

THE 8

This is THE #8, composed and typed by Richard Harter at 5 Chauncy St. No. 2, Cambridge MA 02138. Typos are by Alphonse. Mimeography is by Bruce Pelz.

DOMESTIC DISASTER STRIKES AT 5 CHAUNCY ST.

Not only has the dishwasher been on the fritz (a state of affairs which I have been informed is most unsatisfactory) but we also just went through a seige with the telephone. Monday night we were sitting around doing nothing in particular when I decided to check the answering service. I picked up the phone and noticed a certain peculiarity about the sound coming out - namely that there wasn't any. Aha, I said, the phone cord is busted again.

This was a logical conclusion for me to draw. You see when I had the phone installed I asked the phone man to give me a long cord. Well he didn't have any long cords so he obligingly ran out a number of feet of phone line hookup wire and left the little terminal box floating loose unconnected to the wall. This is fine in its way but it is mechanically unsound so that it is possible to pull loose and break the wires going into the free floating terminal box. This has happened a couple of times in the past.

When it does I have to rewire the terminal box to fix the broken wires. I checked, and sure enough there was a broken wire. I cut back a few inches of insulation, ran out new leads, and rewired the terminals. I confidently picked up the phone, fully expecting to hear a dial tone. NOTHING!!! I got out a meter and checked continuity back to the terminal box on the wall. Everything checked out OK. With some reluctance I concluded that there was nothing wrong with my wiring or with the phone and that the trouble must be further back.

Since nothing further could be done that night I screamed with frustration and went to bed. The next day (tuesday) I called Ma Bell from work and told them my phone was out of order. I also explained that there was no way that anybody could tell this since when one tried to ring my number it automatically got diverted to the answering service. They made soothing noises and promised that it would be checked on that very day. In the afternoon I called the answering service and found that the telephone repairman had called and had it explained to by them that just because he could get them did not mean that my phone was working. Nothing further was done so Tuesday was a washout as far as getting the phone line fixed.

Wednesday morning at work I called the answering service again. There I found that there were several messages for Marsha, from late Tuesday evening, and early Wednesday morning, saying that her regular ride was not going to show up and that she was supposed to get a ride from someone else and meet them at a different place. Marsha, in the meantime, was discovering this the hard way. After standing on a cold street corner for half an hour she concluded that something was wrong, called the office, and found out that she had missed her ride. She was not happy about this.

Meantimes I called the phone company again and was assured that somebody would be there to fix the line. I pointed out that I wouldn't be home and that they should check with the landlord to get in. (It is a three story house with the landlord occupying the ground floor.) I also called Marsha at work and was told by the person answering the phone at her desk that she was out for coffee. (This turned out to be an inaccurate guess by some well meaning soul.)

When I got home I found a note from Marsha. She had never gotten to work. The phone man showed up. There was nothing wrong with the phone upstairs and they had not touched my unapproved phone cord. However the guy did work in the basement. This turned out to be unfortunate.

It seems that the phone wiring for the house is on the wall in the room in the cellar that I have for storage. This room is very crowded since it contains about twenty boxes of books belonging to Marsha and me which we don't have shelf space for, twenty cartons of indexes, 80 reams of mimeo paper, 40 quires of stencils, a couple of boxes of firewood, three boxes of christmas tree ornaments, and the wine racks. The repairman hit the wine racks and broke two bottles of wine (fortunately inexpensive - if he had broken the two bottles of '59 Wehlener Zeltinger I would have cried.) The cardboard cartons of two boxes of indexes are wine soaked but I don't know if the indexes are damaged. To find out I am going to have to remove the six cartons on top of them. (Two different piles, each seven high.)

To top it off it turns out that there was nothing wrong with my phone or the phone line in our house. What had happened was that the phone company, in a fit of tottyheadedness, had disconnected eight phones tied into the answering service. Apparently someone was discontinuing the answering service. Instead of disconnecting them from the answering service the phone company managed to cut out their phone and seven others.

So much for the phone. Onto the dishwasher front. At the moment this is being written the dishwasher is still defunct. Tomorrow morning (Friday) the landlord (Mr. Corry) and a plumber are going to look at and find out what they have to do to replace. Mr. Corry has promised that we will have a new dishwasher by December 1st.

Marsha is off in Rochester this weekend, visiting Sheila and Mikes parents, along with Sheila and Mike and assorted friends. Presumably there will be still another Rochcon report.

DISTRIBUTION COMMENTS ON APA-L 340.

Cover - But blue covers for L are practically untraditional. The general conception and execution are quite reasonable. The anatomy in the girls figure is bad though. The arm holding the sword is too short. The right leg is also too short.

TOC - The note at the bottom suggests all sorts of ideas about where the TOC might have been typed. The obvious (and probably correct) possibility I will ignore. Instead I will concentrate on such possibilities as the receptionists office of a nearby psychiatrist.

Mobius Cube #51. (Robert J. Konigsberg) I liked this very much. May I have permission to reprint it in the Proper Boskonian?

Anything #22 (Jocelyn) - It was (and for all I know still is) very common in the south to give people initials only. This includes first names as well as middle names. Don't ask me why.

Letters From The Outside #20 (Jay Freeman) - One of my friends in college was a fairly good pilot. He had his ILS license and was working on his ILS teachers certificate. He started out in flying by flying gliders in Europe when he was about 10 or 11 and had worked as a crop duster and as a pipeline inspector for many years. He took me up stunt flying a few times. One of his favorites was taking a roll of toilet paper, dropping it so that it would unroll into a streamer, and then circle around and cut the roll with his wingtip.

Once he and I were flying up to Minneapolis. We landed at the International airport. Very shortly after we sat down the control tower told us to make a right turn. As it happened we were just past the point where we could make the turn. The next thing we heard was an emphatic voice from the control tower saying "Make an immediate left or right turn". We did and just as we completed the turn we saw a big cargo plane rolling over the spot where we had been moments before. Unnerving.

Grinking Thru The Wanderwood #8 (Larry Nielson) - Considering that silver compounds are used in photography you may have hit upon the reason that one can't take pictures of vampires, etc. And maybe vampires, etc., can be seen only in mirrors which are actually silvered with silver?

Der Hollander 185 (Flieg Hollander) - I've got to think about your explanation. It sounds right (in fact it is right.) The only question is whether it really explains or whether I have been taken in by the handwaving.

Yeah, books. The Astoundings are one of the last things that I would box. Mine run back to '46 and I still pull them out and reread them every so often. All my bridge, chess, and go books are now down in the cellar along with an assortment of miscellaneous junk. It looks like I am going to have to make another pass through the shelves and box some more books.

Fenachrone #52 (David L. Fox) - Actually you do Eisenhower less than justice. It is quite true that he had nothing to do with the Apollo project. It is also true that he was less than energetic about pushing the space program. However when he took office our entire missiles and space program was dead - Truman had killed it. Ike not only revived the missile program but he also made the decision to go ahead with Vanguard well before Sputnik. Ike was indeed the President under whom our space program got started.

De Jueves #151 (Moffatti) - You're right. Clever of you to perceive it.

Are there two THE FIRST FAMILY albums? I only have one,

Eyeless Faces and Five-legged Huts #9 (Dave Nee) But this is Liars dice played with cards. The difference between Liars dice and Bullshit (as you've described it) is that in liars dice some of the dice could be exposed. It's a great drinking game.

Punctuated Penguin #67 (James Langdell) - To tell the truth I didn't even notice that the disty was "semichromatic". A little thing like paper colors becomes unnoticeable when you have to grind your way through the various forms of repro.

From Saturday To Sunday (Don Fitch) - Home made bread also has a high percentage of air. I remember that when I was a kid I squeezed it down into pellets quite happily. It's been a while since I've had some but my recollection is that the holes in home made bread were larger and less uniform. The other thing is that the texture is 'doughier'. I remember reading once that factory bread was hailed as a great liberator when it first became popular. One wonders if it were as bad then as it is now or if it has degraded substantially over the years.

Probably Something (Tom Digby) - Another possibility for early monitoring of intelligent life is to scatter a large number of tools which would send out a signal when they were being used as a tool. Something like a hammer, for example, for which it should be fairly easy to tell whether the forces being applied to it are random or whether they are the result of it being used as a tool. The advantage of this scheme is that the artifact is a passive instrument with no wear and tear in its internal mechanism until the moment for signalling comes.

Wither The Worldcon? (Dan Goodman) - But they aren't withering - they're growing larger. I'm afraid that I find your premises dubious and your suggestions unrealistic. The preliminary difficulty is in the notion that I can't really go along with the premise that the "majority of attendees are nonfans and gafiates." It may be the case but I doubt it. Partly this is a matter of semantics since you seem to consider that an active fan is someone who is active in club and/or fanzine fandom. (This may not be your opinion but it is implicit in what you say.) What then of people whose principal fanac is attending cons? (To say nothing of collectors, etc.) Is somebody who attends cons, reads science fiction, and maintains social contacts with others who do the same a nonfan? Must one belong to a formal organization or get his name in print to be a fan?

For that matter how do you or anyone else know that the majority of attendees are not in clubs or writing for or publishing fanzines. The number of clubs is quite respectable, particularly if you take University clubs into account. Locus 100 lists about 130 fanzines they simply haven't had a chance to review, and that list does not include Granfalloon and Canticles From Labowitz so it obviously is far from being a complete listing. Rather obviously nobody can keep track of all the people who belong to all of these clubs and who write and read all these fanzines. Also, rather obviously, nobody is in any real position to say to what extent the average con attendee is active.

But let us grant your first premise. Line up convention fandom, one and all, and count them out. Next we have the premise that membership fees are higher because of programming for the inactive fans. But is that really the case? Back in the good old days when a penny postcard cost three cents all of the costs associated with a con were a lot less. But that was back in the good old days. These are the good new days and part of that increase in con membership fees reflects the general increase in prices. Not all of it, of course, because part of it goes for more elaborate programming - movies, better facilities, etc. But what's wrong with that? You're getting a whole weekend of movies for a buck (2000 members, 2000 bucks for movies, \$1 a head.) Nor can you complain about the people who just go for the movies. You aren't subsidizing them - they're subsidizing you. They are paying the full membership fee for one of the side benefits. I like the idea of having an extensive movie program even if I don't take much advantage of it. I like having a large art show. I like hotles which have good con facilities. I like having good security for the hucksters room and the art show because to me they are an integral part of the con - a part which, quite frankly, I value much more than the program. For five bucks (that's all it costs - if you pay any more you're paying a fee for procrastinating) I feel I'm getting a hell of a bargain.

But let us go on to your recommendations. Could you have a worldcon by 'fans', of 'fans', for 'fans'. You might be able to do this as a one shot deal but you couldn't as a regular thing. Conventions are put on by convention fandom for convention fandom. People whose fanac is devoted to writing may bitch a lot but they don't often do much for the rather obvious reason that writing absorbs their time and energy.

Mondegreen #39 (Jim Hollander) - Do you also make copies of rare chinese vases in the British Museum? You blew it - now Mondegreen #n can never appear in APA-L 300+n. You'll just have to gafiante again and try for the 400's/.

The Misty Missed Disty #6 (Robin Johnson) - Don't feel bad. I'm an American and it is my firm conviction that the whole notion of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches is mad. They look awful, the textures and tastes don't blend, and they're sloppy. It took me the longest time when I was a kid to become convinced that people really did eat. I tried one once and am still mystified why anyone would eat them, much less like them.

I Think I'll Shoot Myself #100 (Robert E. Hollander) - A special short zine for your 100th?

Splendiferous #3 (Sheila Stephens) - Are you sure you aren't misspelling your title? I always thought it was splendiferous.

Sixth Dimension Times #34 (Kees van Toorn) - I have been enjoying your history and times of the Ambonese. One of the things that gets me about people who cry morality in political and international affairs is their selective vision.

Dream Recorder #4 (Vixen) - I have never made jewelry although it seems like it would be fun. Marsha once worked for a bead house and has oodles and oodles of beads of all sorts. She also has quite a bit of rather nice jewelry that she made herself.

Rabanos Radiactivos! (Fred Patten) - Ah nostalgia. Some time after I had moved away from home entirely my father sold the old house where I was raised as a child. Not the land, just the house, which was transported away. There is something very unsettling and sad about going to where your childhood home used to be and seeing nothing there - not even other people.

Gnomonclature #104 (Greg Chalfin) - One of the mildly annoying things about Boston is that it is very difficult to get thick 'frappes'. If it's not thick enough to eat with a spoon it's not thick enough for my tastes.

Equinox III (Chris Wilson) - Being also a contributor and a non active member I have to disagree. I think it is a perfectly reasonable requirement. L is principally for LASFS and much of the charm comes from the fact that it is mostly written by and for people who are active. We outsiders are here on sufferance, so to speak. Since L is for Lasfs it is only reasonable to ask people who are contributing to establish their ties. The membership fee is one way of formalising this tie.

What's New At The Wombat Works (Bill Warren) - You are hereby invited to dinner at Roy's the next time you are in Boston. That donkey doesn't impress me. Now if it ate IRS forms...

ψ*ψ 54 (Roger Hill) - The obvious answer to the swimming-pool-elevator problem is to start the con with the hotel full of water and the swimming pool empty. By the end of the con the swimming pool is full and the hotel is empty and the whole problem has resolved itself.

Jacob's Ladder (Tom Collins) - Some people hold the view that making money off of a fanzine is immoral, that it profanes the sacred mystical essence of fandom or some such. I don't happen to subscribe to that particular brand of idealism myself, but there is a good deal to it. The blunt fact is that one can't make money peddling fanzines. I admit that you might, break even or show a slight profit (before depreciation of machinery and not counting labor) if you work like hell and have an extraordinarily popular zine. But as a general rule you may as well relax and treat it as a hobby (and even be virtuous and idealistic about not making money) because the thing is going to run at a loss anyway.

Speaking of China in the UN (and you were a while back) I think its great. Here we were denouncing the Russians and the Chinese all these years when we could have sat back and let them do it to each other. No way around it, we should have been pushing to get the Communist Chinese in years ago.

Ankh Ptui #83 (Matthew Tepper) - Your recent policy of running nothing but accounts of your musical activities doesn't leave much room for comment hooks. However I will mention that the Boston Ballet did a production of Carmina Burana last weekend. I rather liked it but I am somewhat uncritical. People with more knowledge about ballet than I have were not impressed.

Inspid Inspirations #2 (Fran) - Is that explanation of deja vu based on firm evidence or is it someones off-the-top-of-his-head explanation. I was under the general impression that psychology was not far enough advanced to explain anything that complex and subjective.

Demented Duck (duck rogers et. al.) - Obviously this is the output of residents of some sort of institute.

Knight of Pens #43 (Sir Pens) - I went to South Dakota State University (my father was a cattle rancher in South Dakota) where I majored in Math. While there I played supporting roles in George Washington Slept Here, Emperor Jones, The Merry Wives of Windsor (very minor Shaxspear), and something else. I seem to recall that I played Creon in Medea. I was also on a play tour in which I played in a german one act play. (Every year there was a play tour which hit a number of high schools in the state.) The dramatics fraternity put on a melodrama (Dirty Works at the Crossroads) in which I played the villain. One summer I worked at a summer stock Melodrama. We ran two plays, East Lynne (in which I played the villain), and Lily, The Felons Daughter (in which I played a supporting role.) Somewhere along the line I also played the id of a female writer in an experimental play at a local coffee house. When I moved to Cambridge I played in The Firebugs with the MIT community players and then dropped out of acting until the Operetta came along.

The play tour was a gas. We hit two or three highschools a day and became very proficient at packing and unpacking the props. The staging and equipment varied all over the place of course. One of the most amusing incidents happened when we played at one of the Souix indian reservations. The other play in the tour was a one act version of Madame Butterfly. The play opens with Madame Butterfly calling for her maid, "Suzuki, Suzuki, where is my little Suzuki." Immediately there was a low snigger across the theatre, which was repeated every time Suzuki was referred to. We found out afterwards that Suzuki sounds like the Souix word for penis.

Milarky #112 (Craig Miller) - My psych teacher in college would have been a total loss if he hadn't been so unintentionally humorous. He was a high school principal who was working on his PhD in education. His general notion of teaching was to read long lists of terms to be memorized. Much of his lecturing was devoted to practical advice on teaching such as how to be servile to School boards. He was perfectly capable of advising us not to tell anecdotes about our family while lecturing and then turning around and telling an anecdote about his family two minutes later - unconscious of what he was doing. The thing that really endeared me though was his arithmetic. He was the only person I have ever seen who, when multiplying 35 by 100, would say "5 times 0 is zero," write down a zero, then say "three times zero is zero," write down another zero, repeat the procedure for the second line, carry out the same ritual to multiply 1 by 35, and then gravely add two rows of zeros and a 35 to get 3500.

Count your blessings.

Admittedly #41 (Ed Buchman) - Aren't you glad there isn't a daily APA? Re your comment to Roger Hill (re comment to Greg Chalfin (re comment to Fuzzy (re comment to James Langdell (re comment to Tom Whitmore (re comment to John Weybrew))))), a fifty-fifty mixture of ethyl alcohol and water is not only a better ditto cleaner it is also a premium grade of vodka.

What A Title #2 (Tom Selman) - Of course it's the place to detail your woes if they are all as amusing as the ones you describe.

Fuzzily #109 (Fuzzy Pink Niven) - No I wasn't particularly assuming that time travel was cheap - only that it was not astronomically expensive. One of the easiest and cheapest things to ship is information. This includes such things as complete rosters of governmental appointments, records of who was arrested for what, where, and when, along with trial results, copies of all books commercially printed, scientific and technological data, future histories of business organizations, etc.

Nyet Vremia (Bruce Pelz) - Sorry to run so many pages. I got carried away a bit. The latest APA: NESFA is on its way. Re Andrew Olliver - couldn't you have resisted asking him?

Bea Barrio (Beyond The Pail #14) - Sorry about that. No, no, the UN did recognize China. It's just that they had gotten the impression that it was a small island off the coast of Asia.

Thingummy #42 (Marsha Elkin) - What are you complaining about? The telephones working again isn't it?

The 7 (Richard Harter) Wouldn't Flatly Ridiculous have benn a better title?

The Galaxy Reporter #2 (Therri Moore) - Not much to comment on but hi anyway.

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