

Swingline 3

SWINGLINE #3 is done for the third mailing of APA, dated May 6, 1972, by Joyce Katz who still lives at 59 Livingston St., Apt. 6-B, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201. Praise Ghu, Spring has finally come to New York; the last few days have been as pleasant as a day in May... I'm getting my once-every-few years urge to Plant Something; I think I'll try to locate something to use as a window box. I can't quite make up my mind whether I'd rather plant flowers...which would, at the best, only bloom for a short while...or if it would be better to plant herbs. Then again, I suppose I could get all ecological and plant lettuce and green onions and radishes. But, of course, while I'm making up my mind which to plant, the season for planting is passing me by...and perhaps it's just as well, considering the lack of luck I've had with my gardening in years past. My mother---now there was a genuine case of green thumb---and all my (two) brothers and (one) sister have had fantastic luck with gardening...but, alas, not shared by me. Even a sweet potatoe plant will just lie in the water and rot if I'm the one who cares for it...

When I started working at my present job, I was given the chore of caring for the office house-plants. There were three potted vines--ugly and gnarled, but nonetheless luxuriantly green-- and three plants that were nothing more than cuttings in a pot of water.

Frankly, I hated the chore: I mean, after thirty-three years of watching plants die from my ministrations, I've grown a bit of a trauma about it, and feel it's some kind of Vegetarian Comment on my worth. Or something. Nevertheless, week after week, I dutifully watered the damn things, usually muttering all the while. Finally I decided to do a bit of experimenting: while continuing to minister to its plantly needs, and carefully treating it no different than the rest, I developed the habit of standing over one of the plants for a few minutes each week, alternately hating it and telling it to drop dead.

I've killed three of them now... Some days I really feel bad about it. I just thought you people ought to know.

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NEAL Tell me, if there a ski-fandom, in the sense that we know fandom? I suppose the BNF skiers must be the professionals...but are there any trufan skiers? (They probably get together to discuss science fiction.) Do skiers stay in touch with each other during the summer?

In connection with your attitudes toward those of your friends who have been converted: you've got to be tolerant of the missionary zeal that infects Christians. They are, after all, specifically instructed as part of their faith, that they must try to Save Souls.. whether they want to or not. If you were a True Believer, you'd have to try to convert others, too, or else deny your own belief. I don't think it's possible to be a real practicing Christian without at least doing a little witnessing now and then.

Of course, understanding that still doesn't make it anymore pleasant to be around someone who's trying to sell you something you don't want to buy.

I guess I've viewed Religious Fervor from at least three different angles. At one time I was an extremely devout Christian, filled with missionary zeal, life dedicated to the Lord, enrolled in a religious college, with my course of studies chosen to make a Baptist missionary out of me.

Things happened; time passed. After the church, there were various Eastern philosophies, metaphysical studies...now that I think of it, I suppose that was a second period of religious fervor, and means that I've been exposed to at least four such.

And, of course, there's atheism, which can be just as Fervent as Belief. Ray was militantly atheistic...and frankly, I can be pretty intolerant at time about my disbelief.

My most recent exposure to religious fervor was the one which led me to convert to Judaism. A Southern Baptist's missionary zeal could hardly have had any stronger effect on my than my inlaw's non-acceptance of gentiles, since their attitude did lead me to adopt a religious faith, albeit only in name.

I guess the only point that all this is supposed to make is that anytime your opinions of someone are formed because of religion, your approach to reality is distorted. I don't think a man's religion should ever be the thing he's judged by. (Maybe you can judge him by what he does with it...but you have to give at least thought to what he's required to do by his belief.)

Of course, you definitely can judge how pleasant a person is to be around...that's a completely subjective thing.

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BILL Now that you mention it, I've got an undercurrent of terror running through my head everytime I'm in a hotel...and I've had numerous hotel nightmares, too. However, there the similarity seems to end. My fear is less of being lost in a hotel than of the hotel security guards. I'm really honest-to-god scared stiff of the house dick. I confess to having my heart in my mouth everytime there's a knock on the room door, when I'm having a party at a con...and I'm a little ill at ease walking through the halls. At Lunacon, I got on an elevator that happened to be occupied by a hotel security guard. I actually backed back into the corner and hid behind the tallest people I could find...and I don't think I breathed till he got off the elevator. Isn't it funny what extreme fears people have of such innocuous things?

Actually, I kinda like Dr. Pepper myself...but only cold. I wonder if anyone in the world ever actually drank hot Dr. Pepper?

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SETH Well, you're certainly right when you talk about the Ideal Office Job as being one that you can Believe In. Working for a Cause can be very gratifying, and working with a group of people that believe the same as you makes for good office relationships. I suppose that, at one time or another, most of us have worked for some Cause or another, whether it was for McCarthy or Stop-The-War or Environmental Control. I certainly agree with you that those jobs are among the most desirable.

On the other hand, there's nothing that can leave you feeling Stranger than if you're working for a goal that you don't believe in. In my first week on the job when I first moved to St. Louis, my new boss put me to work on a political campaign. I was doing the normal form-letter typing, envelope-stuffing...but together with that, I also was given a certain section of the precinct for mine own, to cajol and entreat to the polls on behalf of Thomas R. Green, alderman-to-be. For the weeks prior to the election, I telephoned the people in my section, soliciting their support, enticing them to coffee klatches and cocktail parties, and--most important of all--to the polls on election day. I also was assigned the job of fund-raising; my introduction to most of the business firms in St. Louis was telephoning them and asking for donations to the Tom Green Campaign Fund. The irony?--I not only had never met Mr. Green at the time all this began, I didn't know

the issues---and at no time during the entire campaign was I ever asked about my political party preference. My participation in the campaign was strictly professional..I was Max Lubin's secretary, and Max Lubin assigned me to that job, and that's all it was...a job.

Mr. Green was rather soundly defeated, which probably says more than I ever could about this method of getting campaign workers. Not that I didn't do my very best. But, face it, it's hard to really get your heart into it under that kind of circumstances.

Actually, my most peculiar political campaign was one that came several years after. Senator Long was up for re-election, and being challenged by Thomas Eagleton. Anyone who reads LIFE knows that Max Lubin was strongly committed to Earl Long, and Lubin had me do tremendous amounts of work on the campaign. Personally I was supporting Eagleton.. which is the reason I call this my most peculiar campaign. It's funny: Lubin knew I wasn't for Long. But he also felt that made no difference; during working hours I was assigned to support Long, and he could see no conflict of conscience in such a demand. Actually, there wasn't much conscience-searching about this; I didn't oppose Long; I just preferred Eagleton. And, I was honest in my working-hour support of Long; I didn't do any sabotage, and I did do everything I was asked, even tho I was a little uninspired.

Long was, of course, unseated by Eagleton.

I've often wondered what I would have done if there had been a real conflict. I hope that I would have been able to get by with refusing to work on the campaign, but it probably would have been a matter of work or quit that job with Mr. Lubin. If obliged to work under those circumstances, I wonder if I would have been fair with my dealings with Mr. Lubin, and done my best..or would I have deliberately done everything I could to hinder the campaign? I don't honestly know which of those alternatives is most distasteful. I came very close to having to answer some of those questions..Lubin only lost interest in the presidential campaign when Johnson bowed out; otherwise I would have been assigned to work on it. And, of course...I just couldn't have done it.

CHARLENE I don't think you should let it worry you when you and Bill write similar comments on any given subject. I suppose that's the most common problem among coupled fans...but, actually, having a similar outlook on most things is what makes couples compatible. It's a truism that, the longer a couple is together, the more alike they get.. and why not? After all, (usually) they're exposed to the same stimuli, they have the same friends, they watch the same tv broadcasts and listen to the same radio programs and..at least to large extent..read the same books and magazines. They also eat the same diet, live in the same environment, get exposed to the same germs..and as result, have the same illnesses..both physical and mental. In many ways, it's a wonder couples don't become even more similar than they do. (Errr..have you all noticed that I'm growing? I was only 5'3" when I came here, but I'm up to 5'8" now.)

I think you should, as you did this past mailing, just go ahead and make your comments with no regard for what Bill might write. Even on those instances when you actually choose the same subjects to discuss, you say things your own way...and I don't think there's any real danger that your individuality won't show through. It does, you know.

Speaking of decadence, I possess the precise streak of it you mention...I love weekends in hotels (--as long as I don't have to be exposed to the house detective, per what I said to Bill.) Hotels..especially nice ones, but even mediocre ones, make me feel like some great long-limbed sensuous cat; I always want to just throw off all inhibitions and give myself

over completely to sensuality and comfort and luxury. I lose every ounce of my social conscience in a hotel. Wasn't it you who once agreed with me on this, and pointed out that being someplace where someone else did all the cooking and cleaning just naturally produced sensuality? -- Actually, I can even fairly well enjoy bad hotels (and I won't even say how bad the worst hotel I ever stayed in was..only that it was really Awful.) Even bad hotels without a touch of luxury still have the attraction of someone else doing the work..and of impersonalness, which can be an interesting sensation.

Aside from all that, wasn't Lunacon a lot of fun? I really enjoyed it more than I've enjoyed any convention for years...and the apans that were there were the reason. Hey, people..I really like you a lot.

Gee, you ask a fair question when you ask if I'd change my opinion of a gigantic SF con if all my friends assured me it was Moral. I don't think so..at least I hope I'm stronger with myself than that. I confess to being pretty much a leaf in the wind of opinion at times; on subjects where I haven't really made up my mind I can be swayed back and forth like a tree in the gale. But, on subjects where I've made up my mind, it usually takes some radical change-of-head to alter my opinions. And I think I feel pretty firm about the gigantic sf con. Even if I could be convinced that it wasn't just intrinsically an evil and wicked thing to do to my favorite hobby, I'd still be left with the feeling that it would be a wrong thing to do to myself. Having already been exposed to the duties involved with putting on a big convention, I think I've learned that I shouldn't do it again..I'm not temperamentally suited for it. Even though, contrary to what Arnie said and conversations we've held on the subject, I wouldn't leave Arnie over a gigantic sf con..I think the work involved with putting one on would put us under such a strain and would produce so many conflicts and also uncover so many of my old traumas, that it could very likely have a disastrous result on our relationship. I just wouldn't want to take that risk.

Maybe someday..a long time from now..I'll want to put on another worldcon, just to prove to myself and fandom that I can do it, and to sort of officially establish the fact that I actually did have something to do with St. Louiscon. (The opinion to the contrary that's held by most of fandom represents one of my largest fannish traumas.) But, it would be a very unhealthy thing for me to even contemplate doing this now, or even in the foreseeable future. And..even if things did get worked around where I could face the prospect of another worldcon, it wouldn't be like a gigantic sf exposition.. I'd do everything possible to cut back on size, not increase it. (It'd be Cheap, too.)

ARNIE Those were True Words and Wise that you wrote about the mythical Great Brotherhood of Fandom. I suppose that every neofan at one time or another believes himself united in the Bosom of Buck Rodgers with all the rest of fandom. Together with the tribal tendency of neofen that would cause them to accept as soulmates such strange opposites as Harriet Kolchak and Redd Boggs or Janie Lamb and Ray Nelson, there's also the Fans-Are-Slans mythos you mentioned. No doubt that Laney suffered from this afflicted notion...no doubt we all have had our moments of disappointment when we learned our fellows were no more perfect..sometimes even less perfect..than ourselves. (I wrote a really Touching poem the season I learned my favorite BNF was flawed. The gist of it was that no matter how faulty a thing he was, I still held him in awe..because I had held him in awe for his good points which, in my opinion, continued to outweigh his sins.)

But, as you indicated, realizing with your head that you're not related to all other fans by virtue of your common hobby, and that fans are no more likely to be superior beings than any other group..realizing this with your head is a lot different than knowing it in the pit of

your stomach (from whence all real knowledge rises...I believe this.) And I'm afraid I still don't know it. The not-superior-beings part of it I think I've learned...there were so many really good people who weren't really too good at all during the year of St. Louis-con. But, I'm absolutely cast down each time I'm reminded that fandom isn't really one big happy family, and I'm hurt when it sometimes becomes obvious that we don't all love one another as I wish we did.

The Ted Pauls Thing was the first time I had ever come even close to a fan feud and, as anyone who was around me at the time probably knows, I was absolutely crushed by it. I took it all personally. For me, there was nothing cerebral about it. I couldn't understand why Ted Pauls..someone I had never met, whose fanzine I had always subscribed to, (I'm probably the only one among us who ever had a kind word to say for KIPPLE; it was my published opinion that it had merit), with whom I had had one or two friendly exchanges via letter, should decide to level an attack at me. I was shaken to my fannish roots and, I'm sorry to say, didn't really react in a fannishly sophisticated way. My reaction was completely wounded-female-animal: I cried, I stormed around the house; I threatened gafia.. in every way I was totally emotional about it. I'm sure you remember, Arnie, sitting with Terry Carr trying to comfort me evening after evening..and each time a new article or letter would turn up, it would all be unhappily revived for me.

I learned two things from the Ted Pauls Thing: I learned that everyone didn't love me. I had really truly felt that probably most fans did like me..I felt that I deserved to be well-liked in fandom: I had given a year of hard work at a "service" for sf and fandom; I had been around enough that most people knew me; I had been associated with some well-received fanzines, and two well-known groups of fans. I felt I had knowledgeable opinions. Most important of all, I liked most fans, and I saw no reason why the affection shouldn't be returned. During the course of the unpleasantness, I even came to understand that Ted Pauls didn't actually hate me, but was doing what he felt he must..but I couldn't understand why Mike Glicksohn should dislike me so much as to pursue the subject to such great lengths. We'd phone him, and talk to him, and he'd tell us not to worry about it..that there wasn't going to be any feud in the pages of Energumen...then along would come the next issue with another chapter, and immediately on the heels of the fanzine there'd be a letter from Mike asking me not to take it personally and assuring me there'd be no more. I guess I was more hurt by Mike even than Ted Pauls.

Oh, well. The second thing I learned from the Ted Pauls feud was much better: I learned that Terry Carr and Ted White are both darned nice guys. Terry for sitting with me evening after evening to reassure me that I wasn't really as black as I was being painted.. and Ted for writing the point-by-point refutation that I couldn't. (Ted, I bet you didn't even know how very personally I was taking the whole thing...but thank you, anyhow.)

It's my belief that these two notions (all fans are slans; all fans are brothers) are responsible for a great many gafiations. Sooner or later every fan must face the disillusionment of these great ideas, and many fans don't make it over that hurdle. They feel that if fandom's no better than the rest of the world in these regards, then it's not worth troubling with, and they go on their way hoping to find some more utopian group. I consider the period of realization of the untruth of these precepts to be the most potentially dangerous period of a fan career. I know that the closest I've ever been to gafiating had to do with those realizations. I think that Bill (hi, Bill..) recently had such a realization, and I think that he felt urges to just chuck the whole thing when this happened. (Am I right, Bill?)

Of course, the next realization, after you've learned that all fans aren't slans, is that

no fan is a slant. And that one's a lot harder to digest. When the person you like or admire best exposes some flaw in his makeup that is beyond your capacity to understand, sparks are certain to fly, whether it's in marriage, friendship, or fandom. And yet, it has to happen sooner or later in any relationship. (I have three "Super Star" fannish heroes. Two of them did things that exhibited great flaws in their characters by my standards..and the third has some incredible weaknesses. My realization of these facts were very expensive to my fannish Sense of Wonder.)

I think I'm getting close to a fairly realistic attitude toward fandom, and expect little more from it than it's likely to give. I expect to get even more realistic as time passes. I figure you and I, Arnie, are in for the duration...if one of us has flagging interest or crushed illusions, the other will fire him up, and vice versa.

JOHN . I would be glad of APA if its only excuse were a chance to re-establish lines of communication with you. As you said, your trips East haven't really been that frequent or lengthy, and in the last couple of years I feel you and I have dropped..if not out of touch, at least out of total understanding.. For some reason I can't even explain to myself, you had always seemed to me to be one of "my people" in fandom..somehow, very early in my fannish career, when I drew my tribal circles you were on the inside. -- Now, unfortunately, there's been an awfully lot transpired since you and I had a really clear idea of where the other's head was at. For me, I've gone through a period of some of the most massive and dramatic changes of my life..and, it's mildly discomfiting to realize that you have no real knowledge of how total the changes were, to say nothing of why the changes had to be. I believe that in your mind I'm still Joyce Fisher...well, forget that. Somebody else is Joyce Fisher these days, and I'm someone all together different. If you felt more comfortable talking to me in Brooklyn, perhaps that's the reason...I think I'm a bit less shadowy now. (Did you know that my self-image has been, at various lengthy not-now times, that of a shade, an insubstantial thing that might drift away at any time?)

I really wish there was a miraculous way of filling your head with the understanding you missed by being out of contact for a couple of crucial years...not that the knowledge is in itself of such earthshaking importance, as that it would be easier for us to retie the tribal knots. There are only a few people in apa who have known me for more than two years..and there's a smaller number of people in the world than I like to think about who've known me over two years that I still have contact with...I can't afford to waste what few old friends I have left. Apa literally contains every old friend I've got..that I'm still in contact with..save four. I'd nominate the last four, but three of them fell out of fandom when St. Louis fell apart, and the fourth was never a fan except to read my publications. With the exception of that fourth..would you all like to add Diane to your mlg. lists to try to make a fan of her, too?...I have literally no friends left outside of fandom or that I've known for longer than I've known Hank. (I guess Ted White is the person I've known next longest after Diane and Hank.) Does this begin to give you an idea of just exactly how shattering the separation and divorce actually were?

The reason I mention this, Johnny, is because of your surprize at the communication gaps that have left Alice unintruduced to Ray. Your surprize is not consistent with the facts as they really were. However, I hope that things are quieting on that Western Front from recent reports I've had from there...if so perhaps Chris or Hank & Lesleigh will decide the time is right to introduce Alice; they're in better position to judge the desirability than I.

That's not beligerance speaking...truly. I just wanted you to know how it really is.

It's funny to hear you rag Chris for criticizing St. Louis, considering the way you sometimes write/talk about your old home town.

Tell us about your bus trip to Canada. Where'd you go? -- I'll admit, I really envy you your independence and freedom to travel. Those periods of my life that were spent knocking about were among the more interesting I remember, and I learned a lot about myself by doing it. But--sigh--the financial realities were that it couldn't last forever. The itch to go somewhere new bothered me a lot after it became impractical to wander freely. Of a matter of fact, I guess it's only been in the last year or two that I've reconciled myself to becoming settled save for occasional, normal vacation periods. -- Maturity really isn't everything it's cracked up to be, in some ways.

Your first two pages didn't seem to sing to me the way they should have. They were certainly well written and interesting...but, somehow, they were academic, and tole me less than I'd like to know of how you felt about the things you discussed.

ROSS I was strangely upset by your confessions, last mailing; I suppose that I've come to identify fairly strongly with the underdog in any situation, and the fact that this particular underdog was Jewish made me feel even sadder. I wonder if you mistreated Mike because he was Jewish, or if it was actually because of some personality conflict between you two...ghu knows, even good friends of similar ethnic backgrounds have many personality conflicts when they're the age you describe. Playing tricks..even cruel tricks.. is very common to kids. Well, no matter whether it was the normal trickery of childhood, or the more vicious cruelty of true ethnic prejudism; we are all born very young and dumb. And it takes time for us to grow up. The awkward-in-between stages of our development, before we escape the bondage (how's that for rhetoric, huh?) of our childish ignorances and attain maturity can be very awkward to remember. The particular streak of cruelty you possessed was one I never had...but I had my own, and who's to say which were worse?

One prejudism I don't have: I can see how sardine pancakes could work. Not really anything I'd ever had a craving for..I'm frankly not that fond of pancakes. But, I could see how sardines could be added to scrapple...and that's almost the same thing you describe. (Scrapple: make a thinnish mush of cornmeal boiled in salted water; add anything you have in the house. Maybe meat scraps. Maybe left-over vegetables. Maybe nothing. Fry in grease in thin crisp little patties. Have the grease smoking hot, so the patties will get really crisp. Eat hot, or cold...with anything. Maybe sorghum molasses, or honey, or syrup. Usually eat them plain except on special occasions. Scrumptous.)

That was a friendlier attitude toward office relationships than mine: your approach of a large family situation can be an accurate description, if there's anyone at all in your office that you can feel any kind of kinship toward.

I wouldn't say it made you faanishly immoral to have quit smoking pot. I don't think it really had anything to do with faanishness at all, except in the most peripheral way. And in this particular case (if not in all cases) morality is a pretty subjective thing... Only you could say if smoking or not smoking had any effect on your morality. I personally preferred it when you were smoking grass...not that it had much effect at all (if even any) on the way you talked or acted afterward. But, when you were smoking with the Insurgents, it was more like you were letting down your hair a bit. You are always a very cool customer Ross, not really given to opening up to the rest of us...but just the act of smoking was one step in the direction of accepting the rest of us more as compatriots and less as an amusing spectator sport.

Of a matter of fact, Jo Stafford's voice is a great nostalgia trip for me, too. High on the list of Useless Esoteric Things I'd buy If I Had A Million would be a largish collection of the ballads that were popular in the first half of the 50's.

I think it's Really Great that 339 49th Street continues to be occupied by a fan...

TED I'm so glad to see you here. For one reason or another, it's always seemed to me that I had a lot of things to say to you and Robin that just weren't goint to get said. Somehow the opportunity just never presents itself... I always seem to be coming when you're going, and vice versa. I've felt particularly sorry that the short period of time when we cohabitated Brooklyn was so unprofitable to our acquaintanceship; I was only barely getting out of my fog by the time you two left and still not able to cope with people. Really more of my loss than anyone else's, of course...it's a shame to need Help, and be unable to relate to other people who might be willing to give some help. At any rate, the bad timing (that makes me be preparing to leave parties when you're just coming in, and makes me leave conventions when you've only just arrived) has coupled itself with my feeling that in your eyes I've always been a shadow of other stronger personalities. I hope I can finally get past all that negativism to the point we can finally have some meaningful intercourse between us.

I guess I'm the only one here equipped to understand some of the ways you must have felt when you saw Sylvia extolling mindlessness on tv. After reading your remarks, I wrote a few paragraphs about my reactions to receiving bombshells of news about Ray. I reread them and threw them away; then I wrote a few paragraphs more..and threw them away, too. I guess I'm going to say a whole lot less about this than I had intended... I'm afraid that it's just a little Heavy for the third mlg. of even a very promising apa. Like you said, old age has to teach us something...maybe for me, restraint will be the most important lesson.

The subject of Mindlessness is, however, an intrinsically interesting one to me. One of the questions that we kick around from time to time deals with the phenomena: if there were such a thing as a perpetual pleasure machine where (perhaps) electrodes were implanted in your brain and an electric charge titillated your pleasure centers, and you could be intraveinously fed, and you would do nothing but just exist in the throes of ultimate pleasure...would you do it? -- It's not for me, but I suspect my rejection of the notion is because of remnants of puritanism that tell me it's good to have the lows along with the highs.

Speaking of orgasms, I bought a copy of COSMOPOLITAN this month. I'm not normally a reader of COSMOS...those girls march to a different drum. Besides, there's something about COSMOS that always makes me feel inferior; I always seem to have too much or too little of the commodity they're discussing. But, from time to time, something triggers the masochistic area of my brain and I decide to see how the other half thinks knowing full well that I'm going to come away vaguely distressed about our differences in values and life styles.

When I saw the article, "The Myth of the Multiple Orgasm", I knew it would be a Live One.

The thrust of it was that, after interviewing Multitudes of women, COSMOS located only four or five who had ever experienced a multiple orgasm. Furthermore, all but one indicated that this was something that had occured only very infrequently, and only "after committing unusual acts, such as masturbating or using a vibrator or reading porn". One lady admitted that the only time she had ever had a multiple orgasm was the time her husband had got her

to smoke some pot. COSMOS only located one lady who habitually experience multiple orgasms. Further questioning of this lady revealed that she also has an Unnatural Appetite for sex.. desiring intercourse a record number of Four Times Per Week. COSMOS didn't come right out and say the lady's a nympho...but they discussed the possibility and admitted that it was impossible to resolve the question with such superficial knowledge. They did, however, seem to think it was a likelihood. -- It was probably to keep the COSMOS readers from feeling they were inferior to this sex-mad creature that they further developed the information that her unnatural sex cravings were causing marital difficulties. It seems her Perfectly Normal husband only wanted sex about twice a week...and the conflict caused by her desire for four times per had caused them to seek professional marriage counselor's guidance: Can This Marriage Be Saved, and all that.

I don't know where all the normal women were when COSMOS did their interviewing of the Multitudes. Personally, I just folded up the magazine and slunk off into the night, knowing that I'd never make it as a Cosmos Girl. -- Or at least not very well..and certainly not very often.

You're the only other person I know at present who's involved with Sound. (Everyone I know is involved to one extent or another with music, but that's not the same thing.) I'd dearly love to hear your set now that you've added the Quadaptor. Won't you make even a comment or two about the quality of the sound, just to satisfy my curiosity? I haven't seen NULL-F...and I've never heard a quadraphonic set. Is it really good? As different from stereo as stereo from mono? As hi-fi from low-fi?

What I'd really like to hear is Berlioz Requiem recorded quadraphonically. What a splendor that must be!

LANE What you and Seth are going to have to do is move to Brooklyn. Or, barring that possibility, make it to a con...or better yet, come to NY to visit. If you're wanting a career in magazines, you'll find it ultimately necessary to relocate...and, of course, the East is where the publishing industry is. Soon as you get a chance, maybe you'll want to come have a look around.

I think you'll need to make several trips to the city to sort of get used to the psychic shock it may be after the piney woods of Boaz. But, of course, piney woods aren't everything, and NYC certainly has an abundance of all those things that Boaz lacks. I think you'll probably enjoy the city (any city) once you get used to it.

DAVE Of a matter of fact, I've found myself growing more interested in country music in the last year or two. Like you, Ferlin Husky, Hank Snow and Ernest Tubbs were a major part of my musical background; but, unlike you, I developed a great prejudism against country music because of having to listen to so much of it as a kid. (Poplar Bluff was very hillbilly oriented music-wise...and to top it all off, Ray used to be a dj with a country-western program.)

However, in the last year or so I've found myself inclined to forgive CW the sins of Kitty Wells. (Now there's a name that conjures for me. Is she still the Sweetheart of Country Western?--God, she's bad.) I suppose I was softened up by The Band, and Happy & Artie Traum...at any rate, now I actually enjoy occasionally hearing the stuff; it evokes a nice warm down-home feeling.

I was faintly croggled by your mention of GRILS. If what you say is true, we came very close to meeting long before we did. -- Did you ever get a copy?

FRANK I'll admit that, from the audience standpoint, it's a lot of fun to use a group as "electric wallpaper"...but, wow! you sure can't blame the musicians for resenting it! I mean, if a group is playing a concert, they theoretically can expect to be listened to.. At a dance, I think a group expects to be only background, but being demoted to that position at a concert is certain to be a disappointment.

After enjoying your company and smoking your dope at Lunacon, I feel especially sorry I have so little to say in response to you this time. Write more next time, won't you?

ALICE What a grove that you're playing piano again...and how I envy you! I studied piano, too...six years of lessons...but when I got out of highschool I stopped. Actually, I quit playing for a pretty silly reason. Like you, I had been playing classical (isn't that what piano teachers always give their students to learn?) I enjoyed it and was often complimented on my ability; my teacher was one of those who gave recitals and I had been the *star* pupil for three years straight. Then I had the mixed fortune of being exposed to really good recordings of really good performances...and the gap in ability was so wide that I didn't have the heart to continue. Now I'm sorry that I allowed this to so inhibit me, and if I ever have a chance to buy a piano, I probably will. I still don't feel I'd ever be able to unbend enough to play it if anyone else was around, but I'd enjoy thumping around on it when I was alone.

One thing I am getting back to, though, is drawing. I sure am rusty...I've forgotten everything I ever knew, and don't have much freedom of technique yet. But, I've made a beginning, and I'm enjoying it... Maybe by the time I see you next I'll have something worth showing; if not, I'll certainly have had a lot of fun smearing around with magic markers.

Something I haven't been doing is writing poetry..not for a full two years. But since it seems that all my other old pursuits are again Coming Around, I suppose that one's bound to pop up soon too. I'm curious to see what form it's going to take. (Wouldn't it be funny if it was space-race, stars-wars, Saturn-lattern...and I could realize my Secret Ambition to be an S&SF poet, it not a good one.)

What you say is truth, that where you are has little to do with whether you're able to live with yourself. And, as you know, it happens that I think St. Louis is a pretty nice place, and can't blame you for being happy to stay there. But, on the other hand, you can't really blame us for persistently inviting you to come to New York...after all, not to get smorgy about it (oh, hell. Get smorgy--it's free) we're all very fond of you and would really like to have you with us. You came to NY last year and just kind of made a niche for yourself that no one else can fill. I think all we're really saying, when we invite you to consider NY, is that if you get restless where you are, and if the day ever comes that you're hunting for a different place to go, either permanently or just for a visit, we'd like you to remember that there's a place already left vacant by your absence from our dinner table. See? No sinister intent, and no pressure. Just that we like you. And of a matter of fact, I think we all like you enough that our real preference would be for you to be happy wherever you are...even though we know that as long as you're happy elsewhere, it seems unlikely you'll be here. But, we're not altogether selfish in our affections.

I VOTE NO on Jim Turner. I'm sorry, Hank & Lesleigh. He is a colorful person, and he and Dave should be introduced. But Jim never treated me well when I knew him before, and always seemed to view me as an Ireney. I don't think I want to be in a personal correspondence apa with him now.