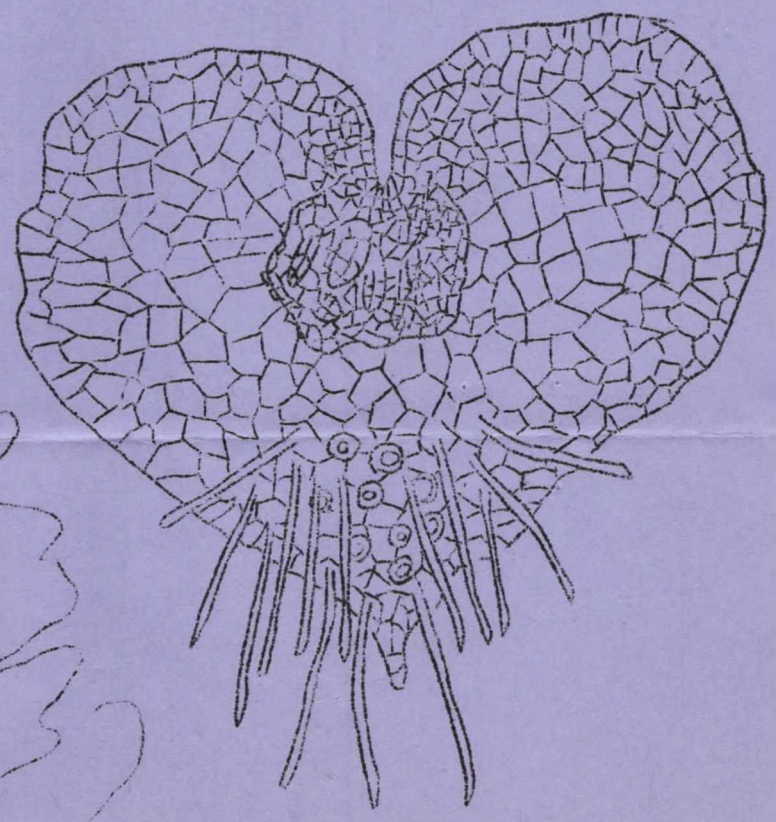


FEBRUARY 1977

# PROTHALLUS



.....  
\*\*\*\*\*  
#####  
PROTHALLUS a Duottape production  
#####  
\*\*\*\*\*  
|.....|

Sarah S. Prince  
8030 Sawmill Rd.  
Dublin OH 43017  
614-889-8487

Being a hesitant sort of personal fanzine-- intended for a diverse array of audiences, the score or so people to whom I owe letters, those <sup>and</sup> publish fanzines I want for whom money seems in the wrong spirit, people I've talked with once at a con but wouldn't recognize again (I'm embarrassingly poor at Names & Faces) if they didn't have nametags & mailing addresses, art instructors with whom I might want a tech problem (independent study credit in studio art) in correspondence art & repro media...if any of you wonder what this is all about, ask & ye shall receive a glossary.

My current pigeonhole in society is "art student!" Though I'm not the most dedicated student that ever was, I am a potter of sorts & a candidate for a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at Ohio State (just being there watching the circus go by is a trip & a half). I live in a cabin in the woods 15 miles from the campus in farm country suddenly become bedroom community with a bleak cat and a chainsaw. My emotional life is at the moment largely vicarious, through the mailbox. I am still young as a fan but have served an apprenticeship in apas.

"WE HAVE THE RECEIPT OF FERNSEED, WE WALK INVISIBLE"

My botany book says that Shakespeare meant by that (King Henry IV) a belief that the spores of certain ferns, gathered on St. John's Eve (23 June) and placed in the shoes, caused the wearer to be invisible. The prothallus is the plant form that grows from the spore; groups of them on a surface look more like lichen than ferns except that they grow in damp places. The prothallus produces the seed from which grows the plant usually recognized as fern.

"AS SILLY AS ALL WOMEN'S STORIES"

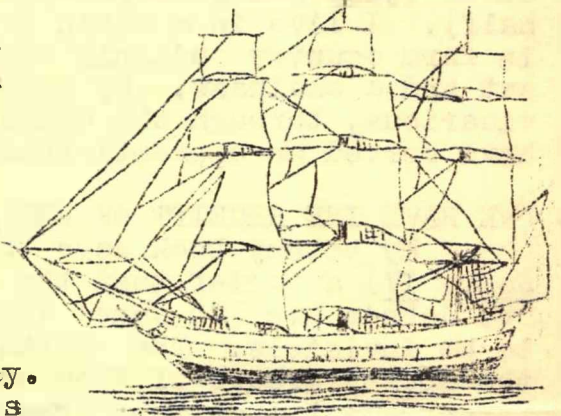
Mosquito had asked Ear to marry him, whereupon Ear fell on the floor in uncontrollable laughter. 'How much longer do you think you will live?' she asked. 'You are already a skeleton.' Mosquito went away humiliated, and any time he passed her way he told Ear that he was still alive."

--Ibo tale, from Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe

#####  
\*\*\*\*\*  
.....1.....

"THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING TO ME."

When I was little I sometimes thought nothing interesting ever happened to me. Long dull years. But these days, though I haven't ceased to be young & foolish, I have become aware of things happening all the time-- many a long dull minute, but lots of interruptions. This morning at 7am it was 32°F-- the warmest in a month-- at noon it was -4°F, generally westerly wind of 25mph gusting 36. Amazing. Like most, my house is inadequately insulated for the temperature. Like Alice I give myself a lot of advice, on subjects like acquiring firewood last fall; now I have none for cozy evenings, only an emergency fuel supply in case of electrical failure-- and at that I'm better off than those whose oil tank isn't big enough to last the weekend, or who may lose gas service because the gas company can't keep the necessary pressure in the old neighborhood pipes. There are always more faggots to be gathered in the woods once you get down to the subsistence level. And I have the sun! You may laugh at the idea of solar heating in Ohio, for truly the sun is a welcome but unexpected guest, but its gift is nothing to despise. A plain act of good design, a wall of double-paned windows facing south, with conscientious use of insulating shades, gains me perhaps 15°F on a sunny day. Mirabile dictu, for both these great cold snaps the sun has stayed with us (though this day there is a rainbow halo in the ice crystals between it & us). So I have stayed with the house. If worst comes, the cat & I go elsewhere; I had thought, either the plants will freeze or they won't, I might as well go to Confusion & have a good time as mope around here in the cold. Realizing it was not weather for solo travel by Volkswagen (I wonder how much an auxiliary heater would cost? If I'm dreaming of living in New Hampshire...) I arranged for a place in a vanload at the last minute. But then they hadn't finished reassembling the van as the sun lowered in the sky, numerous roads including the Interstate normally used between here & there were reported closed, and as I regarded the road half blocked with drifts though I live but a mile from the township garage, I decided I respected the comfort of my own skin & the power of the weather more than they. I wonder if they were among the 2000 motorists who spent the night in Findlay? Perhaps if they'd come to pick me up they'd have been impressed by the obliterating action of a westerly on a north-south road with eleven inches of powder snow to play with. But I doubt it. These city folk...



In spite of the long pleasant hours I've spent playing snow-bound this month I've found it very difficult to begin on this opus. So the weather's an innocuous subject, right? No, it leads right into a favorite game of mine: complaining about the difficulties I've set up for myself. I think from the way I act about it that I don't want anyone to share my experience of living in the country; let them think it's too cold, too far from the city, too primitive: it's my secret paradise, an acting-out of fantasies, a trial run to see what's essential in this kind of life. Best of all, it's mine alone as no situation has ever been-- no one to make demands on me, or for me to blame with responsibility. This isn't just happening to me, I made it & am responsible for it in the most elemental ways.

So I spent a quiet weekend at home, opening the insulating shades at dawn, crawling back under the electric blanket with novel til noon, then puttering about doing cozy domestic-- and heat-spilling-- things like practicing my theory of fudge, dipping candles and (horrors!) cleaning. Even plugging away at my fanzine, though I did not fall so low as to do any glaze calc homework. Somehow I always have too little time at home, but too bad to have this excuse for an extra weekend. How drab to go to school again on a Monday morning not having been to a cen in ever-since-when. (Especially knowing that the gas curtailment has hit the kiln room.)

Dammit! It's not perfect. (We printed the first page today.) There're so many things still to learn. (If it can't be done right is it worth doing at all? if when it's worth doing at all it's worth doing right.) I guess there's nothing to do but barge ahead & let experience teach. Onward!! onward!! into the jaws of death rode the six hundred components of my persona. If I threw out everything I wrote that sounded dumb my fanwriting career would go the way of my academic one-- sunk by a solid block against writing at all. If I had all the thoughts intended for this zine memorized or rough-drafted I could go elsewhere (Hi, Steve!) & type them up on a selectric-- but that's not a way I can work. I need the particular reality of this typer's associations & the familiar mechanical set-up. (One of the best parts of living alone-- your typer margins & rearview mirrors are always left the way you want them.) I can see the typer's faults, but I'd rather use a rundown antique than a modern clunker any day.



philodendron leaves at the institution where the roneo lives--  
shh! don't tell anyone. It's a secret.

"WAS DIE SCHÖNHHEIT SEI, DAS WEISS ICH NICHT" (what beauty is, I don't know)

Like a hundred or so others, I was forced by that characteristic that killed the cat to attend Chris Burden's performance here last spring. Was he going to crawl through broken glass? Have himself shot? Set the gallery on fire? It was so boring that I was one of those who left early. I wasn't surprised, figuring that his medium was audience disgust.

A month or so later I found this typed text on an obscure bulletin board of art exhibit flyers (and authenticity is not guaranteed since I copied it longhand & can barely read it now; it is not clear in my notes whether the entire heading is original or not).

Chris Burden's extension to his retrospective  
Shadow  
Ohio State University Columbus Ohio  
April 26, 1976

The piece began the moment I arrived at the airport and lasted the entire time I was in Columbus. I was dressed in clothes which I thought would fit people's preconceptions of an avante-garde artist-- ie a fatigue jacket; pockets stuffed with notebooks, film, and a taperecorder; opaque dark glasses with chrome rims; a black cap; levis; and a striped T-shirt. These clothes were in no way characteristic of my normal attire. During the course of the piece, I acted distant and aloof, and had as little interaction with students and faculty as possible. The University had scheduled a particular time in the gallery for what they believed to be the performance. I had them erect a translucent screen to separate me from the audience. I sat on a chair behind the screen, and a strong light illuminated my profile. I read the audience descriptions of the pieces I had done in the last six years. I allowed 30 seconds between each description for the audience to visualize the piece. The following day I was supposed to have a question and answer period with students. But I remained elusive, answering elaborate speculations with a simple "yes or no." My intention throughout the piece was to make my personal presence almost superfluous by revealing little or no information about myself that was not already available publicly.

I have to admit it has a very Columbus flavor.

And now to fill out the page, since I really don't know what to think about this crazyman, some comments by one Robert Horvitz whose bio nutshell is "an ordinary housewife who draws," in ART-FORUM May 1976: "Burden's present type of work derives genetically from environmental sculpture rather than from theater." "No longer confined to the materials and values peculiar to sculpture, he has gone on to devise dozens of performance events that are notable for their space-filling energy, their stark simplicity, and their perplexing, audacious amorality." "Every piece centers on some sort of iconoclastic behaviour that floods its surroundings with an almost palpable atmosphere of anxiety and fascination..." "the ostensive elements of pain, risk, violence and vulnerability are less salient to the conception of the work than are self- and situational control." "the whole spectrum of somatic fears and fantasies is at his disposal..."

AND OH, FATHER CHRISTMAS, IF YOU LOVE ME AT ALL, PLEASE SEND ME A GESTETNER; I CAN SEE JUST WHERE IT WOULD GO, BETWEEN THE WATER HEATER AND THE TOWEL RACK

The other day I gave in to fate & bought a box of Gestetner stencils to use for the women's apa (I had hoped to stock just one medium, or ditto masters & one brand of mimeo stencils, but such is not to be; this opus is occurring on a Roneo. Edward Lessingham (A Fish Dinner in Memison, E.R. Edison) had a roneo, which has to be a good recommendation...). What kind of stencils? You mean there are different kinds of stencils? There are lots of different kinds of stencils. Ah. A crevasse opens at my feet & the blazing realms of knowledge shine through. I casually ask if they ever have second-hand machines, on the excuse that the OSU Terran League might be acquiring one, though I know they'll never bite at Gestetner's price. None today, but leave us your name...

A scant few days later I got a call-- if I'd left for school on time this all wouldn't have happened-- would I like to have a demonstration?! Had I used a Gestetner before, or why did I think I wanted one? Well, some of my friends seem to think Gestetner is the Rolls-Royce of mimeo. That apparently was the right thing to say. Today I spent an hour and a half there among marvels & things I'd barely heard of-- an electrostenciller with built-in filters for three-color separations!. I saw the official way to make a color change. (The dude's suit was spotless.) Having had trouble explaining what I wanted a mimeo for, I took with me a KARASS, half a current AZAPA and Brian Earl Brown's MAD SCIENTIST'S DIGEST. They got pretty excited about the last-mentioned item. To cap off the morning I indulged myself with a bottle of ace corflu and a ream of lilac paper-- it hurt to pay broken-case rates, but I could justify it to myself as the difference being less than the price of a bottle of wine & a lot healthier (or is this whole business just an expensive obsession?). The whole thing was very strange-seeming, to be standing in a plush showroom asking questions when normally I have a terrible fear of confronting the mundane business world, expecting to be treated like a scruffy kid. It's not as if I led them to expect me to buy...just wait, I'll be pubbing in grape ink on avocado yet.



"You've had no trouble getting your first license?"

"No, the Guggenheim people fixed it. The idea of having to have a license to do a piece of art seems bizarre... can't you just see it? 'I'm sorry, Michelangelo, but this piece of Carrara marble needs a priority IX license and you have only a IV.' And Michelangelo says, 'But I want to do this statue of David, see? Big, tall boy, with a sling, kinda sullen looking. It isn't because he'll be nude, is it?' 'You just go to the Art Control Board in beautiful downtown Florence, Signor Buonarroti, and fill out the papers in triplicate, last name first, first name last. And remember neatness counts. Speak to Pope Juilius, maybe he can fix it for you.'"

--Patron of the Arts, William Rotsler

The modern Persephone still has no other place to go but into marriage and motherhood. Her father (men in general) still conforms to a rape-incest model of sexuality. And her mother has not taught her to be a warrior, i.e., to take difficult roads to unknown and unique destinations-- gladly. Her mother and father neither prepare her for this task nor rejoice in her success.

--Phyllis Chesler, Women & Madness

While I'm thinking of it, some credits: cover diagram of prothallus from Botany, Wilson, Loomis & Steeves, line illustration prepared by George V. Kelvin based on drawing by Hannah T. Croasdale. Sporophyte frond traced from life. Page 2 from jacket design by Samuel H. Bryant for John Paul Jones, a Sailor's Biography by Samuel Eliot Morison; not definitely claimed to represent any specific ship. Page 3 editorially generated. Page 5 the Disney Cheshire Cat, unwittingly supplied by Bill Waldroop. TNX to Lori (I hope that's how she spells it) Huff for a shot of Irish. Mimeo access by Yvonne Schaefer (definitely a relation; when you're having more than one...) The whole ball of waxy build-up dedicated to my Unca Kyger, who has indeed never steered me wrong. Bacover by Steve Lovejoy.

CHROMATIC GREYS (when ya goin' ta cut off yer ear?)

Paint always intimidated me. I left this formal & tradition-heavy medium to those who can talk about aesthetics & composition, sounding like complete bullshit to me-- either that or I'm pretty dumb. (I'll compromise at 90% & deliberate ignorance on my part.) I avoided meeting either the medium or the verbalization since in high school I could hardly take an art course under my own name; my sisters had covered the ground pretty thouroughly, and looking for something else, I tried to be a music major for a while. It was definitely not wasted time but eventually I concluded that the eye meant more than the ear to me. So now I'm at an art school for a craft, grumbling facetiously about all the drawin' & paintin' & stuff you gotta do to be an art major. It's still a mystery to me how to apply blops of paint to make a recognizable (not that you'd necessarily want to-- there must be a competition for the ugliest pile of junk used as an academic still-life) or meaningful image, though I guess it's at least as conceivable as learning to play the violin in tune. But I've fallen in love with the substance paint. I've always (sic) had acrylics around for various decorative purposes, preferring fingers & toothpicks to brushes that require painstaking washing (I get rather obsessive about cleaning brushes, for if you don't treat your tools right who else will speak for you?), often using straight tube colors or unsophisticated mixing from 5 basic colors. In this quarter's Foundation Year color class I got excited when I realized how subtly you can tame colors by adding touches of complementaries, and work with the pigments instead of bemoaning the lack of absolutely pure primaries. I paint in lush layers that prompt people to ask whether I'm used to oils (never have used them, but Real Soon Now); I bought some old cheap tube watercolors out of curiosity & was intrigued to find them opaque & possible to use similarly. I love the things that can happen in one brushstroke. Drudging in class I surreptitiously run a brush loaded with color along the margin & anticipate the end of term when I can cut these exercises into my favorite square inches to stick in apazines...

The amateur publishing mania is not new to my family. Here's what my grandmother Catharine Jackson Alger had to say about her compulsive rhyming: (which describes my packrat editorial policy)

Then string me a bit of a sparkling word,  
Slipped over a slender thread;  
Slight is the rhyme I am making, you say--  
But the beads are blue and red.

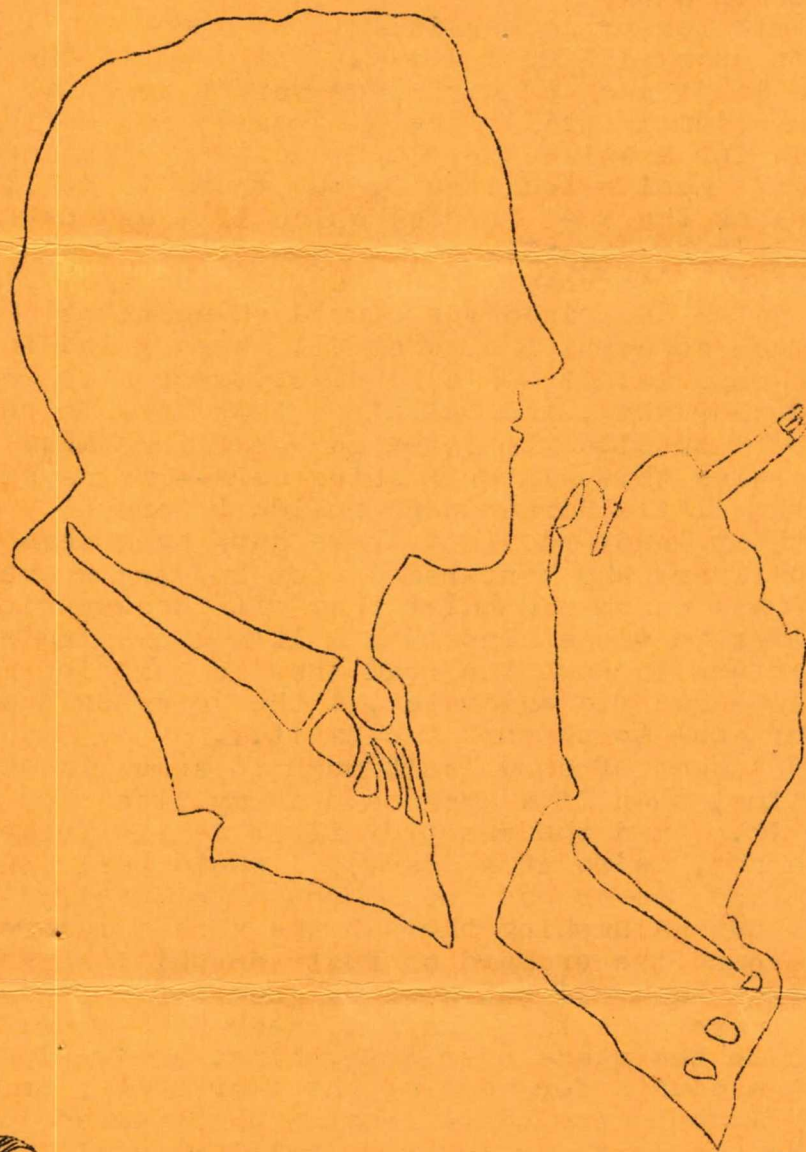
#### THE ESQUIMAUX WORD FOR SNOW

There's a cosmic terror in realizing that when I really need to I probably can't just pick up & leave. And even if the roads are passable there isn't much of any place warmer to go to (well, the university gymnasium is still nice & steamy); not having had any more -20°F days for a while the simple delivery problem mentioned earlier hasn't manifested itself, but there is still the complex thing known as the Fuel Crisis, which if I understand it at all (and that ain't necessarily so) is artificial though not deliberate: a matter of contracts made many months ago, & a federal regulation system too rigid for second thoughts at this late date. I haven't much conception of what all these idled industries will do to the economy, but it won't be nice...when will They give up the electric toothbrushes, the buildings that have to be air-conditioned over 50°F outside temp, the gas-guzzling tanks (I've got most of my exercise this winter pushing cars-- we haven't had any trouble with the little German cars resident here (I share a long driveway with my landlords) but there have been some epic situations with outsiders who ventured in not knowing where the safe ruts are; perhaps we should paint them with hockey-rink dye; you put your shoulder to those dinosaurs & it's a meaningless (or hernia-risking) gesture)? Down the road they're building more & more of the same all-electric eggcrates, & the governor just wants to burn high-sulfur coal to support the habit...

I know eleven inches of snow isn't much to some places (it's more, in depth x time, than I've ever seen in my life) but that wasn't the end of it. (And the snowplow fleet is pitifully small; when salt availeth not, we're at a loss.) I would tell you about all the stages the snow cover has been through to justify this section's title, about galumphing through the crusts layered in the snow touring around the orchard on rusty downhill skis with new ironstiff boots-- painful! but must be good for a few more muscles. Finally there were three days of near 50°F thaw, just enough to consolidate the glaze over everything. This plus my smooth-soled boots accounts for some of the wear & tear on these stencils. If only I could produce a fanzine undisturbed in some calm temple, having developed an intense familiarity with one duplicating machine, any duplicating machine, from constant use; like printing photographs or firing pots, I won't be satisfied until I control the entire process. Every detail's execution must be subordinated to an understanding of the whole! Suggestions welcome, especially if literate & witty; I'm only using envelopes because they were free (and are about to become kindling if they sit around any longer) while the paper is not. I've been given free rein to practice cementing electrostencils for a sailing club membership pamphlet, so next ish I'll start using the illos I have cajoled/blackmailed out of fans on the feeble excuse that SOMEDAY...



backyard



celibacy assembly