor boy who did yard work for us sometimes.

"Mister Miller?"

My head was all swimmy, and there was a funny, dirty-metal smell all around. I think I said something along the lines of, "Duh?"

"Are you OK, Mister Miller?"

I blinked a few times. Everything was black except for a few tiny bright spots.

"I'm not sure," I said. "Is it dark here?"

"Yeah."

"Are those stars?"

"Yeah."

His shaven head appeared in my field of vision. I spent half a second wondering why teenagers only got one ear pierced these days. "Oh. Yes, Cal, I can see."

Cal exhaled. "Oh. Good."

I sat up. A flat, dry plain stretched to the horizon in all directions. The stars seemed to light the land fairly well, even though the sky remained black.

"Where are we, Mister Miller?" Cal asked.

I squinted at the stars. I'd never been an expert at astronomy, but I knew the Big Dipper. It wasn't there.

"We must be in the southern hemisphere or something," I breathed, thinking aloud. "The stars are different down there, aren't they?"

Cal just stared at me, looking worried.

Abruptly, the shock wore off. "Oh, my God. Marge-- the baby--"

"Calm down, Mister Miller," Cal yelled, after I had ranted for a while.

"But I--"

"I don't know where they are. I don't know where anything is. All I did was go to the corner store for some two percent milk, and...uh...."

Cal apparently didn't know what else to say.

It occurred to me that his family was nowhere to be seen, either.

"Sorry," I said. I stood up, mostly to be doing something, and paced a circle around him.

"How did we get here?" Cal asked, pivoting to follow me.

I shrugged. "I haven't the faintest idea."

"Me, neither." He paused and looked at the stars. "I don't think this is the southern hemisphere, Mister Miller."

No shit, I thought, but I just shrugged again.

"Hey," Cal said, and pointed. "Look."

"What?"

He shook his finger for emphasis. I followed his stare and saw what he meant. One of the stars seemed to be coasting past its neighbors.

"What is it? Think maybe it's a shooting star?" he asked. "It's not moving like a--"

Before he could finish the word, a big--I mean BIG--white thing materialized four feet behind him.

"---plane," he finished. His face changed as he noticed my expression. I pointed, and he turned around.

"Shit," he said.

I just shook my head. My mouth was open and I couldn't seem to shut it.

The thing was about the size of an apartment building. It looked like a giant, round water balloon full of milk. Its surface shimmered like pearl.

Milk made me think of babies, and babies made me think of Marge. Was she all right?

My thought was interrupted by an unfamiliar voice.

"Excuse me?"

The voice came from the pearly water balloon. It had a tinny quality.

"Excuse me," it said again.

Cal hit the dirt. Then he stared at me. "I think it's talking to you," he said.

I suppressed an urge to belt him.

Apparently sensing that it had our attention, the water balloon asked, "Do you have it?"

"What?" I blurted.

"The fuel."

"What fuel?"

The pearly water balloon trembled for a moment. "Oh, dear. I'm sorry," it said.

I blinked. Cal asked something stupid. I ignored him.

"Don't be embarrassed," the giant balloon assured me. "We get you guys by mistake all the time."

"Uh, no problem," I said.

"You're tourists, aren't you?" the balloon asked. "Where are you from?"

"Did that thing say we were tourists?" Cal blurted.

"Yes," I said quickly, not taking my eyes from the pearly water balloon.

At which point, it vanished.

"Where'd it go?" Cal asked.

I blinked and stared at him. "Budapest," I grumbled.

That kid sure could get on my nerves.

"Budapest?" Cal asked.

"Right," I said, and paced a few steps away.

Cal was beginning to ask how I knew it had gone to Budapest when a curved, pearly surface materialized two feet in front of me. I glanced up. Sure enough, it was the giant water balloon.

"You," it said with authority, "are in the wrong reality."

"Buh, Budapest," Cal stammered.

"Where do you live?" the water balloon demanded.

Without thinking, I rattled off my address. Before I could even finish my zip code, I was smacked in the face with a couch pillow.

"Wha--?"

Marge laughed. "I only managed to choke down the Constitution and a few Rights. Pretty dry stuff. That's why I needed the second glass of milk."

Once again I said something along the lines of, "Duh." Then I realized I had some partially knotted blond hair in my hands. It was attached to Marge. I threw my arms around my extremely pregnant wife and held her as tightly as I dared.

She laughed, pleasantly surprised. "What brought on this burst of affection?"

I thought for a few seconds. Well, dear, I was just in the middle of nowhere, literally, with Cal, and a giant pearly water balloon came along, and...

"Oh, nothing," I told her.

Things seemed pretty normal after that. Marge had the baby the next day. Little Cindy weighed in at eight pounds, twelve ounces. We agreed to let her settle the doctor/lawyer dispute--after she learned to talk.

A few days later I was making a milk run to the corner store. Marge and Cindy were both sleeping, and I wanted to get the milk before they woke up.

I arrived at the store and went to the dairy case. Cal Boyd's father was there. He looked at me funny for a moment, then shrugged to himself and came over.

"You, ah, wouldn't know anything about Cal, would you?" he asked.

My gut churned. I blinked a few times, not taking my gaze off the carton of two percent in my hand. "Why do you ask?"

"Well...it's the damdest thing. I sent him out to get a quart of two percent milk the other day. He didn't come back, so, you know, his mother got worried. We made a few calls to his friends and all, but no luck."

I could feel sweat forming on my face and neck. I hoped Mr. Boyd wouldn't see it. I glanced cautiously over at him. Somehow I wasn't surprised to find that he wasn't looking at me, either.

"Then we got this call," he went on, "from--would you believe it--Budapest. It was Cal! I know it sounds nuts, but see, he mentioned your name, so--"

I dropped the carton of two percent and ran. I was halfway down the block before I turned to see a puzzled Mr. Boyd staring at me from the store entrance.

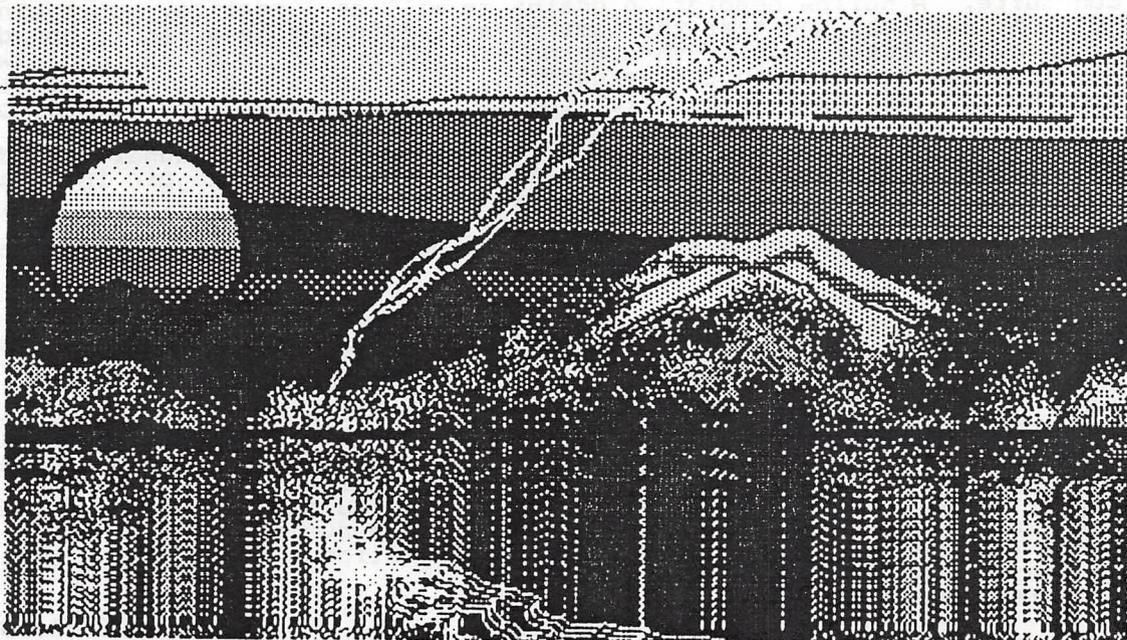
"Nice seeing you," I shouted, trying to sound casual.

I got home safely. I never did go back for the milk. Marge started wondering if I'd gone exotic on her.

However, to her credit, my no-longer-pregnant wife can be very persuasive. She eventually talked me into getting milk again. I'll go out for it nowadays, sometimes even by myself. My only stipulation is that I don't have to go to the corner store.

And I will absolutely, positively *never* get two percent milk again.

---Paula Robinson



SL164

...when I came up with the Brilliant Concept of this Grand Effort, the question arose as to who to ~~MAFASSED~~ invite to participate. Those who had been represented in ~~OUTWORLD~~ 51, naturally. But I also wanted new blood.

I specifically did not "invite" everyone in Cincinnati. I didn't even invite everyone listed on the Cincinnati Fantasy Group Roster.

But I did invite those I found/find interesting -- even if they'd never contributed to my ~~or AA~~ fanzine before....

Hell, I even invited Scott "Arlo" Street.
Go figure.

SCOTT STREET

I do not know Bill Bowers nearly so well, nor have I done so for nearly so long, as many as fandom, yet he has done me the signal honor of requesting that I turn my hand toward the enhancement of this grand effort. (Well, yes, I *do* live in Cincinnati, so of course he asked, but only an uncongenial blister such as yourself would have brought it up -- you obnoxious little twit....)

What can I say about Bill that others (particularly himself) will not have told you already? That he is kind? Generous? Sets a high moral tone? Is a credit to the party and the 15th ward. Engages in such good works as refitting the wings to stray *mus domesticae* that manage to escape *Chez Ellison*? Why, not too many months ago, at a meeting of the Cincinnati Fantasy Group, I myself with my own personal eyes say this paragon of selflessness nudge a container of nosh at least a sixteenth of an inch in the general direction of another fan.

Indeed, who among us has not been witness to the ~~MYTHICAL~~ legendary Bowers generosity? Whose ears have not strained to catch, yet once more, the familiar trademark greeting "Dop ack!" (Oh, sorry, wrong Bill...) And whose eyes have not closed in an easily-achieved attempt to bring to mind the sleazy wink, the knowing smirkle, the ~~fa~~ famous grin. Why, it's...it's....

Oh, fudge. What it's really, is no use. I had intended to emulate the cannibal swordsman on his visit to Rome ("I come to parry Caesar, not to braise him"), but the required level of hypocrisy is just too overwhelming. I do *not* admire Bill Bowers, nor do I respect him. In fact, I harbor an inordinate detestation for the pestilential little pipsqueak. Envy gnaws at me vitals as I contemplate this exercise in publishing vainglory, a patently self-serving effort to ratchet his level up yet another gratuitous notch. Acid despair floods me veins as I recall the pell mell departure of every unattached specimen of my complementary gender when he exits a con suite. A hollow desolation drains me will as I realize, yet again, that there is no justice, and that the Name of a certain Big Name Fan is bound inevitably to become Bigger still--through no particular virtue of the Fan!--while we poor wee timorous beasties in the wainscoting of fandom are destined ever to dart hither and yon, whiskers atwitch for the first faint emanations of that old metaphoric strychnine.

But no...strong though the urge may be to suggest he consume annelids and cease cerebroneural function, I restrain myself. Instead, I must join in this celebration of Bill's many years in fandom. I must applaud his fifteenth anniversary of residence here in the Queen of the West. I must...I must....

I must pause to (*ooh, yucch!*) wipe this odious brown substance off my nose.

* * * * *

Some will call it "fate", others "coincidence". As I was first perusing the Call for Papers for this ~~over~~ ~~type~~ ~~good~~ momentous compendium, an ad appeared on my television screen. The ITT Technical Institute wanted to train me to be a (*gasp*) draftsman. I had a momentary flashback to my mechanical drawing classes in high school. My, those were pleasant days. Then, before I quite realized what was happening, I found myself wondering idly whether a certain other person's notorious career proclivities had been shaped by similar experiences.

Some will call it "fate", others "coincidence". You may call it "synchronicity". I call it a disgusting example of Universal perversity. Is there *nothing* that does not work to impose an unlooked-for contemplation of Bill Bowers upon the decent, unoffending majority in our society?

For the ~~Trustees~~ Trustees,

/s/ Scott Street

Mr. Curry, as was the case with Mr. Locke, is represented here with an installment of his regularly scheduled ~~WNY ddyf~~ ~~delivered~~ ~~OUTWORLD~~S column. Mr. Curry seems to have acquired the dread symptoms that plague the Senior Columnist: Seadinitis. (...a fannish affliction only slightly less fatal than Bowers Drop-Dead Publication dates.)

He made me work for this one: He stopped playing at the Brew House...so I couldn't corner him there.

He changed his phone to a new, unlisted number. Something about "harassing" calls.

He even had the nerve to call me on a Sunday to pick it up. Upon my arrival at the new Curry-Loughlin abode, he took me to the bar next door where he plied me with beer, while I attempted to decipher thirteen hand-written pages. He had run out of ribbons for his fancy new typewriter. Yes.

You should really appreciate the things I go through to bring you Quality Entertainment.

AL CURRY

Blue Flame Pure Shine Chronicles

"The time has come," the fanhack said, "to speak of many things...of slandercons and zine attacks...of ravages and stings."

* * *

My, my...another of my slap-dash collections of verbal fumlings. To top it off, Bowers actually requested this. Requested? Nay! Cajoled...wheedled...let's face it, the man whined and pleaded in such pathetic fashion that it would've brought tears from a banker, for Chrissakes.

It's sad, you know. Bill's been around so long that the rest of us were only itches in our fathers' pants when he hammered the slugs into type trays for his first fanzine. In those magical years, we thought that everyone's mother was a variation on Donna Reed...that you could actually protect yourself from nuclear attack by the high-tech method known as "duck and cover"...that our government was actually controlled by the people. In other words, the days of innocence and naiveté. This would've been during the period when my main concerns were food, pets, avoiding homework, avoiding chores, food, and an older acquaintance of mine named Sheila who like to play "I'll handle yours if you'll handle mine"...*...*...* Oh! Sorry! I seem to have wandered off to gather a bit of wool while wondering whatever might have happened to Shelia since those days in the tool shed out back of our ...I mean, she actually had these silky, black hairs on...but I digress.

Bowers is now an institution. He shouldn't be forced to go trawling for contributions. Buck up, Bill. We still love you. There will always be those of us out here who are more than willing to crank out zine fodder for The Big Skinny.

* * *

Hot damn! Eric Lindsay! Well, wank my wallaby! The little bugger finally re-appeared in the northern hemisphere and flopped into our burg of Cinsanity. I'm sure that many of you reading this will be seeing him, or (considering the publishing schedule Bill follows, which is based on life crises, rather than such niceties as calendars), will have fond memories of having seen him, by the time this sees print. Still, the visit of our weird little friend (American Fandom's own pet Aussie) seemed well worth a mention. It had been some years since his last visit.

My wife, Lyn, had never met Eric. By way of description I said, "He looks as if someone stuck Bowers in the dryer for too long...and then...healthed him up a bit." Eric came walking in, and she had to agree with my assessment.

Another thing I noticed when we sat down to chat, was that the passage of years didn't seem to matter much. That happens occasionally with certain special people. You have spotted something unique in an individual. Regardless of the time span between visits, that uniqueness pops up to greet you with its happy memories.

This is no ponderous truth as revealed by an eternal philosopher; rather, it simply demonstrates an example of one of the many little gifts we receive when we take the time to look for them. These small gifts frequently appear in the form of people who move through our lives.

Take a moment...look around. They pass you by everyday. You can't catch them all, but don't miss any more than you have to. Sometimes it takes a bit of work, but the benefits are legion.

* * *

Throughout the microcosmos of fandom...and even extending into that uncharted, smoking region sparsely occupied by mundanesters, car mechanics, and other semi-gaffium shell-dwellers such as myself...one is apt to find notebook scribblers. Out here, in this rarefied atmosphere, you may find that the view seems moderately clearer than when you are up to your scuppers in fanac. Don't get me wrong. This is not a criticism of those who dive in headfirst. Done it myself a few times, and (with the exception of the occasional burn-out while editing two fanzines simultaneously) it seems to have done little personal damage. The facial tic is nearly gone, and few total strangers comment on my weird, limping gait anymore.

My few years as one of the editors of *QUANTUM* and as sole editor/publisher/typist/etc. of *GNOMENCLATURE* were enjoyable enough. Yet, when I stopped for a break in 1979, I suddenly realized that publishing was over for me. Something had ended...an internal toggle had been switched. I had reached that stage of Fan Zen where the contemplation of publishing was sufficient for my purposes...or...to quote myself (and who better, I might add)... "meditation on the sound of one fan hacking."

There have been a few times when I've become peripherally involved again. A few cartoons, a few columns, that sort of thing. Usually, that was more than sufficient for scratching my itch. Then in 1985, while my wife and I were living in Ireland, I became enmeshed in the world of the Wide-Open-Four-Way. This particular aggregation also contains my fellow Wofwarriors Mike Glicksohn, Dave Locke, and Paul (no, honestly, this is my beard, you blind twat) Skelton. For those of you not familiar with the concept, a WO4W is the sort of laid-back APA-on-Quaaludes that makes "serious" fanwriters as frustrated as a Rottweiler in a pack of horny Chihuahuas.

If memory serves, Skel started the whole thing (or was it Dave?). Regardless...SOMEONE sent me a multi-paged, single-spaced, Xerox-reduced (Lillifucking Putian, in fact) copy of a letter in which I found myself accompanied by another indirect reader. This process went so well that, in short order (no slur intended...yeah, right) we found Mike Glicksohn hanging out on our street corner and wanting to join our game of barbs 'n quills. I said no, of course, but that was only because Mike is so damned adorable when he pouts and scuffs the toes of his shoes. So there we were, sending our thoughts winging back and forth from Europe to North America. In spite of the passage of years, and the fact that the American midwest is somewhat over-represented since I moved back to Cincinnati, the letters keep winging back and forth.

Once, in what must have been an alcohol-induced stupor, I suggested that we should sit down and compile a "Best of M.A.D.S." for publishing as a one-shot. Then I looked at the 3 to 4 inch thick file folder on my desk that represents our seven years of correspondence and felt my sphincter clench. The forthcoming torrent of anatomically heroic suggestions by my partners made it clear that the squeaks of clenching sphincters had also been heard in their own homes. The project could wind up being a career, in comparison with which the mucking out of the Aegean stables would have been a cakewalk.

Still, it has been a good time with the guys. Maybe I've found enough of a niche to keep the ink flowing through my aging veins.

* * *

A little over a year ago, our dear friend, Marilyn Elkus, graduated into infinite existence. The passing was less than peaceful. Cancer wasted and wracked her. It tore at her vitals through the curtains of morphine, yet she remained, essentially, Marilyn throughout the ritual of passage. May the eternal grant this much grace to each of us in turn. One gift remained...her smile and strengths were lodged securely in the memory of each friend. When you think about it, that's one hell of a legacy.

The United Jewish Cemetery is about fifteen miles away. It's one of those fine, private places. Surrounded on all sides by a high wall of woods, the only intruding sound is the distant, low noise of traffic on the expressway. Even this remains unobtrusive; it is a soft, white noise that acts as the canvas wash of an auditory painting that is lightly touched by the fine lines of bird song and the broad brush strokes of wind through branches.

Not being Jewish, we were unsure of custom in such places; we were told that flowers were not appropriate for the occasion. However, not being Jewish, we decide that we could defend a compromise with the justification of our ignorance. Perhaps a gift from our ancestral heritage would not be amiss if transplanted into Marilyn's traditions.

We sat on wooden benches beneath vine-covered arbors near her grave. We smoked our cigarettes, carefully smashing and stowing the butts so as to spare her spot from our leavings. We remarked on how pretty our gift was, lying on the polished marble of her memory. We said our goodbyes, climbed into our car, and drove away.

We left nothing there...except for two stems of purple heather, tied with a ribbon whose color matched the thick covering of tiny blooms.

* * *

As some of you already know, we have moved...yet again. Our old neighborhood had simply become far too much of a much. This is especially true when one considers what quiet, sensitive, gentle beings Lyn and I are. My heavens, too much excitement could surely bring on the vapors if we weren't careful. And that's without even considering the possibility of arrest on assault charges as almost came about on Christmas night when we nearly came to blows with the mouth-breathing, brain-cramped, maladroit, subnormal spawn of our downstairs neighbor. He was up in my face in our doorway while explaining in his quaint street parlance how he was going to pound my rectum into the nearest patch of soft earth...and how he was going to do the same favor for my stepson, Doug. Then...he really screwed up. He replied to my wife, Lyn, with the pithy witticism...and I quote..."Why don't you shut your mouth, you goddam white bitch!" Well, mercy, mercy. The sweet, even-tempered Ms Lyn is totally without prejudice on such occasions. She is an equal opportunity pounder of heads, and she possesses a mouth that can make dock workers cringe and look around to be certain that their mothers haven't overheard.

As things seemed to be proceeding in such directions, I felt gratitude for my large, gnarled, walking stick so near at hand. It would've ben the perfect thing for giving him a splinter enema. However, before things got quite that far, some of his relatives came along and cooled him down a bit...finally leading him back to his dripping rock crevice where he, no doubt, spent the remainder of the Yuletide evening gnawing strips of sinew from the bones of pampas animals he had chased to ground...or, perhaps, scraping the callouses from the knuckles of his front paws.

In reality, this was merely the final straw under which our residential camel had been buried. We were tired of the neighborhood, the noise, the landlords who did absolutely nothing about repairs. Lyn found our new address listed in the classified ads; we came over the next day, and snatched it up in the blink of an eye. Considering all the problems we had experienced with the management company of the old place, we felt no compunctions whatsoever about cheerfully breaking our lease. In fact, I was so annoyed by their sloppy management that I decided to get vicious; I turned Lyn loose on them. She called them up...read her version of the riot act...and said we were moving in a week, and if they didn't like it the could "...damned well sit on it and spin." She also told them that they could keep the deposit, since we had no intention of paying any rent for the month. God, but this woman is handy to have around. You simply point her at the target asshole, give her the attack command, and try to keep your coattails out of the entrail coils and other spillage.

The new apartment is near the University of Cincinnati in the Clifton section of town, meaning proximity to work, bus lines, University (for my stepson), shops, a nice park.

When we returned from a run to the grocer's this afternoon, we parked the car and took a leisurely, meandering stroll through the backstreets of our new neighborhood. There are hundreds of old homes in this part of town. Some years back the city tried to slip in an order to have all the gaslights removed from the streets over here. Clifton residents went stark, screaming berserk and threatened to torch City Hall if they tried to lay one electric finger on our gas streetlights. So, we're still able to take pleasant walks after dark through the gaslight, residential backstreets. At the end of our walk, I stopped off at a store for beer and a paper. We came on home (stopping in at Arlin's Bar, since it was on the way). I sat on our new front porch (a first floor front porch, I might add) to read my paper. I had a nice, tall mug of Christian Moerlein Select...my whiskey glass was filled with John Jameson's tasty Irish...my paper was resting on my belly. Life can be decent on occasion...not much money, oh but honey, ain't we got fun?

* * *

Not long ago, Lyn and I decided we had earned a wee bit of vacation. We had absolutely nowhere that we had to go; we had nothing that we had to do...yes, it does sound lovely, doesn't it? Lyn had her reading material lined up. She determined to set aside at least three of the days to do nothing but take bubble baths, listen to classical music, and curl up on the living room couch with her books and cups of tea. Sounded fine except for the bubble baths. Nasty things, those. Always struck me as being a bit like immersing oneself in a tub of not mucous, but, heh...it's her vacation.

I laid in a stash of beer, another bottle of Jameson's, a few steaks, a few movies, etc. Lined up all the bits of music that I wanted to send tearing through the AM-FM/TURNTABLE/CD/DUAL PLAY-RECORD CASSETTE Borg ship beastie that was one of my Christmas presents. I also got my reading material together.

Some of you already know this about me, but others don't; I am an absolute addict (coincidentally accurate term, that) for the work of those known as the BEAT WRITERS ... Kerouac... Burroughs... Ginsberg... Ferlinghetti... Snyder, etc. There was a biography out a few years ago on Jack Kerouac by a woman named Ann Charters.

She gave it the marvelously appropriate title of DESOLATE ANGEL. I heard an interview with her on National Public Radio in which they were discussing her latest effort...a massive tome that covers the period from the late 40's through the middle 60's, which she has titled THE PORTABLE BEAT READER. Wellllll! Obviously Al can't wait for such niceties as paperbacks. No, no! He has to trot out to Barnes & Nobles straightaway (10% discount coupon in his hot, little hand) and pick up the hard-bound copy. Ah, what the hell! It was only \$25...well, actually, \$22.50 + 5.5% ST = \$23.70...yeah, I can live with that.

It was an interesting period in writing. The Beats in America (and, in parallel, their English counterparts who were referred to as the Kitchen Sink Writers) dealt with the disillusioned realization of society after the war. It was a time when any member of what William Burroughs referred to as the Booboisie could feel sanctimoniously one with the rest of our selfrighteous culture as long as they were white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants...a time when a bowl of vanilla pudding such as Dwight Eisenhower could serve two terms as President...when a shit-stain like Joe McCarthy could ruin countless lives with his witch hunt. The first four lines of Allen Ginsberg's book-length poem "Howl" represent the feeling of the poetry from this cluster of writers:

"I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving
hysterical naked,
dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking for
an angry fix...."

Good old Ginsberg. I've met him on three occasions over the years, and in different parts of the country. Last time was here at a college in the Greater Cincinnati area. He is a strange and wonderfully fucked up little man, but Thunderin' Christ! He sure can write when he gets his knickers in a twist about something.

* * *

Memorial Day just passed recently, and the occasion set me to remembering. The holiday used to be one of those somber days of families coming together. They would make trips to gravesides and leave flowers thereon. I suppose it was a form of continuity for most folks, remembering the dead years while fostering the delusion of eternity through the hordes of children that always seemed to be scuttling around under foot. At any rate, those are the memories from my childhood.

My maternal Grandfather is buried in a small cemetery just off a country backroad. I never knew the man. He died about six months before I was born (from injuries received in a car crash). Still, we always made that annual pilgrimage to his grave.

I wonder if people still do these things. It seems likely that my parents do. They believe in such rituals. Blindly, nearly unconsciously, they follow the strands of family that remind them of their own lives. By this, I don't mean to infer serious criticism of them. I have my own version of these strands, but they are probably more incorporeal, meaning my memories.

I wonder if my parents worry about the graves that wait for them; are they concerned over their children's lack of concern? For myself, any useable organs (whatever few there might be) may be had for the asking. The rest is dross, and the ashes may as well be flushed. This marks the break in their continuity, I fear.

I expect it must be much like the anxieties of the last old Viking. Lying on his deathbed, he must have been suddenly stunned by the realization that there was no one left to wrap his body and place it in the longboat. No young warriors to build his pyre, to lash the rudder and set the sail, to fire the tinder and set him blazing out into the Western sea.

Ritual may bring comfort for generations. Yet, at the end of the line, a single individual must wait alone in the fear of ritual's limitations.

* * *

Just read that last bit to Lyn. She liked it, but said she knew it wasn't going to be particularly cheery. Why, I asked.

"Wagner," she said.

"What?"

"Wagner," she repeated. "You had Wagner on the CD player."

She's right, of course. Put on Wagner, let me near a pad and pen, and I can really put you in the proper mood to kick your dog. That's what happens when you start getting old and mossy. Perhaps the brain cells are stiffening up. Perhaps they've grown too susceptible to suggestion. Perhaps it's just that (in the words of the late, lamented Ed Cagle) my hind wheels fell off.

Whatever...you kids play nice, and don't fight. Maybe Father William'll let us all come and play in his nice magazine again sometime.

---Al Curry

One of the most pleasant surprises I encountered in 1990, upon returning from my...err..."Sabbatical"--was the discovery that Roger and Pat Sims had moved to ~~ELINDALE~~ Glendale earlier that year. In fact, an August 1990 CFB Meeting at Roger & Pat's served admirably as my unofficial Coming Back Party.

I'd "known" Roger & Pat for years--Roger and I were Two of The Seven on the quintessential Worldcon "bid"--but over the past two years I've gotten to *know* them. And it has been a delight.

One of the first, in an endless stream of kind and generous acts from both...was Roger's driving me to the 1990 Chicago DITTO--my "official" Coming Back Convention. There ... Roger obviously had such a good time that he suggested that "we" should bid for a future one. This exchange has led to DITTO V (coming up, here, this October!) -- the Very First Fanzine Fans Convention co-chaired by two former Worldcon Fan Guests of Honor. Yes.

In the meantime, Roger has just published an issue of his genzine, *FANTASY-SCOPE*... "Now In Its 41st Year". The second issue, no less. I, along with a horde of others, had promised "to write something" for that issue. I ... along with a horde ... didn't.

...however. I have assured Roger that, if he would write something for this issue of ~~■~~--I would certainly contribute to F-S #3. Earlier today (5/30/92) Roger dropped off two manuscripts. ...but now I'm not really sure that I'm still "obligated" to uphold my end of the bargain!

First up is a Genuine FanHistorical Item: From 1951--the very first submission of a youthful Roger Sims to a fanzine. [Wait to you see the "credit line" ...to where it ran!]

It is followed by an article that Roger wrote back in 1976 but which, to the best of his recollection, was never published.

I now have a new ~~680A&L~~ in Life:

...to publish something by Roger written in the 90s!

ROGER SIMS

"A Bird in the Hand"

Monday night was the night of the banquet and at said banquet a number of interesting things occurred at the table I sat at. Among those at the table with me were Es and Les Cole, Messrs Lee Jacobs and Lee Hoffman, Angus Harok, Ken BeAle, Frank Dietz, and Ted Dikty.

When the soup arrived (a gelatine mess of brown nothing) I said out of the corner of my mouth to Lee Hoffman, "What the hell spoon are you supposed to use on this mess?" I was the immediate receiver of a cascade of unintelligible helpful hints as to what I could do with it. Frank Dietz made the sterling comments that I should heat it and drink the CENSORED. This sounded very good to me so I set about trying to find a possible way of heating the soup. The coffee cup looked like the most likely place to start a fire. I took the cup and placed it in my plate and put the soup bowl on top. Ted Dikty made his claim for fame by pointing out that since no air could get into the cup a fork would have to be placed between the cup and bowl. Meanwhile the other fans were tearing the wrappings off their crackers and stuffing them into my cup. Les Cole decided to make himself a party to this affair by handling a folder of matches to me. But fortunately for Harry Moore's sanity, at this point I decided that I had coped with the situation long enough and completely avoided the whole mess.

During the latter part of this incident, Lee Hoffman had been staring at his salad hypnotically. Ed Kuss, who was on the other side of her, asked him what was the matter. She replied in a small but incredible voice, "There's a fly drowning in my salad." Sure enough there was a predatory (!!) creature drowning himself in the muck and mire (hy muck, hy mire) of the salad dressing. For some reason or other Lee would not share the salad with the fly. Not only wouldn't she share it, she wouldn't eat any of it herself. I for myself cannot see why, for how much can a fly eat?

((After several attempts at rescue operations we gave him up for lost, and passed the salad around the table for all present to speak a few words over the remains.))

Somehow or other the conversation got from the the lowly fly to the digestive system of man. I maintained that it takes approximately two hours for all the food one eats to reach the stomach so there one does not fill the stomach when he is eating. Several people disagreed and a stimulating argument was underway when some of the more squeamish fen decided that this was not fit conversation for the dinner table and told me so. I felt if they wanted to be that way about it, I would avoid them, so I did for the rest of the evening.

---Roger Sims ° 1951

First Published in *QUANDRY* [Vol II #3 (#15)], November, 1951

ROGER SIMS

A Trip to the Airport

This story begins one peaceful Sunday morning in February, 1976, at the home of my in-laws in Bellingham, Washington, a small sleepy town of 41,000, twenty miles south of the Canadian border in Puget Sound. We were there for their fiftieth wedding anniversary dinner and other R & R activities. The silence is broken by the jangled ring of the phone, which when answered responds with the voice of my sister-in-law: "I called the State Patrol and was told to stay off the roads going north as they are very bad."

Since both of us must return to work the next day, this is not possible. She continues, "Maybe we'd better not go to church."

However, since our arrival the previous Saturday had caused my mother-in-law to miss the previous Sunday, this was also not possible. The time of the phone call from my sister-in-law is 9:30 a.m.. During the conversation it is decided that if we can be under way to the airport by 10:55, we will have 95 minutes for the 45 mile trip, arriving thirty minutes before the 1 p.m. flight. This will allow enough time to check-in, wave a tearful good-bye (Pat's family cries when the cat goes for a walk), and find our seats on the aircraft. (IMPORTANT NOTE: To travel 45 miles in 95 minutes one must average 28 miles per hour.) So it is decided that we will go to church, all except father-in-law who went the previous Sunday in mother-in-law's place, and leave after the sermon when the congregation stands for the closing hymn. After the decision was made, sister-in-law said, "Good-bye."

At 11 a.m. we are still in our seats because the preacher is really into the sermon. At 11:05 he stops. All stand up. The hymn begins. We troop out.

The sun is shining, the breeze is comfortable, and it is a lovely day. Unfortunately, there is also four inches of wet gloppy snow on the ground and even some on the road.

Father-in-law, standing by the car, says, "I'm not going." Mother-in-law decides that she also will not go to the airport. So we drive back to their house. Fifteen minutes go by, we are still saying good-bye. Finally Pat says to her mother, "Are you sure you don't want to go to the airport?" Her mother, looking glum, says nothing. I put her coat on, take her by the hand and begin walking her to the car. All, including father-in-law, follow.

We enter the Interstate at 11:30 a.m. giving us 60 minutes for the 45 mile trip.

At 12:24 we arrive at the border. We sail right through because no one is waiting. However we now have only 6 minutes to complete the trip. During the preceding 30 miles we observed three cars in the ditch; watched seven cars spin out in front of us and leave the road; and we slid down just eight inches of the ditch.

When my father-in-law makes the comment that we will not make the plane, we all shout, "the luggage may not make the plane, but the passengers will."

Fourteen minutes later, the car stops at the entrance for departing passengers. We averaged 64 mph for the last segment. The overall average was 34.6 mph. Time of arrival was 12:28.

At 12:50 we fasten our seat belts and prepare for take off, wondering if our luggage made the plane. We feel fairly confident that it has, having been assured by the attendant at the check-in desk that she was sure it would. At 1:05 the loudspeaker informs the passengers that because of a malfunction in the luggage conveyor belt, the plane will be five to ten minutes late leaving. Pat says, "Great; why were we worried?"

Shortly after we are in the air, the steward asks what I would like to drink. I say, "A dry Rob Roy with a twist on the rocks." He asks for instructions which I supply. He walks back to the bar, selects a six-ounce wine glass and adds, in this order: three small ice cubes, one large lemon slice, three-fourths ounce dry vermouth, and 12-year-old Dewars to the top. Shortly thereafter the trip became the best ever.

Several hours later we arrived at Windsor Airport. Fat goes to collect the luggage, and I go to pay the ransom on the car. As I come back into the building, she informs me that only one bag has made the trip with us. The necessary forms filled out, we leave for home to await the arrival the next day of the rest of our luggage.

Monday is a most uneventful day. The luggage arrives and is in good condition. Tuesday morning also is uneventful. I go to work. At noon the rains come and by 4 p.m. all of the trees are covered with ice; it is beautiful. The ride home is most enjoyable; the streets are wet but not slippery. Now the mode of operation for Tuesday evening in our household is for me to wait for Pat's call to come collect her from work. I arrive home at 5:45. By 6 the lights flicker and one by one they go out. There is no call by 6:15. I pick up the phone. It is dead. I leap out the door and drive to her office, from which she has just started to walk home. It is a close call.

Once home we decide that a battery-operated radio is an indispensable item. So, off to the local shopping center for dinner and a radio we go. We are home by 9 p.m. to find that the lights are on. They go off 15 minutes later and do not return until 2 p.m. Sunday, after a series of events which will follow in chronological order:

That night we take the cushions off the love seats and make a pallet on the floor in front of the fireplace, in which I had built a roaring fire. Several times during the night I added wood.

At noon on Wednesday I drove home to purchase ice for the refrigerator/ freezers, one in the kitchen and one in the basement. On the way home I am unable to avoid a large section of a truck's tail pipe. At the time, both the tail pipe and the car are in the middle lane of a local expressway. The action of the tail pipe hitting the underside of the car throws the transmission into neutral. That night I stop at my gas station. The mechanic responds, "The pipe hit the gedit and the fram went out; it will be all right." That night we again sleep in front of the fireplace.

Thursday on the way to work, the transmission starts slipping. That night I again stop at the gas station, stopping just short of the pump. When my turn comes, I put the car in gear. Nothing happens. There is no fluid in the transmission. I leave the car and walk home. Later a friend comes over with a Coleman Lamp which improves our reading ability. He takes away our frozen foods which are by now are only almost frozen. And again we sleep in front of the fireplace.

Friday morning we decide to go out of town for the weekend. I call the gas station. Because the transmission shop also does not have power, the car cannot be fixed. On the way to work a plan is worked out with the members of the car pool to borrow a car for the trip home at noon to replenish the ice in the refrigerators and to borrow a different care for the weekend. On the way home I buy ice. Once home, my wife, who does not work on Fridays, asks me to purchase a fuel cell for the Coleman Lamp, which I do. By the time I start the car (my first experience with the new MG's ignition system), drive home, and go out for the fuel cell, it is quite late; in fact, over an hour has passed. Therefore I am in a hurry. Now, some time back the key for the door developed an illness which at this very moment resulted in its demise producing the most curious effect. One half of the key is now in the lock, and the other half is in my hand. This is most significant as future events will show. I go back to work and return that night. In the meantime, Pat has packed suitcases and readied the cats for the trip. We have two cats; one is a full Siamese and the mother of the other is a full Siamese. The car is quickly loaded with the luggage, kitty litter box, good Canadian ale, cats, and us. The first stop is that the home of the Coleman Lamp owner. On the way to his home the full Siamese becomes confused as to the location of the kitty litter box, and makes do with what he can find. He wets the floor behind the driver's seat. This is the normal position of the box. The lamp is delivered, and we decide that it would be best to go back home to clean up the spot so that other accidents might be prevented. Once home, Pat reaches for her pocketbook. It is not in the car. We have landed on the bottom: no heat, no electricity, no way of making a phone call out, very little money for the weekend, and no key for the house with us. However, all may not be lost. Our neighbors, whose daughter is our permanent cat sitter, have a key. Unfortunately, they are not home. Pat yells and then cries. I say to hell with it and drive off to the Hickmans, wondering what will go wrong next. That night we slept in a real bed.

Saturday morning we wake up to the chirping of birds and a lovely morning in the small town of Wauseon, Ohio, some 35 miles southwest of Adrian. The sleep period follows some friendly conversation with the couple we are visiting, a number of beers, and several rubbers of bridge. At noon the two husbands amble off to the local pool hall which doubles as a bar, where I proceed to play the best pool I have played in years. Later, a call is made to the holders of the house key and arrangements are made to pick it up Sunday. That night we duplicate Friday night's activities.

Sunday we leave early in the afternoon, arriving home about 5 p.m.. The power is on. All is well. Serenity is the hymn of the household.

---Roger Sims • 1976

Mike and Carol moved to Cincinnati a few months before I did; in the interim, Bill Cavin moved to town from Trenton. The Resnicks, and I, became members of the CFG ... without being voted on.

Mr. Cavin has never quite forgiven the lot of us. Mike's current avocation is keeping Roger Sims in line. He also writes for *LAW'S LANTERN*.
...in his spare time, he wins Hugos.

MIKE RESNICK

LosCon 60H Speech (November, 1991)

Usually, to warm the audience up, I tell some funny stories about the city in which I find myself. Unfortunately, I've never heard anything remotely funny about Long Beach, so I took a drive around yesterday to see what it was like.

It lacks South Brooklyn's *joie de vivre*, San Francisco's vegetable cults, Cincinnati's bold new approach to the First Amendment, or the asylum from which New Orleans draws its gubernatorial candidates. In fact, Long Beach's main accomplishment seems to be the creation of an entirely new mathematical concept: the shortest distance between two points is a construction zone.

Well, so much for Long Beach. Now it's on to the speech.

You know, giving a speech isn't as easy as it used to be. First, there is the matter of what you can and cannot say. The speaker's restrictions vary from one city to the next.

In New York, for example, you must tell a minimum of three Donald Trump jokes.

In my own home town of Cincinnati, which recently became the first city ever to sue an art museum for obscenity, you can say anything you want -- as long as no one's listening.

In Washington D.C., you don't have to tell jokes at all. You simply point them out. Usually they can be found eating in the Congressional cafeteria.

Here in the Los Angeles area, I am free to discuss anything I want, with one exception: I've been informed that the locals are very sensitive about the fact that the rest of the NFL keeps beating the Los Angeles Rams like a drum--so I won't mention that at all.

Anyway, since I didn't want to offend anyone, I decided to solicit some suggestions for the topic of this speech. I went on the GENie computer network, where most of SFWA hangs out, listed the topics I felt most comfortable with, and asked each of the pros to vote for one.

The topics I listed were:

- A. My work as Enduring Literature
- B. Bruce Pelz as a Hollywood Sex Symbol
- C. East African fertility rituals
- D. The Intracacies of the Cincinnati Bengal's No-Huddle Offense
- E. Coat Color Inheritance in Collies
- F. The true story about the night the L.A. cops arrested David Gerrold for frolicking naked in Griffith Park

The results of the poll were a little disappointing:
Jerry Pournelle voted for the no huddle offense.
38 writers voted for Harold Stassen.
And 57 didn't understand the question.

So I decided that what I really ought to tell you about is what I did yesterday morning. And what I did was pay a visit to the La Brea Tar Pits and the Natural History Museum, an experience that would surely cause any Creationist to re-think his beliefs. The resemblance between a slaving, flesh-rending Tyranosaurus Rex and a science fiction publisher is simply too obvious to be denied.

I think the cyberpunks probably came from the pterodons, which made an awful lot of noise and commotion flapping their wings, but really didn't get anywhere. Most of the smaller, parasitical animals evolved into critics and academics. Those that lived exclusively on blood doubtless became agents.

I think fandom can find its roots there as well; there is no doubt in my mind that the primeval ooze evolved over the eons into mimeograph correction fluid...and certainly the ferocious battles between the allosaurus and the triceratops resembles nothing more than a worldcon committee meeting.

I couldn't find anything that might have evolved into editors, but then, everybody knows that editors are aliens. The lack of human compassion gives them away every time.

I see I still have some time to kill, and since you're honoring the work more than the writer, I think I'll get serious for a moment and address myself to it.

Being a Guest of Honor at a science fiction convention is nothing new to me. But there is something that is new. For years, during autograph sessions, I would sit there and sign book after book after book. But for the last four years, it seems that I am sitting there signing magazine after anthology after collection. Which leads me to a confession.

I feel like a fool making it--but what the hell, it's not the first time I've felt like a fool, and I'm reasonably certain it won't be the last.

Science fiction is a field which has produced at least 30 demonstrably great short stories, and, at best, two or three near-great novels. And yet, as recently as 1986, I held firmly to the conviction that short fiction was somehow trivial, that if an idea or a character was worth anything at all, then it belonged in a novel.

So I wrote novels. Some pretty good ones, if I say so myself. One was a national bestseller. Others came close. A few were optioned to Hollywood. Most of them sold to half a dozen or more additional countries, and were translated into any number of exotic languages.

The late Terry Carr, whose greatest fame was as a book editor, the creator of the Ace Specials, was the first to take me aside and gently explain to me that if I ever wanted recognition within the field, I was going to have to write some short stories, since most of my peers were too damned busy writing their own stuff to be bothered reading novels by an author with whose work they were unfamiliar. I thanked him for his advice, and explained to him that this was all well and good in theory, but short stories were pieces of fluff. Novels had substance.

He looked at me as if I was crazy. (I wasn't. Wrong, yes, but not crazy. Although in this case, that's merely a quantitative difference.)

I kept writing novels.

Then my friend Barry Malzberg, author of GALAXIES and HEROVIT'S WORLD, probably the two finest science fiction novels of the 1970s, spent the better part of a year trying to convince me that short stories were predestined to be trivial only if you set out to write trivial short stories.

I listened politely, nodded sagely, and kept writing novels.

Finally my wife, line editor, and uncredited collaborator, Carol, took up the gauntlet. Carol doesn't lose a lot of arguments.

So I gave in. Officially. Just enough to obey the absolute letter of the law. I wrote one short story a year from 1977 through 1986. Sold most of 'em. Even won a couple of awards. Got picked up for a best-of-the-year anthology.

Trivial.

The awards were minor. The pay was minor. Even the year's-best anthology was minor; it appeared once and never again.

Then a strange thing happened. Usually, when I finished a novel, I would loaf for a week or two and then get right to work on the next one. But in the summer of 1987, I finished IVORY in mid-June, and the next novel on my schedule was PARADISE, a science-fictional allegory of Kenya's past and future history. And since I was going to Kenya in September, it seemed counter-productive to start writing the book prior to taking a very expensive trip that had been arranged for the express purpose of researching it.

So I was looking at ten weeks of unproductive dead time, and I decided that I might as well finally give short stories an honest shot.

So I sat down, and before I left for Kenya, I had written and sold nine of them. Not only that, but even I had to admit they weren't all trivial. One of them, "Kirinyaga", was nominated for a Nebula, won a Hugo, and did more for my reputation than any novel I'd ever written.

Something else strange happened, too.

I found--to my absolute amazement--that I enjoyed writing short stories.

So after I finished PARADISE, I took two months off and wrote another ten. And sold them all. And included in that batch was another Hugo and Nebula nominee.

And while the pay wasn't quite up to what my novels brought in, I found that if you sell enough short stories to enough major markets, it does a lot more for your bank account than sitting around the house watching the Reds and Bengals blow one lead after another.

My next novel after PARADISE was SECOND CONTACT, and this time I didn't even wait to finish it: I wrote and sold seven more stories while I was writing it--and two of them were nominated for Hugos (and one of them, "The Manamouki", won my second one). More recently, while I was writing the Oracle Trilogy for Ace over a period of about fourteen months, I wrote and sold another twenty-two.*

Some of them, admittedly, were good-natured pieces of fluff. I like humor, science fiction is one of the few remaining markets for it, and I've included some of the better ones here.

But a number of them weren't trivial. Some of them have substance I once thought impossible for works of short fiction (or at least for my short fiction) and I take an enormous pride in them. The Kirinyaga stories, the Teddy Roosevelt stories, such personal pieces as "Winter Solstice", are as ambitious and meaningful as any novels I have written.

Back in 1986, I seriously wondered if I would have enough short stories to form a respectable collection by the turn of the century. Now here it is, 1991, and my biggest problem in preparing the collection I just sold to Tor is which 30 stories to eliminate. Life just gets curiouser and curiouser.

So what you have standing before you is an avowed novelist who spent most of his life shunning short stories, and who has won two Hugos for short fiction and received eight Hugo and Nebula nominations in the past 30 months** --seven of them for short fiction.

Go figure.

I have one last subject to address. Some few months ago, Harlan Ellison wrote an article called "Xenogenesis", which appeared in *ASIMOV'S* and *MIDNITE GRAFFITI* and a batch of computer bulletin boards.

The gist of it was a catalog of all the wrongs that fans have done to writers, all the hideous behavior we have to put up with not only at conventions but even in the sanctity of our homes, and it listed not only Harlan's grievances but those of a number of other writers as well.

I don't doubt for a moment the honesty of the accounts in that article--but I do think it's time for a member of the loyal opposition to speak up.

I have been attending conventions since 1963 and writing science fiction professionally since 1967, and in all that time I have never been treated with anything other than courtesy and consideration by fandom.

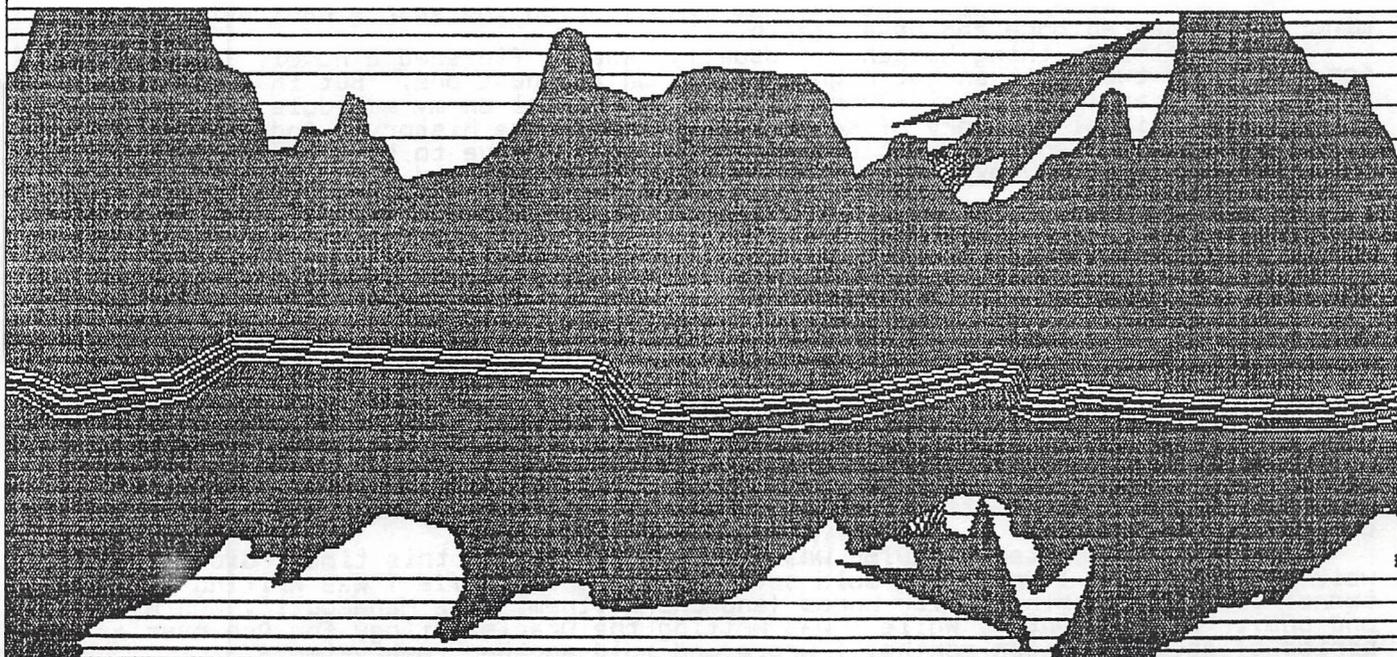
That's why I keep coming back to conventions, that's why I agreed to appear here, and that's why I look forward to my next convention, wherever it may be.

They say you can choose your friends but not your family. They're wrong. I just gave a speech to my family.

* (And two of them just were nominated for the 1992 Hugo.)

** (That's now eleven Hugo and Nebula nominations, ten of them for short fiction.)

---Mike Resnick



It's probably only appropriate that the most "Cincinnatiish" contribution to this issue ... is from the one (at present) furthest removed in terms of distance.

Frank, along with Joel, are two that, no matter how far away they move, or what perverted professions they go into (Hi, Joel!), will always be firmly fixed in my mind as an integral part of Cincinnati fandom. (...moreso than some residing within the I-275 perimeter!) As such, I fully expect them to contribute yet again...in another five years!

By then.... Well, both Frank's and Joel's contributions to this issue were generated on their Amstrads. Last time ...1981, Frank simply gave me a disk containing his entry ...I copied it, reformatted...and that was it! This time, I had to retype all 2671 bloody words. Still, maybe if I ever get "mine" back...next time we can do it again....

Not to steal Frank's thunder, but since he brings up the subject:

It probably is only fitting to observe, in light of Cincinnati's progressive reputation, the irony that while the "new" WKRP is carried on a Dayton (Ohio, not Kentucky) channel at 7:30 Saturday evening, new episodes "premiere" on the local channel at 11:35PM. Sundays. ...and are repeated at 12:30AM the following Saturday nite/Sunday morning. The same channel that pulled the plug on Alice Cooper, no less.

[And Frank may not be aware that his favorite newspaper, The Grand Old Lady of Vine Street, is vacating the "Enquirer Building" for more modern accommodations this summer. This is relevant to the rest of you only because that is the building used for exterior shots of the "WKRP Building"....]

...at the time of the original WKRP run, there was some idle speculation "casting" various CFG members in the sitcom's roles. At that time, Frank's assignment seemed so obvious. But, as far as I know, he doesn't write poetry.

It is probably not politic of me to candidly "assign" roles in the new show from the present CFG roster. But I can't help feeling, given his way with hotel contracts, that Bill Cavin would fill Herb's shoes. In a major way.

FRANK JOHNSON

That's With Just One T, Damn it!

I

Unlike our host, Mr. Bowers, I was born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio. And until I went away to school in Bowling Green (Ohio, not Kentucky) that's where I was pretty much all the time. After those four years in the northern part of the state, with summers off for vacation and MidwestCon, I worked for a couple of years in Dayton (Ohio, not Kentucky) which I consider to be merely a distant suburb of Cincinnati even though it is its own separate municipality. And except for an eight month western sojourn, I worked the following 12 years in Cincinnati.

Throughout these three dozen plus years, I was exposed to many movies, musics, television and radio productions. And though it took a while for me to catch on, it was through these mass media I discovered that I was living in one of the funniest places on earth.

Imagine watching a typical sitcom: The harried husband tries to explain the blonde hair on his jacket to his brunette wife. "I had to spend the night in a dog kennel, honey" he worriedly stutters, accompanied by the nervous giggle of a canned laugh track. "The car broke down in Cincinnati." Uproarious laughter; pre-recorded, pre-staged pandemonium breaks out in the non-existent audience.

For some reason, just hearing the name *Cincinnati* elicits guffaws from those who don't hear it on a daily basis. As an almost life long resident, I'm afraid I've completely missed the joke. I just don't understand. If the guy's car had broken down on the Interstate some twenty-five miles north of town and he had to explain spending the night in *Blue Ball*, now that would have been funny.

And by the way, I didn't just pull that name out of the, uh, blue. It's on the maps. Trace I-75 north from Cincinnati to Middletown and you'll see it just to the east. So there.

Ia

Why do so many people have trouble spelling Cincinnati? Back in the 1970's there was this one Iron Man comic book that took place in the city (Tony Stark's midwest industrial base was under terrorist attack or some such nonsense). Throughout the entire book, a double T was lettered in.

And check out the liner notes for Paul McCartney's "Tripping the Live Fantastic". Even though the man has dough enough to buy the town and everyone in it (Procter & Gamble and Carl Lindner included), he can't pay someone enough to get the spelling correct.

Could it be that the typesetters are so convulsed with uncontrolled laughter over the city's name that they keep hitting that one key an extra time?

II

Everybody asks me about WKRP in Cincinnati as if it's a real radio station. They find out I'm from the city, work in radio and, QED, that has to be the place where I worked. I used to say I worked for the FM side, that WKRP was our co-owned AM station. I can't do that since one of the FMs I did work at in Cincinnati now owns a real AM outlet. It seems to confuse people even more when I try to explain that the guy who created the tv series used to work in Cincinnati radio at WKRC, not P.

The other most frequently asked question is about dropping live turkeys from a helicopter. That did really happen, but ages ago and at a station in Dayton (Ohio, not Kentucky).

Yes, many of the things that you see on the series do take place from time to time at radio stations. Just, thankfully, not in such a concentrated manner. Though I have to admit the Cincinnati radio scene is quite incestuous. Far too many people in the business are sleeping with and/or married to employees of competing stations. That makes it tough to keep a professional secret. The Cincinnati broadcasting community's ongoing soap opera contains marital infidelities, suicides, drug abuse, various back stabbings, board room buy outs, and other assorted goodies I'm singularly too straight and boring for that kind of stuff, part of the reason I'm no longer there.

IIa

Eleven or twelve years ago, Tim Reid, one of the regulars on WKRP in Cincinnati, was doing a tour to promote a book of poetry. When I heard he was going to stop at my station, I wanted to be there to have my picture taken with him. I persuaded one Stephen Leigh (big time author & probable contributor to this publication) to meet me at the studios with his camera. To refresh your memory, Venus Flytrap, Reid's character, was an announcer doing the night shift at a rock station in Cincinnati. And at the time I was the night shift announcer at a rock station in Cincinnati. I remember Reid laughing at the title I intended to give to this photograph: "Art and the Life It Imitates".

III

One of the overwhelming images that most people have of Cincinnati is that of a very peaceful city. It's of a size that is right in the middle, neither too small or too large, a nice, safe, good place to bring up your children. A good, moral, law and order kind of town.

That last part translates to uptight if you're familiar with official Cincinnati lifestyle.

I'm constantly amazed as to how often the First Amendment is examined and re-worked into a special version for the city and surrounding Hamilton County. All of this is to protect my morals, by the way. (You may laugh here and chortle "Johnson? What morals?")

My first inkling of this occurred back in 1968 when a small arthouse theatre wanted to run the film "Vixen". The cops came and raided the place, confiscated the prints and raised a lot of loud hell.

This attitude hit me personally when I completely missed the first run of Kubrick's "A Clockwork Orange". Because of its original X-rating, the local tv stations and newspapers (the Cincinnati ENQUIRER was the one we got at home) did not advertise the film's local engagement.

Then there was the celebrated RUSTLER magazine trial. Because of it Larry Flynt became a media celebrity. You still can't buy it in Cincinnati (nobody I know would want to anyway). And occasionally the county will remove an issue of PENTHOUSE if a photo infers that a fondling finger might have entered a forbidden nook or cranny of an airbrushed model.

Remember all the Cincinnati jokes Cher used to make on her variety show of twenty some years ago? The local affiliate refused to air the program because of her costumes.

The same station declined to run the network sanitized (edited) version of "Carrie", the DePalma-King movie at its 9PM showing. Our morals were also protected when the network re-ran it at 11:30 about a year later.

The ABC station (WKRC, by the way) was on line for the first In Concert program back in 1971. It was Thanksgiving weekend when the first installment was aired with a stereo FM simulcast, pretty technically progressive stuff at the time, on the co-owned WKRQ-FM (just one letter away from P, for those of you keeping score at home). It was midnight that Friday night when Alice Cooper was doing his West Side Story routine, kicking a garbage can around the stage and sticking his face in the camera. Suddenly the screen went black and an old episode of Rawhide started with no explanation.

That came on Monday when station management told us that this wasn't the sort of fare that families should be watching on the airwaves in Cincinnati.

So it was with no great surprise two years ago when I heard that a handful of snap shots taken by the late Robert Mapplethorpe was bringing the nation's news spotlight on Cincinnati. Sure the official buttheads lost the case when it went to trial, but that doesn't matter. The fact that the "offending" Contemporary Arts Center had to shell out major bucks to defend itself was punishment enough. This very same tactic was useful in putting the screws to a small public radio station who used the words "dildo" and "sphincter" during a gay advocacy program.

This ain't fiction. It's real life. No foolin'.

IIIa

Let me tell you the story about a former Cincinnati city councilman.

He went across the river to the den of iniquity known as Northern Kentucky (one time residence of another probable contributor, Joel Zakem) to engage the services of a lady of the evening.

He paid with a check.

The check bounced.

He is later elected mayor, runs unsuccessfully for Ohio governor, and is now a syndicated television talk show host.

To quote Anna Russell: I'm not making this up, you know.

IIIb

The editor/publisher of the Cincinnati *ENQUIRER*, the daily paper that protected my young impressionable eyes from that evil X-rated Kubrick film, was William Keating. His brother, Charles, used to run a savings and loan. Badly.

IV

They try to give you the idea that Cincinnati is a very stable community. Actually it's quite the opposite. You see, there's an earthquake fault that frequently affects the area.

One Sunday afternoon circa 1979 I was talking to the aforementioned Mr. Zakem from my apartment in Cincinnati. I heard a loud, low rumble as if a huge truck had passed by. I mentioned it to Joel who commented that it must be a very long truck because it was passing his house in Newport.

I'm not talking your California model that collapses bridges. Nor was it severe enough to knock off wall hangings. This earthquake certainly had enough *oomph* to be felt and to make the soft drink in my glass vibrate when it wasn't supposed to.

V

Cincinnati is very conservative in many ways, especially in politics. Which is why both Reagan and Bush have made major campaign stops there over the past dozen years. It was during the last election year that I found myself within 30 feet of President Ronald Reagan.

It was late one hot Friday afternoon and I was on my way home from work. From the downtown location of the overpriced parking lot, I turned a couple of corners to travel eastward on Third Street. From that one way street, it was another couple of turns to Columbia Parkway and the way to my apartment on the eastern extremes of the city limits.

Three blocks of travel on Third put me at a just-turned red light, allowing the crossing traffic to go northward on Vine Street from a Fort Washington Way overpass. But when the light turned green I was unable to continue. Four cop cars pulled up and started to set up a roadblock. Surprise! This was the route the President was taking to a downtown fund-raising affair; his motorcade to arrive any minute.

The local cops were very nice by the way. I asked what was going on and they politely told me. So I asked how long this would take, hoping it would take a couple of minutes for everything to zip by and then I could go home. They didn't have an answer to that question.

So c'mon, guys, I plead, how about letting me through 'cause I'm the first one here at the intersection and I can't back up because of all the cars behind me. Look, you can see that the street's clear, no one's coming for at least a couple of minutes, let me go through and I can be long gone before anyone notices.

That's when the Secret Service guys noticed me. Definitely Secret Service, dark suits, sunglasses and all--OK, I'll give them the shades, they were facing west into a 5:30 glare. But it was too damn hot for the threads. Hot enough for me to have the AC on in the car. But since my car was closest to the intersection, the local cops told me I had to shut my car engine off.

Wait a minute!, I protest. First you guys tell me I can't go home from a long day's work on a Friday afternoon. Then you tell me I have to sit and wait for this circus to go by without my AC. I sure as hell wouldn't keep Reagen from going home from work on a Friday afternoon. What did I do wrong, anyway? Is it my fault I didn't speed up to get through the light? I bet Reagen has his air conditioning on full blast.

That's when the secret service gents slowly walk over. PLEASE GET IN THE CAR, TURN THE ENGINE OFF AND STAY THERE UNTIL THE MOTORCADE PASSES.

I can't tell you whether I was sweating because of the Fahrenheit and humidity or the No Bullshit Will Be Taken tone of voice. I could see that even with the lawyers of clothing they had on, the service guys were not sweating.

I got in my car. I turned off the engine. And I stayed there until it was all over. But not without one little sign of protest.

Most people around me got out of their cars, hoping to see the President as he passed. My initial thought was to hold my arm out the window, displaying a middle finger salute to our Commander-in-Chief. This has nothing to do with politics--it's in the Bill of Rights that you can flip the bird to whatever jerk cuts into your lane without a turn signal. That same inalienable right has to apply when you're sitting in an artificially induced traffic jam set up so that a handful of cars can pass through an intersection some ten minutes later.

I then imagined myself in a courtroom with an ACLU lawyer arguing my case of Freedom of Speech and denied civil rights. I saw myself in that courtroom with my left arm in a cast, the hand painfully absent having disappeared in a spray of red mist from the gunfire of secret service agents. Or maybe it was sight of the offending digit that was removed by the agents being shown to the jury as Exhibit A. In any event I thought better of the idea, wanting to retain the ability to count to ten without taking off my shoes.

So I stuck my feet out the driver's side window and reclined on the front seat.

As I didn't have the radio/tape player on I could hear the roar of the approaching motorcade, the cycles in front zooming their way past. Other motorists didn't mind the inconvenience and cheered and honked their horns as the vehicles zoomed.

It is my sincere hope that as the President crossed the intersection of Vine and Third, he noticed among the cheering and waving crowd, right there in front, right behind the police barricade, there was one guy laying down with his feet out the car window as if to say, "So what?"

VI

Second Street, a short hill down and one block south of the previous story, is the old name. It's now called Pete Rose Way. This represents a departure from Cincinnati tradition.

Ordinarily, you have to die to get a street named after you. But they made an exception for a local sports hero.

If I had done things the Pete Rose Way, I'd still be in jail.

VIa

I'm sure someone told me a long time ago, but I've since forgotten.

Why are the Cincinnati Reds in the western division of the National League while the Chicago Cubs and the St. Louis Cardinals are in the eastern division?

VII

There are a lot of wonderful people in Cincinnati who more than make up for all the uptight, often hypocritical crap that seems to be a part of every major city. If the right opportunity arose, I'd return yet again.

---Frank Johnson

...some of these "introductions" have written themselves; others, because of familiarity (lack of...or, perhaps, too much), have had to be written. Some have been lengthened, others were shortened...to make it all come out even.

This one desperately wants to write itself. But I, firmly, won't allow one introduction to fill all 40 pages.

If I were to say more.... Well, I'm not worried about embarrassing Denise. //?? Y??Y ??? ddddY??/

So I'll say simply, this... For 15 years, My Friend:

DENISE PARSLEY LEIGH

On Turning 39: an introspective

On May 15, 1992, I turned thirty nine, something I share with Jack Benny, though I'm not dead...yet. People say they have trouble with the decade years but I always seem to have trouble with the last one prior. I remember at twenty nine I decided it was my last year before thirty and that I was going to do lots of things that I'd always wanted to. I proceeded to have my hair permed, thought a lot about what I'd do with my life in the way of careers and ended up pregnant. I'd always planned to start my family by the time I was thirty and quit by the time I was thirty five so it seemed like it was now or never. Steve and I had a lovely daughter, for those who don't know me, and her name is Megen Elizabeth, the pregnancy and subsequent birth of whom were chronicled in various articles and fanzines. She was huge...11 pounds 3 ounces or thereabouts. I had to have a c-section and my body has never been quite the same, nor has my sanity, I suspect. No matter what they tell you, having children changes everything. Suddenly there was no time for us or me, there was only work and taking care of Megen. But she was/is wonderful and we thoroughly enjoyed those years with the three of us...she was even starting to become human. And why, we said, don't we get on with it and have another one?

By then I was thirty four and realized that time was running out if I wanted to reach my goal of giving birth by thirty five. Fortunately, I appear to be extremely fertile (also lucky, since I often think I could have been one of those unfortunate unwed fifteen year old mothers because Steve and I were very stupid about birth control). I had this thing about thirty five being this magic age whereby nothing would go wrong if I had the child by then... at least I wouldn't have to go through amniocentesis why my ob-gyn "required" after thirty five. Well, nothing did go wrong with the pregnancy except that my body fell apart (I now have a "heart condition") and we had another huge baby, one Devon Michael, who continually amazes me with both his charm and brutality. I sometimes think he is the classic example of a manic depressive personality, but I am told by his teachers and his pediatrician that this is just normal two, three, and now maybe four year old behavior. But he too, is wonderful...really.

I did finally change careers.... I'd worked with the same life insurance company for nineteen years and was ready to look for something part-time so that I could spend more time with the kids. One of the sales managers asked me to think about sales and I scoffed at him and he let it drop. But then I started to think about it and it became a more and more attractive idea and I decided what do I have to lose? So here I am, in my second full year, enjoying my work a lot more, though it does have its moments, and I still have very little time for myself...but it IS flexible.

I was lying awake in bed on the eve of my thirty ninth birthday and started reflecting on where I was at twenty nine, and realized that along with a lot of outward changes, I'm also changing inwardly. Growth is always good, and I'm sure that there has been a fair amount of that. But I sometimes worry about the more subtle changes.... I'm more easily angered, more stressed out, I scream at my kids, just like my mother always did with me and like I swore I'd never do with my kids. I often wonder about the shrew I seem to have become...when did that part of me change or was it always there, lurking in the shadows, waiting for me to have kids to jump out? I don't really like the Denise that I am when this happens, and I'm always sorry afterwards but the reality is that kids are stressful, work is stressful, and the combination makes for a volatile situation sometimes. I have a VERY understanding husband, who is equally stressed with two careers and two kids and a spouse who works days and nights so we only get weekends to spend any real time as a family. (Megen can't understand why we like to go to dinner and movies without the kids sometimes...and she's learned well how to lay guilt trips on us...I'm more susceptible than Steve is, but then I have all that ethnic guilt that I was brought up with to model after.) There is a lot of love, though. My boss recently asked me when was the last time I'd told my spouse that I loved him. I told him that it was at 11:30 that same day. He was very surprised...he said he rarely tells his wife

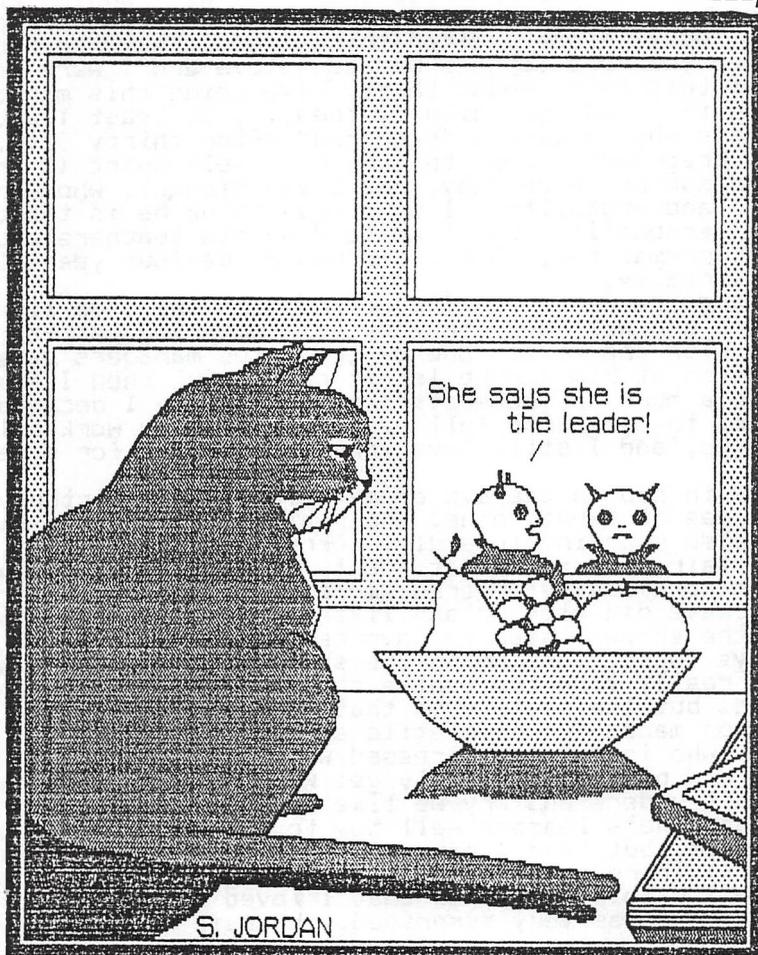
that... he's just not demonstrative. What's demonstrative about it?...if you love someone you tell them once in a while. My kids are so used to hearing it that if I say "Know what?" They say, "you love me, mom." It may be cliché, but it works and in spite of our hectic schedule and short tempers, we really do love each other ... lots.

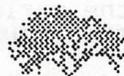
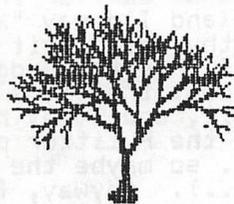
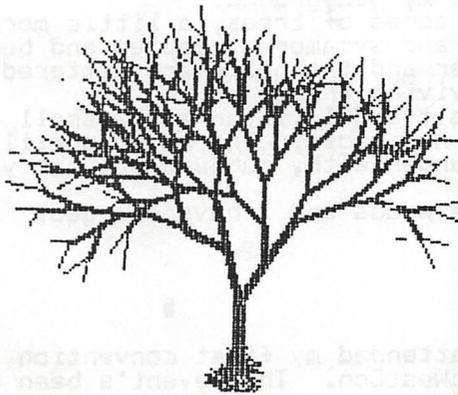
One major problem is that I'm tired all the time and who has time of energy for sex? My weight is up, though that is getting under control, my heart isn't good (see weight) and I need to exercise more (see heart and weight). My paycheck is up, but probably not where it would be if I had the time to devote to my career that other sales reps do...it IS flexible, which is why I'm always running my kids everywhere, trying to be a good mom (it helps having a good dad, too!), and once again, taking time away from me and us (I'm sorry, Steve, I seem to have a knack for that, don't I?). But I am growing with my job...I am learning things and actually helping people (that's what a good insurance agents does...really). Never mind that I get evil signs from friends if I even MENTION the word insurance, I know they are well intentioned. And we really don't bite...really. (Gosh, Bill Bowers, you sure taught me well that lesson about ellipses way back in my early publishing days....)

If any of you were wondering what my editorials in *GRAYMALKIN* were like, they were a bit like this...rambling and personal. I'm not sure that they were good, but they were fun. Hey, this is kind of fun, too. I rather like having an outlet for something other than mommy wisdom. I don't keep the records that Bill does, but I think somewhere around that same 29th birthday I stopped publishing, mainly because it seems like whatever energy that I'd put into *GRAYMALKIN* was being put into my child and who has free time? So, it has been about ten years and this is my fifteenth year in fandom, and you can't really even blame Bill Bowers for it, though he did steal me away from Ric Bergman way back then. It is my fifteenth MidwestCon and I can't imagine missing one, though I do LIVE here, so there is very little effort involved. But MidwestCon will always have a special place in my heart because of the people that I've met here...they have become my core of fandom, they've become my friends, some my loves, my mentors (I'm working on baby sitters). Who'd have thought that a silly black cat named Responsibility and a phone call from Dale Tarr would have brought me/us this far?

Oh, and an aside to Eric Lindsay; consider this a response to any and all correspondence you send...I may not be prompt, but I do respond...eventually.

---Denise Parsley Leigh





...normally, when "putting together an issue, I attempt to achieve a sense of "flow"...from contributor to contributor ...to contributor.... With mixed, but occasional, success. One would have thought that this issue, with a theoretical "related" group of contributors, would have been easier than normal. It hasn't been...particularly.

In the Vast Scheme of Things, I hadn't really planned on "pairing" Steve and Denise's entries -- even though they arrived in the same envelope. But, as I sorted through the pile of initial print-outs (for once, everything [except the 'editorial' I was "typed-up" before the paste-up was started) ... well, here we are....

I really don't think they'll mind being thrown together.

...which is not to say that Steve isn't my friend, also. If my closeness to him isn't as close as my at-ease level with Denise, that is only my hang-ups; not his. Steve has been there for me, in more ways, more times, than I can begin to recall. And my world would be a lot less complete without his presence.

He's also one of only a handful of people I am genuinely envious of.

Last year's **ALIEN TONGUE** was one of the best alien contact novels I've ever read. And his other gifts are self-evident, to anyone who knows him.

...but, personally, I must admit to missing the 'old' rock-'n-roll lead singer.

(...perhaps if Curry or Greg will bring a guitar to Ditto? Steve?)

STEPHEN LEIGH

Ch-Ch-Ch-Ch-Changes

I treated this like any other deadline -- I ignored it, hoping it would go away. Finally, after a few 'prodding' phone calls from Bill and Denise's triumphant "Well, mine's finished..." I realized that I'd have to put aside the WILD CARDS story, the novel, and the comics script (all with their own nagging deadlines that I'm also studiously avoiding) and write something.

But write what?

I treated that problem in the same way I treat every recurring infection of writer's block--I ignored it. Finally, seeing that I was sitting at the computer playing with Kid's Pix, noodling around on GENIE, or idly letting Norton check out the hard disk for non-existent problems, Denise came up behind me as I was starting a game of Battle Chess.

"So... what are you writing about?" She put just enough inflection on the word 'writing' to make me guiltily try to quit the game as if booting it up had been a careless slip of the mouse.

"I'm not sure yet. I wish Bill would have given me a subject. If he'd told me what I had to write about, I could get started." (Law of Delaying Deadlines #1: It's not your fault. It's someone else's fault.)

"So you're waiting for a voice from above to hand you your theme, huh?"

"Yeah. I guess so."

"Then here it is. Write about fandom and how it's changed for you."

"But--"

"Look, you're sitting. I'm standing. Therefore, this is your Official Voice From Above. Now write."

Can't argue with the kind of logic...

#

It's been my habit, once every year or so, to go wondering through the woods behind my parent's house, back to where I spent days upon days in a fantasyland of my own making. From the time I was nine through high school, that few hundred acres of forest and its streams and Cooper's Creek was my playground.

Suburbia has encroached on the stubborn acres of trees, a little more each year, and what remains of the stands of oaks and sycamores, maples and buckeyes are much less wild. The glades are trampled under and the hills are littered with kipple from the houses that encircle the surviving trees.

I go back in the deepest center, and I sit and I listen and I smell and I watch. And I remember how wonderful it was, how magic. The magic's still there, too. I can sense the undertones, throbbing underneath, subdued but not yet gone. Not quite.

Something draws me back, even though the woods and I have changed. I wonder which has changed most: the woods, or me.

#

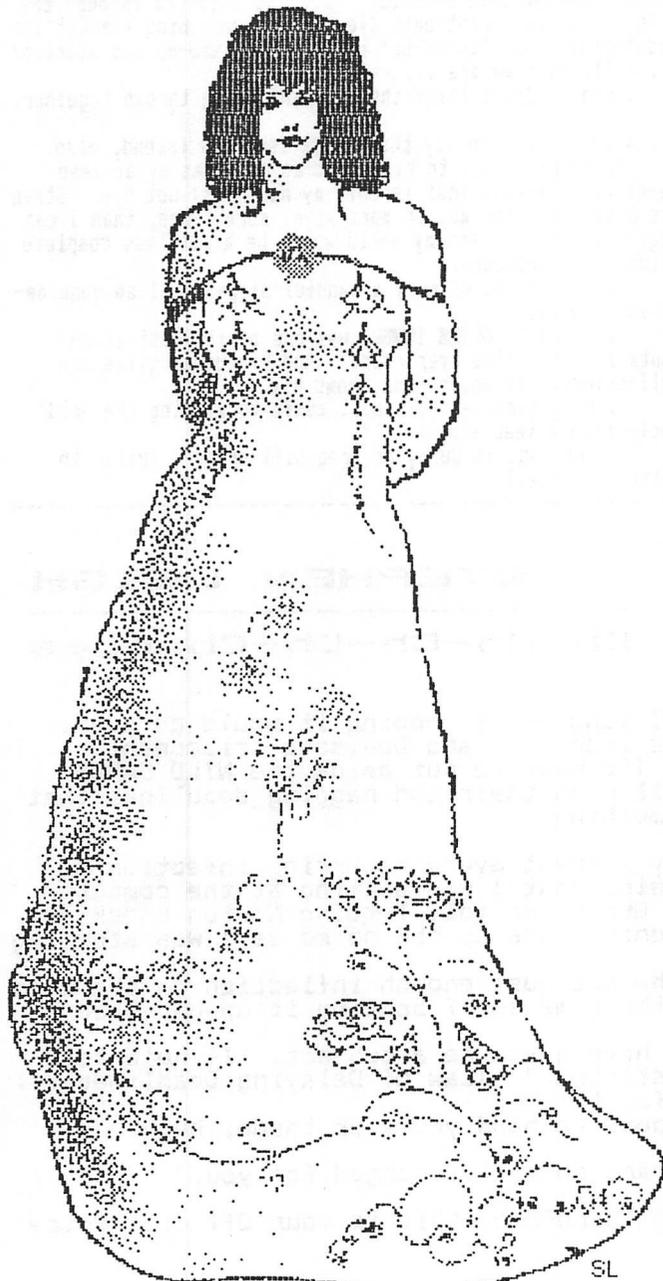
I attended my first convention in 1977, a MidwestCon. That event's been chronicled before in some earlier incarnation of *OUTWORLDS* (and I'd say "and a very amusing and pithy article it was, worthy of a Pulitzer if only the judges read fan-zines," except that it's been years since I've read it, and I may have changed my mind about the Pulitzer part. Bill liked it a lot... so maybe the other part's wrong too...). Anyway, from that rather inauspicious beginning, both Denise and I plunged into the world of fandom.

It proceeded, quite rapidly, to change us.

Or maybe we were just ready to be changed. Back then, I was a musician who sometimes wrote stories and was lucky enough to have sold a few of them. I was twenty-six, had never used a computer in my life, had never had a 'real job' in my life, had no children, had only read of a martial art called aikido, wore glasses, and Denise and I lived in a three-room apartment. In the wake of a decade and a half, music's place in my life has been replaced by writing, I write on a computer and work with them most of the day with my 'real job', have two kids, spend three or four nights a week either practicing or teaching aikido, wear glasses only if my eyes have decided they no longer care for pieces of glass in them, and possess the mortgage to one of those financial black holes known as a house.

The only constant is Denise. She's still my best friend. The geography of our relationship has changed over the years, but the core, the heart, remains.

I feel an odd combination of nostalgia and distress looking at our albums of pictures from back then. Back then, I was also a rampant amateur photographer -- another avocation that seems to have dropped through the grating of time -- and I snapped a fairly consistent record of the conventions we attended in those first few years and the people that, in one way or another, made those conventions worthwhile. Conventions were never places; they were people. They were hugs and joy and conversations and faces. The hotel, the city, the makeshift structure of the programming through and around which we moved didn't matter a great deal. I came to be with friends.



SL
dress pattern by A. Beardsley

How crazed was I? I remember an Octocon (back when Octocon was held ~~where it's~~ supposed to be held in the wilds of Sandusky) where I drove up on Friday -- a four hour drive--left the con Saturday afternoon to play a gig (back in Cincinnati), and motored back to Sandusky on caffeine and adrenaline after we'd finished playing at 2:00 am, all so I could be there before everyone left for home again Sunday afternoon. (Such foolish behavior was mostly Hania's fault....)

Yet... Too many of those friends no longer figure so prominently in our lives. No one's fault, that--it's just life. I've drifted apart from some: Art Metzger, Ric Bergman, Tanya, Ro, Lin, Suzi. Others have disappeared from fandom--or at least I never seem to encounter them at the four or five cons that Denise and I still get to each year: Patty Peters, Sally Sellers, Lynn Parks, a dozen others I could name. Still others are gone from this realm entirely: Bea Mahaffey, Lou Tabakow. Other 'newcomers' have come and filled the places left vacant.

Fandom, I think, filled a niche for me that in some people is filled by other 'tribal' groups: church, family, work. It was a place to belong. It was (at that time anyway) a haven where alternate lifestyles of various sorts could operate in the open without anyone much lifting an eyebrow. That's another aspect that's changed. Certain behaviors have become either non-existent or more discreet (okay, a little more, anyway)... which reflects society at large, I suppose.

But things have changed for me somewhere along the line in other ways. The bigger conventions became two conventions for us: the 'fan' convention and the 'pro' convention. There didn't (and doesn't) seem to be a hell of a lot of mixing between the two. I serve two masters at cons: stuffy, aloof Business, and libidinous, flighty Pleasure. They don't like each other. In fact, they sneer and hurl thinly-veiled insults. Dark lightnings flicker between the twin fortresses of the SFWA Suite and the Con Suite.

I've always had a love/hate relationship with cons. I'm a little better at it than I used to be, but I'm still not a 'group' person. I like to be alone with someone and talk. There's often a 'special' person at a con that I really want to spend a lot of time with, but indulging that vice means I don't spend a great deal of time with all the other friends there. A curious cycle of reinforcing anxiety sets in: I'm in a room party with "A" and "B" and "C", but I haven't seen "D" yet and I really want to talk with her because it's been months since we've had a chance to catch up with each other, but I know if I wander the halls looking for "D" I might not find her, and "A", "B", and "C" will no doubt be gone when I get back, and--oh, look!--"E" and "F" just popped their heads in and said they're going up to the Minneapolis in '73 party, but I told "G" I'd hit the SFWA suite around midnight and see if he was still there, and maybe my agent "H" will have shown, or is she in the secret Tor party at the other hotel, and somewhere along the way I've lost Denise who ran off with "I" and "J" and I really should touch base with her....

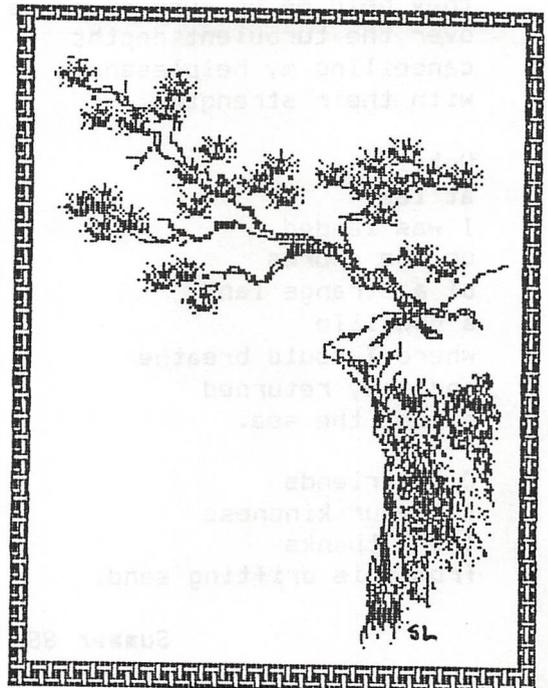
There is never enough time. There has never been a con where I didn't 'miss' someone vital, just managing to say "Hi!" in passing or having just about enough time to hug and kiss and say "Next time...."

#

We haven't had many "next times" recently, Denise and I. Fifteen years ago, the months were defined by cons, the years by worldcon sites. Now they're a blur of birthdays and school events and aikido seminars and writing deadlines. We tend to pick and choose our conventions: the worldcon, because that's the business convention; Octocon because it's here and why not; MidwestCon because, well, it's Midwestcon. Maybe a few others irregularly--Confusion because we remember what it once was (but never again until they move to a new hotel...); Archon, because that's as far east as a lot of our western friends will come; Rivercon, close and some good memories....

So few, compared to then.... Making it to all the cons doesn't have the driving importance it once did. I know I'll enjoy myself if I go, but if the scheduling doesn't work out, I also don't seem to miss them. The magic has faded, the tribe has dispersed--or have I just exiled myself from it?

Which makes me wonder, now and then, which has changed the most: the woods, or me.



---Stephen Leigh

Roger undoubtedly has seniority in the MidwestCon attendance sweepstakes; my first was in 1963, but the string is not complete. Joel and Frank's first convention was the 1968 MidwestCon; ...Denise and Steve's, the 1977 edition.

Lorraine's first convention was last year's MidwestCon. Why it took so long, when a few years back she was in a High School SF Club organized by someone who went on to become one of the better-known SF book editor/publishers, is "...just one of those things."

She'd seen fanzines before ~~OSTERLIPS~~...but none "quite so personal." Still.... The following, on the benefits of having friends, were written back when she was going through some of the tribulations I've just been through.....

----- LORRAINE KAWECKI -----

Rescue

My friends
my saviors
loving dolphins
boosting the lost sailor
above the suffocating sea
of trouble.

They called
they cared
in relays
they held me up supporting me
over the turbulent depths
cancelling my helplessness
with their strength.

Until
at last
I was landed
on the shores
of a strange land
a new life
where I could breathe
and they returned
across the sea.

O my friends
for your kindness
I cry thanks
from this drifting sand.

Summer 88

How the Mighty Have Fallen

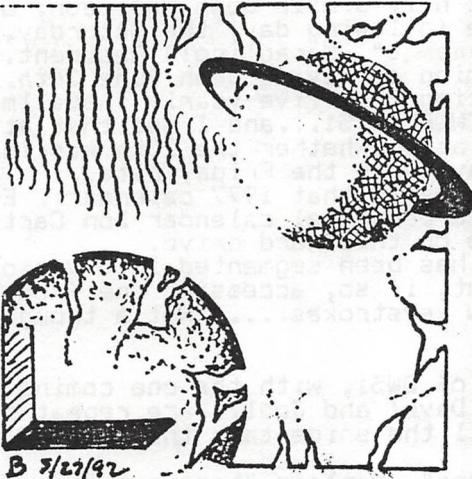
In August,
hot, hot August,
what drifts across
the wavering road heat
confronting my warp-speed car?

A leaf?
A tattered rusty leaf,
untimely fallen,
blown by a
mysterious imperceptible wind
always west, south, west?

No.
A drifter,
Monarch of the summer,
now king of the road,
drifting down to Mexico.
The first leaf to leave,
the leader of millions
who can only
fall
off trees.

August 88

---Lorraine KaweckI



 This, then, is the "editorial".

...in which The Editor tears his hair, gnashes his teeth, and, in general, will abuse, beause, and confuse you. He knows this is true, because he has just written six+ pages that have to be distilled down to four.

...he is never quite sure of what to say...but usually manages to say it...in twice the requisite length. (Hey! Be kind!)

...but it is His Fanzine. After all.

BILL BOWERS

Post-it[®] Notes From a Former CoA

2468 Harrison Avenue.

1874 Sunset Avenue, Apt. 56.

4651 Glenway Avenue.

...all with various Zip Codes affixed to a Cincinnati, Ohio tag line.

And, for one hot month of August, 1990:

3937 Floral Avenue.

(...the residents of whom will receive mail if you address it to "Cincinnati" ...even though, checking the map, you'll find they actually reside in the illustrious community of Norwood.)

Such were the official residences of my body, and sometimes my mind, over the past fifteen years. Those addresses serve as a frame to some of the best years of my life, as well as a couple of the worst. The memories they bring forth with the simple act of typing them out once again are as vivid/faded as the hectoed pages of my first fanzine.

...which was issued a little over fifteen years prior to my move to Cincinnati.

The recollections that the mere act of putting together this exercise in self-aggrandization have inevitably brought to the surface dominate my thoughts tonight, and yet the sudden realization that--no matter how important they are/were to me--the totality of those fifteen years comprise less than a third of my life to date, serves to put a few things into perspective.

And God knows that I'm an expert on the subject: I learned how to take a line to the vanishing point in high school drafting. The only trouble is that, on occasion rare in real life, I've been unable to trace that line back to the foreground.

Let me be the first to tell you:

Things can be really strange, on the far side of the Bowers Event Horizon.

In this alternate reality, it is much, much too suddenly, the evening of June 20th, 1992. A Saturday.

Less than a week before MidwestCon and the "I will publish by..." deadline for this issue. I *should* make it. Everything save for these four pages, is pasted up; even the "contents page" awaits only a keying-in of the final word count, before a final printout.

But, as always, I'm paranoid: I *know* something will go wrong.

It's simply a fact of life, out here on the cutting edge of the Bowers Fanzine Publishing & Life Decisions Avoidance Emporium.

At the moment, this space that I have "reserved" for myself looms large; yet, had I "saved" myself only a page or two...that would not have been enough:

I have, easily, fifty pages worth of pent-up things to share with you. I also have, I suppose, only a half-page's worth of substance that really has to be said. I know that, going in. Your only assignment is to determine exactly which half page that is....

It wasn't really a clever editorial ploy that lead to this page being commenced on this particular date. But it should have been.

It was late on a Friday night, in June of 1977, that the packed-to-the-top U-Haul truck towing a battered Mustang (containing my then much-younger Responsibility) died in the parking lot of the grocery store diagonally across the street from 2468 Harrison. I spent that first night half a mile down Harrison, on Bill Cavin's couch...so I've always considered the following day, the Saturday, as my first day as an Official Cincinnati [that's one "t", Maraglino!] Resident.

And that Saturday has been fixed in my mind as having been June 20th.

...but, for the first time since commencing this five-yearly installment, I just went back and dug up my file copy of OUTWORLDS 51...and I see that at that time there was a modicum of doubt in my mind as to whether the 20th was indeed the relevant Saturday, or might, just possibly have been the Friday date.

I guess I'll just have to wait until I unearth that 1977 calendar. Even so, it will probably be well before I decipher the perpetual calendar Don Carter has buried in the mass of CP/m software elsewhere on this hard drive.

[I suppose, in retrospect, that my life has been segmented into various "user groups", albeit not sequentially numbered. But, if so, accessing one from the other has not been as simple as the matter of a few keystrokes.... Not a thought; just a correlation.]

...comparison shopping: the "contents page" of OW51, with the one coming up...:

Naomi; Al; Frank; Sandy; Denise; Steve; Dave; and Joel...are repeat offenders. I do appreciate that. (Carefully omitting all the snide-tags that are de rigor in these situations.)

This time, I sent/gave out 21 "Invitations". Marla's "bacover" is a decade old --and the three pieces of Steve's art not incorporated into his piece have been in the files...for a while. Dave and Al are Genuine Official OW Columnists, and probably would have been here regardless of the "theme". But I do, in all possible humbleness, wish to Thank Lorraine, Paula & Rick, Irene, Mike, and Roger for humoring me -- even though in several cases they probably had no idea of what they were getting involved in.

...and I'm still not at all certain about Scott.

Overall, I'm pleased, but I'm sorry that the other eight "invitations" didn't produce more than verbal acknowledgements. Perhaps next time...?

And there will, probably, be a "next time". ...if only to see how both Joel and I can justify the inclusion of "All the Way From Kentucky III" in these pages.

...speaking of foreign places, I previously mentioned (if not explained) my month of residence in ~~David Duke's~~ Norwood, Ohio. I took a room at that 1977 Midwest-Con, and later semi-joked that it took me longer to reach my room via the elevator, than it would have taken to have driven "home".

That probably wasn't the reason, but 1977 was the last year, for a long time, that MWC was held at the Quality Inn, Norwood, Ohio. Last year, a re-emergent Bowers---

First words, from Cavin to Bowers, when I showed up on his doorstep after two years of total silence, were:

"...what weekend is MidwestCon?"

"The last full-weekend in June---if the Sunday falls, in June, that's the weekend." *pause* "...is this a trick question? EVERYBODY knows that!"

"...well, I signed this contract with the Marriott, and I forgot to check the dates, and it's a weekend before, and.... Do you think anyone will mind?"

"NO, Bill," I said. "...some people plan their vacations for this, and.... You'd better change it."

---was one of the pushy ones bringing about a "nostalgic" return to the (up-scale renamed) Quality Hotel Central. In Norwood, Ohio.

...and it was there, and it was fun. Despite the fact that the "hillside", forever immortalized in the pages of OW 28/29, has been terraced-over--and we never did find Jodie Offutt's contact lens....

That's where the 1992 Edition will be taking place this next weekend. And I'm looking forward to it.

...but I won't be taking a room.

This issue will, inevitably, have the largest distribution of any of the '90s "run": There's the "new" locals. And there's the fact that, on my own, I'm using this issue as a "promotional" get-acquainted device, and will be sending it to those not on the regular mailing list ...but who'll be coming into town (and to those I still have hopes of inveigling into coming...) for DITTO V, this October.

To those of you who've never seen a copy of OUTWORLDS before, or haven't seen one for a long time, I should mention that this is not a "typical" issue.

...but then, again, that may not be a totally valid statement.

I enjoy doing fanzines. I work at them, sweat over them, cry over what the copy-shop does to my carefully crafted masters...and spend far too much of my "disposable" income--and indisposable time--on them. I inevitably bitch and moan, and become even more socially-withdrawn while in the throes of production mode...but I

do have a lot of fun teasing, provoking...and reformatting.

I have yet to do an issue I'm satisfied with, but I've done a few that have pleased me. They may or may not be the "best" around; I know of none "better". I take pride in what I affix my name to.

...but I don't "give it away". And wouldn't, even if economic reality allowed a vastly-expanded print-run.

Yet...I have no exclusion list, and the circulation is limited not by any magic number other than that dictated by affordability.

I have my "circle" of regulars, and a Fine Group they are. But the joy, the incentive to keep going, is the discovery, often unexpectedly, of a "new" (at least to me) writer or artist to publish, to share with the core readership.

If this issue at all intrigues you, I'd love for you to become an active part of my world(s).

Unlike diehard purists, I have absolutely no problem with subscribers (the few, the brave, the trusting...). But monetary recompense is *not* the only way of staying on my capricious issue-to-issue-flexible mailing list.

...but I do need/require a level of response/feedback that other, more generous faneds, don't seem to demand.

Even though I rarely respond, directly, in kind. Let me know what you think.

Rabble-rousing. After one particularly slanderous "cut" on me and my heathen ~~women~~ friends, I responded to "her" with the observation that "she" wasn't evidencing "a very Christian attitude."

("I'm *not* a Christian," she responded. "...I'm a Cath-o-lic!" But that's merely an aside, and certainly not the only communication-gap "we" had.)

My take on religion:

There are those who "believe" and those who profess to "believe". I have no problem with either, but I have noted over the years that those who have had to "tell" me they were a "Christian" (or believed in "family values")...*weren't*, by any set of criteria/definitions known to me.

My take on "fannishness":

There is such a thing. And it is good. I may not know how to define it...but I know what it is when I encounter it, and can point to it, and say....

If you feel compelled to constantly *tell* me that you are "fannish", or that your fanzine is the epitome of the same...then you probably aren't. ...and your fanzine probably makes LAN'S LANTERN look positively exciting.

This Public Service Announcement is brought to you by the originator of fwa: Faned's With Attitude.

"How many CF6er's does it take to motivate Bill Cavin?"

"None. ...but a two-meals for the price of one coupon, might."

Despite the multitude of references in these pages, this is not a Cincinnati Fantasy Group "publication. In fact, not all the contributors consider themselves "members": Mr. Curry "left" in a huff several years ago. I also "left" (for similar reasons, but in a much more refined huff) at the same time--but have drifted back.

It is certainly not the most "exciting" club imaginable, and the membership is as old & graying as (we are told) fanzine fandom is. But the CFG has been a vital part of my life for a decade and a half, and has served to introduce me to several of the most important people in my life. It has had its moments....

...but it could be a *little* more exciting.

[...just don't ask *me* to "do" anything.]

"How do you know what Cavin's 'position' is, on a subject of vital concern to the CFG membership?"

"...simply find out *who* he has talked to last: Resnick, Roger & Pat, Scott & Jane, Bowers...."

Mr. Cavin *will* be contributing to the next five-yearly installment.

A succinct Update on the Trials & Tribulations, for those of you *fortunate* enough to know me, but who have only had blissful static since you received OW62:

I was out of work a total of sixteen weeks this time, before being "recalled" to the same place I've worked (when I've worked) for the past two years. Since then I've been working 50-55 hour weeks, which have "helped", but which have left me as physically-drained as I've ever been. I maintain.

It was...rough...this time; I was on the edge...but, one more time, my friends rescued me. They know who they are; they know I care. And I know that, no matter what, I'll never "give up". Primarily because of a very special group...of you....

There remains one legality: We had a divorce hearing in April. "She" (thankfully) wasn't there. Her lawyer was--and said that if I was willing to let it be (i.e., relinquish any claim to everything "she" hauled out of here in August of '90) we could "resolve" everything there.

I said, "No."

There is now a "final" hearing set for August 7th. We both have to be there. I really don't "expect" to get any of my toys back, but at least then, it should All Be Over. (...and, if only I *could* believe that one....)



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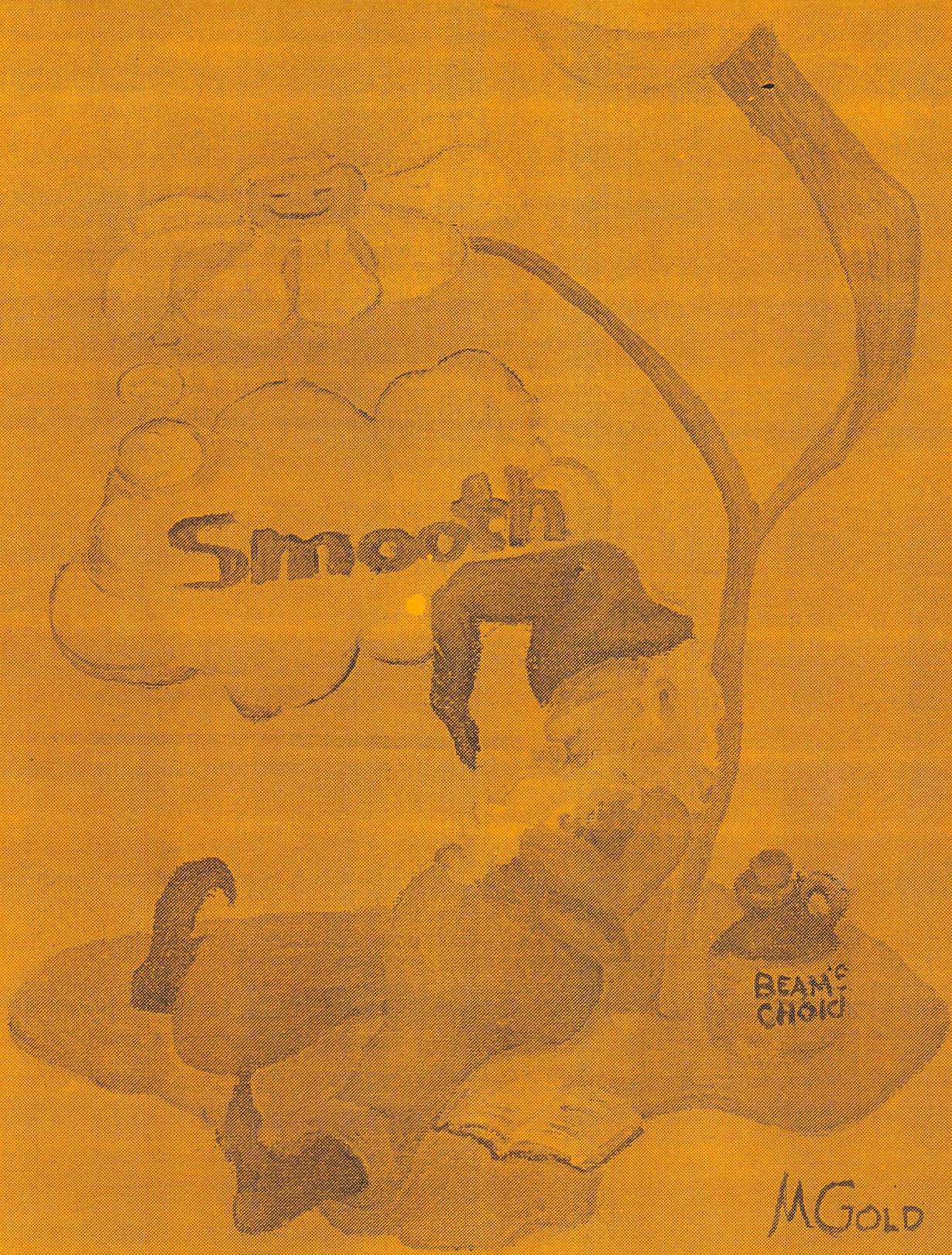
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 I'm capricious...and require Response; but once you're on the the Mailing List.....

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M GOLD