

We Came In Through the Taffroom Window

A joint production of those two big-hearted buckaroos, noted epicure Jeanne Bowman (We B Dudes Ranch, P.O. Box 982 Glen Ellen, CA 95442—0982 USA), and notorious roué Richard Brandt (4740 N. Mesa #111, El Paso, TX 79912 USA), as a Special Get-Acquainted Offer to promote their mutual candidacies for the Trans Atlantic Fan Fund. Thanks to Roy Anthony for production support, and to Lucy Huntzinger for her inquiring mind. Send those votes and letters in by January 15, 1992.

Spirit Lizard Dance

by Jeanne Bowman

Jaime got up early one morning and went out lizard hunting for breakfast. He brought in a blue bellied fence lizard; the biggest and fattest he'd ever caught.

And you know what? It hardly even ran away and was real easy to catch. It was quite wide in the belly.

I put on my maternal protector role. "Jaime," I said with quiet authority, "I think you have a pregnant lizard. You must not handle her too roughly or I'm afraid she will die." It was no certainty on my part, but the advisory prompt was too good to resist.

Jaime took her to school to share, with the understanding, "I won't let people hold her because we have to be gentle, 'cuz she might be full of eggs." Everyone was in ok shape after school, but Jaime wanted a playmate.

He put the critter in one of the outdoor cages—an old sink with a busted window screen cover. His friend Gabriel came over and they went out on the prowl. Meanwhile, I was sort of busy with important things and somehow the lizard succumbed to the attentions of sturdy Jesse's 3 year old embrace. All the way. When she didn't move anymore Jesse carefully arranged the dry grasses and put her back.

The big safari returned and went directly to the holding area. Wails arose. Cries of pained disbelief. Mortal anguish. Oh, oh, the lizard's dead. Tear stained cheeks disguised brain accelerated feelings of grief into thoughts of fratricide. Time for me to do some judicious intervention, turn this disaster into a win and reduce the noise before someone got hurt. My flash of inspiration, "Hey, maybe we could dissect the lizard & see her eggs."

Jaime's eyes brightened while Gabriel burst into tears. "But Jeanne, it's dead. Jesse killed it. Its spirit might be mad."

Gabriel is obviously an appropriate name for this minx angel faced child. He had never had a hair cut in his life when I first met him, and it always felt some way entirely appropriate. (Gabe was born & raised on the Farm in Tennessee & up until recently none of that tribe cut their hair.) He has a genuine revulsion for people drinking cow's milk, having been raised a total vegetarian, and being protective of the baby cow.

"So Gabriel," I ask, "how can we make peace with the lizard spirit?"



"Jaime," he says, "we have to do something or it might come get us or hang around and be mean to you. Or to Jesse... Let's do a lizard spirit dance."

"Right, guys, go send off the lizard spirit & then we can look inside her."

Off they went, whooping and dancing, stomping, chanting and dancing. Much serious gyrating and encircling of the corpse.

"Goodbye Lizard Spirit. Be nice. We're sorry. Go away and leave Jesse alone, he's just a baby. We love you." Laced with ululations and increasing giggles. "We love you." "I'm NOT a baby." "We love you."

They all came in ready for science. We performed our kitchen cut up. Sure enough, she was full of eggs. Golden yellow eggs in a pair of spiral clumps, growing from pinhead sized up to a maturity which could substitute for soy beans any day.

Her body lives in the freezer now, and occasionally Jaime will take her out & study her with Jesse, or show her to anyone who might look a bit interested.

(First appeared in Whistlestar #1, July 21, 1984, from Lenny Bailes, 504 Bartlett St., San Francisco, CA 94110. As soon as he finishes his book, another ish will appear.)



My date disagreed, observing the entrance in question led directly to the mall's Food Court, so the owl was probably just waiting for some rats to exit.

We also speculated about the bird being an escapee from Jerry's Perfect Pet Shop, which led me to wonder why there weren't any Imperfect Pet Shops—you know, where you could get, like, factory-second animals.

I had seen another owl this winter, at least I think I did, but it was for just an instant in my headlights before it darted up from the middle of the road as my truck came upon it. I wasn't used to catching owls in my headlights. In the daytime, roadrunners were a common sight in my travels around Dog Canyon; one such

fellow jumped out of the undergrowth at the side of the road, and stood panicking in front of my speeding truck, panting and wild-eyed, unable to decide which way to dodge, before I skidded around him.

Two in the morning, I'm awakened by a persistent tapping at my apartment door, flashlight beams shining in through the window. "Just a minute," I call, throwing on a robe on my way to the door. "Police, sir, can you open up?" comes back from the other side. I open the door. Cops on my doorstep. Four of them. All carry flashlights. "That your truck?" I squint down at the parking lot where they're pointing; I don't have my glasses on. "Is the license number 7913DE?" They say it is. "That's my truck. What's the problem?" "We got a call some suspicious characters were trying to break in. Can you come down and take a look at it?" Uh huh. I look over the interior. The ignition hasn't been tampered with, anyway. Can't spot anything missing; seems remarkably clean.

The El Paso police are in the midst of a heavily-publicized crackdown on auto thefts in the city. They credit their vigilance with reducing stolen vehicle reports to an abnormally low 100 a week. They might

More Stories About Roadrunners and Trucks by Richard Brandt

I was taking someone to the new mall the other night, and outside the entrance we saw a small, odd-shaped bird perched on top of an oil drum, leaning into the wind with its feathers ruffling, staring intently at the sliding glass doors. "I think that's an owl," my date said. "Maybe so," says I, but it looked pretty small for an owl. Just couldn't think of any other bird that would look like that: an egg-shaped ball of fluff resting on top of two spindly legs. I tried walking around to stand in front of it, and the bird danced around to face me, and sure enough it was an owl, glaring yellow eyes and all, but less than two hands high, tiny little thing. We stared at each other for a while, then it turned around with great dignity and flew off, with that odd, distinctive working of the wings peculiar to the owl family, settling on another perch a little further away from us.

I wondered if the denizens of the desert still hadn't grown accustomed to the recent development in the area. "He's probably staring at that spot, saying to himself, 'There's a nest of field mice, right there...'"

want to consider the recent unusually heavy rains, and ponder whether anyone would really want to be out in the wet trying to break into a car.

The cops have also been feuding with their counterparts across the river, claiming the Juarez police are masterminding a ring of car thieves. Not surprisingly, cooperation between the two departments is at an all-

time low. (I wonder if it takes longer to settle a traffic ticket. When Juarez cops write up your car, they take off your license plate and hang it up downtown. They have a wall plastered with them.)

(Excerpts from *Deja Vu* #5, April 1989, and *Spirits in the Night*, typed at *Ditto* 3, October 1990)

MEET THE TAFF: TEN QUESTIONS FOR ASPIRING TAFF CANDIDATES

In the spirit of *glasnost*, civic mindedness, the public's right to know, and similar high-minded stuff, TAFF candidates Bowman and Brandt submitted to a mail interview conducted by the eminently impartial Lucy Huntzinger. Lucy sent each of the candidates an identical list of ten questions; following are each candidate's responses.

Q: Do you agree the U.S. TAFF administrator is obliged to attend the U.S. Worldcons during his or her administration in order to raise money and promote the fund?

Jeanne: Obligated??

Richard: If at all possible, not only to promote the fund but to be a gracious host during the year that the European winner visits.

Q: If you discovered evidence that a prior administrator had embezzled all the funds do you believe fandom should take legal action or handle it within the community?

Jeanne: Oh my. Any fund that says "make checks payable to Administrators — not to TAFF" hasn't a prayer of accountability. I think if the funds were used to secure a house loan, the embezzler would be required to host a large fan gathering of the community's creation. If the funds were used for a car loan, our nefarious fan would need to place said vehicle at the disposal of the fan community — for instance, airport pick-ups and chauffeuring. In the event funds were unaccountably used, the administrator would be required to collate, label and lick the stamps for any local faned producing a zine in perpetuity. Lawyers would only complicate things.

Richard: Embezzle is such an ugly word... I would prefer that the prior administrator be confronted with the

evidence, and offered a chance to make restitution, before one resorted to legal proceedings. There's also the practical matter of establishing TAFF's claim to checks made out in the administrator's name. However, we should certainly take what steps we can to regain funds obtained under false pretenses.

Q: What do you think of the idea that if a TAFF winner fails to write a trip report within a year of making the trip, all the overseas hosts will write up their version of what the administrator was like during his or her stay?

Jeanne: Oh, my yes. When do we start?

Richard: An excellent idea which might spur future TAFF winners to new heights of alacrity. ("Your trip report will be co-authored by Michael Ashley and D. West.")

Q: Should there be a fan fund between Texas and the rest of the U.S.?

Jeanne: Yes, and we need one to get San Francisco fans to the East Bay.

Richard: Regrettably, this would require finding a Texas fan who was willing to depart God's country, even temporarily, for a stay in any other of the Colonies. This is a pity, since such a fund would afford U.S. fans a chance to visit a locale more exotic than those reachable via any current fan fund.

Q: What's your favorite science fiction novel?

Jeanne: Ah, um...er, well, gee whiz, I have a really hard time remembering titles.

Richard: Philip K. Dick, *Eye in the Sky*.

Q: Name 3 fanzines you received last month that didn't make you puke.

Jeanne: Don't be silly.

Richard: *Folly 10*, *Sglodion 3*, *Daisnaid 7*.

Q: What was the first record you ever bought?

Jeanne: McCoy Tyner and Brownie McGhee, "Swiss Movement."

Richard: Carly Simon, "The Right Thing to Do." (Hey, you were young once, too.)

Q: Why do Brits drink so much?

Jeanne: Compared to what?

Richard: They don't have to import the good stuff.

Q: What is a toad-in-the-hole, and would you eat one?

Jeanne: A pig-in-a-blanket, and yes, but it needs catsup.

Richard: A tasty treat with a yummy cholesterol center, and I'll try anything once.

Q: If you had your choice of spending the evening discussing fan history with Walt Willis or horror with Iain Banks, which would you choose?

Jeanne: Can't I discuss international banking with Pam Wells or Green politics with Judith Hanna?

Richard: Fan history with Walt Willis.

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