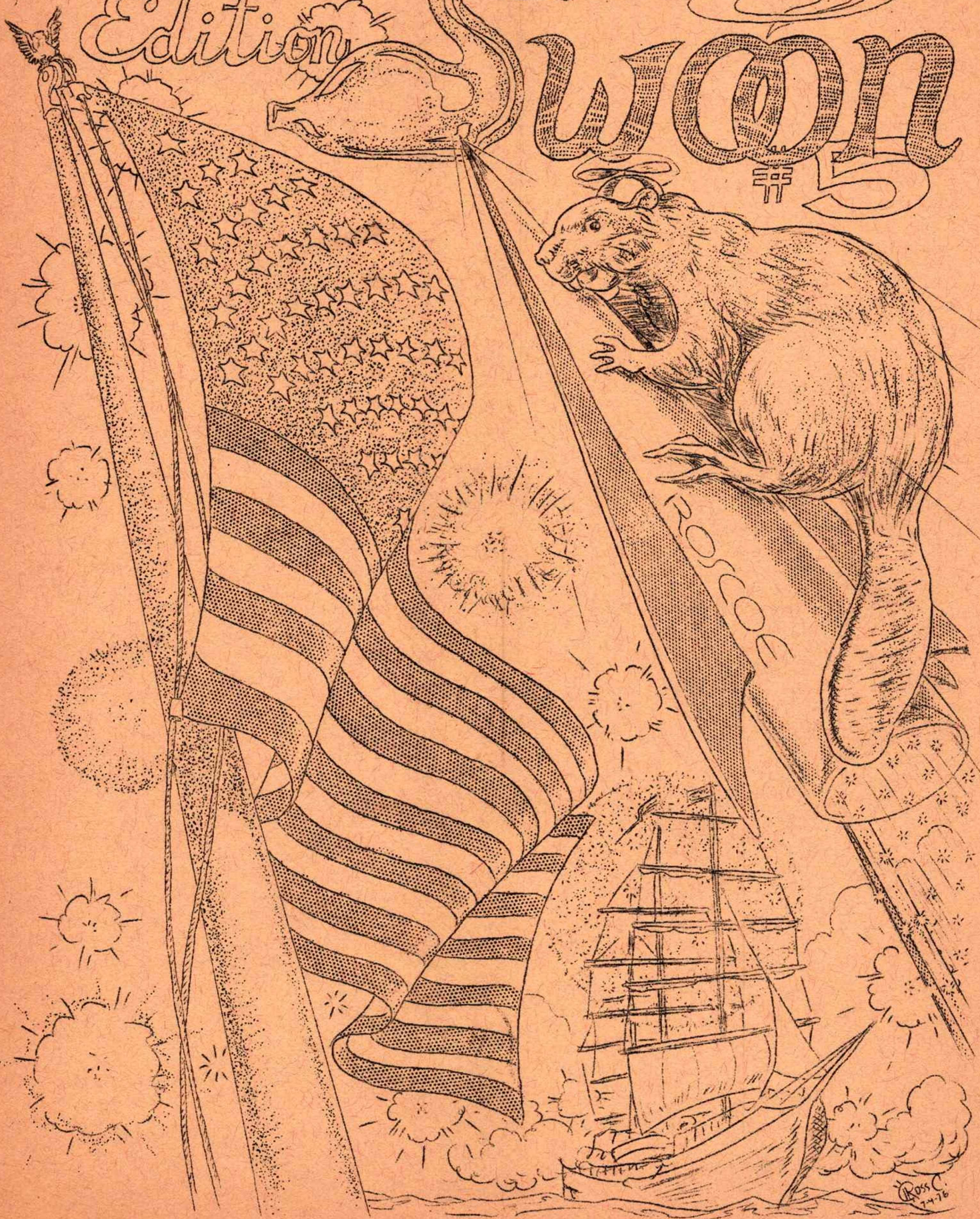


The Bicentennial
Edition

Swan

#5



SWOON 5

Unendurable Pleasure Infinitely Prolonged

SPECIAL 'OUR AMERICAN LIFE STYLE' ISSUE

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Bacover by Ross Chamberlain

COLOPHON

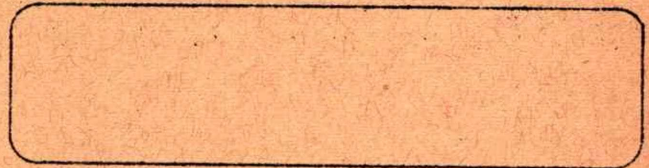
SWOON #5, July 1976, is edited by Arnie and Joyce Katz (59 Livingston St. Apt. 6B, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201) on an unfailingly monthly schedule (except when it's oftener...). This fan-nish insurgent publication can be obtained for trade, contribution of articles or art, letter of comment or, if all else fails, by subscription at the rate of six issue for \$5. Sample copies are available for \$1. Helping with the production on his issue are Bill and Charlene Kunkel, Ross Chamberlain, Cindy Valentino, John Cappadonna (sp?) and perhaps Stu Shiffman. Today is July 25, 1976.

"The Incomplete Terry Carr," an anthology of some of the very best fanstuff by Terry, is still available from us for the paltry price of \$1 while they last.

JOYCE
KATZ



BLUE JAUNT



"Look at this," Roseann was waving a poster around her head exuberantly. When the bosses are out, my co-worker does tend to get exuberant sometimes.

"What're you talking about," I growled at her, coming up for air from my typewriter. I could tell it was going to be one of those days in the office. Roseann was feeling cheery after her lunch, and my typewriter was pretty boring anyhow. Might as well give in to the inevitable, and see what had Roseann so worked up.

"It says here that they're free!" she burred, still not saying what she was talking about.

That was the magic word, and I turned off my Selectric II, just in time to dodge the poster, folded into a replica of the Concorde, sailing along the ceiling and coming to rest nose first underneath my desk. Gracefully I crawled under the desk, even while Roseann was gracefully sliding under the desk on her belly from the other side. Gracefully our heads met in the middle with a distinct "clunk!"

"You're right. It does say free," I admitted, studying the poster that lay on the floor between our two bobbing, throbbing heads.

"Creative Hairstyle Design Studio" the poster proclaimed in banner headlines. The address was 666 Fifth Avenue, the same building our dear bodies were now lying in. "Wanted: 30 Girls to Receive the Latest Cuts, Free of Charge" it said. The poster was further graced by six photos of girls sporting new hairdos of varying styles, and a

phone number to call for information. Roseann was already dialing, as I crawled out from under the desk.

"They have an opening at 3:30 today," she announced. "Why don't you try them out."

I muttered a little under my breath: "How come you're touting this on me?" I mumbled. "How come you don't be the first guinea pig?"

"Frank would kill me if I cut my hair without asking him first." Hmm. Logical explanation. "Besides, this is your style." Roseann pointed to one of the photos. True, I had paid \$25 for that particular cut a few months previous.

"I dunno." I was still doubtful. "How come they're giving them away for free?" We discussed the advantages of free advertising; a new stylist could well decide on giving 30 haircuts free to introduce himself. Actually, not a bad gimmick for getting attention, now that I reflected on it. And, you sure can't beat the price.

"Well..." I hesitated, then let out my breath and my reservations. "Ok. I'll go down and check them out; gimme the number and I'll make an appointment."

"I already gave them your name," said my helpful co-worker. "I figured I could talk you into it..."

When I got off the elevator on the 14th floor, it wasn't hard to find my way to the stylist; another poster had been taped to the wall, and arrows pointed me down the hallway. I walked into a rather dark and drab room where a bored receptionist sat behind a counter. "I'm Joyce Katz, and I have a 3:30 appointment," I told her. She checked her list and crossed off my name. "Go put on a robe," she waived toward an even darker cloakroom, "then have a seat."

"Oh my god," I exclaimed when I saw the crowded waiting room. "How far are you running behind?" I had been increasingly trepidacious about allowing this unknown stylist to work on me, and even Roseann would accept this as a graceful way out.

The receptionist looked surprisedly at her wristwatch. "Oh, no," she said. "We're right on schedule."

Having allowed even this slender thread of an escape rope to slip through my fingers, I walked into the cloakroom. It was identical to cloakrooms from my gradeschools, except that a large picture window looked into a huge room where several dozen people with books sat at long tables. Several girls in varying stages of undress were huddled in the corner trying to stay out of range of the window, while asking each other questions about what was going to happen; all to replies of "I don't know," (the most commonly repeated phrase of the afternoon.) I decided I didn't want to be naked and defenseless in a strange cutter's snare, so only removed my jacket and slipped the brown shampoo robe over my blouse and skirt. As I watched the window, all the people got up from the tables and filed out. One woman walked over to our window and gazed intently at it as she smoothed a wrinkle from her skirt, even as another of we guinea pigs exclaimed, "Oh, this is one-way glass."

When I returned to the waiting room (all in cheery mud-brown to match our cheery mud-brown shampoo robes) the seats were taken, and I huddled against the wall with several other late-comers. There wasn't much talking; by this time everyone had figured out that no one knew what was going on, and I believe everyone was reconsidering the decision that had brought them to this place. Another five minutes and I believe we weaker ones might have broke and run, but at exactly 3:30 the door opened and a young woman walked out.

"I'll take ten of you ladies now," she said, and there was a general scurrying to the door. I often think that if Satan appeared in a puff of red smoke and said "I'll only take x number of you," there'd be people fighting to get into hell first. Personally, I shrank back behind a column, determined to wait as long as possible before going into that room, with hopes that either the screams of pain or sighs of pleasure would tell me which way to run. A few minutes passed, and the same woman came to the door again. Evidently the first batch had already been dispatched, because she grimly said, "I'll take ten more of you now." We chicken-hearted few that were left behind gazed at each other, and one woman actually did chuck off her shampoo robe and leave. The rest of us hadn't yet decided whether to join her or to brave it through, when the door again opened, and it was too late to escape. She carefully counted as we filed through, and didn't seem too surprised that there were only nine in the third grouping.

We were in the large room that had been visible from the cloakroom. There were three long library-type tables in the room, placed banquet style, each surrounded by ten chairs which we nervously occupied. One wall was mirrored floor to ceiling, reminiscent of a dance studio. The lighting was brilliant and glaring; none of the softness nor prettiness you might expect from a hairdresser's parlor, but more what you would expect of a surgery. We 29 women sat gazing around us, at each other and into the bright mirrors that harshly laid bare our fears; the only place I have ever encountered a similar atmosphere of gloom and dread was when I walked through a proctologist's waiting room.

After what must have been only moments but seemed like hours, a rear door opened, and a rush of men and women flowed out. There seemed to be exactly 30 of them, and one came up to me. "What style did you want?" he asked with no preamble. I pointed to the poster picture that I liked, and he said, "I don't guess I could interest you in a wedge cut, could I?" The picture he seemed to mean looked like HammerHead from Spiderman, and I allowed as how I didn't think so. He looked disgusted and walked away to another table where he conferred with another man, complete with hand-waving gestures in my direction. I smiled at them both hopefully, wondering if my refusal to look like Spiderman's arch-foe would cost me my haircut, and not feeling too sorry if that were the case. They seemed to have reached some kind of agreement, because the first man came back and said, "Go sit at that table; tell the girl in the end chair to come over here." Obediently I scurried over.

My new stylist was wearing a badge that told me he was Mr. L--- from Macy's of New York. I saw other badges announcing their wearers from different studios around N.Y., and from other cities on the East Coast. "Is this a school?" I inquired none too brilliantly and was rewarded by the information that it was indeed a school where stylists were enrolled for a one-week course to be taught new cuts. I felt a little better now that I knew that they weren't amateurs working on us, but I did wish that the poster had been more candid.

The atmosphere in the room was considerably more relaxed now than it had been before, and as my stylist led me back to the shampoo sinks, I could hear a buzz of small talk; but when we came back to the table and he started combing out the wet hair, the difference between this and a commercial establishment became apparent again. Frankly, he pulled...and there was no nicety such as creme rinse or detangler to ease the pain... and somehow I knew that complaints were not invited. I hunched my neck up, somewhat like a turtle trying to retreat into his shell, in an effort to relieve the pressure, and he nonchalantly asked "am I hurting you?" Feeling this was no time to be coy, I flatly said "yes" only to be told that it would be over soon, with no abating, nor any effort on his part to ease my distress.

Finally it was over, and he got out his shears. He waved them in the air for a

few minutes, then got a folder of diagrams out of a notebook which he proceeded to study. "Oh, no.." I thought to myself. "He's never done this cut before." Feeling like someone who was about to have his tonsils removed "by the numbers" I glanced at the mirror where- in I saw the same apprehension reflected 29 times over.

"Don't look so scared," growled Mr. L---. "We know what we're doing, and I'm really very good at this."

Reflecting somewhat ruefully on what experience has taught me is usually the truth when a man makes such a statement, I craned my neck to try to see the mirror when he started snipping away. "Sit still," he yelled. I miserably held myself as erect as I could, so still I couldn't breathe. I felt the draft of his scissors passing over my ear, and decided that stillness was probably the only way I was going to escape with skin intact. He trimmed and clipped and cut and hacked away for an interminable length; then asked me to stand up so he could reach me easier. I took advantage of the movement to sneak another quick look at the mirror, then decided perhaps I was better off not to know.

A very beautiful young boy came to look over Mr. L---'s shoulder, and I realized that this fey manchild was the instructor. "Very nice," he murmured low in sweet strains, and reassurance was written all over his face. "Very pretty," and he smiled and nodded to me until I relented and smiled back. "It'll be just fine," he comforted, then walked away. With him went the sense of security he had brought with him. Mr. L clipped a bit more, then something must have gone wrong because he went running after the pretty creature. They spoke together for a moment, then both returned, and the instructor took the sciz- zors. Clip-snip, and he was again nodding and smiling and saying it looked fine, having evidently snatched my hair from the edge of ruin.

At last the cutting was over...and Mr. L--- seemed to relax a trifle. He plugged in his Conair dryer and pulled his circular brush from the stack of equipment on the table, and I relaxed too. All over the room the stylists were finishing their jobs, and I had to admit all the women were looking pretty good. There were a smattering of the wedge- cuts, and even they looked striking. The six styles pictured on the poster had been adapted and modified to the appropriate degree, and even though I suppose there must have been five of each haircut, no two really looked the same.

Finally finished, Mr. L--- let me look in the mirror, and, hooray, it actually looked good. The beautiful instructor came over and admired my hair. I felt a little like a cabinet must feel when it's used to display some lovely object d'art, and at no time was under the misapprehension that the rest of me was anymore than a carrier for this mop of smoothly clipped locks.

"What nationality are you?" the instructor inquired of Mr. L---.

"I'm Italian".

"Oh, yes, I should have known..." and they smiled knowingly at each other, secure in the knowledge that the Sons of Caesar make the best hairdressers.

"I guess this is an Italian-Indian haircut" I told Mr. L--- when I thanked him for his attentions; that seemed to please him a great deal, because I heard him repeat the line to several other stylists.

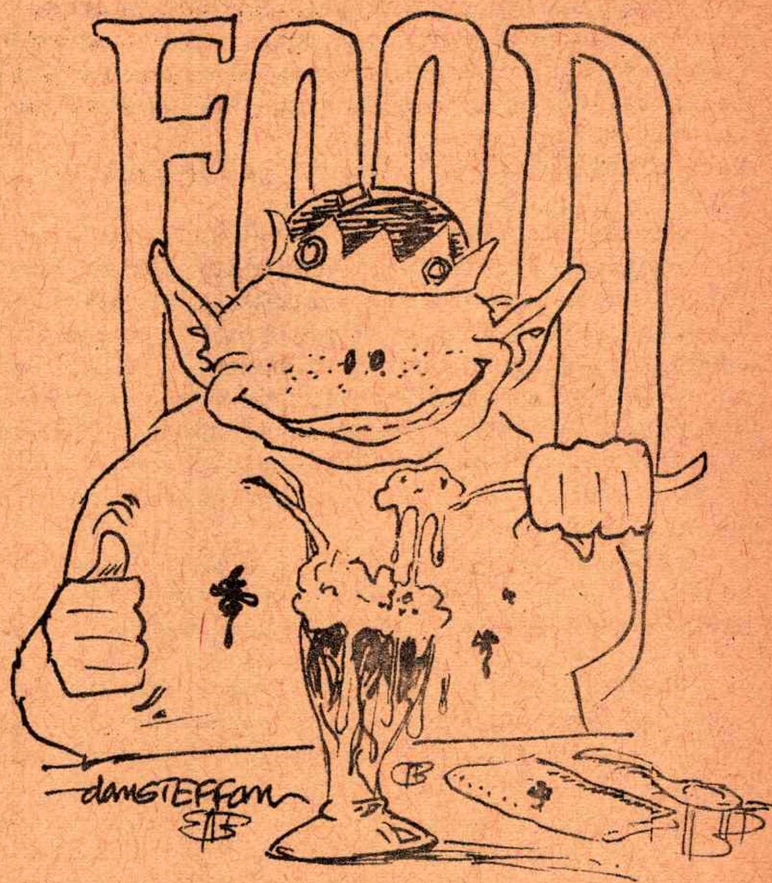
When I got back to my office Roseann said, "Oh, Joyce, it's magnificent."

"Well, I gotta admit, it's a pretty good haircut," grudgingly; I hadn't yet

(Continued on Page 10)

KATZEN JAMMER

—
ARNIE
KATZ



"I come from a picnic family," Joyce told me over lunch last Wednesday. Since my company moved to its posh new offices on Park Avenue in the mid-fifties, Joyce and I have had many opportunities for lunch dates. We were discussing the Highly Significant Theme of this issue of SWOON, "Our American Lifestyle," and to Joyce there's nothing more red, white and blue than a family of four huddled together in an ant- and mosquito-infested wilderness bolting down mountainous heaps of cold food.

"If you like picnics so much, why don't you write about them for SWOON #5?" I challenged.

"Well, I've already done this article," Joyce said as she pulled her vacation bible school piece out of her handbag. She read it to me right there in the coffee shop as I chomped away at my turkey sandwich (all white meat, for those of you who are taking notes). I could immediately see that it was a good article, even if she didn't quite get around to losing her virginity in it. I knew there was no chance that she'd put aside this finely crafted morsel to go back to her typewriter to create another piece, no matter how seductive the subject.

So it's up to me to tell you this tale of perseverance and great inner strength; the touching struggle of one lone woman to get Her Picnic. I will shoulder this heavy load -- selflessly abandoning a detailed discussion of our mailing list and trading policies in the process -- even though I know full well that I may not be the most qualified person to tell this particular story.

You see, I do not come from a picnic family. The Katzes were more of a lay-around-the-house-in-your-underwear group. It was my father's belief, held with evangelical fer-

vor, that Sunday traffic was a natural force which no sane man would challenge. A poverty-ridden childhood in Europe combined with a comprehensive tour of World War II battlefields, courtesy of the 82nd Airborne Division, have molded my father into one of the most dedicated sybarites I have ever met. He would be as likely to "rough it" at a picnic as my saintly mother would be to buy a home-viewing print of "Deep Throat." No picnics for the Katz clan!

Joyce came to New York City six years ago a woman steeped in the lore and tradition of the American Picnic. It wasn't long after she got here that Joyce established the annual ritual which has, by now, become so familiar to those around her. Each year, when the Tree That Grows in Brooklyn turns green and the days get longer, some instinct prompts my co-editor to spend hour upon hour planning her ideal picnic. I doubt that Hannibal gave more thought to provisioning his bunch for that crossing of the Alps than Joyce gives to her perfect picnic. Once she is satisfied that every detail is precisely set, it is her wont to jump up in the middle of some desultory conversation and shout, "Hey, let's have a picnic!"

"Right!" "Sounds great!" "Absolutely!" we all exclaim enthusiastically. And each and every year, that's where it ends. Somehow, we never get out there and actually have that picnic. At least, that's the way things went every year until this one.

Having grown more cynical with the passage of time and paucity of picnics, Joyce refused to take our "yes'es for an answer this year. This time, she was not to be put off by grandiose, never-to-be-completed schemes involving weekend jaunts to exotic Wildwood, N.J.

Joyce bided her time, making the necessary mental arrangements to switch into High Picnic Gear the instant she was offered the slightest opportunity. Her chance finally came when Bill Kunkel announced he was going to Boston for the weekend to work on a demo tape with his band, Blitzkrieg.

Joyce suggested that since Charlene was likely to be at loose ends for a couple of days, the three of us ought to plan some diverting activities. It was quickly decided that we'd go to Shea Stadium to see the Ali-Inoki match on Friday, June 25, and to the Metropolitan Museum of Art on Sunday.

When the appointed weekend was just a few days away, Joyce mentioned that the Metropolitan Opera Company was giving a free presentation of "Madame Butterfly" starring Anna Moffo in Marine Park on the so-far-uncommitted Saturday night. "We could have a picnic and then see the opera," Joyce said brightly.

"You want to picnic in the park in the middle of the night?" I asked. I could visualize the three of us huddled around a makeshift fire as a band of red-eyed muggers circled closer, ever closer, in the stygian darkness.

"No, silly, it won't be dark that early." She smiled encouragingly. "It'll be fun." I knew she had me. I lamely countered by making the decision contingent on Charl's approval, but I knew we were finally going to go on that picnic. Figuring that I might as well go into the thing with a whole heart, I also invited Ross Chamberlain to join us in soaking up some culture and cold cuts under the stars.

Like native bearers, the four of us trooped across the grassy expanse of the park, loaded down with commodious hampers filled in accordance with Joyce's concept of the proper amount of food for four people. I must say, her estimate was very accurate. Four was just the right number for the food we'd brought -- assuming the four were about to be marooned on an island for the next year!

We must have walked about a quarter-mile until we came to the band shell area, where early arrivals had already set up their beach chairs. We had chairs, too. They were back in the trunk of Charl's car, however, and nothing on earth could've compelled me to hike back to get them. Besides, I knew we'd never be able to lug the chairs, Charl's two thermos jugs and the excess food back to the car after the opera.

So we spread our bright blue blanket and laid out the food. It was a light meal of salami, bologna, brownsweiger, liverwurst, potato chips, various cold salads, white and rye breads, lemonade, grapeade and a big box of doughnuts. If you think we must've attracted attention, you're right. Oh, there were a few more picnic blankets spread cheek-by-jowl with ours to form a buffer zone between two vast seas of beach chairs, but none boasted the array of gustibles displayed before us.

We bought the toleration of the first few hundred onlookers with some of our surplus cold cuts and girded ourselves for the first assault on this gargantuan repast. I was just taking my first bite when a woman waving an "encore" banner nearly stepped on my head as she seized a golden opportunity to get close to the stage by planting her chair right on the edge of our blanket.

As she knocked me aside, she simultaneously began an argument with the man sitting in front of her. "You've got no consideration!" she thundered at him. "How dare you bring such a high-backed chair?" she asked, just as though he hadn't already been seated when she staked her claim.

The chair back was a few inches taller than it had to be, but she didn't have to sit with her knees jammed into his spine, either. He kept begging her to relax in a soft, friendly voice, and she kept calling him an inconsiderate bastard in a loud, angry one. The only time she paused was to thoroughly douse me (and my dinner) with a can of bug spray.

We were lolling back, bloated by our conspicuous consumption, when the orchestra began tuning up. "They sound hungry," Joyce observed. She rushed the stage, sandwiches for all at the ready. I guess even the resources of the Joyce Marie Worley Katz Picnic Combine were exhausted by this mighty assemblage. She must have fallen a few sandwiches short, because at the end of the performance, Anna Moffo, obviously miffed about having been overlooked when the goodies were doled out, stuck a sword in her belly and everyone went home.

And that's the way Joyce finally got to have her first New York Picnic.

-- Arnie Katz

Birtain is fine in 1979

Continued from page 6

recovered from Mr. L---'s bad disposition, but I couldn't deny that my freebie had at least equalled the cuts for which I had paid so dearly in the past.

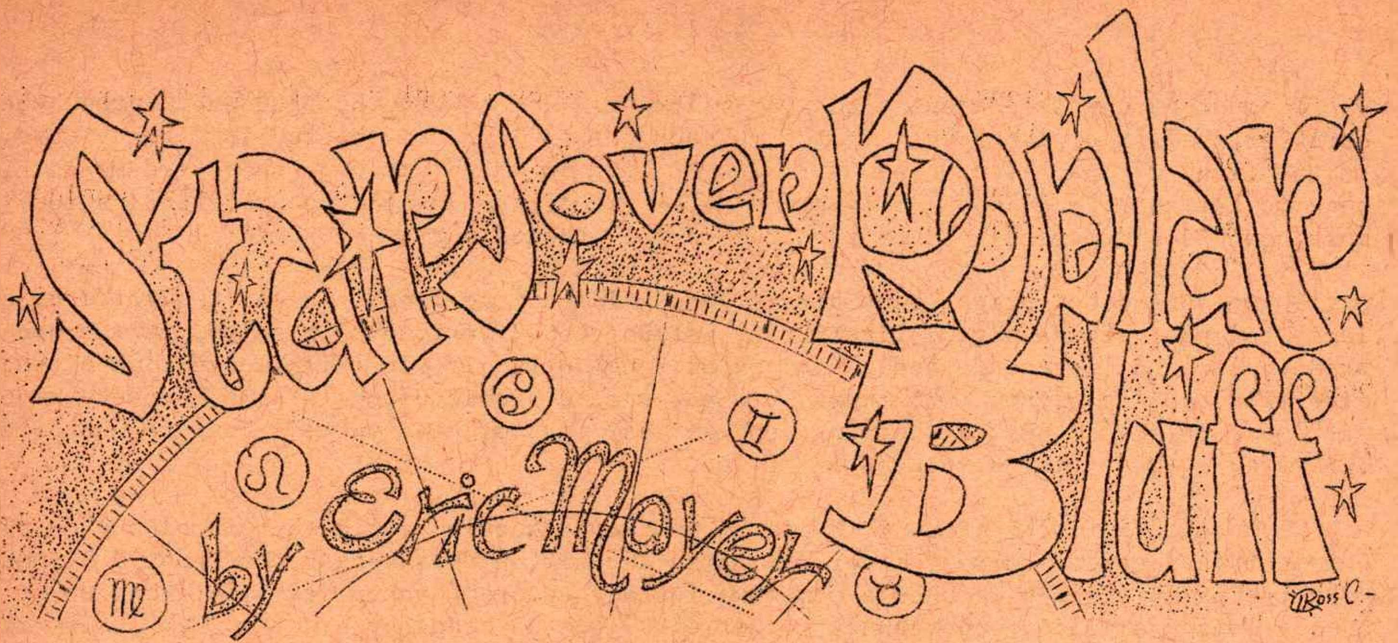
"What's the place like?" asked Roseann.

"Well, maybe I'll write about it for SWOON."

"Will you mention me?" she begged.

And so I did.

-- Joyce Katz



(An Astrological Inquiry Into The Life Of
Claude Degler From 1942-1976)

Nowhere is the ephemeral nature of man's achievements so evident as in Fandom. The pyramids of the pharaohs, Hadrian's wall, the architectural masterpieces of Pericles' Greece, still remain but the fruits of faanish genius are not so enduring. Fan historians are forced to struggle with fading ditto ink and crumbling twilltone when they have access to records at all. It isn't surprising that there are gaps in the chronicles of Fandom. It would be surprising if fans did not attempt to fill those gaps. In this article I will propose a method to accomplish this feat.

The fate of every fan is printed in infinite detail across the heavens. The universe is too big to need a WAHF list! I will attempt to validate this claim by correlating observed astrological data with known facts. Then I will demonstrate the use of the astrological method to uncover previously unknown facts.

According to Harry Warner, Claude Degler was born on the 19th of May, 1920, in the town of Poplar Bluff, Missouri. When a birth chart is constructed from this information it is seen that Degler's sun sign is Taurus and his ascending sign is Virgo. The former, so overpopularized by mass media astrologers, depicts the outer facets of Degler's character, the latter illuminates his inner character. In this instance the two signs are complimentary and tend to reinforce one another. Both reveal a person rooted in his opinions - a trait further strengthened by Mercury's positioning. Both reveal a person with a slow and basically unoriginal mind, given to derivative ideas. Both reveal, however, a person with incredible persistence, given to overwork, unable to let up. Certainly it would be acceptable to describe Claude Degler as an opinionated man, of average intelligence, given to obsessions. But such a description would fit any number of other men, none of whom have succeeded in becoming faanish myths. The major indicators in a person's chart depict a basic character-type. In order to determine more precisely what the subject of the chart will do with the raw material of his character, the astrologer must look deeper.

One oddity in Degler's chart is immediately apparent. All of his planets save one are clustered in a single hemisphere. This is an example of a "bucket arrangement". It usually indicates a singleminded, obsessional-type person who tends to devote his life to a single interest. This interest, or goal, is shown by the single planet that occupies the otherwise deserted hemisphere of the chart - the "handle of the bucket". The handle of Degler's bucket is Uranus, a modern planet, associated with such subjects as the oc-

cult, science, and science fiction! In those stars over Poplar Bluff we begin to glimpse the shapes of things to come.

Degler's chart is not a pleasant one. It is dominated by a few powerful conjunctions and numerous square aspects, which are generally trying. Mercury occupies an important place in the chart and gives impetus to the subject's need to communicate and travel. The conjunction of Mercury and Venus grants Degler charm of speech and has strong associations with writing, science and publishing. Falling as it does in the 9th house this conjunction is also indicative of long distance travel and good relationships with foreigners - possibilities alluded to consistently elsewhere. Who can forget Cosmic Claude's numerous cross-country crusades, or his good work in bringing into the CC fans from all corners of the world?

A conjunction of Jupiter and Neptune indicates a streak of idealism and a pronounced attraction to philosophy. The moon and Mars conjunction shows that the subject has great energy and a propensity for risk taking. All these characteristics seem to fit with the Degler depicted by fan historians.

A key aspect, in light of the more powerful aspects already alluded to, is a sextile between the moon, always an important consideration, and Neptune. It reveals that the subject has a desire to do something out of the ordinary and is led by this desire into behavior that is downright bizarre. Unfortunately, the aspect indicates that the subject's ambitions in this direction will be thwarted finally by lack of ability. This is consistent with the rest of the chart. A subject of only average intelligence, born under rather conventional signs like Taurus and Virgo, would have a difficult time trying to accomplish anything really special or unusual.

A conjunction of the sun and Mercury in the 9th house clearly shows the directions the subject's unusual interests will take indicating as it does an attraction to extreme and peculiar religious beliefs. Combining this attraction with the strong liking for sf mentioned earlier, it is easy to see the emergence from Degler's mind of the Cosmic Circle. The sense of drama, the desire for leadership shown elsewhere adds to the story of the CC and very bad aspects of the all powerful sun to Uranus (so important in this chart) and Saturn (always dangerous) end the saga. For these aspects offer the subject nothing but ultimate failure, thwarted ambition, opposition, enmity and public disfavor.

Before going on to the next part of this study, mention must be made of two other facets of Degler's character highlighted by his birthchart. The first is bad health. Degler's famous "heavy chest cold" following the unfortunate Slan Shack incident was not an indication of hypochondria on Degler's part. It was no doubt only too real and Degler had every reason to be concerned, considering his chronic health problems.

The second point that must be brought out is the utter failure of Degler's emotional relationships. He seems destined ultimately for a bad marriage, which will be treated in more depth later. One particular aspect shows that he would tend to seek out unconventional relationships to begin with. What could be more unconventional than Degler's much publicized escapades with a series of women, none of whom has been proved to exist?

As fascinating as it may be to examine an historical figure's psychological makeup through his birth chart, such studies do not add any new facts to the record. To do so, it is necessary to progress the birth chart, in order to discover trends for given years.

Faanishly speaking, the most interesting year of Claude Degler's life was 1943, the year of the Cosmic Circle. His progressed chart for 1942-1944 is revealing. Mars forms strenuous aspects to both Jupiter and Neptune, indicating extremes of action, over-enthusiasm, and a strong attraction to religious cults. A conjunction of Jupiter and

Neptune favors travel and also shows, according to one expert, "investigation of religion from a scientific standpoint. Popularity and success in secret societies". Unfortunately the eventual outcome of all this activity is clouded by an opposition of Saturn and Uranus, indicative of obstacles and disappointments. Obviously, these progressed aspects correlate with, and seem ready to activate the more dangerous aspects of Degler's birth chart. A conjunction of Mercury and Pluto at this time shows that the period was one of mental turmoil for Degler, the staid, Virgoan side of his character no doubt battling his eccentric drives. The climax of this inner struggle occurs around the 24th of February, 1943, when it is accentuated by a transit of Mars. According to Harry Warner, it was on the 20th of February that Degler left New Castle for the Boskone, thus initiating the great year!

The planetary configurations were present before 1943, forming most likely in 1941, the year that marks Degler's first tentative entrance into Fandom. However, throughout 1942, described by Warner as uneventful, Degler's reckless, ambitious impulses were held in check by two strenuous lunar aspects that inhibited him and blocked any progress. At the beginning of 1943, these aspects give way and are replaced by a pair of lunar aspects especially good for travel, philosophy and general progress. At this point Degler is free to move forward with his plans, and has, in fact, resolved his doubts. These beneficial aspects culminate in September and October of 1943, when Degler's career was at its height; then they begin to fade. In the spring, the moon begins to move into an opposition with Mars, resulting in nervous tension and extremism. The strength of this opposition increases throughout the year, culminating toward the end of the year, just as the beneficial aspects are beginning to fade. Thus we see Degler's forward progress give way to turmoil and final dissolution by the spring of 1944, when his impulses are no longer supported by favorable lunar positions. Degler's inner character had not changed, but that tide in the affairs of men had passed him by.

The progressed birth chart seems accurate. Will it yield any valuable information? Harry Warner says of Degler, "The date on which he entered Los Angeles has been lost to history." This is a shocking gap. Would a mundane historian be content to say, "The date on which Caesar crossed the Rubicon has been lost to history" or "We have no date for the signing of the Declaration of Independence"? Hardly. Dates are important historical landmarks. Besides, a thousand years from now, when the world is ruled by Homo Cosmen, our descendants will probably want to celebrate Degler's epochal arrival in Los Angeles!

Let's examine the data we have to work with. We know that Degler visited Hagerstown in August of 1943 and that by Halloween of that year he was back in New Castle to be honored at a party thrown by the Oak Grove SF Society. The date we are looking for must fall between the beginning of August and the end of October.

On August 7th Mars transits natal Mercury, a planet strong in Degler's chart and one associated with communication and publishing. It is tempting to think that this was the day on which Degler visited the man who was to communicate his story to the world.

But we are faced with inconsistencies in the record. Warner states that by early summer of 1943 Degler was in Indianapolis where he worked for two months, saving money for the trip that would take him, eventually, to the west coast. Since summer starts around June 20 this would place Degler in Indiana as late as August 20. Even more confusing is Warner's assertion that at the start of Degler's important trip, he spent an additional several months in New York. This would mean that Degler, leaving Indiana at the end of August, would still be in New York on October 20! Clearly, this chronology is impossible. Not even Degler could have contrived to publish innumerable fanzines, break up LASFS, give Yerke a heart attack, leave L.A., be repulsed at the Slan Shack, and catch pneumonia in a week!



To get around these difficulties, let us assume that by "early summer" Warner, or his source, is referring to the summer-like weather of mid-May, rather than calendar summer. We can then assume that Warner's mention of "two months work" in Indianapolis followed by "several months work" in New York were gleaned from exaggerated information supplied by Degler in his publications. No doubt a notorious free loader like Degler would try to make himself appear more industrious than he actually was. And if Warner's information came partly from fans Degler was staying with during these sojourns then it is understandable that they would suppose more time had elapsed than was really the case.



The Martian transit of August 7 is impressive enough to lend weight to these assumptions. If Degler did visit Hagerstown in early August, he might have been commencing his second major trip of 1943. It is interesting to note that in August of that year the sun was in Leo. This sign is associated with the countries of France and Italy, then embroiled in World War II. It is also associated with the city of Los Angeles.

Studying our charts more closely, we cannot help but be drawn to August 18. On this date a number of unusual things happened. Mars transits the sun, an occurrence indicative of nothing but trouble. In addition, on that same day the sun itself enters into four strenuous aspects at once with Saturn, Mercury, Uranus and its own natal position. The sun is all important of course; Mercury and Uranus are driving forces in Degler's chart, and Saturn is ever-dangerous.

This truly remarkable and horrific combination heralds calamity, loss of honor, incompatibility, opposition and public disfavor arising from writing and publishing ventures! Obviously, it was on August 18, 1943, that Claude Degler entered Los Angeles. The lost date has been found.

In seeking to investigate Degler's later life we are faced by two obstacles. The lack of birth time gives our charts a certain fuzziness, though it is possible that some future historian will be able to discover Degler's birth time through chart rectification. Secondly, as we lose track of Degler entirely, it becomes difficult to know exactly how to interpret the information the progressed charts make available to us. Nevertheless we can sketch his later life with some confidence, though without much detail.

As we have seen, the influences that spurred Degler to the heights in 1943 are already disappearing by the end of that year. In the late forties and early fifties a new set of aspects takes over his charts. The indications are that Degler's life is about to enter a new phase, eventful but stressful, probably featuring permanent relationships of a depressing nature. At this point how can we fail to remember the omens of bad marriage so prominent in the birth chart?

We have few objective facts to help us along. Warner affirms that there was a west coast visit in 1951. The last report of Degler, and that unsubstantiated, has him

married, sick and living in California around 1954, totally cut off from Fandom. This report does fit in with the changes predicted for Degler's life by his progressed charts for the period.

It is interesting to note that in February of 1951 the moon's conjunction with Neptune shows Degler slipping back into bad habits. Could the 1951 west coast visit be considered a relapse into his faanish ways? Though Warner gives no date for this visit it would be convenient to imagine it coming at the beginning of 1951, because we might then imagine him making his unlucky marriage in June, an event very likely to be brought about by Mars transiting the sun in that month. This would fit nicely because other indications are that relationships formed at that time will go sour, in accordance with the overall picture presented to us by the birth chart. In addition, we could then explain his west coast visit as a last fling with nostalgic overtones. A similar Mars transit occurs in June of 1953, so Degler could have been married then also.

At any rate Degler is married by 1954, as Warner's anonymous source tells us, and he is indeed a sick man since a bad aspect between the sun and moon exacerbates his chronic ill health still further. 1955 is another trying year, perhaps resulting in the breakup or near-breakup of his marriage. Toward the end of the year, it seems likely, there was a visit to New Castle. Perhaps he wished to visit the scene of happier days.

The next significant year for Degler seems to be 1962. In that year the moon forms a remarkable triple opposition to a three-planet cluster which includes the sun. Ill health and bereavement seem likely. Aware of Degler's ongoing history of bad health, we can't help wondering if this disastrous year does not mark the time when Cosmic Claude decided to thumb a ride from that BNF in the sky! Yet, Degler was only 42. It is more heartening to think that there was a death in Degler's family. Perhaps if he was still married, he was relieved of this burden by a fate that had decided, at last, to treat him kindly. This latter possibility looms strongly since a conjunction of Pluto and Venus indicates a scandalous love affair. Surely any love affair, occurring under such circumstances, would have seemed scandalous.

Degler's history after this year is uneventful until, surprisingly, 1976. In many ways the progressed chart for 1976 resembles the chart for 1943. Once again Claude Degler has entered a period of risk taking, overenthusiasm and action, the more eccentric side of his personality goaded on by strong planetary aspects and the invigorating action of Mars! But, whereas inhibiting aspects thwarted Degler's ambitions in 1943, the aspects for 1976 are all positive. The moon is coming into conjunction with the sun. His ambitions will finally be realized. This time he will find honor, rather than dishonor. Public favor will finally come his way.

It would be ridiculous to suggest that Degler was about to return in triumph to Fandom. The years since 1943 indicate continual change and continual study. Degler is older and considerably wiser. 1976 is an election year. It isn't hard to imagine a 56 year old Claude Degler who has forsaken fan politics for the politics of the larger world.

In November, somewhere in this country, enough mundanes will pull the right voting lever to make Claude Degler a town councilman or a schoolboard director. It's a heartening thought. We will probably never hear from Cosmic Claude again. But then again, Jerry Brown gets votes talking about planetary consciousness. And who ever heard of Jimmy Carter two years ago?

Notes on terms:

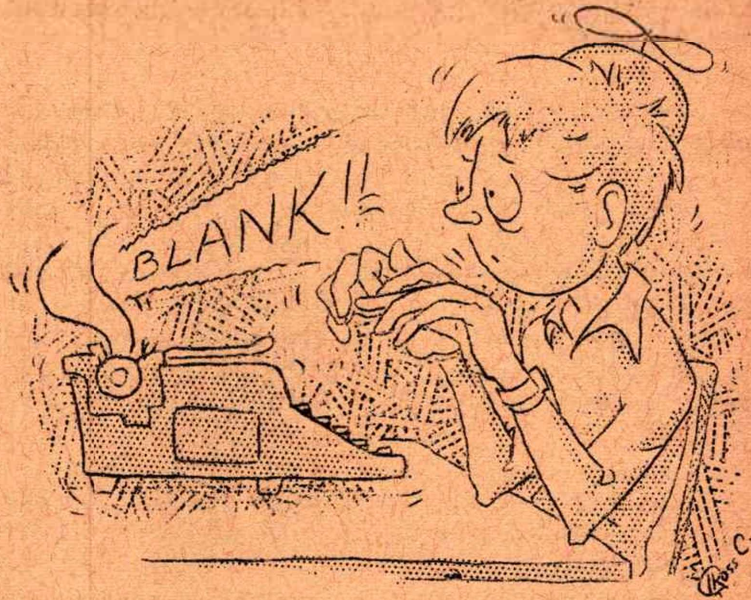
Aspects - certain, significant, angular distances between planets.

Conjunction - planets in conjunction occupy identical degrees in the birth chart.

Opposition - planets in pposition occupy opposite degrees.

Transit - the passage of a planet subsequent to birth over a degree occupied in the birth chart by another planet.

BREAKING THROUGH JIM MEADOWS III



I've almost arrived.

Though I've been around Beautiful Fandom for about five years, it's only now that I finally seem to have a chance at making the Big Time. I'm talking about Published Articles, pieces with real headings and Ross Chamberlain illos drawn just for the occasion. I'm talking about my name in the table of contents and a note from Arnie and Joyce praising the piece and asking if I'll write another one soon. And warm comments from Harry Warner in the Harry Warner LoC with the Rotslertoon pointing to it. And...*sigh* Articles.

Sorry, I got carried away.

It started like this. In a letter from Loren MacGregor, he dropped the casual suggestion that maybe I'd like to write something about the broadcast media for QUOTA since that's my speciality and Loren thought it would be interesting. Then Hank Luttrell went out of his way to write me a letter in which he said he'd read my rantings about Jay Ward cartoons in a letter to KNOCKERS FROM NEPTUNE and wondered if I'd like to do a full-fledged article on Jay Ward for STARLING. He had never even sent me STARLING previously, and now he was soliciting a contribution!

Well, this may not seem like much to you, but for a little nipper like me who has trouble making the WAHF column in these fabulous fannish fanzines, it's the first step up the ladder to fannish superstardom. Just think, he thought hungrily, when I finally make it to a convention, everyone will look at my nametag and Know Who I Am. That's almost like being a BNF!

There's only one hitch: I haven't written the articles yet.

It seemed so easy. Writing letters of comment is easy; just read the zine, stuff the paper in the typewriter, put your address and the date at the top and start "Dear Bob, The last issue of LE ZOMBIE lacked the usual cheery existentialism of past efforts.." You can get away with anything in a LoC, because everybody realizes it's off the top of your head. The editor will peel off all the junk and only deposit the pure gold (or bronze) goodies within the actual letter column. It may only be three lines, but it'll be solid bronze (or tin).

But articles are different. They require organization -- and the illusion you know what you're talking about. Articles require a specific subject, even if it's nothing at all. And in an article, you have to be "up" all the time. It's like being Johnny Carson. No, he's not fannish. It's like being Dick Cavett. He got cancelled, so he must be fannish. With articles, you can't be saved as easily by clever editing. You have to edit the thing yourself beforehand. Why, that's, that's... self-discipline!

What a horrible word.

I have to do something. Two respected fanzine editors are depending on me. Perhaps they won't gaffiate out of desperation if I don't send them something, but they're certainly hoping that I come through. I told Hank I'd get something to him this summer. I promised Loren -- no, I wrote the letter, but I haven't mailed it yet. I was going to send him my article of 100% tin (or synthetic rubber) with it, and I haven't even finished the first draft yet.

You know how difficult this is? I even stooped to prayer and nothing appeared magically or otherwise on my copy paper. Yet Francis Towner Laney did it, and he didn't even believe in God. (Maybe that's the problem: I'm seeking aid from purely mundane sources of power. Help me, Ghu! Save me, L. Ron Hubbard!) And Harry Warner does it all the time!

So if Harry Warner can do it, I can do it, right? If Jim Turner, who doesn't even exist, can turn out masterpieces, then I should have such hassles with my fannish pieces of synthetic rubber (or dacron), right?

Right?

Hey, my ego needs some propping up here. Let's hear some "right!"s when I ask, "Right?" Right?

Donning my Norman Vincent Peale positive thinking beanie with the dial set all the way up to "nine", I stride purposefully to my elite typewriter. (The pica would make the piece look longer, and that would be Cheating.) With keen Anglo-Saxon precision, I slip the copy paper, carbon and second sheet into the typer. Advancing the paper to the first line, I decide to do Loren MacGregor's broadcasting column first. A column will be easier, I tell myself, because I can ramble yet still seem to remain witty. And I can build a following, my very own flock.

I'm calling it "The Media Beast". It looks good at the top of that clean white, hardly violated paper, right up there and dead center. Now for my name. "By Jim Meadows" -- that's really impressive. Now I'm ready to put it down on paper, reams of humor culled from my experience in broadcasting. Pure yards, just yards of fine fannish dacron.

But you know, it's hard to write those light airy dacron lines when your mind is made of heavy-handed lead.

I think I have a copy of SPECULATION I haven't gotten around to locating yet. It'll be a bit late, but... "Dear Pete, the last issue of SPEC lacked the cheery existentialism of past efforts..."

-- Jim Meadows

CHICAGO NOCTURNE

CHARLENE KUNKEL

I've always felt that one of the biggest disadvantages of attending any kind of public event can be the crowd - particularly that part of the crowd that is sitting next to you. It seems like I've run into quite a few treasures lately, ranging from the incredibly fat woman who overflowed into my seat at the Ali-Inoke card to the little old lady who sprayed us all with Raid at the Opera in the Park (proving, I suppose, that the Horror in the Next Seat spans all types of events.) Perhaps the most annoying one of all was the idiot behind us at the Phil Ochs Memorial Concert who, after an incredibly beautiful and moving rendition of "There But for Fortune" by a veritable who's who of folk music, leaned down to ask us, "Who wrote that? Buffy St. Marie?" Then there was the lady at the wrestling card in Chicago.

Bill and I had gone to Chicago to combine a family visit for me with some business for him. I'd been looking forward to the matches also, so while he was escorted to ring-side to take photos, I set out to find my seat. I think it was the fourth usher I consulted who finally found the correct aisle. The ushers are quite a crew in the Chicago International Amphitheatre. Dressed in band-box uniforms with invariably filthy white gloves, some 95% of them are black. Combined with the rather antique Amphitheatre itself, I felt as if I had wandered into a 1930's railway station - except they probably had more class.

The seats on the floor of the Amphitheatre were, like those in all arenas: folding chairs set up only when the occasion demands it. Although there was at least a decent amount of space between the rows (unlike, for instances, the Nassau Coliseum, where they crowd so many rows onto the floor that you cannot fully stand up for the Star Spangled Banner), the chairs themselves were rather narrow ones, connected in groups of five and painted a bright red. As I sat in my own seat, I found myself next to a middle-aged couple. The woman asked if she might have a look at my program and, as she went over the evening's card, she told me that today was her anniversary and that her husband had taken her to dinner and that she was taking him to the matches. I also noticed that she had had a few. Pointing out wrestlers she particularly hated, she asked me if I minded yelling. Not at all, I replied (I've been known to do a bit of it myself, and since my favorite tag-team, the Valiant Brothers, was on tonight's card, I figured I'd be getting in a few words myself.) Well, she said, she was glad of that since sometimes she had a tendency to get a little carried away. As far as I was concerned, anyone could yell as much as they wanted and I hoped they got all their frustrations out that way. After all, I was now sitting in the only arena I know of where a frustrated fan in the balcony objected to the results of one match by opening fire. None of the combatants were hit, but five ringsiders were downed - so yell, yell!

Having concluded her perusal of the program, the woman tapped the man sitting in front of her and went through the same questions. However, she went on to suggest that he watch out for his head, and to write down her name and address in case he wanted to sue her at a later date. By this time I had concluded that it was unlikely that anyone else was going to fill in our row, so I moved down a few seats in hopes of getting a better view.

Finally the matches got underway. The yelling in Chicago, I found, is rather tame

by New York standards - even the Valiants, in their colorful tights and long peroxide locks, inspired not a single "faggot!" About the most extreme thing I heard was "Sissy!" Except, of course, from my friend down the aisle. Fortifying herself with beer from the many vendors stalking the floor (though if you wanted a soda, I noted, you had to go out to a stand for it), her "son of a bitch" and similar yells drew quite a bit of attention. She loved every minute of it.

As the empty beer cups at her feet mounted, though, the yelling came to be not enough. Since we were situated on the opposite side of the ring from the dressing rooms, hitting the wrestlers as they walked down the aisle to the ring was out of the question. (This is popular whenever fans have the opportunity, and is sometimes carried to the extreme of stabbing.) Desperately, her besotted brain searched for an alternative. Aha! The chairs!

Now, chairs have an illustrious place in wrestling. Dick the Bruiser, who we were to see in a chain match that very night, has been known to push ringsiders from their seats in order to slam some unwary opponent's head into the hard metal. And who can deny that Chief Jay Strongbow is poetry in motion as he brings a folding chair down on some heel after he's committed one foul too many? But chairs are not generally used by fans, other than for sitting.

Well, lack of tradition was not about to stop my friend. She grabbed the set of chairs in front of her and began pounding away. Most of those who were sitting on those ill-starred chairs soon found other seats down the row. At intermission she gravely asked the remaining brave souls if they would mind getting out of their seats, "in case I need them." By the end of the night, only one fan remained there, trapped, with no other seat available to him.

So there he remained, rising and falling in time with the tide of my fellow fan's blood pressure. The last bell sounded and as the crowd wound its way from the cavernous depths of the Amphitheater, one lone soul remained, seemingly affixed to a fleet of five chairs. His nerves obviously shattered, he slowly drew a deep breath and moved haltingly out to the box office.

"Hello, Mr. Hart!" the ticket custodian greeted him. "Same seat next month?"

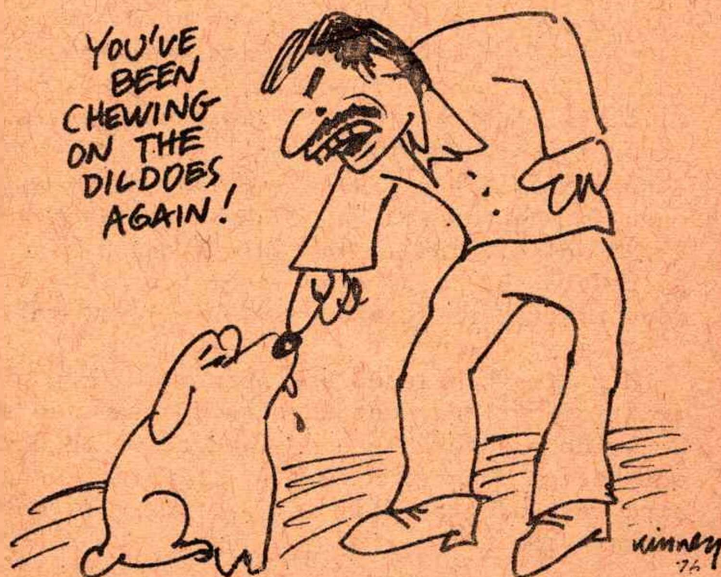
"Y-y-yes, Irv," he managed. "Same seat."

-- Charlene Kunkel

Now a commercial announcement

Joyce and I won't be making it out to Big MAC this Labor Day weekend. We hope you'll smoke and drink a few for us stay-at-homes.

There is something you attendees can do for us, though. You can write up the most interesting experience you have at the worldcon and send it to us for SWOON.



the
best
man

ARNIE KATZ



Those who only know Joyce and me through our fanzine articles on topics like life on a Missouri farm and the joys of mimeography probably think of us as apolitical. This is true to the extent that we're neither crusaders nor activists at this point in our lives, but we're far from indifferent to the political scene. We've closely followed the presidential nominating procedure as state after state selects the least sordid of assorted evils for the two major parties.

As you may have already surmised, Joyce and I regard the entire field of hopefuls with a jaundiced eye. Like most of our fellow New Yorkers, we're registered Democrats. This gives us the right to vote in the state's only interesting primaries and, in 1976, wear Carter buttons, but we're a little too committed to societal change to feel really comfortable with the grey old men and good ole bhoys of the Donkey brigade.

On New York State's primary day, we trooped to the polls where we both pulled the lever for Mo Udall, but it was with a sense of futility that we did so. It seemed fairly plain to us that Jimmy Carter, who often seems to stand for nothing, would defeat Hubert Humphrey, who stands for everything, and Henry Jackson, whom I just can't stand at all.

So it was not altogether surprising that the subject of write-in votes should come up in conversation at our house. Joyce and I have always fancied ourselves as political realists -- which means that we've always passed over "can't win" third parties to vote for the lesser of two devils, but Joyce was a little wistful about not having made at least a gesture of defiance on primary day.

"Can you vote for a write-in candidate in this state?" Joyce asked.

"Yes," I replied quickly, but as I considered the matter, I began to wonder. All area polling stations use the automatic booths, and, in truth, I had never actually seen anyone cast a write-in vote. "Well, I guess you can," I added lamely.

"Are you sure? I've never seen anyone do it in this city," she said, her words clearly paralleling my thoughts. "Maybe the practice has fallen out of use, because of the ease of machine voting. Maybe no one bothers to write in people any more," she theorized.

"It's sure not like the good old days," she complained. "You could always count on a good write-in turnout for Pogo."

"Maybe it has died out," I mused. "Maybe it has." I could see it all plainly. We'd wait for a slow news day -- papers will print anything on slow news days -- and then tell the world, or at least New York City, that Joyce intends to cast a write-in vote in the November election.

Her picture, with slightly cheesecakey overtones, appears on page three of The Daily News with a short blurb to the effect that Joyce Katz is going to buck the almighty machine and avail herself of every American's constitution-guaranteed right to vote for the person of his or her choice.

The story is picked up by the wire services. One lone, courageous New Yorker against the limitless resources of The Bureaucracy (with slightly cheesecakey photo). Soon Joyce is visited by a film crew to do a human-interest short for "The Six O'clock News."

"Whom will you vote for, Ms. Katz?" I can hear Walter Cronkite asking as he thrusts the microphone under her nose. "Who will it be in November?"

Joyce plays coy. "My vote will go to the one person, the one individual, whom I truly feel can get this country moving again I'm talking about a person who can restore the full vigor of our basic freedoms and aggressively attack the manifold problems which currently assail our American society." Millions of Americans, conditioned by the usual run of political propaganda, are now vaguely ready to vote for Joyce's choice without even knowing the candidate's identity.

"Yes, but who?" Cronkite inquires breathlessly. A nation of inveterate gossips leans forward to hear the answer.

"I'm sorry, Walter, but I am not ready to divulge my choice at this time."

"But you have made a choice?" he asks, fishing for the tiniest scrap of information.

"Certainly," Joyce replies. "It was a difficult decision. I weighed many factors, considered all aspects of the situation, before arriving at the name of the individual for whom I will cast my write in vote on Election Day."

"Can you tell us this: Will your candidate be a member of a minority group?"

"Walter, I don't want to incite further speculation," Joyce will say, inviting further speculation, "so I will say this much: I have, indeed, chosen a candidate who is a member of a minority group. I will say definitely to you, and to your millions of viewers, that I will be voting for a man in November." Joyce parries all follow-up questions, and by the next morning, the rumor mills begin to churn.

The National Star runs an obviously faked photo of Joyce seemingly standing shoulder to shoulder with Ted Kennedy, topped by the headline "Is Teddy Joyce's Choice?" Rona Barrett breaks the news that Joyce Katz (promoted to the level of intimate personal freindship with the Tinseltown Tattletale overnight) will vote for Paul Newman. She is immediately contradicted by Russell Baker, who writes a trenchant column in which he suggests that Ms. Katz should vote for Art Buchwald.

Speculation builds to a crescendo as Election Day approaches.

By November 1, the day before the election, the country is gripped in a frenzy of curiosity. "Who?" screams the one-word banner on the usually staid front page of the New

York Times.

Not to be out-done, the Washington Post dispatches Bernstein and Woodward to 59 Livingston Street on election eve to interview Joyce Katz, the write-in voter who has captured the hearts of America. Finally, in an exclusive interview (and for a sum of money large enough to keep us in ink and mimeo paper for many a year), Joyce tells the Truth, the Inside Story, to Woodstein. She has chosen...

Harry Warner!

Yes, the one person in the entire country who would most like to avoid publicity, Harry Warner. Harry, who has been scanning murder reports for years with the chilling fear that the perpetrator will be some berserko fan friend who will drag the Sage of Hagerstown down in a sea of lurid publicity, will suddenly find himself the subject of the most intensive press scrutiny in history.

Why would an executive secretary from Brooklyn pick a newspaperman from Maryland? That's what the world will be wanting to know, and that's what the 75,000 radio, TV, newspaper and magazine journalists who will converge on 423 Summit Avenue will be bound and determined to discover.

Before the first paper even hits the street, they're already banging at Harry's front door. Three fanzines will be denied Harry Warner Letters of comment because of the momentous events of this night.

Stunned by this interruption of what had, until moments ago, been a quiet and contemplative life, Harry dazedly invites his fourth-estate confreres in. They enter with their flashguns exploding, cameras grinding and cassette recorders humming merrily. Before he quite knows what he's doing, Harry is before the network TV cameras. Newsmen, under the delusion that he qualifies for the "equal time" provision of the FCC fairness doctrine, are pushing him in front of live cameras in a futile effort to even things up after all the time they've given to this unknown's more established rivals throughout the campaign.

One of the eagle-eyed newshawks spies Harry's typewriter and stack of fanzines awaiting comment. Suddenly, Harry Warner is on all three networks coast-to-coast explaining fandom. Battered by a hail of questions, Harry is forced to discuss the intricacies of letters of comment, monthly genzines and -- horror of horrors! -- the inner workings of FAPA! (The Harper & Row edition of "All Our Yesterdays" hits the streets the next day and sells a quick five million copies.)

One week later, Joyce Katz is found dead, run over on a street in Brooklyn Heights. A Hagerstown Journal delivery truck is seen speeding away from the scene of the crime, headed South.

Harry Warner, who narrowly loses the election as a write-in candidate, is never seen again.

That's the way it would be -- if we followed the scenario I've just outlined. So Joyce is going to make the sacrifice. She is going to go to the local polling station this November, and she is not going to ask for a write-in ballot.

The future of fandom (and Harry Warner) is safe once again.

-- Arnie Katz



VACATION
BIBLE
SCHOOL

JOYCE
KATZ

I had really not planned to write any more about summer in Poplar Bluff, having already said my piece on that subject this year. But when we set the theme of "Our American Lifestyle" for this July issue, I knew there was no evading one more trip to the bucolic land of yesteryear.

Actually, summer vacations in Poplar Bluff always started in a most un festive way, so far as I was concerned. Though I'm sure the First Baptist Church didn't mean it to be that way, I approached the early weeks of summer with positive dread of the beginning of that all-American pastime, Vacation Bible School.

It would seem that no sooner than the cobwebs of the classroom had blown out of my brain than my mother would be urging me out the door to another classroom. True, this one was not for the pursuit of literacy and mathematical skills, and did comprise only a few weeks, and only half-days at that. Still, it just didn't seem fair to have to spend those precious summer hours confined in church-school. My mother, being a tenderhearted lady, frequently could be coaxed to let me skip altogether; therefore I didn't attend as religiously as Charlotte and Carolyn Griffith, or Larry Wilson, the boy-next-door. (Larry grew up to be a Methodist minister; I wonder if all those hours in Vacation Bible School were the reason he turned out so well?) But, the truth is, since my playmates were missing, the summer mornings would lose a lot of their glory for me, and I'd end up by drifting down to VBS just to have something to do.

It's a funny thing, but I can't actually remember a great deal about it. I know that we'd all be assigned to age-group classes, where we'd do projects. These projects ran rather heavily to things made out of yarn and paper plates glued together to make "wall placques", adorned with cut out pictures from old greeting cards. Decorated tincan "pencil holders" were also big in that crowd.

But the only project I specifically recall was when we made stuffed toys. I made a stuffed elephant out of blue flowered cotton. He was such a gala toy, with button eyes and a shoe-string tail which immediately fell off. I really loved that elephant; he was nice to hug, and I slept with him on my pillow for years and years. But that project was atypically nice.

At the end of the classroom sessions, all the kids would gather together and there would be a grand march from the rear of the church, up the aisle, to the pulpit. Each

class would peel off and sit together in its assigned space. Being small, my assigned class was on the very front row of the church. "Turn to your left at the front of the church" our teacher would tell us daily, "and sit in the left-hand row of pews."

Only problem was, I never did know which was right and which was left, so I always got confused. Finally my teacher took mercy on me and pointed out that the flag was on the right hand side of the pulpit, behind Reverent Pillow, so I should go the other way. Even now, when I have to quickly choose between right and left, my mind has to take me on a trip down that aisle, and I have to envision the flag-flanked pulpit before I'm certain.

Every day that you attended VBS, you got something...a star on a chart to show your presence, and perhaps a picture card of Jesus walking on the water with a Bible verse beside. Charlotte and Carolyn went to Presbyterian VBS, and they got these nifty puzzles. Every day they'd get a different square of the puzzle, and at the end of VBS, they'd have the complete picture. 'Course, if they skipped a day, there'd be a big hole in their Biblical scene; it was a really good incentive to keep going.

The real payoff for VBS was one I never got. After Vacation Bible School, if you had attended regularly, you'd be eligible to go to "Vacation Bible School Camp". Baptist Church Camp was located just out of Van Buren, Missouri, on a cliff overlooking the Current River, in one of the most beautiful locations this side of anywhere, not far from where Terry Hughes spent his youth, and even closer to the site where Degler planned his Love Camp. Of course, it cost to go. Not a lot, but enough that when I said I didn't want to, my parents were happy not to push. Anyhow, all I really know about Camp is heresay.

There, the kids played organized games. You know, volley ball, baseball, that sort of thing, took supervised hikes on mountain trails, and in general had an incredibly healthy, wholesome time of it. There were barracks to sleep in, community dining room, and the chaperones were good people from the church that you'd known all your life and could really feel comfortable around. The vesper services were held on Inspiration Point watching sunrise or sunset, and from all I've been told, the entire Camp experience was pretty much fun for those who went.

Truth is, it was a little more fun for the older kids than the young ones, but the chaperones didn't know about it. There was a cave, and it was a church-camp tradition that each year there'd be a last-night beerbust in the church camp cave. It was in that sacred environment that many of my girlfriends lost their virginity.

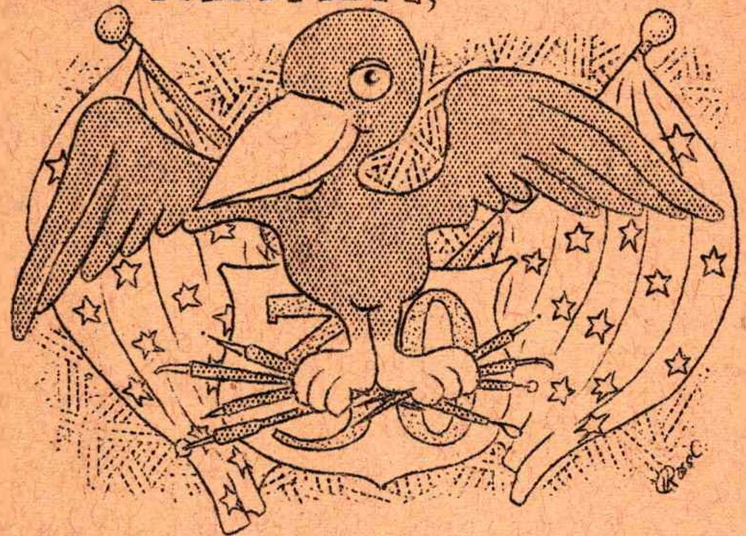
By the time the entire Vacation Bible School experience was finished each year, it was time for 4th of July, and the Independence Day celebration had double significance, marking as it did the true end of the year's classes. My experience with oppressive kings is negligible, but the concept of Liberty was easily explained by my feeling at being through with school. Even to this day I am disproportionately anxious for the Fourth of July to come, and enjoy it more than any reason would explain.

-- Joyce Katz

BRITAIN IN '79

QUOTE

DE MAVEN, EVERMORE...



MANY ARE
WRITTEN,
MANY ARE
PRINTED

Once again, let's begin with some of the many fine letters which commented on the issue before last (that's #4 for those as perplexed about our numbering system as I am) before moving along to the latest batch. My (Arnie) comments are set off (<like this>).

A down-in-the-mouth BRUCE ARTHURS gives us a hand

Got home last night, after spending a few days with my parents while recuperating from wisdom teeth removal to find the new SWOON in the mailbox. Thank you kindly. (<We are glad that our humble fanzine helped to ease the pain. ak>)

Ross' cover is (naturally) well done, but it might be a bit mysterious to newer fans on your mailing list who aren't familiar with Joyce's reputation for mammoth fannish meals. Locally, our resident gourmet is Bill Patterson. I use the term "gourmet" advisedly. Even if he does frequently mutter about coq au vin and boullibaisse, do you really trust anyone who takes seriously a suggestion for "Chinese chili" substituting bean sprouts for the usual red beans? (<Actually, I m not sure that I d even trust someone who makes it a habit to wander around muttering, "Coq au vin, boullibaisse." ak>)

While in the Army, there were naturally a great many 'massage parlors' outside of Fort Lee, Virginia. I never went into any, preferring to spend my money on stencils and postage and such, but I heard about them from lots of the other men in the company. Apparently, that ten bucks is for just a massage; any extra services will cost you extra, varying according to the parlor you frequent. One not-too-bright fellow let slip that he'd forked over thirty-five bucks for a mere hand job! His nickname thenceforth was, of course, "Turkey". (<I can't vouch for any city except New York -- and I can't vouch for even the Big Apple through personal experience, of course -- but reliable reports on the #10 houses insist that there is no massage involved, just sex for money on an assembly line basis. ak>)

I'll never forget one of my earlier flights. I was in the Army at the time. This was before the airlines let soldiers fly around in civvies, so when I went on leave I was fully bedecked in my splendiferous uniform. Anyway, after the plane had been flying for a while, I noticed that I'd been seated next to a rather nice-looking girl. Hmm, I thought in my best chauvinistic soldierly manner, this is a rather nice-looking girl I am sitting next to; I wonder how I can manage to break the ice with her?

So I threw up.

Somehow the sight of me, vomit spewing out from between the fingers tightly clasped over my mouth and nose, clawing wildly for an airsickness bag that turned out not to be there, failed to impress her. Ah well.

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JoAnn Wood comments on the "fanhistory of the fifties" controversy

Well, SWOON #3 certainly elicited response in one quarter. I may be one of your fannish curds, because I certainly don't like to write letters. I've always thought that if ghod intended me to write, he would have put a pencil in one of my fingers. As it is, he equipped me with the perfect tool for dialing or punching buttons on a phone. However, I am taking up my typewriter to respond to "1950 Will Be a Little Late This Year."

Let me begin by saying that I am not an Advent partner. My connection with Advent Publishers comes through being married to Edward Wood, one of the founding Advent partners.

Next, I must say that I admire Harry Warner greatly. Not only has he produced an infinite number of LoC's (there was one in SWOON #3), but he has also written articles and columns for fanzines. He kept up this activity while turning out a fan history of the 40's. In fact, he has produced one of the longest, consistantly excellent literary efforts in and for fandom.

Despite my admiration for Harry's achievements, I must take exception to several of his remarks. Let me say here that I do not think Ed Wood is perfect. In fact, I am perhaps his severest critic and do not fail to tell him when I think he is wrong (he does the same for me).

To begin, Ed Wood, not George Price, was the main editor on AOY. George set the type and extracted the index which he and Ed had decided was necessary to the understanding of the book. The majority of the editing was done by Ed. He found pictures, chapter headings, suggested reorganization of some material, etc. Regarding the dust jacket illo, I was under the impression that George and Harry had chosen it together and that Harry liked it. Seemingly mistaken.

Next, while I cannot verify the correspondence between George and Harry, I overlooked all Ed's and Harry's letters. Ed originally wrote and asked Harry for the rough ms. so he would have plenty of time to locate photos and edit, and so he would have some idea of what it was all about.

After reading the ms., Ed wrote Harry (and Ed is not Fandom's Secret Master of Tact) and suggested a reorganization of some material and several changes and additions. Among the things he considered necessary for a fan history was a section on the birth, death and dormancy of the fan publishers (not just Advent, but Shasta, Arkham, Gnome, etc.) Then, he felt that a chapter on fan organizations and clubs (like Chicago, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Detroit, DC, Pittsburgh, etc) which were important in that decade would be appropriate. While these organizations did not always produce fanzines, many of them produced fannish personalities who contributed to Harry's WEALTH OF FABLE. Also, perhaps convention fandom which seemed to start or at least revive in this decade deserved some mention.

After reading Harry's explanation of his philosophical purpose in writing WOF, I wonder whether Harry is writing a fan history or a sociological treatis on the development of fandom. (Of course, 'past is prologue' as Hari Sheldon would probably agree.) In either

case, one needs all the facts to understand the phenomenon. Unfortunately, WOF emphasized many details recounted at length in fanzines and ignores fannish matters that were not. Ed pointed out several of these omissions and asked that Harry add several chapters to make his work more balanced. He also corrected Harry about the actual happenings in certain events in which he (Ed) was a participant. Ed then requested that Harry report both good and bad fannish events in equal detail.

While a policy of keeping mum or not mentioning names in some old fan happenings (which exemplify the humanity and fallibility of fandom) may contribute to keeping rancors dormant, I ask myself whether this is either history or sociology? Don't we have to examine both pleasant and disturbing happenings to understand a decade?

While I can understand Harry's reluctance to make changes when he thought he was in deteriorating health, perhaps if he would give it a little more thought now, he might admit that some of Ed's suggestions had some merit. The fact that FANTASY COMMENTATOR was covered in AOY should not exclude it from mention in WOF. If something was of importance in the 50's, it should be covered in a book about that decade.

Both participants in this discussion seem to be over-emotional. Ed's letters to Harry were needlessly tactless (particularly considering the state of Harry's health), and Harry seems to have considered his work a perfect jewel to which any suggested additions or corrections were a terrible insult.

This whole situation would probably be improved if both gentlemen considered their actions and stopped making sarcastic comments about each other.

While HW's work on WOF was monumental and exhausting, EW has also spent much time on it. Ed located (and informed Harry) of sources of 50's photographs, as well as sending Harry 5 pages of corrections when the ms. was returned.

Although when I read WOF Harry's theme of the development of fannish legends was not apparent to me, still, it is a theme well worth going into. Perhaps it would be clearer to the reader if it were seen in a more complete historical perspective.

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MIKE GLICKSOHN can't take the punishment

Of the many facets of Arnie's writing that pop up like quick frozen poptarts from the toaster of my memory when his name comes to mind, a propensity for rotten wordplay wouldn't have been one of them. Until this editorial, that is. Congratulations on a couple of the worst groaners I've seen since Sam Long hung up his typewriter for the joys of conjugal bliss! I'm not at all sure I'd want to go around proclaiming that SWOON was an ex-lax fanzine, though. Are you sure that came out right? Perhaps it's appropriate, however: You've already mentioned that the pair of you are already in debt on SWOON. Apparently, it's a fanzine which causes di-arrears. (←Or perhaps we can just think of SWOON as an antedote for some of the shit that clogs up your mailbox. ak→)

Terry (←Carr→) touches (through his Katzian-reported telephone call) on what might become the newest fannish game: More Gafiated Than Thou. The possibilities are endless! "You mean to say that LOCUS is offset now?", "Whatever happened to the Dallascon bid?", "What's a good price for hecto jelly nowadays?" all the way up to "Harlan sold a story?" (←Or, for our West Coast readers, how about, "So, how did the Panpacificon go?")

Ross Chamberlain writes a very interesting personal column: Quiet, but it tells a

lot about him and resonates nicely with his readers. Me, I don't groove on the concept of traveling to a place (as opposed to travel for its own sake which, next to sipping Chivas, reading fanzines and making love, is one of the more delightful pastimes one can indulge in), because I'm usually more interested in being at the place in question. Thus I no longer drive to cons, much preferring to spend money to get there rather than time. But occasionally, I can be turned on by the nature of the transportation and enjoy it for its uniqueness, its luxury or some other similar feature.

I fly a lot (on planes, I mean) and have never been particularly susceptible to concern, upset, queasiness or blind maniacal panic. In fact, I can only recall one time when I felt under the weather," as they euphemistically say -- and that was my own, and god's fault. Returning from England and their 1975 National Convention, I was on a charter that supplied an unlimited flow of free booze. Now, booze has a certain attraction to me at all times, and free booze is quadrupally alluring. I made a very determined effort to earn back my airfare and might well have done so had we not hit a pocket of moderate turbulence approaching North America. For the first and only time in my flying career, I couldn't hold myself down. I grabbed the little white bag (which I usually take with me to use as a lunchbag later on at school) and allowed that epic series hero Perry Stolsis to have his say. And the fucking bag promptly split at the bottom and dumped the whole mess in my lap! Had I been a religious man, I might have taken it as a Sign instead of a (weakened) seam, but I'm not. After getting washed up, I refused to consider myself washed up. Happily, the incident has not repeated itself. And neither have I. Although, to be honest, the steel garbage can I've carried with me since then plays havoc with the metal detectors at the airport.

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An entrancing letter from JAY KINNEY

Well it looks like you are dragging me out of my hard-fought-for state of sublime Gafia by inundating me with SWOONS, one even with a caricature of me on the cover eating what looks like a breadstick (cheese log?) balanced on a hamburger. Who can stoically remain silent in the face of such faanish provocation? Not I. If nothing else, Ross' caricature did it. Now, I am always delighted at how Ross manages to nail people's features in just a few simple lines, except in MY case where I am always convinced that his representation of me has somehow missed my true handsome mein. Of course, what this means is that he has nailed me just as well--but I don't want to admit it. Kudos to Ross, at any rate.

And while I'm at it, Kudos to you too. Yes you still know how to crank out good zines on tight schedules. These days I read few zines, so the few I read might as well be readable. (How's that for stunning prose? I'm a little rusty on LOCing, so bear with me. Usually the only way I write LOCs these days is in deep trance. And those only to T. Hughes...) There is, though, something disturbingly "eternal" about these SWOONS, that I can't quite put my finger on. Perhaps it is that they seem so close in appearance and flavor to early 70's Insurgent zines, that they make it seem like those two years you were caught in the whirl of wrestling and closed apas never happened and that this is actually 1974! (Or 1972, to be more exact in placing this essence.) I can't say if this is time-binding, or nostalgia, or creative anachronism at work, but it's weird, nevertheless. I mean, what exactly should a "1976" fannish zine have in it to make it "up to date"? Beats me. Fold-outs of nude pregnant women? Articles on the New Conservatism? Skreeds against Belly dancing at World Cons? I just don't know. (I'm stung to the quick by your comment that SWOON seems to belong back there in 1972. Not that that wasn't a great year, you understand, but Joyce and I have very consciously tried to make this zine a bit of a departure from past efforts. Maybe the differences have become more apparent

in the last couple of iss...
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GREG BENFORD writes fanhistorically

Fantastic Warner article. I have no grudge against Ed Wood, but I do have a natural bias against publishers who delay books, particularly ones I want to read. One aspect of the editor-author relationship that continues to astound me is the insensitivity of editors and their unwillingness to give feedback that expresses their balanced reaction to a work.

This isn't confined to Ed's pages of criticism without praise; I've found it at the very top of the "quality" hardback houses, too. I'm just winding up a five-month negotiation with one of the best hard-cover publishers in the nation, and throughout it I've gotten precisely one 100-word paragraph of feedback from a corps of editors. Or had, that is, until this weekend, when I got two long distance calls, each exceeding an hour... I have a hunch that if editors knew how much further they could get in negotiations by being sympathetic to the writers, they'd get more satisfying contracts. I can only surmise that editors have this realization blunted by their immersion in the business world, where (from what I can tell) most of them operate by a winning-through-intimidation programming.

Interesting that Harry is bringing out the myth-building theme in 50's fandom. That sounds about right; at least, that's how I remember the era. Berry's Goon Defective Agency was just a programmatic way to try and build a mythos. The Insurgent became a central myth, too, and the line from Laney to Raeburn is clear.

In fact, that myth was one of the central images that guided my fanwriting, even though I was living in Germany most of the '50's (until late '57). The early VOIDS were chock full of cynical and wry humor, Imitation Derogations (one of them, Raeburn later said, was the only imitation he thought really caught the spirit...) and fannishness. It's hard to remember, now, how fan-centered most of the creative writers in fandom were then... (Ninth Fandom (circa 1971) was pretty much of a throwback to Sixth and Seventh Fandoms which produced most of the memorable fanac in the 1950's. In view of subsequent fannish developments, it certainly looks like we were swimming against the tide with a lot of what we tried to put across to fandom at large. ak))

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LEE HOFFMAN finds Ross' column hard to swallow

The first thing that amazed me about SWOON #3 was the discovery that I was a contributor. Gee! I hope that happens again some time. (Maybe I will be able to Do Some-



thing About It one of these days). (←It's not fair to do things like that to a material-hungry fanzine editor, Miz Hoffman. My tongue is hanging out so far that it's fouling up the typewriter keys.ak→)

The second thing -- the thing that blew my mind and has sidetracked me from all else -- is Ross Chamberlain's mention of the series about The Swallows and the Amazons by Arthur Ransom. I was really hooked on those books when I was a kid. I learned to read hand semaphore because of the little stick figures giving messages in the books. (I have since forgotten it, of course.) I desperately wanted a boat of my own (I got over that, too.) And I found what seemed to me to be a true nugget of parental wisdom, far superior to that generally dispensed by parents in Real Life.

When the kids of the boat SWALLOW wanted to go on a boating/camping expedition by themselves, the mother (as I recall) wired the father (a naval officer off on duty) to ask his permission. His reply was, "Better drowned than duffers."

Could a kid help but envy kids with a parent like that?

Would the world not be better off if more of us had drowned and there were a lot fewer duffers around.

However, one important question remains: Who sawed Courtney's boat?

GEOFFREY MAYER registers pleasure

I'm very pleased to be receiving SWOON. From the first two revival issues, it looks like SWOON is a worthy successor to FOCAL POINT and TANDEM which have been sorely missed.

It interested me to learn that Arnie works for Chain Store Age since I used to read -- scan, actually -- that magazine a couple of years ago. I was working for a company that build electronic cash registers, and a few of us were supposed to scan periodicals for any items relating to our field. Of those we read, Women's Wear Daily was always the most enjoyable because it had lots of underwear and bikini ads. (←Coincidentally, I am now, among other things, the supermarket field's Reigning Expert on electronic cash registers, having authored a half-dozen major articles on the subject in the last 18 months. I've usually been obliged to scan a wide range of periodicals at the various editorial desks I've manned. One of the greats is a little number called Trawling Times. This slick-paper newsletter is published for officers on fishing boats and always features a 1940's-style Pin-Up Photo (with saucy caption) to entertain the boys so far from home. I know one fellow who has a file of this little publication covering the last four years. ak→)

+ + +

I originally intended to print more letters than this, which should be pretty obvious from the fact that I never did get through to the Locs on SWOON #4. Rather than cutting the many fine letters still unpublished, Joyce and I have decided to cut the letter column right here and bring out a letters issue of SWOON in about two weeks. That'll give us a chance to print more of the fine stuff you've been sending us than even an unusually long letter column could have accommodated this time.

Meanwhile, we hope you'll write us lots of letters (and send art and articles, too, naturally), because this special SWOON is going to leave the cupboard mighty bare for the issue which follow it. See you again in a couple of weeks -- Arnie

