

WOODWORKS

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Welcome to my humble personalzine.

In this issue you will learn more than you care to know about a game called Boggle, you will of course be given full details on the latest Dave Locke Pain Story, I will divulge everything and tell you the absolutely true tale about the hooks in our bedroom ceiling, and then you will share in the wonderfulness of a Saturday which was spent moving a person despite their protests. After that you get a lettercolumn of thirty pages which you should cherish because of the quality of its wordsmithing, the self-contained nature of its content, the fact that some of its participants are from out of the woodwork, and because I can't afford quite this big a lettercolumn in the next issue (I can't afford it this time, either, but I went crazy and felt that I had to).

Missing is a more well-rounded view of what's been happening in the gaping interim between issues. For example, you don't get reviews of



This is a personalzine, which means that I talk about me and what I've been doing lately as opposed to making an effort to say something worthwhile. You might find it amusing. A distribution of fifty copies is based solely upon editorial whim (I send this to whoever might be able to cope with it..). Extra copies not available.

books and movies, though I've encountered some interesting ones. There is no room to tell you about Midwestcon, which I went to for the first time, and where a number of amusing things occurred. Nor is there room to talk about Iguanacon, though I'd be hard-pressed to maintain a light tone if there were. The trip to Oklahoma to visit Ed and Sue Cagle was touched upon in SHAMBLES #3, but there's much detail which will have to wait for Jackie's editorial in the next RESOLUTION and/or the next outing of this thing. If Ghod wanted personalzines to run a hundred pages He would make mimeo paper grow on trees and would subsidize the post office.

I've also got stories up the ass about neighbors in particular and our apartment building in general, and a list of article topics the length of which amazes even me. We've had three visiting fans stay with us and there's no room to tell you about that, either. Perhaps if I learned to say hello in less than two hundred words I wouldn't have so much trouble with giving you two cents worth of information wrapped up in five dollars worth of bullshit.

We are passing the middle of an Indian Summer as I write this. California days are very warm, and lately very smoggy, but the nights are unpredictable. They're either a bit too warm, just right, a bit too cold, or freezing (relatively: remember that your blood thins out if you stay here too long. Also your nose goes dead to protect you from the smog and the perennially pollenating posies, and your shoulders grow scales in defense against a sun which seems to hang much closer to the earth out here). Since Jackie is an indoors person, as am I ever since I moved out of the country (to me the most interesting thing about a city is the fact that it converts me to being an indoor person), what it's like outdoors doesn't bother us all that much. Except that I'm getting a tan from lounging around the pool when my son Brian comes to visit. Jackie still has the complexion of a Ku Klux Klan member in uniform.

Our lifestyle, when we aren't working for a living, still resembles a two-person relaxicon. This appears to suit us most of the time, but whenever we feel troubled by an apparent lack of direction or accomplishment we frenziedly get embroiled in some heavy writing or drawing or building a social calendar so crowded it looks to have the consistency of the heart of a small, dwarf star. That out of our system, we go back to lounging around and ironing the wrinkles caused by exposure to our employments.

The content of our "spare time" is something that we often confront from the standpoint of how much entertainment value a given activity might possess. We eschew that which offers too much or too little, and strive to toe the middle line. Given a choice between Scrabble and reading, we might opt to call it a night and go to bed. Given the dilemma of choosing between a movie and staying home to drink ourselves stupid, we might go for the resolution of getting ourselves blown away and then going out to see the movie.

We still do a lot of reading, though mine continues with the tradition of occurring in spurts while Jackie's reading maintains a more constant pace. Theatre attendance has increased of late, which is the normal byproduct in hearing of numerous releases which have the potential to tickle the low end of our thermometers. With these, we win some and we lose some, though interestingly enough we are usually not in accord as to this outcome.

In the area of games, chess has been dropped in favor of Spider (a version of solitaire offering considerable opportunity for manipulative juggling, which we play separately except in those instances where the one playing the game feigns a good-heartedness at the kibitzing attentions of the other), Scrabble (which often possesses a duration exceeding that of my attention span), Mastermind (a logic game

absorbing to one player and requiring regular but unchallenging attention on the part of the other), Othello (a simplified version of Go which stays interesting only if we don't play it too often), Chinese Checkers (I've likely played over a thousand games of this since I was a kid. My mental storage bins indicate that I may never have lost a game. Quick: someone tell me if they hold tournaments and give away heavy prize money), and Boggle.

Ah, Boggle.

If it would amuse you to give consideration to a game which possesses some of the finer points of Scrabble, anagrams, and Word Search, then you might be a potential fan of something called Boggle.

We purchased the game, but you don't need to. For about five bucks you get sixteen lettered dice in a 4x4 compartmentalized tray with a see-through cover. You also get a 3-minute egg-timer, which you can throw away or place in the kitchen, and a list of rules.

To play the game, unless you wish to be fancy all you really need is some paper and a couple of pencils. Draw a square containing sixteen boxes (four rows of four), and drop in some letters at random. Be liberal with vowels.

Now start looking for words made up of three or more letters. Words of three and four letters score 1 point. Five letters scores 2 points, six 3, seven 4, and so on. You're limited to a maximum of sixteen letters, because you can't use the same box (with a letter inside) more than once in a single word. Additionally, you are handicapped in your sequencing: as you go from letter to letter in creating a word you must move to an adjoining (or "touching") box.

In choosing legitimate words, follow Scrabble rules: "any words found in a standard dictionary are permitted except those capitalized, those designated as foreign words, abbreviations, and words requiring apostrophes or hyphens."

Set a time limit or play until you're satisfied you've found all the words you're going to find. Then, you match lists and score only those words which are unique to your own list.

Certainly Boggle is a game which is more fun to play than to be instructed on. Try it, and you might see why it holds some degree of fascination.

You don't? And you've tried it?

Hmmm... Maybe I forgot something.

Did I tell you that you're supposed to get stoned first?

Ahhh.

The noise of sixteen wood cubes being shaken in a plastic box is enough to wake the dead, cause professional concern on the part of your dentist, and attract the attention of someone with even my hearing difficulties. Somehow the noise isn't quite so bad if you shake up the Boggle game yourself. When someone else does it, like Jackie sitting across from me, it sometimes makes me sincerely believe that I am accelerating my already decayed hearing faculty.

We obtained four steno notebooks so we would have big scorepads for tracking points and disallowed words (one of these days we'll get an unabridged dictionary, and Jackie will coup another 150 or so points on words I never heard of before), and for being able to maintain consistency in which words we're not giving credit for.

These are our "Boggle Books". We have decorated the covers with irrelevant wordage and irreverent cartoons. We still haven't filled the first set of notebooks. The other two have an even longer way to go toward getting filled. My son, Brian, has some pretty impressive games in his Boggle Book, but that's because we allow him to keep any words he finds instead of crossing them off if one of us also has them (we're going to have to change his handicap; he's beating us most of the time these days).

Terry Ridgeway, an old friend of mine who comes down Tuesday nights, has a book which is mostly (by proportion) filled with disallowed words. Each one is backed by as much outrageous justification as can be thought up.

"Scid," Terry said, reading off his list.

"There's no 'k' in this game," Jackie advised, glancing at the layout of the wood cubes which nested in the plastic box.

"S-C-I-D," he spelled out.

"No," Jackie said.

"You didn't get it?"

"We didn't get it because there is no such word," I told Terry. "She means 'no' as in 'no you don't.' Or as in 'wrong, paleface'."

"The word is spelled S-K-I-D," Jackie noted, "and it means a slide, or to slide."

"No, this is a different 'scid'," Terry told her.

"No."

"I'll put a mark by it," Terry muttered. "We'll check it later."

"What's your next word?" I asked him.

"Well, I guess you didn't get 'scids', then."

Some of the cubes are hanging point-down in their grids. Jackie is tapping the sides of the box to get them to fall into place, but there always seems to be one more stubborn than all the others. Right now the hangup is a cube that might settle into the grid as either an "E" or a "Z". We're cheering for the "E".

Of course, sometimes I'll give it the old high-school try, too.

"Sim," I read off my list.

"What?"

"S-I-M," I spelled out. "It's a type of pulley."

"A type of pulley?" Jackie repeated, with rhetorical cynicism.

"Yes: the Sim-Pulley," I said.

"Next word, please. And no, you can't have the last one."

"Cess," I said.

"Cess?" She dropped the pencil in her Boggle Book.

"It's a type of pool," I explained.

"Are you reading the jokes first," Jackie asked, "or is this typical of your entire list?"

"Sunsetiest," I read.

"It's typical," she groaned.

All the cubes are in place now. Nice selection of letters. None of the consonants are isolated and it looks like a gold-mine of maybe sixty or seventy words. I let my eyes scan the more promising letter combinations and work on extrapolating interesting patterns. There's one. P-A-I-N. Keep going. Drop down to the kitty-cornered F. P-A-I-N-F-U-L. Don't stop now. P-A-I-N-F-U-L-L-Y. Will Jackie see all of this, too? One never knows. Some pretty obvious stuff can be easily overlooked.

In the first issue of THE WORKS I thrilled everyone (except maybe the Grennells) with a Dave Locke Pain Arkle about twisting one of my ribs as the result of sleeping on the Grennell's daybed.

You know, whenever I think closely about it, I really feel lucky that I have somehow developed a "peasant touch" which, for example, frequently allows my automobiles to fall apart, and my body to be pulverized so that I may always be provided with material for fanwriting. I mean, this is great. Other fans tell me that "nothing ever happens" to them, and inform me that I am "lucky" when a drunken amazon wanders off the street into my house, sits in the living room, and it takes five cops to get her out of there. Some fans envy me for these "great experiences" which are so much "fun to read".

You don't suppose they're missing the point, do you?

But, as the peasant touch continues to stay with me, it would be a shame not to at least get an occasional article out of it all...

For example, I had another rib incident. The scope of this pain story is not particularly large, nor is it heart-thumpingly colorful in detail. It started with a sharp twinge in my left rib cage whenever I swivelled my upper body to the right. Explaining this to a physician was not easy, because I had trouble keeping a straight face (I kept imagining dialog such as: "Doctor, it hurts when I do this." "Don't do that!").

The doctor who examined me was not the same one I had gone to for the twisted rib problem. He was there that day when I went in, but apparently his objective was to clean up a few details before leaving on vacation and turning the whole workload

over to his partner. The other doctor came into my examination room and asked if I minded his handling this matter, as his colleague wouldn't be around for any subsequent treatment that might be required. I told him it was no problem, and refrained from gauchely adding that it probably made no difference since all doctors were only practicing medicine anyway.

I took off my shirt and stood there in front of the examination table while he played around with his hands in the area of my left rib cage. Though he didn't actually use the words "does it hurt when I do this," he would create eye contact each time he engineered what he presumed to be a significant prodding. I would reward certain of his efforts with an exaggerated grimace, just to let him know that he had hit paydirt.

Apparently content with this phase of the examination, he took three steps to the other side of the room and started jotting a few notations in a folder. While he did this the door to the examination room opened and in trooped a nurse with two small and ancient ladies. Apparently the nurse had decided that this would be an excellent shortcut to one of the other examination rooms, being as they were all interconnected. At the sight of me standing there bare-chested she hesitated just long enough to make it apparent that she recognized an error in judgement, but to her credit she decided to forge ahead rather than make matters worse by trying to turn the troops around for a disorderly retreat.

With dignity and aplomb, and eyes forward, she led them into the room and deftly squeezed through in the two-foot largess which separated my bare chest from the closest wall. The elderly lady behind her played an excellent rendition of follow-the-leader, but the one bringing up the rear was stopped at chest-level when the procession ground to a halt as the doctor stepped in front of the nurse and began addressing her on some off-the-wall business matter.

As the nurse fidgetted, the old lady in front of me appeared to be experiencing a mild puzzlement at being trapped with her nose only two inches away from a hairy male chest.

I maintained a phlegmatic composure, being content to enjoy the awkwardness of the situation as it presented itself rather than make an effort to further develop it. But all this went out the window as the old woman lifted her head to look at my face, giving me an expression which indicated that she hoped to find eye contact more socially acceptable.

In response to this I grinned broadly, and in a mock-seductive voice said "hi..." to her.

For this I got a big, toothless grin together with a sparkling crinkle of blue eyes. We shared this joke until the nurse unencumbered herself from verbalizing with the doctor and impatiently backtracked to prod the dawdler into continued movement.

After getting an x-ray in an adjoining room I was informed by my new doctor that some gristle had pulled away from around a nerve-ending, thus allowing it to get tweaked whenever I twisted around. He advised cortizone and novacane injections if the problem didn't clear up in a few days. This did not thrill me, but under the circumstance that I did not again have a twisted rib I felt quite lucky that I would be able to escape the physical beating which would be necessary to correct such a problem. Or so I thought.

If you will remember, and I know this will be unduly pressing some of you, when I had a twisted rib it was required that I be "cracked" to get it back in its proper

place. My doctor's bedside manner in this regard was to beguile me into believing that I was being examined, while in actuality he was setting me up so that he could leap upon me while I layed on his examination table. The force of his body coming down on mine was sufficient to correctly reposition my rib, knock the wind from my sails, and startle the shit out of me. I remember threatening him with physical violence at the time, which amused him because I was too weak to get off the table.

So here was a different doctor, and I was breathing easier as the result of learning that I had a different problem.

That's when I felt the *deja vu*.

It started as the new doctor had me sit up on the examination table, and then requested that I position my arms and hands in a rather strange but familiar manner. Very familiar. Just like the other doctor, he was trying to sucker me. I was going to be "cracked" again.

I couldn't help it. I started chuckling. This puzzled him, but I was still chuckling when my regular doctor came through the door and stood there viewing what at first glance must have appeared to be an effort on the part of his colleague to tickle a patient. Upon achieving recognition as to who the patient was, and the nature of the treatment to be administered, and the reason why the patient should be laughing when faced with such sober happenings, he cracked. He went over to a wall and leaned against it so that he could devote full attention to laughing and avoid reserving a part of himself to the task of not falling down.

Needless to say, all of this served only to enhance the state of befuddlement, as evidenced by the fact that my new doctor was beginning to shed the facial expressions which denoted his professional demeanor. In their place appeared a look which might normally be reserved for someone who suspects himself of incurring a fast case of paranoia, but refuses to embarrass himself by publicly checking to see if he has ripped the crotch out of his trousers.

When this tender moment had passed, following a cryptic explanation on the part of my regular doctor together with a promise of more detail to follow, the two of us found ourselves alone once more and I got cracked without further dallying.

Just like sex, the technique varies. Though the bedside manner of both doctors was basically the same, centering around trickery and deceit, the actual cracking was performed in a whole different style. Whereas the first doctor relied on the impact of his body weight to do the job, the second doctor employed a bear hug and counted upon the strength of his arms. Whether this is the reason he failed to accomplish the results he was looking for, I don't know. I do know that after thirty seconds of poking and prodding around in the area of my discomfort he decided to crack me again. We both grunted at the effort involved.

Afterwards, while he made entries in a folder marked "Locke," I layed on my back on the examination table and, while in a mild daze, reminisced about the time that I had lost a bar fight as the result of an alcoholic disagreement with three gentlemen. I believe they had wanted my barstool. Though I had wanted to retain it, I had wound up in a position just like the one in the doctor's office, and feeling remarkably similar. The parallel was depressing, so I switched to counting the spots on the ceiling. I stayed with that until my strength returned in a degree sufficient to clear up my vision, at which point the spots disappeared and I got off the table.

"Are you going to charge me for your dry run?" I asked him, as he finished his

notations and closed the folder.

He hesitated a second while trying to comprehend my question, then set down his pencil. "You'll get two line entries on your billing," he told me, his distaste showing at the impertinence of my query. "One for the office call and one for the x-ray."

"I see," I said, glancing up at the ceiling to verify that the spots were still missing. "Is there anything further?"

"Put your shirt back on," he advised, without looking at me.

"Thank you."

"Don't mention it."

"That will be harder," I suggested, with an eye toward writing another pain story.

There are almost as many words hidden in this setup as there are in a vest-pocket dictionary. The normal outcome of such a game is that each of us finds a handbasket full of words that the other doesn't, and the one who wins is usually the one who can sustain their interest or their determination over the long haul, with enough left over to carry them through a final review. I'm pausing to take mental note of the "R-E" combination, which will require that I go back through the list to see how many words this prefix can be applied to. But that's for later, as part of the final review. Right now I'm into finding words starting with "R-E" where those letters are not used as a prefix. There's one: R-E-A-M. Here's another, and it's more likely to be a point-getter: R-E-S-U-M-E.

The letter that follows, which I directed to one of the hundreds of anonymous L.A. Times want ads, is pretty much self-explanatory. Before you go into it you might want to know that I've been less than pleased at hooking up with a company that became, and continues to work at being, a parody of a real company. Life does have its moments there, but those moments have a tendency to grow older through bone-wearying repetition and sometimes I lose the capacity to be amused. Jackie tells me that when normal people come home from the office they prefer to open the door, not kick it down.

As a byproduct of this rising tide of discontent, I am sending out resumes. Not frantically, because this job pays well for the privilege of pissing me off occasionally, but regularly, because I've been around enough to know that on the other side of the fence there are places where the grass is tended more carefully.

In my search to find such a place, I responded to this ad during a moment when tiredness and my wiseass nature combined to make me too weak-willed to avoid the temptations that presented themselves.

MANAGEMENT

* BIONIC COPILOT

If you have extraordinary energy, are slightly crazy, very well organized, educated, personable, diplomatic, highly versatile and have a proven track record then we need each other. Write Box X-145, Times.

L.A. Times
Box X-145

Hello!

Now that I've finished sending off cover letters and resumes directed toward such jobs as Branch Manager, Plant Manager, Administrative Services Manager, Material Control Manager, Import Manager, Manager of Operating Procedures, and Purchasing Manager, I'm left with the clipping of an advertisement for a Bionic Copilot which for one reason or another I shuffled to the bottom of the stack. However, there's nothing else left to respond to and I'm tired of merely staring at your ad (with my bare face hanging out, wondering what to do with my hands). This is a Sunday, and I could go back to reading PSYCHOBABBLE (a well-wordsmithed, witty putdown of est, co-counselling, primal scream therapy, and several other mindfuck pseudo-sciences), where I could put your ad to good use as a makeshift bookmark.

Something tells me that I'm not taking this opportunity in the serious and constructive spirit in which it was not offered. Let's start over again.

Speaking directly to the areas noted in your advertisement, which was somewhat strange (to say that your ad was strange is sort of like saying that King Kong was a monkey), I'd have to say that, yes, I do have extraordinary energy. Not right at the moment I don't, because I'm fighting the tail end of a battle with mononucleosis (don't worry, you won't catch it unless I kiss you), a disease which is characterized by alternately feeling fine or feeling aggravatingly weak. As a consequence, when I have to take a leak it's always a mystery as to whether or not I'll have enough strength to unzip, but it's the little uncertainties in life that keep you on your toes. Ordinarily though, yes, I do have extraordinary energy. I'm not certain just how much of it I'd be willing to let you tap, but it would be a point for conversational grist if we ever get so far along that you would require an interview. (This shows how far-sighted I am. You should also know that I'm realistic enough to be aware that quite likely no one has gotten this far into my letter and there is every possibility that I am now talking to myself.)

Your next requirement is that the applicant be slightly crazy. You're not a mental health clinic suffering from a business slowdown, are you? It bothers my idle curiosity that someone would find this qualification useful to them. Why would it be useful? Because normal, sane people might feel out of place working with the rest of you? Because the job function being offered will drive a person crazy anyway? (I'm trying to visualize the dialog in a personnel office: "This job will drive a person crazy, George." "Well, hell, Tom, why should we sit around waiting for them to flip? Let's hire them that way!") All I can say in this regard is that I'm responding to your ad; does this qualify me?

Oh yes, I'm very well organized. That's one of my main strengths. I'm not formally educated (beyond high school, where I graduated salutatorian. Don't let this overly impress you, though, as there were only eighteen of us in my graduating class...), and beyond that I don't ever expect to be; it's too late now -- I already know how to do it. Personable? My friends have indicated that I am somewhat manipulative, persuasive, and occasionally silver-tongued. Does that mean I'm personable? Yes, I'm diplomatic, except when being diplomatic doesn't get the job done. Then I'm whatever I have to be to meet the objective (besides being true, this is what you want to hear, isn't it?). And certainly I'm versatile. Even highly versatile sometimes. Other times, like when I wake up in the morning, I have trouble remembering my name and have to wait until I've resolved the question before I can get up and put my slippers on.

I think I have a proven track record, though in all honesty I should mention that I got into jogging a few weeks back and gave it up because I couldn't see deliberately boring myself for a half-hour every day (after all, no one was paying me

for it, like they do at my present job). Feel free to contact me, and I'll give you a goodly number of business and personal references.

Incidentally, if you do contact me please let me know what this strange job is that you're offering. My curiosity is palpitating.

I have now applied for a job as a Bionic Copilot. Actually, the most I've probably accomplished with this missive is to amuse myself at your expense. The least that I've accomplished is to amuse you at my expense. Sounds fair. I think I'll go back to reading PSYCHOBABBLE now.

However, if you do have a job to offer I'd love to hear from you. I'd like to get another job, you see. The one I'm at now has been driving me crazy, and it would be nice to justify it all by saying that I've merely been in training for the position which you need to fill.

My office telephone is (213) xxx-xxxx, ext. 15. Please be discreet when making contact at this number. Somehow it wouldn't do, when my secretary asks you to state your business, to actually tell her. Might make her nervous.

Thank you for your consideration of my qualifications.

Cordially,

The letters are beginning to blur rather than flow. Boggle games have a tendency to cause that when the shake is so fruitful that you wind up staring at the letters for a prolonged period. Time to go put on some music. The Alan Parsons Project would appear suitable. Fix a drink. Fix two drinks. Back to the list and the sixteen cubes. H-O-O-K. H-O-O-K-S, too. Glad I took the break, as I thought I was finished with the "H" words. Now I wonder what other obvious things I've overlooked.

Before moving to Torrance (southern Torrance, which is called Walteria by the residents and the mapmakers, and called Torrance by the Post Office) we picked up the basically useless piece of information that a single woman was vacating the apartment that we had placed a deposit on (ala Winston Churchill, and not like a dog on a fire hydrant). After occupying the premises we discovered a potentially contributing reason for her single status.

When we moved in here, after choosing which bedroom would be the fan den (the larger one) and which bedroom would be the bedroom (the room that came equipped with a shoehorn), we did not have much choice with regard to where we would locate the double bed. It doesn't fit particularly well in any position other than where it is now, and we presume the previous occupant would also have found this to be the way things worked out.

We hadn't been living here very long before one day we found ourselves lying in bed and contemplating the ceiling.

"You know," Jackie mused, "it might look better in here if we hung a swag lamp."

"You might be right," I responded, "but I'm not too thrilled with the location of those two hooks in the middle of the ceiling. Hanging a swag lamp over the foot of the bed, at either corner, wouldn't appear to be too practical."

"I was thinking of using one of these hooks," she said, pointing directly overhead at the pair which hung above each corner at the head of the bed, "but they're too damn close to the wall."

"You're right."

"Why would anyone put ceiling hooks that close to the wall?" Jackie asked, a note of peevishness creeping into her tone.

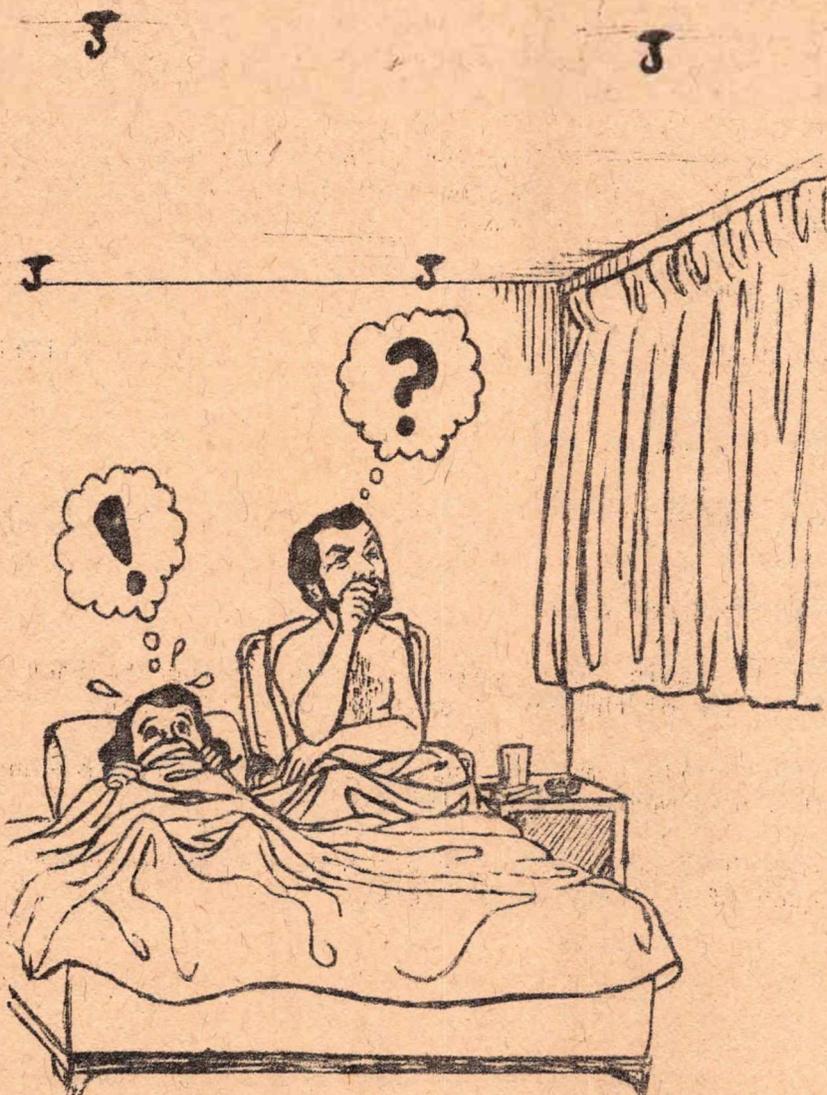
"Must have been some reason for it all, I presume."

We layed there and mused at the four hooks which flanked the corners of our bed.

"You don't suppose..." she began, and then let it hang.

"Certainly it would be a distinct possibility," I said.

Jackie's eyes measured the positioning of the hooks. "Unfortunately I can't think of any other possibilities," she advised, giving the impression that if there was one it would likely be more desirable.



"Perhaps the woman was handicapped," I suggested, "and needed some kind of pulley apparatus to hoist herself out of bed."

"No and yes," she said, looking at me. "A handicapped person wouldn't live in a two-story townhouse. While she might use this setup to hoist herself out of bed, the question is: for what purpose?"

"Well, maybe she hung curtains around the bed. Could be that she was trying for a canopy effect."

"You don't use ceiling hooks to hang curtains," Jackie informed me, in a conversational manner usually reserved for children and congenital idiots.

"You don't suppose that she used them to hang a fishnet around the bed for decorative purposes, do you?"

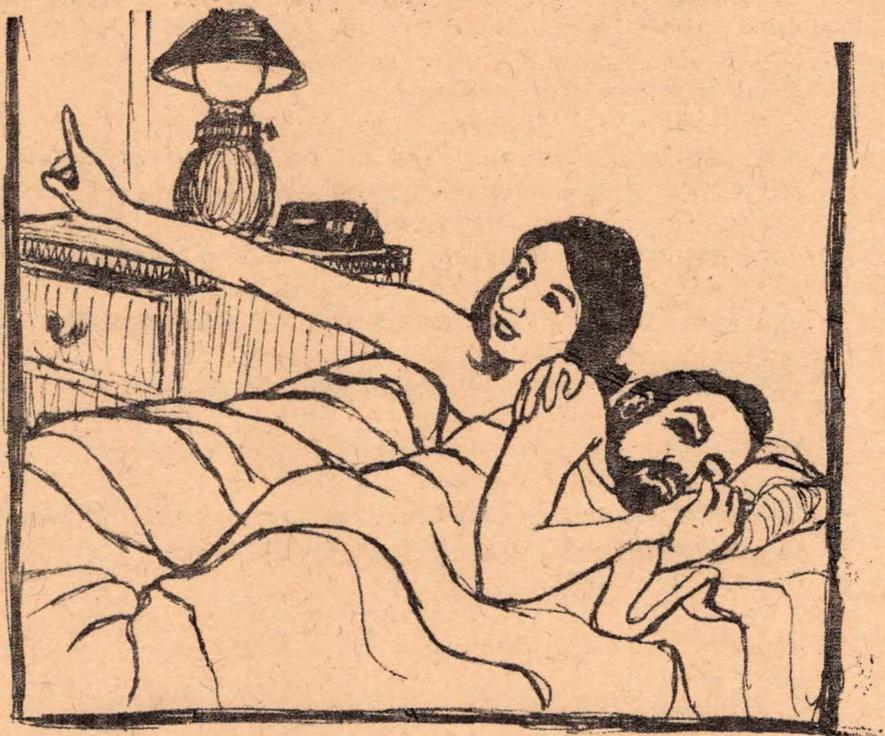
"No."

"How about the likelihood that she was too poverty-stricken to afford a bed, after paying the rent on this place, and decided to string-up a hammock?"

"How about applying a little more logic to the potentials involved," she said, rhetorically.

I assumed an injured expression. "I'm only trying to help," I said. "However, if you require realism I could rethink the matter."

"Don't strain yourself, now."



I studied the ceiling. "With a modicum of imagination I can envision two possibilities, based on whether it's the man or the woman who uses the pulley apparatus to suspend themselves above the other. If it's the woman who is raised--"

"I don't want to hear about it," she told me, rolling over on her stomach.

"We can presume," I continued, "that she maintains a posture reminiscent of sitting on a swing."

"That's enough," Jackie mumbled into the pillow.

"Naturally, the actual points of support would be under the arms and legs, leaving the 'seat' open for access."

She took my pillow and placed it over her head.

I remained quiet for a few seconds, laying there with my hands cupping the back of my head. Finally, giving up my train of thought, I snatched my pillow back.

I turned out the light, thereby visually removing the hooks from my scrutiny, and settled back to stare at the darkness where the ceiling used to be.

Barely did I notice the movement which preceded Jackie's head appearing on my shoulder. I felt the light touch of a finger on my cheek.

"Dave," she whispered.

"Hello," I said.

"Dave," she whispered again.

"What?"

"Tell me how it might work if it were the man being suspended."

"I don't want to hear about it," I said.

A good technique in Boggle is to take the letters one at a time, exhausting their potential as starting points, and to keep your list in sequence by letter. Makes life easier when you disremember whether you've already recorded a particular word. Working left-to-right from the top down, I have intrepidly made my way through half of the letters, and already the list is enormous. Jackie is staring at the cubes as though she were watching something move in there. Maybe she is. Or maybe she's mesmerized and lost in there someplace. I hope she sends a postcard. The next letter for me is "M". And there's the first word: M-O-V-E.

We didn't have anything planned for that Saturday after I picked Brian up. We didn't even plan to have an absence of planning, so it seemed only fitting that serendipity should step in and, with a little wasted motion, book us up. It was just that kind of a day.

Serendipity came in the guise of a phone call, and I wasn't here to take it.

"Terry called," Jackie told me as I walked in behind a small boy with his large blue suitcase. "Did he get in touch with you at Phoebe's?"

"Nope."

"I think he was trying to recruit for a moving party. Wants you to call if he missed you in Duarte."

I dialed Eagle Rock.

"What's up, Screwloose?"

"My brother crapped out on me," his big voice returned. "I'm stuck here with only two arms to move all this shit."

"We can be up in about an hour and a half."

"Nah, forget it," he said in a resigned tone. "You've already been on the road for two hours. If I'd reached you at Phoebe's place I'd have felt reasonable in asking you to come over from there. But not now."

"We had nothing planned."

"It's too much," he sighed. "Relax and enjoy your Saturday."

"Fuck you," I told him. "We'll be up in an hour and a half."

"No really, Dave, it's alright. I can handle it."

"You've helped me move twice," I patiently explained to Terry, "and you've moved three times without accepting my offer to help. We expected today to sit around this apartment doing questionable things like trying to keep each other awake, and now we have an excuse to do something. Something useful, even. It gladdens our hearts, Mokus, that you have provided a direction for our lives today." I turned the phone away, and coughed.

"Well, if you're sure it wouldn't be too much of an inconvenience," he said with a note of spirited concern.

"Our pleasure."

"Bring a change of clothing. I'll take you out to dinner."

"I refuse to change clothing for any reason other than that I might offend myself, and I avoid deliberately preparing for the possibility. Wouldn't do me much good anyway, as I still haven't got my sense of smell back from that last cold."

"I know," he said.

"Besides," I continued, ignoring him, "I never bribed you that way. We'll pick up some burgers afterward."

Jackie, sitting at the kitchen table, blanched. After some more frivolous dialog with Terry I hung up and she said: "Why did you have to cajole him into accepting the help that he called up to ask for?"

I sat down at my usual place across from her, and lit up a cigarette.

"That's simple," I said, dismissing any potential puzzlement with a wave of my hand. "Terry would give you the shirt off his back even if he were just taking off on a vacation to go ice fishing. On the other hand," I showed her my other hand and she stared at it, "Terry might be freezing to death, but wouldn't accept a shirt from a trunkful of shirts unless he allowed you to convince him that you really disliked the shirt and were pleased that someone might have a use for it."

"I understand."

"You do?" I asked, incredulous.

She stared at me.

"Personally," I said, "I've never seen the purpose of such an approach."

She continued staring at me.

"Well, shall we get ready?" I suggested.

Terry showed up about ten minutes after the three of us had let ourselves into his unlocked home. He'd been living on the ground floor of a two story house that he was co-owner of. His partner lived elsewhere; the upstairs was rented to a Chicano family of four people and one large dog. Terry was moving to a smaller and cheaper place, so he could rent this one.

The house itself was California stucco, adequate but typical, with even less yard than the normal postage-stamp lot common to the middle-class suburbs out here. This was because his house was shoved up to the base of a hill so steep that the view from his back window extended only about three feet and could be described as basically uninspiring.

Terry had said he might be out when we got there, but his new place was only a couple of miles away and he wouldn't be long between trips. Besides which, you can't haul much in a VW Beetle, although Terry holds great potential for being

famous if stuffing Volkswagens ever becomes a prominent artform.

We let ourselves in and were greeted by a view of disorder only slightly worse than usual. Terry is a confirmed batchelor and almost singlehandedly perpetuates the stereotype of what a batchelor's quarters is expected to look like, complete to the six-day supply of unwashed dishes which mounded out of the single-basin sink. If it hadn't been for the fact that he had his bed disassembled, it might have been difficult to observe that he was in the process of moving.

When Terry came walking in we all sprawled around in the living room and shot the shit for a few minutes, but as usual we kept getting interrupted by the neighborhood children who have adopted this very tall, thin but muscular mid-thirtyish fellow for being some sort of an amusing adult. This seems to work out well, as he appears equally amused by their attentions.

"Terry, you got any popsicles?" Hollered from just outside the screen door. "Yes, but I have to defrost the freezer before I can find them." "Won't they melt?" "I defrost the freezer with a hatchet. As long as I've got room for a couple of trays of icecubes I figure that's good enough."

"Terry?" Another boy's voice. Spanish accent. "What?" Hollered from the living room to the screen door off the kitchen. "Can we have your empty cigarette-pack collection when you go?" "Buzz off, Tommy."

"Terry?" A little girl's voice. "Marvin is unrolling your garden hose." "Tell Marvin to put it back, or Marvin will be beaten with it."

"Terry," I said, "it impresses me that all of these impertinent little motherfuckers have chosen you upon which to dump their charming attentions. You must feel quite honored, somehow."

"Buzz off, Dave."

Terry and I left to rent a small box-trailer. Jackie and Brian stayed behind because even Terry lacks that much talent at packing a Volkswagen. For some reason I was amused at riding back with a trailer that took up more square footage of road than the car did, but it was even more amusing to contemplate what we would look like when the trailer got loaded.

Terry doesn't like to start with the easy shit. He wanted to haul the refrigerator first, so that we could be worn out all day long. As inflation had driven the rental of a dolly to the point where we felt strong enough to do the job without one, I was not especially pleased with his eagerness to give me a hernia so early in the afternoon.

"Are you going to move both refrigerators?" I asked, looking at one of medium size and a significantly larger unit standing next to it in his kitchen.

"I'm not sure which to take, but I'll leave one for my new tenant."

"How big is your new place?"

"Hardly big enough to cough in. If I want to scratch my ass I'll have to go outside."

I was beginning to feel relief that the smaller refrigerator would be the more suitable choice.

"Let's take the bigger unit," he said.

I opened it and started handing him things to place in the other refrigerator. Few of them made it. Most got thrown in the trash.

There was the remains of a pan of stew which Terry had probably cooked two years ago. A white fungus had grown out of the stew and was threatening to crawl over the lip of the pan.

"Yuccch," Terry said, and pitched the pan and everything into the trash.

"What's this?" I asked, handing him half a loaf of brown bread which had turned white and fuzzy. He took it, delicately, and dropped it on top of the stew. It made a fluffy noise upon impact.

There was a small jungle in the vegetable bin, caused by potatoes and carrots and other former edibles which had bowed to the urge to procreate. Terry upended the bin into the wastebasket, and then held it arms' length from his nose to put it back in the refrigerator.

I opened the freezer compartment and stared at a fifty pound block of ice and snow. In the center of it someone had tunnelled out enough of a hole to insert an icecube tray. I handed the tray to Terry. "This is all that's in there," I told him.

"Nonsense," he said, and pawed through the snow to come up with two TV dinners and half a dozen popsicles. He transferred the former to the other refrigerator and passed out the latter to all of us and to the usual quantity of kids playing outside, but not before breaking the popsicles in half so they would stretch to meet the demand.

We chewed or sucked on our popsicles, depending upon our inclinations, until we were finished with them. At that point there was nothing to do but move the refrigerator. Fifty pound block of ice, and all. Without a dolly. Through doorways so narrow we had to juggle and turn as we went. Clint Eastwood, Charles Bronson, and Superman would have been proud of us. All the while I kept thinking that maybe Terry would stop for a rest and find some more popsicles.

Terry was moving to a house located in someone's backyard, which is a fairly common circumstance here in sunny Califurnace. I think it has to do with the local phenomenon which might be called Lawn Fixation. Many try their damndest to turn their lawns into showcases, while at the same time doing everything possible to reduce the amount of lawn which requires tending. Most people don't have enough property surrounding their homes to worry about it, but others will put in pools, jacuzzies, patios, rock gardens, fountains, streams, tennis courts, or, if the property is large enough, a small house to provide them with a little extra income and a few tax advantages. They call them "backhouses," which means something altogether different in the upstate New York area where I grew up, and I still get a twinge of amusement when I think of someone "living" in an outdoor privvy.

I was somewhat dismayed, upon carrying my half of the refrigerator into Terry's rented backhouse, to discover that there was already a refrigerator in there, albeit one that didn't work, and that we had to carry it out to the garage.

The prime source of my dismay was over the size of the damned thing. We had just moved an oversized unit in, but in comparison to the one already there we were in the position of having conquered Frankenstein only to be confronted by Godzilla.

It was a humungus unit, old beyond belief, manufactured in the days when you could not indent a side with your fingertip, when products were built solid, by Ghod. I groaned, suddenly feeling much older than 34, and eyed the beast with great trepidation.

"Why do you have the refrigerator plug running into your bedroom?" I asked Terry, as I eyed the cord that disappeared through the doorway off the kitchen.

"Because there aren't any outlets in the kitchen."

"That's ridiculous," I told him, and began immediately to peer along the baseboards behind the stove and refrigerator. Terry sighed as I got down on my knees, opened the cabinet under the sink, and peered inside. Finally I finished my exhaustive inspection of a kitchen which must have measured all of six by eight feet. I went up to Terry and confronted him in an accusatory manner.

"This is ridiculous," I explained, as he regarded me with a patient expression.

"I know."

"Somebody had their thumb up their nose when they put the electric in this place."

"I know," he said.

Just then Brian walked in carrying four pair of shoes, followed by Jackie with thirty pounds of clothes on hangers. In four steps they crossed the largess of Terry's living room, squeaked by us in the kitchen, and deposited their loads in the bedroom. We heard them grunt as they did it. Terry doesn't believe in wasting boxes on carryable items like clothing.

There was a small exclamation of surprise, followed by the view of Jackie coming through the doorway as she held an electric cord in her hands and traced it until it disappeared behind the refrigerator.

"Terry," she said, dropping the cord, "why is your refrigerator plugged into the bedroom?"

"There aren't any outlets in the kitchen," I explained to her, shaking my head to signify the ridiculousness of it. Terry leaned against a counter and sighed.

"That's ridiculous," Jackie said, dismissing the idea with a hardening of her eyes. She began peering behind appliances. Brian crawled into the cupboard beneath the sink. We could see his sneakers twitch as he searched the walls in there. In a short time they both gave up and confronted Terry with the absurdity of renting a backhouse where you had to plug the refrigerator cord into a bedroom outlet. He sighed again.

Getting the old clunker out of the house and into the garage was a job and a half. I don't know about Terry, but I can't offhand recall ever lifting anything quite that heavy before, nor anything with less of what might be called "handholds" (a good word, not found in the two-volume Lexicon Webster, nor on this refrigerator). We got the job done, and it took every ounce of strength possessed by the both of us. If a falling leaf had dropped on the refrigerator, we never would have made it.

We didn't transport Terry's dirty dishes. Terry has moved around a fair amount in the past three or four years, and he refused to move a sinkload of dirty dishes again. He didn't wash them, either, at least not that day.

When the move was as complete as he desired it to be, we went to a local Two Guys From Italy, a chain that serves the best pizza to my taste, and we three had pizza while Jackie tried the cannolloni, and we all found the food delicious. This may have been because it was delicious, or maybe because it was good and we were all starving. The place also had a nice atmosphere, thanks to Terry loaning me a clean teeshirt.

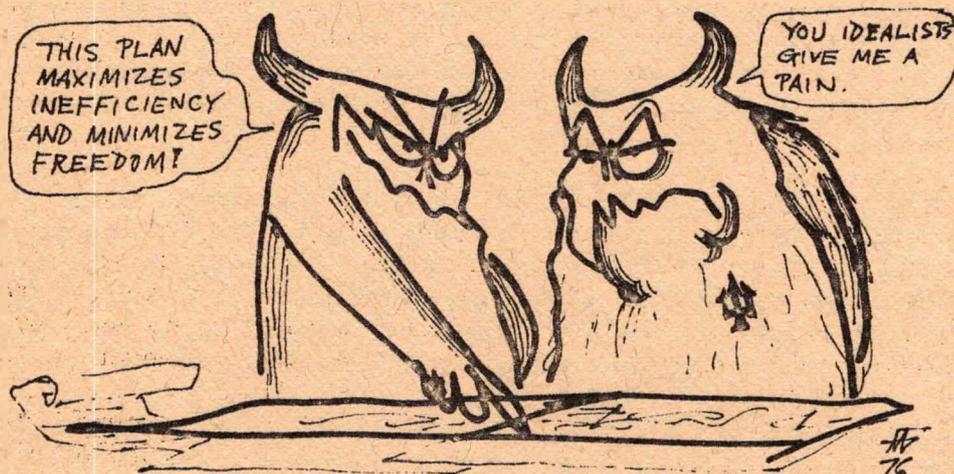
After that we took in ANIMAL HOUSE, and laughed ourselves stupid. The movie was a tad uneven, mixing humor that worked with attempts that didn't, but the balance was on the positive side and we enjoyed the hell out of the movie. All of us. With a group like us, that's hard to do. In fact, being familiar with our tastes, I'd have thought it next to impossible.

We got home late, very late, and had no particular trouble getting to sleep six or seven minutes later. Like, we were tired. We were also agreed that, for some strange reason, it was as much fun to move somebody else as it was a pain in the ass to get ourselves moved. If we can ever figure out why this is, we may find ourselves the proud owners of one of the secrets to the universe. In the meantime, we'll ponder it.

Not a typical Saturday, but certainly an amusing one. We feel it kind of serendipity to occasionally combine productivity with entertainment.

Still, I hope Terry finds his new place liveable for a few months.

It's sometimes frustrating to find out which words you've overlooked. I'll give a nod to someone who scores a seven or eight-letter word that I missed. If it's a real charmer I might even applaud. It's missing words like C-A-T that pisses me off, especially when the letters lie in a perfect horizontal sequence and do everything except jump off the tray onto my list. In this particular game we had a tie score, with Jackie's big find being N-A-P-A-L-M, and mine being M-A-I-L-B-A-G.



Chess fans are often slow to make a move. Pinball players love replays.

everyone on board would order drinks. I've seen some goofups that would even put members of the W.C.T.U. in the mood to order drinks, just for spite. So only those who order without knowing the drink is going to be free collect the bribe; and with one exception, it's been one drink.

That one exception was an American Airlines flight out of Chicago. Not even a computer expertly programmed for goofups could have managed what happened that night at O'Hare. At first there was no plane to get on, and no one knew anything about anything. Then we were directed to another gate, where there was a plane that it turned out wasn't going anywhere. Then to a third gate. We finally got on a plane and sat on the ground. And sat. And sat. We were still sitting there long after we were supposed to have landed in Detroit, and the thing was artfully arranged so that it wasn't possible to call the people who were supposed to meet me and tell them I'd be late and how much -- no one knew how much -- with the result that while I sat on the ground in Chicago, they sat in the Detroit terminal waiting for me to arrive. They sat there for a couple of hours. Of course no one in Detroit knew anything, either. I don't usually drink on airplanes, but by the time that plane finally took off I needed either alcohol or a tranquilizer, and they weren't selling tranquilizers. So I ordered a drink. It was no surprise to me that it turned out to be free. It was a surprise that the moment I finished it, the girl was there to refill the glass. All the way to Detroit.

The moral is this: If you're watching the arrival gates in an airport, and you see a mob of furiously angry, drunk passengers disembarking, you can guess that you're seeing the tail end of a king-sized goofup.

Bridge fans look for good partners, and do it with finesse. Apafen do it together.

The last king-sized goofup I suffered which had any pleasing compensations to it was the time that a barely pubescent Dave Locke was taken by his mother to lunch at a restaurant in Gloversville, New York, during a shopping expedition which had been mounted in the wilds of Indian Lake some hundred or so miles upstate in the "Northwoods". Whoever mounted the wall mirrors above each booth should have had his union card burned. The one above us, which originally possessed as much square footage as the table, came down and smashed itself to holy smithereens on top of our lunch. Neither of us got cut, but it did serve to jostle the forks out of our hands (as I recall, she jammed hers into the side of her booth, and mine got inelegantly tossed up to the ceiling). The incident also served to get us another table as well as tray upon tray of the finest preparations which their chef could be flogged into providing. Rather than sue their ass off we shamefully allowed ourselves to be surrounded by a half-dozen waiters whose every facial expression spoke for their concern that we be pleased with this sudden and frenzied burst of service. I recall a mild disappointment that a mirror did not fall into my table the next time I had occasion to eat there.

Hekto pubbers do it sloppily.

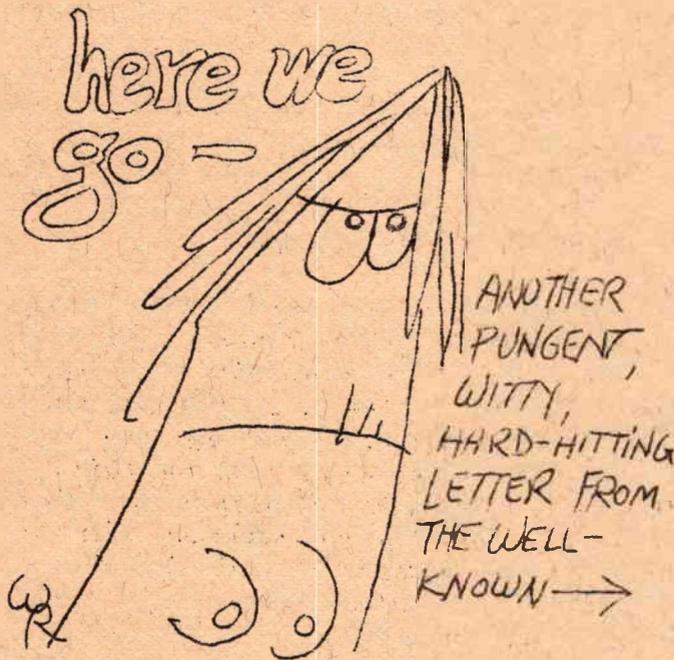
Aussiefen like it down under.

Punsters like to make you groan.

and rendering the male unable to sit down for a week. And if you don't screw in the toilet, and try the seats instead ... well, then you've got to put up with a barrage of camera flash bulbs, and all sorts of remarks from the less inventive passengers. Unless the airplane in question is flying practically empty, and the air hostesses are up in the galley helping the steward get his rocks off. All of which doesn't mean that I wouldn't mind trying it one day, and thus joining the famed Mile High Club... provided I can ever afford to fly. I mean, we British aren't as rich as you Americans; no sir! Just because we've got a Labour Government and double figure inflation...

Video games freaks do it for a quarter.

MIKE GLIGSON. -- 141 HIGH PARK AVE., TORONTO, ONTARIO M5P 2S5, CANADA



It's typical of a first-time faned that you'd set such a ridiculous requirement as "tell me something interesting" as a medium of exchange for getting THE WORKS from you. Do I demand such strenuous activity from you in return for my fanzine? Of course not, I instruct recipients of XENIUM not to LoC it unless they have something wondrous to say and you've proven yourself how easy it is for fans to follow such suggestions. But I have to tell you something interesting. Still, you didn't say interesting to whom, which might leave things wide open... [1]

Okay: the indefinite integral of $\cos^3 u \sin u$ is $-\frac{1}{4}\cos^4 u + C$. (My twenty two Calculus students failed to see the interest in that today so it's up for grabs.) Yesterday I spent fifteen minutes talking to Harlan Ellison in my

bath. ~~What/Harlan/Ellison/was/doing!!!~~ Some people might find that interesting even if you and I don't. I've got several thousand dollars in my savings account and registered retirement savings plan. That's good for a fair amount of interest. And that's all you deserve, in the face of your oppressive and all-encompassing trans-continental silence of late. [2]

Actually, I've nothing to say on the topics you write about so entertainingly. I haven't moved in almost a lustrum. House, I mean. I move to the kitchen each time the glass gets empty, which I see it has done again. Here I am writing to some faned in California and someone's stealing my scotch while my fingers are turned. There's no honesty among fans any more! Actually, I did gain a roommate fairly recently and last week I discovered two cockroaches in the kitchen but I expect these facts are unrelated, not unlike the parents of people who don't respond to letters and tapes from their friends. [3]

Regency fans do it formally.

And pain was never my pleasure or inspiration so that's out too. But I do have something interesting I can send you, now that I think of it! It's inspired by the first paragraph in the second box on page three and is quoted from XENIUM 2.2, where it was quoted from a Bruce Gillespie apa-45 fanzine: "When people ask me 'How are you?', usually I tell them. That shuts them up." [4]

I'll tell you something else interesting, as per your instructions. (We teachers take orders well.) When I got to the end of your fanzine (and the large glass of scotch that mellowly accompanied the reading thereof) and read the comment "I wonder if eighteen pages of a Dave Locke personalzine..." I snorted to myself (it's cheaper that way) and thought, "That was never eighteen pages!" So I counted them. I had a little trouble when I got past ten but I dug out my calculator and persevered. By Johnny Walker, it is eighteen pages long. But it certainly doesn't read like eighteen pages. It slides smoothly and reads like a much shorter fanzine. Reading just the title of a Garth Danielson fanzine seems to take longer. I found that to be an interesting observation upon the nature of fanzines. Hoping you are the same. [5]

Mystery fans wonder how it's done.

[1] True, I didn't say interesting to whom, but when I state "tell me something interesting," I am expecting my students to instinctively follow the meaning of my request as opposed to mentally requiring a statement that says "tell me something interesting to me" before they are capable of comprehending my meaning. This is my method, you see, for weeding the slow learners into a separate area in my little classroom of life. Exceptions are made, naturally, for students who make humorous capital of my request in an effort to be amusing. These go in yet another section of the classroom, and are categorized as people who have a nice eye for the absurd. I count on these people heavily to come forth with material that makes for a good read. (Note my technique of placing this loose point in a teacher/student context. In using this approach I may have confused you. Hope not...)

[2] We're sorry; we know we owe you some kind of communiqué. It's just that we've been so busy lately. We've been drinking, and smoking, and going out, and playing chess, and working on fanzines. Like right now I'm frittering away my "free time" by communicating with Mike Glicksohn somewhere amongst the scattered minutes and hours that I spend in working on the lettercolumn, instead of sitting down at my typewriter to catch up on some back correspondence. I feel suitably guilty, believe me. I should be doing a letter, telling you that I appreciated your LoC on THE WORKS, and maybe send you a few words on the last XENIUM which I enjoyed (if I could remember which one that was). Instead, I sit here toying in a much less spontaneous medium (I mean, you might not get to see these words for a couple of months), feeling guilty of Priority Failure as I drop every word onto this page. Please don't press this point any harder or I might not be able to stand myself.

[3] My Ghod, Mike, we're sorry we haven't written or sent a tape recently. I swear to Christ that we're guilty as all hell. Jackie is off in the den working on RESOLUTION (I think she's composing a response to your words in the lettercolumn), and I'm lounging at the kitchen table and with pencil and paper I'm drafting out my responses to the LoCs on THE WORKS (I think I'm composing an apology to someone), and there's just no excuse for such negligent behavior on our part. If we promise that we'll send you a tape, soon, will you stop sulking and stop saying disagreeable

Western novel fans like to get in the saddle.

Your plane story, however, reminds me of a great tale involving Allen Funt of CANDID CAMERA. About a year ago he was on a flight from Chicago to Los Angeles when the man across the aisle from him recognized him and commented on how much he enjoyed watching his show. Funt thanked the man and went about his business (most likely getting loaded with the rest of the passengers). A few minutes later a man stood up, pulled out a gun and announced he was hijacking the plane. The stewardess was used as a hostage as the man forced his way into the pilot's cabin. Everyone was silent, when suddenly this man sitting across from Funt stood up and declared that Allen Funt was onboard and this was all obviously a Candid Camera gag. The rest of the plane sighed in relief as Funt started getting nervous. He tried to explain to the man that this was not a Candid Camera gag and that the guy was serious. In fact, if this didn't stop he would probably get the plane in more trouble. Everyone began laughing even harder and Funt was befuddled. At the sound of the laughter the hijacker stuck his head out the cabin door and wanted to know what was going on. After being told, he too tried to convince the passengers that this was indeed a very REAL hijacking. His hard-as-nails speech brought roars of laughter from the passengers. He retreated back into the cabin and after several hours was taken into custody, a harmless man with mental problems. Nonetheless, this was possibly the best Candid Camera gag ever -- it even had Funt convinced.

As you'll undoubtedly be told more than once, the Bill Stafford song MY GIRL BILL is not a gay love song. Stafford, who had hits with SPIDERS AND SNAKES and the delightful WILDWOOD WEED, is a tongue-in-cheek songwriter who used the MY GIRL BILL ploy to sell a lot of records. The song is a well-written piece which ends up purely as a conversation between two men who love the same girl. "She's my girl, Bill." Bill ends up a loser in the song -- probably from both ends.

Then there is Jimmy Buffett's line in CHEESEBURGER IN PARADISE which goes something like: "Not zucchini, fetachini or bulgar wheat, but a big warm bun and a huge hunk of meat." What was it that Peter, Paul and Mary said about laying it between the lines?

Fanzines are a bitch to store, aren't they? You can't set them up like paperback or hardback books, and rarely are there enough issues of one title to merit piling them in distinct piles on a shelf. You sort of have to put them in a hit n' miss fashion and hope you'll never have to look a certain issue up. [1]

I enjoyed THE GOODBYE GIRL quite a bit myself. You are right about them being unlike normal people, but if they had been less than exceptional it would have made for a pretty dull film. Besides, I feel that such a situation (as most of Simon's situations) would bring the "best" out in a person. Verbal dueling, when done right, can be enjoyable. I thought THE GOODBYE GIRL was done right. [2]

I once dated one of those meter maid girls who drive around in those mailman carts putting chalk marks on tires and giving out parking tickets. She told me that sometimes at the end of the day she would need four or five tickets yet to meet her quota, so she'd stick them on any old car. They always paid the fine she said. Maybe she moved to California? I stopped seeing her after our second date -- I let the time run out on my meter and she gave me a ticket. Claimed she'd get an early start for the next day. I paid it, too.

Monster movie buffs like to see it done in Tokyo.

DEC 19 1984

Geis likes to do it all himself.

Dr. Demento doesn't sound too familiar. With the exception of Gary Owen's weekday afternoon show, which I try to catch when I'm driving home and sometimes continue listening to after I get there, I haven't been much for following any particular radio "show". Nor any particular station: In the car I've got all the push-button tuning locked into various listenable stations (and if I do it, that's definitely the correct verb to indicate that specific action) and will never hesitate to jump from one to another if the commercials or music are of a lesser caliber than what I would require my ears to endure. And it's usually the music and commercial level that determine listenability to me. The host usually is innocuous. Occasionally one of them is too strident, too stupid, or otherwise too undesirable for my taste, and I avoid them when I encounter them with my station-hopping. Even less occasionally, an amusing and witty fellow like Owens will come along with a nice bag of tricks and I'll seek him out whenever opportunity and interest present themselves.

I should mention, as he is not well-known to most of those on the mailing list, that Lon is a long-time fan who has chosen SFPA and SoCal barbeques as his major fannish way of life. Much to the loss of general fanzine fandom, Lon is a major fannish wordsmith who, not unlike Bob Leman when he was in FAPA, plies his trade only to a small but appreciate audience. However, he's not anti-social. His address is up there. If you occasionally send out zines on speculation, try a copy on him.

Among those **WE ALSO HEARD FROM** (and I have no turd in my pocket; many of these LoCs were addressed -- not just in the endearing salutation, but in content and tone also -- to the both of us, and I'd like to lift my finger and state that I'm all for it. Jackle has to take a great amount of credit, in my mind, for the existence of this godawfully sublime fanzine, and it's pleasing to me that people recognize this by the way they aim their response): **MARTHA BECK** graces our mailbox with what amounts to her very first LoC. *"Never, never have I in 20 years written one!"* Careful, sweetheart, of leaving clues to those relatively newer fans who might have a tendency to date you from this disclosure. For instance, I try to avoid mentioning that I got into fandom 18 years ago, for fear that someone might notice. Martha also mentions that she's been pining away ever since Thorne Smith died, and then embarrasses me by proposing (never mind what). You're sweet, Martha, and I dig you, too. **ALAN HUTCHINSON** sends a note ("B-flat", he says) agreeing to a trade arrangement. Alan publishes one of the better apazines in one of the better apas (SFPA), so I made certain to express the fact that, as I was no longer in SFPA, I felt deprived with regard to some of the good writing that was passing me by. If Alan has the time and inclination, I'd like to share a sample of that writing quality in the next issue's lettercol. Alan is also a top-caliber fanartist, which disturbs me because I feel there should be a law against a comics-fan possessing that much talent... **JOHN BANGSUND** drops a postcard at the both of us, and tells me that *"I can't tell you how much I enjoyed THE WORKS, Dave. I would like to, but you said not to, so I can't."* John also puts things in the proper perspective by noting that he's pleased Jackle and I got together because *"All my old-friends-by-mail should be happy, especially when they get together and save me postage."*

From a copy distribution of fifty I received a 42% comment response. Including trades the percentage of response jumps up to 56%. That's the best yield of any fanzine I've done, which isn't too surprising when you consider that the mailing list was not compiled with much of an eye toward serving out copies on speculation. However, the quality of the letter response pleases me no end (though most everyone bitched about the "tell me something interesting" lettercol policy, it seems to have served its purpose surprisingly well). Do it again. I will if you will.