

**INSURGENTS ATE MY BABY!**

**WILD HEIRS**

**REAL  
FAN NEWS  
THE WAY  
IT IS**

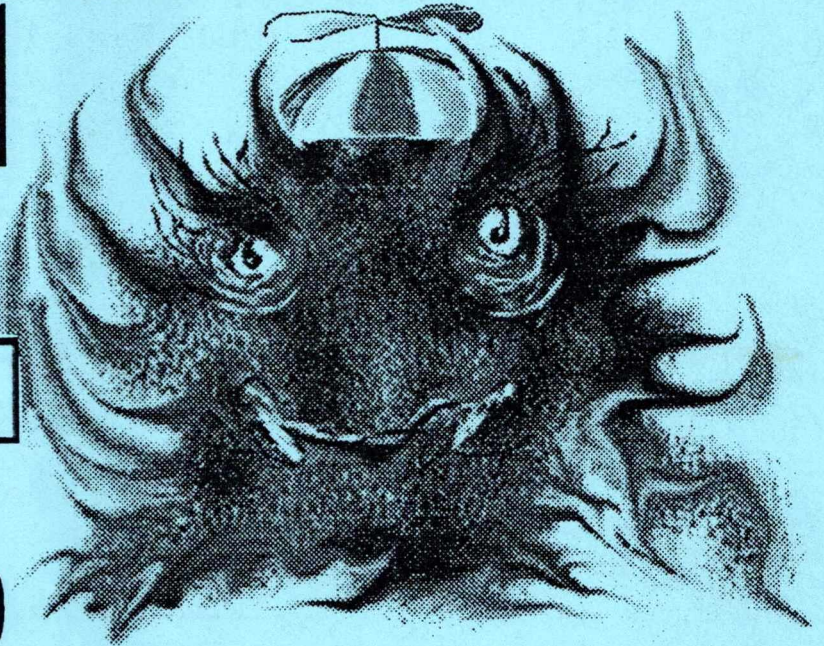
**No 18**

**October 1996**

**MARTIAN**

**FANDOM** II

**EXCLUSIVE FIRST PHOTO**



**BLAT!**

**SIGHTING... CONFIRMED!**

**SLUGGER**

**BITES SIX**

**SEE INSIDE**

LAS VEGAS FAN  
WHO ALWAYS  
FACES EAST



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# Wild Heirs 18

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**Arnie Katz**

We weren't going to have a "Vague Rants" in this issue. We have somewhat timely stuff that we want to rush into print, so we agreed to produce #17 and #18 simultaneously.

We could've put them together into one big, fat fanzine. It might have run a hundred pages and inspired awe, if not reading.

We didn't. Besides the fact that I dislike using the manual, giant Swingline instead of our two electric staplers, we wanted to make #17 about Toner. A 100-page fanzine is cumbersome for bathroom reading, and we've already done one of those this year, anyway.

But a "Vague Rants" wasn't part of the plan. We planned a few columns, and then our articles, my faan fiction story and the letter column. That was my intention until I temporarily withdrew from the September Social to collate and staple the 61st Vegas All-Stars.

The electric stapler polished off the 35 copies of Vegas All-Stars in nothing flat. That left me with a lot of fannish energy, and nowhere to expend it except on starting this installment of "Vague Rants." (Note to Speer: This is the only part of this fanzine that is

# VAGUE

**The Editors Jam  
-- a Little Bit**

# RANTS



done "round robin" style.)

Toner has ignited local fanac more than Silvercons, or even Corflu Vegas. The chemistry turned out to be so right that a lot of Veg-rants made out-of-town friends with whom they'd like to stay in contact through fanzines and other fannish channels. Ben, Cathi and

Tammy may've been the most affected, but the upswing in written output is noticeable.

Except for Tom Springer. Flushed with his Toner triumph, Tom's usual flow of prose has dwindled to a laconic trickle. Where are the fanzine reviews? What about the promised worldcon report? Where is his searing condemnation of the Hugos? If this would-be firebrand doesn't crank it up, he may continue to fool people into thinking he's one of the nicest guys in fandom.

This pillar of our fannish community has hit what looks suspiciously like a fanwriting block. I've started this "Vague Rants" in order to force him to the keyboard to combat it head-on. (Tom can't resist a oneshot.)

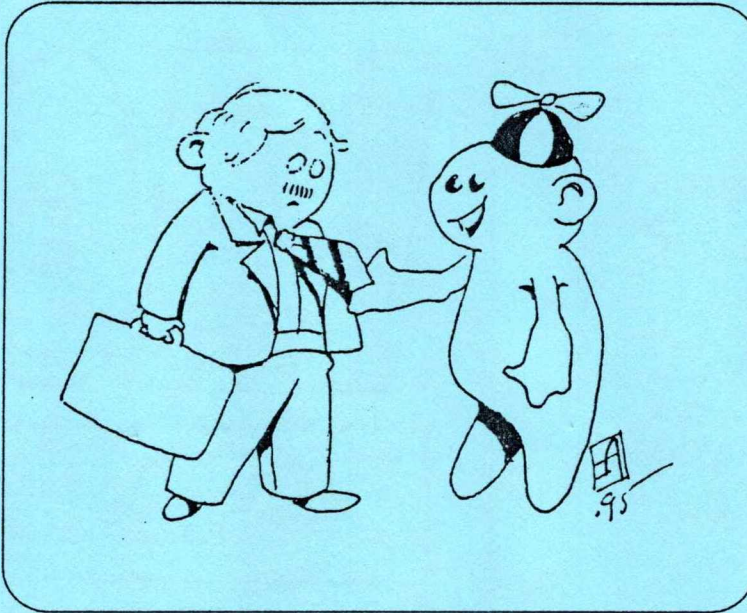
### Tom Springer

Toner ended Tuesday for many fans but continued right on through to the weekend for me. Tuesday night at the pub with Ben, Martin, Helena, Christina, Perry, and Tammy. Wednesday Geri Sullivan and Robert Lichtman leave.

Wednesday night we gather at the Katzes'.

Thursday night the Tudors and I depart for the Worldcon in Los Angeles. We show up at the Marriot, check-in, and head for the fanzine lounge. An amazing eighteen hours later (chronicled elsewhere) and I'm on my way from Anaheim to Palmdale on Friday of Labor Day Weekend. I have a previous engagement I cannot miss, so I'm forced to leave the Worldcon early, at 4:00 pm. Vacation Rush Hour.

Now, I lived in Sherman Oaks for two years while I commuted and sold property in Tehachapi, an hour and a half north of the Valley. So I've had some north/south experiences at peak hours and know how bad the stop-and-go can be going up



the 14. I'm not worried though because it's such an *LA Day*, and I know nothing can go wrong despite the disasters confronting commuters on all freeways. I hear the reports every nine minutes on 720. My boss, Don Adams, used to advertise on that station. "Don Adams, Land King of the Mountains!" He was classic, partners with Mad Man Muntz, the guy who invented the car radio.

Before leaving the fannish paradise of the fanzine lounge at the Worldcon, Robert Lichtman and I retired to his rooms down the street. Primed and fannishly empowered with **Trap Door**

**#9-#12** and a great Southern California road map, I departed with much regret. I headed south from the Anaheim Convention Center, hopped on the 2, over to the I-5, then to the 57 North, and straight into a brushfire. I'd heard it on the radio before I saw the airplanes dropping their loads into the hills over my horizon. It didn't slow down traffic but for ten minutes. The windows down, a cold Coke between my legs, Oingo Boingo blasting on the stereo, racing across southern California on the 210, then up the 14, well, it kinda brought back memories. Memories strongly associated with the very reason I was leaving the Worldcon on Friday afternoon (just after hearing Len Moffat, Bill Rotsler, Sam Moskowitz, and Dick Lynch talk about the Retro Hugo Nominees.)

I'll always have this same appointment every year, at the same time as the Worldcon. This is because I'm a pro-football fan. Oh yes, long before I was a fan of anything else I had bought my lifetime ticket to the NFL. It's what happens when your family's from Wisconsin. The Packers have precedence. They are everything for sixteen weeks, and when they make it into the playoffs I breathe the Lambeau air of every summer I spent six blocks away from Lambeau stadium between my fifth and fourteenth birthdays. Five years ago I joined a Fantasy Football League with my best friend Matt, who happens to be a California Highway Patrolman. A fucking cop. But I've known him since high school, lived with him twice, once in Sherman Oaks for two years, and we get along better than brothers, better than any of my other friends. He just doesn't give a crap. Nothing bothers him. So we're very close.

I laugh harder when I'm with him than anyone else I know. Everything with us is incredibly intu-

itive. We always know what we want and go about getting it the same way eight out of ten times. He's somebody I'll always know, and always try and spend as much time with as I can. We're family. He got a Fantasy Football League together at his CHP office in Culver City. Matt, myself, our mutual little buddy, Kelly, the third guy of our three man group. We do everything together, including play in the Pig's Fantasy League. We draft on Saturday, and watch the games Sunday. And party all weekend. It doesn't look like I'll ever go to a Worldcon unless I can take four hours out of Saturday and do the draft over the phone. This is highly unlikely. After the games Sunday we sat around Matt's swimming pool drinking beer, eating, and talking shit. We've been doing it so long together we're pretty good at it.

We would have continued on into the week, but Kelly had to return Monday afternoon for work (he's a MRI technician at Grossmont Hospital). I was planning to leave at the same time but the Monday Night Game was calling and Matt said he'd call in sick if I stayed. Naturally I had to call Tammy about the developing situation and ask for advice.

"So, whattya think honey?" I asked hopefully into the phone.

"I advise you to get your ass home right now," she said evenly.

"But baby, Matt's already called in sick." This was met with silence. "I'd really like to stay."

"First Toner, then the Worldcon, then football, and now more football!" she cried into the phone. "If you don't want to you don't have to come home at all," she grouched.

"I'll be home Tuesday, sweetie."

"If you loved me you'd leave now."

"That was low."

She sniffled. She wasn't holding anything back.

She wanted me to come home. I had to think fast. "Honey, we'll do something special next weekend, just the two of us," I crooned. "I'll take you away to the mountains. We'll barbecue chicken, sit by the campfire, make-out, and watch for falling stars. Just me and you." I gave it everything I had while watching the muted pre-game show.

"Okay," she said smugly.

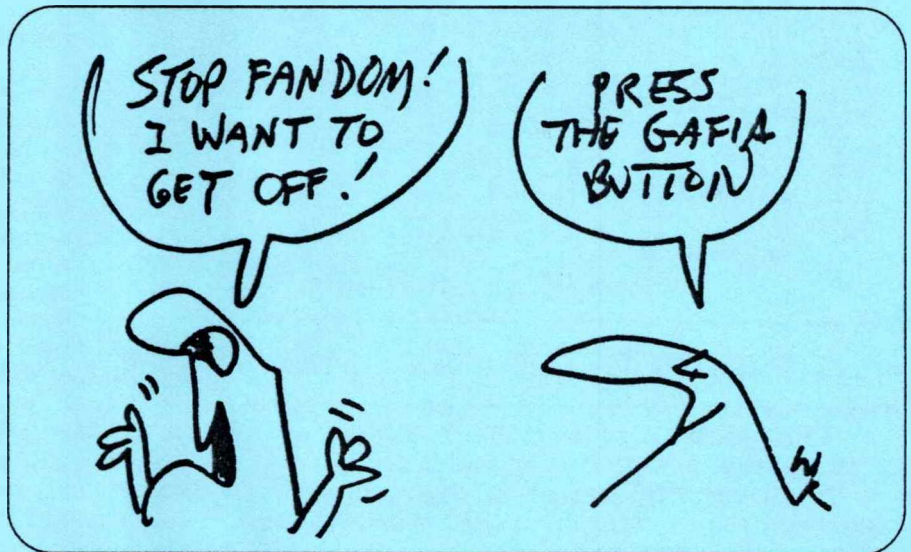
"Camping on Mt. Charleston next weekend. Just you and me."

She was just waiting for something like that. I knew she was. I'd already weighed it. I looked at it as a win-win situation for me. "Great, see you tomorrow then?" Several romantically themed pro-

nouncements later and I have beer in hand and gingerly lower myself to the floor, next to the Doritos.

All of which brings me to our little camping trip last night. Tammy and I are practiced campers and continuously marvel at how easy it is for us. Car camping is a breeze. Everything into the car. Drive. Everything out of the car. Stick two long flimsy poles through tent sleeves, seat them in corner o-rings. Unzip the tent, let Tammy set up the bedding, and break out the barbecue. Light the coals, cook the food, eat it, light the campfire, smoke, drink, gaze at the stars. We're good at all of these things. The only problem we have is finding a bed cushion method that allows for comfortable sleeping. It's amazing how flat ground can contain so many hidden bumps. I slept on one that bulged right into my hip, and it was big enough that there was no getting away from it without moving the tent. I didn't sleep very well, and once I had achieved some semblance of slumber, Tammy would wake me up because I was snoring and she couldn't sleep. She didn't sleep, I didn't sleep, together we maybe got three or four hours each.

We've purchased a queen-sized foam egg crate and are now in the market for a big air mattress with a foot operated pump. Until then we won't rest easy. Our little camping trip was all it was supposed to be except for the restless night. Restless only because we're sleeping on a mountain. There's nothing like sleeping on a mountain. Talk about being high. Over six thousand feet up's more than a mile and it doesn't take but half a joint and a few beers to really feel how high up you really are. I don't sleep on mountains often, so when I do I like to make note of it. Not everyone sleeps on mountains. (How's that for Vague Rants?)



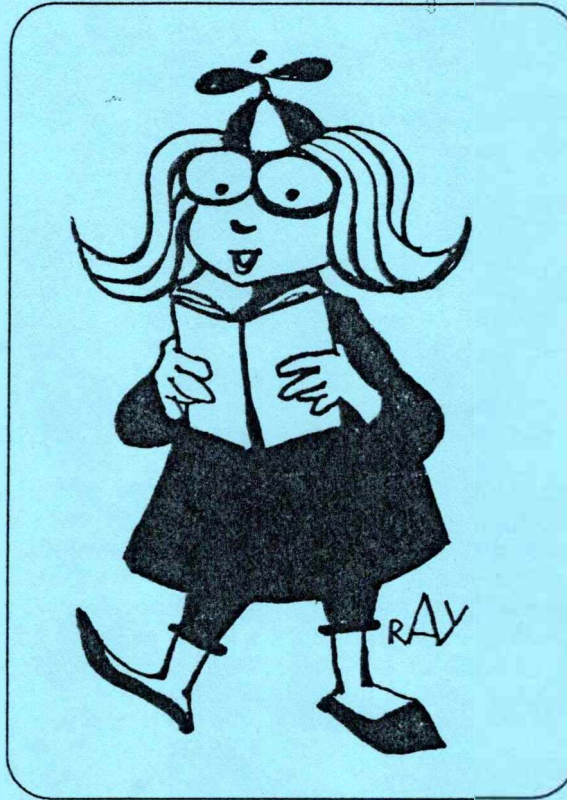
**Joyce Katz**

Actually, Tom, it sounds like you were Not sleeping on a mountain, which in my experience is a lot more common than sleeping there.

My family had the camping fever, too. Every weekend of my life until I reached adulthood, between March and October, was spent camping in some uncomfortable spot.

The worst was one weekend crouched beside the river, up to our ankles in oozy black mud, surrounded by swarms of Missouri mosquitoes. The best were those weekends spent at a nearby National Park, that boasted real showers and running water toilet facilities. In fact, there was a ranger's headquarters building overlooking the camp, no more than 50 yards or so, with a dance floor and a jukebox. That made it just Almost Acceptable to a teenager.

I've often wondered why my parents loved camping so much, since in fact they did everything pos-



sible to make it opposite from a truly rustic experience. Portable stoves and Coleman lanterns and giant freezers made the daytime hours comfortable and extremely well fed; air mattresses on cots with down blankets kept the nights warm and toasty.

Camping experiences like this share little with roughing it in the wilds. But, I don't mind; I'd just as soon be comfortable. In fact, I'd like to put in a good word for luxury hotels. You can always look at the Wild Life through the windows.

**Arnie (again)**

Those who want camping stories will get their full quota from Ken Forman's article this issue. Ultra urbanites like me may prefer to ration contact with the outdoors and articles about same

On their behalf, I'm halting this installment of "Vague Rants" before more camping stories materialize.

Go quickly... and don't look back.

**KATZEN  
ARNIE KATZ  
JAMMER**

**A Fannish Time Capsule**

I don't know why I love them, but I do. Polls, that is. Specifically, fan polls.

That's why **Wild Heirs** is sponsoring one — and why I want to tell you about a similar survey taken exactly 25 years ago.

I hold my nose during fan Hugo discussions. Even the Fan Achievement Awards, revived at Corflu Vegas, don't go far enough. Three people get honored, and everyone else is more or less forgotten.

That's not fanzine fandom. Many hands weave the tapestry of fanac that distinguishes our tribe. It's good to single out "the best," but it's truer to the fannish spirit to credit a large group of valued contributors.

The Egoboo Poll concept, popular for over 50 years, says "thank you" to many more fans. There's more than one winner and a batch of semi-anonymous also-rans. Egoboo Poll results salute 10, and often 20, fans in each category. Many fans unmentioned in the Hugoes and FAA will get deserved recognition in the 1996 Egoboo Poll. (They will if you send us your ballot.)

**Focal Point**, then a biweekly newszine, sponsored the 1971 Egoboo Poll. Rich brown and I received 130 ballots, making this the era's largest canvas of fanzine fandom. We published the annotated results, along with rich's excellent review of the year, as **Focal Point #26**, dated July 4, 1971.

Fans voted **HeiCon**, the first worldcon in a non-English-speaking country, the most important event of 1970. German Fandom did a good job, which fed the long-term trend toward a more international approach to site selection.

The Bob Shaw Fund, which brought the legendary Irish fan and pro to Noreascon in 1971, placed second. The Bosh Fund was the main achievement of the fannish resurgence — led by **Focal Point**, **Metanoia** (Greg Shaw), **Nope** (Jay Kinney), **Microcosm** (Dave Burton) and **Egoboo** (Ted White and John D. Berry) — which contemporaries rated as the third most significant occurrence.

The success of **SFR** inspired the rebirth of fannishness. Most of those new zines were a reaction against its strong streak of Professionalism and Commercialism.

Geis excelled at whipping up fights, which thrilled fringe fans. After awhile, many active fans got tired of all the fighting. The fannish resurgence had a good-time quality, an emphasis on Trufannishness, that gradually waned as Insurgentism gained influence through the 1970s.

Special Bosh Fund issues spurred activity among the fannish fans. It also helped us pull those 130 ballots. **FP** coordinated the Bosh Fund, much as Larry and Noreen Shaw's **Axe** administered the 10th Anniversary Willis Fund in 1962.

The fannish resurgence was the Next Big Thing, but **Science Fiction Review**, revived by Dick Geis several years earlier as **Psychotic**, still ruled the roost. The flamboyant fanzine drew about 40% more votes than runner-up

**Focal Point**. Rich and I pioneered a hybrid format called the news-genzine. We always opened up with several pages of fan news and information, but every issue also featured columns, articles and even fan fiction.

Richard Bergeron went more fannish in 1970's only **Warhoon**, #27. Willis, Shaw, Carr, Warner and Bergeron himself helped **Whrn** #27 win "Best Single Publication" and finish right on **FP**'s heels in the "Best Fanzine" category. (**Focal Point** 12.5, the special Fund issue, was the second-best single publication, miles behind **Warhoon**.)

**Speculation** (Pete Weston) and **Locus** (Charlie Brown) claimed the next two slots, two STffy (but not stuffy) zines headed in opposite directions. **Spec** was completing its run, but even we ultra-fannish types admired it. Unlike **FP**, **Locus** mostly covered the pros. Wonder whatever happened to it?

Sixth-place **Energumen** (Mike Glicksohn and Susan Wood Glicksohn), one of the newer fanzines, was growing into a leading, big-circulation genzine. **E** had Mike and Susan, developing into good fanwriters, and

introduced both Alicia Austin and Rosemary Ullyot to fanzines. Rosemary has drifted away, but her "Kumquat May" column was a big hit. (It finished 5th in the "Best Regular Column" category, despite impressive competition.)

Seventh-place **Outworlds** (Bill Bowers) embodies graphic ideas that sparked a movement to large, ornate genzines. **OW** was the best of the lot, because the content did more than fill space around the artwork. **Outworlds** #4 tied for 4th (with **Locus** #70) in "Best Single Publication."

Before Greg Shaw became a rock maven, his perzine **Metanoia** established him as one of fandom's most entertaining writers. It finished right behind **Outworlds**, despite its relatively low circulation.

Rounding out the top 10 were the fast-rising **Egoboo** (Ted White and John D. Berry) and Buck and Juanita Coulson's dependable **Yandro**. **Egoboo** crackled with the excitement of then-new Fabulous Falls Church Fandom and went on to much greater popularity through the early 1970s. **Yandro** benefited greatly from the debut of Liz Fishman. Her "Through the Wringer" column finished 4th in its class, and fans acclaimed **Liz** the year's best newcomer (in a tie with Grant Canfield).

The next 10 hints at the variety and quality of the 1970 fanzine field. In order of finish: **Beaboheema** (Frank Lunney), **Nope** (Jay Kinney), **WSFA Journal** (Don Miller), **SF Commentary** (Bruce Gillespie), **zEEn** (Earl & Jan Evers), **Crossroads** (Al Snider), **Microcosm** (Dave Burton), **Granfalloon** (Linda Bushyager), **Starling** (Hank & Lesleigh Luttrell), and **Algol** (Andy Porter).

This was the year of Indianapolis fandom. Under the tutelage of Jim and Lee Lavell (whose **Embelyon** rated 22nd), Dave Lewton, Dave Burton

TELL ME ABOUT  
WHEN FIRST  
FANDOM RULED  
THE EARTH.



and others came into the thick of fanzine publishing. Their candles burned brightly, but briefly.

Harry Warner led the "Best Fanwriter" standings. Harry wrote a letter to every fanzine, which led to a huge stockpiling of Rotsler cartoons about not having a loc from him. It also encouraged untold neos, who often got no other response of similar quality.

Every loc ran at least a page, and a fanzine with decent content might aspire to two pages or more. Sometimes Harry resorted to word association to wring subjects from the worst zines, but few current faneds can forget those entertaining letters.

Harry was more than a locsmith, though. He published four issues of his FAPazine **Horizons**, which finished just out of the top 20, wrote a Willis' biography for **Warhoon** and authored the third most popular column, "All Our Yesterdays" (in **Focal Point**).

Terry Carr stepped up his activity in 1970 and finished right behind Harry as "Best Fanwriter." His "Infinite Beanie," in **Focal Point**, finished second in "Best Regular Column," and he also scored with his **Warhoon** column "The Fannish I" and his perzine **Gilgamesh**. Add contributions in fanzines such as **Metanola** and **Egoboo**, and you've got a big year for a major fan. As it turned out, the early 1970s before his move West turned out to be one of Terry's peak fanzine periods.

Professional work, fatherhood and the move to Virginia didn't keep Ted White from a strong third-place finish in "Best Fanwriter." "Trenchant Bludgeon" (**SFR**) was the second-rated column and

"White Trash" (in **Egoboo**) was sixth in the same category. He also wrote several fine articles, notably his **FP 12.5** piece on meeting Bob Shaw for the first time.

Bob Shaw himself filled the 4th position. His most notable pieces were his "Bosh Tosh" column in **Focal Point** and "Mortal Gael" in **Warhoon**, but he also appeared in several of the Shaw Fund special issues.

Dick Geis parlayed talking to himself into a fifth-place finish. His "Dialog" editorial, the 5th most popular column, consisted of Socratic dialogs between Dick and his Alter Ego. **SFR's** well-liked "Monolog" news-and-notes column undoubtedly contributed to Geis' standing.

The second five, all within a few points of each other, were: Bob Tucker, Arnie Katz, Greg Shaw, John D. Berry and Greg Bensford. Like the top five, all have professional writing experience, again demonstrating that fans don't always gaffate when they start getting paid for their prose. Liz Fishman, in 11th, was only a couple of voting points behind this group.

The "Best Humorist" category underscores the importance 1971's fans put on funny stuff. Terry Carr took top honors, followed closely by (in order): Bob Shaw, Liz Fishman, Bob Tucker and Arnie Katz. With the possible exception of Tucker, all produced prolific amounts of anecdotes, satires and parodies during the year.

The **Science Fiction Review** circle dominated the "Best Critic." Ted Pauls, who also flourished in **Locus** and **Outworlds** won by a landslide. His reviews and columns leavened penetrating opinions with a personal touch that made him especially palatable to those outside the science fiction hardcore.

A radical difference between fanzines then and now is the status of serious art. Before auctions and art shows started to get realistic prices, many sf and fantasy artists found an outlet in fanzines. Electronic stenciling and the widespread use of photo offset covers made it possible to reproduce the complexities of pro-style art.

Alicia Austin's exceptional art in **Energumen** propelled her to victory over Tim Kirk in the "Best Fanartist" category, though Kirk also finished second in the Best Fan Cartoonist" division. George Barr, Steve Fabian and Mike Gilbert filled out the top five.

Guess who led the "Best Fan Cartoonist" list? No fan artist has matched the combination of quality and quantity of William Rotsler. Fans knew it in the 1940s, they know it today, and they knew it in 1971, too. Jay Kinney was third (behind Kirk), followed by Steve Stiles and the relatively new Alexis Gilliland.

Liz Fishman and Grant Canfield tied for "Best





New Fan," but the class of 1970 was quite large. At that time, it was common for as many as 50 new fanzine fans to appear in a single year, though the average life span was closer to two years than two decades. Only one of the high finishers, Tom Foster (5th) is still with us. Among the departed, in order of finish: Jonh Ingam, Leon Taylor, Dave Lewton, George Clayton Johnson, Jeff Cochran and Dave Burton.

The 1971 Egoboo Poll also asked two questions that didn't relate directly to 1970 fandom: nominations for a fannish "Hall of Fame" and "Best All-Time Fanzine." We're asking the latter question again, and it'll be interesting to see how fandom's opinion on classic zines has changed.

The 10 selected for the "Hall of Fame" were: Bob Tucker, Harry Warner, Walt Willis, Forry Ackerman, Charles Burbee, Terry Carr, Ted White, Bob Shaw, Lee Hoffman and Francis Towner Laney. How'd you like to have a fanzine composed of one representative-quality piece from each of those fans? And I'm sure most would welcome contributions from the five that narrowly missed: Bob Bloch, Sam Moskowitz, Bill Rotsler, Redd Boggs and Jack Speer.

The "Best All-Time Fanzine" category displayed a slight bias toward contemporary fanzines, an expectable skew, but I don't think it hurt the

standings much. **Hyphen** (Walt Willis and Chuch Harris) topped the list, followed by **Warhoon** (Richard Bergeron) and **Science Fiction Review** (Dick Geis). Then come two true classics, **Quandry** (Lee Hoffman) and **Innuendo** (Terry Carr and Dave Rike).

**Lighthouse** (Terry Carr & Pete Graham), **Vold** (Benford, White, Carr and Graham), **Slant** (Walt Willis), **Shangri-L'affaires** and **Yandro** (Buck & Juanita Coulson) earned the next five positions.

Few fanzine collectors would turn down complete sets of the second 10, either. They were: **Skyhook** (Redd Boggs), **Grue** (Dean Grennell), **Fanac** (TCarr & Ron Ellik), **Le Zomble** (Tucker), **Zero** (Dick & Pat Lupoff), **Oops!a!** (Gregg Calkins), **Spaceways** (Harry Warner), **Inside** (Ron Smith), **Cry** (FM & Elinor Busby and Wally Weber), and (tied for 20th) **Horizons** (Harry Warner) and **Fantasy Commentator** (A. Langley Searles).

Finally, there is the category of "Number One Fan Face." This is sort of fanzine fandom's MVP Award. The winner is essentially the person perceived to be the top actifan at the time. Edging out Terry Carr by one point was... Harry Warner!

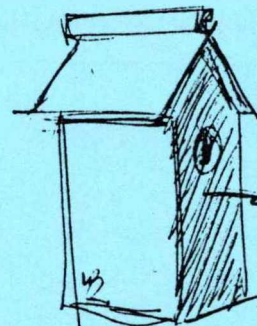
And that was that wonderful fan year, 1970. What will the 1996 Egoboo Poll be like? That mostly depends on you. Send your ballot to secure your copy of the poll results and find out. ∞∞∞

EASILY  
TAMMY FUNK  
AMUSED

### The Egg and I

"Damn it," I cried as I hurled the egg into the trashcan. "By tonight I will truly need a drink."

How could a mere egg, even a hardboiled one, drive me to drink? Actually, it had taken weeks to peel away my defenses and reduce me to the level of fighting eggs.



BIRDHOUSE OF THE  
AUGUST MOON

Back when Tom, Ben, Arnie, and Joyce conceived the idea for Toner, Cathi and I happily agreed to do all of the cooking. "It'll be fun!" we chimed. And it was, most of the time. I just wish that someday I would learn to be more realistic about my projects — for example, how long will it take to make twenty different dishes, and do we really need all of them? Would anyone really "go hungry" if we discarded some cookies here, or

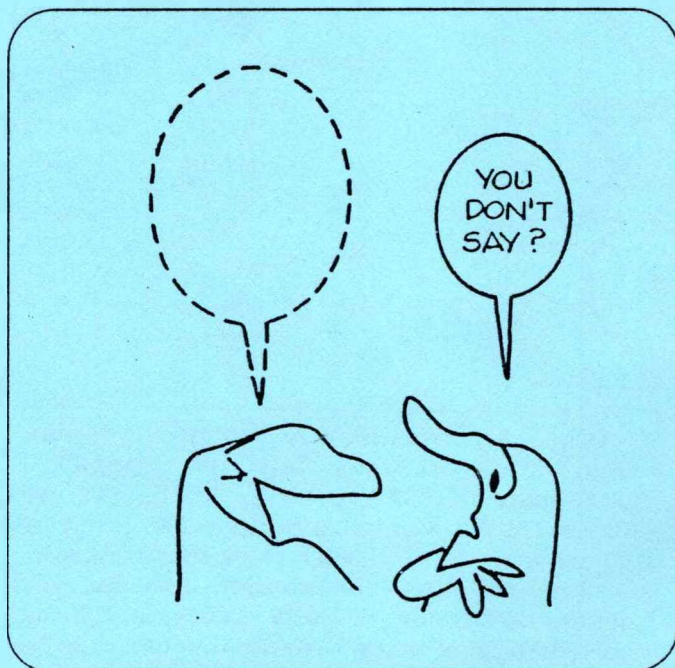
some wings there? Of course, we made it all, as I knew we would. I can not say the same for some of my other inspirations.

I once decided to embroider eight placemats in four months for a friend's Christmas present. (I could have just done four, but to my masochistic brain that didn't seem like enough.) I gave no thought to how detailed they were, or the fact that I had a job. My only thought was how perfect they would look. That was four years ago, and to this day she only has six of them!

In any case, I jumped right in to the Toner menu. I simmered, stewed, and froze my soups a few weeks in advance, interrupted just once in this process by a six-hour blackout. It was only when the convention crept closer, and the dishes piled higher, that I grew tired and reached the end of my culinary rope.

The Friday morning of the Katzs' kick-off party found me just six items away from the end of food production, and not a moment too soon. What got the best of me were two-and-a-half dozen deviled eggs. I do hate to lose a battle with inanimate objects. To begin, I dragged the trashcan over near my feet for the shell peelings, since our garbage disposal is nearly useless. I cracked the first egg and found each tenacious fragment I removed tore out a chunk of white with it.

"Oh well," I thought, "it's probably just this one egg." After wrestling the second one for five minutes, I chucked the whole thing in the can, frantically shaking shells off my hands. Then, I called Mom. These calls had formed a once-a-day pattern for the previous two weeks, as I continued to pepper her with my latest annoying cooking questions.



"Hi Mom, it's me again," I sighed. "I am going to scream, I am so annoyed. In fact, I already have. I'm trying to peel eggs and the damn shells keep sticking to the whites. My deviled eggs are going to have pits and pock marks!"

"Try peeling them under running water," she laughed. "I wish I could be there to help you," she lied convincingly, as only a mother can. Her suggestion helped, but not enough.

Then I called Cathi. "Did you let them sit in cold water first?" she asked. Yes, in fact I'd changed that water three times.

Four of five eggs later, Joyce called in regard to my plight. "Why don't you just make egg salad?" she asked, sensible as ever.

No, no, I just couldn't be that logical. I refused to admit defeat. I simply continued to pick away at the wretched ovals. It was like trying to separate me from the fine jewelry counter at Penney's, Arnie from his fanzines, and Tom from his sidebars, all at the same time. It was a crusade. No matter how small the fragment, how delicately I tried to slide a fingernail under it, how hard the water beat down from above, craters continued to form on each pristine surface. It wouldn't be pretty (and they weren't), but I refused to be the one to fall.

Three quarters of the way through them, I heard a key twisting in the door lock. I walked Tom and Geri Sullivan, to behold a sorry sight.

Shoulders hunched from leaning over the sink, bits of shell clinging to hands and shirt, lank, unruly strands of hair stuck to my face, I stood in a white-flecked pool of water.

"Hi," I snarled. "Any minute now, I am going to throw all two-and-a-half dozen of these off the balcony. I mean this in the best possible way, but if I ever see another hardboiled egg, it will be too fucking soon!" Realizing I hadn't picked the smoothest way to greet an esteemed guest of honor, I felt belatedly ashamed of myself. "So Geri, how's the trip so far?"

"Don't worry, relax," she soothed, as if to a crazed animal. "Soon all of the preparation will be over and you can enjoy yourself." Bravely, she surveyed the shell debris on the countertop and the floor around the trashcan and asked the dreaded question. "Do you need any help?"

"No, no," I assured, flicking away a stubborn bit of shell off my wrist. Tom ducked as the mini-shrapnel whizzed by his cheek.

"Have a beer?" he asked me, as he shoved one in my hand. Realizing that he had a means of escape, he took it.

"Well, I've got to get Geri checked in at the Four Queens, because I need to pick rich up in a couple hours," he said, giving me a quick kiss and withdrawing quickly, just in case.

"See you tonight at the Katzs'," I called forlornly

as they fled the kitchen from hell.

Once the eggs were naked, halved, and utterly defenseless, filling them up was a breeze. I finished a few less stubborn items and made the last big trip to the store. However, by the time I cleaned up and arrived at Arnie and Joyce's kick-off party it was after 10:30 p.m. I wanted to celebrate my victory over the evil eggs with a few brews, but I was too tired. I'd have to wait until the Bar Stagger the next night.

...

"Is Ben back yet?" I asked Cathi anxiously. "We'll be leaving for the Bar Stagger soon."

"I haven't seen him," she replied, glancing at her watch. "He did have an awful lot of wings to thaw!"

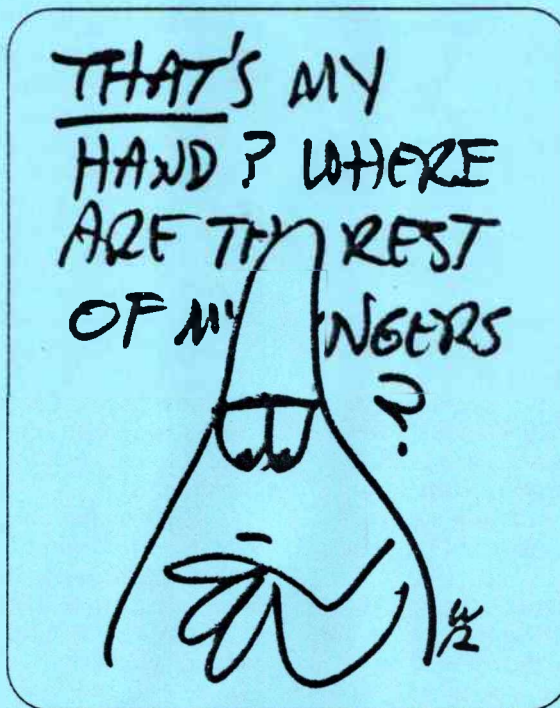
Ben had appointed himself the annoying task of taking several pounds of frozen BBQ and Terriyaki wings back to his apartment to stick in the microwave. We'd overestimated the heating power of the Las Vegas sun to do the job on the trip from Tom's and my apartment to the hotel, and by the time we got there, it was almost happy hour. The crockpots couldn't cut it that fast.

"Ah, there's Wing Boy now!" I cried as I spotted him hauling the steaming zip-locks into the crowded consuite.

As we dumped the tangy chicken limbs into the pots, I saw the Bar Stagger crowd forming near the consuite door. As it turned out, Ben decided to stay at the consuite and recuperate from Toner-induced exhaustion. Cathi and I hurriedly verified that the happy-hour guests were still munching away, grabbed a plate or two of the wings and her spicy meatballs, and proceeded to quickly gorge ourselves. The beer-seeking procession of fans was already marching out the door as I ripped the flesh off my last bone, flung it at the trashbag, and sprinted after them.

By the time I reached the front of the pack, we were down in the lobby, looking to Tom to see which way to go. Unfortunately, Tom was ready to drop right there over the craps table. He hadn't had more than ten hours sleep combined over the last several days; our leader was confused. He ambled along, however, hopefully in the direction of the door.

"Do you have the program?" he asked me, rubbing his eyes.



"No. Can't you remember which ones to go to without it?" I asked hopefully, dodging a plump little nickel slot player.

"Not a chance," he mumbled as he came within sight of the exit. "Does anyone have a program with them?" he asked, moving down the line of participants.

He hit the mark with bar seeker number three, Bill Kunkel. We breathed a collective sigh of relief, and trooped outside the hotel to regroup under the lights of the Fremont Street Experience.

"Wait a minute," I said, reading over the itinerary. "Weren't we supposed to start with the bar here at the Four Queens?"

"Where were you?" Tom asked. "We voted to skip this one and start with the International Bar at the Golden Nugget." The fresh air had energized our fearless leader, and he was ready to lead the party.

I took a moment to scan the turnout for my first, and most eagerly awaited event of the con so far. In addition to Tom, Cathi, and I, Geri Sullivan, Christina Lake, Martin and Helena Tudor, Bill Kunkel, Art Widner, Perry Middlemiss, and Karl Kreider all grouped together in eager anticipation of the brews to be sampled. We tramped across the neon-lit "Experience" and into the Golden Nugget, as Tom confidently led the way to bar number one.

Once there, we discovered a possible problem we hadn't considered — at your average casino bar, how could we expect to enter and find enough chairs, preferably next to one another, to seat all eleven of us? As it turns out, not a problem. The three separate seats soon multiplied to six or more, mostly in pairs, all courtesy of our new-found ability to chase off other hotel guests. Nothing like a big, boisterous group to clear a path!

Cathi and I were quick to select a pair of seats, thankful to have a relaxing moment to discuss something other than food preparation. Taking Cathi's lead, I chose a mixed drink instead of beer. Because she doesn't like beer, Cathi kept right on going with screwdrivers and rum and cokes for the rest of the evening. In my case, I get bored when I have the same type of drink too often, and wanted to save up for the third bar, which had a plethora of beer varieties. I felt the accumulated egg-stress releasing its hold on me and falling away on

soothing tides of Seagram's 7. We entered into a lively discussion on her life with her ex-husband, ending in a comparison with her new marriage in which Ben rose supreme as husband and partner. Only the first bar, and already we had reached the philosophical stage. Anxious to move on, Tom led the group, glasses in hand, on to the classiest downtown bar, the Binton's Horseshoe long bar.

Nestled at the back of the casino, in a relatively quiet area next to some card tables, stretched my favorite long mahogany bar. The walls even have that retro-60s and old bordello-type flocked wallpaper, in a rich wine color. We were able to take over seats in two relatively close groups, and even hear ourselves think without much effort. In no time at all, I had polished off a Heineken or three, and happily traded fan gossip alternately with first Geri and Art, then Tom, Cathi, and Bill. At some point I wandered down to visit with the English and Australian contingent.

Martin seemed quite pleased with this bar, one arm draped comfortably around Helena and another gripping a cold beer. Both Christina and the Tudors were impressed with the variety of alcohol bars carried, telling me that in England most pubs kept only beer and perhaps some form of sparkling cider. Of course, I'd ditch our Bud and Miller in an instant (and usually do) for a decent pint of ale over there any day. At some point, the conversation veered to the topic of people doing voice impressions, especially stupid voices to entertain your mate. At least I think it did, because something inspired me to volunteer Tom for one of his best.

"He does an awfully wonderful version of Peter Lorre with a hair lip," I declared. "He comes right up to me and talks in that crawly voice right in my ear because he knows I'll laugh. I'm going to get him to come down here and do it."

I ran off on my obscure errand and asked Tom for a command performance. A little less buzzed and inspired than I, he decided it was time to move on to the next bar instead, and queued up the drinkers for the next stop.

As we left Binton's, we saw the light show was about to

start, so we sipped our drinks and stared up at the rigging overhead. Catchy notes from an old Frank Sinatra tune started up, along with a blitz of bouncing colors. I looked over and saw Geri and Christina bopping along, and found myself bumping hips with Tom. When the last tune played out, we entered the lair called Sassy Sally's in search of the House of Beer.

"Hey! You want to play here!" yelled a buxom blonde from atop the center of a group of slot machines, staring fixedly at Martin Tudor.

"Don't listen to her!" shrieked an equally well-exposed brunette from another perch of machines. "I'm the one that'll make you lucky!"

Like everyone else, I made a beeline for the bar, past the collection of machines and their guardian harpies.

"I don't remember them being so obnoxious last time we were here," I told Tom.

"That's because the last time we were here they were starting to close up," he replied.

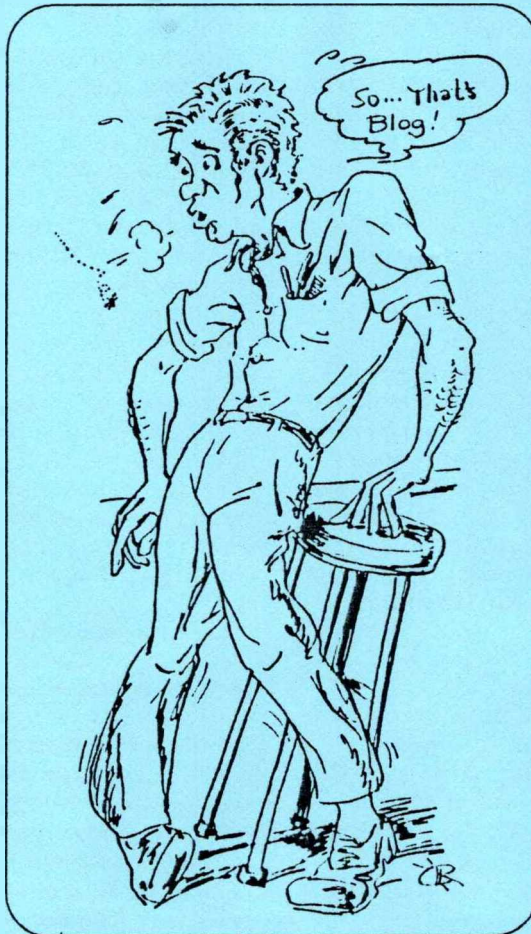
"Oh yeah," I recalled. "That's when they kept yelling 'you only have ten minutes to finish and glasses off the table!'"

Those Sassy Sally employees are just full of tact and decorum (full of something, anyway). It's the only Las Vegas casino I know of that actually closes at 1:00 a.m., or closes at all for that matter. To be fair, they did just recently open back up, and probably didn't have the normal license just yet. This time, we had plenty of seats at the bar.

Why did we go to such a place? The House of Beer has over 500 varieties, that's why. We all began to eagerly peruse the extensive columns of beer types printed on paper menus. Noticing the tropical heat, I decided mine would also make a passable fan. I then fell victim to a fatal beer mistake — getting too creative with my flavor choice. I was stumped about what I wanted when Helena made a suggestion.

"Here," she offered, "try mine. It's got a light raspberry flavor. I don't usually like beer, but this one isn't bad."

Indeed, it did have a nice fruity essence, but not too strong. I ordered one and was fine for about five minutes. Then I noticed the sour aftertaste. Not wanting to waste it, I choked about half of it down before I



decided that I didn't deserve to be tortured. I turned to Helena to see if she wanted the rest.

"No thanks, I'm having a problem finishing the one I have," she admitted. "It's got this nasty taste after a while."

After no one to my right wanted it, I turned to Karl and Perry on my left. "Do either of you want it?" I asked.

"Why do people always do that?" Karl asked back. "They say 'this is awful, taste it.'"

"Just to bother you, Karl," I replied. I gave up and ordered a red beer like I should have to begin with.

Tired of melting, Tom led the group back out past the ranting employees and on to the Vegas Club, where Ben's dad works. We were enveloped by a cool wall of air conditioning as we entered and took over most of the bar. Just in case the temperature wasn't cold enough, the big draw there was a variety of sweet, icy blended drinks. Always the connoisseur, Tom suggested that those who ordered them should get an extra shot to perk them up. As sweet as they were, you could probably add three shots to them without flinching, but at \$1.50, they were a nice treat. I chose a regular margarita, and followed Tom's sage advice. I wasn't halfway through before I felt an urge for more creative drink sampling. I noticed Helena sipping a shot, creme de cassis if I remember correctly.

"I've got a favorite dessert-like shot," I told her. "A Russian Quaalude. I think I'll get one."

Unfortunately, our chatty bartender was busy filling orders for the waitresses, and I was left with the other one. Through some mishap, something had sucked his personality out of him without leaving a trace. After a few fruitless attempts to get his attention, I made my request.

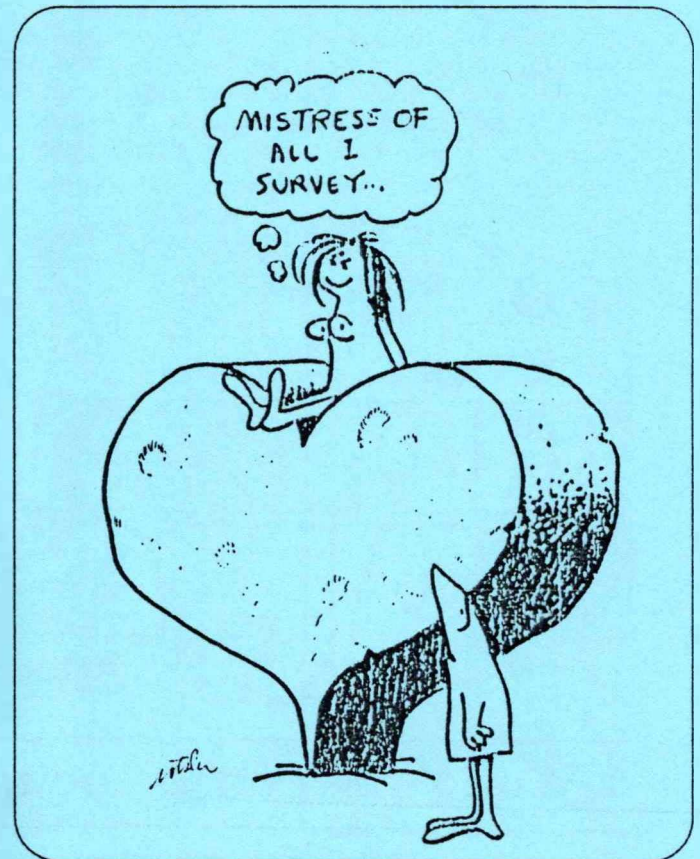
"We have no Baileys," he stated. "We have no Absolut. We have no Frangelico." He stalked off.

"Okay," I said to myself. "I get the point."

I began to peruse the labels and found an intriguing one for watermelon schnapps. Biding my time, I waited until the friendly bartender came back and ordered one, and was pleased to see that all thirteen flavors of schnapps were a buck apiece. I took a tentative sip, amazed to find that it tasted like a fresh slice of watermelon, not too syrupy at all. I passed it to Helena.

"Oooh, it's delightful," she squealed. "I wonder how the rest are?"

We passed the watermelon shot up and down the group for consensus, and did a fair shot at taking turns through the rest of the flavors. Helena ordered one of Butter Shots (butterscotch) and passed it to me. I ordered one of Sour Cherry and did the same. Christina was always game to try them, too, sometimes Geri as well. Only Karl hesitated, lip curled in remembrance of the raspberry beer. Eventually, even he succumbed to a few. We



worked our way through Cactus Juice, Strawberry, and Hot Shots (cinnamon), too, though I don't think we got around to Spearmint or Rootbeer. Fortunately for our brain cells, they were all pretty low in alcohol content. Properly soaked enough to really stagger, we set out for the final bar at the Golden Gate Casino, chosen purely for its location next to the source of the Shrimp Brothers' famous 99-cent shrimp cocktail.

Somewhere between the Vegas Club and the Golden Gate Casino, Tom's bursitis began acting up in his knee. An adamant foe of the Shrimp Brothers, he loyally sat at the beer bar icing his knee while he tolerantly allowed the rest of us to get our shrimp fix. I think everyone else in the party tried the shrimp, and most of the out-of-towners were understandably disappointed with the tiny, watery morsels. We Las Vegans knew not to expect much, and I for one was drunk and hungry enough to eat it all, tasty or not. I ended up at a table with Karl and Perry. Karl and I ended up in a somewhat juvenile conversation (helped along, I'm sure, by the booze) over whose last job was worse, with Perry patiently listening along. I think I won after I disclosed that not only did my boss's dog have the run of the office, but he also had his own nanny, while I wasn't even allowed to close my office door. We three progressed to more pleasant job-related topics until Tom herded us all back

together for the return walk to the Four Queens.

Strolling along, arm around Tom, I realized that I had not thought about those damn eggs or any other food for hours. While the next day would find me with Cathi, bathing zip-locks of frozen

soup in the tub, begging them to thaw in time, that night I was free of my demons. It took me a whole day to get to one, but my first program was an unqualified success.

-- Tammy Funk

# BENT BILL ROTSLER LANCIE

## LACon III: Report Du Jour

Tuesday, 3 Sept 1996

Re-entry to the Real World came about one ayem this morning. I went down Thursday morning, delivered my requested two Hugos for the display, then forgot to get them back when the con was over.

Like every other con you and I have been to, when you look back it is a whirlwind of bits & pieces. Here are some of those fragments.

I drew umpteen cartoons for fans in particular & in general. I hung out & talked and laughed and had a fine time. Suzanne Vegas was there, more or less with me, much to the regret of many. (She used to be my "girl friend," and at one point we were walking along and I had my hand on her back. I said, "I can feel your body move." She replied, "Yes, it's just where you left it.")

Paul C. Turner & I had a room together. I saw old fans & new. Amy Thomson bought Paul, Suzanne & I a nice dinner. Thank you, ma'am, and

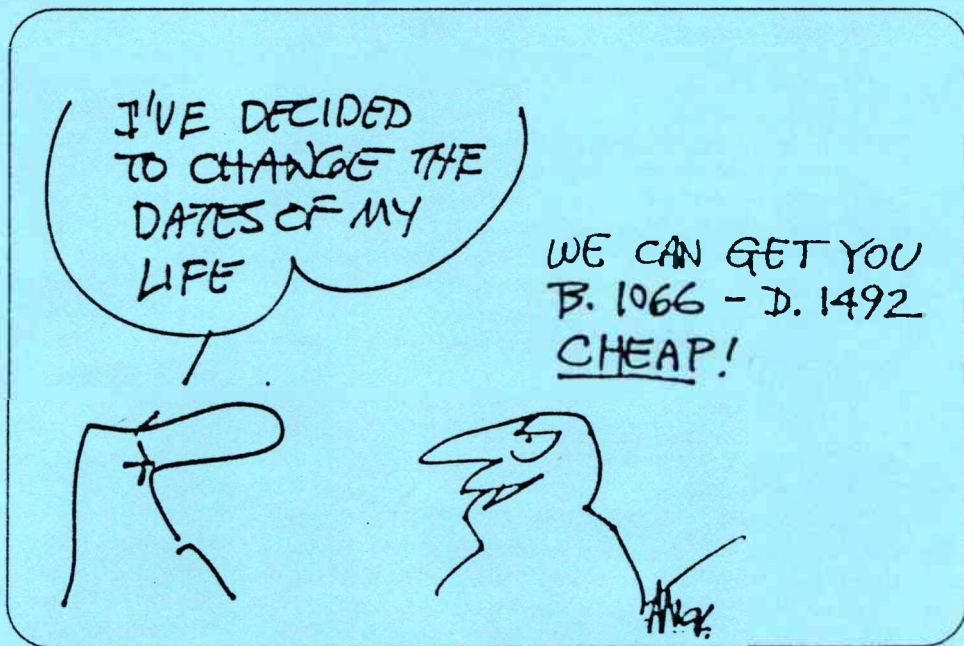
congratulations on the new sale.

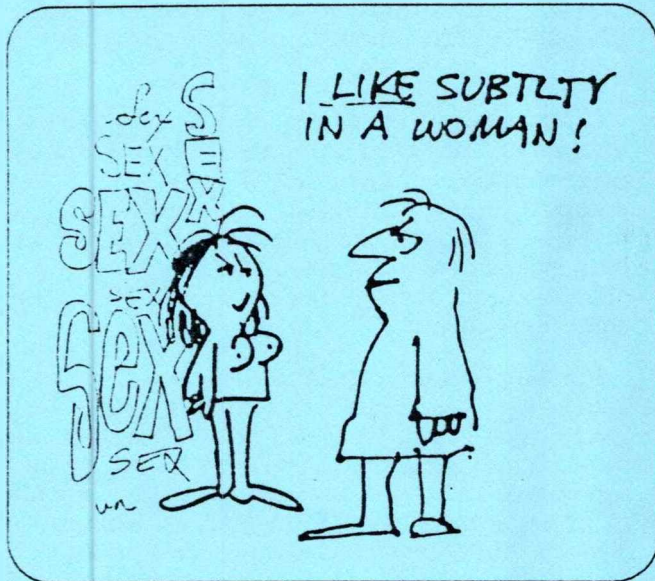
My first panel ("Drawing in Tongues") was a good one on creativity (without any drawings made) with Alexis Gilliland, Teddy Harvia and Brad Foster, which was the only time I had to "interact," as they say. I like him, I like his talent & art.

Did an Insurgents panel which was mostly about Burbee & Laney, of course. I missed oodles of panels I wished to have seen, but hey, that's a con. Talked to James Dinotopia Gurney, Greg & Joan Benford (explained again as how he is adopted and Jim isn't), Eve Forward, Mr/Mrs Dick Lynch, George & Lola Clayton Johnson, Mr/ Mrs Richard Hescox, Betty Hull (talked about her running for office), Greg Bear, Dave Hartwell, Bjohn Trimble.

Talked to James White, telling him once again that he looked like an uncle of mine. He said we could be related, as he was a foundling. A charming Irish gentleman.

Talked to Amy Thomson (and met her new husband), Julie Schwartz, Ackerman, Mr/Mrs Richard Brandt, Steve Barnes (who had just returned from a "sexual magic" workshop where there was a porn star), Kelly Freas, Charlie Lippincott, Keith Kato. Also talked a little bit to Barbara Hambley, Connie Willis, David Gerrold





(but, hell, he lives a mile from me), Niven, Joe & Gay Haldeman, Ross Pavlac (whose name always looks spelled backwards to me), D.C. Fontana, Joe Straczynski, Gilden, George RR Martin (who met Suzanne for the first time), Quinn Yarbrow, Jan Finder, Martha Soukup (who gave me her Nebula to have the title redone correctly), Dick Eney, who seemed to remember vividly the time we embarrassed him at the airport.

But there were so many—Bill Wu, Bradbury, Melinda Snodgrass, Buzz Aldrin & many others I just caught a glimpse of or nodded to. Drat. Plus all those I didn't see at all--or if I did, didn't recognize them.

Bill Warren & I are "fashion forward" (a dumb term) for we were amazed at the number of Hawaiian shirts on people. Which means they are or are becoming fashionable. Which means there will be a time when they are unfashionable.

As you know, I go through every con, large & small, in a constant state of embarrassment. I just don't remember names. I know I know this person, but haven't a clue who it is. They know me, I don't know them—by name. And refer to previous meetings or conversations I simply do not remember.

David Romm, Neil Rest, screen writer Ted Elliot, JK Klein & others gave me stuff for my Comebacks book. Others I pretty much just said howdy & wipe the spinach off your teeth. I usually don't do too much talking to locals (Wein, Wolfmans, Miller, Glycer, etc.) Besides, not one said anything of even marginal interest. (Heeheehee...)

Craig Glassner is a Park Ranger who offered me

Someone told me they heard someone say, referring to Joe Straczynski, "Boy, he's a lot better looking [in person] than he lets on the Internet."

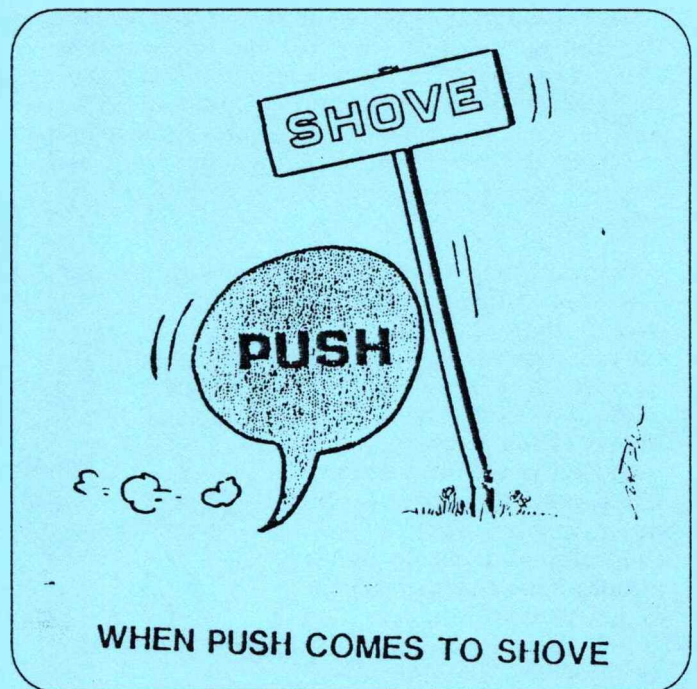
a special tour of his area which is Alcatraz. (Isn't Alcatraz an odd word?)

I had left the SFWA suite, talked to Amy & her husband in the hall, was off to somewhere and I saw Harlan the Ellison steaming toward me. He said he was going to go punch out a critic who had lied about him. I followed—after all, the critic might have friends & Harlan had a heart bypass a little bit back. As I passed Amy I said, "This is going to be interesting," so she happily followed.

But it fizzled because the critic had left. The SFWA hostess was all worried and atwitter, afraid of this possible fight. I told her to stop worrying. "If nothing happens, fine; if something does happen you can dine out on being the hostess of the SFWA suite the night Harlan punched so-and so out."

I hardly attended any panels. Saw one on Roger Corman, and Jerry Pournelle's, too. a couple of bits of others. Talked to John Hertz about fandom needing a panel on manners. Hardly anyone showed up on the Low Budget Movie panel; I gave them cartoons and later in the Green Room [name I've forgotten recognized my name -- !—as the director of Mantis in Lace! and said he should have asked me on the panel. I said my expertise was 25 years out of date. Didn't even know Bruce Campbell was there until talking to Bill Warren today.

I gave two art show docent tours. I told them when they asked that it does no good to do pat-on-the-head talks but they didn't care. I was not out to savage anyone, but I am awfully tired of people who have never learned to draw & probably never will—and maybe don't want to, no matter how



MORE WAYS TO GET RID  
OF PEOPLE AT YOUR DOOR

Any contributions or spleen venting?

- Pretend you are deaf and are lip reading and repeat everything they say only get it all wrong.

much it might improve their brain/eye/hand skills. I even dismissed the work of a lady I'd been to bed with, but actually I didn't look at the name, saying some thing like, "This is all unimportant." She took it like a man.

Paul Robinson *Crusoe on Mars* Mantee was there, much to Suzanne's surprise, as he was her acting coach a decade or so ago.

Late Friday afternoon I won the Fan Artist Retro-Hugo. For work I did 50 years ago. Very bad work. I actually figured I'd win that one—the rest were dead & only the olde pharts like me would remember them.

My acceptance speech was the speech that had popped into my head when they told me I was nominated: "I'd like to thank all the little people I squashed like scampering bugs on my fifty-year meteoric rise to the top."

*Fifty years—!*

I put the Hugo—which is the traditional rocket mounted on a gold painted 35mm film reel which has a strip of film with movie stills on it, a huge crater-wall sculpture that is supposed to remind you of Destination Moon, and two battery-operated Kleig lights—into Suzanne's lap. A little bit later I noticed her absent-mindedly stroking the rocket. I noticed a lot of women doing this, actually.

On Sunday night were the "real" Hugos. During the first part, where they are handing out non-Hugo awards, Mike Glycer made a speech, giving out a committee award, and early on said it was for me, then I had to sit there through a long (to me long) speech of praise. "Now what are you going to say?" I asked myself. Myself had little to say back.

I started by giving my earlier speech, saying, No, that was Friday's then giving advice to aspiring artists. "All you have to do is be there when they open that magic art store every hundred years, buy a life supply of pens [hold up pen] and then all you must do is hold it up and it does the work."

I'm afraid the emo-

tion (and the surprise of it all) got to me a tad toward the end. I thought maybe no-one noticed, but I was very wrong.

Later on I won the second Fan Art Hugo—and know that I never forget these are Fan Art Hugos—presented by Bob Silverberg. I forget what I said except that now that I had won a total of four, I had as many as Alexis Gilliland and that he & I had done a book, *Cartoon Jam*, which I was now offering for sale and the editors and publishers could line up now.

Bill Warren said, "Do you know you have done something no-one else has done? Or is likely to do! Won two Hugos fifty years apart?" When I pointed out—providing fandom picked up this Retro thing in subsequent cons - that others might win this same thing he quoted Bruce Pelz, on winning awards: "Being alive is a distinctive advantage."

Bill also thought I "didn't carry the flag" for Hawaiian shirts, dressed as I was in black, in a "dueling shirt," but that is as formal as I get, y'see.

Later on that night they gave me back the RetroHugo (they had to put on a brass plate), so I was pretentiously carrying both of them around. Of course I complained about the weight, how they banged against everything, that they were Weird, that they were the first battery-powered Hugos, that you were always afraid you'd stab someone or fall down and kill yourself, etc. I did not get much sympathy.

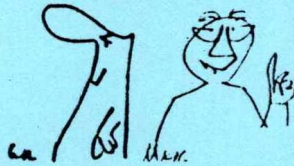
Going into the Hugo Losers Party (always the best party and, hell, I've lost more than I've won!) the press of the crowd caused me to stop right in front of a woman. "Not too phallic, are they?" I asked.

"You can't get too phallic," she responded.

To be frank, I actually thought I'd win the second one, too. First time I've done that. Reason: Everyone said so, but in a different way than they have done at all those previous nominations. I think everyone thought it would be funny/cool/ whatever for me to get "book end" Hugos. I said I thought that was a dumb reason to vote for anyone but you didn't see me refusing it, did you?

I got to know DUFF winner Perry Middlmiss even better (after meeting him at Toner the previous weekend in far-off, exotic Las Vegas—nice fellow that.) I passed out my flyers to solicit material for Comebacks, Practical

AND IN OUR  
PREVIOUS  
CARTOON...  
WIT, HUMOR  
PATHOS, GOOD  
DRAWING!





Jokes- quotes, etc. and often got one or more immediate responses. Keith Kato had his usual superb chili (well, I'm told it is, since I ain't committing suicide by eating his spicy napalm recipe) at his invitational party now in its 23rd year! Thank you, as always. He had a party where I actually knew almost anyone. (There is nothing that makes you feel more like a dinosaur that coming into a room where you know no-one or only olde pharts.)

Got all kinds of compliments, which of course, I took with panache, terminal cool & apparent humility.

Neola Caveny, Paul Turner's ex turned up. Suzanne reminded me of another con, where I was walking down a hall with them and Jerry Pournelle came up behind, saying, in a typical Pournelle whisper: "Ro.sler, you're a goddamn inspiration to us all!"

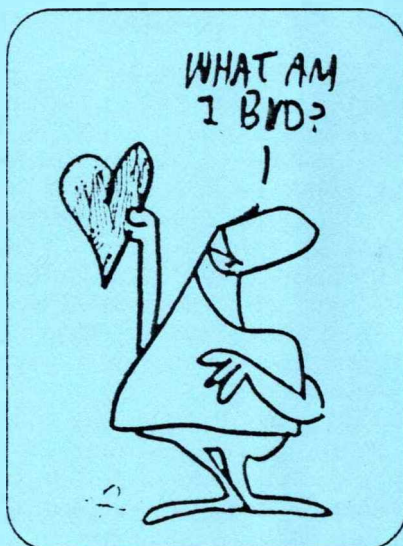
Remember, I *started* the program item of the "cartoonist's war." I know how it should be run, so to make sure, I told The Powers That Be what we needed—typing paper, opaque projector, pens, and a mike.

The talent is a "comes with."

What we got were useless bed sheet size pads, too-small-for-the-area pens, easels. We did get a projector, a mike & pens. Suddenly an Aussie cartoonist was taking over, putting on some kind of pictiory chalk-talk dumbness trick. (Yes, I know, that is what was on the program, but it shouldn't have been, another example of someone who hasn't a clue being in charge.) I was mean, I wouldn't play, assuming (correctly) that Alexis would side with me. I was grumpy.

At dinner, the evening before, Alexis Gilliland & I

Bill Warren & I were out videotaping the Academy of Radio & Television Arts for French TV and discussed an event which had a disagreement in it (by others) whether or nor Forry Ackerman even told a lie. (A mistake, yes...) Bill said he had never detected Forry in a lie. I said, "That means he was very good at it." Bill said, "Or you are a very poor judge of character."



were up to our usual drawing together—which, by the way, is the *favorite* thing in all my fannish activity!—and, of course, these drawings were passed around the table. I was busy having fun and didn't notice for awhile that this "other" cartoonist was adding to our drawing.

I was appalled. First, he hadn't been asked, nor did he ask if he could. And worse, he was not even faintly amusing and often totally off the subject, even. I told Dick Lynch, the recipient O all these, he was authorized to cut that shit out. "Oh, of course!" he said.

Okay, back at the "war." I just refused to go along with this pictiory crap and he took over like some sideshow barker, roped poor Teddy Harvia into it and off they went. Meanwhile I tried to draw on these side-of-the-house pads, ending up throwing it over my shoulder into The Depths. (I was pissed.) From then on Alexis & I just drew for our own amusement (these were projected). We done good, too.

Spent time in the Green Room and the Fan Lounge, hanging out, had a good time. Did drawings for Paul Williams' girl friend, the singer Cindy Lee, who publishes a self-promotion zine. (I suggested *Moi* as the title.) God knows how many I did, but you'll be happy to know I only drew on one banana, and added a bug to one immense flowery tattoo.

At one point, Julius Schwartz was making a big Julie Schwartz thing of cutting me out regarding Suzanne. I said, "What did you do? Urinate a circle around her?"

I wish I had kept better notes— don't we all?—because there was a lot of funny/interesting stuff. But I didn't, so this is what you get.

I did wonder what drugs Geri Sullivan was on. She was always so damned cheerful!

I was sitting in one of those Who-is-giving-this-party? parties and saw a young woman who had been staring silently into subspace suddenly sit up and rush off in a hurry. I said, "I think the alarm on her biological clock just went off," but I don't



think Suzanne heard me.

On the morning of the last day, Paul & I were talking to Bob & Karen Silverberg. Karen was talking & up came the wife of a good friend, a wife who has definitely worn out her credit with me. Somewhere she has decided I am unimportant to her or Len's career and so I don't exist. She's not nasty to me, I just don't exist. (Neither does anyone else she deems unimportant.) A bit ago I was standing alone in her living room; she came out of the toilet, supposedly seeing me for the first time. I said, "Oh, hello," and she walked by without a flicker of acknowledgment.

When I came to the con she made a big thing of calling out to me, saying hello, congratulations, and the feeling I got was "Look, I'm speaking to William Rotsler, BNF!"

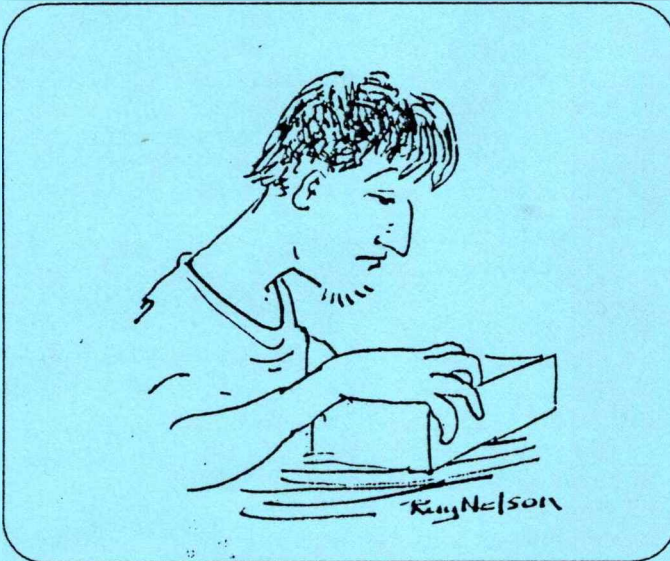
So she comes up to Karen, breaking in on Karen's speech, makes a big thing of Good-bye, and leaves, again without a flicker of awareness of

my or Paul's existence. "Oh, I'm back to non existence," I said.

Very late that night, at a party, she suddenly (again breaking into a conversation without even an "excuse me") did a "Look, I'm saying good-bye to Double Hugo-Winner Bill Rotsler!" production number. I am real tired of her. If she wasn't married to a friend I'd savage her a bit, but she'd only take it out on my friend. I can't defend myself, she's his wife. Besides, although she seems blind to people's awareness, everyone knows she is (now I'm quoting common knowledge) "a social-climbing snob." But she seems to think she is getting away with it. Sad.

So as not to leave this on a downer let me say again I had a great time. I'm prejudiced, of course. You win two Hugos & a plaque that says, "For 50 years of drawing the spirit of fandom" and see if you don't feel good. ∞

-- Bill Rotsler



## Auto Memories

For many a year I've kept hidden a dark secret. Knowing that my secret was best kept quiet. You know stereotyping and all. As such my interest has suffered. I have denied myself for far too long.

No longer does it have to be. I can set my secret free: I'm a motorhead of sorts. Now I can't recite to you the Chilton's manuals, engine sizes, give you a list of the best production vehicles or any other categories of the automotive occult.

What's left?

Put a race on, any kind; superbikes, motorcross, Offroad, stadium truck pulls, IRHA, NASCAR, INDY or anything else with a motor including swampbuggies, and I'm hooked. I could sit and watch all day.

I remember watching races with my old man all through my early years, occasionally sharing a beer. Mom usually left the room mumbling, smiling and shaking her head. Sometimes I caught that phrase mothers seem to like so much: *Like father, like son.*

My father was connected to an automotive career for most of my life. Driving truck for Blue Water Metal out of Port Huron, MI, he made more than a few deliveries to Colita Racing or whatever this organization was called. I learned a few years later that Dad was into amateur top fuel drag when I was a young kid. In his mid-twenties, his paychecks came from driving a taxi for Blue Water Cab Co. I believe it was then that he started driving a charter bus back and forth to Florida. This led to driving a local bus for, you guessed it Blue Water Transit.

**ZONKED  
BEN WILSON  
A COLUMN**

We relocated to Tower, MI, an even smaller town of less than 200. There were few jobs and all had waiting lists. Here there were a few years when he did any job, even got state certified as a cook. Later he teamed up with my best friend's father and started a repair garage.

Here's where my interest swung to motor sports.

Yea, I helped out a little when I could, but that was common sense more than anything else. Northern Michigan is, like I said, dirt poor for the most part. Practical automotive knowledge is vital.

No, what got me into motorized racing was out back, behind the shop. The Moreals, one of those fortunate few that had or had access to, money, built a quarter-mile paved oval track. It was in the back of one of their hay fields, which happened to set beside a similar plot owned by the county after a tax seizure.

On the opposite side of the county property, which conveniently had a grove of paper birch trees, was the shop. We rented the property as well as the shop, and lived there, too. (Ask me about that story some time.)

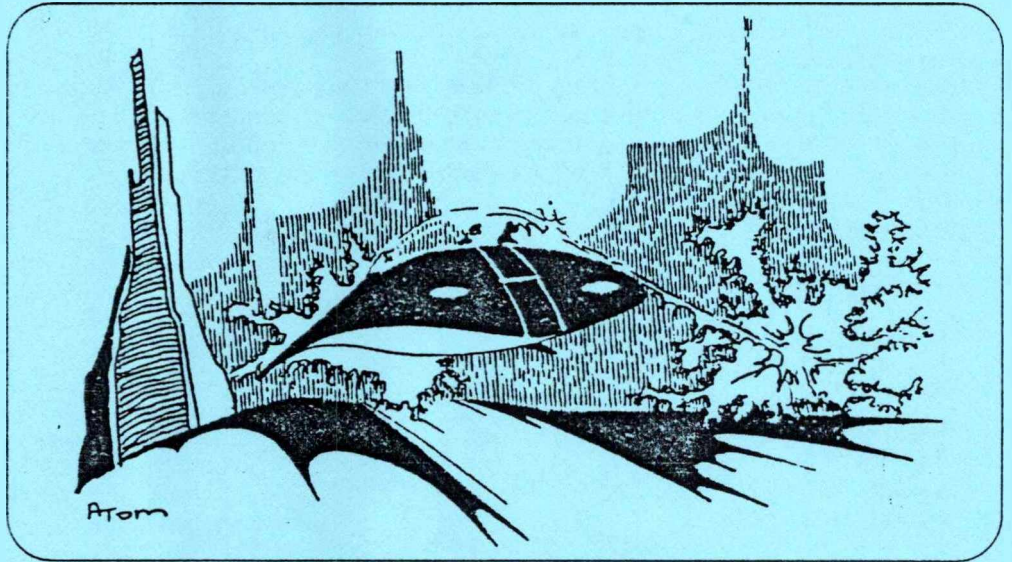
It's only logical for you to assume what a 16-year-old poor boy would do. That's exactly what I did. And I did it every Saturday night for eight weeks.

I sat in my favorite tree, the tree I had groomed while they were building the track. I had insured that I'd have the best seat in the whole place.

I'd picked a tree the right distance away, but with a clean line of sight. In order to do this, I had to reshape a few tree limbs. Then with an old chair, some bailing twine, a couple of lengths of two-by-fours, nice soft cushion and a bit of ingenuity, I had myself a really comfy perch.

With a pair of low power binoculars, I was able to fill up my view. The best part was I didn't have to move them. I could see the whole track.

By the second week, I had a place to mount them, and all I had to do was put my eyes up to it.



Like I said, I did this for eight weeks.

The ninth, every thing changed.

To celebrate me passing all of my sophomore classes, my father had saved enough money to buy both of us tickets and pit passes. (At the beginning of the second term, this had seemed very unlikely.)

After that night, I was no longer content watching from the trees. So I began to sneak in. At first it was just into the stands. I didn't want to brave the thinner crowd and risk being singled out by track officials. But even being in the stands wasn't enough, I needed to smell the hot brakes and the clutches that had been slipping for the last dozen laps while the driver fought for first place.

A week or two in the stands, then it was the pits. It took me longer to get in unnoticed, but I soon found a drainage ditch that never seemed to have any water in it. After a while everyone expected to see me in there. Even the officials gave up trying to catch me coming in.

Near the end of summer that year, Ronnie wrecked his Camaro. It was a spectacular wreck. I got to see his car's undercarriage, 15 feet away and 5 feet above the wall. The car came down the wall nose first. Momentum, and the way it made contact with mother earth, made this big hunk of metal roll three times, sideways. It ended up on its wheels, directly in front of the gate to the pits.

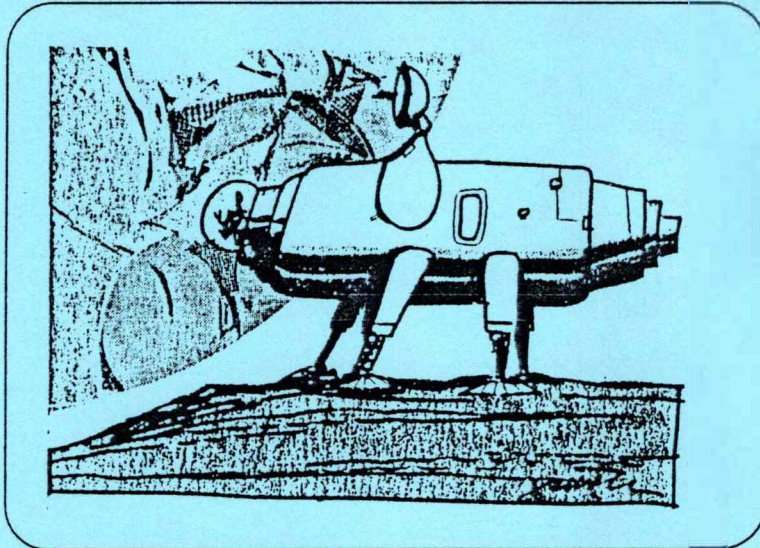
Knowing Ronnie, I ran to



give what help I could. I didn't know what I was getting my self into.

The rumors were flying even before they had the damn thing loaded. "Ronnie's never going to race again." "Ronnie's not going to be able to race the rest of the year. He just doesn't have that kind of money," and a hundred more.

Well, Ronnie was pissed -- and not because of



the rumors that were starting. You see, he didn't hit that wall because he made a mistake. No, they were being a little rough and someone got carried away.

You see, Dean Palmer was in second place. He was always in second. Ronnie was just better. Dean got frustrated and came down on to the apron of the track and under Ronnie. Then back on to the track he came, leaving no room for the orange-and-white Camaro.

Ronnie was loaded (with the help of his brother and their combined crews), packed up (with help from me) and out of there (with help of his truck) before they had finished the race. He had to. We all knew that, if Dean got back into the pits before he was out of there, one of them would be going to the hospital after all.

I stuck around to watch Virgal, Ron's big brother, run his race. Over all, a very exciting night.

Seven am, came really early.

As a kid, I never answered the phone. That was Dad's job, but the sound always woke me. Shortly after that disturbing ring, there was an even worse knock at my door.

So much for sleeping in. Before I did more than grunt, my father stuck his

head in.

"You want to make some money?"

Yea, right. What 16-year-old kid doesn't want to make some money? But I wasn't going to go into it blind. "What kind of work?"

"Top secret..."

"I'm not going to agree to any work before I know what it is," I butted in. I had learned the hard way, by blindly agreeing to clear a patch of poison oak. I itched for weeks.

"If you'll let me finish?! I was saying that it's top secret, and that if you don't want to do it, you still have to keep your mouth shut." My dad was now going through the things on my dresser, great. "Ronnie is going to put his car back together. He wants it raceable next week. He called and asked if we could help. I could use the extra money...what about you?"

"What could I do?"

"Mainly, you'll be doing Ronnie's chores and as an extra pair of hands. Be ready in 20 minutes, I told him I'd be there by eight."

Thanks to Mother Nature, we had two weeks to prepare. Good thing, too, because we weren't done.

Ronnie, being a Moreal, had keys to the track's gate. Friday afternoon of the second week, we stole down to the track to test the car.

We covered the car, borrowed someone else's truck and headed out. Getting to the track undiscovered was the hardest part. Once there we had no worries. His folks and brother, who lived at the front of the property, were out of town.

Ron took the car out, warmed it up and brought it back into the pits. Ronnie has an unusual way to test the setup of his car. He adjusted this, that and those, and then headed back to the track for another go. After a dozen trips back and forth, he felt he had it in line.

He asked me if I wanted to drive. With all I did to help him, he felt I deserved to try it out. After changing into a firesuit -- talk about uncomfortable! -- and getting my dad's ok (good thing Mom wasn't around), I climbed behind the wheel of a stock class, race car.

I was scared, really scared.

Ronnie had told my dad he wasn't worried about the car. He figured I would be so worried about wrecking it that I'd never get it up to a speed to do any damage if I did hit something.

He was right. For the first



two laps.

I gained confidence as the car gained speed. After a dozen laps or so -- I lost count -- they waved me in.

Ronnie told me I had done extremely well. My dad reminded Ronnie that he had told him so. (I had just gotten my drivers license, but I'd been driving for six years; everything from farm equipment to a '71 caddy after Mom and Dad had too much to drink at a wedding reception.)

Ronnie had told me he'd pick up my pit passes for the rest of the season, along with dear old Papa's, for helping him out.

He'd stop by and pick us up before heading in.

Everyone was surprised to see us towing in the car. It was cool. Everyone was watching us, marveling.

While Dad unloaded the truck, Ronnie had to attend the drivers meeting. He had asked me to come along, so I could check it out. I had asked what the meetings were about earlier in the week. They cover track rules along with the league rules.

Boring stuff. I took off right after the meeting to help Dad finish with the car.

Ronnie went out and qualified on his first go. Outside pole.

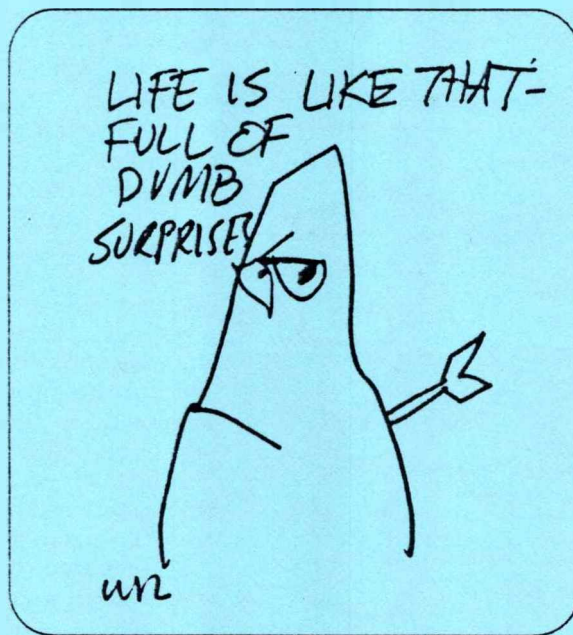
After everyone went out for their second try, Ronnie sprung the surprise that he and my dad had planned. In short, he let me go out and run a qualifying run.

Now, *this* was awesome. I got to have my name announced as the driver, and I was doing it in front of a thousand-plus people. I did pretty good, the sixth-best time of the night. Not hard when there are only 14 cars.

There were two 15-lap heat races, to set up for the 10-car, 25-lap feature. Ronnie won his heat, I didn't do as well, although I did make the feature, coming in third.

Of course, I had to drop out of the feature, but I was absolutely hooked on racing, of any kind, just as long as there's that motor.

This year Richie Clyne, with daddy Ralph's money, has built a major racing complex, with 24



venues including Indy cars.

The main facility is huge. When I first saw it, I experienced the same thrill I had when I was racing all those years back. It's the same sensation you get when you go off that first drop, on your favorite roller coaster. I glimpsed it incomplete from the road. Just the anticipation of the events to be held within was enough to thrill me.

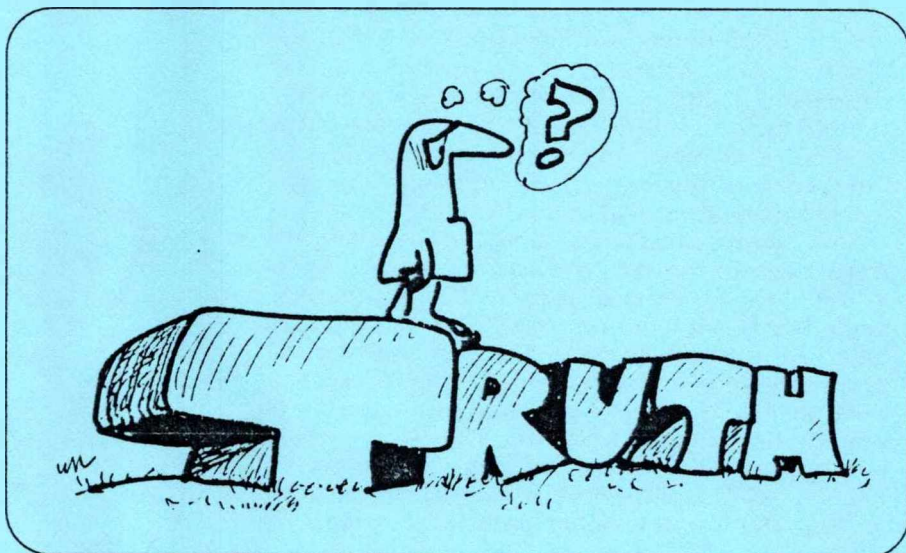
When finished, this place will have a seating capacity of 107,000 around a 1.5 mile tri-oval banked track. They have two more tracks under construction out back. Two smaller ovals, a quarter-mile clay oval and either a 1/4- or 1/2-mile loop.

They will also have Richard Petty's Driving School. Yep, you got it, a school to learn how to

drive NASCAR and very possibly other styles. I've seen the prices for the classes. They're pricey, but within reach with a little saving. I'm looking at doing one for approximately \$1,100. It'll give me three 10-lap tries with coaching in between each. There will be five different levels of activity, some cheaper and a couple definitely more expensive. The flyer I saw had one priced at 5,000+ buckaroos. Didn't even bother to find out what you got.

As another part of the racing complex, old-time car and engine designer Carroll Shelby is building his research and development plant adjacent to the speedway. It'll be the first time he has been able to use anything other than airport runways to test his vehicles.

As for me, this is the first time I've lived any-



where with a major racing complex. Now all I have to do is figure out how I'm going to pay for all those races I want to see.

A parting shot... Just last night, I saw that

Formula 1 wants to sign a 10-year contract with Las Vegas, to host the USA Grand Prix. I'm praying that the city officials don't mess this up.∞∞∞

-- Ben Wilson

# JEST GATHI WILSON JIVIN'

## A Day at the Races

The thrill of it was the thing that surprised me. Ben and I were lucky enough to receive four tickets to the Las Vegas Indy 500 races through my work. I'd never been before so I thought I might go for the experience. We invited Ben's father, Tom (not to be confused with Mr. Springer of our little group), and his step-mother, Laverne, who are racing enthusiasts, and we would make a day of it.

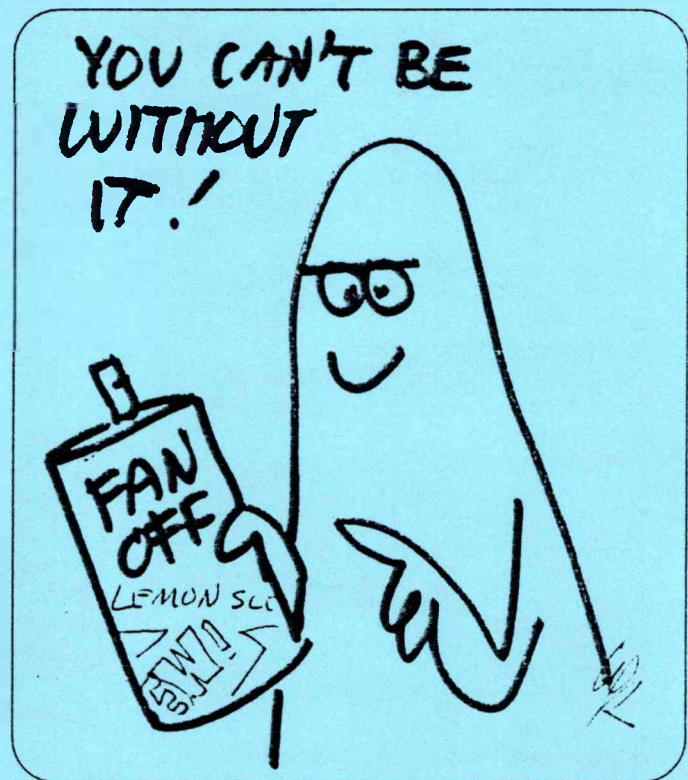
We agreed to pick up Tom and Laverne at their home around 11:30 and head out for the races from there. It was only a twenty minute drive from their home and the official start time for the race was at 1:00 p.m. so we were in no big hurry. We should be there in plenty of time. The speedway is about 10/15 miles from downtown Las Vegas. Much to our surprise (and everyone else on the expressway) the line for the race track started there. Our quick little twenty minute ride out to the races took an hour and a half. By the time we fought the traffic in the parking lot and finally found our seats it was about 2:00.

Now I could not complain about the seats. We were 17 rows up from the race track right in front of the start/finish line. Taco Bell, my employer, had some pretty good connections. The weather was beautiful in the bleachers. The sun was shining and we were enjoying weather in the high 80's. This, believe me, was a pleasant change from our usually hot 110+ degree heat. The sky was blue and bright, full of sunshine. There was a breeze blowing off of the desert that, for the fans, was making the warm weather even more enjoyable.

Unfortunately it wasn't the best driving conditions for the racers. There was sand and dust blowing all over the track. This made for many casualties during the course of the race. Out of twenty-eight drivers only fifteen crossed the finish line. By the time we had finally gotten to our seats, four of the cars had already been towed away.

The race itself was very exciting. The vying for positions at 210 miles an hour keeps you at the edge of your seat. The many crashes we were able to witness gave me a whole new respect for high speed racecar drivers. These are not boys playing in their high powered toys, these are truly brave men. There was a racer by the name of Johnny O'Connell, whose vehicle slammed into turn four, exploded into a ball of flame, and then slid upside down all the way to the start/finish line right in front of us. The crowd held their collective breath while we waited for the EMT's to arrive.

All eyes were on the twisted, burnt machine in front of us when there was movement. A red helmet appeared from under the machine followed by the rest of the driver who managed to walk away.



The crowd erupted. This is the thrill of Indy car racing. You hope to see high risk moves that keep your blood moving but you don't wish to see anyone seriously injured.

The adventure did not end there. Our little speedway is a brand new facility. They haven't even finished all the stands in the big oval, so minor details in the parking lot, such as signs and spaces have not been completed (or even started). It consists of many large sections of gravel and sand divided by makeshift roads made of tarmac poured over the dirt. There are many light poles poking the lot, but no distinguishing marks anywhere. Out of the 70,000 attending I'd say five thousand of them could not find their car. We, of course, were part of that statistic. We wandered searching for about half an hour, when Laverne started to tire. Tom asked Ben to try to find the car while we rested. Bad idea. We got tired of waiting and decided to do a little exploring ourselves.

While we were looking and trying not to go too far so that Ben could find us, Tom remembered about a landmark, a big red tow truck, that we had passed when we turned into our space. We saw the wrecker and found the car, but now we had another problem. We no longer knew where my husband was. We figured he would find us eventually but when a half an hour passed and still no sign of Ben, Tom decided to look for him. He returned about twenty minutes later without Ben. We sat for about another fifteen minutes when Laverne noticed someone looking like my lost mate off in the distance. We managed to make enough noise to get his attention and drove over to meet him.

The traffic getting out of the lot was just as bad as when we arrived five hours earlier, even this late after the winner crossed the line. We were able to escape to the freeway about an hour after we headed for it.

Next time I plan on camping out. ∞∞

# SERCON TOM SPRINGER NAVIGATION

## Sixteen Hours

I made my final decision to go to the Worldcon in Los Angeles upon hearing the Tudors were in need of transportation to So. Cal. My ultimate motive was to meet James White, but if I could spend some quality time with Martin and Helena on the way (and cop their spare bed or the floor that night), so much the better. Late Thursday afternoon I stopped at the Arco station on Tropicana, right off the I-15, to gas up the truck and eat a Twinkie and Coca-Cola lunch. Fingers sticky with Twinkie preservatives, I steered us onto the I-15 south, into the desert. I found out, as we motored up the hill and away from Vegas, that this would be their first American Road Trip. If I wasn't so responsible, unlike in my misspent youth, I would

have bought a twelve-pack of beer to lubricate our way. As young men, my friends and I always had beer on the many road trips we made to Vegas, the old saying being "Vegas is only a six-pack away." San Francisco was a twelve-pack. Distances were judged by beer cans consumed, and averages were also calculated. Nowadays we must settle for a mild caffeine buzz.

I handed Helena the CD case and burdened her with the responsibility of choosing music for us. She was successful in that none of us developed headaches, and since it was my music, I liked all her selections. Martin had a bit of trouble with Turbo Lover from Judas Priest, but took it well, our conservative volume control preventing any migraines from forming.

I'm not sure what they thought of the desert and its unfathomable size, but coming from that cold little island they live on, it must have made some sort of impact. I believe I asked them, and they did answer, but I forget what they said so I can't write anymore on the subject. Two-thirds of the way to Anaheim we stopped in Victorville, just the other side of the San Bernadino Mountains, and had a beef feast in an upscale Cocos. They had steak and I had prime rib. We gobbled our meat and talked about Mad Cow Disease.

Forty-five minutes later we were back in the car and soon gliding through the San Bernadino Mountains. Next, we hit the 91 and found ourselves in Anaheim, looking for the Hilton. From the time we left Las Vegas to when we rolled up in front of the Marriot (which was right across a multi-lane drive from the Hilton), it took no more than five-and-a-half hours. Two hundred eighty

miles and a prime rib later, we were in it deep. The Worldcon.

"Look at all these fans," I thought. I turned slowly about, gazing at the assorted species of fan as the bellman loaded his cart with our luggage. There were so many different kinds of fans, and I had forgotten to bring my Fan Recognition Book. I don't think our bellman stopped talking until I pushed a fiver into his hand. Too sincere and informative, he overwhelmed us with stuff he thought we needed to know. I gotta admit, the shortcut he showed us to our room was a lot quicker than the way I came back later the next morning.

Sharing the Tudor's room for the night was made comfortable by our association over the past week. We got along fairly well, and I certainly enjoyed



their company. They are a shy, lovely couple who I think are a perfect fit for one another and complement each other nicely. They should stay together as long as Helena doesn't experience fan-overload. A possibility, considering Helena is as much a fanzine fan as Tammy, skipping along the stratosphere and avoiding the final plunge to earth, or in their case, fanzine fandom. Martin and I both agreed their descent is inevitable. Just like SkyLab, time is on our side.

After dumping our bags, calling Tammy, and freshening up, we made our way across the street to the Hilton. More fans. Wow. We found the elevators and glided up to the fourth floor, following maps to navigate our way. The final hurdle being a group of filkers singing in a sitting area, and just past that, the Fanzine Lounge. Whoa. Major fan-nish fanage.

"Watch out for those bouncing things." Martin warned us as we entered the fannish sanctum of the Worldcon. Fuzzy, bouncing creatures with

pogo legs used piston spring noises to greet all who entered.

"There's Geri," Helena cried as she spotted her, just before we melted into the lounge. Within seconds I had a hello hug with Geri, swung around, and immediately entered into a conversation with the seemingly serene (but totally exhausted) Jeff Schalles. He told me about his solo trip to Disneyland earlier that day, while showing me where the superior select brews were hidden in iced tubs in the closet of the lounge. I identified with his current condition so strongly that I had to grab one. I believe it was Anchor Steam. Martin was quick to follow suit. Introductions were made then, several times in fact, as fans gathered to speak the way they're known to do.

I met Steve Stiles for the first time. He seemed to be grooving to the scene and met my tentative art queries with a positive enthusiasm that totally set me at ease. For the very brief time I spent with him, I liked him. Talk about a whirlwind of faces. Robert Lichtman was there to greet me and ease the way for my first Worldcon experience with his friendly conversation and knowledge. He made my entire 16 hours at the Worldcon a superlative experience. Frank Lunney, Art Widner, Jack Speer, the Tudors, Richard Brandt and Michelle Lyons, Andy Hooper, Alan Rosenthal, Janice Murray, Jack Hennegan, Ken Forman, and Karl Kreder were all there; I'm sure there were more fans I can't remember, but I wasn't taking notes. Hell, it was all I could do to keep from being bowled over by it all.

Beers in hand, a group of us wandered down to the Smoking Area, which at was the end of the hall by the doors to the stairway. We opened a couple windows and lit up. Our conversation turned to room parties, and Frank Lunney mentioned that he'd been up to a huge one on the fifth floor terrace that was serving grape-flavored grain alcohol. It was only 11:30 p.m., and the mood was on us. Frank led me, Robert, Andy, Martin, and Helena through a maze of corridors and up one floor, then the shouting, laughter, and party sounds guided us the rest of the way to the large open-air courtyard where groups of people were having fun. Unerringly, Frank marched us to the supposed bar in hopes of a round.

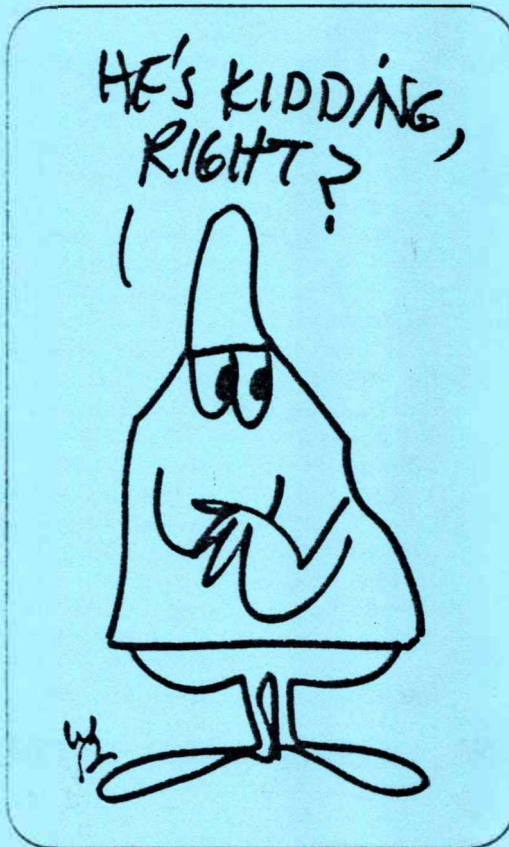
I wasn't surprised when it became obvious we were too late for the mass quantities of alcohol served earlier. The booze must have been low, because the drunk guys who were supposed to be serving shepherded out one drink at a time from a room behind the bar, not reaching enough people. (In any case, we knew where to get a beer any-time.) Still, it was a loud, boozy party. Evidence abounded. All the plastic cups sitting around the sprawling party-suite were empty. The guy with the large silver helium balloon tied around his



forehead and staggering through the crowd could easily have accounted for all the empties. There were many hooting, shouting, yelling, laughing groups at this party, all bunched together and making plenty of noise. Many were dressed strangely.

The open courtyard allowed people to sit and talk in more private groups, apart from those who could at any moment break into drunken song. These little ditties were usually repetitive chants that eventually erupted into cheers, or hoots, or whatever applause method they preferred. All of us who had made the trek eventually gathered behind a roped-off shuffleboard court some distance away from the main mob, seating ourselves in comfortable plastic chairs. We lounged there — the Tudors, Robert, Andy, me, Frank, and somebody else, but I'm not sure who. I talked to Andy about his latest "Fanzine Countdown." He picked **Attitude #8** over **Trap Door #16**. He told me it was the fanzine he'd rather read first. I suspect Anglomania. After my incredulity was long behind me, we trooped downstairs and back to the Fanzine Lounge for more beer.

Another Anchor Steam hit the spot after almost having a drink at the party upstairs. Some fans had left. Others were saying their protracted farewells. Robert and the Tudors followed suit. I wandered the lounge long after Martin and Helena gave me a room key and retired for the night. I wanted to get in as much as I could before I had to leave the next day. After a time, there were only Frank, Andy, and I left. Andy had wandered off somewhere, and I found

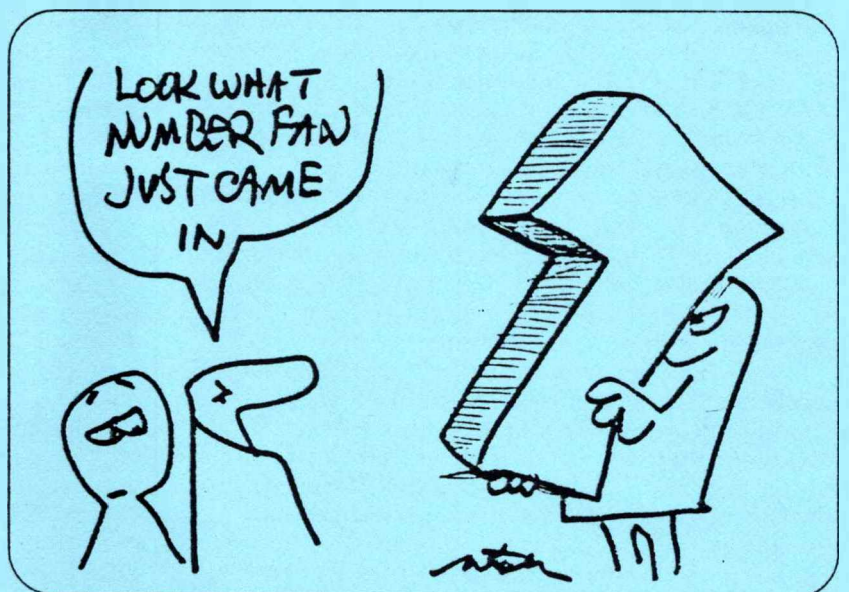


myself sitting at a table with Frank listening to a fan named Blars Blarson expound upon the great pains he made, fifteen months before LAcon, to insure his days off. He'd been up some twenty-seven hours, and showed it, like the rest of us. He told us he was going to crash at three in the morning and not rise until sometime after six in the evening the following day. He was a logistical genius and a genial and friendly host, if a little clumsy. I think he was the appointed LASFS host representative to the Fanzine Lounge, or he could have been some fat, weird guy with a head-pendant (I don't know what it's called) dangling down in his left eye. He was a kick. He seemed to direct most of his conversation at Frank while I studiously examined the latest **APAK** Andy had handed me earlier that evening. After a while, Frank and I excused ourselves to search for Andy. We cracked up outside in the hall.

Blars Blarson. I couldn't stop laughing. Frank had a good yuk too. Then I started to think about how I couldn't stop laughing. I got worried. This sobered me. Then I started giggling again. Frank must've wondered about me. I will always remember Blars with fondness. We found Hooper near the elevator, and after a short discussion, Andy and I decided something to eat would be a Good Thing. Frank actually evinced surprise that two large men such as Andy and myself would be hungry at two-thirty in the morning after a night of drinking, smoking, walking, and talking.

He said, "You're nuts," and went to bed.

Andy and I went to the Marriot's late-night restaurant. Instead of a shrimp sandwich, he had some kind of chicken salad. I had nachos. We talked about our fanzines, contributors, other fans'



fanzines, and certain writers, voicing opinions on each topic. Unfortunately, by then the fatigue factor set in, and my brain shut down even as Andy and I continued to speak.

After I pleaded fatigue-induced stupidity (not to be confused with my regular day-to-day idiocy) we agreed to retire and meet again in the fanzine lounge the next morning. After a restroom stop in the lobby, where I re-read **Apparatchik #66**, I wandered the long way back to room 366, seeking a bed and five hours sleep. I came in the room to find Helena sprawled across Martin's chest, both fast asleep. After asking if I could grab some car-



pet space, I warned them I snored, and that I snored loud. This didn't bother them, they said, Helena claiming with her screwed-up sinuses that she'd be sawing her own lumber. Her cute little snorts are nothing to my eye-opening noises. They declared it a perfect night's sleep after waking at nine in the morning. When Martin had taken his shower, I dashed in for mine. Helena sprawled on the balcony with a cup of coffee and a fanzine, while Martin began tapping away on the Notebook Computer he'd borrowed to write up his TAFF report. Since he was still working on it after I completed my morning rituals, and Helena was in relax mode, I decided I had a mission. We said our goodbyes, noting we'd probably see each other in the fanzine lounge later that day, and I left on my quest to meet James White.

The fuzzy pogo creatures lay dormant upon my arrival in the Fanzine Lounge at ten that morning. Benoit Girard and Spike Parsons were chatting away at a table, and after grabbing a Coke and an apple muffin, I joined them. I met Benoit Girard in Las Vegas during his short stay there and was delighted to find him at the Worldcon. I hadn't spoken with Spike nearly enough at Corflu Nashville, so I enjoyed spending time with her and

Benoit before James White's lesson in Psneerotics. Benoit was still riding high on the praise Ted White gave the **Frozen Frog** in Benoit's last letter-ish, which also happened to be his last ish. It's been over two years now, Benoit.

From there on things speeded up considerably. Robert Lichtman arrived, and I moved over to join him at another table as Benoit had to leave for a panel and Spike saw someone she had to talk to. Robert and I spoke about the night before while waiting for James to make his entrance. Fans were everywhere. James arrived with a spring in his step and a smile on his face. He looked just like the pictures I'd seen of him in **Idea #7**. He sat down between Robert and me as Geri, the hostess, served him a sandwich and milk for lunch. Geri and Robert introduced me and I finally got the chance to meet James White — the same James White I'd read so much of in the **Hyphens** Arnie lent me.

I had written James earlier in the year to invite him to Toner, but he had to plead time constraints and pass on the party. So, when Geri introduced me, it wasn't as if he'd never heard of me. We small-talked through his lunch, and after the place before him was cleared, Robert and I pulled out various publications we hoped James would sign. Robert had him sign both an already-signed book (he wanted this signature to be in person) and a copy of **Trap Door #9** containing James's contributions. Then Robert gave the fanzine to me. That was very cool. It was so unexpected, my flustered thanks didn't seem enough. Thanks again, Robert. Next, I asked James if he would sign Arnie's **Hyphen #19**, the one with his Southgate in '58 report, as a surprise for Arnie. James complained that he couldn't think up anything funny to write, then cribbed a short note to Arnie and signed his name. From what I read, I noticed he went for witty instead. Something about other life forms.

A small group of fans clustered around as James expounded upon Psneerotics and his involved sneering experiences, regaling us with several sneer accounts. He then proceeded to instruct us in sneering. He had the group of us curling our lips and scrunching our faces as we shot our puny sneers across the table at each other. Robert seemed the most experienced sneerer at the table, except for James, of course, and sneered two fans right out of their chairs. Mine were strong and vivid (this from James), and he said in time, with practice, I could have a most serious sneer. It was all great fun, as was James White. This made my short stay at the Worldcon quite wonderful. My expectations were fulfilled. It's not every day such a thing happens, and when you pin them all on a BNF you've never met before, you're spreading it a little thin. But James was everything I thought

he'd be, and more. He showed me the same **Hyphen** magic I've lost myself in during those days out at the sales trailer reading Arnie's collection.

More people came to visit with James, and I had to give way to more adoring fan friends and acquaintances who vied for his attention. That was okay, because next door they were holding a discussion about the Retro-Hugo nominees, paneled by Len Moffat, Bill Rotsler, and Sam Moskowitz, and led by Dick Lynch. The most interesting part of the panel was when Sam Moskowitz denounced "Ah Sweet Idiocy!" and Laney's work. I can't remember exactly what he said, but it was somewhat derogatory, and I'm hoping someone else who was there, like Robert Lichtman, will write and share the words of Moskowitz. Afterwards, in the milling conversations following the panel, I introduced myself to Roy Lavender and we sat down back in the Fanzine Lounge for a short conversation. He told me how he drove Harlan Ellison to his first convention. I told him that's exactly the kind of story WH would love to publish. I still have to send him a letter.

After my round of goodbyes, Michelle Lyons, Robert Lichtman, Jeff Schalles, Andy Hooper, Geri, and I retired to the Toad Hall Retreat for some fan-ish discussion. On the way to their room, we passed Forry Ackerman. I turned as the tall, elderly, gray-haired man passed me in the hall. I quickly focused on his name badge before glancing at this face, to find out who he was. I just caught a glance of his face as he passed me, and marveled at his back until he turned the corner. I turned back to Robert, who was waiting in the hall with a smile on his face.

"Did you see him?" I asked him.

"Yeah. You run into a lot of old dinosaurs at Worldcons in LA," he answered, as we hurried to catch up.

This is incredible. Sam Moskowitz, Forry Ackerman, George Hewitt, Roy Lavender, Len Moffat. . . I ticked the names off on my fingers.

"If you were to stick around, there's no telling who else you'd see.

Meyer," Robert said, catching the door before it closed behind Andy. I shrugged and stepped inside. The longer I hung out with Robert, the more I wanted to stay. I'd made plans long ago, however, and my responsibilities and friendships could not be forestalled. I enjoyed that half hour in Geri and Jeff's room as we sprawled on the furniture and floor, talking about the Worldcon. It felt so right and comfortable and fun.

Soon enough, we found ourselves talking with Bruce Pelz at the Information-Desk-turned-Fanzine-Sale. After Robert kindly bought me Ron Ellik's TAFF trip report, **The Squirrel's Tale**, for a buck from Bruce, I helped him skim through a huge box of fanzines Bruce hadn't yet sorted and priced. Robert found a handful of publications he wanted that Bruce priced nicely, and off we went. As we headed toward the doors, Robert suggested we drive to his room down the street so he could drop off his load of fanzines, give me some, and examine my route to Palmdale, which we both knew might be a bother.

Convention and Disneyland traffic successfully navigated, Robert and I retired to his air-conditioned room for a sidebar and some map study. Then he surprised me with a **Best of Frap** and all the spare **Trap Doors** he had on him, numbers 9-12. Wiping the drool off my chin, I stammered my thanks and held them tightly in my lap. They're now covered with eyetracks.

Next, he gave me a map of the local area and LA. He also gave me a fantastic

Worldcon experience that I'll always remember in my own hazy, spotty way. The good feelings, pleasant surprises, the laughter and funny things said. They all combine to form a fine memory and general feeling of good will.

Before I knew it, I was shaking Robert's hand and climbing into my Rodeo. As I turned the corner and headed south, I rolled down my windows, turned the stereo up, and cruised on to the next party.

This one was in Palmdale, with my oldest and closest friends, Matt and Kelly. Funny thing is, they don't know anything about fanzine fandom or what I've been doing with it the past three years, not to mention the past three weeks.

So close, yet so far. ∞∞∞

-- Tom Springer



# small fans

# BIG NATURE

## By KEN FORMAN

*(Several times while I was writing this, I asked Ben to read my work in progress. I wanted him to check for accuracy and completeness. He helped immensely. He couldn't help adding his own asides. His comments are in italics.)*

"Are you going to go on any more canoe trips?" asked Pam Wells during her Spring visit. "That article you published last year was delicious." (The

way she said "canoe", with that delicious London accent, sent snatches of the National Geographic theme song through my thoughts.)

"Actually, we're planning on going down the Colorado next month," I replied.

"Good, I'll look forward to your article."

The rest of her stay was delightful, at least from my point of view. We went to the Valley of Fire State Park, about 45 miles North of Vegas. She kept complimenting us on our wide open spaces and scenic views, which she called "big nature."

That's what went through my mind as we floated down the Colorado River. Two hundred foot cliffs rising above us, twenty-two thousand cubic feet of water per second flowing with us, two canoes; this is big nature.

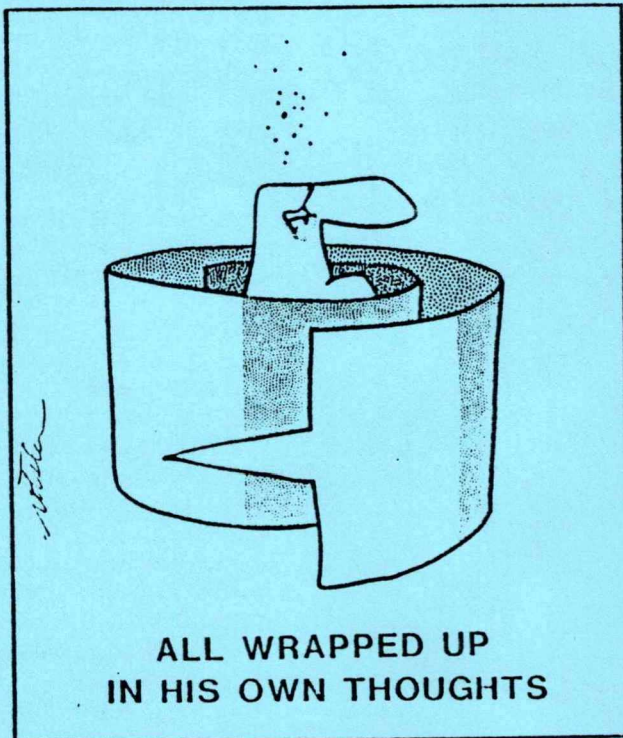
Ben Wilson, Paul Gardner, JoHn Hardin and myself once again, decided to brave the third largest river in the US and spend three days canoeing nine miles. With that much flow, the most paddling we'd have to do would be stopping. Mostly we just lashed our boats together and floated through some of the most scenic country in the world. Oh, yes, we also brought feasts for the four of us.

"I'm the man," Ben chimed out. He was in the next canoe, about eight inches away from me. We were both laying back against our rolled up sleeping bags with our feet propped upon the gunwales. (I didn't know at the time that they were gunwales, but I'm getting ahead of myself.)

He didn't have to chime quite so loudly, being so close, but I suppose he, like the rest of us, was feeling small in this big nature.

BALLOONS

ROTSLER



Slowly he pulled himself up into a sitting position. Was that a groan muttered sotto voce? "Geez, Ben," John chided. "Are we working you too hard?"

"No, no, I'm doing fine, John," the groaning boatman replied. "I just don't see any reason to hurry." He rustled in his lashed down backpack, produced a lighter, and something to light, and slowly returned to his former position.

We all benefited from Ben's effort and went back to relaxing. Inhaling deeply, we felt Mother Nature enlightening us. I allowed my mind to drift back to the events of that morning.

We launched easily and quickly, remembering to lash everything down with thousands of bungee cords.

"Could you toss me another bungee," Paul called. "I want to lash down my hat." (It's easy to get carried away with lashing stuff, but Paul's half of his canoe looked like it was covered by a psychedelic web.)

Ben tossed him another elastic cord and went back to packing his half of the same canoe. John and I successfully slipped our own boat into the chilly water, followed by Ben and Paul. We took one last look at Hoover Dam, raising almost 600 feet over us. The mile and a half distance between us did nothing to diminish its grandeur.

"What now?" asked John. I reminded myself that this was his first trip in the area. He'd hiked down to the river before, but being on the river in a small boat is different matter altogether. John sat stiffly, alert to any twitch or bob of the canoe. His life vest wrapped tight around his barrel chest, he clutched his paddle loosely but ready to react.

"John, settle down. The first thing we're going to do is take a break. Relax." My words seemed to reassure him and his shoulders visibly settled into a more comfortable position. I couldn't blame him. As warm as the weather was that weekend, the river is only twenty degrees above freezing. Canoes do tip, so John's apprehension was well founded. I on the other hand, was very confident. I've never tipped over a canoe, not even on purpose, and I didn't intend to now.

John started looking around and seeing the landscape for the first time. "What's that?" he asked. We were floating under some cables that crossed the canyon; they seemed to be associated with some structures built on the shore. I explained about the hand car engineers used to cross the river fifty years ago. The ruins of equally old bridge supports spoke of man's attempt to tame this river. Black cormorants dove underwater - fishing.

"Over there, over there," I shouted. "Let's pull over there." My mates turned to look at where I pointed. A small cove on the Nevada shore beck-

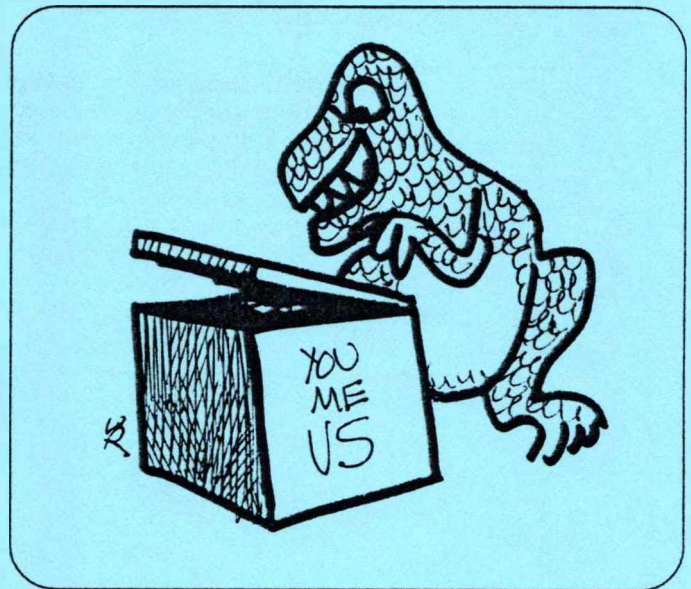
oned. "We just launched, and it's time for a break."

We paddled a few strokes, just to get the feel of it and soon found ourselves against the shore. John's exit from the boat was a little shaky, but I could see he was learning fast.

The lads looked at me with questioning eyes. They wanted to know why we were stopping. I felt like Peter Pan leading the Lost Boys on another adventure. "This way, my friends. There's a sauna cave up here. Back in the thirties, they wanted to investigate a hot spring, so they blasted a tunnel in the cliff face; all the way back into the spring." ("Damn, I thought it was time for mother nature to enlighten me.")

"Here it is," Paul called. We climbed to the square, obviously man-made, opening. A stream of warm water flowed at our feet and steam rolled out of the cave. Cautiously we started into the cave. Instantly my glasses fogged up, the humidity inside was so high. John lit his lighter - we had flame, just in case we wanted to light something, but we hadn't thought to bring a flashlight - but it only served to illuminate his hand and make the gloom inside the cave even more oppressive.

Shouldering my way past John, I forged ahead.



It didn't matter to me that I couldn't see in the dark, in their present condition, my glasses were useless anyway. I reasoned that this cave, this sauna cave, was too hot to house wild animals. I also knew that sixty years ago, during the construction of Hoover Dam, workers used this cave after a long day's work.

There should be no problem with us blindly making our way into the dark. With outstretched arms, I worked my way further into the cliff.

"Whew, it's hot in here," someone behind me commented.

"No shit, Sherlock," someone else responded.

"Hey, why do you think they call this a 'sauna cave?'" I explained.

It occurred to me that Ben hadn't followed us into the cave. Did he have a problem with claustrophobia? Or was it just too dark? I had the answer as soon as the thought crossed my mind. A bright beam, obviously from a flashlight, stabbed me in my eyes. Ben had gone back and retrieved something more useful than JoHn's small lighter. "Out of the way, I've got a light," Ben matter-of-factly stated.

We all moved out of the way of the smarter member of the group. Ben forged ahead and in the steamy beam from his light, I saw that there was very little else to see.

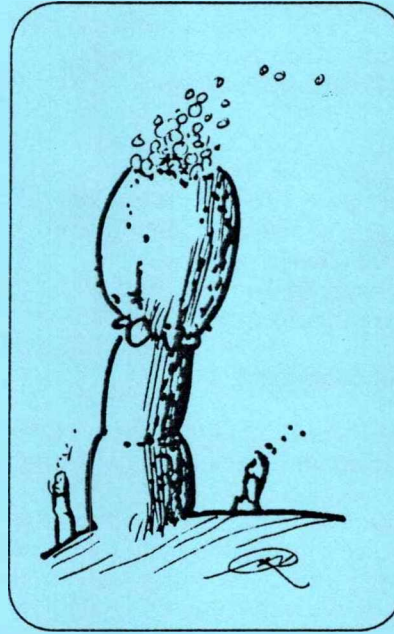
"I've had enough, I'm out of here." I turned and worked my way out to daylight.

As soon as I emerged, I noticed my clothes were soaking wet. I didn't know if it was from sweat or steam, but the breeze felt so refreshing that I didn't care.

Before too long, my three compadres joined me at the river's edge. We put JoHn's lighter to the use for which it was intended and all agreed that our adventure was off to a fine start. (*"Thank you Mother Nature."*)

After an uneventful launch, JoHn settled down, we floated the rest of the morning away. The sun crawled to its zenith and past while we drank Colorado Coolers. Lunch consisted of sliced meats, fruits, tortillas, and french bread. A couple of turkey vultures floated on the thermals raising along the cliffs, but I don't think they were looking at us. I guess we didn't smell dead yet.

A pair of mallard ducks, male and female, floated in the water beside our boats. I was sure they were



looking for hand outs and snacks, but I didn't expect them to follow us for two days.

The only thing that interrupted our day was inconsiderate power boaters. They're supposed to slow down within 100 feet of non-powered crafts. Many places in Black Canyon aren't more than 175 feet wide.

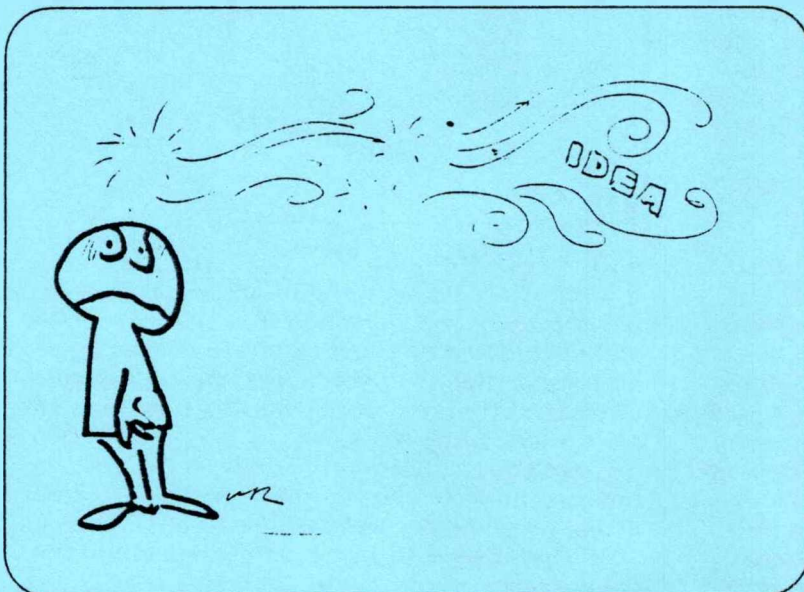
"Wave if you're an asshole," I'd shout and wave as they sped by. Of course they'd wave and smile all friendly

like. The wakes created by their passing shook and bobbed our boats, but we never felt too threatened, just annoyed.

All too early we rounded a bend in the river and saw our campsite for the evening. The swift current made short work of the long miles. Long before we got to our destination, we became aware our first choice was already chosen. Colorful tents claimed the preferred locations. "That's all right my friends. There are other spots." JoHn didn't look reassured by my words.

"Look, the weatherman said the wind would be coming out of the south until midnight. Tomorrow it's supposed to swing around and come out of the north. The campsite I have in mind for us is protected from the south. Soft sand for us to sleep on and open skies for a ceiling." We untied the boats and paddled for the cove I indicated.

Much of the sand beach had washed away with recent high waters, but the campsite was still well above the high water mark. The thirty foot rock wall above the beach curved around like a cup toward the north. We landed and unpacked the boats. While my friends and I set up camp, I couldn't help notice how much they admired my choice of sites. Their eyes seemed glazed over in appreciation. I imagined they each wanted to congratulate me - the protection provided by the cliffs, the view of the river - but they were too shy to come forward and say so. In retrospect, I think the quantity of rum and other mood enhancers accounted for the dazed looks, but I can dream, can't I?



I've said before that the Colorado River through Black Canyon offers no significant challenges. There is one rapid in Black Canyon. Ringbolt Rapid is the shallowest part of the river, being only eighteen inches or so deep. The current increases enough to make it a rapid. After unpacking the canoes, we all decided to paddle through the chute. Ben and Paul paddled upstream with the help of an eddy; JoHn and I followed behind. I watched them move to the edge of the current, prepare to turn into it, and advance into the flow. I looked down to adjust my seating and the next thing I knew, my friends were swimming in the cold river. Fortunately both of them are healthy and strong swimmers. JoHn and I sped to their aid, but our friends indicated they were okay, but could we please retrieve their canoe. We shot out into the current and caught up with the swamped boat easily enough, but we couldn't right it. A couple of handy boy scouts called us over to the shore, we followed their lead. In a calm cove, they showed us how to un-swamp a canoe from a second boat by perching it upon the gunwales. (If you need to know how, you'll already know how so I won't repeat it here.) By the time we'd accomplish this task, Paul and Ben were warming themselves on the shore. We turned our prow into the river and shot down the watercourse.

After we'd had enough of that nonsense, Ben and I decided we needed to soak in the hot spring on the other side of the cove; about a half mile hike. We knew the hot spring's canyon, our first campsite choice, was filled with campers, so we figured on encountering a lot of people at the spring. We weren't disappointed. Cresting the ridge between our canyon and theirs, Ben and I counted over thirty tents set up in a temporary bivouac. They completely filled the small canyon with color and noise. I just shook my head. My college studies indicated that no more than three campsites be located in this canyon, while a half mile upstream there was a canyon big enough to fit all thirty comfortably and with relative privacy. I sighed and we jumped down to the floor of the crevasse entrance to the hot springs. Rampaging waters have cut a beautiful slot canyon through the rock walls.

We hiked a quarter mile through a labyrinth-like crack in the rock no more than 10 feet wide, and 75-100 feet tall. Our efforts were rewarded by a pool of 120' degree water collected in a sand-bagged depression in the rocks. The sandbags dammed the exit of the hole, serving to increase the depth of the pool.

Hot water and big nature always relax me. Even sharing the spring with six other people did nothing to diminish my enjoyment. My muscles breathed a sigh of relief as the pains of the day soaked away.

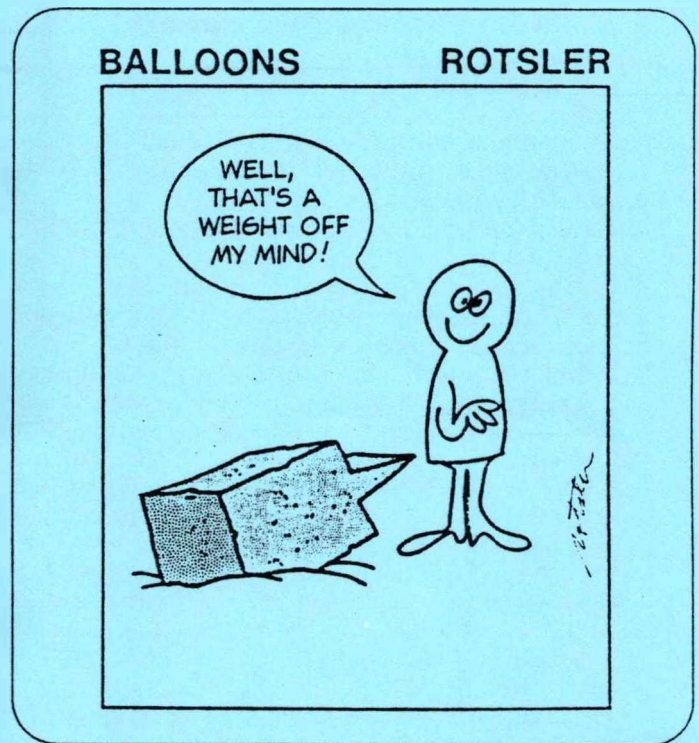
*("Yea, after that hard day of work.")*

It only took the hot water a short time to drive us out of the pool. We wanted to get back to camp, and other people wanted to use the water. The hike down the slot canyon took less time and less effort. It's amazing how nicely well relaxed muscles work. We hiked along, over the ridge to our campsite. Along the way, we spotted a side path leading up to a precipice 300 feet over the river.

Ben looked back at me; I could read the question on his face. We turned up the path. Climbing to the top was neither strenuous or dangerous, but the wind and the height made it seem so. The Colorado River stretched before us. We could see three miles of river and canyon going from north to south. Big Nature indeed.

"Look down there," Ben pointed to the river below.

The wind made sheets of ripples on the surface of the river. Our vantage point above the water allowed us to track the progress of the micro bursts of wind coming from the south. Predictable, yet chaotic, we could almost see the wind.



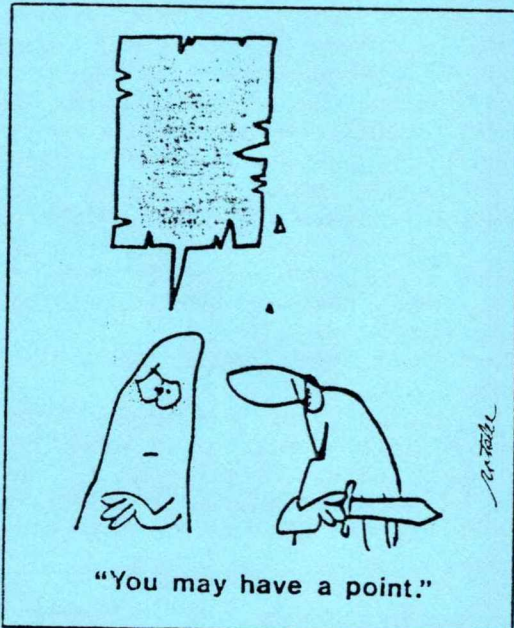
We noticed a particularly stable patch of wind starting at the far south end of the canyon, a mile or more away. I didn't time it, but I could swear we watched that wind travel for five minutes, and disappear into the north.

"The campsite is protected from the south," I commented. "We should be completely sheltered from the wind."

Ben murmured his answer without taking his

BALLOONS

ROTSLER



eyes off the scenery. I couldn't blame him. The view was so grand that it demanded your attention.

*"We were really elevated and we were high up too."*

All too soon we climbed down and made our way back to camp. When we crested the hill overlooking our camping spot, it became apparent our campmates had not been idle in our absence. Paul had the kitchen unpacked, coolers arranged conveniently near sitting rocks, and his sleeping bag unrolled. JofIn was conjuring forth fire in a ring of stones. He was hunched over the fire ring concentrating on the task at hand. I just knew he was using his new 'toy' to ignite the tinder.

"It's a block of magnesium that you shave into slivers. Then you use a striker on the other side and a pocket knife to spark it. This thing will light a fire underwater," JofIn had bragged just after he bought the gadget. "Besides, it'll be fun."

Ben and I started to climb down the steep hill when disaster struck. Suddenly our little cove was in a swirling cloud of sand and leaves. It felt like being in a wind tunnel. The wind had suddenly changed to the opposite direction, out of the north! The

cove acted as a natural wind trap! My tent nearly collapsed and the sleeping bags started to blow away.

I kept thinking 'Maybe it'll change back, maybe it'll change directions. The weatherman couldn't have been wrong. Science is never wrong.' I know it's not so, but I'm optimistic and idealistic.

"What do we do now," Paul asked reasonably enough.

*"You're the man, Paul."*

"Maybe it'll change back," my reply, echoing my thoughts.

I walked over to JofIn to inspect his progress. The swirling wind and blinding sand made the simple act of walking across the beach a tedious task. Still I tried to remain optimistic. My pyrotechnic friend's progress wasn't so encouraging. He was discovering the flaw in his plan to use metal shavings to light a fire. The wind kept blowing the slivers away.

It took about thirty minutes of wishful thinking before Ben and I finally grabbed a canoe and paddled out of the cove, scouting for an alternative place to spend the night. The other two broke camp and loaded the other canoe.

We got lucky. It didn't take more than 45 minutes to find another place to camp, deliver this news to our friends, load our boat, ferry back, and re-setup our stuff. The remainder of the night brought us no further difficulties.

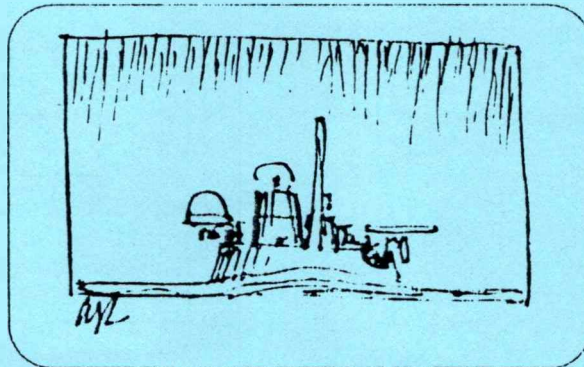
When I go camping, I tend to be an early riser. It's a little easier now that I'm on a regular morning schedule for work, but I've seen almost every sunrise in my camping career. There is something almost spiritual about that time of day. Lots of other, more adept, writers have described sunrises, so I'll not try. I stretched and watched the light creep down the rock face.

There was no hurry, the river's current would do most of the day's work. All we had to do was pack the boats, and unpack them at the next campsite. In fact, aside from those two chores, the hardest thing we had to do today was operate a lighter. (Sidebars don't just happen...someone's got to flick his bic.)

I smiled to myself as I remembered something from the middle of the night before...

Sometime after midnight, I awoke to JofIn whispering loudly, "Ben...Ben, quit snoring."

All four of us snore on these trips. Too much fresh air, I think. Ben was no exception and he was sawing logs for the winter. He







wasn't bothering me, but apparently John was having trouble sleeping through it.

"Ben," John whispered louder, "knock it off!" Normally I would have sympathy for someone in John's situation; being kept awake by someone snoring is very annoying. Mr. Hardin is a special case, though. John snores, camping or not, with a vengeance; loud enough to wake the dead.

"Ben, quit it!"

"John," I said, "you're one to talk, you snore too."

"Yea, but I'm not snoring now and Ben is." He threw a rock at the sleeping, snoring form, which seemed to do the trick.

By the time the sun reached the bottom of the cliff, I was ready to get up and start the day. A vulture lazily traced a path along the top of the cliff, hunting without working too hard. The big bird depended on the thermals and updrafts lifting out of the canyon. A fish splashed, and brought my attention to the rippling of the river. I stretched and sat up.

"Wake and bake," I thought.

Paul lit a cigarette and we all woke with a smoke.

("Now this is the way to camp.")

Breakfast happened (egg burritos with bacon, coffee and another round of smoking).

While we were breaking camp, some boy scouts in canoes landed on the beach near our campsite. They unloaded several neatly packed backpacks onto the beach and left without saying a word. We ignored their activities and continued to pack our own camp.

A little while later, the scouts returned with more packs and neatly stood them with the others. This was repeated every fifteen minutes until we left forty-five minutes later. When we pushed off into the river, they were returning, once again, with canoes filled with packed packs. They proceeded to add their load to the nearly forty packs that lined the shore. We all agreed on a "don't ask, don't tell" policy and moved on down the river.

Day two on the river was less eventful than day one. We spent our time eating, drinking and smoking. We saw some mountain sheep and a few birds, but nothing particularly exciting. The day passed in a pleasant, but inebriated state.

"Is this the right cove? Is this it?" Paul kept wanting to know.

"Christ, I don't know," I answered. "Just keep looking for a good place to camp. I'm sure it'll be just beyond that next bend."

As is my custom (maybe I shouldn't call it a "custom", perhaps "quirk" would be more accurate), I had left the map at home. I'm not sure why it is, but four canoe trips out of four, I've left any sort of map behind. I don't intend to do this. I have detailed maps of the area, and I always make several copies to distribute to my co-boaters. For some reason, in the hustle-and-bustle of pre-trip preparations, I neglect that last, most vital step of distributing them.

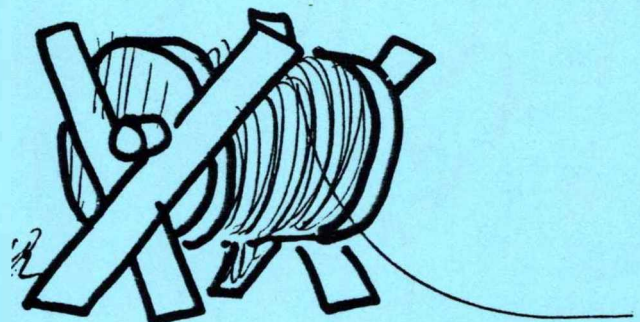
I wasn't too worried; since we were in a moderately swift flowing river there was really only one course of action. There was no hurry, but Paul was feeling a little antsy to land on shore.

"There are some sandy beaches..." I started.

"No sandy beaches." This from John.

"What, you want to sleep on rocks?"

"Just no sand. If I'd known that yesterday's lunch was the last meal I'd eat without sand in it,



THE FABULOUS GILLILAND  
LINE, NO. 2

I'd have made it a point to enjoy it more."

We sought the cove known as Don's Bathtub (although it was only known as such amongst the Vegrants, the Park Service insists it is called Crane's Nest Rapids, but I've never seen either there). On a previous trip, Don Miller once dug a three by five foot bathtub at the water's edge where a small hot spring did it's feeble best against the bitter cold of the river.

Just like the previous day, the current moved us faster than we expected. We reached right spot by early afternoon.

JoHn's wish came true, small pebbles and river stone covered Don's Bathtub Cove. And not a grain of sand in sight, except for the beautiful sand beach on the other side of the river.

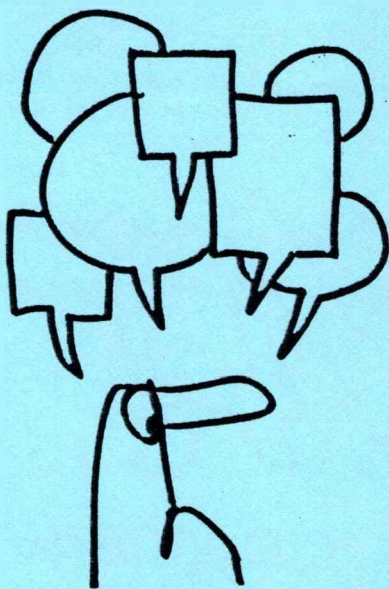
We took a vote, three to one, and set off across the river to the sandy beach. JoHn and I maneuvered across the water to the other side. Ben and Paul cut upstream to scout a second possible campsite.

*("We were actually looking for firewood, and we were successful.")*

With most of the beach eroded away by recent high water, the shoreline rose about eight feet above the river. Firmly packed Colorado River silt, just moist enough to stick together. The natural campsite was right on the edge of the drop off. The scouts returned and agreed that this place was better than any they'd seen.

*("And there was plenty of firewood here;, didn't use all that we gathered.")*

With two of us at the canoes, conveniently tied to



ANGRY BUT SPEECHLESS

the shore, just below camp, and two of us eight feet higher, we made short work of unloading the boats. We set up camp just as easily and were left with the rest of the afternoon to relax. A human sized depression in the ground, left by previous campers, cradled my sleeping bag. I also noted the fact that any thrashing about in my sleep might throw me over the edge about fifteen inches away. I decided to chance it.

With the boats empty, we paddled back across the river to Don's Bathtub. We searched for the hot spring, but failed to find it. Even though we couldn't locate the water flow, we still enjoyed it's influence. The water in the cove was noticeably warmer than the river. Swimming back and forth across the temperature gradient, we enjoyed the current but avoided the cold.

Congratulating ourselves with a smoke and a drink, we discussed the plans for the rest of the afternoon.

"I don't see why we can't just stay here. How long before sundown?" JoHn asked.

Ben bent down, turned over a rock, picked up a handful of sand and let it run through his fingers, squinted at the sun and stated, "We've got three or more hours of sunlight."

"Wow!" exclaimed Paul, "You could tell what time it is with that ceremony?"

"What ceremony?" Ben queried.

"That thing you did with the rock and the sand."

"What are you talking about? I bent down to look at this rock, and it burnt my hand when I picked it up. I ran some moist sand through my hand to cool it down. Then some sweat dripped into my eyes and when I wiped it off, I noticed my watch and saw what time it was."

"I need to drink more," Paul said, reaching for the flask of rum.

*("You're the man, Paul.")*

Empty canoes are so much easier to control; JoHn and I played in the current while Ben waited for Paul to stagger to his side of their boat. The exertion and the sun sobered us all enough to spend the next few hours playing in and on the water.

We all decided to wait until the rock cliff high above our camp cast its shadow upon our small sand cliff, then we'd head back and prepare for evening's dinner and music.

I usually bring my ebonite flute with me when I camp. Yes, that's right, I said ebonite, the stuff they make black bowling balls out of. It's practically indestructible and completely water proof. It has a good enough tone, with my meager skills, that people generally don't run screaming when I play. That night I pulled it out of my backpack and started playing. I felt inspired to add my music to that of the river. I walked down the shore

to be alone.

The perfect spot to play was a rock out-cropping sticking out of the shore. I climbed the rock, found a seat, and began my serenade. A lonesome duck responded to my song. He'd quack a few notes, I'd play a few.

In the meantime, Ben chose to stumble nearer to where I was sitting.

"Listen, can you hear that?" he asked, calling my attention to the echo.

The slot canyon directly across the river was deep enough and angled enough to provide four separate echoes in return. I played a phrase, the canyon responded four times over, even the duck joined in the sympathy.

Paul, John and Ben all agreed the music was hauntingly appropriate for Big Nature. Even though I always play for myself, it's nice to know my audience enjoyed themselves, too.

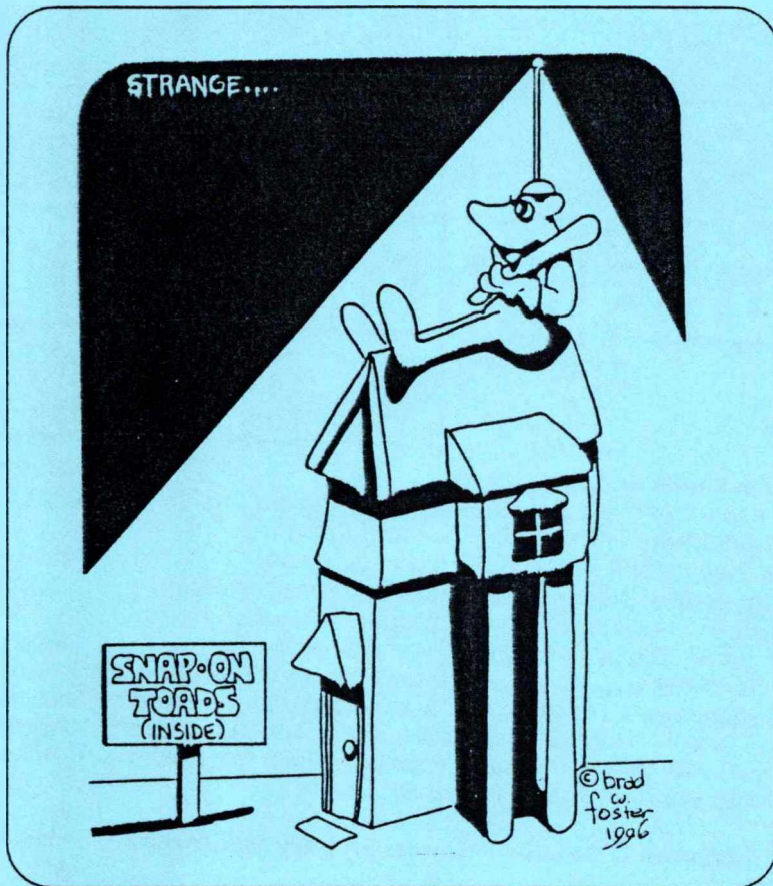
The second morning dawned much like the first. We watched the sunlight creep down the cliff above us. We rose refreshed and ready to face the day. After sharing a morning smoke, the four of us found rituals to begin the day with.

John grabbed a camera, climbed the lower cliffs above us and prepared to observe the vista. Paul relaxed into a chair with a book and a cigarette. Ben unpacked his small stunt kite, seeking to take advantage of a slight breeze. I decided to shed my clothes and enjoy the calm water of our cove.

The kite swooped over the cove, followed by John's watchful camera. Click, click went the camera, splash went the kite into the drink. I waded over to retrieve it for my friend, thinking nothing of my nudity since there was no one in sight besides my companions. Lifting the kite out of the water, I held it aloft to catch the breeze again.

Little did I know that John chose that moment to snap off another snapshot. ("I call it Naked Launch," he said when I showed him the developed print.)

Ben declared that he'd had enough flying and was going to make breakfast.



The menu called for pancakes (Ben's specialty) and hot maple syrup (from Vermont) and coffee. We all decided that was the best course of action. Mmm, mmm, good.

Eventually we packed for the last time and cast off into the river for the final leg of our journey. Anyone interested in history would enjoy traveling through this part of the canyon. Seventy year old scaffolding hangs from the canyon walls high above water. Water testing platforms from a bygone age stand in the river, unused but ready.

Less than half a mile later, Willow Beach, the end of the trip, showed itself around a bend in the river. Our rides waited on the launch ramp so we wasted no time unpacking.

The drive home passed in silence. Big Nature needed no epilogue. ooo

-- Ken Forman

IF YOU READ THIS  
FANZINE BACKWARDS  
YOU'LL SEE "LANSY  
IS KAPUT"

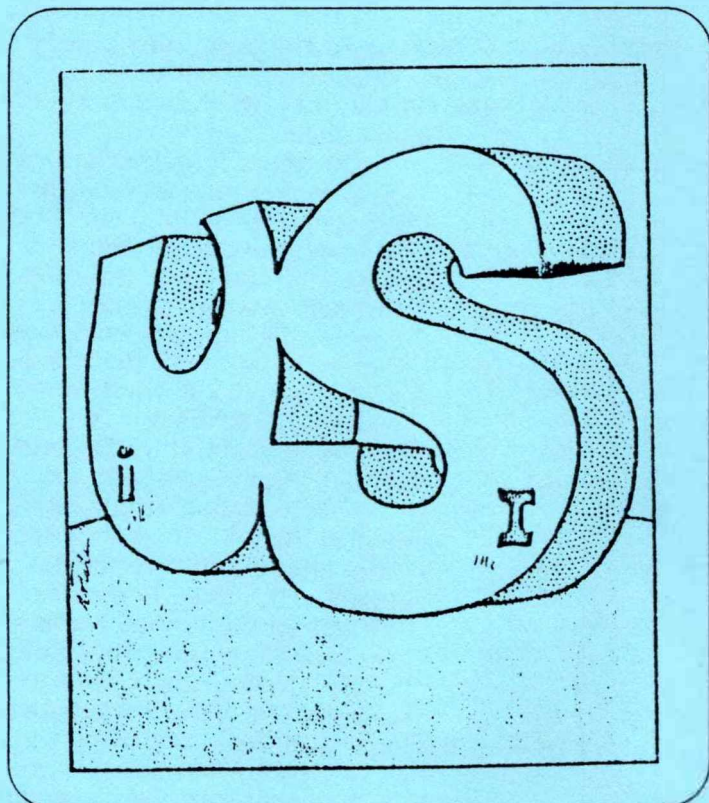


# SILVERCON III GOH SPEECH: THE FANZINE TRIBE BY GREG BENFORD

## Toastmaster Jack Speer

*I think of Greg as more of a Fan, than a Pro, although he is the embodiment of what the Michelists called the Gernsback delusion, which was that science fiction (SF) readers would turn into scientists. As a scientist, every ten years or so he takes up a new topic because he has exhausted the previous one and has made some discoveries. In addition he is a science fiction writer. Not one of those wannabe SF writers who would like to be scientists but one who actually is predominantly a writer of hard SF.*

## Professional Guest of Honor Gregory Benford



It was indeed a pleasure to be invited as a professional to what I've always thought of as a Fan convention. I still think of myself as a Fan. I belong to an APA, I contribute regularly to Fanzines or rather I contribute to Irregular Fanzines. There are no regular Fanzines, except for *Locus*, which of course is not a real Fanzine. This is what we've come to these days.

I've just finished writing a long essay about my involvement with both science and science fiction, titled "Old Legends," for Greg Bear's collection, *NEW LEGENDS*. I discovered through my whole career that the scientists I knew were as likely as not to have had a considerable, though breakable, habit of reading science fiction. Indeed, many of the most prominent scientists of our time are or were SF Fans.

Like Marvin Minsky, master of Artificial Intelligence, who has an astonishing collection of SF paperbacks in completely chaotic order. His collection is on moveable shelving run by servos, for which he has concocted an elaborate mechanism, so he can shuffle these bookshelves back and forth with a flick of a switch, as adroitly as a hand of cards. I never quite understood the reason for such because he does not know where any particular book is. It's a sort of Al Ashley invention, really better on the drawing boards than in reality. Marvin proudly showed me these moving shelves and when I asked about a particular book he looked at the wall of them, still sliding past, and he said, "Well, it's here somewhere." The shelves rumbled by on their rubber rollers. "I've got the essentials all here in my head," he said. "If I really wanted a book, I'm sure I could see it going by."

From Marvin Minsky to Edward Teller and people of that sort. Freeman Dyson, Gerald Feinberg, Shelly Glashow—winners of the Nobel Prize -- have published Fanzines! That should tell us something. They didn't get the Nobel Prize for literature, however—not yet.

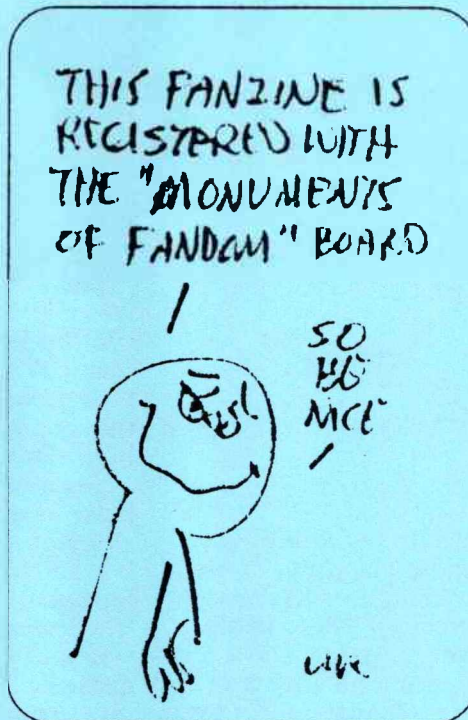
This kind of apotheosis of the involvement between SF and science came to me about a decade ago. I was at a meeting between various mucky mucks of the Jerry Pournelle circle, involved in giving advice to the White House, which was inhabited at the time by an ex-actor, instead of an obvious amateur actor like the one today. We were engaged in producing some serious options in the Space Program. These were to my astonishment acted upon and taken up. The Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) was originally proposed by a bunch of technology and SF people -- for purposes, very different from the way it eventually came about.

One thing you learn in politics is nothing is linear. You learn that in science too but it takes a while longer. That was in the summer of 1984, I remember. Arthur C. Clarke was there and so was Robert A. Heinlein. Arthur was in town because 2010 was being kicked off or maybe kicked under. In the living room of Larry Niven's house occurred one of those strange events that echo on through time—a confrontation. Clarke said he didn't like the idea of any kind of weapons in space. Heinlein jumped on him and said in no uncertain terms that Clarke didn't have anything at stake. It was about the defense of the United States and Heinlein found it personally offensive that Clarke felt this way. It was really quite a spectacle for all of us who knew these people as great icons of the field. And, of course, Arthur C. Clarke had been a Fan during the 1930's and early 40's. To see them come to sword points over this issue was really quite unsettling.

Clarke was so disturbed he left and that was the last time he ever saw Heinlein. They later made up via correspondence but it was a sticking point, about different visions of the future that came out of SF. Most of the people in the room, in one way or another, had been involved with fandom. Myself, Greg Bear, Larry Niven, Bjo Trimble and others.

This comes non linearly again forward into the present. Some of you may be aware that a couple of months ago the U.S. launched the first interplanetary vessel in quite a long time. I suspect that most of the American public will never be aware of this, the so-called Clementine mission. It is at the moment completing a topographic map of the moon—the best one ever. It will then go on to do a flyby of an asteroid this summer, just about when the broken up icetoroid strikes the back of Jupiter. The interesting thing about Clementine: it cost \$70 million bucks, the cheapest mission flown by NASA in over 20 years, except of course that it wasn't flown by NASA. It was built by the Office of the Strategic Defense Initiative (OSDI), with NASA help.

In the last decade the SDI has developed diagnostics and sensors that simply didn't exist before. High quality, infrared, ultraviolet and other mapping techniques which last month made a very interesting vertical shot of the Apollo 11 landing site. You can see the remains of the vehicle and more. For \$70 million bucks they accomplished what NASA had estimated would take 400-to-500 million dollars. The package is extremely light



because all this was developed to function in small Earth orbiting satellites as detectors for ICBM liftoff burns and the like. This is unknown to the American public largely because the Clinton Administration has chosen to suppress the publicity. Right now it's almost impossible to get a publicity package, particularly including photographs made by the mission, from NASA.

Because politics still reign and many factions in both the House of Representatives and NASA do not want the connection between defense and the Space Program to receive any publicity.

They particularly don't want to bring to light the next proposal made by the

OSDI, which is to build a space craft which will rendezvous with and achieve orbit around an asteroid. It would then fire high velocity pellets into the asteroid so that it ejects dust. The craft could measure this spectrographically and determine the composition—the cheapest way of performing that task. It's easier than landing on the surface and taking samples.

They're pressing this for \$40 million, approximately the cost of refurbishing the tiles on the outer skin of the shuttle for every mission. A complete mission for the cost of the tile replacement on the shuttle! We all know the shuttle, it's a space ship designed by a committee of lawyers in the early 1970s.

The funny thing about all this is it underlines the fact that science and science fiction, the Space Program, all of this has been deeply entwined in way that is completely non-linear. The one thing I've learned by my experiences as a Fan is that the things you read in the magazines often turned out to be prophetic, but for reasons that were completely unforeseen at the time. That's known as hitting the target but not looking at it.

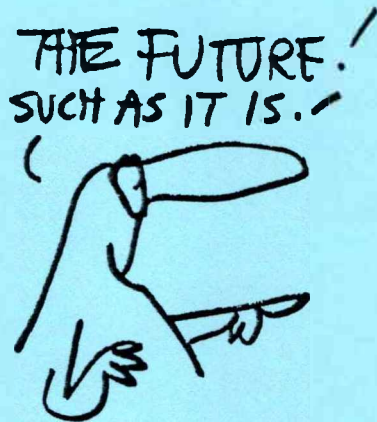
The striking thing about all this is that everybody involved in the Clementine mission—including my twin brother Jim, ex-editor of **Vold** -- first met because the chief director of the Clementine Mission was Jim's funding officer for several years out of OSDI. Jim was doing research in building microwave detectors for them. So it's all non-linear and it really has little to do with liberal or conservative politics. When I was at that meeting planning

the ideology behind the SDI—which was always to my mind a method of defending strategic assets, not cities -- I was a registered Democrat. Now, I hope you won't hold that against me.

What impressed me was how fans have many times migrated into all species of technology buffs, computer buffs, or as I call them in their larval form, computer weenies—the guys who think that the Net is a fundamental revolution in human discourse. As we all know that was long ago accomplished by the advent of Fanzines, essentially invented in the true form by Bob Tucker or Charles Burbee, I can't remember which. One of them invented sex and the other invented Fanzines and each has envied the other for some reason ever since.

I found it enormously reassuring that you can't really predict the future. You can sometimes anticipate it. But the people who went at it with the most playful attitude, fans in spirit, did it out of a sense of love and fascination. They were invariably more imaginative and I believe accomplished more than the people who were far more serious and thought in a more linear fashion.

I was speaking with Buz Aldrin about this; he who lives a few miles from me in Laguna Beach. He told me that he signed an agreement a couple of months ago with Time-Warner Books to write an SF novel. I said, What? He said ever since I landed on the moon I've been thinking about these kinds of things. It was such a fundamentally different and moving experience for him; he had never much thought about SF until he had done that. Not until he'd realized the scale



of the human prospect. The experience of looking back at the whole damn planet appearing about the size of your hand had forever changed the way he thinks about a lot of things. So he had begun to think up a Science Fiction plot. And he is now, as is usual in this field, writing this book with a collaborator, because he doesn't really write all that well.

The book has actually sold.

He'd already written one book, his memoirs, which is really quite good.

Aldrin began to talk about how he had begun to read SF, since the Apollo 11 Mission 25 years ago. I asked him what kind of SF he likes. I've asked this question of many people, usually those who hear that I write SF; about 50% of the time they say something like "Well, you know what I really most love is Tolkien." When this elicits from me a singular silence, they say "Well of course you know I read the kind of rocket stuff too." They have phrases which seem to mean something to them -- "the rocket stuff".

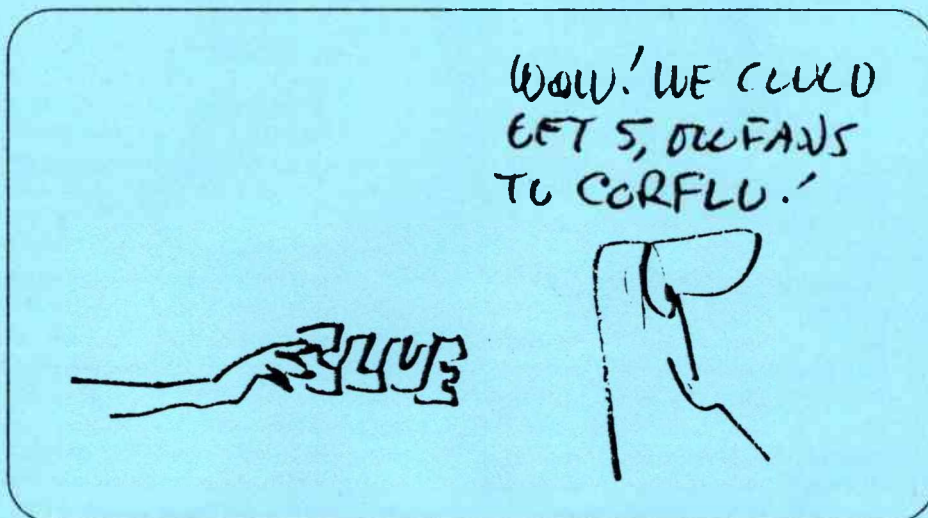
As a scientist I was stunned when about a decade ago people started using the phrase "he's no rocket scientist" to imply that someone wasn't very intelligent. The first time I heard that I thought what can they possibly mean. Because I actually know "rocket scientists" -- though they don't actually exist. The rocket was invented a long time ago. They're engineers, folks. They're the kind of people who read Astounding when it was still called Astounding.

The fact that the American public doesn't distinguish between science and engineering tells us more than what they think about rocket scientists. (I kind of cleaned up their response; they very often cited Piers Anthony, but I'm trying to keep this a light talk and don't want anyone to get depressed.)

(I haven't even mentioned Marion Zimmer

Bradley here, and don't forget she was a fan.) I was much struck by the fact that they thought the rocket stuff was even now really very blue sky.

That is, they think SF is still about things that



are highly improbable. Only when events are about to happen do they become worth discussing. That's the fundamental difference between us and them, in case you've wondered.

The people down there in the Vegas casinos are the kind of people who only dimly recognize ideas. Let's put it this way, you would call them an entomologist if they recognized the bug when it hit their windshield. That's the kind of foresight they have. And that's a fundamentally different way of looking at the world, qualitatively different. Of course, it's easy to satirize.

I was lying down in my room upstairs trying to recover from the program items from this afternoon, *The Incomplete Burbee* -- Al Ashley Distinguished Novelist, Big Name Fan and all these pieces which satirize what Fans are, were and could be. And it struck me that there's still truth in it.

There's a lot about Fandom that is naive, is displaced from the World. The Fan doesn't know what's going on, doesn't tuck in his shirt, shine his shoes or lose weight. But there is something about this community that has, in my own direct experience, the ability to dream and then to do something about it. Working as a scientist, a consultant to NASA, as a consultant to a host of other agencies, I know that governments don't invent ideas, they just recognize them.

They're usually the last major people to do so. I've noticed that the people who've done the most in these organizations are usually the Fans, in spirit. If you can't imagine something you can't make it happen.

That's the basic job of Science Fiction—and Fandom is an important part of SF—to imagine things so that they can happen. And I've seen it happen so many times now that to me it's just an obvious fact of Nature. I had a discussion with Isaac Asimov just about a month before he died and he said that he had been trying to say this in the citadels of power. He'd written articles in every publication from the Smithsonian to the *New York Times*. But, he said, there's an enormous reluctance to recognize this. The media doesn't want to realize that the ideas which have shaped our time to a great extent have come out of an astonishingly small community.

It's not just a community that dreams about the future either. This small group which at one time numbered at its core perhaps only a couple of thousand, invented whole institutions which have now been copied again and again and again like a bad Xerox all the way through American Society.

For example Fandom itself, and Fanzines.

I was having an argument with Lenny Bailles about how it seems to me that the Net is a kind of electronic Fanzine. I've been on the Net for over

20 years. I came in on the ARPANet (Advanced Research Projects Administration). It's the Dr. Strangelove guys, those who directed advanced research in the U.S. They put up the original wide spread net in order to facilitate communication between research groups. Then it proliferated like something out of a bad Michael Crichton novel and became what we now know. Strikingly, the net has replicated many of the institutions of Fandom. People called Flamers—we knew them as fug-heads 50 years before they appeared on the net.

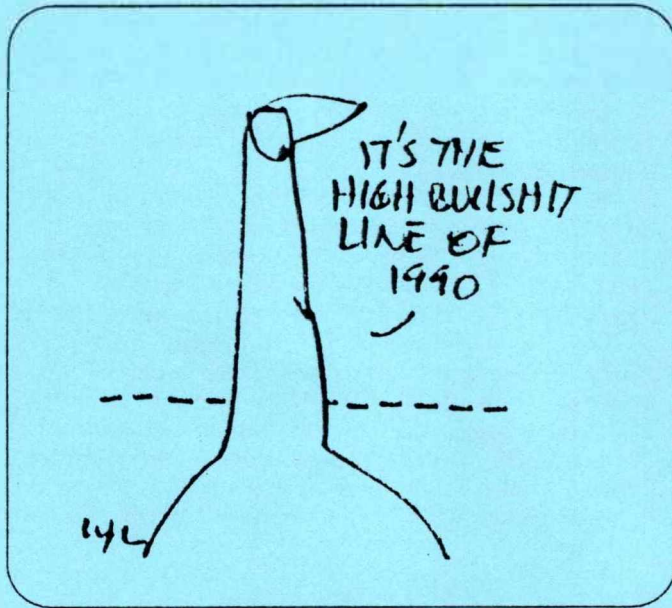
The social formation of Fandom in the 20th century has been replicated in many walks of life. Of course, there has been circus Fandom (Harry Warner wrote an article on that in the early 60s). There is the larger constellation of rock Fandom, rock Fanzines. The word Fanzine now permeates the language and it was invented by us. You may



look it up in the Large Oxford English Dictionary and also the Webster's.

We invented something very general, I think. The human race has made a great success of itself by simply taking its earliest and still the best social formation, the tribe, and proliferating it. We all belong to tribes. The fundamental human tribe of about 10,000 years ago -- just about the time we stopped being hunter gatherers—was roughly a few hundred people. It was not a few thousand people because a few hundred is about what you can feed if you can stampede 10 or so wildebeests off a cliff—which by the way was one of the major methods used. Brave hunters and all that—actually we used traps and dead falls because, what the hell, it was easier than running. Even then we had turned laziness into a principle.

The human tribe is the fundamental agent of organization. Fandom showed modern popular culture—that promulgated mostly in the U.S.—how to organize itself around an interest group. That's



basically what a Fandom is—an idea that replicates and carries on throughout an entire society. As a society gets larger the number of interest groups proliferates and inside the Fandom you get subfandoms. We like to retain the essential size of a tribe. You can't really be on very good terms with more than a few hundred people -- a thousand, tops. How many people are on your personal mailing list?

Recognizing this as the essential pattern, we worked out by hook & crook and experimentation the methods of organization. They include loose communication organized around a semi permanent method of keeping track of things—that's a Fanzine.

It doesn't really matter which particular technology you use, the more permanent form in which a thing is kept the longer lived group memory can be. We've learned to value that connectivity, that long timebinding.

Such timebinding is essential in a tribe, for that's how you pass on the traditions and hold the tribe together. Our Fandom worked out all these methods for the first time in modern popular culture. One of the basic reasons it could do that was because the central culture was written down.

The reason it didn't happen quite so for things like Dixieland jazz is because although you could record it you couldn't keep the whole social fabric intact in a timebound way. That's faced by a lot of institutions of music, which do not have writing as their primary way of communicating.

That's really one of our major virtues. We don't think about it because we all read and write a lot. But the people who don't read and write a lot are largely adrift. Of course there are lots of other methods of communication you can use now. But

they're not as tightly bound. SF Fandom is the most cohesive of all Fandoms and it's the original. SF conventions are the largest of all. Go to a mystery convention, their banquets are about this size. That's the worldcon for mysteries, and the same is true of westerns and other interest groups.

There are a couple of exceptions here and there to things I've said but I wanted to impress you with the cohesion I see. Fandom developed these modes, but similarities developed in the scientific community. The scientific academic institutes have also broken up into tribes as they have gotten larger. They became interest groups.

The American Physical Society has proliferated from one society to, I think, nine different branches. And they keep proliferating and having special conferences because they find that they can't get above the tribal level without losing communication. You lose track of the group once it gets above the size of about a thousand.

I think about the things in this way because it's important to realize that the modern society that we have come to know in the 90s has been to a great extent shaped by the social institution of Fandom in an almost completely unconscious way. In a non-linear way. I don't think Fandom ever thought that the invention of Fandom itself in all its mechanisms, its social tropes, etc, was perhaps the most profound thing it was doing. We thought space flight would be the big payoff! But an essential point which I have learned about thinking of the future is that you never really know quite what you're doing.

You do things by experiment, you cut and try things. Fandom has been in a real sense one of the leading agents of social change in modern popular culture. It's worked things out on its own terms in a fairly small group of people. In fact, I'm egocentric enough to think that it's Fanzine Fandom which is the true hard-core of fandom.

Of course SF is important; this entire institution would not exist without it. Fandom was invented by people who were most interested in the future. I think intuitively they understood that this was going to be one of the central ways of organizing people in a tribal fashion, in the future of modern popular culture. All done unconsciously; you can't go back to 1942 and find an essay by Damon Knight that predicts all this. None of us knew it.

My own bias is that in science fiction the core of the field is hard science fiction, which is organized much like the scientific community. A close-knit international group which proceeds often by collaboration. The number of scientific papers published now with one author is in the range of only about 15-20% of all papers published. Most are collaborations.

This entire social manner, that science has



devised— collaborative interaction and lots of discourse, not the lonely romantic Dr. Frankenstein— reflects the other connection we all have, through genres. We came out of a genre, but the most important of this century, the genre which has grown the most in this century. The essential signature of any genre is that it is an ongoing discourse, the complete opposite of the usual model of literature. That is, literature is about these great isolated monoliths, these great classic works. The cannon stands there alone and remote, works almost independent of who wrote them. They're like giant monuments, Ozymandias, standing alone in a desert.

That's completely the opposite of a genre. That image of literature is very 19th century, the romantic ideal. What we have in a genre is a conversation. Genres are about cross talk. So you write a story about whether a match will or will not remain alight in orbit and everybody knows that you're actually responding to a Hal Clement story published in October 1948, *Astounding*. It's a conversation and that's what makes it so enduring. Oddly enough, talk is the cement of modern organization. And genres are a way of shaping up the ongoing conversation we have about the future and about all the other ideas science fiction talks about. The conversations in western Fandom, and mystery Fandom are much smaller. Their Fanzines are much narrower, much more arcane. Fundamentally we need never feel that there is any competition from other genres. Because, what are westerns about?— a short era in the past which lasted only about 30 or 40 years.

What are mysteries about?—death, crime. What is science fiction about?—well, it's about the past, the future and the present. It's even about things that will never happen, such as alternate history. We occupy the largest conversation, which is about everything (except contemporary realism). I think it's important for us to realize, at this stage, what we hath wrought. In group references. Crosstalk, genre conversations. Recognition that a genre is a giant non-stop conversation, and the recognition that science fiction is a subsection of an even larger conversation at the edge of science. This should make us very aware of the fact that when a GOH gets up, after a long winded speech like this one, and says "I really love you guys! We're a family."— I think that's what they're talking about: the tribe.

The irony of it is that we have turned out to be one of the most important tribes in modern times. We did this largely without knowing it, we did it in an entirely nonlinear way. It's a funny feeling when you sit before a television set watching the President of the United States giving a

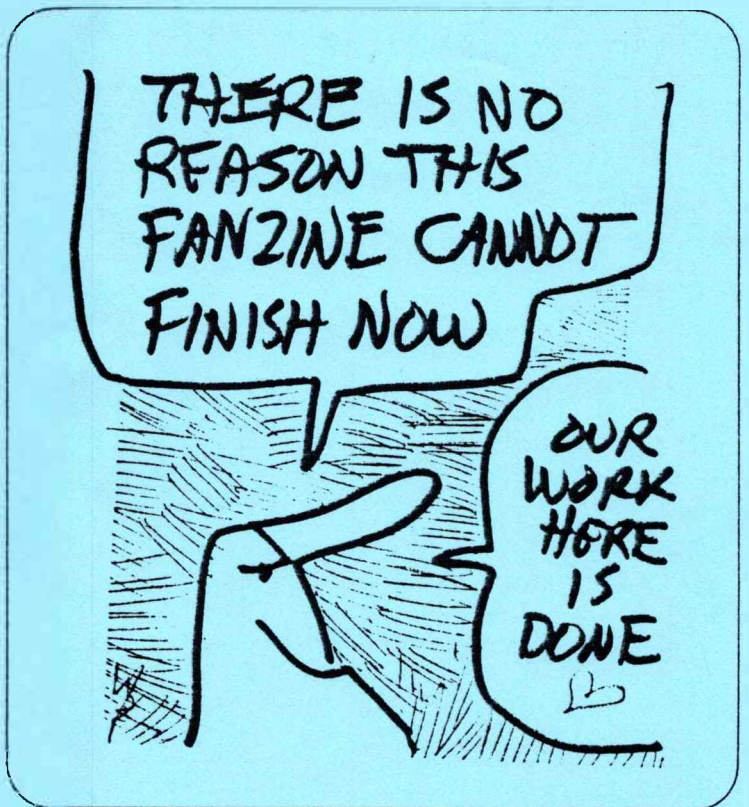
speech, using entire sentences which you helped to write with a bunch of other science fiction fans in somebody's home, six months prior. It's a weird experience but it's a perfectly science fictional Fandom experience. You cannot do anything without, inadvertently, having a nonlinear effect on reality. This tribe of ours has had, arguably, the most strange and largest nonlinear effect that I've seen anywhere in our time. Fanzines mimeographed on twillone don't last long, but the conversation goes on. The presence of Charles Burbee here today testifies to the fact that you can even make fun, bitter, caustic fun of this genre and they will love you for it. Make witty fun of Fans and they will like it, quite unlike politicians.

Recognizing who and what we are will make us better at being what we are. Know thyself! Socrates said that, and he was clearly a fan.

That's why I really couldn't pass up this opportunity to come to this convention.

## Big LoC Section Next Issue

(so pleasure write lots)



TUNE IN NEXT  
TIME - SAME  
FANZINE, SAME  
TYPEFACE

WE'LL BE  
JUST AS  
WONDERFUL  
THEN

