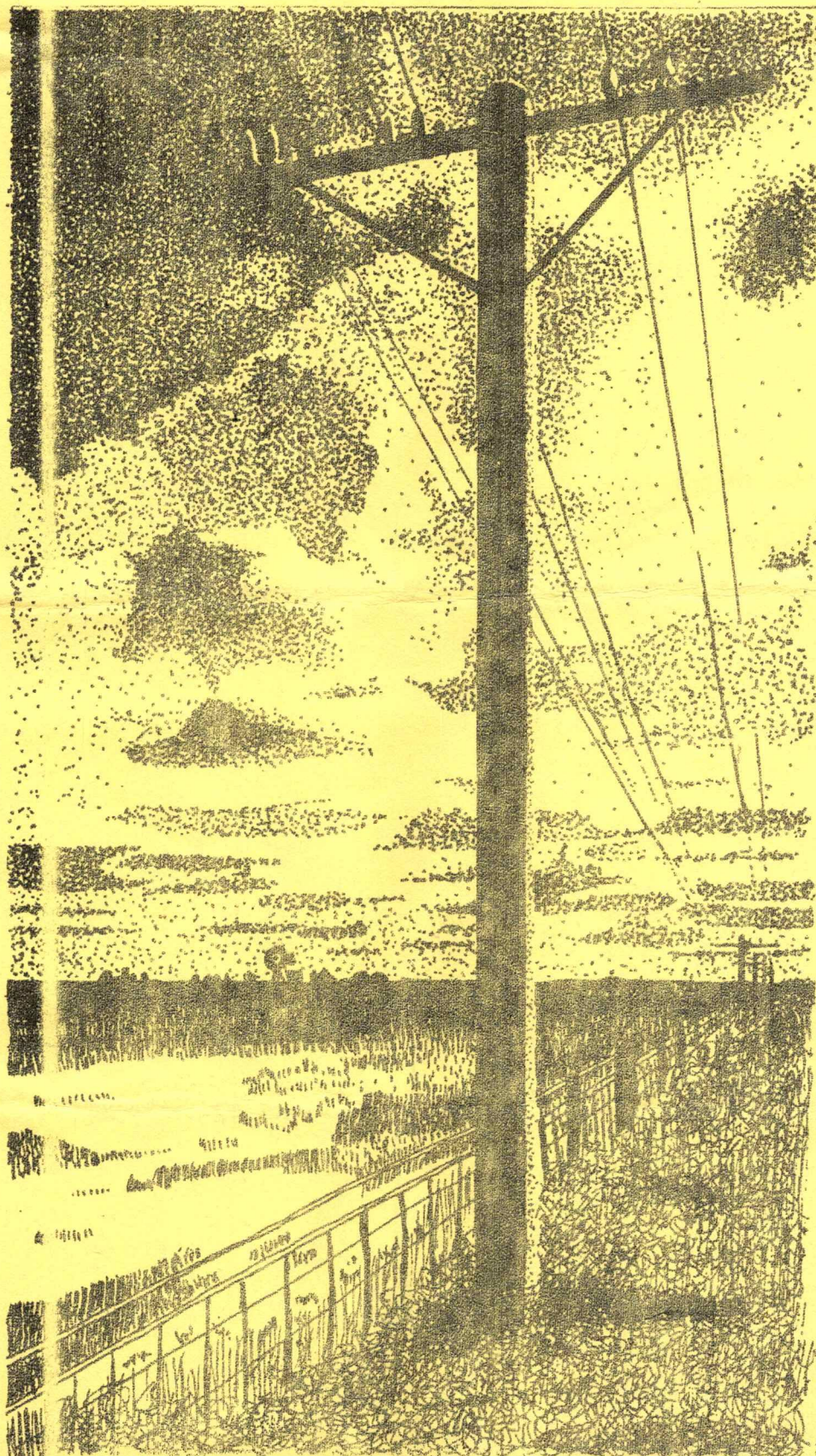
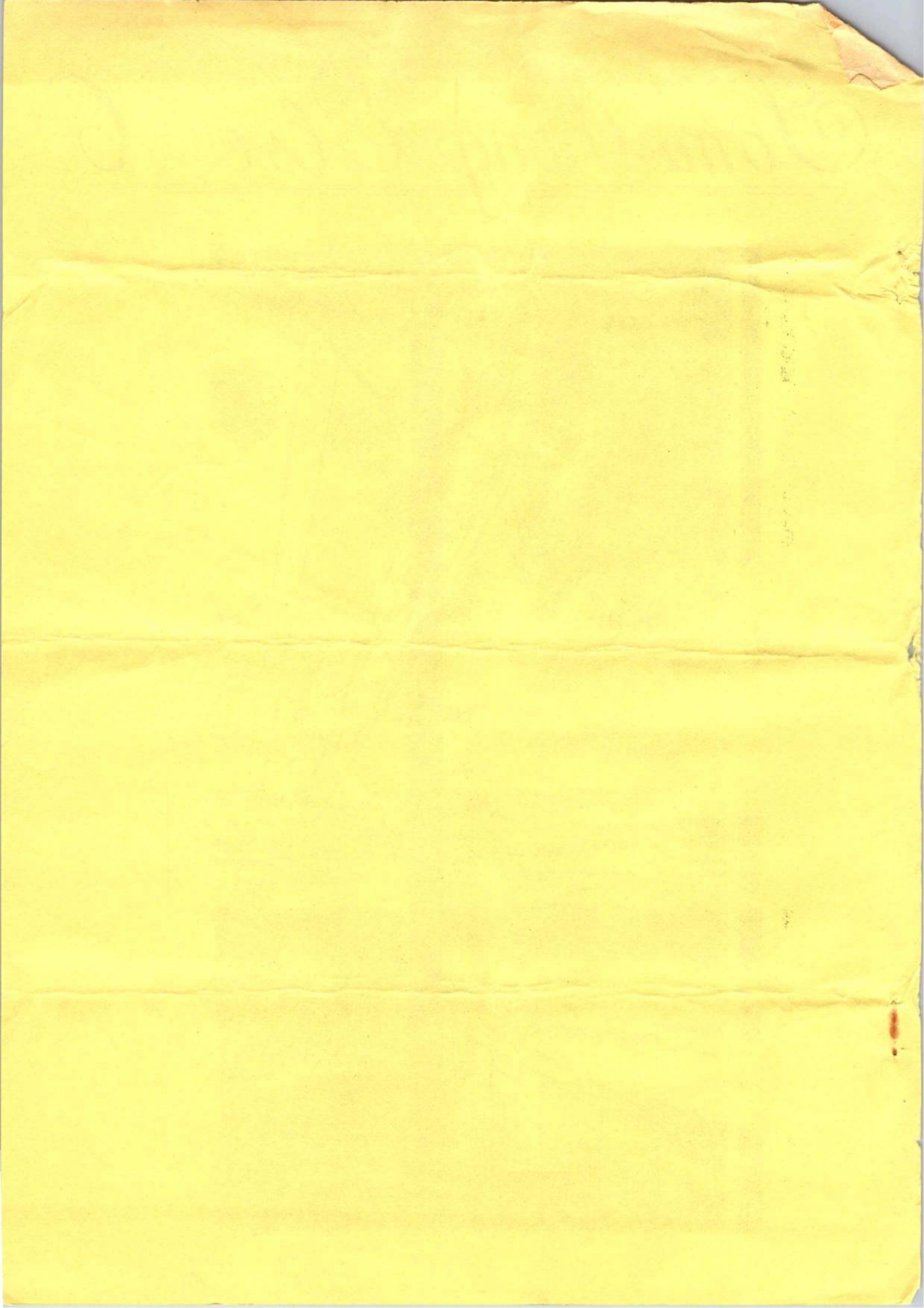


Something Else 6



5/27



Something Else

NUMBER SIX

Edited by Shayne McCormack,
P.O. Box 146, Burwood, N.S.W.
2134, Australia.

June, 1979

This fanzine and its editor
supports the following worthy
causes:

Australia in '83!
HERMAN for DUFF!
Perth in '80!
Koala Fandom!

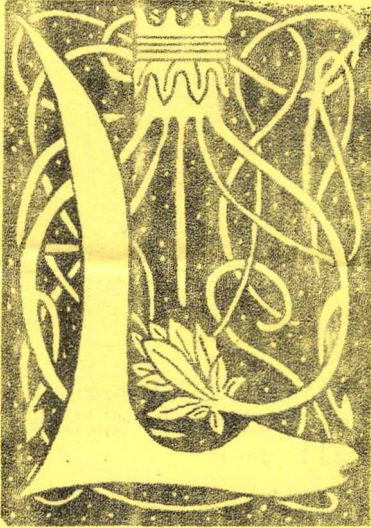
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of very suspicious looking people.
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ARTWORK IN THIS ISSUE:

Cover by SMcC
Pages 6 & 9 - William Rotsler
Pages 1 & 10 - Brian Robinson

Caveat Emptor Press



et's do SOMETHING ELSE.....

I bet you all thought you'd never see one of these again. However, like bicycle riding, once learnt, never forgotten. However again, if you don't do it occasionally, after a while certain parts of the anatomy get sore when you take it up again.

With me, I've just begun to learn that the part of the anatomy that's going to hurt putting this to print is my purse. My my, havn't things got expensive since 1976. Inflation is not only rife, its runnin' amok.

Well, what's happened to me in three years? An awful lot, really, when I look back on it. I gave up being a secretary as a very bad not-too-funny joke, and had a go at commercial art. A year at Technical College gave me a whole lot of 4b pencils, a set of French Curves, a broken equipment box, a true respect for commercial artists, and a failing mark at the end of the year. It seems I'm a fair to middling drawer in the doodles area, a reasonably creative designer, a good copy writer and a truly lousy layout artist. I hate lettering, too. However, that year left me open for any reasonable offers of employment, (except working in an office - swore I'd become a 'dole bludger' before I did that again). In one of those incredible pieces of luck, I fluked a job at Sydney's science fiction specialist bookshop, and ended up managing it. (I know all you Australian fan friends know this, but my friends overseas haven't heard from me for quite a while, and will probably find this amusing). After more than a year, the shop is still in one piece, and even making a healthy profit. I really do feel that all you customers out there ought to take a turn behind a shop counter for a week or so.. you would learn a great deal about the Public. With certain exceptions, they are often rude, moronic, dense to the point of a brick wall, and strange, too. That doesn't put me off, especially. I only have to look along the wall-length shelves of science fiction, sitting there with their often garish, often beautiful covers, a whole bunch of Universes waiting to be read and loved, and it makes it worthwhile. Funny world, isn't it?

I have been abused, sworn at, asked if I see the most amazing range of items (place mats, purple pen refills.

Statutory Declarations, cigarettes, shaving cream, etc.) and offered some pretty funny things, too. Like the drunk who tried to sell me one of my own books, or another drunk who offered me a really choice salami, going cheap. So far, I've been very lucky, really. I haven't had a hold up or a really bad theft, though I have had a couple of book mutilations. Mostly, the nice customers make up for the crook ones. Mostly, that is.

I moved away from home, and set up house with two good friends, Warren Nicholls and William Good. Some time after that, Warren decided to move away again, and become a married person. Jack Herman, well known dice thrower and DUFF candidate, moved in, along with 10,000 movie books, 1605 hats, and what seems like the world supply of paper. Amazing how much paper a fannish house creates, isn't it? I hate to think how many trees died to supply the paper for the books alone that inhabit the house, not to mention the paper lining the hallway for fanzines.

I like being away from home, although I miss my parents and my dog, Rupert. I'm always afraid something is going to happen to them while I'm gone. Silly thing, because my sister lives just around the corner, and what could I do at home, anyhow?

I notice among many fans an increasing tendency to reveal their inner feelings, and lifes' secrets in fanzines. I don't think I'll do that, if you don't mind. Fandom is certainly a way of life, but if a person goes around revealing their soul in print, they are letting fandom take hold of their lives in a very deep-rooted way. A person should keep a few things to themselves, at least, thats the way I feel about it. Maybe if my life was really interesting, and if I had all kinds of fascinating secrets hidden away, it would make interesting reading. I prefer to make things up about other people...they're bound to be more fun.

I'm presently hard at work helping to get Syncon 79 into running order. There have been a lot of hard times along the way, but right around now, things are starting to look a lot better. Its going to be a fancy Convention, thats true, with lots of nice happenings but, you know, sometimes I long for the simpler, uncomplicated conventions of the past. Australian fans have become a little spoilt, I think, and seem to expect perfection for their money. Does it really matter if a programme item is a bit off-time, or the Convention Suite isn't quite as fancy as the last one? Surely what we go to Conventions for is the people, not just the programme or the facilities. How about someone holding an old-fashioned Convention, not in some fancy hotel, or convention centre, but somewhere a little more common and ordinary, and fun. A Convention where the Committee doesn't work itself to death trying to have everything work like a mechanical doll, with just about as much emotion. I don't know whether we could do that anymore, though. People are used to the big, fancy set up, and might think they've been cheated.

Talking of the good old times, hopefully there should be a photo page opposite this page, with some faces that should be easily recognisable. If you have the foolscap photopage, they go like this:

- (1) The first convention held at the Victoria Hotel in Melbourne (year?) from left - my best side, Robin Johnson's back, Paul Stevens, Michael Creaney and David Grigg (as characters from the Wizard of Id).
- (2) A Very Young Leigh Edmonds
- (3) The Unalterable Mervyn Binns
- (4) Paul (Pullon Steffans) Stevens and Good Friend Gary Mason.
- (5) Peter House (on right) and umm (well you, know, the fellow who played Aussiefan..arr..)
- (6) A beardless John Foyster
- (7) Bill Wright recording Robin Johnson's head.
- (8) What a group! Top row is John Ryan and whatsisname, bottom row is (from left) Noel Kerr, Paul Stevens and John Breden.

The ones who get the smaller sheet have Mervyn on top left, myself and John Foyster top right, the group from Wizard of Id bottom left and Bill recording Robin bottom right. I won't even try to explain why there are two different photo pages.

Here's a poem by me.

ME, AND THE UNIVERSE

The night comes
and engulfs me
pulling me into its dark maw
that carries the breath of a day gone,
with star teeth
and moonlight at the end of the tunnel.

I am alone on the grass,
with the warm dark air touching my face,
and the sound of insects drifting past,
buzzing and hissing,
and telling me there is no emptiness.

I look up
and see again the stars
that no longer fill me with wonder,
but with peace.
The Universe is all around me,
and I am aware of it,
and I can think about it,
and this,
above all,
means something.

Join me again, and do write.

Shayne

NE

② ↘



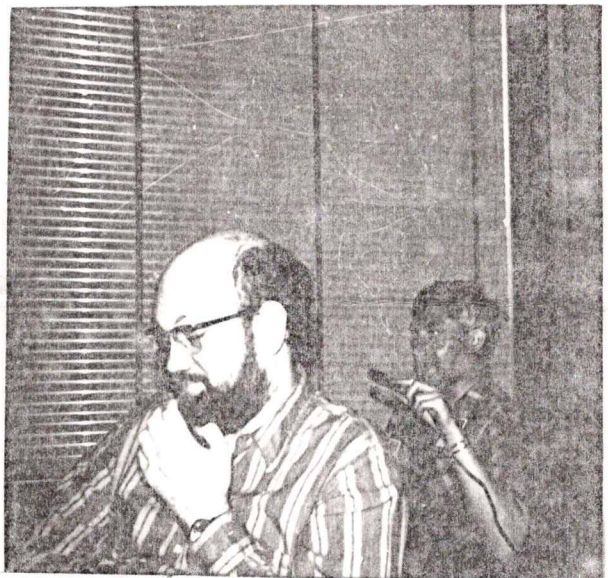
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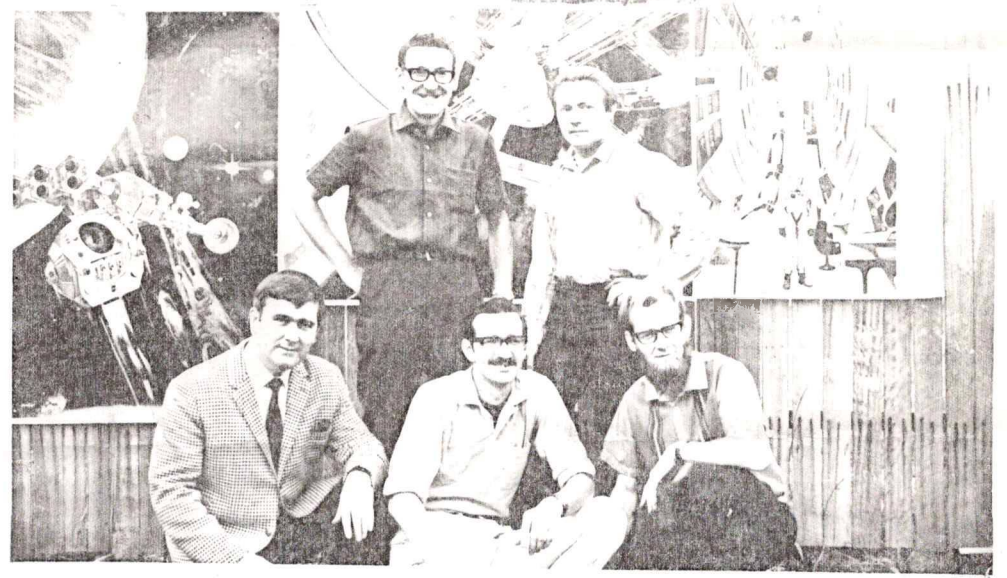
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⑧ ↘



has switched from the literature itself to the people who are actively involved in producing and consuming it. And instead of devoting my time to reading sciencefiction I now put it into reading and contributing to fanzines and attending conventions. (You may consider me a sort of Canadian Eric Lindsay in a hairy plastic disguise.)

Does that still qualify me as a fan? I certainly think so. For example, according to two recent polls of active science fiction fans (i.e., readers) the average North American sf enthusiast spends about two hundred and eighty dollars a year on his or her hobby, namely by purchasing science fiction. That might mean that the average science fiction reader buys (and, one supposes, reads) about three books or magazines a week: let's say, perhaps, nine hours a week put into the hobby of "science fiction". Can I stack up against those average figures? Wellllll.....

Last year, not counting meals and drinks, but including transportation, accommodation, purchases directly related to written and visual science fiction, and materials for use in the area of fanzines, I estimate I spent about five thousand dollars on my pursuit of the science fiction hobby. And with eighteen conventions over the year plus time spent reading fanzines and contributing to them and even occasionally reading some actual sf books I'd conservatively place the number of hours spent on some aspect of science fiction each week at twenty five to thirty. And that's one hell of a lot more time and money than the "average" science fiction fan. (I may be just a dillestants but by god I'm a dedicated dillestante!)

So that's why I still think of myself as a fan and that's also why I don't read much science fiction any more. Take eighteen weekends out of a year for science fiction conventions, tie up an additional fifteen hours a week reading and responding to some four hundred and fifty fanzines each year, toss in a full time job and the self-indulgent desire to occasionally eat or sleep and the amount of time left over for reading that crazy Buck Rogers stuff can start to become vanishingly small.

But I must admit it hasn't disappeared altogether. I still read the occasional novel or collection of short stories. The problem is, I do it for all the wrong reasons. I do it for the reasons that sound elitist and snobbish and ego-tripping and that make people say nasty, suspicious things when they hear them. But for all that my reasons may sound like putting on airs and filled with self-importance they happen to be real ones and taken with the sort of life-style I've outlined in this brief article I consider them valid ones.

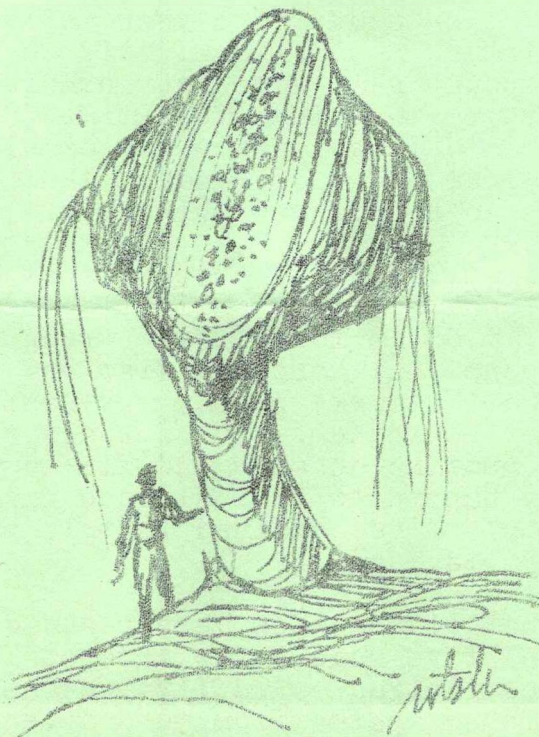
In the years that I've gotten deeper and deeper into fanzines and conventions, I've made a few friends in the "real" world of science fiction. And I've watched a few fellow fans tread different paths from me and become celebrities.

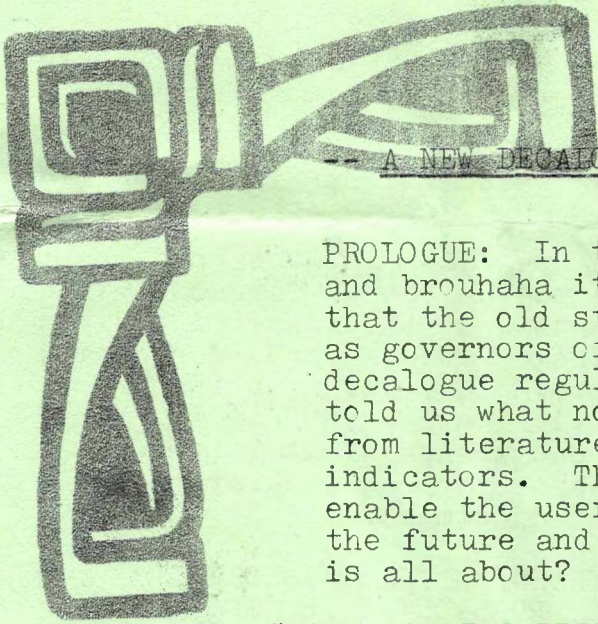
About the best friend I've got in this world won a Hugo and a Nebula for his first novel but that doesn't alter the fact that for twelve years we've drunk and talked and walked and played and sung our way together through a hundred different cities. I can't help it if he's famous.

What do I look for in a science fiction story now that I don't have any time left to read science fiction? I look for the name of a friend on the cover so I can keep in touch with what the people who are important to me are doing. I may not like being restricted that much but you can't be everywhere at once and you can't do everything you'd like to do and I'm certainly not ashamed to admit that's how things often go.

Besides, I get to read a hell of a lot of good science fiction that way.

Reading back over Mike's article reminds me a lot of me. In some ways, that is. Mike, at least, has a profession that is outside science fiction....doing a quick calculation on my own situation, it comes out to something like 70 hours a week I don't spend on science fiction -- the hours I'm asleep. I live with Jack Hermand and William Good, one of whom is a staunch science fiction fan, and the other is a Tolkien fan (although he sniffs at the term fan). I work in a science fiction bookshop. All I can say is, if I should ever develop an allergy to sf, I'd be in an awful lot of trouble!





-- A NEW DECALOGUE --

by Jack Herman

PROLOGUE: In these times of increasing stress and brouhaha it has become increasingly obvious that the old standards are no longer adequate as governors of our actions. The ancient decalogue regulated religious observance and told us what not to do. My ten rules, all drawn from literature and the media serve as behaviour indicators. Their correct application would enable the user to adjust himself (herself) to the future and is not that what Science Fiction is all about?

RULE ONE: "HOPE FOR THE BEST, EXPECT THE WORST" (Mel Brooks from THE TWELVE CHAIRS)

This is my favourite elucidation of Finagle's Second Law. I find the constant iteration of this basic premise of the Universe to be not infrequently pessimistic in outlook. I feel that what we need today is a pessimistic attitude that is leavened by an overweening optimism so that (a) no-one really knows what you want to happen and (b) so that disappointment, that most essential of all emotions, will not be mitigated by an expectation of failure that ruins the whole concept. Also, this statement contains the right dose of ambient cynicism that is needed to offset the Pollyannas in our daily press.

RULE TWO: "IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED, TRY, TRY, AGAIN. THEN QUIT. NO USE BEING A DAMN FOOL ABOUT IT." (W.C. Fields)

The Horatio Alger ideal that anything can be achieved by a constant and sustained effort is the greatest mischief ever unleashed on a suspecting public. The truth of the matter is that more people fall on their faces than ever land on their feet. In addition, I find the spectacle of people trying all over the place to be an interference with my enjoyment of life. Why can't they be like me: resign themselves to perfection and forget about self-improvement.

RULE THREE: "THIS IS LIBERTY HALL. YOU CAN SPIT ON THE MAT AND CALL THE CAT A BASTARD". (A. Bertram Chandler in any Grimes Story.)

One of the things I can never fathom is why it has not been customary to allieviate people's fear of the unknown. A need to feel at home is an essential part of the human make-up and the sight of squirming uncomfortable bodies unsure of the etiquette of the situation in which they find themselves is an unseemly irritation on the epidermis of life. I only need to add that the very act of insulting the

parenthood of domestic felines is both cathartic and strikes a blow for human liberation by undermining the strength of their major oppressors. Liberty is indivisible and the most precious commodity in the world.

RULE FOUR: "I (AM) A VICTIM OF A SERIES OF ACCIDENTS AS ARE WE ALL." (The Space Wanderer in Vonnegut's SIRENS OF TITAN.)

People who don't recognise the special relationship of happenstance to happenings are blind to the cosmic forces that shape our ends. No-one ever gets what they deserve and many are rewarded far beyond their worth. Why? Accidents! Birth, circumstance and heredity. Yet, whinging is no answer to failure. If that's your karma, you got it, baby! Recognition that no amount of chutzpah, sticktoitiveness and talent is enough to compensate for bad luck or bad birth is the first step toward adjustment.

RULE FIVE: "BELIEVE IN EVERYTHING, NOTHING IS SACRED/
BELIEVE IN NOTHING, EVERYTHING IS SACRED."
(Tom Robbins, EVEN COWGIRLS GET THE BLUES.)

The basis for Oriental religion and the Hegelian dialectic is the resolution of antithetic ideas. Rule Five provides the most perfect example of the antithesis that must be met in life. To fall between either extremes is to admit that in the world of ideas and feelings, there are some that are more important than others. This can be a cause of dissension and can lead to conflict and disagreement. Ha ha ho ho and hee hee!

RULE SIX: "HELP HIM! HELP WHO? HELP THE BOMBADIER! I'M THE BOMBADIER! THEN HELP HIM, HELP HIM! (Conversation from Joseph Heller's CATCH 22)

Here we are all floundering around in this mire we call civilisation, trying to stay afloat in an ever-increasingly antipathetic flow, and while some of us are able to cope well in certain situations, we do nothing to help those who can't. I don't care who the people are, it is necessary to help them. Only the most selfish Islands would ignore the need to assist their fellow persons and also the other living things with which we share our biosphere. The interrelated nature of the ecology bespeaks a need to help maintain the balance and to recognise the existence of such a balance. Yet there exists those so blind (or selfish) that they cannot see this relationship and so act in a way that is counter-productive to the best interests of humanity and of Earth.

RULE SEVEN: "A HUMAN BEING SHOULD BE ABLE TO CHANGE A DIAPER, PLAN AN INVASION, BUTCHER A HOG, CONN A SHIP, DESIGN A BUILDING, WRITE A SONNET, BALANCE ACCOUNTS, BUILD A WALL, SET A BONE, COMFORT THE DYING, TAKE ORDERS, GIVE ORDERS, COOPERATE, ACT ALONE, SOLVE EQUATIONS, ANALYSE A NEW PROBLEM, PITCH MANURE, PROGRAMME A COMPUTER, COOK A TASTY MEAL, FIGHT EFFICIENTLY, DIE GALLANTLY. SPECIALIZATION IS FOR INSECTS": (Lazarus Long in TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE by R.A. Heinlein).

The major trouble with today's average man is that he tends towards over-specialisation. I've always prided myself on being a generalist, even if I don't live up to the Heinlein ideal. I find people who become specialists, soon become very boring. Entertainment is a major reason for insisting on broad areas of interest. Survival of the human race may depend on the ability of people to face situations where intergration of divergent skills will be needed. Also, increasing leisure time means that those who don't develop wide ranging interests will not be able to creatively allocate their leisure time to activities that will be non-stultifying and edifying. Don't we all prefer unstultified people.

RULE EIGHT: "THE GAME'S AFOOT." (Holmes to Watson in several Conan-Doyle Sherlock Holmes stories.)

A human being isn't really alive unless the adrenelin is really flowing. The very sound of Holmes donning the deer-stalker, taking off his slippers and going out in the cold London night personifies the spirit of activity and utility that should be identified with the complete person. When in doubt get up and do something! Such is the nature of the animal that an inactive organism quickly decays. So, no matter what you're doing, there's a challenge out there waiting for you. Moriarty might be out there waiting for you. So, get off your arse, and do it!

RULE NINE: "HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU, KID!" (Bogart to Bergmann, in CASABLANCA.)

Partings need not be bitter-sweet or sorrowful, if we can learn from Rick that by doing the right thing, and parting when its necessary, no regrets are needed. The problem is that most people don't or can't let go. If a thing is over, no amount of emotion or rationalisation will enable it to continue. A realisation that the finish is approaching is one of the most civilised skills. So check what you're doing. Are you still enjoying it? Can you recognise a decaying situation? It's always preferable to let go early than too late. Hold your head up high, look the situation in the face, raise your glass and toast the end: "Here's looking at you, kid!"

RULE TEN: "SCREAM AND LEAP" (Larry Niven, RINGWORLD.)

Attack is the best form of offence. When in doubt, attack! When defending, attack! When in trouble, attack! When you're winning, attack! When attacking, attack! There is never an excuse for sitting back and letting situations come to you. "There's a tide in the affairs of man, when you must grab the bull by the tail and face the situation". (Fields) When faced with a dilemma, the only true solution is to scream (distraction) and leap (attack). In this manner do we defeat passiveness.

AS A SPECIAL GIFT, I PRESENT FREE...AN ELEVENTH LAW:

"A THING WORTH HAVING IS WORTH CHEATING FOR." (W.C. Fields in MY LITTLE CHICKADEE.)

This is so obvious that it doesn't need explaining except to say that the folkways, mores and laws of society are an invention of the privileged to protect their position. Try not to hurt innocent people, but don't let the rules (of society) get in your way either.

(SMcC) Well, what a mixture of deep philosophical truths and utter balderdash that was. I warn you, gentle readers out there who don't know this Jack Herman fellow very well....go over everything he says very carefully to sift out where you think he's being serious...then you will probably find that whatever is left is either the truth or an out-and-out fabrication. You think I'm joking, don't you....?

A LETTER: Dear Shayne, Here's the poem I promised I'd write for your 'zine. Inspired by an optical illusion of the sun setting prematurely behind a mountain and then reappearing, the sight of a dead sheep alongside the road and other sights and impressions of the mood of the people in the South Island of New Zealand--plucky, optimistic but reserved, ugliness heightening the beauty and general wonderment at the familiar strangeness.....The puns are all as deliberate as they are outrageous.....

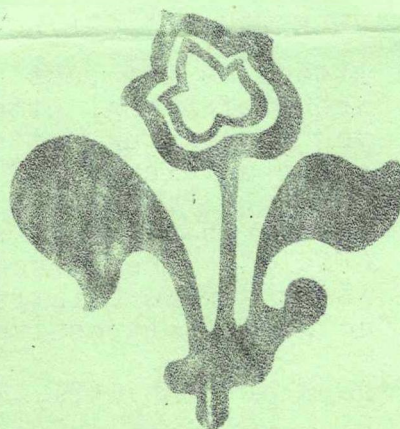
MERRY GO ACROSS (TE ANAU TO INVERCARGILL)

The sun sinks behind the craggy skyline,
Dips for several moments
Darkening our way, then redawns
Above the western horizontal flood plain.
The fertile valley presents a pastoral scene
Shading to Hollywood painted mountains
Vertically jutting towards glowering clouds.

Our bus upsets the calm
Chewers, tails and rumps saucily bouncing.
Woolyclad mutton lies by the road.

Honey for sale, and mint jam.
Cheerio.

Elizabeth Anne Hull
January 4, 1978.



WHY YOU GOT THIS:

- 'cause your a friend and I owe you
- You have sent me a fanzine in the past and this is in way of a thank you
- I'd like to trade
- You contributed (thanx)
- I would like something from you for the next issue (please?)
- on a whim

PRINTED MATTER ONLY !

FROM:
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TO: Jan Howard Finder
PO Box 428
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USA

AUSTRALIA IN '83!

