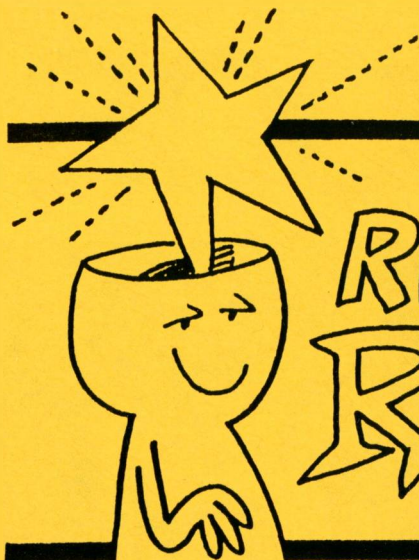


TRAP DOOR





REMEMBERING ROTSLER

MARTA RANDALL

He gave me a huge bear-hug, at some convention, during or just after the SFWA-PocketBooks battle. "Good work, kid," he said. Then he said, "Jeez, Marta, you're still short!" Then he said, as he wrapped an arm around my shoulders and we walked down a hallway, "You know what I like about you? You're the right size. I like a boob in the armpit."

It's hard to believe he's gone.

It's hard to believe he was sick. My image of Bill dates back to the 1970s, but he didn't seem to age in the years I knew him. Big and round-faced and gap-toothed and bearded, caught in the middle of a huge laugh—that's Rotsler.

Bill said things that would have set my teeth on edge and my hair upright, had they come from anyone else, but when Bill said them, I simply grinned. His opinions about women were both gallant and hopelessly antediluvian, but it didn't matter. He once spent the better part of an entire convention week-end trying to give me lessons, whenever he saw me, on the graceful way to light a cigarette. This in between lecturing me on the evils of smoking. I would have butchered anybody else who tried this. It used to bother me, why I didn't feel the need to scalp Bill, until I realized that when Bill opined, he did so from an unconscious (I think) well of affection and humanity and courtesy. Courtesy. Not a word in great circulation these days,

but it applied to Bill. A profoundly courteous man.

And an opinionated one. Terry and Carol and Bill and my son Richard and I attended the travelling exhibit of Dresden art treasures in San Francisco one fine afternoon. Richard and I attached ourselves to one of Bill's belt-loops and rushed along behind him as he flew from room to room at break-neck speed. Occasionally Bill halted suddenly in front of a piece to look it over and proclaim it good, before rushing off past items that he evaluated, at lightning speed, as worthless. "Gaudy it up!" he yelled, pointing at the one-quarter inch space of plainness in an otherwise overwrought vase. The museum guard thought he was nuts. We had to wait outside for the Carrs to catch up.

Bill's kind of courtesy, and his gallantry, recalled something of my father to me, although I never thought of Bill as anything like a father figure. When he offered to roar the world to a stillness, or take out after malfeasors, it was almost always because the guilty parties had offended someone Bill thought to be in need of protection. The list of people and the types of people that Bill thought needed protection is long and varied, and I suspect that almost all of us who loved him showed up on that list, in specific or in kind, at one point or another.

It was, in fact, Bill's need to protect that brought me up short over the issue of "erotica." I honestly don't know what Bill really thought of that part of his world, because the way he always presented it, at least to me, was of a world of people giving and taking pleasure from each other. There was no sin in that world, or unwanted pain, or oppression, or exploitation. No body demeaned or was demeaned. It was very

much a sanitized universe, almost the Disney-version of "erotica" and its people. And I honestly don't know whether Bill promulgated this vision in an effort to protect me, or whether I pretended to believe in it in an effort to protect him.

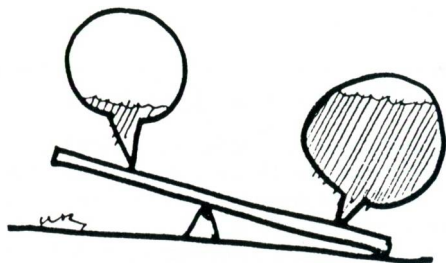
He sent out a memorable Christmas card, years and years ago: a photograph of himself sitting in a huge chair, surrounded by humongous, naked breasts and smiling that smile that extended beyond his ears. "Wishing you the same," the caption read. I think he sent it to men and women both, with no thought that it might offend. He was right.

He treated the talent in his hands as a gift that he bestowed on the world at large. I own dozens of off-hand cartoons, illustrated bread-plates smuggled out of convention banquet halls, name tags, letterheads, postcards, more serious artwork that seemed to spill from Bill's fingers wherever he went. I am not alone in this, nor do I have a large collection, given Bill's production and generosity.

I stopped going to conventions some years ago, and moved away from the East Bay. As a result of both, I hadn't seen Bill in years. And while I feel guilty that I did not have a chance to see him before he died, I am also profoundly happy that my image of him has not changed, and that he will always rush at break-neck speed through so many of my memories, robust and bearded and fine, laughing hugely and trying to tell me how to conduct my life gracefully.

Bill didn't deserve the end of his life.
Mortality sucks.

— Marta Randall



ED BURBEE

I knew Bill Rotsler since my infancy. My mother tells me that Bill first began visiting our residence on Normandie Avenue in Los Angeles during the early 1940s, at the age of seventeen. He existed as part of our extended family. Naturally I feel sad over his recent death. Moreover, I sense that an iconic personality has left us.

F.M. BUSBY

I haven't heard whether it was the cancer that got William Rotsler, or the drastic effects of standard approved treatment. From reading, sometimes I get the impression that the "insults" of chemo and radiation are just about as apt to shorten a person's remaining time as to extend it. And since all doctors are imprinted with the "there's always hope" doctrine, it's probably impossible to get unslanted advice on the question. But I can't help thinking that if William had decided simply to go ahead and enjoy his remaining time as best he could, his final months would have been a lot more pleasant. But, as above, how could a person *tell* what his own best course might be?

After seeing Rotsler's girls in fanzines (including the one that brought the Post Offal down on Lars Bourne—nowadays the authorities would hardly blink at it) and reading of him as the Amiable Bulldozer, we first met him in person at the Burbees' in Whittier, the last night of South Gate in '58. In a photo from that party we see him with Mina Mittelman, a Mediterranean Earth Goddess. I guess my main impression of Bill was of his outgoing vigor and enthusiasm. Not loud or frenetic, but loaded with energy. Sort of like a nearly-grown bear, still enough of an adolescent to be playful rather than grumpy. No doubt the beard helped evoke the bear image.

Sometime during the '60s, Elinor and I talked with him briefly at some con and were shocked to see that he'd suffered a bad dip in that level of cheer and energy; he seemed badly worn around the edges, so to speak. But then at the '67 Westercon he had it all back, crediting a series of monthly investigative acid trips for the revival. Whatever, it surely worked.

Maybe that's why, one Sunday in March 1970, we were one of three couples, widely separated and entirely unknowing of each others' plans, who embarked on trips with the Blue Bombs provided by Bill. When I called him the next day, I was the last of us to check in; he answered the phone, "Dope Central," and chuckled a lot.

Over the years he was in and out of various aspects of show biz. I'm sure he had every bit as much fun giving the rest of us an inside look at that strange cosmos as we had reading about it. I recall when he brought some starlet as his companion to a con—and I was reminded of the occasion when a fella from my old high school, who made it pretty well in movies and TV, brought an L.A. glamor chick to our class reunion in Colfax, Washington. Hey; it's fun, so why not?

When it came to creativity, William hit a lot of bases. Sculpture, drawing, writing, filming. Just about all the major visual modes, in one aspect or another. Very multi-talented guy.

One of a kind, for sure. And over these several decades, a real pleasure to know. Okay, we might shudder at some of William's judgments and opinions, particularly on the Gender Front. But we knew he *m*e*a*n*t* *w*e'l*. And anyway, who's perfect.

One thing I know for sure. We're all going to miss him.

—F. M. Busby

JOHN HERTZ

Bill Rotsler has gone.

What a giant this fan was. He had been with us forever, knew everyone, and did everything. The vitality and reach of his career show in his four Fanartist Hugos, twenty years apart in 1975 and '79, '96 (when he also won the Retro-Hugo) and '97. No other Fanartist, Fanwriter, or Fanzine winner has such a span. In the mid-'70s he was already so long indispensable that it was a scandal he had never been voted this award; the '75 Hugo was not his beginning, but his redress.

His cartoons were deft, his serious drawing fine, his Mozartean facility downright breathtaking, only suggested by the profusion of his artwork in fanzines. When the spirit moved him, he drew on paper, plates, body parts, a Dionysus of line. He worked with innumerable media—welding, writing, photographing—much of which was outside fandom.

He was a friend of the family for costumers. Not competing in Masquerades, he was a keen viewer, and his "Rotsler's Rules," unofficial, sometimes controversial, spread everywhere and are well to heed. The LASFS holiday gift exchange quotes, "Funny is better than serious. Short is better than long. Short and funny is best." I myself discovered a new rule; at LoneStarCon 2, I realized that a maxim Rotsler had repeated for years should be canonized, and when I phoned him, he said, "You're right, print it": *quantity of labor has nothing to do with art*. The task of an artist is to make things that are wonderful; if it takes ten years, and it's wonderful, that's good; if it takes ten minutes, and it's wonderful, that's good; the amount of work alone doesn't make it better or worse. I remember his making a point of this leading an Art Show docent tour at the '94 Westercon, where he was Fan GoH.

He published booklets of excuses, and of cartoon-style speech balloons. He made binomial name badges, like "the sacred & profane Dr. Peggy Kennedy." He generously allowed the Moffatts, Ed Cox and me to rely heavily on his illos for the Rick Sneary memorial zine *Button-Tack*, like every other faneditor. He borrowed T. Remer, *Serendipity* and "The Three Princes" (1965), about Horace Walpole, 4th Earl of Orford (1717-97), and his naming, from a 16th Century source, the gift for discovery by accident and sagacity while in pursuit of something else. He was worth talking to. And I happen to know he had good taste.

A cicada shell;
it sang itself
utterly away.

Matsuo Bashō (1644-94)

[from *Vanamonde* No. 232, 22 October 1997]



LINDA MARKSTROM

Thinking about Bill Rotsler, I can't say I have any one special memory. He was a frequent visitor in our home when I was growing up, but as I recall I don't think he was particularly interested in my brothers and me. He would greet us and then visit with the adults that were present. Actually, I believe that John, Ed and I weren't very interested in what all those "fan-ish" people were doing, either.

One thing I do recall is that he would bring a huge gunny sack filled with walnuts to my mother. His parents had a ranch in Camarillo on which they grew walnuts. My mother would be so pleased with this gift. She loved to cook and bake, and made good use of the walnuts.

Gregg Calkins

I knew Bill Rotsler for a long time, and am very much diminished by his passing. We weren't really acquaintances as much as we were friends, at least the way I remember it, though our lives intersected only from time to time; but I know that we both liked each other in the instinctive way one just *knows* that kind of thing. I first met Bill back when he still lived in Camarillo, and one time drove up to see him with results I do not now remember clearly except that we had a nice visit. A far more memorable visit was the time he invited me over while he was doing one of his famous photo sessions of naked ladies.

Of the fans I have met personally, Bill is at the head of the list and seems to have always been around at the occasions that I managed to attend. Many of those occasions in my glory years of fandom were at Burbee's house. Burb was the fan I felt closest to over the years, but after I left L.A. I didn't see a lot of him. However, I kept intersecting here and there with Rotsler, often at Terry Carr's home.

Bill used to include me as a character in his novels, to our mutual amusement, and he has always, of course, supplied me with illos in his typical liberal fashion. More than I could use, of course, in these my latter fannish days, but I have still been loath to part with them. I wish I had published more of them when Bill was still here to see them appear, but maybe he and Burb are looking down from somewhere up there and will still get their egoboo from this.

—Gregg Calkins

[from *The Rambling Fap* No. 114, February 1998]



Atom

Quite by happenstance I ran across the following piece by Arthur in the first (and only) issue of Biped, November 1957, edited by Bill Harry. Entitled "Profile," I found it interesting for Arthur's commentary on Bill's artistic style and range, and its closing line particularly poignant now.

William Rotsler is one of fandom's finest artists. That is an absolute fact. Though sometimes Bill's illos might seem of no interest other than used as filler illos, the quality of his construction and line is of a standard which is unmatched in fandom. Many artists spend years in perfecting a conservancy of line in their work, a thing which shows the 'true' artist. William Rotsler has this conservancy in his work to a degree that many fine artists throughout the world cannot match.

To achieve a sense of solidness in line only, as Bill does, is the mark of the natural artist. A thing that cannot be taught or learned in any art school. That Bill has this gift of 'natural' artistry in him is shown not only in his fan drawings; for in California, where he lives, Bill has designed many 'backcloths' for motion pictures and live theater in and around Hollywood. He has also gained repute by designing and building several fountains in well-known hotels. One I believe for Errol Flynn's hotel in Bermuda and one for a Conrad Hilton hotel. This was shown on television in the states as a fine example of contemporary art and sculptor work.

Bill has also run an art studio and shop in Hollywood, holding exhibitions of his own and others' work.

His paintings and photos of his wire sculptures have also appeared in well-known American magazines.

Bill is around 28-30 years of age, is married to Abney Rotsler, and they have one small daughter. Before his marriage, Bill lived in Hollywood in a flat-cum-studio which he describes well in his magazine *Kleic*. His friends, especially Gerald Fitzgerald, are the sort of people whose exploits and writings you can read for hours.

Bill, too, is no mean writer. His fanzines *Kleic* and *Masque*, though not subzines and not in general circulation, came near to the top of the fanzine poll that was concluded in the states recently (aeons ago).

Currently Bill lives in sunny Camarillo, California, and classes himself as a walnut rancher—his father having a large walnut plantation and business. It'll be a sad day for fandom when William Rotsler's artwork and fanzines and writings are missing from fandom.

—Arthur Thomson



Or: Another Life Lesson in How, Ultimately, It All Comes Down to Chicken Soup

I wrote this a couple of months before Bill Rotsler died, when I thought he had a chance of getting better. And I knew that Bill would probably read it, so it's a little more upbeat than it would have been otherwise. Almost two months after we said so long to him, we were back in L.A. to say goodbye to him at his memorial. Which, like Terry Carr's and Dick Ellington's, was a touching, solemn, funny, tearful, and deeply appreciative celebration of his life.

So Robert and I are on the road to see Bill Rotsler. It's 6:15 Saturday morning, sushi (sic) from last night (double-sic) in the cooler next to the bottled water, to keep us going till we get to pig out at Canter's Jewish Deli and Diamond Bakery in L.A. Little pieces of paper are everywhere with lists of things to get: potato salad, apple strudel, pumpernickel raisin bread (dense as a chewy black hole), rye bread the way God meant, a few danishes for the trip back, and ekcetera as they are wont to say. Also on the list is matzo ball soup for Bill, because when I read him Canter's menu on the phone the night before he stopped me on that item, remembering that he had liked it, also mentioning that soup is really the only thing he could get down right now. Alas. Hooray.

We get to L.A. around 11:30 and immediately I start complaining about the weather, which is soggy and reminds me of New York radiator drippings. We have reservations at an adequate motel (you wouldn't believe the headboard) just off Fairfax, right near the deli, because early tomorrow morning we will be picking up

our own orders and departing this hot and muggy land, this Angeles. We check in and quick turn on the air conditioner and change clothes and I complain about my projected weight gain at the end of this visit. We walk over to Diamond Bakery, where I place my self-fulfilling prophecy order. Then we continue to Canter's and pick up the dinner stuff we're bringing to Paul Turner's in Altadena, where Bill has been recuperating.

But first a stop at our beloved Southwest Museum, where I get to complain about the Casa Grande pottery that's on exhibit (they call it Pueblo; I call it Melmac). Robert buys a book in the gift shop. I resist a pricey brooch I'd probably gaze at fondly more often than wear, and a plump frog fetish that's very attractive and reminds me of what I'm going to look like after the bakery, after the deli. Ribbit.

We get back in the car and start driving to Altadena, which is about twenty minutes away. We're looking forward to the visit very much, but there's trepidation around the edges. We know that Bill's lost a lot of weight. He's been irradiated and he's been surgically

abused; also he's several years older than the last time I saw him. I'd suggested via e-mail that as soon as we saw each other we must simultaneously throw our hands up in the air and scream in horror, like the darkies do in forties movies when they suddenly encounter each other around a corner in the haunted house.

So we're driving along, a little late of course (a little too much time trying to pin down *exactly* what it is about Casa Grande pottery that inspires me to such heights of kvetch), when I throw my hands up in the air and scream "Oh, my God!" No, I'm not practicing for the vaudeville act with Bill later. We've forgotten the matzo ball soup. We never ordered it. We've got the corned beef and the potato salad and the hot turkey sandwich and the beer and God knows what else. But the one thing Bill specifically asked for, the one thing he said he could manage to eat, we ain't got.

We spend the next few minutes competing for Worst Person of the Year. There's no way we can go back to the deli because we're already late, so we start making excuses for ourselves: maybe Bill can eat more things today than he could yesterday; maybe he forgot about the soup; we can say that Canter's was bombed (God forgive me for the sacrilege) and Hamas took responsibility (or the hummus was bombed... never mind).

We arrive at the house and sheepishly pull into the driveway. Paul and Bill greet us. Bill waves his hands in the air and makes some funny faces. What on earth is he trying to communicate here? I'm still in such grief about the soup that for a few seconds I have no idea he's only doing exactly what I asked him to. We greet, we hug, I rub my toe into the ground and tell him we forgot the soup. Bill looks surprised, then sad, then bows his head and says, "Awwww, I was looking forward to it."

He really did care. Die now, Carol, while there's no waiting.

Bill doesn't look so bad, considering the tortures (I think the medical establishment calls them "insults," as pain is called "discomfort") his body has endured. His two worst problems are lack of sleep (can't get there, can't stay there) and food tasting like gluey cardboard because of messed-up saliva glands (and probably tastebuds). The hole where the trachea tube used to be hasn't healed yet, and let's not dwell on that one. He's lost a lot of weight, he's slowed down, and has obviously been through major bad stuff, but he's clearly, recognizably, Rotsler, and I'm so glad to see him.

Paul (an Academy Award calibre friend, we'd heard, and now we see it in action) lays out the food we brought and we eat while Bill picks at it and finally gives up and Paul makes him some goyishe, non-healing, Campbell's-type stuff out of a can, which Bill

manages to get down just a little of. Robert notices that I too am having trouble swallowing, due to a crust of self-hate where my throat used to be, and that the obvious thing to do is come back the next morning, heavy with matzo ball soup.

Bill and I chew over old times and catch up with the new, but mainly we're just happy to see each other. Paul shows me his mind-boggling schematics for our space station. We talk, we kibbitz, we drink liquids, I complain about the weather. And we say goodnight till the next morning, promising to come back early with the soup.

Cut to Canter's take-out counter, 7:00 a.m.

"Sorry," says the man behind the counter. "It's not made yet."

Please God, no. "When *will* it be made?" "Around nine-thirty." We swallow dryly. We look at each other helplessly. I say, "Er, sir, could you recommend any other places that might have it?" He guarantees us that he can't guarantee us that the place he about to name will have it this early either—but it's our only hope.

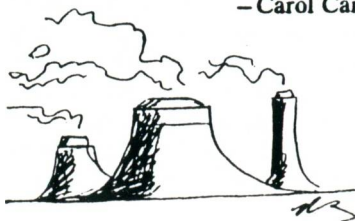
We make, like, tracks. But what is this place? It's called Jerry's Famous Deli but it looks like a small Vegas casino cleaning up the morning after the house has lost. It's dark. It's carpeted. It's weirdly, depressingly, lit. We make our way past half a dozen Mexican employees (how ethnically inauthentic!) who give us "Who are you?" looks, the same looks we're giving them. At the food counter we whimper our order, hoping, hoping. The guy behind the counter looks at us somewhat disdainfully, which immediately gives me hope, since Attitude is a sign we are with My People. And he almost imperceptibly nods.

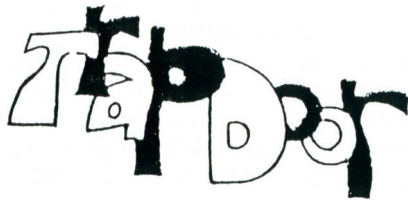
"Geronimo!" we wheeze.

I embrace the steaming-hot package, and we get back in the car. The two big containers are too hot to hold in my lap, so they sit on the floor, warming the insides of my legs. But I can smell it; it's real. It will be swallowed by the throat of Bill Rotsler and it will heal him up fast. Robert steps on the gas. I turn on the air conditioner.

We make Bill sign for it. And then we go home. It was a very good visit.

— Carol Carr





Issue No. 18, May 1998. Edited and published by Robert Lichtman, P. O. Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442 USA. Please send all trade fanzines to this address. Letters of comment can also be sent to this address, or to ccarr@socrates.berkeley.edu. Founding member and Past President 1991: fwa. This fanzine is available by Editorial Whim in response to The Usual, or \$4.00 per issue (*reviewers please note!*). The Usual includes your letters, contributions both written and artistic, and accepted trades. If there's an "X" on your mailing label, your continued presence on my mailing list is in question. All contents copyright © 1998 by *Trap Door* with all rights reverting to individual contributors upon publication.

CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE:

Remembering Rotsler

Marta Randall, Ed Burbee, F. M. Busby, John Hertz,
Linda Markstrom, Gregg Calkins & ATom

2

How to Disappoint A Sick Friend:

An Instruction Manual

Carol Carr

6

Doorway

Robert Lichtman

8

Letter to Burbee's Granddaughter

William Rotsler

11

He Had Fire in His Belly

Bill Donaho

12

In Search of Immortality

Ron Bennett

17

SAPS Founders Reunite in Albuquerque

Joe Kennedy

20

The Baxter Street Irregular

Charles Burbee

22

In Memoriam: Ted Pauls

Steve Stiles

27

The Ether Still Vibrates

the Readers

28

ART & GRAPHICS: ATom (8), Steve Stiles (cover, 2, 8, 12, 17, 19, 20, 22, 27 & 28), William Rotsler (everything else).



The two things that happened in 1997 that profoundly affected the parts of fandom I most care about were the folding of *Apparatchik* and the death of Bill Rotsler.

Bill passed away quietly in the early morning of Saturday, October 18th. I first learned of his death when Carol Carr and I got back late that same day from a trip to Yosemite. Because of our August visit, chronicled by Carol, we knew his condition was not good; so it wasn't entirely a surprise.

A couple days later I had a Lilapa mailing to get out and realized I'd want a different Rotsler cover than the

one I'd picked out and run off before he died: one that might signify the event. Searching through hundreds of his drawings and cartoons in my files, half a dozen seemed like possibilities until I ran across one captioned "I'm outta here" and it was the obvious choice. I almost suspected that Bill knew in advance I'd need it and seeded it in one of the thick envelopes full of artwork he frequently sent my way. Also, it's a wonderful meld of his cartoon and sfnal drawing styles. Although it's appeared in *File 770*, for those of you who didn't see it there it's also on the last page of "Remembering Rotsler."

Carol and I drove to L.A. for his memorial service the following weekend. There were nearly 100 people stuffed into the LASFS clubhouse. We were the only ones from Northern California. I'd brought along several dozen different full-page prints of the color computer artwork Bill did in the final months of his life, and at Paul Turner's suggestion laid them out on every available surface. There was already a lot of Bill's artwork on display, as well as several photographs of him taken at various stages of his life (young, old, with and without beard, various lengths of hair). I also set out fifty copies of "I'm outta here." They proved popular, but the color artwork drew a mixed reaction. Ed, John and Linda (Markstrom) Burbee (who'd known

Bill most of their lives) saw me placing the prints and liked them, so I gave them one apiece. But theirs was the most positive response. At the conclusion of the memorial I offered them to others, but there were few takers. (Were they too tangible a reminder of his recent past? Or was the artwork too much of a departure from what they were used to from Bill? Or both?)

Paul Turner moderated the memorial gathering. (And speaking of Paul, I can only echo what Carol wrote in her piece about what a good friend he was to Bill in his final months.) Many people got up and said things in Bill's memory. There was laughter and tears. Everyone commented on what a fine and true friend Bill was – and how important friendship was to him. It was a good service; I felt a strong sense of closure afterwards.

We got to meet many of the people who populated the close-in parts of Bill's world, the ones he used to write about at length in *Lilapa* (of which he was a long-time member): Bill Warren, Len Wein, Marv Wolfman. Others who were there (by no means a complete list): Harlan Ellison and his wife Susan, Larry Niven and his wife, Len and June Moffatt, Mike Glyer, John Hertz, Marjii Ellers, Bill Ellern, Jack Jardine, Craig Miller, Marty Cantor, Neola Graef, Suzanne Vega. Many attendees were wearing Hawaiian shirts, as was suggested in the announcement. We heard later that Bill's collection of same had been dispersed among his friends. Also present was Bill's only child, Lisa, down from Vancouver, Washington.

Afterwards, Carol and I followed Lisa and Paul Turner back to his place in Altadena. We spent the next four hours with them and were glad for the opportunity, which concluded with an excellent dinner at a Mexican restaurant Paul recommended in Old Town Pasadena. We both enjoyed having the chance to meet Lisa and spend some time with her. I'd known for some years that Bill had his differences and disappointments with her. By spending time with Lisa, I could get some idea of why the two of them would have had a hard time with each other. Carol and I talked about it later and I asked her to jot down her thoughts. She said:

"I think we both found her very open and likeable, a bit unsure of herself, eager for approval, young for her years. Bill liked strong, confident women and didn't have much tolerance for anything else. In his eyes Lisa had made some mistakes in her life, and Bill's attitude towards mistakes was essentially, 'Just shape up.' Lisa is/was trying to get her life back together in small practical steps, but Bill's dreams for himself and others were large and visionary. So I can see how Lisa might not have gotten the support a daughter needs from her

father, and how Bill's patience (or his idea of it) might have been stretched thin."

I mentioned Bill's computer artwork. He created multi-colored, patterned drawings using a simple Mac drawing program called KidPix. When Carol and I visited in August, Bill presented me with two dozen disks holding all the images he'd liked enough to save: over three hundred of them. Paul told us that Bill worked at his computer creating art practically every day and that it helped give him a focus, something he could do in the hours of no sleep, something to take his mind off his physical self.

As he handed me the disks, Bill made me promise that none of the artwork would ever be reproduced in black and white. He got to see one of them in full color when I put it on the cover of the 500th *Lilapa* mailing last September, but unfortunately he died before he could see his egoboo in the following mailing. (As much as I would love to present some of them here, the cost of producing even a single sheet (4-page) spread would more than double the cost of putting out the issue.)

There was one big difference in the way Bill's death affected me compared to the passing of Burbee and Boggs. Their primary activity – the fanac for which they're most remembered – took place decades ago. But Bill had been continuously and energetically present in fandom for over fifty years. It's only a slight exaggeration to say that you can hardly pick up a fanzine without finding his artwork in it. Many faneds have reported ample supplies of Bill's artwork, so his original work will continue to appear for years, perhaps decades, to come.

But this is small consolation for losing yet another friend of many decades.

The folding of *Apparatchik* last June after a three-year run has left us once again without a focal point fanzine. Over forty years in fandom, I've fanned through periods both with and without one; the difference is quite apparent – and I know what I prefer. Focal point fanzines, by their very nature, unify fanzine fandom, give us a focus, a common meeting ground. Without such a fanzine, we're adrift – more a black hole than a constellation – waiting for the next big bang of activity to light us up once again. So to speak.

I miss *Apparatchik* – do you? Over its lifespan *Apak* became a genuine focal point. It also served as the de facto newszine of fanzine fandom, often scooping both *Anisble* and *File 770* due to its greater frequency. Andy's "Fanzine Countdown" kept us up to date on what else was coming out, and the lettercol was lively and heavily interactive. Choosing to be inclusive rather than exclusive, its editors published articles from many

fannish generations. With print editions on three continents (and a presence on the Web), it was truly international in its reach. But the most important thing about it was that it came out frequently and reliably. This made me, for one, want to write for it, knowing that my words would reach my fannish peers within weeks rather than months.

Even though many of the same people fill the pages of its immediate successors—*Squib* and *The Jezail*—and the latter is pretty much a clone of *Apak*, even retaining its best features, these two publications are not yet in its league. Neither has been frequent enough, for one thing, and Andy's decision to run letters only once every three or four issues precludes the heightened immediacy and interactivity necessary to a focal point fanzine. Neither feels sufficiently lively and vital. (But perhaps after three years of *Apak*'s schedule, Andy *wants* a change of pace.)

It's a rare mix of editorial skill *and* the good fortune to attract a critical combination of participants in a fanzine's pages that causes a focal point to come about—and you can't set out purposely to publish one. Fandom makes that decision for you.

I hope one of *you* will find yourself in that admirable position—and soon.

Last year I managed to put together a run of *Nebula*, that long-defunct British prozine that appeared between 1952 and 1959 under the capable editorial hand of Peter Hamilton Jr. In addition to publishing the first stories of such luminaries as Bob Shaw and Bob Silverberg, as well as a short story by Harry Warner Jr., *Nebula* also featured book reviews by Ken Slater and a "scientifilm" column by Forrest J Ackerman. Artwork by ATom also appears in most issues. But all these sterling credentials are not why I wanted to put together a set of this publication. This is why: it also published in every issue (but one) a column by Walt Willis, first titled "The Electric Fan" and later "Panorama." (After *Nebula* folded, a final installment appeared in *Psi-Phi* No. 5, the first annish of my first fanzine.)

These columns range far and wide in subject, from discussion of the masquerade at Chicon II ("There was a Masquerade Ball lasting until dawn, at which half the fans seemed to be disguised as extra-terrestrial monsters and the rest as human beings.") to psionics. Many also include fanzine reviews. To my thinking, the top three prozine fan columns of all time are Bloch's "Fandora's Box," Rog Phillips' "Clubhouse" and Walt's in *Nebula*.

As I gathered and read through the issues, the obvious occurred to me. So last November I wrote Walt:

"The thought occurred to me while rereading some of the columns that they deserve collecting into one volume. As you can see by the enclosed, my little home copier allows me to blow up those *Nebula* pages into full-sized pages, vastly improving the readability of the type. Most of the columns run a full two pages, but in some cases they run short or long or have advertisements tucked into a corner (I recall one for a matchmaker!). In the case of the shorter ones, I'd cut out the other text on those pages and fill in with Rotsler and ATom cartoons. The fact that I wouldn't have to retype everything makes it relatively easy to prepare. So I'm writing to ask your blessing to go ahead with this project. I don't think I'd get this out until next year sometime, but the first step is getting your permission."

"Yes," Walt wrote back, "it's quite okay by me for you to reprint my fan columns from *Nebula*, and thank you for asking. I'll look forward myself to the result, since I seem to have lost about half of them."

I've already photocopied each page, some issues suffering some loss of integrity, the ancient pages creaking in protest as I opened wide and folded flat. As I told Walt, I plan to replace adverts with illos; but I can't resist leaving one appearance of the matchmaker's ad ("Edna Hanson, Social Service and Marriage Bureau... write for brochure with actual photos"). Altogether there will be close to a hundred pages.

The economics of this project require an edition of at least 100 copies in order to get a decent printing price. I won't feel comfortable going to press unless a sizable portion of the edition is pre-subscribed, so I'd appreciate a show of support. To sweeten things, until the anticipated pubdate of September 1st, copies are available for \$8 postpaid to anywhere in the world. After that, they're \$10. Profits will go to TAFF. (In case there aren't enough pre-subscribers, please indicate whether you want money returned or passed along to TAFF.) Would fellow faneds please mention this in the next issue of your zine?

Oh, and if anyone reading this got into fandom as a result of Walt's column, would you care to provide introductory material? (By August 1st, please.)

Meanwhile, I still have copies available of a number of other special publications I've done in recent years that might be of interest to some of you. The largest of these is *Best of FRAP*, a 76-page collection of the best work in my '60s "faanish" fanzine of that name. There are five contributions apiece from Greg Benford and Ray Nelson, three from Calvin Demmon, two apiece from Norm Clarke and Elmer Perdue. Other contributors include Jim Benford, Redd Boggs, Grania Davis, Gina (Clarke) Ellis, Alex Kirs, Len Moffatt, Joe Pilati, Bob Shaw and Madeleine Willis. Oh, and there are

selections from my editorials. Front and rear covers are by Steve Stiles, with interior artwork by Ray Nelson and Bill Rotsler. Except for the contents page, which also contains a brief introduction, all the pages are reproduced directly from the original publications, not excluding the mimeo offset, so it has the look of a '60s fanzine as well. Price is \$7.50.

I also have copies available of a second printing of *Fanthology '92*, a 42-page collection of my selection of the best fan writing of 1992, originally published for the Nashville Conflu. Contributors: Jae Leslie Adams, Michael Ashley, Greg Benford, Richard Brandt, William Breiding, Avedon Carol, Abigail Frost, Andrew Hooper, Gary Hubbard, Linda Krawecka, Luke McGuff, Nigel Richardson (with two pieces), Carrie Root, Steve Stiles, David Thayer, James White and Ted White. Dan Steffan did the covers, and all interior artwork is by Rotsler. Asking \$5 apiece.

Finally, I have some copies of *Psi-Phi* No. 10, a 36-page fanzine (half-letter size) I put out last summer for inclusion in the 50th anniversary SAPS mailing and the 60th anniversary FAPA mailing. It's the first issue of this title in 35 years, and is a selection of the best of my apa writings from 1960 through 1967. There are thirteen pieces on topics such as high school reminiscences, Scientology, hippies, various of my dreams, and more. \$4 for this one.

Fifteen bucks for all three. Prices include postage.

Cora Burbee sent me a copy of Bill Rotsler's "Letter to Burbee's Granddaughter" in the summer of '96, not long after the "Send Off" for Charlie at Amboy Crater. At the time I'd just seen Bill and heard him speak of the book mentioned in the letter that he wrote for his grandson. I thought his letter was touching and charming, but didn't think of it in terms of publication (well, fleetingly but not seriously) back then and filed it away with Cora's letter. I discovered it anew this February while searching for photographs in old correspondence and this time I decided it ought to appear in these pages.

I sent Burbee's daughter, Linda Markstrom, a copy of Bill's letter along with a note asking whether she'd seen it, her opinion of it, and whether she thought it would be appropriate to publish it here. She wrote back:

"Yes, I had seen that letter from Bill Rotsler. I believe that he actually meant it for my granddaughter, Ashley (my dad's great-granddaughter), since it appeared as though it was written with a young child in mind. My daughter (my dad's granddaughter) is 31 years old. She thought it was an incredibly nice thing for Bill to do, as did I.

"Of course, it goes without saying that I, like you, believe it would be a nice addition to your next issue."

LETTER TO BURBEE'S GRANDDAUGHTER

Dear Granddaughter-of-Burbree:

I imagine you will attend funerals in the future, or hear of people who have passed on, and hear people say, "He/She was special." Well, I want you to know that your grandfather was special. These are not empty words, polite words with which to speak of the dead.

To me, and to literally thousands in the U.S., Canada, Australia and England, he was Special. Although far better known in the U.S. and Canada, he is known and liked and admired throughout that very odd and motley crew known as "science fiction fandom."

He strongly and definitely affected my life in a most profound way. When Ed Burbee asked me to speak at the "Send Off" I said, "I don't think I can." I was very much afraid that if I had tried, I could easily have burst into tears (I'm teared up just writing this) and not been able to speak, anyway.

As you saw, people came from as far away as Northern California and L.A. No one *likes* to go to funerals, but funerals provide what experts call a "closure," and I, too, think it is needed. I can see why some kind of funeral ceremony evolved in every culture.

I have no idea how well you knew your grandfather—my own grandson is far away and knows me only slightly, though I have written my best book for him: *Lissen Up, Kid*, a book of advice. Just know that you could go to any science fiction convention or group of fans in the world and say, "I am Burbee's granddaughter," and be welcomed. (It would be kind of like being a princess.)

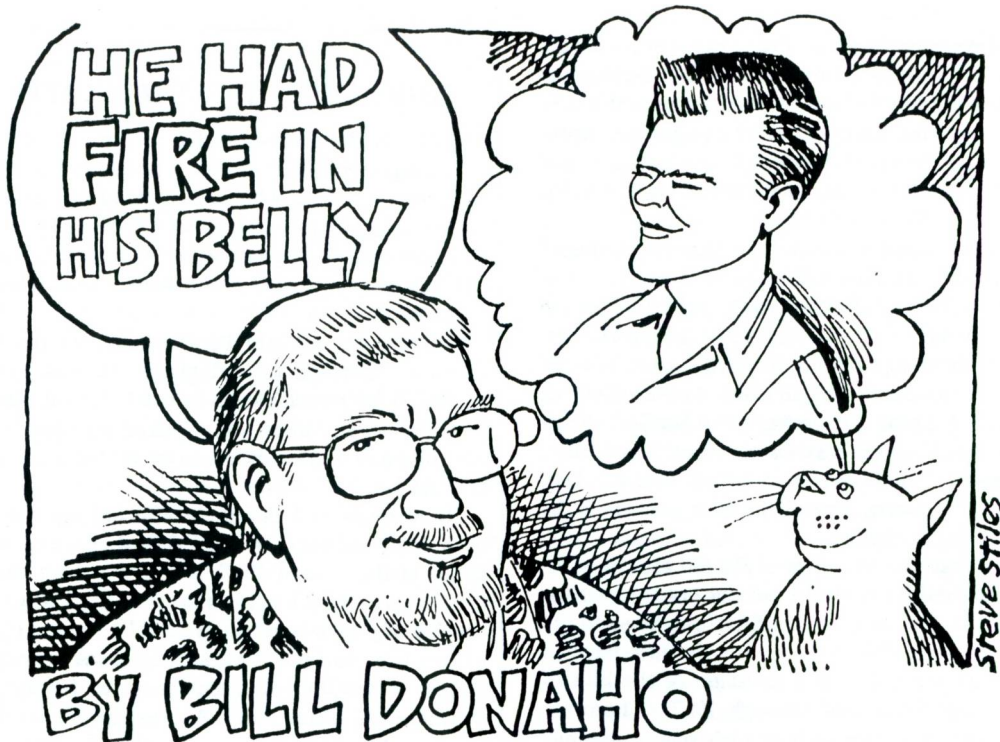
When you are older, read *The Incomplete Burbee* and you will see something of what we saw in him. Then read it again, when you are older still. As Mark Twain said, you'll be amazed at how much he's learned.

— William Rotsler

Before I run out of space, I need to mention that Joe Kennedy's article first appeared in a special publication done by Harry Warner Jr. for SAPS' 50th anniversary, and that Marta's, Buz's, Carol's and Bill Donaho's pieces first appeared in Lilapa in somewhat different form.

Response to recent issues has fallen off from the high point it reached in the early '90s. It's my hope that providing an e-mail address (see colophon) for response will improve matters.

[— RL, May 1998]



Katherine MacLean said that once you love someone, unless something very drastic occurs in the relationship, you always love them, even if you break up or drift away. As time goes by, you think of them less and less, but every time you do think of them, the love is as strong as it ever was. That certainly applies to the way I feel about Dan Curran.

In the fall of 1995, Miriam Lloyd/Knight/Carr and I had been talking about how neither of us had seen Dan for twenty years and how odd this was since he was only about a hundred miles away and had been so Very Important to both of us. But both of us had the same reaction: we supported Dan's right to gradually cut himself off from everyone and everything, drinking himself to death in the process, but we didn't have to watch it going on.

I kept hearing news of Dan and realized that he was getting along okay if not really swingingly. But he had chosen the life he was leading, and I was sure that if he ever really needed anything and/or felt the desire for contact, he would get in touch with me. I thought I had said "Good-by" to him. I remembered him with love and affection, but I thought he had gone to where I could no longer reach him. It hurt, but I felt I had to live with that. I wish I had tried once more.

On one level I had by no means said goodbye to Dan. He lived with me off and on for many years. He would

always be buzzing off on some adventure or other that wouldn't last and he'd be back. So my mind was still expecting him to be back. I've always thought about retiring to Catalina Island, and I somehow had the hazy idea that the island's wilderness area would be enough to satisfy Dan's hermit side... And, among other things, this influenced my choice of movies I bought: "Dan would like this." "Dan would want me to have this." This was not very realistic, but it was just below consciousness, not out and being examined logically.

I must have seen him at science-fiction club meetings before, but I don't remember Dan before the Metrocon in October 1954. He was an attractive, very charming guy who looked and acted as if he were in his early twenties. Among other things, he took charge of what bar a group of us went to after the con. I was considerably surprised to learn that he had become seventeen only a month earlier.

In his obituary in *Locus*, Charlie Brown mentions how welcoming and helpful Dan was to him when he entered fandom in the fifties, introducing him to the local clubs and fans and filling him in on what was going on. Dan was fourteen or fifteen at the time.

Carlyle refers to men who have a striking and arresting personality as men with "fire in their belly." I've never known anyone to have more fire in his belly than Dan did at age seventeen.

Dan's parents were both working-class Irish, born in Ireland. When they immigrated to this country, his father became fairly important in Tammany Hall. When Dan was a small boy, he used to carry him with him on his rounds so that Dan grew to know some fairly important people. His mother was manipulative and over-protective. As was his usual method of dealing with things he did not like, Dan handled this by avoidance and slipping away. He also had an older sister he wasn't very close to and with whom he lost contact in the early '60s.

His father died when Dan was fifteen or sixteen. As I recall, the drinking age at that time in New York was eighteen; but Dan never had any trouble getting served even at age fifteen and sixteen, so he dropped out of high school, began working and started frequenting the Greenwich Village bars.

Being raised on Manhattan's West Side, Dan was very street smart. In fact, he had been a member of the local gang in his neighborhood, taking part in turf wars and all. At this time he was in the process of breaking away, in a friendly and easy manner, from the gang. But whenever a gang member got into trouble, several of them would come down to roust Dan out of one of the village bars to deal with the matter, using his Tammany contacts to get the correct lawyer, pull the right political strings, etc. By the time we set up the Dive (October 1955) Dan wasn't seeing any of them anymore. He also stopped seeing the Tammany connections.

The Dive was a five-bedroom apartment on the 10th floor at 102nd Street and Riverside Drive. Five of us shared it: Dan, Chuck Freudenthal, Art Saha, Dick Ellington and me. Pat Werner moved in with Dick a couple of months afterwards. (They got married in 1958.)

At the Metrocon I became familiar with the Fanarchists (Science-Fiction Fan Anarchists) and started attending their weekly meetings, thereby seeing a great deal of Dan, who was one of the founding members.

Dan had no one to introduce him to intellectual things, but he acquired a wide knowledge and varied interests through reading. He read anything and everything so his general knowledge was quite extensive. Chuck Freudenthal said that he had known two people in his life he could talk to about *anything*. No matter what subject he brought up, both of them would know something about it. Dan was one and Dave Pollard was the other. (Whatever happened to Dave Pollard?)

No one introduced Dan to classical music, either. He found it, liked it, and developed a taste for it just through browsing around the radio dial. He even developed a taste for opera. His opinion about opera

in English was, "Thank God the lyrics are in a foreign language. They are so stupid that if you understood them, it would interfere with the effect."

One of my brightest memories of him is when I had just gotten the album "The Baroque Beatles"—Beatles songs played and sung in the style of Bach—and Dan's walking in unknowing and marching across the floor. The double-take he did when he recognized "Help!" was really something!

Unfortunately Dan developed a Strong Taste for alcohol. He said that the first time he got drunk he not only had the best time he had ever had, but that he felt *great* going to school the next day.

So he became a maintenance drinker at an early age. I remember his saying—circa 1958—"The cost of living just went up twenty-five cents a gallon!" He did drink almost every day, and as the years went on he drank more and more each day. And since both of his parents died in their forties it is remarkable that Dan lived to be 58 years old.

Bob Silverberg says, "When I was in college, Dan Curran used to show up now and then at my room with bottles of pure alcohol that he had abstracted from some medical-supplies house where he was working. We would cut it to 96 proof with fruit juice and bravely belt it down. This was when I was nineteen or so and he around sixteen. I eventually moved on to subtler booze, but poor Dan didn't, I guess."

Dan strongly identified as being Working Class. But he never held a job for long and he refused to take an office job. Since he was very bright and knowledgeable, and took tests well—as well as being attractive and charming—even though he was a high-school drop out, most firms he applied to wanted to put him right on their Executive Track. He would have none of this.

Dan was a very loving person. He didn't have a mean or aggressive bone in his body. He had a fierce independence which he maintained by sliding away, not by aggression. While thoroughly masculine, he was not a bit macho. Most of my male friends at the time treated women well, Dan was the only male I knew who both believed and acted as if women were complete equals. I found this particularly unusual because working-class males are usually much more MCP than middle class, and Dan did identify strongly as working class.

When I lived in New York, I noticed that people brought up in the working class areas of Manhattan seemed to ignore most other people. Any other place I've been, people acknowledged your existence by the way they looked at you. Not in Manhattan. Manhattan had so many people crowded into such a small area

that I believe a defense mechanism like this may have been necessary. I also thought that this was the start of Dan's hermit ways.

The Dive was a tenth-floor apartment overlooking the Hudson. There was no way anyone could have looked into the bathroom window unless they hovered outside in a helicopter. Yet Dan always pulled the shade down when he went into the bathroom. No one else ever did.

The Nunnery was a large loft on the top floor on Cooper Square, just one-half block above the Bowery and right across the street from The Five Spot, the best jazz club in New York at the time. It was also just around the corner from McSorley's Saloon ("Good ale, raw onions and no ladies"). McSorley's was established in the middle of the nineteenth century and the "no ladies" bit was to keep out prostitutes. It was not a gay bar. A lot of guys in our group used to go in there to get away from their girl friends for a bit. And women naturally hated it. It's now been integrated since the Lindsay administration.

It was called "The Nunnery" because at one time five young women lived there. One of them, Heather, was Dan's girlfriend of the time. All five women moved out at once – I don't remember why – so I moved in with Dan.

The Nunnery didn't take up the entire top floor, only about half of it, so there was a large roof area which was essentially a large terrace which we filled with trees, potted plants, etc. We even held fairly large barbecues there. All around us was an industrial area and right below us a Jewish garment factory, so we never had any problem about noise.

Up until the time Dan and I took over the Nunnery I had never been a cat person. But Dan was, and he wanted a cat. What the hell, why not? So, first we got Heathcliffe from Art and Trina Castillo (now Trina Robbins.) Unfortunately Heathcliffe died. So then came Habakkuk, and I became a cat person.

Dan agreed with Robert Heinlein that it was a Very Bad Thing to alter a male cat. He was very vehement about this. When Roberta Gibson had one of the Gibson cats castrated, Dan asked her if she had also made an appointment for Joe. He really Identified. I believe that he thought it was preferable to kill a cat than to castrate it.

Dan had a personality more like a cat's than anyone I've known (that is, any non-fur person). Heinlein once said that when a cat greets you, no one could be more welcoming and open and loving and friendly. But that when a cat says goodbye – he doesn't look back. That was Dan.

I don't know how close Dan was to the friends and

fellow gang members of his youth, but once he broke away, he didn't look back. None of us ever met any of them, nor did Dan ever see any of them separately. And it wasn't a matter of compartmentalization. Dan was never away enough from the Dive or Nunnery to be having a different social life.

Dan made a long visit to New York in the middle 60's. While there, he lived with our mutual friends Bob and Joan Adler and Stanley Alboym. At one point they had a fire that destroyed most of their house. Dan got his things and left. They never saw him again and were rather hurt. I asked Dan about this. He was totally surprised. "But it was Over!" he said. Yet Dan would have been glad to meet any of them at a party or even to have them as long-staying guests at his place. Very cat-like.

Speaking of being "welcoming," Dan came to the Bay Area a few months before I did. His mother had recently died and Dan got his half of the estate just before I got here. We lived quite high on the hog for some time. Dan bought some toys, a Brooks Brothers suit and a second-hand car, a Fiat as I recall. And he started drinking Jack Daniels and Armagnac instead of jug wine. But the money eventually ran out and we both had to go back to work.

The Fiat was an interesting toy in that Dan didn't have a driver's license and didn't even know how to drive. He never did learn. The Fiat sat around for awhile – unused. Then Jim Caughran and Ron Ellik borrowed it. The car broke down in Modesto. Dan abandoned it, although I think that he was eventually was able to sell it "as is" for a fraction of what he paid for it.

In the early 1960s Dan, Dick Ellington and I incorporated The Church of the Brotherhood of the Way. With Dan, we three formed the governing body, the Council of Elders. (This was some years before the Universal Life Church.) We managed to secure both state and federal recognition. We were all ordained ministers and as such all three of us performed many marriages.

One of the ones I performed was that of Chet Helms, manager of The Family Dog and Big Brother and the Holding Company. I had one marriage on stage at the Avalon between sets of The Grateful Dead and The Quicksilver Messenger Service. Many church members were on stage with me. I had red burlap monk's robes – Dick and Danny, black burlap. Pat Ellington, the Mother Superior of The Little Sisters of Mary Magdalene, had a white satin robe, slit to show her legs. The happy couple announced to the press that they were the first couple to get married while under the influence of LSD.

The sexual revolution didn't really occur until the '60s, and back in the 50's and early 60's girls weren't supposed to make advances to guys. It was okay to indicate, subtly, that they were available, but anything very overt was frowned upon. But girls were very overt with Dan. I saw him literally dragged to bed a few times. (He wasn't resisting very hard, of course.) Nevertheless, Dan was not really very sexually active except for a brief period in the mid-'60s.

Oddly enough, his most active sexual period came after he had lost a good deal of his looks. I've often noticed that many Irish guys have baby faces that keep them looking quite young until about age thirty and then their features coarsen. Audie Murphy is a good example of this. He was the most decorated American war hero ever and in his mid-twenties started in the movies. His first role was that of a fifteen-year old boy. And he was utterly convincing – not that he was such a great actor, but he looked that young. I later read an article said that a survey had been made of Medal of Honor winners and almost all of them were either very young or effeminate looking. I guess they had something to prove.

But anyhow, Dan's features coarsened in his mid-twenties. Also, he started wearing a full beard about then. And he never really shaped it. It was one of the most unattractive beards I've ever seen. And Dan's "fire in the belly" wasn't burning nearly as bright. So, he didn't get dragged into bed any more. But he made out all right.

Through the years Dan had several relationships lasting a year or longer. Most of his girlfriends talked, either during or after the relationship, and they all had essentially the same report: Dan was a *great* lover, but there was also a problem of impotence, not from his not getting an erection but from not having an orgasm – I assume his drinking had a great deal to do with this. One of his girl friends, Sayre Hamilton, said that Dan only had three orgasms in their two-year relationship. He broke up with her when she brought up the problem as something they should do something about.

Sayre first appeared on the scene when Grania Davidson brought her to Jerry and Miriam Knight's New Years Eve party in the mid-'60s. Dan and Sayre were immediately attracted to each other. Grania took Sayre aside and told her, "He's a Great Guy, but don't get involved." Naturally this didn't do much good and Dan brought her home. When I staggered out of bed on New Year's Day, Dan grabbed me. "Quick! What's her name?"

Sayre says, "I always was a sucker for intelligent men – particularly when they know more trivia than I do."

After the breakup Dan and Sayre remained friends. In fact, Dan was living with Bill Rickhardt when Bill married Sayre. And Dan continued to live with Bill and Sayre, and then continued on with Bill after Bill and Sayre got divorced. After Sayre left, Mary Alice Warren and her husband lived with Bill and Dan for a few months. Mary Alice died – lung cancer – shortly before Dan. She was not only an ex-girl friend of Dan's, she was also an ex-wife of Bill's.

While she was there, Mary Alice tried to get Dan on SSI. But the Social Worker ruled for rehabilitation. Mary Alice appealed this decision, but after she left neither Dan nor Bill had the energy to follow through.

Dan's teeth had been an attractive feature in the '50s – they were perfectly white and in gang wars they had been broken off into an irregular and attractive pattern – he never said just how. But by the middle '60s they were rotting in his head and he had frequent toothaches and infections. By the late '70s, things were in a very bad state. At one point he was taken to the hospital with severe infections that started with his teeth and spread throughout the body. They were going to pull all of his teeth as a necessary part of the therapy, but Dan came to and refused to allow it. Mary Alice said, "You would think he was defending his manhood." I don't know whether he ever gave in and had them pulled.

By the late '60s, Dan had for the most part stopped interacting with people, even friends, except very briefly. The "fire in his belly" was almost out. He couldn't stand being on public transportation or anywhere there was a crowd of people. I am told that heavy drinking will eventually strip the nerves so that interaction with people becomes very threatening, if not unbearable. Dan was a heavy drinker, but whatever the cause, he couldn't stand being in a crowd of people or prolonged contact with anyone.

Dave Mason, the New York fan and semi-pro who started the Fanarchists and at whose apartment they met weekly, was for some time a mentor, even father figure, to Dan. He moved to San Francisco in the '60s and shortly thereafter became very ill. He knew he was dying and wanted to see Dan. Dan never could get it together to go visit him. He wanted to, but it just wasn't something he could bring himself to do. He kept putting it off until Dave died.

Bill Rickhardt was also a heavy drinker. He worked as a brakeman on the Southern Pacific and got injured in an accident at one point. He got a *heavy* settlement from them. "Was I lucky! Among other things it was the first time in weeks I'd gone to work sober." So Bill bought this farm some thirty miles north of Sacramento and Dan, feeling the need to get away from people,

moved in with him. His hermit inclinations got stronger and stronger. They joked that Dan was Bill's serf since Bill didn't have enough free cash to pay Dan for work he did on the farm, just room, board, wine and a little pocket money.

In the mid-'70s, Bill's doctor told him that if he didn't stop drinking he would be dead in six months. So Bill sobered up and started going to AA and all that. Three months later he made his will and sent back to drinking. He lasted two years.

Most of Bill's estate went to Bill and Sayre's son, Nathan. (Mary Alice was the executor.) He managed to disinherit his oldest son, Will, but I'm not sure how since Will was a minor and legitimate. (Sayre says she showed Phyllis how to get money for Will for college out of Railroad Retirement.) Will was his son by his first wife Phyllis Scott – who was an ex-girlfriend of mine. Their breakup had not been a friendly one.

When Bill died, he left Dan one-eighth of his estate and Mary Alice, as executor, gave him Bill's house trailer which he moved to Bev Lawlis' property (a woman neighbor). There he made out okay on General Assistance and food stamps, but he did need extra money for butane gas during the winter. A number of us sent him occasional checks. Also, whenever we had someone in the area on food stamps, Dan would trade food stamps for cash. After awhile, though, we no longer had anyone who could use them, so that source of income evaporated.

Dan had liked the movies a great deal and I always wondered if he had to give up this great interest of his. But then he traded off so many other things to become a hermit ... But I hope at least that he was able to go to the movies occasionally. I particularly hope he was able to see "Persuasion" and "Sense and Sensibility."

Dan was always a Jane Austen fan. He also like the John Coates completion of her fragment "The Watsons." Dan agreed with me that "The Watsons" was better than a lot of Jane's work. He said, "After all we've about two hundred years worth of examples and techniques of good writing, so John, although I'm sure he tried to be authentically Jane, couldn't help but draw on that. Not only is 'The Watsons' better than a lot of Jane Austen, some of Georgette Heyer is."

We heard so seldom either from or about Dan that we only learned of his death because when his body was found at the side of a mountain trail, there was a letter from Chuck Freudenthal in his pocket. Chuck had sent him a check for Christmas, and even though this was weeks later, the letter was still there. Chuck paid for his cremation and got his ashes.

The State moved in on Dan's trailer and said they were confiscating all of Dan's property (because he had

been on GA?), but that Chuck could have his personal effects. Later they told Chuck that there no personal effects and that the only thing they found was a lot of wine bottles. (There had to have been a lot of books!)

Bev reported that when she went by the house trailer some time later a bear had broken in and been living there. Among other damage, the bear had torn out the refrigerator motor and it was now some thirty feet down the path.

Early in October 1996, Bev, Sayre, Chuck Freudenthal and I went up to scatter Dan's ashes in the American River, which runs not too far from Bev's property. Chuck brought along a bottle of Armagnac to toast Dan with. Bev brought a five-liter container of cheap red wine she had found when going through Dan's trailer. We all agreed that both drinks were appropriate as we poured libations into the river.

It was a beautiful day. We had a brief ceremony and Sayre sang a couple of moving folk songs that exactly fitted the occasion.

This is a very bleak picture. However, Bev reports that Dan was very popular in the area. He had friends and always had invitations for Thanksgiving and Christmas. People who knew and liked him then should have known him in his prime when his fire was really burning! He was really something.

Well-known folk singer Dave Van Ronk was one of the regular Dive crowd and he and Dan were close friends at the time. Dave was in town for a concert a couple summers ago and I had breakfast with him. We talked about Dan, who was still alive at that time. Dave said that of all the people he had ever known Dan could have benefited most from psychotherapy, but that unfortunately he rejected it.

Hail and farewell, Dan. Hail and farewell! I'm sure glad I knew you. And I'll miss you all the rest of my life

– Bill Donaho



IN SEARCH OF IMMORTALITY



by **Ron Bennett**

Even an alien dropped unceremoniously into the midst of the tourist crowds climbing the steep main street would soon get the idea. The tiny Yorkshire village on the edge of the windswept moorland vista has some connection with something called a Bronte.

This, of course, is Haworth. At the head of the street is the famous Parsonage, now the Bronte Museum, across the road from the Bronte Arms pub. The book shop there stocks all the Bronte novels, as well as coffee table albums with titles such as *The Real Wuthering Heights* and *The Brontes in Verse and Song*.

The souvenir shop next door sells postcards depicting portraits of the famous sisters and down the street there's the Bronte cafe.

You get the idea.

If you happen to feel like searching out the tomb of Robert Burns when you're in Scotland, Dumfries is the place to be. It's not exactly next door to the village of Gretna Green, famous for its runaway marriages, forged over the blacksmith's anvil. It's some twenty-four miles west, but you'll know when you're there.

There's the Robert Burns Tea Shoppe, the Gang Aft A'Gley Arms, the Timorous Mouse Book Shop and the small distillery producing Tam O'Shanter Whisky.

Every second shop sells Robert Burns pipes, postcards and of course the tam o'shanter itself.

Stratford-on-Avon shouldn't even be mentioned in the same breath or, if you will, on the same page. The Shakespeare industry pushes Haworth and Dumfries far back into the shade. With the Shakespeare pubs and the Anne Hathaway cottages, this particular center of literary homage virtually mirrors the medieval trade in religious relics. One really wouldn't be too surprised to find oneself being offered a hank of Anne's hair or a couple of Will's knuckle bones.

But Amiens ... ? That's another story altogether.

Ever since my first encounter with the old pulp magazines, I'd been fascinated with that little heading illustration in the early *Amazing Stories*. This showed "Jules Verne's tombstone at Amiens, portraying his immortality." Verne is depicted as almost flying from his grave, one arm outstretched in a posture later made famous by the early *Superman* comic books and newspaper strips.

This small picture in *Amazing Stories* struck a chord. As it was doubtlessly meant to do. Not only was the pose showing Verne's immortality, but the illustration rightly suggested Man reaching out, if not to the stars

themselves, most certainly towards a better future. Or, if you wish, a Better Future. In short, this little illustration captured my imagination and encapsulated the genre's Sense of Wonder.

So it was that some few years ago, en route from Paris to the Channel ports and back to England, I left the northbound A1 autoroute and headed my car across Picardy towards the ancient cathedral city of Amiens. It was a warm day in late summer, the hedgerow poppies were in full bloom, and the drive was a pleasant, relaxing saunter.

I was in the main street in no time at all. I pulled over, climbed out of the car and asked a couple of local tradesmen, deep in conversation outside their respective shops, where might I find this famous tomb.

"Who?"

"What?"

"The writer," I said. Yes, yes, in French. "Jules Verne. The famous writer. I'm looking for where he's buried."

They regarded me as though I were the alien suddenly dropped in *their* midst. They'd no idea what I was talking about. They returned to their interrupted conversation, which no doubt would now be lengthened by additional material.

I began to stop passers-by. All were courteous. Humor this mad Englishman. It's the heat, you know. They don't have weather like this where he comes from.

The fifth person I tried had a vague idea that he'd once heard of some writer having been buried in the Magdalen Cemetery on the far side of town. Follow the road down the hill at the side of the cathedral.

This conversation held overtones of Get This Nut Away From Here but at least there was mention of a cemetery. What better place to start looking? What better reason to get away from the growing crowd of encircling onlookers, none of whom, incidentally, added to, contradicted, or indeed showed any interest whatsoever in the details of my quest?

I drove down the hill past the cathedral and scoured both sides of the road for anything which looked vaguely like a cemetery. Nothing. In fact, *rien*.

Ahead of me a wide highway swept from left to right. At the far side the road divided into two arms, the left slightly wider than the right. From where I sat, I could see that each of these branching roads bent away, diverting ever more from their combined starting point. It would be beneficial, I felt, to take the correct road first time out.

I pulled over on to a small parking lot and walked across to the equally small tavern opposite. A drink would be more than welcome and I could ask for further directions.

The *patron* was ancient and gnarled. He needed only a beret and a *Gaulois* to have stepped from Central Casting's array of extras wheeled out for *The French Connection*.

"I'm looking for the burial place of Jules Verne, the famous writer," I told him, after I'd quaffed a good, lengthy quaff.

"Ah, yes, the ferry boat at Calais. Take the road to the left, *monsieur*."

Anyone who has suffered the dubious honor of listening to my French will suspect that this polite reply was reasonable and by no means unexpected.

Aw, come on! I'm not *that* bad!

I repeated my request.

He repeated his directions for the Calais ferry.

"No, no," I said. "Jules Verne. The famous writer. The *internationally* famous writer. He's buried here. Jules Verne." I was becoming desperate. "*Around the World in Eighty Days*..."

"Ah, *oui, monsieur*, an excellent movie."

I saw a glimmer of light. "Yes, yes. The man who wrote the film. Jules Verne."

He didn't know of any Jules Verne. But he was sympathetic and tried to help.

"Perhaps, *monsieur*, you mean *Charles* Verne. The butcher. He died some fifteen years ago. His daughter married ..."

No, *Jules* Verne.

He scratched his head. He really *was* from Central Casting. Perhaps I meant *Henri* Verne, the ...?

One by one he searched through a mind-catalogue of Vernes. Louis, Maurice, Marcel ... He called his brother from the cellar and they racked their brains for Vernes the *patron* might have overlooked. Thierry, Jean, Claude ...

No Jules.

"Wait!" The *patron* had a great idea. His friend was approaching. He would know. Why! Hadn't he fought with the Scots during the war?

The friend arrived. He downed the two glasses of absinthe lined up for him on the bar and added his two sous' worth. Hell! His English, gleaned from a highland regiment, was worse than my French. Still, he regarded the two brothers triumphantly.

I meant, he said, *Charles* Verne, the butcher!

I let them argue amongst themselves and began to beat a retreat.

"Wait!" The Scottish speaker grabbed my arm. "Of course, *monsieur*. Why didn't we understand earlier. You are in the wrong town. It is not Amiens which you seek. You must go to *Avignon*, in the south of France, *monsieur*. Where there is the famous *pont*."

I thanked all three and got the hell out. So it was

Avignon, after all! Well, well, wouldn't all those thousands of *Amazing Stories* readers be surprised. All that time, believing they could read.

I'd start with the wider of the two roads ahead, drive on for about ten kilometers, and if I'd had no luck, would turn round, come back and try the narrower road.

I didn't have to drive more than half a kilometer. There, on my right, was the wonderful, the glorious Magdalen Cemetery. I pushed open the high, ornate iron gates and walked up the main pathway. A man in blue overalls was sweeping a side path. I walked across to him and asked him whether he knew where I might find Jules Verne's tomb.

He threw down his brush and, grasping me in a bear-hug, kissed me on both cheeks. He released me and apologized profusely.

"You must think me mad, *monsieur*."

Well, it made a welcome change from all and sundry having regarded me as such.

It transpired that he had worked at the cemetery for several years (and his father and grandfather before him, yes), that he regarded Jules Verne as his very special property, and that in all his years ...

"No one, *monsieur*, no one ..."

I was the first, the very first, to so inquire. And not even a Frenchman. He was ashamed of his countrymen. Hadn't he always ...?

"Yes, yes," I urged. For some reason my patience was wearing a little thin. (Yours, too, huh?) "But where is it."

"Along this path, *monsieur*. I will show you."

I hurried along the narrow, unpaved, dirt path, leaving him to shuffle in my wake.

I could see no sign of the famous headstone.

"There, *monsieur*!" he called. "You've gone past it. Behind you."

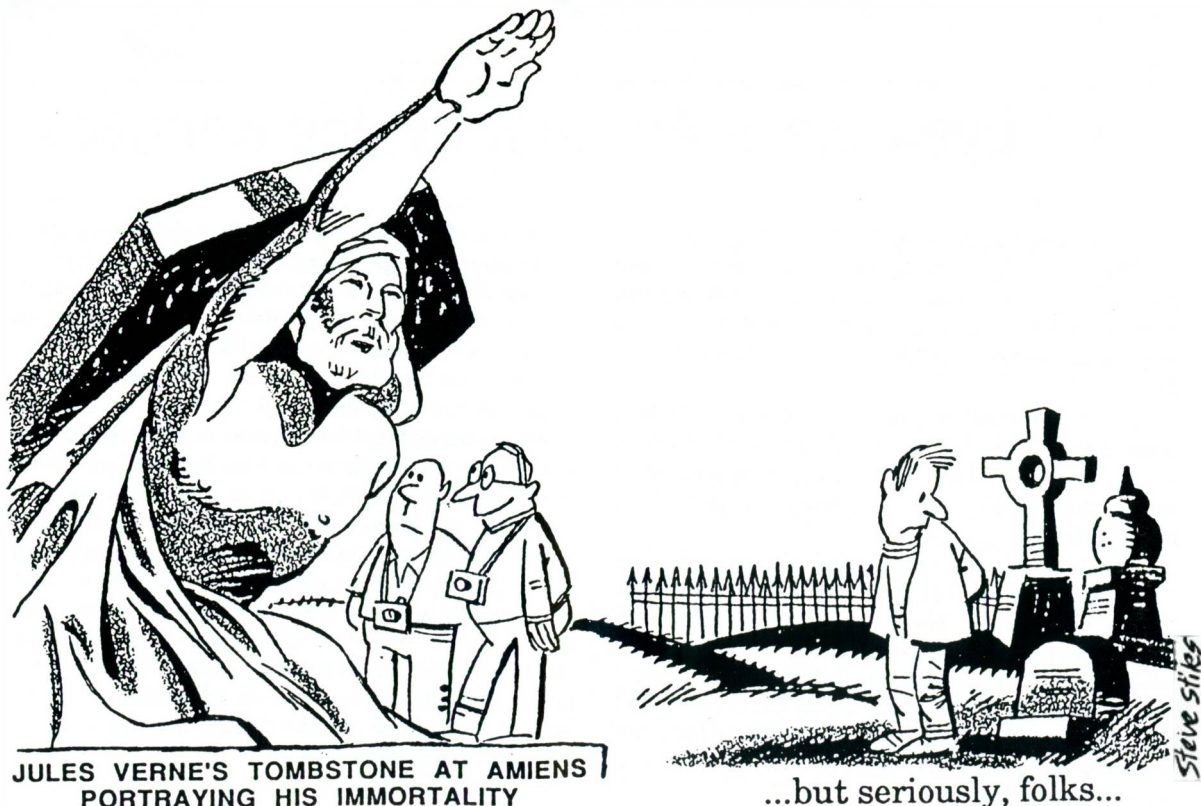
I turned quickly and tripped over something at my feet, falling headlong and only narrowly missing an elaborately decorated flower urn.

The workman helped me to my feet and I looked in awe at what knee-height object had caused me to trip.

The illustration in *Amazing Stories* had always suggested to me that the famous imposing Jules Verne tombstone is tall, well above head height.

I was wrong. It isn't.

— Ron Bennett



SAPS Founders Reunite In Albuquerque



An Eyewitness Account by Joe Kennedy

"You don't suppose the SAPS is still going?"

This question, posed wistfully, resonated in Lloyd Alpaugh's living room in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on September 13, 1996, at a rare reunion of four of the original six members of the Spectator Amateur Press Society.

All of us having long ago dropped out of fandom, nobody knew. The last any of us had heard of SAPS, it had turned 25. At the time, I supplied an account of its founding, a document now buried in (I believe) Mailing No. 100.

The four of us were Alpaugh, George Fox, Ron Christensen, and Joe Kennedy. We'd kept in touch for the last half-century. Not having seen one another in too many years, we'd assembled for the weekend in Albuquerque, the warmest place where any of us lived. Blanca Alpaugh, Helen Fox, Angela Christensen, and Dorothy Kennedy indulged this wild whim; in fact, they too were there. Blanca even cooked the throng a colossal Cuban dinner.

Much of the first evening was devoted to reading aloud from Alpaugh's copy of *All Our Yesterdays*, Harry Warner Jr.'s history of the fandom we had known. It was all there, to our astonishment, with an ample account of the early days of SAPS.

Lest this fact be lost in the dim backward and abyss of time, let me recall (said he, stroking his flowing whiskers) that SAPS grew out of the Spectators, a bunch of adolescent rebels who had cohered within the Eastern Science Fiction Association. Shortly after the end of World War II, ESFA, benevolently dominated by Sam Moskowitz, began meeting each month in Newark. Though Fox and I had served SaM in organizing a First Postwar Eastern SF Convention, the Spectators conceived of themselves as somewhat aloof and sophisticated bystanders, passively inspecting more sober fannish pursuits with a jaundiced eye. We must have annoyed hell out of poor SaM many times. SAPS, too, seemed an attempt to fly in the face of more straitlaced organizations. It began as a kind of anti-

FAPA. That its roster of members was short was meant to enable people to publish zines who didn't have the ambition to crank out more copies than 25.

The meeting that spawned SAPS took place at my house in Dover, New Jersey, in February 1947 and, besides the four of us, numbered one woman, bright and unconventional Lee Budoff, and happy-go-lucky Ron Maddox (both of whose present whereabouts we don't know). I didn't expect SAPS to get far. Nothing begun so casually could last long, I figured. And if SAPS perished soon, I should care? I had plenty to do trying to earn a sheepskin and crack the pulp magazines, while belong also to both FAPA and Vanguard APA. No doubt SAPS would suffer the fate of the Spectator Club, a would-be publishing house that never got off the ground, after (although he denies this) treasurer Christensen confiscated its cash reserves and went off to Coney Island for a spree. But it seems now that my talents as a Nostradamus have proved crappy.

Art Rapp may be the only still-extant SAP who might remember the four of us, but for the record let me briefly sum up our later trajectories. Alpaugh, whose *Sunshine* was head-and-shoulders the finest, fattest, and funniest SAPSzine of its era, moved from New Jersey to Albuquerque, where he could drive his Jaguar faster. There, he printed poems, and for years before his retirement worked as a technical editor for Sandia. George Fox went on to be a staffer on *Male* magazine, writer for *Esquire*, *Playboy*, and *SatEvePost*, author of a hilarious novel, *Without Music*, and popular

thrillers *Amok* and *Warlock's Hill*, and script writer of *Earthquake*. (See Fox's Signet paperback, *Earthquake, the Story of a Movie*.) He now lives in Woodland Hills, California. Ron Christensen, whose fanzines were long on distinctive whimsy, had a career as a school teacher and (on his own) published language-teaching materials. He served on oil tankers in the Merchant Marine, and today, partly retired, inspects tankers in New York harbor. He still hangs his hat in Brooklyn, as always. Me, I became a college English prof, mostly at Tufts U., until I made enough writing from textbooks to quit teaching. Nowadays I write mainly verse and books for kids under the pen name X. J. Kennedy. I'm in Bedford, Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston.

The reunion had a surprise aftermath. Ron Christensen actually produced a whole bogus SAPS mailing, containing not only his own reincarnated *Engerzerp*, but also individual zines purportedly published by the other three of us. In a *Senior SAPSzine Special*, he supplied his own fanciful account of the affair, which opened: "The AlpaughCon, for those who missed it, was a smashing success, and you deserve to be bathed in dung for not having been there."

That SAPS has persisted for half a century fills me with awe. I'm sure I speak for all the other surviving founders in wishing well to you who carry SAPS on. Good luck — strong eyesight — cheap and copious reproduction to you!

— Joe Kennedy



ANNEX

The piece that follows originally appeared in *Burblings c/w Elmmurmurings* No. 3 in the February 1958 FAPA mailing. Always impressed with it as a character study, I once wanted to use it as the introduction to an Elmer Perdue anthology I planned. Though I abandoned the project at the prospect of having to do so much typing, at the time I asked Burbee for permission. He graciously gave it.

Inspired by my discovery (while cataloguing my fanzines) of half a dozen Burbee articles not in either *Incomplete* collection, I sent copies of "Baxter" to Ed Burbee and Linda Markstrom to also obtain their consent — to reprint not just this article but also the others (which will appear in future issues). I want to conclude this introduction by sharing their observations about Elmer:

Ed wrote: "The mists of time obscure my memory of this article's content — whether I heard it from my

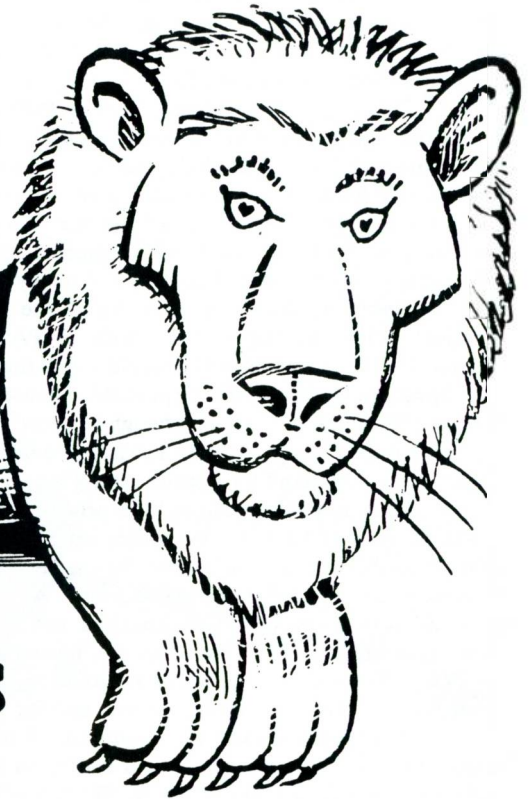
father's lips in his many comments about Elmer or read the article but forgot doing so or, more likely, blended the reading and the comments with the numinous reputation of Elmer. I knew this man Elmer since my infancy, and held him in my affection. I also viewed his actions in semi-awe. My relationship with Elmer therefore leaves me without much to say in objective terms. Or, more accurately, I would have to objectify my personal memories of Elmer, and do not wish to do so any more than I already have for publication."

And Linda said: "Reading 'The Baxter Street Irregular' certainly brought a bunch of memories to life for me. I believe this is a very true and warm article about Elmer Perdue. I think there are 'new fans' out there who will read some of the articles my dad wrote about Elmer and believe that he was very cruel to Elmer. On the contrary, Elmer and my father had a very good relationship that lasted until Elmer's death. I believe they accepted each other as they were and were never judgmental. Elmer was a unique and eccentric individual, but that was just Elmer."

THE BAXTER STREET IRREGULAR



by
**CHARLES
BURBEE**



"I am a lion but do not be afraid of me. I will not jump out of the phonograph to frighten you. I will only tell you a funny story."

— from a child's cardboard cut-out record, 1918

It was to my great astonishment that Elmer Perdue spoke to me more than five weeks before the February 1958 FAPA mailing and suggested that since he and I both owed eight pages of critical activity we get together at his house and produce this critical material. Elmer is evidently not much like Sam Moskowitz, who said that "due to circumstances beyond my control" — I think he meant not reading the *Fantasy Amateur* — he'd been dropped from FAPA. Elmer reads the *Fantasy Amateur* or at least has friends who do, so Elmer has been aware for some time now that he cannot postmail critical activity. So, by golly, he called on me and spoke right up about it, and I rallied swiftly from my astonishment and three or four days later I was parking my car at the bottom of the Baxter Street hill on which Elmer lives near the top.

I did not attempt to drive up. It is about a 30 per cent grade and I am a flatlander at heart. I think my

car is, too. I was pretty winded by the time I'd slogged it up to Elmer's house, where The Dog Honeybelle greeted me in dubious fashion. She saw the stencils and mss paper I was carrying and probably took me for a mailman for just a moment. Honeybelle hates mailmen. But something must have clicked in her dog-type brain because she wagged her tail instead of biting me. I passed her warily, though, my typing finger held high in the air.

"Yes, you may, Meyer," said Elmer. Audrey Clinton said hello. I said hello back and that just about ran us out of conversation for a while till Elmer asked me what I was drinking. I replied that I probably wasn't going to drink anything because I'd found that alcohol disturbs the typing ability and I was going to need a lot of typing ability that day. Before very long I'd drunk two quarts of beer. Elmer was drinking Angelica wine and Audrey was pulling at a bottle of some kind of Scotch.

We all had typewriters. However, I'd left mine at the bottom of the hill, not feeling up to carrying it with the rest of the stuff. I said as soon as I got my breath I'd go down to get it. Elmer volunteered to drive down

and I didn't argue much about that. After all, I operate practically on one lung and a typer is a heavy thing and Baxter is awful steep right there.

But he couldn't back his car up the incline beside his house. Lest it be thought that Elmer lacks common sense, to get stuck, in dry weather, down an incline beside the house in which he has dwelt for years, let me be known that Elmer does not do things for mundane reasons. Why did he drive down that slope so far that his wheels couldn't get traction to back him out? Because he was doing something fannish like thinking up an article or dreaming a dream of the atom? No. In his capacity as host he had driven down there to make parking space for "Muggsy" Spanier. Muggsy is a New Orleans style cornet player, and Elmer pulled down there to make way for his guest. What makes it all the more gracious and host-like is that Elmer does not particularly care for New Orleans horn.

Elmer's front yard is an arrangement of hillocks, long grass, and some bushes. None of this has been troubled for years.

We considered ways of getting the right rear wheel to obtain a bit of traction. An old newspaper which I found in the grass did about as expected—came loose sheet by sheet under the wheel. We tried chicken wire, also found in the grass, in spite of my fear that such stuff has been known to twine inextricably around wheels, making a brand new problem of its own. It didn't work. I found four bricks in the grass—I believe it possible to find four of anything in that small wilderness—and chocked all four wheels so Elmer wouldn't keep losing two inches of forward space every time he made a try, failed, and locked the brakes again. I suggested that he get behind the wheel and I'd pry him up with a long 2 x 4 or something similar.

We did better than that. We got two thick poles of eucalyptus wood and Audrey got behind the wheel while Elmer and I levered the front bumper like crazy and in fifteen seconds the car was in the clear. Elmer laughed and said reverently, "What a woman!"

Not only did I get no credit for that episode but I didn't even get to meet Muggsy Spanier. He'd gone before I arrived.

We drove down, got the typer. I asked Elmer if there weren't a more gradual approach to his house and he said there was, and took me through the Silverlake hills in a circuitous route. "Migod," I said, "I asked you to show me this route while I was sober so I'd remember it. Now I wish I were drunk so I'd have an excuse for forgetting."

We got back to the house and I carried my machine in. I set it on the piano bench which they'd moved into the living room. Audrey at the time was sitting at my

right pounding with a disconcerting continuity at her typer which was on the coffee table. She asked me how active in FAPA I was and I said I was passably active. Then I blew the dust out of the typer. A huge cloud of it feathered out over the piano bench and the room and from that moment Audrey could not believe that I was active at all.

She was not too wrong about that, I mused, because though I had a lot of clean paper and a typewriter—and Shakespeare didn't even have that—I couldn't make the words come out. I kept typing right along, though, hoping that pretty soon something would break for me. I was rusty, stale, my channels sludged up, so to speak. I could not think of anything to write about that pleased me. Then the very obvious answer came. Why not write of Elmer Perdue? A different approach. A novel twist. Elmer Perdue as seen through imical eyes. That would be a switch. It seemed like a fine idea.

It seemed like such a fine idea that I had to celebrate its conception with a can of beer and somehow or other this led me to the music room, to which room I had no trouble luring Elmer away from his typer. It was quite natural that Elmer and I, with deadline approaching us, should be so easily enticed away from our work—something to do with the hormones, I think—while Audrey, not even a FAPA member, sat doggedly knocking out pages on her machine.

In the music room Elmer sat up to the piano on a camp chair and played and sang away one side of a three-inch tape for Harry Warner Jr at my request. Seems last time Harry heard Elmer play and sing was in 1940 and I thought it would be interesting for him to hear Elmer Perdue¹⁹⁵⁸. On the playback of *Tea for Two* Elmer's bad chording came through fine and clear. Elmer laughed and said, "As one of my old teachers used to say, 'Elmer, if you're going to screw up, do it good and loud.'"

This bit of taping led to more taping. I'd brought along a reel which Elmer obligingly filled with Jelly Roll Morton. When I got home and played it it had heavy background noise. His erase coil wasn't working well. Elmer offered to recut the tape at my earliest convenience.

When we'd filled my tape there didn't seem to be much more excuse to stay away from our typewriters till Elmer remembered a fine reel of blues he'd cut in a beer joint up in Casper Wyoming in 1955. About near the end of the reel Audrey was inquiring as to our intentions toward our fapamag. "Are you going to goof the whole day away?" was roughly the way she put it. We got back to work.

Even after all that fine Jelly Roll and Sam Lanier, Elmer Perdue still seemed like a good subject for an

article so I began making notes on him with his enthusiastic cooperation.

Elmer has been a FAPA member since the '30s, which means he's been a member longer than some of the FAPAns have lived. He is the first and only member who ever submitted a teletyped fanzine to the mailing, the only FAPA member to my knowledge who answers the phone as follows: "God speaking."

Yes, right there under my nose was our most colorful, most unappreciated and perhaps most valuable member.

Our valuable member lives, as I mentioned before, in a semi-ramshackle house near the top of a very steep hill. A respectable number of fannish folk have lived in this house. Among former occupants and/or owners have been Mel Brown, Dale Hart (who put on a new roof), Niessen Himmel, James Kepner. That is James Lyn Kepner, author of *Songs for Sorrow and Beauty*. He still lives only three doors down the hill from Elmer.

The house is in the Silverlake district. I do not know my way about in the Silverlake district. I used to avoid this region in the '30s when I was chasing around because it is so easy to get lost there. Very much like the Hollywood Hills, with winding streets and hills. I remember long ago I left a party in the Hollywood Hills to go buy a few half-gallons of beer. I found the liquor store but never did find the house again. After forty minutes of winding endlessly I started steering by the North Star and got to a known boulevard. From there I proceeded to another spot — the evening yet being young — where I thought my half-gallons of beer would not be wasted.

Are they still waiting at that party, in some sort of time-warp, for me to return with the beer?

Baxter Street, on an ordinary non-topographic street maps, runs in a very straight line from here to there. This would be the view one might get from an airplane also. But to a surface crawler it is not of such simple layout. It consists of one steep block up, one steep block down, one steep block up, etc. If you teethed on the guard rail of a roller-coaster, or spent part of your youth wondering how cable cars worked at intersections in San Francisco, you can take Baxter Street in stride.

I drove up it once, but my car and I were younger then.

Anyway, upon entering Elmer's door, if The Dog Honeybelle has subsided in her attempts to protect Elmer from the outside world, one might notice that the door is reinforced on the inside with four pieces of green-painted angle iron and a rectangle of quarter-inch plywood. This is to keep The Dog Honeybelle from breaking out. The Dog Honeybelle has no use for

mailmen, it is true, but she believes that Elmer is the most wonderful person in the world, and even though she is a dog it does not follow that she is wrong.

Directly to the right is a white dresser. On it is a grey hammerloid 7-inch TV set, fourteen 7-inch reels of recording tape, a small druggist's bottle which says, "Two capsules a day," a bottle of Skrip #02 Red, a bulky envelope which seems to contain a bank statement, buckram-bound books, a roll of dimes. The fourteen tapes contain hour after hour of music played at jam sessions in the music room. On the floor in front of the dresser is a tape playback machine which he uses in conjunction with his recorder to dub off the best parts of the jam sessions. To the right on the wall is a fine clock which runs counter-clockwise. Elmer says that Muggsy looked at it and said, "That's about right."

To the left of the dresser is Elmer's bedroom door through which only Elmer ventures most of the time.

Next is the music room. As one enters his face is brushed lightly by a strand of recording tape which dangles from the half-reel hanging on a nail above the door. It sets the motif for this room, in which much recording of sessions takes place.

Immediately inside on the right are several boxes of 78 rpm records, a large number of which are Jelly Roll Morton records. They are there because Elmer is busy dubbing his 78 rpm records to tape and storing the records in the basement. But for the present Elmer has lost the key to the basement. From this stack it was that Elmer cut on tape for me such delightful things as *Turtle Twist*, *Wolverine Blues*, Buddy Bolden's *Blues*, *Winin' Boy*, *Michigan Water*, *Sweet Substitute*, *Big Lip Blues*. Just behind the boxes are seven apple crates stacked to serve as bookcases. They contain many magazines, *aSF*, *Galaxy*, some hardcovers and a reel or two of tape. Among the books was one called *Drowsy*, which had some of the nicest lunar landscapes I've seen. They had the sting of reality.

On the dresser next to the bookcase are more books, one of which is *The Gay Gnani of Gingalee*, a pile of magazines of stefnistic nature, one an Italian magazine with a stolen EEEvans story (stolen?), some 78 rpm records of which only the edges are visible, some comic books, a manila folder filled with random pages from *The Necronomicon*.

Then a closet door. Inside the closet is practically no clear floor space. There are a few clothes but the rest of the area is taken up with books and magazines, and some recording tape.

It was about here that I said to Elmer, "Meyer, you look like something left over from the Twenties. Is it true that Douglas Fairbanks Sr made a picture called *Mr Robinson Crusoe*?"

Elmer said it was.

"This is in line with my current urge to run down all the titles of Fairbanks Sr movies," I said. "Can you think of other titles for me? I know of eleven."

"I think so," said Elmer, and he stepped into the closet. Not very far because there is room for books or belly but not both. He found a brochure which he handed me. It was from a Hollywood theater, an art theater called the Coronet. It listed a 2-month program, with descriptions of each movie, plus stills. Some of the movies: *Life of Albeniz*, an Argentine film *The Eagle*; a Valentino film from 1925; a Chaplin program of films dated 1914, 1915, 1916; *Beauty and the Beast*, a Cocteau film from 1948; seven abstract films by Len Lye; *Battleship Potemkin*, an Eisenstein classic of 1925; and so on. But what really caught my eye was the blurb for the old Fairbanks film *The Black Pirate*. Not only that, it was to be shown a few days in the future, so I did not have to moon about missing it.

Beside the closet is a specially built bookcase for about 900 Armed Services Edition pocketbooks. Some months ago I recall a fellow studying the collection. He said to me: "I've been looking and looking. I can't figure it out. What is he collecting?"

"All of them," I said.

The fellow looked shocked.

In the corner is a large plaque of thick fiberboard. In garish reds and blues it advertises Barbarossa Beer, which is not a local brew.

Against the next wall is the piano. On top of it is a two-foot stack of a newspaper, the Long Beach *Independents*, which Elmer subscribes to because it carries the Sunday *Pogo* strip. In a dish are six or seven plastic 3-inch spacemen such as you might find in a Wheaties box, but Elmer does not eat Wheaties. He just drinks wine.

He bought the spacemen in a drugstore on the southwest corner of Sunset and Alvarado for five cents each. I mention this exact location because you future Elmer worshippers might want to go and stand there in the identical spot and buy spacemen the way he did. Stand there, buy spacemen, and feel kin to Elmer Perdue, FAPA's most colorful and unappreciated member.

On the piano also are some reels of tape and a small porcelain figure of a Chinese girl with clothes on.

Behind the piano is a window that is never open. I think it is because Elmer does not wish the music played there to escape. He wants it to sink into the woodwork.

Next to the piano, more apple-crate bookcases with another stack of Long Beach *Independents*, and on the bottom shelf several 78 rpm albums loaded with Louis Armstrong.

Next wall, four more bookcases in which the apple crate is featured except for the one near the door. Mostly there are hardcover books. *Billy Bounce*, *Case of the Seven Sneezes*, *De Grote Toveraar van Oz*, a stack of old *Animal Comics*, five bound volumes of *Argosy* 1892-3, which contain stories by Horatio Alger that were never released in book form. In a small carton are five children's cardboard cutouts, brightly lithographed in front, with a descriptive text on the back. One of the cutouts is a genial lion, in six colors, and on the back in large clear type appears the little quote I used at the beginning of this sketch: "I am a lion but do not be afraid of me ..."

Of course there are reels of tape here, and many magazines of a fantastic nature. In the corner bookshelf which is built of boards sits Elmer's phonograph — a turntable with the amplifier beside it. Bottom row has many many lp records. Elmer is currently very proud of his almost complete collection of the Panorama and Jolly Roger lp's. Both were pirate labels, using old phonograph records originally issued by other record companies. Both are now out of business, the big record companies having won the fight to eliminate the re-issue people. On most of these records is mighty fine stuff. Jazz. One album I faunch to dub to tape is a King Oliver item, with twelve old King Oliver sides.

Back into the living room again we find a spanking new seven foot steel shelf. It holds such things as the magazine *American Heritage*, some more Long Beach *Independents*, 78 rpm phonograph records, one of which is *San* by the Mound City Blue Blowers which Elmer bought in a nearby town in December for ten cents. I was standing four feet from him when he discovered it. Books, *The Bedroom Companion*, *Satellite Number One*, and some reels of recording tape.

Next room is the kitchen off which is a back porch—on which many comic books and Western magazines are stored—a bathroom with a toilet seat that does not stay up (a story goes with this), another small bedroom and a breakfast nook. On the kitchen wall is another left-handed clock. In the breakfast nook on the table are many detective magazines, some lp albums and a hardcover book or two. In one corner is an easel with an unfinished oil on it.

Back in the living room there is a large home-built cabinet of large drawers. These drawers contain, among other items, his *Doc Savage* and *Shadow* magazine collections, and the L. Frank Baum books. Some twenty-five large size drawers there are, each drawer loaded. Elmer and I crouched there talking about these things for a long time. It was more fun than writing. As we talked the ubiquitous sound of typing in the background died away. Audrey lay prone on the couch

and logged some sack time.

I was enthralled by the sight of all those fine L. Frank Baum books. I'd read several of them as a child, but he had lots there I had never seen. Elmer says he hasn't got a complete collection, but of course that gives him a reason to live. He has some fine-sounding things there: *The Sea Fairies*, *Sky Island*, *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus*, *Queen Zixi of Ix*, *Dot and Tot of Merryland* – these being non-Oz books. Of course he has just about all the Oz books. Among the hardcovers were the three *Shadows*: *The Living Shadow*, *The Shadow Laughs*, *The Eyes of the Shadow*. And the three hardcover *Doc Savages*: *The Man of Bronze*, *The Land of Terror* and one I can't recall. Dates: *Shadows*, 1931; *Doc Savage*, 1933.

We discussed these and other fascinating facts for quite a time. Audrey woke up and bawled us out for not putting a blanket over her. She said we were a couple of fans and therefore pretty much unlike people. We didn't say anything to dispute it.

On top of the large chest of drawers is a stack of recording tape, a cross-cut handsaw, a baster, two reams of mimeograph paper 20-lb. stock, two oil paintings (one a depiction of Elmer's personality), a book about jazz, a bowl of shelled walnuts. Hanging on the wall above is a relief map of the Pacific Electric Railway. In the left hand corner is his vorbelfeetzer, an assembly of lucite, hearing-aid batteries, condensers, resisters and ten or so tiny bulbs. These little bulbs have been flashing at varying intervals since Elmer bought the darned thing at the Westercon, though as of late January 1958 one of the little bulbs has stopped working, I beg to report.

On the next wall is a silken valance that says: "This Establishment Is Dedicated to 100% Americanism..." Its twin is hanging in the music room.

Out the back bedroom window mountains can be seen, purple in the distance. I asked Elmer to identify them but he couldn't be sure. We finally decided they must be the Verdugos or Sierra Madres, or perhaps both. Also out of this window his backyard is to be seen. It falls away alarmingly at a 32 per cent grade or so. Down near the bottom is a wide strip of untrammelled boysenberries growing in such a manner as to cut off the bottom of the yard, making it look as inaccessible as Oz, but Elmer claims to have been down there twice.

Over near the door, which is where we came in, is another dresser, and on it many magazines with content of bizarre nature (space travel and like that) and some reels of recording tape. Also on it is a postcard enclosed in an envelope from Sam Moskowitz.

Concerning his matchbook collection ... he doesn't

collect matchbooks. I'd thought for years that he did, but I got the straight of it the other day.

"I do not collect matchbooks," said Elmer Perdue. "There are many ways of propitiating the Gods. One of the ways I propitiate the Gods and preserve my good luck is never to use up a book of matches twice the same way. I am now at a factorial of seven."

He went on to say that of the 20 matches in the standard book he first uses up the first row of five, then the second row of five, but removes but three from the third row, leaving seven matches, and there the difference begins. There are 5,040 ways of using up the last seven matches.

Actually, there are only two rows of ten matches each but they are staggered so as to yield four rows of five matches each.

Some people are greatly disturbed at hearing of this practice of Elmer's. One of them figured the thing out to the end and found that if Elmer used up a matchbook every minute for 24 hours every day it would take him several million years to complete every possible combination. With perhaps a feeling of some smugness they told him this. Elmer smiled happily and said, "I'm working on it, Meyer."

He is, too. He keeps a checklist so he won't duplicate a book. I told him I hoped I could be there to see him tear out the last match in the last book. I said I would buy him a beer, or maybe a case of beer, and we would put out a one-shot fanzine in honor of the occasion. He thought this a fine idea and even thought we ought to put out two fanzines in honor of it since it was such a special occasion. Meanwhile we will struggle along putting out one fanzine each year.

Elmer described in his magazine a year ago how it is his desire to walk every street in Los Angeles with the object of committing to memory the appearance of every house thereon. Currently he is "racing the freeways" as he describes it, though I discovered he is not racing the Harbor Freeway beyond Slauson or the Golden State Freeway at all. I think he is actually racing only the Olympic Freeway and not paying any attention at all to the San Bernardino, Hollywood, Santa Ana or Long Beach Freeways. Come to think of it he did mention some freeway I hadn't known was there. He has large maps on which he marks out the walked-over areas in red, with the date, and is always greatly pleased if asked to visualize such and such a house on such and such a street.

I think he's got a big job there. There are 500,000 houses in the Los Angeles area.

He is a charter member of the locally-founded (I think it happened in his music room) Society for the Preservation of the Blues which I understand has a

constitution longer than the one the LASFS used to labor under. But he does more than just belong to a society. He produces the blues every time he sits down to a piano, on camp chair or piano bench, and in August 1955 he recorded on tape an oldtime blues player and singer, Eddie Lanier, up in Casper Wyoming.

Among talents unremarked on that Elmer possesses is his uncanny ability to bring out the best conversational qualities of some of the women he talks to. Though I heard few of them, I remember his dialogues with his wife Betty as being highly diverting. And his conversations with Audrey Clinton that afternoon at his house on Baxter Street were so other-worldly that I could not keep my mind on my typing. Worse than that, I could not even read my own stuff while they were talking.

I once said in a letter which Don Wilson published in *The Fantasy Amateur* that Elmer needs FAPA more than he needs anything. When I give it deeper thought I realize this is not true at all. I realize that FAPA probably needs Elmer more than it needs any one of the rest of us.

As a member, Elmer is all things to all people. To the lazy ones he is a living example of how a man might linger on the fringe for years and years with minimum effort, and sometimes with even less than minimum. To the energetic he is somebody to carp about when they boast of their own huge output. To those who aspire to the heights he is a fine example to emulate. To those who don't know how to write he is a despair. To those who are contented only when they are discontented, he is raw material for misery. To those who appreciate the fine turn of a phrase, Elmer is a joy.

Well, that pretty well describes the outward Elmer, the surface Elmer, and the hillside house in which he dwells with his books, his fanzines, his phonograph records, his tape recordings, his piano, his magazines, oil paintings, comic books, and The Dog Honeybelle. Are you not ashamed, some of you, for trying to blow the whistle on this strange and gentle man?

He is not really a lion. He will not jump out of the phonograph to frighten you. He will only, once a year about this time, tell you a funny story.

— Charles Burbee

In Memoriam: TED PAULS 1942-1997

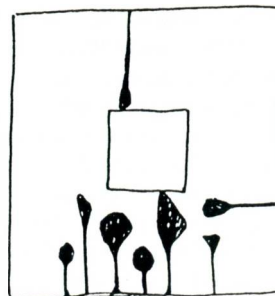
The unwelcome news of Bill Rotsler's death was made all the more horrible for its timing: Elaine and I had just returned from the hospital where our long-time friend Ted Pauls lay in a coma, the result of a brain aneurysm. He never came out of it, suffered a series of strokes, and succumbed on November 5th.

I've been fortunate enough to know Ted (and his wife Karen) for over twenty years since moving to Maryland, but our friendship began in 1961, in the usual fannish way—correspondence and fanac, sparked by his fanzine *Kipple*. Ted had started publishing as a teen in 1959 with *dhog* (faanishly influenced by Ted White and Terry Carr), but really came into his own with *Kipple*, one of the top "discussion zines" of the '60s. It was a muckraker's delight, blasting racism, the Vietnam obscenity, crooked politicians, etc. — and naturally had a very lively lettercol for most of its run of 182 issues. In 1970-71 Ted published the more fannish *WOKL*, which ran for nine issues.

Eventually Ted's interest in fanzines waned and he became a major player in Baltimore/DC fandom, putting on Balticons from 1967 through the mid-'70s, as well as maintaining his mail order business, TK Graphics. Just a few months before his death, Robert began sending him *Trap Door*, which Ted enjoyed and read with interest. I doubt that he would've gotten all the way back into fanzinedom, but he *did* write his first LoC in decades; I think *Trap Door* would've been his foot into the microcosm.

I hate that this is an obituary. Ted was warm and gruff, cynical and sentimental, intelligent, cantankerous, forgiving — and regularly beat the pants off us in cards (or *any* game of chance and skill) two or three times a month. It was a price worth paying for his company; he was a good friend. It stings that he's gone.

— Steve Stiles





TED PAULS

Thanks for sending *Trap Door* Nos. 16 and 17, a blast from the past if ever there was one. I've been gaffiated as far as zine fandom is concerned since sometime in 1965, when *Kipple* evolved into a political zine, though I never completely considered myself out of contact. Steve and Elaine Stiles are our closest friends, and Steve has been earnestly attempting to revive my interest for about the last fifteen years. (And my wife, Karen, is Bruce Townley's sister, so that's another connection.) Steve has kept us au courant with much of the fannish gossip over the years, and what with hanging out with the Stiles we do occasionally run into Ted White, Dan and Lynn Steffan, rich brown, Colleen ex-brown and others.

Still, reading *Trap Door* was quite a trip down memory lane. Kind of a bummer, of course, reading the obits/remembrances about Burbee, Redd Boggs and Elmer Perdue, though I never actually met any of the three. On the other hand, what strikes me even more remarkably are the many who are still with us. Ah, the names and memories that float through *Trap Door*! Mike Deckinger, who was my first fan correspondent, probably around 1958. Jean Young, on whom as a callow teenager I had a tremendous crush. Dunno if Jean ever knew that — guess she will now, if you print this! I was 17; she was a mature, married and totally out of my league 22 or 23 at the time. She was probably the first woman — one of the first people — whose mind dazzled me, having up until then (very limited) experience only with gum-cracking high school girls with the mental horizons of stag beetles. Not to mention her fabulously long hair and bohemian looks turned me on.

-28-

(Need a new paragraph here, Meyer.) Boyd Raeburn, Rotsler, Gregg Calkins (*Oops!* was the first fanzine I ever sent for, having read about it in one of Bob Bloch's columns in a William Hamling prozine), Ned Brooks (last time I saw Ned in person was a mere 21 years ago, at the '76 WorldCon), Shelby Vick, Walt Willis, Vin/ Clarke, Calvin W. "Biff" Demmon, John Berry (the original one, not the later Bronxville, NY fan of the same name), Gary Deindorfer ... wow, the names go on and on.

So, anyway, thanks again for sending the issues, and if this letter earns me No. 18, I'll be happy to see it. I'm certain that Steve will be delighted when I tell him that I've written you a short LoC. See, Steve, your persistence finally paid off! It's probably been 28 or 29 years since my last letter to a fanzine.

In closing, let me not forget to add that I'm very impressed by the high quality of the writing in *Trap Door*. I'd say it was probably the best fanzine around, except that ... how would I know? {Signed, "Cordially, Ted Pauls, Old Phart." I enjoyed collaborating with Steve to try and coax Ted back into fandom, and am saddened his return was so untimely cut short.}

BJO TRIMBLE

{Commenting belatedly on No. 16:} I was very sad to hear about Redd, Burbee and Elmer passing from this vale of tears. They all had an impact on my comparatively young fannish life, in one way or another.

Redd and I had one of the more inexplicable (to me, anyway) love-hate relationships I've ever experienced. For many years, when Redd would get very depressed, he would phone me to talk at all hours of the night. I loved his command of words, and always

hoped to be as good at writing. However, when he was not saying wonderful things, he seemed to think up perfectly outrageous things to upset me. Being Redd, I always forgave him. One of my fondest conversations with him was over the phone:

Redd: Bjo, how many hours does it take to hard-boil an egg?

Bjo: How long has it been cooking so far, Redd?

Redd: About an hour.

Bjo: It's done. (Pause about twenty minutes while Redd peels the egg.)

Redd: Why is my hard-boiled egg brown instead of white?

Bjo: Because most eggs are boiled only about eight to ten minutes, hon.

It somehow doesn't surprise me that Burbee wanted to finally rest in Amboy Crater. Although we never discussed the desert, it seems natural that he would love it, for some reason. That is also my territory, and I hope when I'm done with this little freckled body, I can be scattered at Ubehebe Crater in Death Valley. John and I spent a lot of time at the Burbees, drinking Golden Treachery, which is what someone dubbed Burbee's homebrew. At 13% by volume, it was a nice beverage until one stood up and the kneecaps fell off! Our fannish wedding reception was held at the Burbees' home. It was a long way to drive from the middle of Los Angeles out to Whittier, but the party was always worth it. Isabel's wonderful Mexican cooking drew fans from even farther. The party usually divided between fans in the living room talking to Burbee around the player piano and fans in the kitchen talking to Isabel. One fan came out of the kitchen and Burbee asked him what was being discussed in there. "We're discussing religion," says the fan with a dazed expression. "I took the side of God and the devil"

Elmer Perdue was a special friend. I never knew if he really rerouted a bus near my residence, or if the city was already planning on it, but it was a lovely gesture. We had a beautifully platonic relationship, though for all I know he told the fellows he was after me sexually; but never by word or deed did he intimate that to me. I needed a respite from importunities. I was a severely bruised soul trying to recover from a psychically damaging first marriage (not to John). I wasn't ready for physical dealings. I had no idea of Elmer's physical problem, but in any case I never felt at all pressured by our companionship.

We liked to browse around the city, finding the shortest street, or that funny bridge across a canyon high in the Hollywood hills, or looking at once-magnificent Victorian houses. Elmer knew about wonderful things like the Bradbury Building, the Million Dollar

Theatre, and Angel's Flight. He showed me a city I'd never seen before, and then he would find someplace interesting for dinner. We would often end up at odd hours in some strange little hole-in-the-wall where jazz musicians came for after-hours meals. One night we ate with the Bolshoi Ballet. These incredible people, still in makeup, and still "up" from their performance in front of a huge audience, gave us a show in that tiny Russian cafe to the music of their country on native instruments.

Once when he fell ill, I went to clean his house. There was to be a meeting of the Hot Jazz Society in his home (I wondered where they would all park) and Elmer worried about getting the place cleared out. And well he might! It was a bachelor pad maxed! Everything that could be tossed to the floor had been, and there were enough science experiments in the refrigerator to give a small country ptomaine!

It was at a Hot Jazz Society meeting that I had the chance to talk to one of the old-time greats, Johnny St. Cyr. Disney made a search for and brought several "Young Men From New Orleans" to California to play jazz in Disneyland's newly-opened Dixieland-theme cafe in the Pirates of the Caribbean area. Johnny was one of those oldsters, and he could still play very hot jazz. During a break at a Jazz Society meeting, we sat in Elmer's almost-clean kitchen, and I asked him what he did in those years between musical gigs. He told me he'd become a house plasterer. His theory was that one became the best one could become at whatever one did; he became the best damned plasterer he knew how to be. I've always liked that philosophy.

When I lost my job, I'd go up the hill to clean Elmer's place every now and then. He paid well, and aside from having problems with his left-handed can opener, it was rather fun discovering the strange items he'd picked up here and there. I quite fell in love with a metal bifurcate mermaid pin tray, but Elmer liked it too, and I never got up the nerve to ask him for it. I always reamed out the worst of it, shoved the rest in a couple of closets, or in boxes, and even cleaned a couple of his more outrageous ties. He had quite a collection, including a WW2 one that was supposed to light up to say "Kiss me baby!" but we could never make it work again once it quit. I also found a roomful of Oz books in the back.

That was when I discovered that Elmer was one of the best authorities on L. Frank Baum I've ever met. He knew things about those books that some experts never knew. I got enough knowledge to add to my own small Oz collection with much more confidence, and through his information was able to find some really good buys on first editions. In Elmer's later years,

when he got ill, some people moved in with him who kept many of us away. I've often wondered what happened to his wonderful Oz collection; it was quite valuable, with some extremely rare books.

I remember the green sequin tie that Rotsler mentions. Elmer had even worse ones than that, but he particularly liked that green tie. Which is strange, because he was red-green colorblind. Most fans did not know this, and I'd never have found out except for a mistake he made when we were looking at a painting. He assumed we were looking at fall foliage, and mentioned he'd always liked that particular goldenrod color of the leaves. He learned colors from reading his Crayolas in school, so very few people knew of this, including the artist who had sold him several green paintings. While he could see most reds, he could not see any greens whatsoever. Long before loss of chlorophyll was evident in a lawn, he could see a bright golden spot in that field of dark red. That bright green sequin tie looked dark blood red to Elmer.

The location of Elmer's house scared me half to death. Baxter Street has got to be one of the steepest residential hills in Los Angeles. The first time he drove me to it, we took a back road that climbed steeply, but ran slowly along the ridge of the hill to the top. The first intimation I had that something was going strange was when he turned sharply to the left, and the entire front end of the car disappeared! I was staring straight down a steep hill. I probably screamed all the way to the driveway, where Elmer turned sharply right and parked. I was certain that turn would send us rolling sideways all the way to the bottom of the hill. It was awful. I henceforth made Elmer let me out of the car at the top of the hill, and I'd walk down to his house. Elmer probably agreed so I wouldn't shriek in his car again.

I tried to help Elmer go on the wagon countless times, and he would give me a calendar to write down how many days he was sober. I was an incipient health food nut, and pointed out how much better his life would be if he would change his eating and drinking habits. He would agree totally, and even discuss at length how to go about it. But he would eventually slip, then be very apologetic, even getting me a small gift to make up for it. I finally told him it was his life and he didn't have to account to me for it, but I didn't want him to drink when we went out together. So far as I know, he honored that, and we never had an incident while I was with him.

I learned about foods I'd never heard of, and tasted foods that in fact Elmer didn't eat. Not bad for a little country girl whose gourmet fare until then had been rather limited. Afterwards, we might drive down Sunset Blvd. to the beach or to a railroad yard or high on a hill

to watch the sunrise, and then he would take me home and, in the most courtly manner possible, kiss my hand and see me to my door. There was that part of Elmer which wanted some grace in his life. He was always well-dressed and sober when we went on our little forays into strange corners of Los Angeles, or to that unusual little restaurant, and he was gallant to me. The most physical he ever got was a rather moist kiss on the cheek. He viewed the incursion of my boyfriends as merely small interludes of immaturity, but greeted John as my final choice with good fellowship. He was a dear friend, and I do miss him.

Well, I don't know why I've rambled on so long. I've not answered a fanzine in many years, but this issue had so much about so many people I knew well. Thanks for sending a copy. *{And thanks to you for favoring us with your recollections. Hope to hear from you again.}* (CoA: 601 E. Foothill Blvd., Monrovia, CA 91016-2403)

CYNTHIA GOLDSTONE

Your fascination with Elmer Perdue is quite understandable. He was a *sui generis* oddball. My late husband, Lou, felt considerable loyalty to his old friends from Tendril Towers days in Los Angeles: Elmer, Walt Liebscher, Alva Rogers, Forry, Nieson Himmel, Kris Neville (or did Kris go back that far?). Lou, with his soft, sensitive voice and beautiful command of the language, was a classy accounter of stories and anecdotes. I never tired of hearing him talk about the days on South Orange Grove Avenue in Pasadena, at the huge elegant old house owned by Jack Parsons, an outstanding young chemist who was, interestingly enough, heir apparent to Alistair Crowley. Jack rented rooms, but only to eccentric, creative types, for which Lou qualified in spades.

Lou told me Elmer had been a tall, good-looking chap in those days, who called himself Ghod and addressed all comers as Meyer. I must have met him first at a con at the Sir Francis Drake here in the City, where Olga Ley, wife of Willy, appeared as "Deep Night" at the costume ball, Karen Anderson was nursing Astrid, and Kris Neville (a runner-up to Philip K. Dick in making people laugh) was holding forth with a big group ensconced in the bar, doing his Southern Baptist minister send-up. That convention was the most glamorous, thrilling thing that had ever happened to me.

But back to Elmer: Mostly I remember him in his cups, sitting in hallways at cons wearing that gold-sequined necktie that Rotsler mentioned. During the '60s I had solo shows at good ol' Artists' Coop on Union Street (a veritable heaven for artists – many customers and *many* sales) and Elmer showed up at one

of the opening receptions, to our surprise. Those receptions were great fun. Many old friends from the fannish world would come: Poul and Karen Anderson, Ethel and Les Anderson, Avram Davidson, Al haLevy, Jim and Hilary Benford, you, dear Robert, and Margo Newkom, Grania and Steve Davis, Miriam Allen de Ford, Miriam and Jerry Knight (then), often Nieson Himmel. Ergo, Elmer must've found some fellow fans. However, a third of the way into the reception a friend said to me, "There seems to be a corpse in the back of the gallery." We quickly went back to look and I like to think I said, "Ghod is not dead; he is merely dead drunk." There was Elmer, flat on his back, suit and shirt rumpled as always, hands crossed over his chest. *[I attended that opening, Cynthia, and well remember Elmer laid out on the floor.]* I would like to add that Elmer may have had a case of *acne rosacea* on his nose – the same disease that W. C. Fields and J. P. Morgan had. (The cause is not known. It occurs on the face; the blood vessels become inflamed and engorged.)

At some point in the '60s, Forry and Wendy Ackerman came up for Christmas. On Christmas Eve, Florence (Lou's mother) and I went with them (Lou elected to stay home), first to a party given by Margo Skinner (this was before Fritz Leiber moved to San Francisco from Venice) and, by golly, there was Elmer, looking and acting more like an ordinary bloke than I'd ever seen him. It seems that Elmer and Margo had had a romance years before, and on this special night the old tender regard had once again bloomed. I was truly touched. I'd long since realized the strange aptness of Elmer's surname; he was a lost soul indeed, and it seemed to me that Margo was another. Being naive and optimistic, I had the hope that they would find some happiness together. Alas! it was not to be; the flower that bloomed again faded fast. Back to Christmas eve: We all took off from Margo's party to accept an invitation to visit Anton Szandor LaVey, about whom I knew nothing, but being with Forry almost always holds surprises, and what followed was my most memorable – and un-Christmasy – Night Before Christmas ever.

The house, way out on California Street, was an old two-story one, painted black. The front door opened and we were greeted by a leopard, straining towards us on a chain. In moments we realized it was stuffed, and tall, svelte Tony popped around, greeting us heartily in his adenoidal voice, striking because it was so inconsistent with his appearance. He could've been Mephistopheles: a handsome figure with black hair, Van Dyke beard and the right moustache to go with it. Very pale; he could've portrayed Dracula, too. He led us down the black hall filled with his own sinister paintings of bloody people – very crude and altogether unsavory. We stopped in a neat and comfortable black "den"

midway back, and there met his attractive young wife and their adorable baby girl (and Forry told me years later that he had a son whom he named "Satan").

We chatted; no one had noticed Tony leave the room earlier. The fireplace made strange sounds, started to move, and Tony popped out of it. We were properly regaled and surprised. He explained that the house had been built by a mean and devious sea captain who had a little attic room which could be entered only by a moveable ladder, and he kept his poor wife there sometimes. He also said there was a tunnel leading from under the house directly north to the Bay. It had been used for rum-running at some point, perhaps during Prohibition. We went back to the kitchen; on the wall was a huge devil, with his open red mouth swallowing the stove pipe which went into the wall. There was a door leading to the back yard with a panel of glass in the upper half. I leaned there, relaxed and fascinated, when – *whoompf!* – large paws hit the glass behind my head, scaring the hell out of me. There, inches from me, was this huge lion cub known as Togare, who later became known to everyone who was reading the *San Francisco Chronicle* around that time.

We all went down to the front room, which boasted a human skull on the mantelpiece alongside a tiny wooden cage. "Bruno, my tarantula, lived there, but he died," said our host. A very fine theater organ dominated the room, and Tony entertained and charmed us with his skillful playing. *That* was how he earned his living. After that, he went back and returned with Togare on a leash. He was, as I recall, about six months old and weighed 91 pounds. He and Tony wrestled on the floor. Togare suddenly remembered that happiness is an empty bladder and committed a sizable indiscretion, which Tony mopped up. I got to pet Togare, and if you think a young lion feels like anything else you've ever touched, You've Got Another Thinkola Coming (thank you, Abe Cusich in *The Day of the Locust* for that saying).

Tony achieved quite a degree of infamy for awhile because of Togare and the Black Masses he was holding there in his home. At that time, he considered himself successor to Alistair Crowley, and on that Christmas Eve he mentioned that he had searched high and low for *The Book of the Law*, more or less the bible of the OTO, but hadn't been able to find a copy. When we got home, I told Lou all about the amazing evening, and asked him how he would feel about giving Tony his little black *Book of the Law*. "Sure, why not?" said Lou. I had some matte black paper to wrap the book in, and on top of the package in soft white Prismacolor pencil I drew several little angels singing, "I'm dreaming of a black Christmas." I mailed it and several days

later there was a phone call from Tony. He was almost speechless with joy; in his adenoidal voice he thanked us profusely and hugely.

Last year there was a phone call from his son-in-law who is writing a book about Jack Parsons, the chemist I mentioned early on. He said Tony is still alive and well in that black house. As concerns Togare, he grew up, as lions do, and Tony made the awful mistake of boarding an ocelot in a cage right there in Togare's territory. All hell broke loose. Before long, Togare was transported to the San Francisco Zoo.

Forry was in San Francisco on his last birthday and invited me to have lunch with him. I asked him what he could tell me about Elmer Perdue. All he remembered was walking down a busy street with a fan friend, with Elmer a few paces in front of them. Elmer suddenly removed some false teeth from his mouth and proceeded to comb his hair with them. (350 Dolores Street, San Francisco, CA 94110)

JERRY KAUFMAN

Artwork this issue was superlative. Steve and Dan outdo each other all the way through, and Craig Smith, Lee Hoffman and Rotsler add grace notes.

I loved Julia Vinograd's poem about Dick Ellington. It jibes perfectly with my (scanty) memories of Dick. I think I met him only once or twice, but he made a big impression, and his typesetting and book design activities inspired me to suggest to Don Keller that we, too, could publish books, thus leading to Serconia Press.

As I was reading it, I wasn't entirely sure of which bits in Ron Bennett's report were ironic and which were straightforward. In the end, I decided it was irony all the way through. Would Ron consider attending writers' workshops for other genres? I'd love to know how pompous, self-important and off-kilter they are, too.

I do not wish to be around when Richard Brandt and Victor Gonzalez compare notes. But Quentin Tarantino or David Cronenberg might want to be. Still, Richard's article was fascinating, like, you know, watching an auto accident.

Steve Stiles' articles recently have also been fascinating, exercises in autobiography that ought someday to provide the basis of a great book of memoirs. He seems to have a good memory for details (or else he makes them up convincingly), and has either done some pretty interesting things, or had them done to him.

I've been introduced recently to a modern version of Dave Langford's "Shock Horror Probe." It's an electronic device used in massage. It sends little shocks into whatever parts of your anatomy the electrodes are attached to, and it has special settings for hands, feet and larger muscle groups, along with variable intensity.

The settings don't just give you single zaps; instead, they have computerized the little devil to vary its frequency and rhythms: "Zap. Zap zap. Zap zap zap. Zapppzapppzappp." And so on. A professional massage therapist/fan friend introduced me to it. This model costs about \$400.

Christina Lake's article takes several turns before she gets to genealogy and then back to fan history. She mentions, or seems to, that she has Mormons in her background. My understand is that the reason Mormons study family history is that they can then retroactively get all those ancestors converted and sent to Heaven. Is that accurate? (You might not know, but another reader might.)

So, Christina, if you think of fan history as family history (a family you've chosen to join), would that make it more interesting? You know: Grandma LeeH on one side, Grandma Morojo on the other. Uncle Burb, Great-Uncle Walt Daugherty, second cousins Geri and Jeff, and the black sheep of the family: Claude and George and all.

Jessica's letter included a scene guest-starring me. I don't remember the incident, but I can tell you that Jessica was always such a determined iconoclast that, sure, I'd have believed that she would tear apart a fanzine to use the back of a cover for stationery. I'm glad to hear that she could change her behavior when she saw that it hurt someone. I wonder, though, just what reaction she'd been hoping for?

I'll disagree with Joseph Nicholas about mythmaking in fandom. I think it has continued to take place, sporadically, ever since the '50s. There's the Bay Area fans in the late '50s and early '60s, the Minneapolis fans in the late '60s, the Seattle fans in the early '80s, the Ratfans in London in the mid-'70s, the Las Vegas fans in the early '90s, and the *Plokta* cabal right now. Perhaps these didn't have the same ease, or subject matter, or tone as the Sixth Fandom fans, but no reason that they should: different histories, different people, different cultural milieus.

It's true that science fiction is now large on the landscape, but I don't see a lot of SF as being the spur to mythmaking. It is certainly a desire to amuse others, and it is also a desire to differentiate one's own group from others while explaining, in metaphor, why the group is different, how it came to be, and what its purpose and function is. No reason that the group's purpose has to revolve around SF. In most of the above mythmaking cases, the group's purpose seems to have been connected with fandom itself, and with having a good time expressing that love of or interest in fandom through writing about it. Sometimes the writing has been satirical, critical or unfailingly adula-

tory, but that's been part of the myth of the group.

Mog Decarnin remembers that Minicon had a well-known folk singer as a Guest of Honor a few years ago, but the singer was Dave Van Ronk, not Phil Ochs. Van Ronk has fannish connections and credentials, having been a part of New York fandom and a folk music buddy of Lee Hoffman back in the late '50s and early '60s (according to my fallible memory). *{Besides LeeH, Van Ronk also knew Dick Ellington and Bill Donaho. Maybe Bill has some interesting recollections to share?}* (P. O. Box 1786, Seattle, WA 98111)

FRED LERNER

All I remember of Dick Ellington is that I once bought a copy of *The Bosses' Songbook* from him during a poker game. This was in the summer of 1964 when, thanks to a misapprehension on the part of the United States government, which thought that the national defense would somehow be enhanced if I learned the Hindi language, I was awarded a fellowship to the University of California at Berkeley. I attended classes in the morning and studied the language in the afternoon, with indifferent results. Thirty-four years later, my command of the Hindi language is limited to one sentence, *Hathi aam khata hai*, which translates as "the elephant eats mangoes." They are obviously grammatical purists, not zoological ones. As an Indian student once solemnly assured me, "The elephant does *not* eat mangoes. To suck the sugar-cane, *that* is his delight."

My interest in Hindi had arisen, of course, from too great an exposure to Kipling at an impressionable age. Had I been seeking the great works of Indian literature, I should have studied Sanskrit or Pali, or for modern writing Bengali or Tamil. The best writer that Hindi can offer is a man called Premchand, whose masterwork so far as I can recall recounted the thoughts and deeds of a pair of talking oxen. And in recent years we have learned (not least from Vikram Seth) that, as in Kipling's time, the finest writing on Indian life is to be had in English.

So my encounter with the Hindi language had little impact on my education. On my formal education, anyway. For an eighteen-year-old, a summer in California, three thousand miles from home, was a substantial education in itself. In those days a fifty-dollar-a-week living allowance stretched pretty far when room and board in a student coop could be had for fifteen. It was from fellow-Cultist Norm Metcalf that I learned about the University Students' Cooperative Association. For five dollars I bought a lifetime membership, so I suppose I could claim some privileges at Coyne Court to this very day.

And it was through the good offices of another fan friend, Ed Meskys, that I found myself enmeshed in the

whirlwind of social activity that was Berkeley Fandom that summer. I ate chowder at the Little Men's annual picnic. (It was, after all, The Elves', Gnomes', and Little Men's Science Fiction, Marching and Chowder Society.) I drank draft beer (illegally) at Brennan's. I played Botticelli with the ten-year-old Astrid Anderson at the tail end of parties at which we were practically the only ones left sober. And just after final exams there was a Worldcon at Oakland's Leamington Hotel.

On one of those Berkeley weekends, I found myself in a poker game. I don't remember who else was in it. I don't even remember the exact circumstances of the transaction, except that the pamphlet cost me fifty cents. At the time, *The Bosses' Songbook* and the satirical songs it contained meant more to me than the personalities involved. It was only in later years, as I came to learn more about fannish history and legend, that I understood that I had been for much of that summer in the presence of giants.

I did not know that Dick Ellington was a typesetter. *{He wasn't in 1964.}* Learning that from Julia Vinograd's poem made me feel a connection to Dick beyond our brief encounter across a poker table so many years ago. As part of my training in librarianship, I learned something about typesetting the old-fashioned way, an experience prefigured by several hours with a composing stick in eighth-grade print shop. Perhaps that's what we would have talked about, had Dick and I sat over a poker table in later years.

Or perhaps not. I'm not really sure that poker game ever took place—1964 was a long time ago. It may be that our only meeting was a fleeting encounter at some Bay Area party. But in "For Dick Ellington, Berkeley Typesetter," Julia Vinograd evoked so strong a sense of the man that vivid memories returned to me across thirty-four years. For those memories, whether they represent my personal history or merely wishful thinking, I thank her; and you, for bringing her poem to me. (*5 Worcester Avenue, White River Junction, VT 05001*)

WALT WILLIS

Trap Door No. 17 is an exceptional issue in many ways. First because of your editorial about, of all things, the Hoover Dam. It was surprisingly interesting. Your piece about your collection was interesting to me too, since I've recently disposed of mine preparatory to moving to a smaller house. I know that Carol Carr will be sorry to hear this, because she loved the old one as much as we did. It was just that the upkeep of it got to be too much for us, what with damp and dry rot. It was bought by a builder, who plans to build a new and very expensive house on what Carol described as The Gloating Sward.

Karen's travelogue was enthralling, especially about Palermo. Ron Bennett was fascinating, if true. Carol's contribution was more puzzling than usual, but as readable as ever.

Richard Brandt struck home with his description of the 80-year-old man responsible for a traffic accident. I'm 78 now myself and I worried about being responsible for an accident after being involved in two damage-only accidents in the past year. So when my car was stolen during the move to our new house, I decided not to replace it. So far I haven't regretted it. Nor has James. He visited us over Monday and Tuesday, coming all the way from Portstewart, door to door, by taxi. It cost £50 each way.

Steve Stiles' piece was illuminating, especially the bit about the rock that never cries, that island that feels no pain. It seems to me as if I had been told something true and useful about the psychology of the urban savage.

Dave Langford was entertaining, as was Sidney Coleman in his very different way.

Christina Lake inspires me to disinter my own attempt at researching my family tree, which will entail digging out a piece I wrote for a British fanzine about an ancestor of mine who was born three times. (*9 Alexandra Road, Donaghadee BT21 0QD, Northern Ireland*)

RON BENNETT

I'm afraid I haven't been able to do a John Berry and read through *Trap Door* No. 17 at a single sitting. I do most of my leisure reading in bed before settling down. With *Trap Door* it's a mistake I've made but once. I was writing LoCs in my sleep all night, tossing this way and turning that, my mind churning away. Far too much stimulation. Ha! *Trap Door*, the fanzine with up to 75% more caffeine.

I'm envious of your visit to and in the Hoover Dam. A well-written piece. And I liked your account of fanzine filing. My own collection is stored in piles and I'm pleased to note that you share with me the time-consuming practice of searching for fanzines, time-consuming because no matter how insistent one might be not to allow it to happen, one still spends time on what might be called the Fall-Out Syndrome, the stopping to read something adjacent to the researched item. And maybe even adjacent to that, too.

That's a wonderful piece of travelogue by Mrs. Silverberg. Fascinating and, despite its length, really all too short. I actually found myself shivering at her description of the cold sleet of Paris and Sicily.

The Louvre of course is, well, it's the Louvre. And that's, equally of course, not being dismissive. I prefer what used to be the Louvre's offshoot, the Impressionist

array which used to be housed just across the way in the old real tennis building.

A few years ago, the collection was moved to the old train sheds at the Quai d'Orsay, on the Left Bank, downriver from the Eiffel Tower. On the ground floor there is a stunning collection of sculpture as well as odd pictures stuck away hither and thither. In one corner of a hither I came across Whistler's dear old mum. But it's the top floor which *has* to be visited. Two rooms of Degas, a half-dozen Van Goghs, thirteen Renoirs in one room, Pissaro, Manet, Monet, etc., etc. Mind-blowing.

Good gracious! A piece by me. My first fanzine appearance in twenty-five years. Thank you for arranging such a *fantastic* heading illo. Dan either must have been at that workshop himself or must have a pretty good knowledge of Stirling Hall.

I enjoyed Carol Carr's melange and feel that, in the midst of what she perhaps felt was bland entertainment which needed spicing up a little, she threw in some minor controversy. Yes, she has the typical Woody Allen timbre off to a tee, but I don't think one can criticize Allen because in a film his characters don't grow or develop. Are they supposed to grow or develop? Do people in real life, in a time-span similar to that covered in a Woody Allen film, grow and develop?

Richard Brandt's piece was interesting although, because of the subject matter, not exactly entertaining. His mention of a plane crash victim having been turned to jelly pulled me up short. It was only a paragraph or two later that I remembered that what we call jelly is your jello. And there I was munching a jam sandwich at the time. That *really* pulled me up short.

I always thoroughly enjoy Steve Stiles' ramblings about life in New York. Does he appreciate that the suicide who hit the sidewalk some eight feet behind him as he strolled by might actually have been aiming to hit him but had misjudged his leap? We, too, had a chemistry teacher who disappeared into his stock room. Mind you, it was a practice of his, doing so while he continued to dictate notes to his class. Emsley was his name. We called him Avogadro. One day he disappeared into the stock room, his disembodied voice continuing the spiel. On this particular day there was an almighty bang. Smoked billowed from the stock room doorway. We sat transfixed in mid-scribble. Through the smoke emerged this caricature – wing collar flapping, spectacles awry, hair dishevelled, pull-over holed, charred and smoking, face blackened, etc. If I'd seen it in a movie, I'd have thought it ridiculous. He blinked at us *and continued dictating* exactly where he'd left off.

Is anyone out there still producing a mimeo'd fanzine? [*Geri Sullivan's excellent Idea springs to mind,*

for one.) I still can't quite reconcile myself to the idea of the entire mimeo culture being consigned to the scrap heap. Nor manual typewriters, I suppose. But rotary mimeos and fandom were one and the same. They went hand in hand, perhaps walking alongside their hekto and flatbed cousins. I liked Murray Moore's little tale about opening a bottle of Gestetner corflu for visiting fans to sniff. I could actually smell the stuff myself as I was reading it.

A dozen or so years ago, I was producing a school magazine which I churned out on the school's electric Gestetner. Colleagues were constantly in awe of the expertise I demonstrated. Why, I could correct mistakes! I could draw straight lines without tearing stencils. "Yes, I use a loop stylus." "What's a loop stylus?" I could even shade in areas of illustrations. Magic, Meyer, magic. And when it came to collating the different piles of sheets: why, I even had a speedy method for that operation. Maybe I should have shown around my well-thumbed copy of Vince's *Duplicating Without Tears*. In those days a teacher could be promoted to a Post of Special Responsibility (which also carried a hike in salary) and I was awarded such a post for running the magazine. I turned it down and was immediately awarded the same post with the responsibility for mathematics in the school. I used the first extra pay cheque to go down to the large Gestetner offices in the Leeds city center with the intention of buying a wodge of new guides and shading plates. I was regarded as someone from ancient Babylon. Still, I'm getting used to this sort of thing. Even my 640K Amstrad is regarded as paleolithic by visitors. I think I'll let them look at the Commodore 8K Pet while I go out shopping for a new stylus for my 78 rpm gramophone, er, record player. And, no, don't start chuntering on about Buddy Bolden cylindricals. *{No, and not about Little Wonder Records, either.}*

Yes, it's true that in order to become a taxi driver in London one has to learn the location of every street in the capital. It's called "The Knowledge." And it's actually worse than Shelby Vick envisages. The novice driver also has to learn the easiest and quickest routes from any A to any B. For example, when I'm in London I usually stay at a hotel which is just off Russell Square. Taxi from King's Cross Station, along the Euston Road. Turn left. Quarter of a mile. There you are. That's the direct route which takes in several trillion traffic lights, traffic snarls, buses, through traffic, etc. The taxi route takes a quick left, whips down some narrow alley, turns right along some back street, left, right, left, right, and gosh we're here. I'll salute the London cabby any day.

Oh hell, not Sam Moskowitz, too. Another great

loss, not only as a science-fiction personality, not only as a science-fiction *fan*, but as a nice guy, too. When I first heard of him, way way back, he was always mentioned as something of a joke, someone whose writing was turgid, strained and ultra-serious, entirely without humor, who spoke with a loud, loud voice. Well, he was always great with me, and exceedingly kind. I last met him over here when a convention had taken over the halls of residence at Manchester University while the students were away on their Easter break. I happened across him sitting on a bench in the courtyard one fine evening (rare in the UK at Easter, believe me) and we sat for a long while and chatted about Things Fannish. No humor? Well, he took a ribbing that evening and gave as good as he got. Highlight of that convention for me. *(36 Harlow Park Crescent, Harrogate, N. Yorks. HG2 0AW, U.K.)*

BILL DANNER

Trap Door is undoubtedly one of the most attractive and readable of fanzines done with computer composition. Too many of them violate most or all the "rules" of good printing that have been formed over the 500 years since movable type took over the printing of books from painstaking scribes. If I wanted to nitpick I might mention the use throughout of en-dashes instead of em-dashes, but I realize that most computer faces, for some unknown reason, omit the em. *{Actually, my software is so old that it doesn't support the ASCII em-dash. The dash I use is an overlapping of three hyphens. Someday, Bill, when I get a new computer, I will have Real Em-Dashes.}*

I found your piece about Hoover Dam very interesting indeed. I was around when it was being built, and saw articles about it and shots of it in newsreels. Either I didn't read any of the articles or they were superficial and made no mention of the complexity of the structure. The only thing that got across was its immensity. *(R.D. 1, Kennerdell, PA 16374)*

BOB SMITH

I found your description of the Hoover Dam tour fascinating and surprisingly visual, and it reminded me of my one and only tour of a dam many years ago (I can't even remember which *state* I was in at the time!). I recall I was glad to get back out into the fresh air, though. I kept thinking of all those war movies where the good guys place explosives deep in the tunnels, and ... well, enough of *that*! (Actually, I'm looking at a picture of the Hoover Dam right now, and it conveys an image of awesome depth into which something is about to lower a gigantic coffin.)

"Agbergs Abroad" was most readable, entertaining,

and I detected a hint of the late S. J. Perelman's *Westward Ho!* here and there during the trip, with perhaps a splash of the late Lawrence Durrell thrown in. Humor, culture, good writing and a teensy bit of name-dropping. Lovely.

I must've had a thoroughly boring childhood, because Steve Stiles' experiences in New York City came across as almost alien for me. And yet, I realize that's not true! The London I grew up in had its moments, mostly relayed via my parents because I was too young. So, for example, the death of T. E. Lawrence, the Spanish Civil War, the burning down of the Exhibition Building, are slightly more than just plain historical events. A personal traumatic remembering is evacuation from London in 1939 and return when the countryside couldn't stand us and we wanted our parents. The move to a quiet country town during the Blitz and then, four years later when one is most impressionable, to be taken to a live Glen Miller concert in that same quiet town with the heady atmosphere of D-Day minus whatever exciting us all. To help your dad put out incendiary bombs and search for souvenirs. Nah, Steve can have his New York City.

Is Christina Lake perhaps the female British fannish *enfant terrible*? Is she perhaps the fannish equivalent of the vitriolic Dorothy Parker? (Or worse, Germaine Greer.) Or did someone feed her FTL's *Ah! Sweet Idiocy* when she was a young and (presumably) impressionable fan? Is she *serious*, or is this her way of having fun within the broad universe we know as fandom? There will always be individuals who yearn to lecture at fandom, and I think I can remember a few; and although Christina is very readable, I detect little genuine sense of humor in the writings I have read so far. *{Then I suggest you might try again, because humor is one of the factors in Christina's writing I enjoy the most.}* History means many things to many individuals, and what we learn at school may start us down some fascinating sidetracks, or it might come (much) later in life. We can learn, very quickly and sharply, not to overdo airing our views in fandom or try to get across the True and Deep Meanings of our favorite interests and hobbies, but we can also get a good education on the peculiar habits of those foreign cousins around the globe.

If Christina thinks the British education system was a mite musty in her day, experiencing us oldies being educated in the late '30s and early '40s would no doubt have her jumping off the Waterloo Bridge (to throw in a sentimental overtone) in sheer disgust! As far as we were concerned, the British Empire, the British Raj and the Colonies still existed, and George Orwell was upsetting us on the radio. Our heroes were linked to the Empire and heartily assisted by wartime propaganda. At fourteen

years of age I was so conditioned I wanted to be like Lord Kitchener of Khartoum and drop with the Airborne Division at Arnhem. (Now, *there's* a nifty bit of time travel for you.) If you tell me now that *that* was all rubbish, the acid would come to the surface in my normally pleasant voice, and I would point out that given the time, place and one's age *all of history* is rubbish, whether it be yesterday or the fifteenth century. So, who cares if fandom (one of an almost infinite number of specialized interests) isn't "real" history? For me it *was* good fun, but I'm not so sure about what I observe *now*. However, the fact that I am enjoying myself immensely writing this LoC means it can't *all* be bad. The way I look at it, any of my ancestors could have been fans of almost anything, and no doubt if they hadn't had a hobby of some kind they might have gone nuts in their otherwise dreary lives. The further back in time you go the drearier living becomes.

As I flipped through the letter column, two thoughts immediately jostled for right of way. One was, wow! this is getting into the Big League here compared with other current fanzines I'd read; and *here*, in your letter column, are all the warm, pleasant and unpleasant, deeply felt, answers to Christina's arguments and questions. A further thought niggles its way up: that it isn't the gaffing that causes the mental anguish, it's the coming back. I am reading the aftermath of a memorial issue and trying to come to grips with my own memories. Burbee and Perdue were legendary names when I entered fandom in the early '50s, and my knowledge of Redd Boggs was pretty much the same as John Baxter's, of course. Bob Shaw was part of the Irish Fandom Giants, and Ethel was once very kind and tactful about my foolishness in a certain column. *Valé* all of them. (37 St. Johns Road, Bradbury NSW 2560, Australia)

MURRAY MOORE

Brad Foster's cover stirs a possibly confused memory that the noun swag is an acronym. *{If so, for what?}*

I was interested to read your judgment that U.K. fanzines are more interesting, on average, than North American ones. *Banana Wings* is one of my current favorites. Comparing your U.K. and U.S. stats, my interpretation is that more fanzines are published per fan in the U.K. than in the U.S. My hypothesis is that geography plays a role in the U.K., which has less geography than either Canada or the U.S. U.K. fans can travel across their country in much less time, on trains. They can and do see each other more often. Fanzines are an expression of this community. I shall be interested in explanations from U.K. fans correcting my confused conclusions.

As for the Canadian statistics, adding or subtracting *Opuntia* takes the total for 1996 to 2 from 14, or to 26

from 14. I am sure you are on Dale Speirs' mailing list. Throw in a couple *Space Cadet Gazettes*, and there's your 14 Canadian fanzines from a country of 30 million. *(That's pretty close; add one fanzine from Daniel Farr, Ukelele No. 4, and you have a complete picture for '96. Farr did another issue in '97.)*

I started an index, by editor, of my fanzines. My initial enthusiasm for typing editor, title, number and date, soon petered out. I have been adding fanzines as they arrive, though. I am a recent convert to sorting fanzines by editor. I thought alphabetically by title was obvious, until I visited Taral, who bags his fanzines grouped by editor. "Why would you file them by title?" he asked. For one reason, I didn't have as many fanzines, then. My fanzines are stored in various places, in boxes and flat on shelves, and in two categories: read and unread. Ditto for my books and my comics.

Dan Steffan's illustration for Ron Bennett's "It's A Mystery To Me" made me think of Alex Toth's style. This comparison is a compliment. Upon finishing I wondered how much, or all, of Ron's story is made up. I quickly decided the answer was unimportant.

Christina Lake agrees with Harry Warner's oft-made suggestion that fanzines will be for future sociologists and historians a fertile source of detail about everyday life, albeit, I add, of a group of educated, bright – educated and bright are not synonymous automatically – English-speaking, Protestant-Jewish-Catholic, middle-class individuals in the U.S. and the U.K.

Jessica Amanda Salmonson's letter, particularly this observation, stuck with me: "Mail arting is an utterly pointless waste of time, just like fandom, filled with people trying to build a sense of community *(and she continues)* on the basis of dada, surrealism and silliness."

More recently I came across this description, in an Associated Press-originated obituary of Allen Ginsberg: " 'Basically, just a gang of friends who were very into being literate, and who were interested in art, and loved each other,' Ginsberg once said of the Beat Generation's founding fathers. 'Some gay, some straight.' "

Fanzine fandom is unique only in its details, not in the impulse that brought it into, and keeps it in, existence. (377 Manly Street, Midland, Ont. L4R 3E2, Canada)

A. VINCENT CLARKE

Yes, one has noted that much is made in *Trap Door* of the talents of the recently departed. A very worthy cause—we mourn, but we record our appreciation. Very healing, too; it was putting out a memorial zine on Arthur Thomson that helped me—and I hope others—through a traumatic period. As Julia Vinograd's poem says, I still "don't quite believe it." And that poem is a very good piece of writing, too.

Ron Bennett was one of the leading lights of '50s British fandom – great to see him coming up with a marvelous little short story like "It's A Mystery To Me Too" in the mid-'90s. As one whose creative juices have dried up, makes me writhe with jealousy, too.

Carol Carr is like one of her own exotic butterflies, flying without pause from one outre subject to another. Fleas on elephant hair. The high-tech *S.F. Chronicle*. Adult fast food. And some intelligent discourse on Woody Allen films thrown in. Lovely.

The rest of the contributors are good, as usual, with a special mention of Christina Lake's ancestral delvings. I suppose that I *should* have some interest in ancestors, seeing that they passed on genes and stuff into my cells, but surely all of this just relates to physical attributes? The things that make me *me*—including being a lifelong fan – are the results of being put through the pinball machine of life.

As far as I can understand Christina's theory, she thinks the chief value in fannish writing is the insights it can give future historians into everyday 20th century life. Well, personally I couldn't care less about future historians—fandom, and especially its humor, is a thing to be enjoyed by fans here and now.

The letter column (headed by the best illo in the issue) is the usual joy. And the RIP note on Sam Moskowitz brought back memories. I have a small story about Sam. Way back in the '80s, soon after my return to the bewilderment of fandom (as I perceived it then), I received a phone call.

"Vincent Clarke?"

"Yes."

"This is Sam Moskowitz. I'm in London, and I'd like to visit you."

My sense of wonder dropped in a dead faint. Sam Moskowitz? The name which I'd first read in *pre-war* fanzines? It must be a hoax – some modern fan had read that '50s fans were fond of hoaxes. I was a born-again '50s fan. Someone was trying it on. I was just getting ready to utter some frivolous reply, when that beautiful bass American accent came again.

"Edward Tubb gave me your phone number."

I gulped. No one, but no one, would call that wild card of '50s British fandom (and later) anything but "Ted" – except for one highly regarded serious fan.

"G-good to hear from you, Sam. When can you come around?"

So we made an appointment for a few hours time, and I was left with a slight dilemma. I'm not *really* serious about science fiction, only about SF fandom. I had a few thousand fanzines, but I didn't think I could bear to discuss them in bibliographic detail. And I had some hundreds of SF books and magazines, but didn't

treat them with Sam's sort of respect. What to do? Terry Hill, who got me back into fandom, said he'd come over. But Terry, who'd entered fandom three or four years previously when a friend wanted assistance selling stuff at a con, wasn't the sort of heavyweight I thought was needed. And suddenly inspiration struck. I had the phone number of Mike Ashley, the author of the multi-volume *History of the Science Fiction Magazine* and other bibliographic works. I rang him. Yes, he'd be glad to come over.

And Sam's visit went off well. Terry and I did the lighter stuff, and Mike brought over a bag full of Sam's books for him to autograph and talked serious SF with him. Sam later sent me a couple issues of *Helios*, his pre-war fanzine. A nice guy. (16 Wendover Way, Welling, Kent DA16 2BN, U.K.)

F. M. BUSBY

We'd just become pleasantly acquainted with Seth Goldberg at Corflu. His sudden death came as a real shocker.

I like Julia Vinograd's poem on Dick Ellington: good insights.

Dave Langford's slide rule mention reminds me that I still have my good ol' K&E Log Log Duplex Something-or-other (not the usual Decitrig). But only the vaguest idea of how to use it!

Our family osteopath, a gentleman a bit older than my grandfather, supplemented his skills in the cracking of necks and shoulders and hip joints with a couple of electrical aids. One was the Abrams Machine which enhanced one's well-being in ways unclear to me then and now. The other used the violet-glowing evacuated glass electrodes as described by Dave. One summer I developed three small fleshy moles at the dorsal rim of my right armpit. When Dr. Archer ran a glowing electrode, buzzing like a nest of wasps, over the trio, I felt the mild sting of static sparks and smelled ozone. In the next few days the three nubbins shriveled and fell off like scabs, leaving no sign.

During the early '60s we met Sam Moskowitz a few times. One on one or in small groups he came across great: interesting and pleasant. But not unlike some of our other icons, given a microphone he never knew when to stop. Allowing for bias, I enjoyed and appreciated *The Immortal Storm* a lot – but also got a kick from the comment of a Phillyfan (either Hal Lynch or Will J. Jenkins, the one who was not Murray Leinster) that it was “the only book (he) ever read, to which World War Two comes as an anticlimax.” {It was William F. Jenkins who was Murray Leinster; Will Jenkins was a '60s fan.} (2852 – 14th Avenue West, Seattle, WA 98119)

TERRY JEEVES

Liked the cover. The bag labeled “swag” reminded me of my childhood comics where burglars always wore black masks and striped jerseys, and carried a jemmy and a bag labeled “swag.” It never struck me as looking suspicious. Interior illos also excellent; Foster and Stiles have lovely complementary styles (no pun intended).

Enjoyed your reminiscences of visiting Hoover Dam. We had that pleasure in '82 and your description brought back memories. Since then we've seen it (in films) as a Middle East secret weapons center and in the latest Bond movie, among other places. I wouldn't rate up as up there with the Grand Canyon, though. We had the pleasure of flying around in the latter (before such trips were banned) and that was really something.

Karen Silverberg's Continental trip was interesting and recalled memories of Parisian hotels with their narrow corridors and “off in fifteen seconds” corridor lights. Also “The Cecil” in Belgium where plumbing was eccentric to say the least. Worst was using a toilet in Paris and having an old lady whisking a broom around my feet.

Ron Bennett's piece was undoubtedly the best item in the issue. Great illo by Steffan to head it. Lovely, gentle humor which caught you unawares every time. Excellent piece and neat ending. Nice to see Ron back in fandom.

Re Vince Clarke and Joe Nicholas on “old fandom,” the circumstances were totally different. We only had three magazines; they were exceedingly hard to get in the U.K.; and it was a rarity to find a fellow fan living anywhere near you. SF hardcovers were almost non-existent, paperbacks and films likewise. As for TV, it was still a glint in Baird's eye. Truly, it was a proud and lonely thing to be a fan. Nowadays the scene is totally different – and so is fandom. (56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough, N. Yorks. YO12 5RQ, U.K.)

LLOYD PENNEY

I'm glad that some fans are looking after their fanzine collections. I try to, but I have sixteen feet of shelving full of zines and there's just no more room. Two photocopy boxes are also full, and I'm going to need a third. I wonder if SF libraries would preserve this kind of publishing ephemera? I know how our local SF library feels about them; I know they stuffed what fanzines they received into a file drawer, and I'm not sure if they've archived or trashed them. {The only SF library I feel comfortable about is the Eaton Collection at the University of California at Riverside, where Terry Carr's and Rick Sneary's fms collections reside along with a huge SF library in a climate-controlled facility. Harry Warner Jr.'s collection will join them someday. If there are other libraries

devoting this much space and energy to SF and fanzines, I don't know about them.)

Carol Carr's article reminds me of a recent 60 Minutes story on how the deer population in New England is skyrocketing, and they're becoming a huge nuisance. Venison farming, anyone? If they can farm ostriches in some parts of Ontario, deer farms in New England might help enhance the diet in the future, and solve a problem at the same time.

When I grew up, kids didn't form gangs; they were too busy moving out of town. (For the record, I grew up in Orillia, Ontario, about eighty miles north of Toronto. Orillia was the home of novelist Stephen Leacock and folkie Gordon Lightfoot. I also think Orillia originated the idea of rolling up the sidewalks after 6 p.m.) *{Orillia was also home for a time to Colin Hinz, editor of the late lamented fanzine Novoid, who still resides on my mailing list but hasn't been heard from lately.}* I had to put up with my share of bullies and punks with lots of muscle and no brains, but I was smart enough to find ways to set one bully against the other, and let them pound one another even more senseless than they were. In other cases, I did just what Steve Stiles did – when I was above, and the bullies were below, a few buckets of water were often enough to get rid of them for the moment, and enough to get downstairs and away. High school and university proved to be the best revenge, especially if you went back home to find that the bully was in a reform school, in jail, or sometimes dead.

I know some of my family's genealogy on my mother's side, for my great-grandfather was involved in such a project. He stopped his work when he found a horse thief in his ancestry, too embarrassed to continue. Yvonne has researched her family as far back as France; her ancestors were part of the French royalty shipped over to North America to start new lives. She's thought about getting on with her researches again, and she's in luck; there's a Mormon genealogical facility a short drive away from where we've moved.

Too bad that J. A. Salmonson has bad memories of fandom; too many fans have a negative take on their fannish experiences. You must build your communities where you can, and if fandom is built on dada, surrealism and silliness, it sounds a lot more fun than other communities. Besides, even though some people have FIAWOL as a fannish philosophy, it still supplements the other communities of your life, like family, peers, etc.

Just a couple of week's after Sam's death, I finally purchased my own copy of *The Immortal Storm* at a grand reopening of a small bookstore. One Mike Glicksohn was there, and he quipped, "It's going to be a little difficult to get an autograph." I smiled and said,

"Ah, but there's the challenge." (1706-24 Eva Road, Etobicoke, Ont. M9C 2B2, Canada)

SID BIRCHBY

As to *Trap Door* being a Fanzine of Record, you may well observe that the recording is in a sense a tribute to "those worthies who are no longer with us." That is true, but I wonder if we – and especially you, Robert – have a special sense of remembering all that was attractive in a personality and very little to his/her discredit. I am thinking of the larger and sleazier world wherein a person famed in literature and letters is at his death an eminent role model, and *then* is cut down to size regardless of family feelings and of the libel laws. *{I'm not 100% of the "speak no ill of the dead" school, but I prefer that the worse excesses of tabloid (and, increasingly, mainstream) journalism remain alien to the fannish landscape. No doubt this is due to having lived through both the 1964 and 1984 blow-outs.}* (40 Parrs Wood Avenue, Didsbury, Manchester M20 5ND, U.K.)

JOHN BAXTER

I enjoyed Karen Silverberg's kvetch about Paris's shortcomings in waiter service, hotel service, the design of the Louvre, deficiencies in Paris *vestiaires* ... pretty well everything about my adoptive home, in fact. It was an exercise in a venerable, indeed historic literary tradition. There are whole books devoted to the same sort of complaint. When Caesar divided Gaul into three parts, there was probably an argument about the check. ("Listen, waiter, we can't *all* have had the grilled groin of swine. 300 sesterces? Zeus's testicles! Back in Rome you could have the whole pig for that.")

Before I lived here, I shared the common view that the French waiter was by nature, breeding and education a class apart. Surely scouts must scour the countryside for the curdled cream of France's peasantry: the most arrogant, the least helpful, the deaf, the innumerate, the children with thumbs so prehensile that they could extend a dirty nail into the deepest soup plate.

Seven years in Paris have altered this view somewhat. Rudeness and intransigence in the French is largely, I now believe, a function of rival ideologies. I came to this conviction through the improbable route of Tony Hillerman, whose novels mostly deal with crimes on the Navajo reservation in Arizona.

In *Sacred Clowns*, Hillerman expounds on the differences between Navajo and white conceptions of justice. White society punishes crime, and aims for a dispassionate imposition of the law. Navajo society regards crime as the act of a sick person and hopes, by mediation and prayer, to restore the perpetrator to health. Retribution concerns them less than restitution.

This system permeates Navajo thinking, according to Hillerman. (I've never discussed it with a Navajo, I admit.) *{Nor I, but all the writing I've read by Navajos supports your view.}* When there's a drought, others pray for rain. The Navajos pray for understanding.

Visitors to France who sit down in a cafe and look around for a waiter think they have a right to a good product well served; the visit is primarily a commercial transaction. The French don't take this view at all. To them, the visit is essentially social. Food and drink will be provided as a courtesy to guests. You pay, but out of a similar courtesy—why should your hosts be out of pocket? It's the same impulse that leads one to take a cake or a bottle of wine to dinner with friends.

If one sees a cafe in this light, almost everything a foreign visitor does is guaranteed to give offense. Few, for instance, greet the proprietor or waiter when they come in. (You wouldn't in a coffee shop in Sioux Falls, but imagine arriving at a friend's house for dinner and not saying "hi"!)

Most sit down and immediately look around for service. (Imagine taking your coat off at the house of a friend and saying immediately, "When do we eat?") Many ask the waiter, "Do you speak English?" Or Spanish, or Italian. (Is this a question you should ask your host at a dinner party if you didn't speak their language? Or would you expect them, as considerate hosts, to make an effort to understand you?)

It takes a radical readjustment in one's sensibilities to greet everyone when one enters a French shop, to wait uncomplainingly until you're served, to let the vendor offer to speak your language. Understandably most tourists don't have the time or the energy to do so. But until they do, there will always be a thumb in that tepid soup. Or, in Karen Silverberg's case, the wet umbrella inside her husband's overcoat. *{True enough, but I searched in vain to find anything in Karen's narrative that would've provided the basis for such a judgment in this instance.}*

Vicki Rosenzweig's question about the French ban on publishing embarrassing facts about public figures, and her suggestion that European countries might trade scandals, some nations allowing publication, others not, is very acute. This is almost what happens now. A British tabloid like the *Sun* can print revelations about French public figures which would attract prosecution in France, while French publications like *Paris Match* or *Allo* print items (e.g., that shot of Prince Charles in the nude) which the *Sun* wouldn't touch with a barge pole. (Whether the prince's pole was in fact of barge dimensions was, naturally, the question on all lips, but the picture, snapped through an open window on a very long lense, was too murky for precise calculations.) *(18 rue de l'Odeon, 75006 Paris, France)*

WILLIAM BREIDING

I'm afraid that Karen Haber Silverberg's road journal was like a long convention report where the attendee mentions names and places and parties but little of any substance seems to happen to make these experiences important; or maybe nothing really did happen, just a pleasant moment in time where the interior architecture is not accessed. There were some damned fine turns of phrases, but that's just not enough to keep the fluff from blowing away. I feel like a shit for writing anything negative to a fanzine, but then I remember Glicksohn's hard but fair LoCs to my fanzine in the early '70s which, though tough on my fragile teenage psyche, were ultimately a needed kick in the butt. Besides, if you can't react honestly to a fanzine, why bother at all?

Steve Stiles' *Cosmopolitan Boy* was most engaging. One day Steve is going to have enough of his episodic memoirs written and printed in various fanzines to put a book together. That will be a wonderful fannish event, and I look forward to it.

You say to Gary Hubbard that multi-colored ditto is a fave. I agree. But the problem with it is the slow fade. Great chunks of the history of Apa-50 (and much of fanzine fandom in general, I'm sure) are now defunct because many of the contributions were reproed using spirit duplication, and truly, those sheets of dusty colored paper are now haunted only by the ghosts of words. *{The fading varies a lot, Wm., because I have hektographed fanzines from the '40s that are still bright, while more recently done dittoed publications—including my own—have faded to varying degrees. Multi-colored artwork has winked out unevenly, some colors faring better than others.}*

I'd say Ray Nelson took Burbee a little personal, don't you? Just why was Ray's ruff caused to stand on end? It's no secret that the majority of the BNFs in our history were weird-assed nerds and entirely egocentric. They were also real good with words. It's how most of the myths and legends were created: egocentric tale spinning (Ray knows that!). But I suppose Ray's point might have been that this was often at the potential expense of another's feelings. *{Ray would have to clarify this and I hope he will, but (speaking of feelings) you're on thin ice here with "nerds"—"weird-assed" and "egocentric" are more like it.}*

Addressing your burning question to Murray Moore: do Sure Rite and Gestetner conflu have different aromas? I used Sure Rite Correction Fluid exclusively on Sure Rite stencils on my Speed-O-Print hand crank mimeo and I remember the smell vividly (I of the self-typing fingers). The other day I found a half full bottle of Gestetner conflu at a thrift shop for a dime.

While sniffing it I could detect no difference in aroma from my memory of Sure Rite conflu. The next time we expect to be in the same place we should bring our respective bottles and do some serious sniffing. *{It's a date, Meyer!}*

I was amused by Mog Decarnin's mention of Denys Howard's *Wandering About From Place To Place Without Apparent Reason* and the spot it holds in her own fannish canon. Denys came across that title in a small news item in the San Francisco *Chronicle* while he was staying at my place. I believe it was the *Chron's* polite way of saying the guy had been busted for vagrancy. When Denys read near the end of the piece that the man had been "*wandering about from place to place without apparent reason*," he cackled (as Denys was wont to do) and said, "That's just like being at a worldcon!" Thus the title for his con report for KC in '76 was found. At least that's how I think it went. Memory do play tricks. (P. O. Box 2322, Tucson, AZ 85702-2322)

STEVE STILES

Have I ever mentioned to you that illustrating articles for *Trap Door* makes it, for some unknown reason, difficult to comment on those same articles? I have no idea why this is. *{Me either, but from my point of view it's an acceptable trade-off.}*

Carol's column continues to be one of my favorite features of your fanzine. This time around her column reminds me of that summer two years ago when we had the Randallstown mountain lion. I have to explain that Randallstown is a pretty typical U.S. suburb in Baltimore County and is rapidly becoming overdeveloped. I'd say that 80% of our woods and farmlands have been transformed into upscale condo communities with cute names like Foxgrove Meadows and the like (who thinks up these names, I'd like to know). Even so, it's been encouraging to see that all manner of woody wildlife around here continue to survive and even flourish. Some beautiful red foxes and huge egrets are regularly spotted in our neighborhood. Two animal populations are particularly thriving in western Maryland: mountain lions and black bears. The reason the authorities know this is that three times as many bears and lions have been hit by automobiles in 1996 than in 1995, and that the figures for '97 so far indicate that the body count continues to climb. Even so, there are no mountains in Randallstown (and if there were, one of them would probably be called Foxview Heights) so I was skeptical when the local papers reported a mountain lion had been sighted in our neighborhood. That is, until a week later when I went out for a walk and within two blocks of our place came across what was left of a large German Shepherd. It had been torn limb from limb.

Still, that was two years ago and no other sign of any mountain lion. These days I'm more worried about Lyme Disease. Attaching rubber bands around my pants legs is probably far more effective (but less satisfying) than carrying an AK47. (8631 Lucerne Road, Randallstown, MD 21133)

BOYD RAEBURN

What a great line-up of talent on the contents listing. Many of the items which I enjoyed considerably unfortunately didn't produce comment hooks. But I loved Carol Carr's bit on *any* Woody Allen movie. *How true*. I don't think I could *stand* sitting through a Woody Allen movie. On a recent Siskel & Ebert program, they showed a clip from the film *Mrs. Brown*, which concerns itself with the friendship of Queen Victoria (played by Judith Dench) and her gamekeeper, Mr. Brown (played by Billy Connolly) after the death of her husband. One fragment of it was a bit of conversation between Brown and Disraeli, with Brown saying, "There's danger. I keep telling them, but they don't see it," with exactly the same Woody Allen whine. I hope there's not too much of that in the film.

Steve Stiles' "The Cosmopolitan Boy" was grimly gripping. One reads these types of accounts, but they are abstract experiences. It is different when it is lived by a person one knows.

I particularly liked Dave Langford's article on his Ediswan High Voltage Healing Box. I have been aware of such things, and thus it was interesting to read a first-hand account of such a device. One may laugh at the credulity of the purchaser of such devices (as late as 1933 even) but then I think of a package named Ekiban (or something like that) which I have seen at the pharmacy counter of more than one drugstore. It consists of a few small magnets which one places on sore muscles, and their wonderful magnetic powers relieve the pain. Is belief in such any more outre than belief in the High Voltage Healing Box?

Like Ron Bennett, I too find William Danner (and his *Stefantasy*) comes to mind when I see store advertisements or signs claiming "Up to 70% Off" with the "up to" in teensy type. One technique I no longer see employed is an ad with a list of items with prices such as "\$2.99 compare at \$10.00. \$4.99 compare at \$18.00." Naive persons thought the "compare at" price was the "regular price." A Danneresque take on this would be such as "GM Geo \$9,998.00 compare at \$50,000.00."

Joseph Nicholas in his letter wrote "Fifties-style mythmaking has not survived. Clearly, therefore, it is no longer useful. QED." I glee, not at his assertion, but by his ending it with "QED," a usage which is little understood now. (QED – *quod erat demonstrandum*,

meaning "which was to be proved.") (189 Maxome Avenue, Willowdale, Ont. M2M 3L1, Canada)

MARTY CANTOR

Steve Stiles' "reminiscences" about being a little kid set upon by big kids really is not something that happens only in run-down neighborhoods. I grew up in middle-class West Hartford, Connecticut, and had to walk two blocks to grammar school (one of which was very long). Most of the year I had no problem; however, during snow-time I had to run a gauntlet every morning. On both sides of the street, the larger kids built snow forts and had snowball fights every morning—when us smaller kids walked by, the larger kids stopped throwing snowballs at each other and, instead, threw them at us. However, instead of snowballs, they threw iceballs (snowballs made the evening before, dipped in water, and left outside at night). Those things *hurt*. The major difference in our experiences, though, lie in the fact that his tormentors were "formal" gang members and mine were merely larger kids taking advantage of us smaller wimps.

Harry Warner Jr. relates Elmer Perdue's goal of walking along every block in the entire Los Angeles area. Ye ghods! Not only would Elmer have gotten himself killed in some of the more non-salubrious parts of town, but also the sheer scope of that undertaking is breathtaking. The approximately 300 square miles the southern part of Los Angeles County which includes the City of Los Angeles has about eighty other cities of various sizes more or less contiguous to other cities in the county (with most of any non-street areas being ridges, hills and mountains which wander through and impinge upon these cities) which hold thousands of blocks of streets in all imaginable kinds of configurations. I have my doubts that Elmer ever accomplished this goal. *{No, he didn't, but he covered a lot. His goal was to walk streets only within the City of L.A., as he described in a mid-'50s issue of his FAPazine (reprinted in Wild Heirs No. 11.5), where he also reported he'd gotten as far as five miles away from City Hall. Cognizant of the "getting killed" aspect of things (even though this was long ago) he wrote, "Put off the tough areas until I can do so during school hours when the gangs will for the most part be dodging truant officers."}* (11825 Gilmore St. #105, North Hollywood, CA 91606)

DAVID THAYER

Dave Langford's nostalgic article reminds me of the inexpensive slide rule I had in college. I, and many other of my poor classmates, envied the students who could afford the expensive models (with their precision parts and legible markings). In the four short years I

took to reach graduate school, the once indispensable slide rules became obsolete, replaced by even more expensive calculators. Fortunately for my psyche I had switched from engineering to English. Still I lamented the relegation of the slide rule to history. It was something physical you could touch, work, and see. And it showed not only one specific answer but the relationship of a whole series of calculations. For me, computers have taken a whole generation of engineers one perilous step away from the real world the numbers they work with represent.

Richard Brandt's article showcases his ability to make the gruesome and sordid elements of another world seem, well, gruesome and sordid. It's a world I don't care if I never experience firsthand. (701 Regency Drive, Hurst, TX 76054-2307)

DALE SPEIRS

Collecting obsolete technology is a nice hobby if you have the space. Langford's High-Voltage Healing Box has got most of us beat, but slide rules are also one of my interests, as are pocket calculators and computer punchcards. None of these three collectibles requires an awful lot of space. Punchcards I only seem to find as long-forgotten bookmarks in old computer manuals (another thing I collect). It is a rare thing to find one despite the millions or billions produced back then. One thing that I keep thinking about is the tremendous waste of paper in those days, when nobody worried about the vast quantities of spreadsheet paper and punchcards simply chucked into the garbage can, not recycled. *{You may be opening yourself up for a whole new category of mail with your admission that you collect old computer manuals.}* (Box 6830, Calgary T2P 2E7, Canada)

DEREK PICKLES

Dear Dave Langford, I remember slide rules—have one in the desk drawer. Big advantage over calculators is that the batteries never go flat. Ghod, I thought I was Einstein when I bought my 10" Unique Log-Log slide rule in 1941. It has Scales A, B, C and D, Log-Log and Reciprocal (if desired) and cost six shillings (30p, about 55 cents). The instruction booklet claims that "The comprehensive number of the scales is a distinctive feature of the Unique Slide Rule, and in this respect it is superior to the more expensive instruments, most of whom are numbered in an inadequate and misleading manner." I wasn't allowed to use the slide rule in exams as the back has a table of Deg. Sin. Tan. and a comprehensive list of trigonometrical formulae.

The description of the Ediswan High-Voltage Healing Box reminds me of the glass electrodes applied to my face when I was having the facial part of the full hair-

dressings treatment I used to get when I was a model in the hairdressing department at the college I worked at. What I did for the students! Trouble was that I had to have my hair cut every fortnight so that by the end of the year I was almost as bald as I am now and had barber's rash from having soap powder used for shaving. This got so bad that I provided them with my own shaving cream. The UV electrodes were applied to my face and scalp and felt odd but not unpleasant. By the time I'd my hair washed and cut, had a facial, UV stimulation and hot towels applied to my face, I was so relaxed I sleepwalked through the next lecture I gave.

Shelby Vick mentions London taxi drivers. The one-year course that prospective black-cab (Hackney Carriage) drivers take is voluntary and unpaid. Candidates usually use a moped and drive the streets learning the names, one-way systems, etc. Not only the names of the streets but the names of the buildings in the streets, for when they are examined they can be asked to describe exactly each road and street from, say, a hotel to an office block miles away. This learning of the names and locations is called The Knowledge. Successful candidates are awarded a Hackney Carriage License which allows them to "ply for hire." They can stop and pick up a passenger who hails them in the streets. Hackney Carriages are regulated by law and supervised. "Private Hire" vehicles can only carry prebooked passengers, *not* pick up people in the street. You have to negotiate the fare with a Private Hire driver. There are regular police and Trading Standards sweeps when Private Hire drivers are booked and prosecuted for illegally acting like Hackney Carriage drivers. (44 Rooley Lane, Bankfoot, Brndford, W. Yorks. BD5 8LX, U.K.)

JAE LESLIE ADAMS

I was browsing through *Trap Door* No. 17, I swear, and in the middle of Calvin Demmon's piece, dropped the zine – literally, in the kitchen on the way to the basement stairs – and rushed right down to make a file drawer label "O-Z," just like Baum's, and Demmon's. In fact, there was a blank card waiting on a drawer for the inscription, so it was but the work of a moment. I had never quite decided what to call that drawer.

Now I'm wondering what I will find when I look in there again.

I liked Carol Carr's fine description of Woody Allen's work, although to me she doesn't seem to get down to what is so objectionable. All that whining and unresolved angst that annoy her so much are exactly what amuses me. I don't expect any fanfare, sunset, roll credits kind of conclusions in my life as she is lived, and so Allen's one-liners and cobbled-together closures are both as true and as artful as I can hope, from realism.

{I disagree that Carol doesn't get "down to what is so objectionable": go back and reread the paragraph in her column that begins, "Nobody listens to anybody." It's all there.}

I always enjoy Christina's observations, which get me thinking. This piece got me thinking about how history is taught in the U.S., how it must be an entirely different set of information from that taught in the U.K. When I asked my nine-year-old what kind of history he was learning, he had no idea what I was talking about and I had to point out to him that long before my time (a mist-shrouded era) his gramma learned History in school, and also Geography. Her mother (my gramma) saved some of the texts, which I read myself with great interest. The view from the '40s in the State of Oklahoma of the march of history was not remarkably broad or deep, but it seemed to me to provide a nutshell account of the continent. I never actually had History myself until I went to college. Apparently it is a higher discipline. *{As a product of the California school system (after second grade) back when it was good, I took separate courses in California (this came in fourth grade), U.S. and world history. But mostly what I remember these days is from reading Larry Gonick's Cartoon History series.}*

What U.S. citizens get in school nowadays is "social studies." This is mostly social history of the 18th and 19th centuries in America, which we get pureed with pinches of Economics, Psychology, Sociology, Biography, Cultural Geography and miscellaneous cultural studies. *{I had social studies, too; it was in addition to the various history courses.}*

I am as fond as anyone else of meaningless Names and Dates; but the way such factual items have been stigmatized as Hard Stuff would be laughable if applied to the sciences (which are all Hard Stuff). And somehow our study of history stops short at the details of the Great War – real hard stuff – by putting off any attention to the events of the 20th century until high school, by which time the students have been effectively immunized against actually learning anything.

Excuse me, but I've dived into my accustomed rant about the anti-intellectualism of the Amerikan educational system. I am not opposed to the synthesis of all those disciplines I mentioned. Education is not so bad that I would ever advocate ignorance instead. After many years of frothing about this, I have narrowed my suspicions to the social culture of the schools, which famously frowns on academic achievement and nurtures mediocrity, a sort of corporate culture that the teachers are sometimes surprisingly helpless to affect.

As American citizens outside of school, our main sources of historical information are television mini-series, war movies, romance novels and Mawsterpiece

Theatah. Thus my son and I have both gleaned many interesting facts about the Napoleonic era by watching the British adventure series "Sharpe," which I supplement by reading Jane Austen. We developed a common interest in the period which actually impelled us to the library.

It is too bad there is not more well-written and well-presented history commonly available. There are so many galvanizing stories in it. (621 Spruce Street, Madison, WI 53715)

JOSEPH NICHOLAS

Christina Lake's contribution was the stand-out of this issue, and her proposition—although one which I'm sure many fans may be unwilling to accept—one with which I find impossible to argue. But then how could any adherent of the history-from-below school of historical thought dissent from the proposition that future generations are likely to find the everyday details of life in the closing decades of the 20th century as recorded in apazines more interesting and important than the so-called fannish classics? Of course, this goes for my stuff as well, but then I'd be a fool if I said I expected any of it to be remembered once I'm gone, or even to be remembered from one year to the next.

Mind you, I'm not sure that I do have any theory of history, since to sign up to any theory is to implicitly accept that history (probably with a capital H) has a sense of purpose and direction—which usually entails a choice between either the Whig view of it as a glorious chronicle of humanity's upward progress from barbarism into the light, or the Marxist view of it as a cycle of revolutions in which the oppressor classes are overthrown by the oppressed who in turn become the new oppressors. Although the concept of history-from-below—that history is the story of the people, not of those who claim to have led them—owes much to the Marxist world-view, neither holds up well against the contingency theory, which argues that were it not for one particular event or person the subsequent history would be very different—and the more history one reads, the more likely the contingency theory seems. Which doesn't mean we shouldn't also focus on the lives of the ordinary people rather than their overlords....

Although Christina rejects fan history, I think she does so for the wrong reasons. It's not that it's all about people who are old or dead, but that—as practiced—it's not really history at all, but merely a chronology of what happened to whom and when, without any attempt to analyze why or how and certainly without any attempt to challenge the received wisdom about who were the great writers and which the great fanzines. And what's the point of that? Writing history which doesn't try to revise

and expand our understanding of the past by assaulting hallowed conventions seems quite pointless. *{Although agreeing with your observation, I don't think all fan history can be lumped into this dismissal. For instance, Laney's memoirs would surely be an exception; he goes on for pages analyzing why and how.}* (15 Jansons Road, South Tottenham, London N15 4JU, U.K.)

LEIGH EDMONDS

Trap Door No. 17 arrived here last week and brought some joy and nostalgia. John Bangsund's note about John Baxter's letter box: my golly, I remember that even though I had not met Baxter at that stage.

I enjoyed Christina Lake's article about fanhistory. As a filthy pro (in the history area) I more or less agree with her—she did not draw the analogy that fanhistory is family history because for most fans fandom is a kind of family. People are interested in fanhistory because they want to preserve their personal heritage, not because they are keen or good historians. That's my theory, anyway. (6 Elvira Street, Palmyra WA 6157, Australia)

GEORGE FLYNN

I was particularly impressed this issue with Carol Carr's and Sidney Coleman's respective miscellanea, but all the articles were good.

I really should do something about filing my fanzines. For many years, I've just stacked them in order of receipt, starting a new stack when the current one gets too tall for stability. But I'm running out of places to put stacks. *{Your system's like Harry Warner Jr.'s; he describes filling large shopping bags. If coupled with a cross-referenced (by editor and title) catalogue, this could be a useful system. One could get a sense of the pulse of fanzine fandom at any given time by pulling out the relevant folder(s) for the time period desired.}*

Christina Lake's theory that fan writing will eventually be of value mainly to social historians is an interesting (and scary) one. But I hope it doesn't become too popular in the short term: I can imagine certain people making up bizarre accounts of their daily lives just to confound the future historians. *{For some of us, making it up is hardly necessary.}*

Let's see, if I remember right the book Gary Hubbard talks about is *The Universal Baseball Association Inc.: J. Henry Waugh, Prop.*, by Robert Coover. Good book, but very strange. And fantasy of a sort, I think.

To Ken Forman: You find *The Book of Mormon* in Marriott hotel rooms all over, so Las Vegas is hardly special in that respect. (They also usually have a little biography of The Founder, which I think of as *The Book of Marriott*.) (CoA: P. O. Box 426069, Kendall Sq. Sta., Cambridge, MA 02142)

DAVID REDD

Many thanks for *Trap Door* No. 17 which was welcome for many reasons, not the least the contributions from so many people I've lost touch with. It's the (*Trap*) *Door into Summer*, almost. Especially evocative was the Jim Harmon letter in the Vibrating Ether ... he'll never know how much I looked for his letters in back issues of *SS* and *TWS*. (*He will now.*)

It's the atmosphere that gets me, along with little details such as the failed homeopathic bomb. Also the Salmonson sketch of the mail-art community – now at least I understand a long-ago song which was described as “not a song” but was both about and an example of “mail art Dada skank.” So educational, *TD*. (48 *Cardigan Rd., Haverfordwest, Pembrookshire, Wales SA61 2QN*)

TERRY HORNSBY

Several of your correspondents had me thinking about the nature of our fannish subculture, and I have to disagree with Ron Bennett's remarks that fanzines have nothing to say to the future. One mark of any good piece of writing, whether it's in a fanzine or a professional publication, is its longevity, its ability to communicate across the generations and the years. Instant obsolescence means a fan's hard work isn't going to be read by many people and so it behooves many fans to write in such a way that their material stands the test of time. Making articles fun and instilling a sense of myth into the work can certainly help in its assimilation by large numbers of people involved in the world from which such works tend to belong. Leaving a legacy of one's existence is one of the chief reasons any writing gets done at all, and what better way of doing so than making your friends and yourself the chief characters, in effect creating a “myth.”

Fannish myths are also made from a cloying nostalgia for one's youth and as fans get older it is only to be expected that their writings should harken back to their youth, to the “golden age” of the duplicator and mimeography. Such introspection becomes unhealthy when personal preference, borne from familiarity and nostalgia, breeds unreasoned discrimination, however. I don't think DTP is any more or less superior or inferior to the (until now) traditional methods of producing one's ish. They each have their advantages and disadvantages, DTP being so easy to get wrong just because in many ways it is so easy to do so much with it. Both forms of production require a certain discipline. I personally think that if less time is spent on the method of reproduction, more time should be available to spend on the actual writing of the text and drawing of the illustrations. It is easy to churn any old thing out using a computer, but DTP probably requires just as

much thought as using a duplicator to get the best out of it. (*No matter what the reproduction method, the most important things are to write to the best of your ability, and be legible.*)

There will always be mythmaking in fandom (through the joint efforts of congoers and faneds), but the days when there was only one myth, shared by all, are long gone. Now you can choose your myth as it pleases you or make your own. The Leeds fans, whom I call the Leeds mafia, have for years written about their convention exploits with each other and put forward each other for awards and fan funds. The whole business of TAFF and DUFF and so forth requires the nominees and their supporters to wax lyrical on their achievements, achievements which often can't be measured in anything but their own terms, let alone the larger incorporeal body of fandom as a whole.

Vinç Clarke mourns the passing of the myth-making group he was in rather than the passing of fannish mythology per se. Fandom is so much larger now and Vinç is simply not a part of the new cycle of myths, a youthful form of recreation to be frank, in any case: it's difficult to start myths when you are no longer young because it often requires years of supported effort.

Fandom by its very nature will encourage myth-making for as long as it continues to exist. When fannish myth finally drops dead, so has fandom. (66 *Johns Avenue, Lofthouse, Wakefield WF3 3LU, U.K.*)

ARTHUR JEAN COX

About Ray Nelson's relief at not having known Charles Burbee when he (Nelson) was a teenager: I met Burbee when I was 16 and knew him fairly well for some years after that; and yet I don't have those painful memories that RN seems to assume would have been the natural lot of any fledgling who knew the man ... despite the fact that Burbee and I were in more or less opposite camps in his various skirmishes with the LASFS. If I had any unpleasant memories of him, they would have been quite wiped out by the astonishing cordiality and delight with which he greeted me when we ran into each other, after not having seen each other for perhaps a quarter of a century, at the 1993 convention in Anaheim. (1528 *Winona Blvd. #11, Hollywood, CA 90027*)

PAUL WILLIAMS

Another excellent issue. Stiles, Coleman, Carr and Demmon all delightful (surely *Trap Door* is more in the great tradition of *Lighthouse* than any contemporary fanzine, though *Attitude* comes close), good art, good letters, and (I can't resist, this has certainly become a *TD* specialty which, after the loss of our beloved Bill,

must surely continue in No. 18): good grief. {Oog! But yes, Lighthouse is one of my models; I even have some of its columnists.}

Tom Perry would have been disappointed, if he'd stayed around long enough to read my reply to his comments in No. 17's lettercol. Regress as much as I might have—and I'm still working on it, as I drag out a lifetime of undercirculated or incomplete projects to see if they might find readers via the big apa in cyberspace (the Internet is a non-fannish apa with no space limitations and no waiting list)—I still would have had a hard time publishing the letter of comment Tom refers to that he sent me in response to *Within* No. 4 in 1963. My copy of the pages that did get run off but never assembled for *Within* No. 5 includes such marvels as Walter Breen's review of Ray Nelson's psychedelic utopia novella "Turn Off the Sky," Joe Pilati's fanzine review column, which has this to say about Thom Perry's *Logorrhea*, just revived after a six-year lapse: "Log is now nearing the pinnacle of small-fanzine perfection. ... If I had Thom's gift for bright, wry and generally erudite editorializing, I'd be publishing nothing but my own material." And a fine installment (which I trust has since been published somewhere else) of Bob Tucker's "Beardmumbblings," with art by Rotsler, Dave English, Lee Hoffman and Steve Stiles. But my surviving copy of this great unpublished fanzine (the back cover is still one of my all-time ATom inkings) is frustrating in that after page 109 the letter column is missing every other page (the stencils were cut but the second sides of those sheets were never run). So there's a full page of Thom's letter/book review, but the half page that came before and the half page that came after are missing. If I'd regressed fast enough I could have xeroxed the one page and sent it to Florida and challenged TP to fill in the blanks now.

Oh, that letter column. I was a fan-out-of-time, due to many readings of old Cultzines and FAPA mailings in Larry Stark's apartment, so how marvelous for my 15-year-old self, born too late to be active in 7th Fandom (where I belonged), to be able to lead off the lettercol with letters from Art Rapp praising *Within* No. 4 as a great individual-pubbed genzine comparable to *Peon* and *Quandry* (!) and from Bob Silverberg suggesting that, "If it's in your mind to go writing professionally, I think you'll do quite well at it." Encouraging words. It was a great time to be fifteen. Joe's column also discusses recent issues of *Minac*, *Hyphen*, *Double-Bill*, *Kipple* and *Bane*. Sorry I never pubbed the ish with your letter, Tom! Question for fannish 12-stepers: when you made amends did you include people whose articles went unpublished because you gafiated? (CoA: P. O. Box 232517, Encinitas, CA 92023)

{The following letter has waited several years to see print, arriving too late for the 15th issue and being squeezed out of the next two issues; but since this issue's lettercol includes Bjo's first LoC in decades and rich mentions her at length, its time has come at last.}

RICH BROWN

Today while cleaning up, I discovered *Trap Door* No. 14 lying open between a copy of *Fast Forward* No. 1 ("A Monthly Guide to Video, Music & Computers") and *Gnosis* No. 34 ("A Journal of the Western Inner Traditions" published by Jay Kinney), all in a seldom-investigated pile. It's too late to do a full LoC or even try to reconstruct the one I sent off to George A.T.W. Charters—but I couldn't resist the opportunity to let you know that your idea of a Science Fiction, Fantasy and Fandom Hall of Fame and Museum really struck a responsive chord in me (D minor, I believe it was, or possibly M flat).

But it also caused me to recall an old if minor grief: As recently as ten years ago, I had a few dozen copies of something which, when you come right down to it, might well have gotten into the Fan Wing of the SFFFHFM, right beside Terry Carr's report cards.

It's been ten years since I visited my parents in Southern California. For those who may regard me as an undutiful son, I could explain that they moved back to Texas four or five years ago and I've visited them there. But that wouldn't be the full truth. As I noted in personal exchanges with you, Robert, we come from remarkably similar backgrounds: I don't particularly relish visits with them because my parents, like yours, are bigots. I've made them aware, over the years, that I don't agree with them—for one, I married a Chinese Catholic—but my father gets perverse joy out of taunting me with racist jokes. *{My parents didn't go quite that far, and in their final years seemed to mellow out about such matters.}*

But when I visited them in Southern California, it was in part to go over a lot of stuff they'd kept in storage for me in case I ever wanted it. No, not those *Mads* and other EC comics they tossed early on, not the '30s and '40s *Astoundings* that they'd given away because they were taking up "too much space" in the back of a garage we never used. But some fairly interesting things, nonetheless. An old diary in which I "logged" receipt of fanzines as I was entering fandom from 1956 to 1958. There were a few fanzines, but the majority were ones I'd published myself—about twenty copies of a barely legible *Postie* for the N3F, ten or so of a single sheet called *Dissenting Opinion* that may or may not have been distributed through SAPS—and a dozen or so copies of a thing that sent my mind reeling

backwards in time even more than my diary and these other fanzines had.

You may recall the grand and glorious pre-Solacon-but-still-late-1950's days of the LASFS, when the club was utterly free of the usual sort of distasteful fan "politics" and no one who attended ever had a personal agenda to address. If you do, I have to say that I'm fairly certain it was because you attended even fewer meetings than I did and were less attentive besides. *(Actually, I didn't attend LASFS meetings until well after the Solacon – which I didn't go to because of shyness, though I knew of it. As I've written previously, I didn't know of the club's existence until after publishing the first issue of Psi-Phi and mailing it out.)*

I paid attention but couldn't go to meetings all that often because they were held on Thursday nights and that was a school night. The few times I'd been "allowed" to go, it was only to attend the meeting, not the after-meeting meetings.

I should perhaps try to explain how Los Angeles fandom was unique among local fandoms in major cities regarding the way fan clubs worked. In other parts of the country, a large city might have as many as half a dozen groups, each appealing to different segments of the fan community at which fans with similar interests who genuinely liked each other c/would hang out together. Tight-assed sercon fans c/would hang out at a club that was run to the tune of *Roberts Rules of Order* and propose full-blown Daugherty projects to each other complete with amendments and points of order, while more fannish types found themselves drawn to the kind of club that had few or no rules and tended to be a name attached to a regularly-scheduled party. L.A. had its Outlander Society, of course, but that was made up of pipples who wanted to attend LASFS regularly and lived too far out in the "outlands" to do so. There was also some other strange little group with "Foundation" in its title; I gather it was considered strange in part because it had little or no contact, much less overlap, with LASFS.

So for the most part everyone who could attend LASFS did so – even if (or sometimes, particularly if) any given meeting was certain to be full of people they despised. They came to present their own agendas and defeat the agendas of their perceived enemies – after which they'd go off into their own little groups to spend some quality time with their friends and refine the ploys they wanted to spring on LASFS.

"Ted Johnstone" (Dave McDaniel) helped me convince my parents to let me attend this particular meeting by guaranteeing that I would be home by 9:30 or 10:00 p.m. at the latest – either Bill Ellern or Milo Mason would drive me back. I was being imported, or

exported (whichever) – at great expense and no little trouble – because I was needed for a part to help convince some "undesirables" ... but I was far from the only one. (As to how I got to be one of those Chosen, I think it was probably because I had Done Well in a previous Bjo-inspired outing. Learning that some 20 or 30 Chinese junks to be sold had been docked at Long Beach Harbor, she came up with an idea that let us get on board and get a close look at one of them. We showed up with a complete entourage, including Bill Ellern as our chauffeur; Bjo was supposed to be rich but out of "real money" for the quarter – and I was her spoiled brat of a younger brother who "might" lend her enough to buy one of the junks. We were actually hoping for a free ride but it was enough that we got to go on board and look around.)

The truth is, Bjo was once again exercising her considerable persuasive powers, this time to ensure that all the fanzine fans in LASFS would be at this meeting, and at least some of the fans whom she'd determined to be opposed to her plan would be diverted (to an outing to see some new SF movie). The meeting itself was accelerated because it was still possible that some of those who'd gone to see the movie might still show up before the vote. At "New Business," Bjo introduced the Gestetner salesman who unpacked a hand-cranked Gestetner 120 and began to give a demonstration. He dipped a finger into the ink, showed everyone his finger, applied a handkerchief and lo, like a bit of parlor magic, his finger was "clean" again. He put some green paper in the machine and began to crank out an advertisement for an electric lawnmower. He demonstrated the ease with which the gestafaxed photo of that lawnmower could be moved up or down or right or left on the page. On cue (I had been rehearsed), I stepped forward, grabbed a handful of the advertisements and said, "Wow, I think I'll use these for the cover of my next fanzine." Terms were proposed and discussed whereby the club would purchase half the machine and individual members (I forget if it was 10 or 20 of them) would step forward with \$5 (or \$10?) each, which they just happened to have on them, to purchase "shares" in the other half. It was so moved, seconded and passed in the bat of an eyelash, and after the vote I was whisked out the door and driven home, arriving on my doorstep at 9:59 before I could turn into a pumpkin. *{I think my first LASFS meeting may have been within weeks of this one; I have a memory that the last available shares were being sold.}*

A quarter of a century later, visiting my parents as described, I'd come across these artifacts which could have been my contribution to the SFFFHFM. I decided it might be amusing (and thus help me ignore my

father's "jokes") to take a few with me when I attended a LASFS meeting unannounced that coming Thursday. (I'd never been to the building LASFS had purchased for its club room, but I had the address.)

I wasn't recognized by an awful lot of people. Len Moffatt was one who did recognize me. I flashed one of the lawnmower advertisements at him—which, after all these years, I thought worthy of preserving under glass, perhaps even until such time as an actual SFFF-HFM was founded. "Do you recognize this?" I asked. No, he had to admit, he didn't; so I explained it and he, in turn, explained that he hadn't been at that meeting. Well, Len was one of the Outlanders, after all.

Bruce Pelz recognized me when he walked in a few minutes later. But, again after I'd had to explain, Bruce pointed out that while he was certainly the sort of person who generally paid attention to little details like that, if I would but pitch my cast-iron sieve of a memory back across the sands of time, I would certainly realize and acknowledge that he hadn't moved to Los Angeles at that point in time but was, rather, still living in Tampa.

When the meeting finally got underway, there were either two or three electric Gestetner 360s running off the night's Apa-L distribution—the "grandchildren," if you will, of the 120 we had gathered on that night so long ago to "force" the club to purchase. *{That 120 is now, I believe, in the hands of Dave Rike, via Redd Boggs, who bought it from LASFS years ago.}*

Bjo came in partway through the meeting. I don't believe she recognized me. Her hair was darker and she no longer had freckles, but she was more her former self than I was mine—for just one thing, when I had been her rich spoiled little brother, I topped the scales at 96 pounds, whereas now I was three times the man I'd been back then. Nonetheless, I flashed the green sheets with a picture of an electric lawnmower on them and, whispering so as not to interrupt the meeting, asked her if she recognized what it was. She gave it a glance, a slightly raised eyebrow, whispered "a lawnmower" and walked away.

I should have gone after her and explained, as I had to do with the others—but that would have ruined a great exit line. I do still have a few copies of the lawnmower ad mixed in somewhere in the dozen huge trunk-sized boxes my accumulation of fanzines are kept in. If someone else remembers the event clearly, they might someday be able to back me up. *{I remember hearing about both these capers—the Chinese junk and the Gestetner 120—back in my neo days, so I know they happened, but I don't remember the details beyond what you relate here.}* (2520 N. 10th St., "Basement," Arlington, VA 22201)

WE ALSO HEARD FROM:

JOHN BERRY (who particularly liked Karen Silverberg's travelogue: "I was breathless when I concluded her account of rapid visits to historic sights."), SHERYL BIRKHEAD, PAMELA BOAL, RICHARD BRANDT ("Carol's Medline anecdote recalled a similar message when I was saving an article which for reasons of my own I had named God.Doc. When I tried to save it, I was prompted with, 'God already exists. Are you sure you want to overwrite it?' Gives one pause, to be sure."), NED BROOKS, E. B. FROHNET, STEVE GREEN, DAVE HAUGH, DAVE LANGFORD, BOB MADLE, CATHERINE MINTZ, A. LANGLEY SEARLES, CRAIG SMITH, BO STENFORS, CANDI STRECKER (who informs us that her visage and the cover of *Trap Door* No. 15 (and many other fanzines and "zines") are on the backcover of a new book, *Zines! Volume 2* from V/Search (formerly Re/Search) Publications), TARAL WAYNE, BOB TUCKER, MICHAEL WAITE, HENRY WELCH and a really wonderful mail-art postcard from PAG HAT THE RAT GIRL (aka Jessica Amanda Salmonson) that makes me wish *Trap Door* appeared in color (black and white would do it no justice). Thanks to everyone!



... CLOSING ...

When someone said at Potlatch this January that *Trap Door* had become an "obitazine," I denied it immediately. While a somewhat higher than usual percentage of the space in this and recent issues has been devoted to writing about (and by) deceased fans, this is no departure from either past practice (the first memorial issue was in 1987, for Terry Carr) or ongoing editorial policy (which is broad but has included a focus on "fandom and family," especially in the past half dozen issues). To keep this fanzine alive (the backlog has been used), well-written, entertaining articles on *any* subject are welcome at the editorial address at your earliest convenience.

Finally, here's the annual tally of fanzines I've received. Since 1992's upswing, despite increased use of e-mail, the invention of the World Wide Web, and much doomaying about the death of paper fanzines, fanzine production has maintained a fairly steady pace.

| | '97 | '96 | '95 | '94 | '93 | '92 | '91 | '90 | '89 | '88 | '87 |
|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Australia | 9 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 16 | 18 | 16 | 16 | 12 | 15 | 32 |
| Canada | 19 | 14 | 16 | 14 | 12 | 17 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| U. K. | 58 | 47 | 52 | 60 | 51 | 50 | 44 | 30 | 61 | 51 | 33 |
| U. S. | 109 | 108 | 143 | 109 | 91 | 104 | 85 | 66 | 55 | 67 | 58 |
| Others | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 4 | 3 |
| Totals: | 195 | 180 | 223 | 199 | 171 | 191 | 147 | 115 | 130 | 138 | 130 |