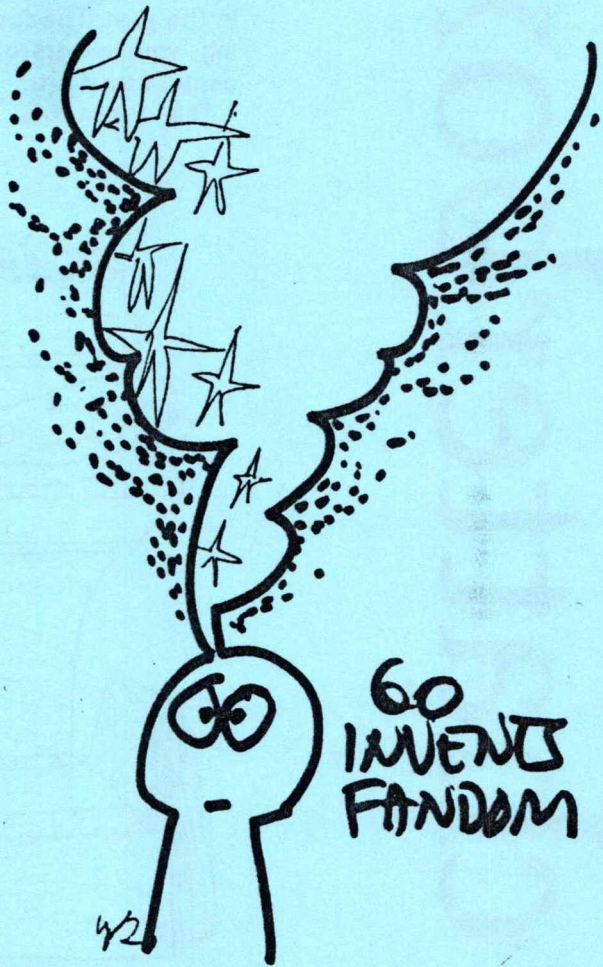
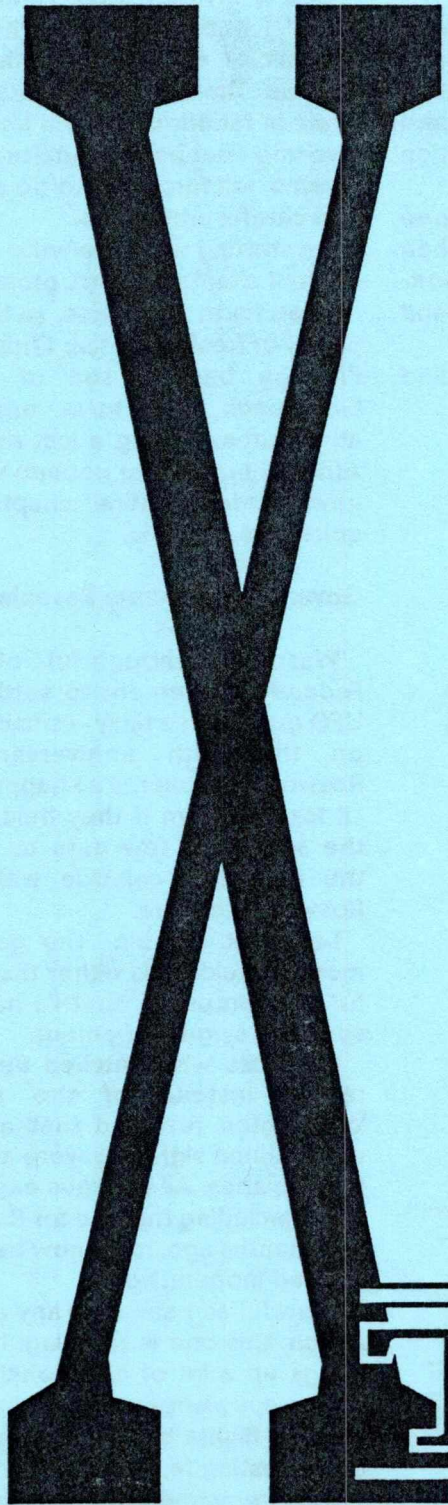


ISSUE 6 FEB. '98



60  
INVENTS  
FANDOM

# XTREME



# chatterboxing

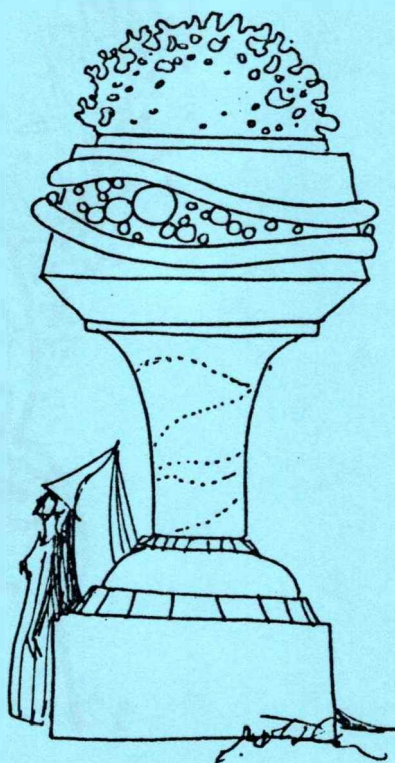
## Changing Faces

Now that I've done a couple of decent issues, it's time to shake things up a little. Not too much, but some.

Why meddle if I'm happy? That's part of the fun of fanzines. I can't tinker with *Inside Games* or *Game Trend* without discussions and meetings. Only lack of imagination can stop me here.

*Xtreme* will reflect a fuller range of my fanwriting in the future than in the past. The format is: my writing, your letters of comment and contributors' art.

The inevitable FAPA deadline



*Xtreme* #6 comes from Arnie Katz (330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107; Email Address: [Crossfire@aol.com](mailto:Crossfire@aol.com)). It's published for the February, 1997 FAPA mailing and quite a few good friends. Member fwa. Waffling support, afal.

should keep *Xtreme* quarterly until a reviewer lauds its dependability. Until then, *Xtreme* seems ideal for some multi-part projects I've hesitated to start elsewhere.

One is my memoirs, "Fandom in Mind." I published three chapters as part of an original anthology, *Fanzine Drams*, that marked 30 years in fandom. I have a lot more awaiting final polish. Publication in *Xtreme* will force me to do a slow and careful editing job.

I'm starting with a re-write of the original chapters. Don't groan. I've revised them fully, twice, so there's plenty of fresh material. (This time, I'm the bastard son of Hugo Gernsback and have amazing adventures hunting a lost mine in Africa.) I promise to get into wholly new "Fandom in Mind" chapters as quickly as possible.

## Government Secrets Revealed!

Wasn't it thoughtful of the Federal Government to settle the UFO question so tidily – smack dab on the 50th anniversary of Roswell? It made me so happy that I'll forgive them if they held back the solution a few days to make the revelation coincide with the Roswell milestone.

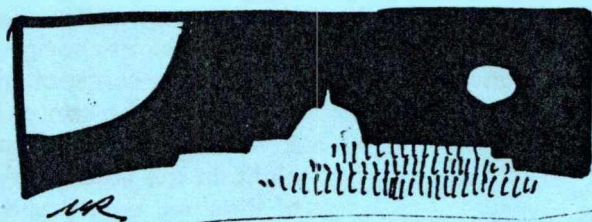
Let's not quibble. The government so seldom is either thoughtful or appropriate, that I'd hate to spoil this singular moment.

For those who watched *Seinfeld* reruns instead of the news, Washington revealed that all the unexplained sightings were actually spy planes. All previous explanations, including the one for Roswell two months ago, must now be considered inoperative.

Grateful as I am, I for any explanation, this one is puzzling. It also brings up a lot of questions, such as why spy planes would make low-altitude flights over comparatively uninteresting farms.

Is the government implying that





it was *Russian* spy planes? That doesn't explain the sightings, mostly of low-level objects. This certainly puts all those wild-ass ufo stories in perspective, doesn't it?

A two-hour program on A&E, *Where Are All the UFOs?* propounded a more plausible theory. At least, it's one that sounds sensible to me. (Which only means it's a nice-sounding theory at this point.)

The program suggested that ufos originate in the minds of the observers. Movement of the Earth's crust not only creates visual phenomena low in the sky, but it may generate energy wave that introduce thoughts and false memories into the cerebral cortex.

One segment showed scientists bombarding a subject with a particular pattern of neural stimuli that produces false memories akin to abduction accounts. They didn't say much about the guinea pig, except that he was a volunteer.

I dimly remember calls for scientific volunteers in my college days. They'd offer a little money, and then they'd do whatever it was they wanted to do.

Taking a written test or the like is one thing, but receiving induced traumatic memories of an alien abduction sounds like a very *Gad* idea. Who knows what devils this kid will have to battle for the rest of his life?

### Sonny Boy and Sleepy John

The Blues Revival continues without let-up at our house. We've bought one or two current CDs, like Meredith Brooks' first album,

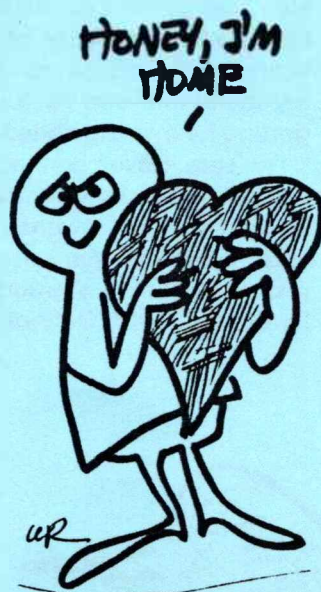
but we've invested most of our music budget in the older stuff.

Two particularly good, and highly recommended, two-CD anthologies are

*Sonny Boy Williamson and Sleepy John Estes*, both from Fremaux & Associates. (Originally earmarked for Europe, they're available at Tower Records, and probably through Tower on the Internet.)

Sleepy John Estes bridges the gap between country blues like Robert Johnson and Chicago electric blues. John L. "Sonny Boy" Williamson, the first of two bluesmen to bear that name, was Estes' disciple. Sonny Boy shaped the Chicago blues revolution, giving guys like Muddy Waters and Little Walter their start.

Estes wrote and sung numerous blues standards, including *Diving Duck Blues* and *Milk Cow Blues*.



Starting as a player in the Memphis blues tradition, he pioneered the guitar/harmonica dual lead (with Hammie Nixon). Current events supplied the themes for many of

his songs.

Sonny Boy Williamson wrote *Good Morning Little School Girl*, *Coal and Iceman Blues*, and *Stop Breaking Down*. After his death, a former student and imitator named Rice Miller took his name and forged a long career of his own.

Nearly eclipsing their music, which would be a major feat, are their personal stories. Sleepy John Estes got cheated so regularly and rapaciously by record companies, which stole all his song royalties, that he stopped recording and went home to the Deep South at the beginning of World War II. A field sociologist accidentally rediscovered him, living in anonymous poverty, around 1951. Estes got some belated justice in the form of restored royalties and even bought a brick house in his hometown. They tried to make it up to Sleepy John Estes when he was an old man, but it's hard to atone for stealing someone's music and blighting their life.

About the time I realized there were two Sonny Boy Williamsons, I read that the original died in a race riot. That stuck in my mind, though my early interest was the second Sonny Boy, host of the *King Biscuit Hour* in the late 1940's and 1950's.

Subsequent research unearthed a significantly more interesting version of the first Sonny Boy's demise. It seems that Sonny Boy liked to invite a good-looking woman up on stage while he performed. Sonny Boy liked to run his hands over her body and openly fondle her during the song. The women apparently enjoyed this attention, but husbands and boy-friends didn't share that outlook.

Friends advised Sonny Boy that this would certainly get him into trouble somewhere down the road. He just kept doing this shtick, though. One night a guy didn't like the way Sonny Boy was caressing his woman. The disgruntled hus-



band followed Sonny Boy home from the gig and smashed him over the head with a bottle, killing him.

### Home for Thanksgiving

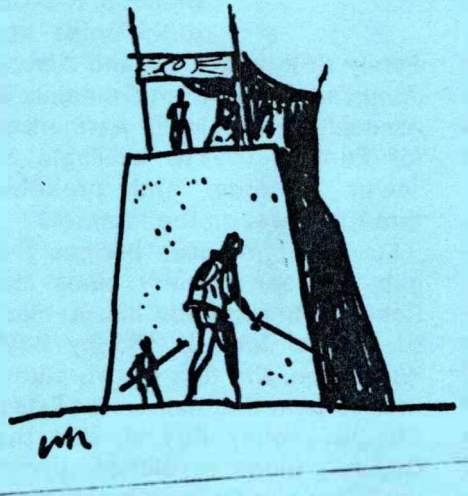
This year brought a rarity, a family Thanksgiving. Joyce and I flew to Phoenix to spend the holiday with relatives (my brother Ira and his wife Carol, our niece Michelle and her new husband Micah, our nephew Rob, my mom and my cousin Mike and his wife Maria.)

The trip, an outgrowth of increased contact via the Internet, is one of the few occasions I've spent with my family since I was a high schooler in New Hyde Park, NY. My opinions and priorities never meshed harmoniously with my dad's outlook (Jewish Archie Bunker), and keeping my distance avoided endless confrontations.

This doesn't mean I don't love my relatives. In this case, the cast of characters included my favorites, so the three-day stay proved both entertaining and informative.

I'm always surprised by my brother's circumscribed society. Although we were both raised semi nonpracticing Conservatives Jews, he has grown up to have only Jewish friends while my associations are far more catholic. He absolute-

ly shocked me when he mentioned, in an off-hand way, that he'd probably be more comfortable associating even more with other



Jewish people.

That's one of those attitudinal differences. Ira strove for approval in the family, while I sought it outside that circle. Eventually, I found fandom and also became a professional writer, which stroked even my mammoth ego sufficiently. (It's getting its own zip code.)

I'm sure closer connection with the family has brought my brother many priceless rewards. I'm also sure it has communicated to him just the barest shading of the European Jewish Outlook.

My mom brought the ghetto with her when she arrived in the New World as a teenager shortly before World War II. She can spot another Jew around the corner, inside a building, in the dead of night. In the little Polish town of Prushna, where she grew up, it was a survival tactic.

In Europe, she lived in a cordoned-off Jewish world surrounded by the ever-resentful, chronically hostile Gentiles. The enigmatic, dreaded *Goyim*. Jews clumped together in communities either because laws established such ghettos, or because those were the only places the residents felt safe.

Group paranoia was endemic, but Polish Jews had genuine cause to fear. The good, religious folk of small town Poland periodically rampaged through the Jewish section, looting, raping and killing with the zeal of someone doing God's Holy Work. *Pogroms* were more a holiday treat than every-day entertainment, but a system of limiting laws and rampant prejudiced insured that every Polish Jew knew they were in the cross-hairs.

The ability to spot a *landsmann* meant the possibility of help, or at least witnesses, if something ugly happened with one of the Gentiles.

Almost every European-born Jew shares my mother's talent for, and concern with, Jew-spotting. It came in handy for immigrants, and it's still a reflex for many.

The behaviors they learned as children weren't suited to middle class America, but they'd had them so long. It was hard to jettison

As a kid, when I'd mention someone, my mother's first question was: *Are they Jewish?* Since I've never picked friends by ethnic or religious heritage, my habitual "no"s and "I never asked"s frustrated and worried her.





When I became an active science fiction fan, my parents weren't ready for the diversity. They coped with the fact that their oddball son had oddball friends as best they could. I developed a cosmopolitan society of friends and acquaintances, while they continued to live in overwhelmingly Jewish neighborhoods on Long Island and in Arizona.

Now my brother carries forward our parents' xenophobia, albeit diluted, into the bright Arizona sunshine. And me? I don't trust anyone who hasn't read at least one Heinlein.

### Caught in the Draft

I watched a little of what radio commentators called the world's dullest sports show. That's really saying something in a world that includes that *meshugginah* girl who roars her spelling bee answers to the heavens on ESPN 2.

It was the Expansion Draft. That's where baseball's two newest franchises stocked their rosters with major league cast-offs.

It took seven hours to redistribute the talent. The draft included some promising players, like Jeff Suppan and Dimitri Young from my sim league team, but there were plenty of ennui-inspiring has-beens and never-will-bes. The quality of the eligible draftees was so noticeably bad,

in fact, that it made me second-guess the wisdom of picking Suppan and Young in Las Vegas. Only the general managers' atrocious track record in player evaluation kept me from summarily dropping them off my roster.

I didn't watch the whole thing, because even my love of baseball has limits. I caught the opening and checked back periodically to see how it affected members of my St. Louis Aliens.

One of the commercials proved more interesting than the surrounding program. It warned that I shouldn't miss the chance to sign up for the Official Credit Card of Major League Baseball.

The advantages of such a card are numerous and obvious, except that I couldn't think of one. Unless the O'Malley family plans to guarantee my solvency, a Los Angeles Dodgers logo on my credit card doesn't do much to aid my financial picture.

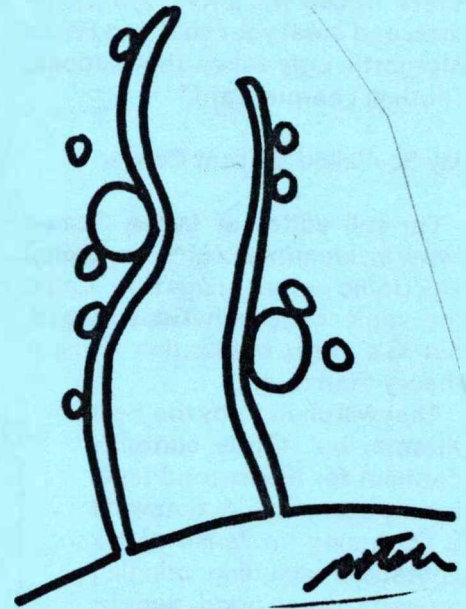
It doesn't do much for my opinion of how MLB orders its priorities, either. This bunch has no full-time commissioner, attendance problems in half its cities, a well-established teams that threaten to relocate in Podunk and Albert Belle. It may warm owners hearts, and fatten their wallets, to see those team logos on plastic rectangles, but that's whistling in the dark until baseball reverses its attendance and TV ratings slump.

When I saw the ad for the Official Credit Card of Major League Baseball, I knew that the football guys wouldn't sit on the sidelines. If there isn't an Official Credit Card of the National Football League yet, there will be soon enough.

Since major league sports compete harder against each other off the field than their teams do on it, the battle of the pro sports credit cards is almost upon us. The tor-

rent of ads may even sweep aside licensed athletic shoe commercials.

Sports guys often go at life the way they do at athletics, so head-butting comparative commercials are inevitable.

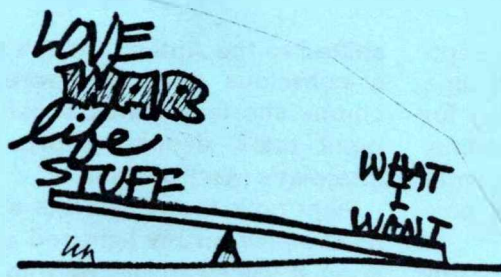


Soon we'll see aggressive TV spots that make the choice between the football and baseball credit cards nothing less than a moral imperative. Which symbol you have on your plastic will become the measure of manhood. The baseball guys will say that only gangsta lowbrows want an official NFL credit card.

Then the grid guys will retaliate. They'll say that the only place a guy with the rival one has balls is on his major league baseball credit card.

If the marketers succeed, the official MLB and NFL credit cards will increasingly take on the auras, the personas, of the leagues they claim to represent.

This might not necessarily be a good thing.





Eventually we'll get a commercial like one of those VISA ads. You know, the one that ends with the voice-over announcer saying, "... so if you're going to The Fist of Morgorth Crack House, be sure to take along your Official Credit Card of the National Football League. Because the Fist of Morgorth Crack House will pervert your children and steal your soul, but Fist of Morgorth only takes the National Football League Card."

### My So-Called Brilliant Career

I'm still editor of **Inside Games** ([www.insidegames.com](http://www.insidegames.com)), the digital electronic games magazine. I hold the same post with **Game Trend**, but **IG's** sister publication is more theory than fact.

That will change by the next **Xtreme**, but **GT** is currently dormant for the second time. Parent company Actionworld is tightening up its New York operation, including bringing on some very good people, so I expect to have **Game Trend** flying again once everyone settles into their jobs.

We've had a bad year, financially, but I think I see daylight. **Inside Games** has paid better than **Escapee**, easy enough since **Escapade** paid nothing. ActionWorld has accepted our salary proposals.

### Now we Wait for the Check.

I've gotten very cynical about the compensation process. I could retire on money left unpaid on work accepted and used commercially. If time spent is any criterion, Waiting for the Check is my favorite pastime. Editors are quicker to assign work than publishers are to send payment.

Action world has paid property for everything, so I am hopeful that

funds are on the way. I think I'll wait for the check to clear before I celebrate.

### Farewell to the Macintosh

This may be the last major fanzine done with the Macintosh 7100/90 and its associated peripherals and software. We're going to change our home office over to PC.

Though we'll keep a couple of Macintoshes and the Apple printer, our Windows machines will become the focus of our computing activities. All our word processing, desktop publishing, Internet riding and printing will switch to the standard 96% of the world now favors.

My computer gaming has already

Anyone who has heard two allegedly rational people argue Mac versus the PC with the fervor of Martin Luther going one-on-one with the Pope knows this isn't an easy change. It is, however, the sensible move.

The Macintosh operating system, I will declare with my last breath if necessary, is the most intuitive and flexible way for the average user to control a home computer. As much as MicroSoft has improved Windows, it's clunky and unreliable compared to the Macintosh desktop. Advance word on Windows 98 is very good, except for the now-secondary browser interface, but the Mac remains the simpler system.

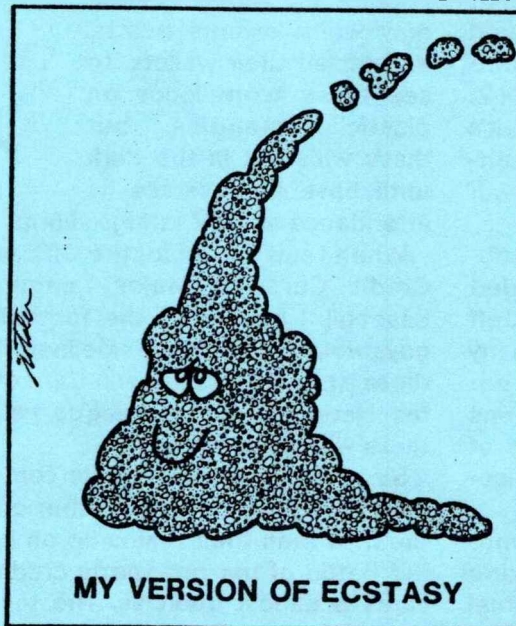
Too bad Apple marketed the Macintosh into computing's answer to Betamax. The Macintosh share of market has fallen to 4%, and I doubt even Steve Jobs thinks OS 8.0 will magically reverse the trend.

The lopsided competitive situation results in spotty software support for the Macintosh. **Inside Games** gets an enormous number of entertainment programs for review, but the supply of Macintosh software has slowed to a trickle.

The Macintosh community produces a lot of game, but most are equivalent to PC shareware. The big-budget titles are all for the PC audience.

The publishers are convinced, perhaps rightly, that this is the only strategy that makes sense. Even a complete monopoly in the Macintosh field won't produce as much sales revenue as a solid PC hit. As part of the downward spiral, it's also getting harder to find pro-quality developers for game projects on the Mac, a notoriously tough platform to program.

## BALLOONS ROTSLER



shifted to the Aptiva. It didn't take a conscious decision; there's a chronic shortage of Mac entertainment titles, despite efforts like Interplay's MacPlay line.

Right now, the Aptiva sits at my right elbow on my I-shaped desk. Soon it will swap places with the Mac on which I'm writing this.



Support for older Macintosh software is feeble, too. I gave up *Publish It! Easy*, the desktop program used for *Folly*, *Wild Helms* and many other Vegas fanzines, because there was no upgrade to make it work properly with the Macintosh 7.0 operating system. Broderbund's *Typestyler*, which produces the headings, hasn't had an upgrade, either.

Turning loose of the Macintosh is a wrench. It means breaking the habits of over a decade. It's sad to see Old Faithful slink off the sidelines.

This is an only a lightly veiled plea for any desktop mavens in the house to send me suggested enhancement software to go with the standard *Quark* and a possible replacement for *Typestyler*.

### A Troubled Mind

Sometimes, an over-active mind is as hazardous as an under-active one. When a mine begins racing, it doesn't always head in the right direction.

When I say "a mind," of course I mean *my* mind. Lacking psychic abilities as I do, it's the only one with which I have firsthand experience.

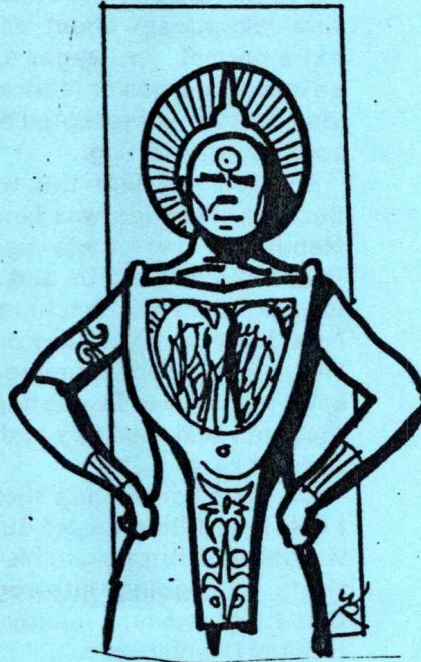
It creeps over me. Maybe I'm watching some sporadically funny sitcom, Suddenly, I'm worrying about things that in more lucid moments, I know are completely ridiculous. It's not that I think these things are important, even during one of these mental episodes. What worries me is that I bother to consider them at all.

A case in point is a recent Radio Shack TV commercial for the Sprint store. I don't usually notice phone company ads, but this one starred the *Jetsons*. As a life-long science fiction fan, I could do no less than pay attention.

The spot's plot is simple enough. The *Jetsons* visit the new Spring

store at Radio Shack and are Amazed.

That's fine on the surface, a sim-



ple promo that exploits residual nostalgia for the *Jetsons*. Subjected to my overly intense scrutiny, it transforms into an enigma.

*If the Sprint Store is new to the Jetsons, who live in the future, how can we visit one in the present?*

### Vox Joyce

"Do you believe that you would be an artist if you could find the right medium?" Joyce asked me one morning,

I considered the question. It roused old thoughts and memories, rekindled ancient yearning. "No, I knew that wouldn't help me," I said, "but I always wished I *could* be an artist. I believe that if I'm very very good, the fannish gods will smile upon me and suddenly I will be able to draw like Bill Rotsler."

"I keep hoping I'll find the perfect song to sing," Joyce said wistfully. "I haven't found it yet, and

now my voice isn't as good."

My wife is many things, but not a songbird. Several times during our long association I have rushed across the house to rescue her, drawn by her gut-wrenching screams of agony, to find her happily belting out *Amazing Grace*. The idea that it could get worse troubled me.

"Not as good, Joyce?" I said.

"I have the voice of an old lady," she pronounced. "I listened to it, and it's kind of scratchy and, well... weepy."

I patted her thigh consolingly.

"It's not fair," she continued.

"My sister sings in her church choir. She sings *solos* at the age of 71, and I have this voice." She looked at me. "I know why," she whispered. "It's because I've lived so hard, sinned so much. My sister is very good."

"Well, that probably puts you several thousands of orgasms ahead of her," I countered. "Lay them end to end and..."

"...that's a lot of laying," she admitted. "If my sister sings better because she's led such an exemplary life, then home what about blues singers?"

"What about them?"

"Well, the older those women got, the better they sang." Coincidentally, Memphis Minnie started to sing *Hot Stuff* on the stereo. "The more she did, the harder she lived, the better her voices sounded," Joyce said.

Her knitted brow grew placid, as though she'd made a significant decision. "I always knew I should be a blues singer."

And on that lascivious note, "Chatterbox" fades into the sunset for another issue.

Prepare to enter the rest of the fanzine. — Amle

# Claptrap Deluxe

I'm a sucker for claptrap. I don't believe any of it, you understand, but really slick charlatanism fascinates me. Clad in the immunity of Total Skepticism about all things extra-normal, I'm eager to hear anyone's delusion or fabrication, as long as it's well-presented and reasonably entertaining.

My doorway into the world of Secret Knowledge was Long John Nebel, the king of late-night New York radio in the '50s and '60s. A former sidewalk pitchman and New Jersey auction house operator, Nebel subjected contactees and spirit mediums to five-hour grillings that both told the story and laid its idiosyncrasies bare.

It was on Long John's shows that I first heard Barnums of Bullshit. It was through listening to his deceptively easy-going interrogations that I learned the handy skill of Healthy Distrust.

So I became an interested observer of, and disbeliever in, claptrap. Fortunately for me,

Claptrap is all around us. The public eats up bullshit like my cat gobbles his bowl of 9-Lives,

It's not a good time to be a skeptic. It's never easy to be the debunker, but 1990s America is positively awash in charlatans, scamsters and dupes. It's a perpetual challenge to logic, rationality and the scientific method.

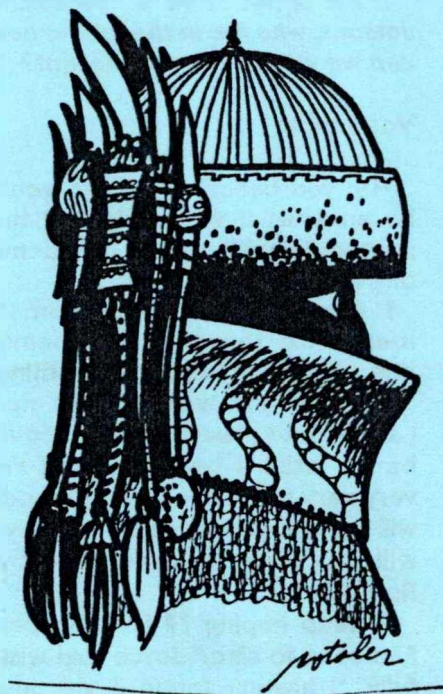
Arcane Knowledge is the refuge of those who can't cope with the Unknown. Humanity always asks "why?" and wants debate-ending answers. The fierceness of the desire for certainty drives some to any answer rather than accept uncertainty. An instant solution is better than wait for a valid one. Better to fasten on pseudo-scientific piffle like astrology than face an unsure future.

UFOlogy is a contemporary response to dread of the Unknown. When we receive a stimulus we can't identify, some turn it into something rather than leave the question hanging.

At one time, people saw angels and talked with god. The phenomenon are the same, but the interpretations have changed. Now those wheels in the sky are alien craft and holy messengers are ambassadors from other worlds. (Have you noticed that the '90s angel craze has caused some people to start seeing heavenly beings again?)

Our culture's penchant for short-cuts and easy answers leads many to champion claptrap. It's easier to surrender control to the Psychic Strangers Hotline than make an unaided decision. Claptrap provides elegant, definitive answers for those too impatient to travel the rocky road to truth.

UFOlogy is the Cadillac of claptrap. It's a large game, compared to most bunco schemes. Standards are high in UFOlogy, and most people encounter it only as practiced at the very highest level of skill.





Your next-door neighbor may take a fling at palmistry, and abandon it for another panacea two months later, but few trial balloon alien abduction with their friends.

It takes commitment to mount a UFO scheme. Casual dabblers seldom get beyond formulaic accounts of bright lights in the sky if they lack the knack for gathering adherents. By the time most people encounter a UFO practitioner, the act is practiced, polished and polished. Maybe that's why people who are impervious to Marilyn Monroe Conspiracy theories and hoot at pyramidology are often suckers for extraterrestrial mysteries.

Like most big-time nonsense, UFOlogy is rooted in reality, or rather, a carefully selected slice of it.

Reason, buttressed by mathematical probability, suggests that Earth is not the only planet with life. People ignore variables of time, distance and evolution and imagine a sentient race on another planet close enough to our to pay us a visit.

Earth's rocketry experiments and attempts to explore near space also fed UFOlogy. Anyone who sees a Space Shuttle launch on TV can glimpse the possibility of vehicles coming in the opposite direction.

Some UFOlogists like to point out sightings through history. This is pretty easy to do, because all it requires is to find a report of an unexplained phenomenon and reinterpret it in light of prevailing UFO dogma.

Despite such antecedents, UFOlogy flowered at the end of World War II. Intense media hype for the Dawn of the Atomic Age, and the accompanying exaltation

of technology, made it inevitable



that people would start interpreting their brushes with the Unknown in scientific and mechanistic terms.

Most sources cite Kenneth Arnold and Maj. Daniel Keyhoe as the catalysts for the post-war saucer boom. George Adamski, Betty & Barney Hill and half the population of Roswell, NM, made contributions to fundamental UFO lore.

Yet the man who *really* started modern UFOlogy is rarely mentioned in documentaries and articles on the subject. My guess is

that he embarrasses the eminently serious students of extraterrestrial contact. He's a little too PT Barnum.

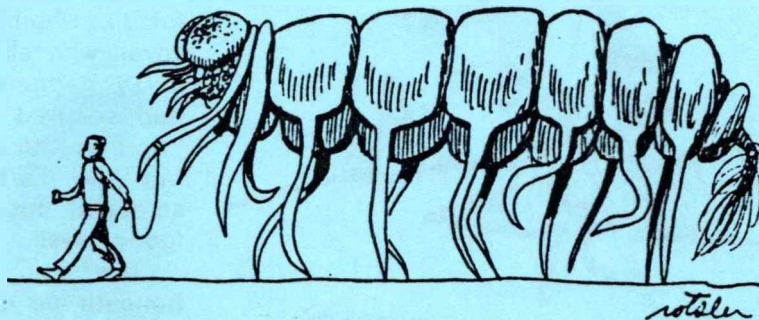
Ray Palmer, a science fiction writer and editor, saw the potential in The Shaver Mystery. This seminal piece of claptrap flourished in *Amazing Stories* in the mid-'40s and maintained a tenuous existence in Palmer-published magazines for another decade.

What separates The Shaver Mystery from ordinary strange-but-true favorites like Bigfoot and the Loch Ness Monster, is scope. Richard S. Shaver, with much mental and writing help from RAP, offered a sweeping cosmology with resonant nonsense for every taste.

In the almost-surely-apocryphal origin of The Shaver Mystery, Ray Palmer rescued a 10,000-word letter from Richard S. Shaver from the oblivion of assistant editor Howard Brown's wastebasket. Brown had flung it there after reading Shaver's description of a newly discovered language called Mantong.

Mantong turned linguistic science upside down. Latin and Greek turn out not to be the wellspring of modern European language. Instead they're the degenerate offspring of Mantong!

Anyone who reads the article will understand why Shaver needs to overturn all of comparative linguistics. Nothing less will justify those





10,000 words of mumbo-jumbo.

Mantong uses the familiar alphabet, which is fortunate since the words are pretty much the same as English. But Mantong is 'way better than English. because it adds a level of Hidden Meaning. Those clever folks who coined all Mantong words gave an additional meaning to nearly every individual letter and syllable.

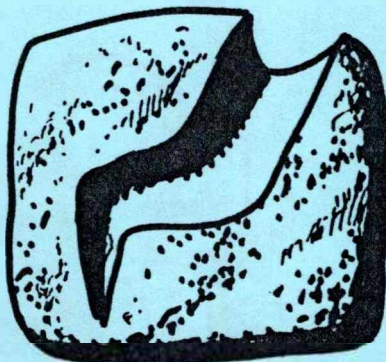
As proof, Shaver gave numerous Mantongian Interpretations of common English words. For example, "Ape," which Shaver notes the ancients pronounced "ay-pee," is composed of "a" (for anima) and "pe" for power. (He doesn't explain why "pea," which the ancients presumably pronounced "pee-ay," isn't an inside-out gorilla.)

Mantong by itself had little more than curiosity appeal, but Palmer re-wrote Shaver's concepts into a pulp science fiction story *I Remember Lemuria*, which he published under Shaver's name in *Amazing Stories*.

The central myth of The Shaver Mystery is that We Are the Aliens. As further stories explained, the Earth had suffered a prehistoric calamity: the Sun started emitting bad - "de" in Mantong for those who want to learn it instead of Sign - rays. The ways in which

Terrestrials dealt with this danger shaped the entire history of life on this planet.

Those who could, the Atlans, got



ALIEN MONEY. MR86

In big flying saucers and set out for Parts Unknown. The folks with the next-best clout, the upper middle class of ancient super beings, retreated to large subterranean caves. The rest - our daddies and mommies - had to stick it out on the presumably deadly planetary surface.

The Atlans began returning to Earth to loot species treasures entombed at the North and South Pole shortly after Shaver and Palmer swiped the flying saucer idea from Keyhoe and Arnold. It gave The Shaver Mystery a UFO connection that feed its popularity for years to come.

The Atlans are exciting, but the real stars of The Shaver Mystery are the careful folks who hid in the caves with all sorts of glitzy gadgets. They had secured protection from the De rays, but the Earth also screened out the Te (good) rays!

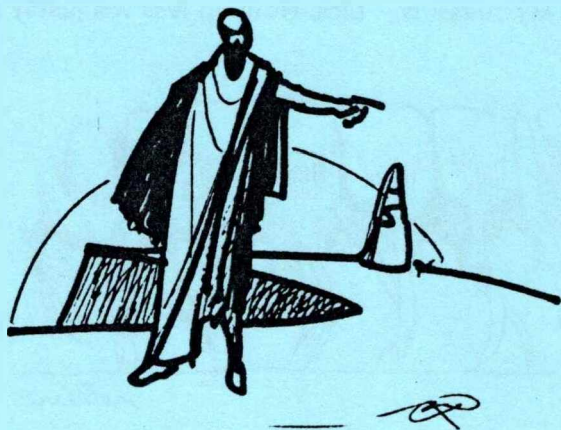
The beings beneath us devolved into misshapen demons who try to

control us topsiders with powerful super-scientific devices. They are known as "Deros" (bad controllers in Mantong). Shaver got the idea across that when you thought about raping the girl next door or broke your diet with an extra cream puff, it was the Deros putting those ideas into your head with their ray machines. It wasn't your fault; you're just a victim.

When Palmer and Shaver saw that *I Remember Lemuria* struck a chord with people who needed explanations for hearing voices and feeling naughty compulsions, they revealed that it wasn't fiction but fact. Amid acclaim from all edges of the lunatic fringe, The Shaver Mystery jostled the sanity of an expanding audience of *Amazing* readers until someone brought to Mr. Ziff's attention that the Shaver stuff didn't bend the knee to Einsteinian Physics.

After that, Palmer publisher several different magazines, including *Flying Saucers from Other Worlds* and *Fate* at least partially devoted to this mammoth scam. There was a Shaver Mystery Club, an attempt to establish a Shaver Fandom as an alternate to science fiction fandom and a quasi-religious Leumurian novel called *Mandark* that connected Deros and the Messiah. Palmer was really ahead of his time in some ways. Today, he'd sell the true believers teeshirts and migs, too.

The stories were crude and lurid, perfect for a nation of guys not getting enough sex. Shaver and his ghostwriter Palmer expended much space in stories glorying in the weird machines the Deros had down in their caves, especially the Stim Machine. Deros sat in this gizmos and experience continuous sexual pleasure, a clear prediction of AOL private chat rooms. Women with enormous breasts and oddly colored hair were also prevalent in the stories, presumably for those





who weren't imaginative to image the artificially induced orgasms of the Stim Machines. Shaver's stories were Edgar Rice Burroughs crossed with Krafft-Ebing and a dash of Russ Meyer.

I previously alluded to "prevailing UFO dogma." The evolution of UFOlogical literature is one of its most fascinating aspects to the dispassionate doubter.

In the uptight early '50s, the pulp bravura of Shaver and Palmer soon gave way to a more sanitized presentation. Undulating, half-nude amazons grew unpalatable to image-conscious nouveau middle class suburbanites.

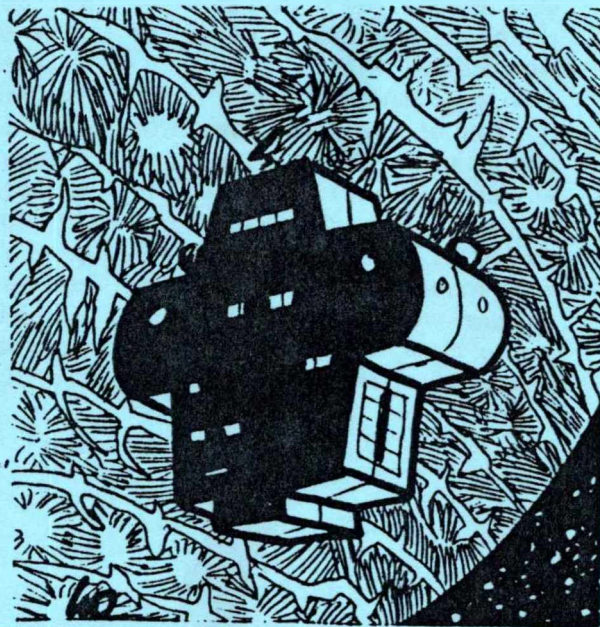
Shaver's voluptuous space vixens retreated to the shadows. Replacing them were the clean-scrubbed representatives of assorted galactic and solar federations, empires and hegemonies. They dressed like tour guides and stewardesses, though the skirts were always short and the tunic tightly

fitted. These alien glamor girls still had a muted sex appeal, but it was a long way from the space nymphs who exposing their alien flesh to goggle-eyed Shavarans.

The super beings strode forth from their flying saucers in impressive numbers in the early 1950s. They weren't joyriders or conquerors. Instead, they always ntipihy an Important Message for Earth. It usually involved not blowing up the place with atom bombs and universal love. In other words, space visi-

tors of that period were often remarkably benign. *The Day the Earth Stood Still* obviously stirred the waters for many.

The movie stars from space don't seem to drop by Terra much these days. Maybe they found a hipper destination. Instead, we've got a bunch of little gray guys with big black eyes and a predisposition for medical experimentation. As fears of nuclear holocaust mounted in the late 50s and early 60s, UFOlogy drew less from hope and more from fear. The peace emissaries were replaced by aliens who



made even the atheistic Russkies seem benign.

The Star Child cult of the 1980s tried to bring UFOlogy back to the light. It fed the common childhood fantasy that those aren't really our parents. We are orphan princes in disguise — or aliens incognito.

It takes a high pitch of self-delusion to maintain this pose, however. It proved beyond the capabilities of all but a few dedicated frauds and borderline psychotics. The latter group, however, found

the idea of invisible, undetectable alien devices implanted in their bodies a much easier delusion to embrace. It fit well with the alienation from their own physicality many feel in our guilt-drenched Puritan society.

Whitley Streiber, today's foremost apostle of Close Encounters, brought the thoroughness of a methodical researcher and the cleverness and creativity of a top-line science fiction/fantasy writer to UFOlogy.

He welded the childish and often internally inconsistent stories into a rallying point for the mentally damaged. It took the talents of a highly talented author to compile a database of all UFO cases, digitally extract common elements and forge them into a coherent narrative.

*Communion* and his other pseudo-realistic UFO novels are the ultimate synthesis of UFOlogy's first 40 years. He's even got echoes of *The Shaver Mystery* and the Lovecraft myths!

People who demand answers to the so-far-Unanswerable find points of similarity between their personal delusions and Streiber's slick accounts. He may've stumbled a little by associating himself with crop circles in a bid for a still wider audience, but Streiber has made his space yarns pay off even more handsomely than *The Wolfen* and *The Hunger*.

Where will UFOlogy go in the future? I think the next stage will be some kind of synthesis between aliens and angels. Watch your local bookstore for my account of meeting God and the new testament He gave me especially for His Chosen Species.

**Loc the Electronic Way**  
You can join the Internet revolution. I love hard copy locs, but they can also be sent to me electronically at: [crossfire@aol.com](mailto:crossfire@aol.com)



# The Pizza Crisis

"A large pizza," one of my companions boomed.

"What do you want on that?" the waiter demanded with the bored air of a pizzeria lifer.

"Half and half," came the reply, "beets and okra."

This didn't happen.

Yet it *could*.

Success threatens everyone's favorite circular snack. If we don't act decisively, America's iconic trinity — Mom, Pizza Pie and Chevrolet — may shrink to a duality

Once Pizza was a universal, a pure concept. We placed our trust in pizza crust. When you ate a slice of pizza, you shared an experience with millions of fellow Americans.

In those simpler, classic times, this land of ours had a consensus about the meaning of Pizza. Stop any citizen from Portland, ME, to Portland, OR (or "Ore" as it was known in those times), and ask what makes a Pizza a Pizza. The answer would come back the same: crust, tomato sauce and mozzarella cheese. For a garnish, a

sprinkling of parmesan was sufficient.

Crust, tomato sauce and mozzarella cheese — how easy it all seemed. People in those primitive times ate pizza — crust, tomato sauce and mozzarella cheese — and found it Good.

The demand for Pizza expanded faster than a pizza-addict's waistline, From '40s pseudo-ethnic curiosity, to occasional '50s treat to this country's favorite "fun food" of the '90s, Pizza has never faltered.

Something was lost along the way. Let's call it Purty. (We might as readily call it "Innocence," but let's not be melodramatic. Reality is tragic enough.)

Blame no byzantine conspiracy. No one plotted to subvert and debase the Pizza. It just happened. A series of bad choices, made in feckless error, combined to cause the downfall of True Pizza and erect a pantheon of false Pizzas in its stead.

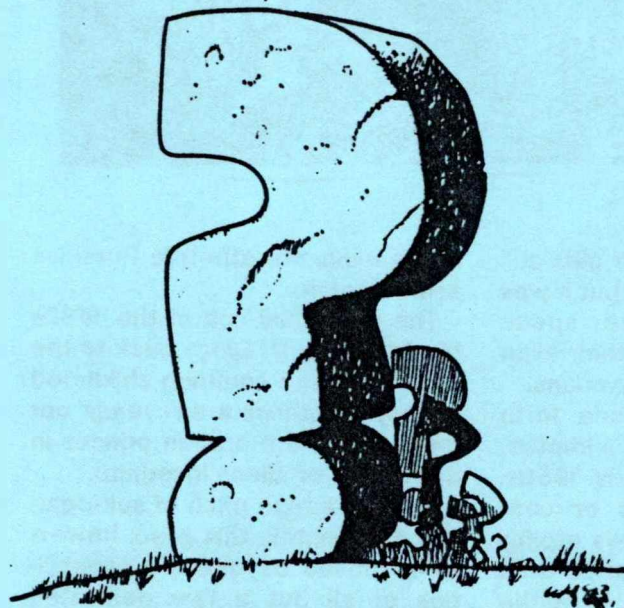
Well-intentioned folks like you and me did the harm. If you have ever ordered, made or purchased in the supermarket something labelled "Pizza" that is not crust, tomato sauce and mozzarella cheese, you have contributed to the adulteration of the Pizza ethic.

Some few have repented. "We only wanted to make a good thing better, they cry. We had such noble purpose they whine.

Perhaps it's unfair to be so harsh in hindsight. Yet the fact remains, these misguided culinary dabblers sullied something fine, perhaps beyond redemption.

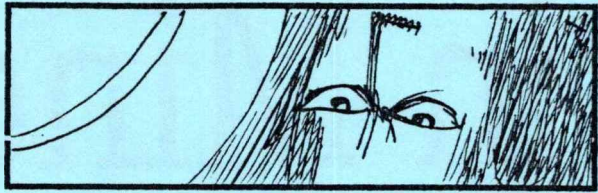
Let me name their Sin: They invented the Pizza Topping.

It sounds... harm-



BIG QUESTIONS ONLY EVOKE OTHERS





less. Some pepperoni, a little sausage. What could be wrong with that?

Those "harmless" beef and pork products were the wedge that pried open Pandora's Box. Untethered from the aesthetic oneness of crust, tomato sauce and mozzarella cheese, Pizza plunged into angst, ambiguity and anomie.

Its pole star shot out of the sky by well-meaning heretics, Pizza has become a catch-all for a menu of foods that have little or nothing to do with the authentic article.

I realize this is not a popular opinion. There are many who actually *enjoy* a so-called veggie pizza or hawaiian pizza or mexican pizza. (Note derisive use of the lower case.) They may feel that strong advocacy of the Pizza ideal threatens their rights to enjoy these ersatz pies.

Not at all. This is America, where you can eat any damn thing you can afford. No one has the right to stop you from consuming a round crust topped by piles of shrimp, cod and lobster, *not even for your own good*. A society that allows the sale of known poisons should not intervene in personal food preferences.

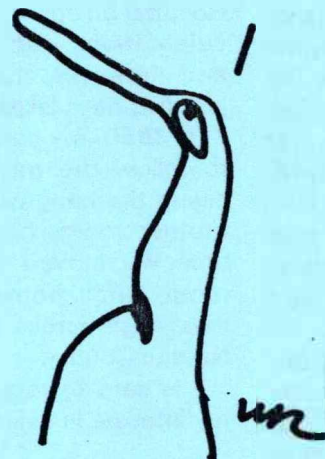
Eat those non-Pizza conglomerations with ground beef and lima beans, but don't represent them as Pizza. They are not Pizza.

It comes down to the Standard of Identity. The Food and Drug Administration spent millions to determine the unique, qualifying characteristics of every food. If a

product doesn't satisfy the conditions for a given Standard of Identity, it can't claim to be that food.

That's why some food packages say "Chees," while others read "Cheese Food" or "Cheese Product." The degree f

**"BECAUSE YOU CAN DO IT" IS NOT A JUSTIFICATION FOR DOING IT.**



cheesiness determines what the manufacturer can call it.

That is what separates an all-beef Kosher hotdog from a meat-and-filler hot dog. Wait, that may not be a good example. Hot dog purists may argue that since the hot dog Standard of Identity includes a small percentage of rat hair, the Kosher item is not a true specimen. Well, you get the point.

Standard of Identity is what distinguishes Carvel Soft Ice Cream from Dairy Queen Frozen Dessert. The percentage of milk fat in DQ does not satisfy the Standard of

Identity for ice cream. No matter how many shards of Butterfinger the counter girl shovels into that Blizzard, it's still just a frozen dessert. It's not Ice Cream, and if DQ told you it is, you could have them arrested. You can do hard time for violating Stands of Identity.

Many food today are sold as Pizza which abrogate Pizza's Standard of Identity – crust, tomato sauce and mozzarella cheese. Yet no one raises a voice of protest or a defense of the purity of Pizza.

Until now.

While no one can make you abandon the degenerate ur-pizzas that now pollute the American palate, I *can* implore you to return to the seminal concept voluntarily.

Join the Pure Pizza League. You can help reverse the rot. And who would want a rotten pizza?

The Pure Pizza League simply wants justice for Pizza. If it is crust, tomato sauce and mozzarella cheese, then it is Pizza. Otherwise, it should, it *must* be called something else.

I'm no mindless zealot. The PPL must accomodate to reality, however odious. We can compromise, to a limited extent, without failing our sworn oath to restore the classic Pizza to its deserved recognition.

**X t r e m e  
Pizza Crisis Update**

Since I wrote this article, a national chain has introduced a pizza without the traditional the crust heel heel on the outer rim. I never dreamt that such sacrilege was possible.

**We must mobilize!**



# Fandom in Mind

Fandom was created when Forrest J Ackerman "met" Jack Darrow in the SF magazine letter columns. My creation took longer, though it was probably more fun for the participants.

My parents met in Brooklyn, NY, shortly after both immigrated to the United States before the outbreak of World War II.

It was the thing to do back then if you were an eastern European Jew. My mother, a qualified primary school teacher, took special classes to acquire skills to make her a particularly desirable immigrant. She learned how to use the machine that stitches bras. This uplifting, yet dull, knowledge, got her through Ellis Island to her waiting brother.

All my father had to do was agree to let lots of guys shoot at him. His arrival in the US. coincided with the war buildup

The 82nd Airborne Division enveloped him in its khaki embrace. "Who wants to be a citizen?" an officer asked a formation that included my dad. "Take one step forward and raise your hand."

Dad stepped forward. "You're all citizens," the officer pronounced. Despite the seductively easy initiation, he paid some heavy dues to join this particular club.

He fought through the entire European campaign. The US Army gave him a heap of medals and sent him back to my mother with all vital parts, including reproductive equipment, intact.

When Leon Katz came marching home, he did exactly what most of his comrades did; he got a job and impregnated his wife. The latter

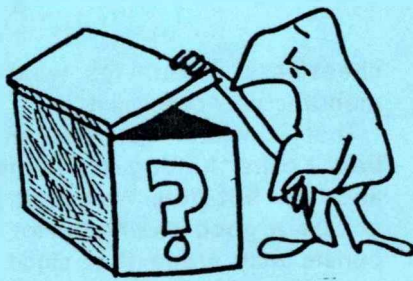
## Chapter One Life Before Fandom

was quite popular at the time, possibly because network television was still almost four years away.

I was born in Brooklyn Jewish Hospital on July 2, 1946. A riotous celebration, with parades, flags, and fireworks, marked the event just two days later.

By 1950, my parents were ready to follow the migration from the city to the Long Island suburbs. My brother Ira was born just about the time we moved to a three-bedroom ranch home in New Hyde Park, just across the city line in Nassau County.

It is hard to recall a time before my interest in science fiction. Even



as a pre-schooler, my curiosity about outer space impelled me to badger my mother to read me astronomy texts.

Mom probably understood a tenth of the material. Jewish families would rather suffer a pogrom than stunt their kids' budding

quest for knowledge, so she read me the incomprehensible books. "He's going to be a college professor," she prophesied to friends and relatives.

Other little kids wanted to be cowboys and fireman. I wanted to become an astronomer. Then I saw an episode of the "Tom Corbett Space Cadet" TV series. I stumbled upon it accidentally, wedged between two segments of a dinner-time movie. Today we'd call it channel surfing. At the time, there weren't enough stations to clothe dial-twirling in such impressive metaphor.

I turned the selector knob two clicks and beheld Tom and crewmates in dire distress. They were sitting on the wreckage of their space scout on a deserted asteroid wondering how they'd get back to Earth.

That scene had little to distinguish itself from a story about a bunch of college kids with a flat tire on a deserted road, but the ambiance hooked me. It fired my ambition to not only see the stars in a telescope, but go visit them in a space ship.

Ambition collided with reality very early in my childhood. I wore glasses from age three, and comparisons to the bottoms of coke bottles were frequent and appropriate. I was a brainy little kid, and about the time I nailed down the Santa Claus question, I also understood that demand for myopic astronauts and astigmatic astronomers is slack.

A combination of parental over-protectiveness and poor vision subtly guided me toward a more



bookish, and introspective lifestyle. They might keep me from patrolling the spacelanes like Buzz Corey, but nothing could stop me reading about it, or imagining it for myself.

Sophisticated roleplaying games like *Dungeons & Dragons* are an outgrowth of the "let's pretend" childhood afternoons. Cowboys and Indians wasn't a particular favorite around our house, but re-enactments of *Capt. Video* filled countless hours.

I learned to read in the first grade and improved rapidly. I was a big youngster, but awful vision made it hard to keep my eye on the ball. I was slow-footed in the bargain. This brutally disappointed my father, a professional soccer player in Europe before the war. He probably visualized me as Duke Snider's eventual successor in center field for his beloved Brooklyn Dodgers.

Alas, the only similarity between the Duke of Flatbush and me is that we both have a propensity toward an impressive five-o'clock shadow. And that similarity didn't appear until my late teens.

So I became the kid who knew every conceivable fact about baseball. When my dad took me to lovely, rickety Ebbetts Field, home of the Dodgers, my eyesight made it hard to follow the flight of the ball, but I knew all the averages.

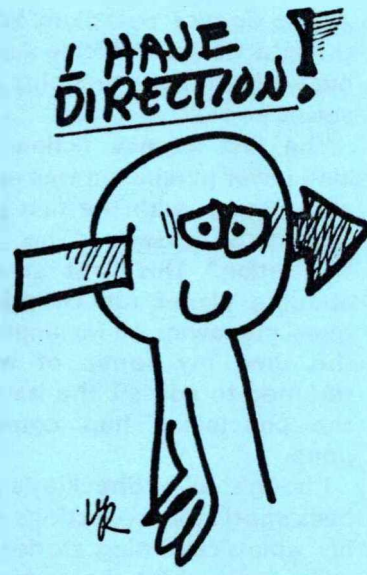
Voracious reading soon led me to novels that fed my vicarious identification with the National Pastime. I read all the novels of diamond deeds by authors like John R. Tunis and Duane Decker, which made my face familiar to school and public librarians.

My avid reading habits pleased teachers at Parkville Elementary, but they fretted about my steady diet of astronomy texts and baseball novels. They wanted me to broaden my horizons. One afternoon in fourth grade, Miss

Manners the matronly librarian shoved "Lucky Star, Space Ranger" into my mitts. The first 10 pages relegated stories of the mythical Blue Sox dynasty to the realm of fond recollection.

I assaulted the school library's with renewed fervor but a different focus. Now I couldn't get enough "outer space books." Once I exhausted its selection, I move on to the public library. I became such a familiar visitor at the small local branch that the woman in charge eventually bent the rules and let me borrow sf from the adult shelves.

Despite my penchant for reading and notable scores on IQ tests, I



wasn't much different than my classmates until seventh grade. A line drive smashed into my head during a pick-up game of street baseball. It hurt like hell, but I didn't think anything about it.

A routine eye exam a month later sent me to Glen Cove Community Hospital for an emergency retina reattachment on my left eye. Today's laser surgery makes this a simple procedure today, but it was 1958.

"Emergency" is a misleading description of the procedure. It

implies flashing lights and grim-faced medicos ministering to bullet wounds.

Not in this case. The hurry was to get the procedure started, because the preparations took so long. In the pre-laser era, a detached retina meant lying flat on your back for a month, having the operation, and then lying motionless for another month. Then came a couple of months as an ordinary, bed-ridden patient. For a good part of that time, I was blindfolded to keep my eyes as motionless as possible.

The operation was what might be called a technical success. I kept the eye, but I never regained any vision.

I listened to the radio a lot. I bitterly missed reading and my favorite television shows. That summer of forced idleness changed my life. It put most sports out of bounds and saddled me with a long list of things I'm not supposed to do. The doctors didn't want to risk a detachment in my other eye. Forbidden activities included all forms of vigorous exercise, roller coasters, and diving.

Fate had given me what every four-eyed introvert wants most, license to wallow in a world of hobbies and books. I went with it. I didn't know it at the time, of course, but that same fate was shaping me into the very model of a profan.

Although I never confided the matter to anyone, the most crushing consequence was the death-blow to dreams of ever seeing outer space for myself. If a roller coaster was forbidden, I knew the multi-g takeoff force would keep me from flying to other planets.

This real-world barrier boosted my interest in science fiction and fantasy to new heights. If I couldn't go to Mars, I could read and maybe someday write, stories about the future.

I became a full-fledged science



fiction addict. I read everything I could find, but Asimov and Heinlein headed my list of favorites. Anthologies introduced me to many authors. I always noted the bylines on stories on liked. Then I'd look for more of their stories.

I approached science fiction with the same thoroughness I applied to all my hobbies and interests. I kept lists of favorite stories and novels with the meticulousness of a kid with too much free time

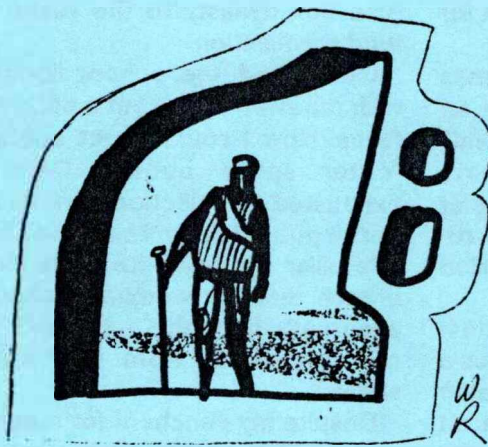
By my *bar mitzvah*, I knew I wanted to carve out a career as a writer, though I also wanted to design games. My mom still visualized me as a college professor. I didn't trouble her with the news of my change in plans. Occasionally, I combined the two interests. My first game design was a finish-first boardgame in which Rocky and Bullwinkle raced Boris and Natasha to the Moon.

Lenny Bailes, who lived a few houses down and across Patton Boulevard, shared most of my interests. He was a year behind me in school, a significant social barrier to a grade schooler, but mutual enthusiasms drove us together.

We both liked science fiction, games, baseball cards and comic books. His enthusiasm confirmed mine. He didn't care much for girls, not surprising since he was over a year younger. It didn't cause any practical problems, though. My success with girls didn't equal my interest, so it was mostly theoretical. And our theoretical discussion were much more likely to involve our attempts to map the comic book distributor's day and route in our area or how to make player cards for a statistical baseball simulation.

Since I was well on my way to my eventual 6'3", we looked like Mutt-and-Jeff as we tramped through New Hyde Park on our mysterious

kid errands. We two comics lovers saw the basis for that comparison but chose to ignore it. What could we do? We both preferred the



*Archie Comics* paradigm. We both thought we were Archie Andrews, but we kept those thoughts to ourselves as well.

The first science fiction magazine I ever purchased was an issue of *Amazing* with the first part of Robert Sheckley's "The Status Civilization." This light adventure about a planet run by prisoners blew me away. Unfortunately, by the time my sense of wonder returned to normal, the issue with the conclusion had come and gone.

I bought all of Sheckley's paperback short story collections. I loved his whimsical, biting stories, but I still hungered for the second half of the serial.

I only had one serious falling out with Bailes, and that occurred long before fandom. It was my fault entirely, though I'll admit that Lenny could sometimes boost my frustration/irritation level to the stratosphere.

We didn't speak for months. Then one Saturday morning, as I ate my breakfast bagel, I saw his round little form at the kitchen screen door. "It's you," I said, voice flat with stubbornness.

"Yeah," he said. "You shouldn't

have pushed me. I wasn't going to talk to you again, but something great happened, and you were the only one who would appreciate it."

Five minutes later, the quarrel was old news, and we were friends again.

Bereft of his co-conspirator, Bailes turned to New York City, just a bus and subway away from our insulated community. Bailes' remarkable memory had quickly mastered the entire subway system. His insatiable curiosity led him to two remarkable discoveries.

The "something great" involved our mutual love of comic books. I listened with undisguised envy as he told how he'd visited National Comics' office, taken the tour and read the company's precious files of Golden Age comics. He was right, a triumph like that had to be shared with a fellow connoisseur, deficient as he might be in one or two other respects.

Getting even one tour was a coup, and Bailes had done it several times. His adventures in comic book land didn't end there. Something within Lenny Bailes, proto-fan, called out to the hearts of the writers and editors. The folks at National took a shine to him. They let Lenny visit the offices and bullpen whenever he wanted.

The high point of his visits to the home of Superman and Batman was worshipping the publisher's two most famous editors, Julius Schwartz and Mort Weisinger, at close range.

Comic book readers all knew Julie and Mort were buddies as well as co-workers, so Bailes and I identified with them. Had we known of their *Fantasy Magazine*, fandom's first certified focal point fanzine, it would've hastened our entry into fandom by a couple of years.

New Hyde Park's Columbus had



made another discovery. At first it paled in comparison to DC headquarters, but it soon loomed larger in our lives.

Lenny had found stores that sold old magazines, including science fiction and fantasy. I hope that revelation has not given collectors visions of mint copies of *Astounding* and *Weird Tales*. These are the memoirs of Amie Katz, not Sam Moskowitz or even Lucky Joe Siclar.

Age is relative. To a 15-year-old, prozines from two or three years back are ancient artifacts. As the best part was that the backdate magazines marked then down from their original cover prices. I could buy two for the price of one brand new one. This was an attraction to a kid on a tight allowance.

One day Lenny led us expertly into mysterious Queens to a store — we could hardly believe this — with nothing but science fiction.

Although we didn't know it, this was our second brush with fandom. The proprietor was longtime huckster Bradford M. Day. He had no direct links to fandom at that time, but if we had pushed the right buttons, I'm sure he could have given us the name of someone who did.

Financial considerations shaped my collection. I bought mostly digest prozines from the mid-to-late 1950's. My special favorite was *Infinity*. This short-lived title, deftly edited by former fan Larry Shaw, seemed to me to be the epitome of what I liked about SF. The fact that I was comparing the quality to *Amazing* and *Fantastic* of the same period didn't make Shaw's star shine less brightly, either.

The magazines had one thing in

common: they usually printed a fanzine column. In stark contrast to the juvenile slant of the fiction, the Ziff-Davis twins had fascinating reports of fandom and fanzines by Roger Phillips Graham. Rog Phillips may not have been a dedicated trufan, but he reviewed the fanzines with warmth and considerable compassion. I've tried to follow his example in the fanzine review columns I've done for electronic gaming prozines. Rog Phillips made fandom sound like the world's most fascinating activity.

By mid-1962, I had become a regular letterhack in *Amazing* and *Fantastic*, then edited by Cele Goldsmith (Lall). She kept printing my letters, so I wrote to each magazine every month.

Those letters actually discussed the stories! The only controversy concerned the literary merits of David R. Bunch. His "Moderan" series outraged hardcore readers, while I joined the vocal minority who thought they were quirky and elusive enough to justify space in the magazine.

I knew — or thought I knew — about fandom from those columns. I yearned to make contact with it. The columns in the backdate mags

people united by history and custom though geographically dispersed. I visualized fandom as a social union, with science fiction as its torah.

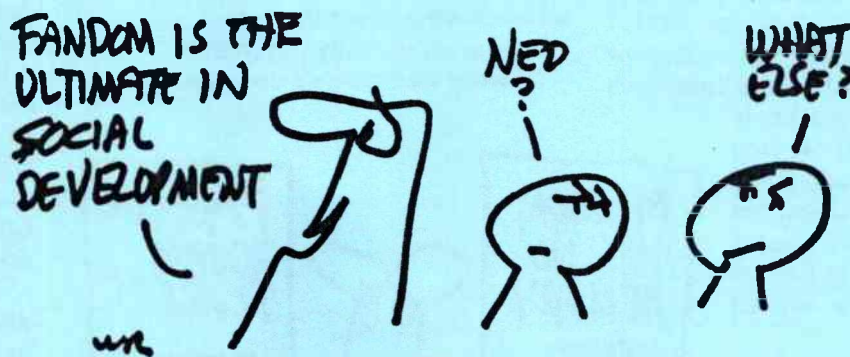
I looked forward to hour upon hour of science fiction discussion with the erudite men and women who produced the fanzines Rog Phillips touted so enthusiastically.

The reviews said fandom likes humor. I could be funny, went my reasoning, so they will love my parodies of classic science fiction stories.

I had to find fandom. My first idea was a long shot, but worth a try. Since no SF magazines had fan columns in the early 1960's, I combed the newest of my backdate prozines for fan columns. Then I studied the names and addresses, alert for ones that maintained continuity over the years. I looked for older, more stable fanzine editors, the most likely to have the same address. Since they were older and more settled, it increased the chances that they would have stuck with the hobby another five or six years. I didn't think ex-fans would be able to do much to help me make contact.

Research yielded three prospects. In retrospect, I'm proud of my detective powers. The targets were Dean Grennell, Dick Gels, and Buck Coulson. I wrote each of them a heartrending letter. I explained my predicament and begged for help in making contact with fandom.

My bad luck was that Coulson had moved years earlier. Had Coulson actually gotten my letter, he might've sent a *Yandro*, and put Bailes and I out of our misery.



promised so much that I wanted.

I understand that it must be some kind of sub-culture. My Jewish heritage had already familiarized me with the concept of a



Grennell had also moved, but my letter followed him all the way to California. A postcard with a *Shooting Times* logo wished me luck, but stopped short of directing me to an information source.

I can't blame Dick Gels for not writing. He'd flamed out in a blaze of invective a few years earlier, and he probably wanted to part of fandom at the time I sent my note..

In a cycle he repeated almost verbatim in the late 1960s, Gels made *Psychotic* into a leading fanzine in the mid-1950's and then changed its name to the more pretentious *Science Fiction Review*. Although the mercurial Gels ultimately rekindled his interest, at this juncture he wanted no contact with fandom. He may even have felt he was doing me a favor by not recruiting me for the hobby.

Whatever the reason, my letter-writing scheme failed. Time for Plan B. Only a pair as audacious (and ignorant) as Bailes and Katz would have attempted to contact fandom by publishing a fanzine.

I wrote my contributions in long-hand on notebook paper for the ghastly first issue of our neo crudzine, *Cursed*. Typing was another of Bailes' skills, and he bashed out the spirit duplicator masters on a decrepit LC Smith.

Besides writing about half the material for this 10-page effort, I took responsibility for somehow getting the word to the hundreds of people who we knew were out there waiting for us. If they had known the full dimension of *Cursed* #1, those people would've been out there waiting for us armed with clubs.

We saw two possible avenues to obtain publicity, and we cynically styled the contents to take maximum advantage of both opportuni-

ties. *Castle of Frankenstein* had a fan column that might mention *Cursed*, so we ran an article comparing it against *Famous Monsters of Filmland*. (We didn't know that fans edited both publications.)

Since Cele Goldsmith used at least one of my letters a month in

her two magazines, we also had an article about *Amazing* and *Fantastic*. It was easy to work the details of *Cursed* into my monthly letters using the planted piece as the *segué*.

Lenny obtained use of a ditto machine. We printed and assem-

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## Chapter Two

### The Door Swings Open

The wait was hard, and Bailes' move to Commack, on the eastern end of Long Island, didn't make it easier. I knew, with the certainty of the utterly misguided, that fandom would love *Cursed* and us. Yet disquieting possibilities kept my nerves quivering for several months. What if *Amazing* didn't print my prozine letter? What if the *CoF* reviewer didn't get *Cursed*? Worse, what if he gave it an unfairly bad review?

Surprisingly, my publicity scheme went perfectly. Cele Goldsmith printed the letter, and *Castle of Frankenstein* gave *Cursed* a brief mention. Bailes and I congratulated each other over the telephone. We were on our way to fandom!

Or were we? *Cursed* drew lots of

orders for sample copies, but nary a word came from the fannish establishment. *Cursed* was supposed to be our vehicle to ride through the golden door of fandom, but our strategy produced an unanticipated result.

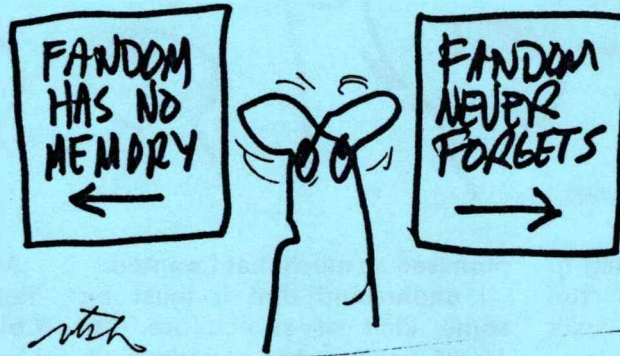
Instead of pulling us into the charmed circle, *Cursed* briefly became the center of its own Outgroup. Our publicity attracted people like ourselves, who were not yet fans.

The response to the first issue wasn't quite what we expected, but some of it was heady stuff. Instead of weird teenage pariahs, we were respected editors of a little magazine.

*Cursed*'s readers, even more in the dark than its editors, sent long enthusiastic letters of comment with questions about fandom and science fiction. Our egos would have attained escape velocity if we'd known any of the answers.

One incredible example of this blind-leading-the-blind phenomenon was *Galaxy Reporter*. Dwain Kaiser, then of Las Vegas, NV, really threw us for a look. *GR* made all of our mistakes, plus a few we'd luckily dodged. We saw everything we did wrong in *Cursed* reflected in the trick mirror of *Galaxy Reporter*.

The content tossed a bucket of ice water in our faces. To be charitable, most of *Galaxy Reporter* is closely paraphrased from *Cursed* #1. To see our mistakes regurgitated in *GR* underlined the poor quality of our effort. It's so





much easier to see that someone else has blown it.

A surprising number of fans trace their contact to either *Cursed* or its doppelganger. These include John Kusske, Paul Gilster, and Dave Proctor, all of whom will now rise from their fannish graves to refute this claim.

Finally, in March 1963, first contact occurred. Just when I thought we'd never find a way into fandom, a letter arrived from an active fan.

A stirring perfumed letter from a female fan.

A letter from a female *publishing* fan who sent recent fanzines along with the cheeriest, friendliest letter I'd ever gotten Positive re-inforcement, do your stuff!

Judi Beatty Sephton was a student at New York's CCNY evening college. She lived in the Bronx, and one of her fanzines mentioned a recent marriage.

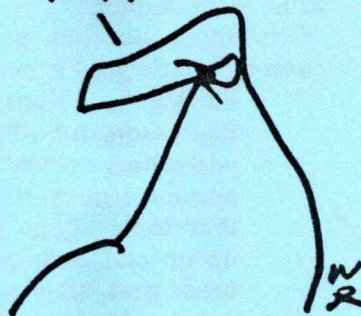
Judi belonged to an active club at the school that included such later-famous fans as Marsha Elkin (Brown Jones) and Elliot Shorter (TAFF winner and sergeant at arms for the 1967 NYCon 3). She assisted on *Engram*, the club's official organ, and also produced a genre-zine, *Free Radical*.

Her photo in *Free Radical* showed an intense, slightly zaftig older woman — older than me, that is — with long dark chestnut hair and even darker sunglasses.

I also didn't fail to notice Marsha, sitting beside her in the photograph. I thought she looked hot. Comments in Judi's zine suggested that she and Marsha were on testy terms, but I couldn't see anything wrong with either.

Those old fanzine review columns mentioned a few women, but I hadn't thought much about it. The notion that fandom could fill lonely nights with more than discussions of the latest Heinlein novel galvanized my imagination. I could see that fandom might be

WUUZZAT?  
DID I HEAR  
"NFFF"?



even more fun than I originally thought.

Like all 16-year-olds, I was crazy about women of every age, size and description. (Fifty-year-olds aren't much different, but we learn to hide it more discreetly.)

Like many teenaged introverts, I had virtually no actual experience with the opposite gender. Judi was married, but the exotic, erotic Marsha Elkin sparked fantasies of fan girlfriends who shared my hobbies and more. In fandom five minutes, and already a hound!

Even sex couldn't topple Fandom from the top of my agenda. I shelved libidinous musings and concentrated on the content of Judi's meaty letter and accompanying batch of fanzines.

Unsure about how much the editors of *Cursed* knew already, Judi correctly assumed we were totally ignorant. Her letters began with the basics.

I devoured everything she sent, puzzling over mentions of many unfamiliar names, events and activities. I have since learned that this was a pivotal point in my incucation

into fandom. Masses of unfamiliar factoids have repulsed more than one potential fan.

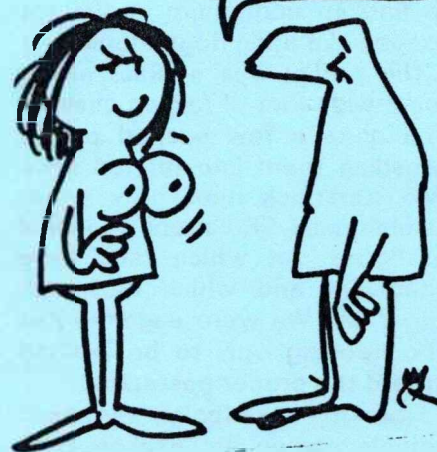
I went at it like a dedicated researcher, as I always did with hobbies. I sifted every syllable of Judi's handwritten letters and then re-read the prozine fan columns in light of increased knowledge.

Judi's most exciting news was that a club called the Lunarians was sponsoring a convention in New York City on April 21st. When I relayed this to Lenny, he instantly agreed that we must go to Adelphi Hall in midtown Manhattan for this sure-to-be-dazzling event.

Cons were far less common in those days, of course. Had we missed the Lunacon, we probably wouldn't have gone to one until fall, 1964.

It was only a one-day con. The full-dress Lunacons with program, parties, huckster room, and art show didn't develop for several more years. To us, as we clung to the straps of the subway car, a whole day with fans sounded like a science fictional summit meeting.

HM... UNDER  
200 POUNDS,  
NO MUSTACHE,  
MUST BE ONE  
OF THOSE GIRL  
THINGS...

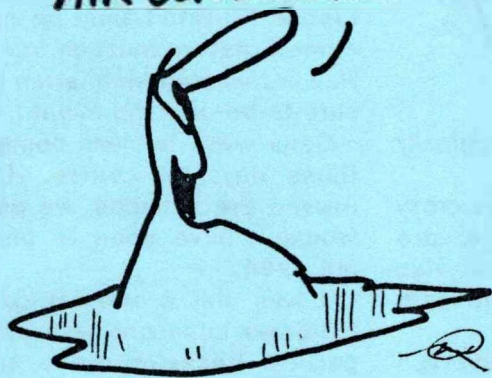




The setting for the Lunacon reinforced the summit image, because it was on the top floor of a 10-story building. Fortunately, there was no trouble with the elevators. Unfortunately, there were no elevators.

The only difference between

OKAY, OKAY —  
I'LL TURN UP THE  
AIR CONDITIONER!



treading the endless staircase to the meeting room and ascending Mt. Everest is that the higher we climbed, the hotter it got. You couldn't hold a con at the Adelphi Hall today, and not only because it has probably long since succumbed to the wrecking ball. The heat and exertion would devastate today's older fan population faster than the TAFF Wars. I half-expected to find an auditorium at the top shaped like a big double boiler.

The reality was a drab, airless room with a lot of folding chairs — and quite a few excited people wrestling them into ragged rows. Two starstruck neos groveled to semi-famous SF writers and tried to figure out which fans were important and which only self-important. We were eager to kiss ass, needing only to be pointed toward the proper posteriors.

From my standpoint, the most notable person at Lunacon 1963

was Sam Moskowitz. Lenny recognized him from book jacket photos. SaM was destined to strongly influence my non-fannish life: He gave me my first full-time job as a magazine writer/editor.

The most notable panel discussed "Is Science Fiction Dying?"

Ed Meskys, Hans Steffan Santesson, John Boardman and others couldn't find the answer. I guess that's why that topic keeps cropping up on con programs. I figured that science fiction was probably pretty safe, unless it died of heat prostration at the Lunacon.

Randall Garrett, pre-Lord Darcy, exhorted the audience to respond to the prozines. No one pointed me out as the last of a dying breed of prozine letterhacks, and I certainly didn't volunteer the information. No one had to tell me that, among the

Lunarrians, wise neos kept their heads down and stay quiet.

Judith Merrill, the Guest of Honor, polled the audience on its reading habits, but I don't remember the conclusions. That everyone claimed to read so much impressed me. Voracious reading wasn't a bragging point back in New Hyde Park.

Bailes' absence from my day-to-day life began to take its toll. Phone calls and regular visits were fine, and we always enjoyed each other's company, but I no longer had someone right there to appreciate and discuss the latest developments. A few school friends read a little science fiction, but they showed absolutely no interest in moving beyond this level of involvement.

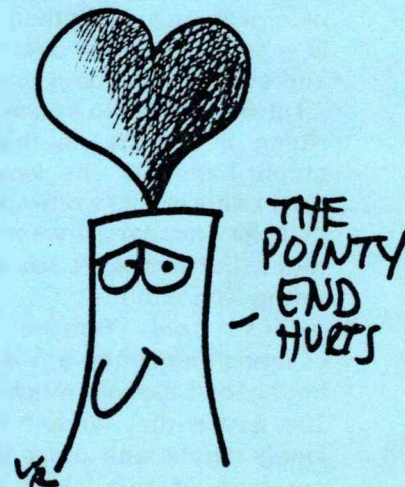
One of Judi Sephton's letters suggested that I join the only national club for true fans of spec-

ulative fiction, the National Fantasy Fan Federation. She told me of its long and hallowed history and described an association of mature sfists, dedicated to the advancement of the Great Literature.

I sent my dues to Janie Lamb, secretary-treasurer of the N3F for about six eons. The new membership packet was a hopeful sign. *The National Fantasy Fan* looked tidy and informative. Also included were the three recently published N3F "Fandbooks, half-size pamphlets which covered fanpublishing, worldcon history, and fan jargon.

Robert Lichtman wrote the one on fanzines, and I practically memorized his advice. Robert was deep into his omni-apan period when he wrote it, and his enthusiastic descriptions induced me to add my name to several waitlists.

I don't think it's fair to actually blame Robert, but he *did* inspire me to learn hunt-and-peck typing. Bailes produced all the masters for *Cursed* and my first couple of apazines, but each new bit of fanac put added strain on his time, capabilities, and generosity. The desire to correspond with other fans and plans to join several apas forced me to get a portable typewriter. I





used that sturdy Hermes until I moved to Brooklyn Heights in 1970.

It wasn't long before members of the NFFF Welcommittee, under the direction of Seth Johnson, began sending me letters. And what letters! Maybe they worked from the same outline. Stripped of their maniacal friendliness, they mixed congratulation with exhortation. Welcomers placed laurels on my brow for joining the only national fan club, and strongly encouraged me to plunge into N3F activities.

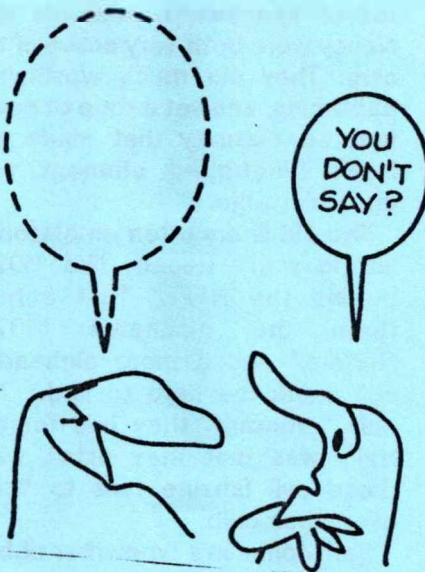
These folks seemed to know a lot more about fandom than I did, so I gave their words much credence. They are all convinced that only the NFFF performed "worthwhile" activities on behalf of science fiction. An earnest young aspiring writer like myself couldn't resist this appeal.

All this adult approval encouraged me to enlist at the first opportunity. I joined the Welcommittee. My ridiculous gesture gave my N3F sponsors hope that I would develop into a fine energetic nefer.

So under the guidance of Seth Johnson, I set forth to welcome those standing directly behind me in line. I shared my meager crumbs of fannish knowledge with still newer neofen.

It didn't take long for the standard criticisms of the National Fantasy Fan Federation to reach my ears. I saw that the detractors had some ammunition in folks like Ray C. "Racy" Higgs and Art Hayes. The former was a Midwest Rotarian type who blundered into fandom, but the latter was a mean-spirited fugghead.

Art hauled loads at a Uranium plant for awhile. It wasn't a long-term job, even though Art circumvented exposure limits so he could



stay twice as long. That didn't seem to make him any worse, which is a comment on how very unpleasant he was.

Seth Johnson was King of the NFFFuggheads. He looked like a kindly middle-aged man as he posed in front of his "Uncle Seth's" ice cream truck. For all I know, his little customers thought of him as a cross between Pinky Lee and Buffalo Bob Smith from *Howdy Doody*.

Seth's approach to fandom was less appetizing than his ice cream bars. His first few letters explained his unified theory of fandom to me in disgusting detail.

Fandom outside his beloved N3F was a fetid sinkhole where "the BNFs" hatched fell plots against all the good Neffers. He cautioned me to shun these despicable people who hungered for my fannish soul. Thank ghod the National Fantasy Fan Federation was there to protect me!

Seth Johnson al-

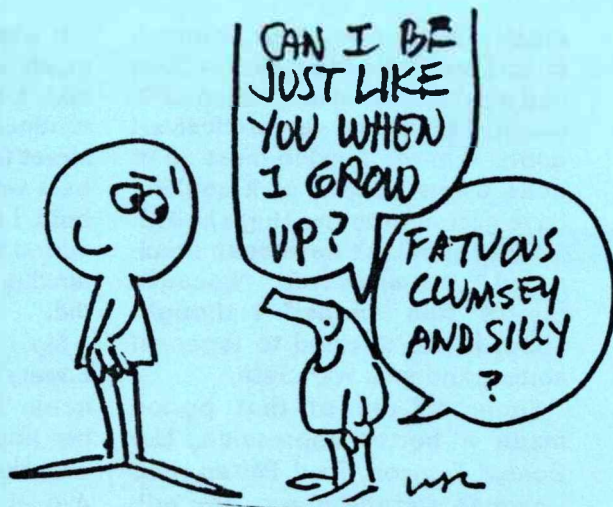
ways practiced the most stringent economies of any of my correspondents. His letters came on onion skin so thin you could read both sides at the same time, or they were typed on limp shiny paper that Seth salvaged from his job.

He never changed the typewriter ribbon, either. Letter by letter, the text lightened until I couldn't tell which sheets had typing and which were blank. Then he'd soak the ribbon in oil, which brought whatever ink remained to the surface of the ribbon. Then he'd start all over again as though it were brand new.

I sympathized about restraints imposed by a tight budget. My fanning money came out of a small allowance, so I was in no position to look down my nose at any form of economy.

It was the content of the letters, not their form, that horrified me. The idealistic fanzine review columns and Judi Sephton's sunny view of fandom didn't prepare me for Seth's hardcore craziness.

One exchange forever punctured my rosy image of the N3F. In the summer months leading up to the Discon (1963), Seth raised the subject of the Hugos. I said, as an aside, that I'd heard that Xero stood a good chance to cop a rocket.





"No," Seth replied. "They're Apa Snobs!" I'd never seen an issue of *Xero*, but I didn't count that against the Lupoffs. I hadn't seen any other nominees, either. Besides, *Xero* had folded.

I wrote back that I didn't know what he meant and asked for further explanation. Seth replied that the Lupoffs were two of those evil BNFs who never send people their fanzines and hide in the Apas so we can't read their precious products.

That couldn't be right, I protested, because I was on the wait list for every apa in creation, and the Lupoffs weren't members of any of them. They were on the FAPA w/, but that was it.

He repeated, almost word for word, that the Lupoffs were Apa Snobs who selfishly kept their

tor of *Spacewarp* and his wife Nancy were both very active in the club. They did much worthwhile publishing, and set a tone of good-natured maturity that made the N3F's hidebound element very uncomfortable.

The old-liners often emblazoned letters with slogans like "102% behind the NFFF." That earned them the nickname "102% Neffers," and a more pigheaded cult would be hard to find. The only "program" they had for the NFFF was that they didn't want those evil fanzine fans to "take over" their club.

Seth Johnson's typewriter ribbon ran irreversibly dry, so the Welcommittee needed a new chief. It looked like an easy way to "get noticed," so I accepted the position.

misguided letters welcoming him to fandom and explaining it to one of the hobby's best-known personalities.

Also for that prospective Sneary essay, I recognized the surname, checked the address, and warned the Welcommittee to tread carefully. I described him as an ex-N3F officer and big name fan who needed no introduction to either the club or fandom. He never wrote the article, so I must've done all right.

Success brought the revitalized Welcommittee unwelcome attention from the 102% neffers. My policy of introducing neoNFFFers to other club members who wanted penpals caused most of the furor. By fostering correspondence among members I infringed on the Correspondence Bureau, which was just rounding off two full years of continuous inactivity.

"Combine the two bureaus into a more efficient operation," I suggested. "Have the greeters steer new members toward possible correspondents." In the interests of club harmony, I even offered to give up my post in the consolidation if someone else coveted the post.

I had broken the NFFF's 11th Commandment for bureaus: Be fruitless and multiply. I had blatantly advocated reducing the number of NFFF Bureaus. Scandal in neferville!

President Franson worked out a compromise to appease the 102% neffers. I moved over to the Correspondence Bureau, and one of the old-timers took over the Welcommittee. I did the job for the rest of my brief NFFF career, but the incident convinced me that my fannish future didn't lie with the National Fantasy Fan Federation.



fanzine away from "the common fans." I responded that I knew *Xero* had a circulation of more than 300, which didn't sound very exclusive. I added that the fanzine must go to quite a few people, or it couldn't have gotten onto the Hugo ballot.

"They shouldn't have been nominated," he answered, "because they're Apa Snobs!" I thought about it and decided to taper off correspondence with Seth.

Some N3Fers of that period made a better impression, like Donald Franson, Fred Patten, Bob Lichtman and the Rapps. The edi-

It was a snap. I still didn't know much about fandom, but it didn't take long to develop a productive routine. Each month, I sent a one-sheet flyer to Welcommittee members with profiles of all new members. I kept the better writers and added a few of the brighter young fanzine fans who'd joined when I did.

My efficiency spoiled Rick Sneary's fun. He rejoined under the name "R. Monroe Sneary." I believe he hoped to replicate Burbee's experience, as described in "NFFF: Ave et Vale" and receive tons of

**Fandom in Mind**  
Continues Next Issue



# xtreme response

*Significant Comments from the Cognoscenti*

FM Busby, Seattle, WA

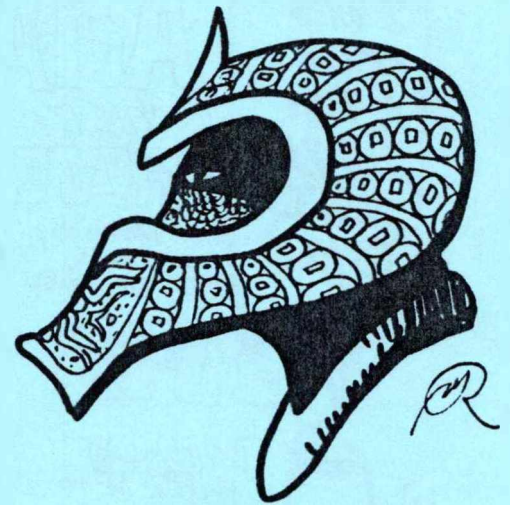
You've seen sitcom episodes in which a minor pointless fib gets escalated by circumstance into welling the end of Civilization as we know it? Well, that's my take on Roswell. Someone stumbled across a picayune routine cover-up of the type that occurs in any military (make that government!) installation at least twice a week, and the coverer(s) were so hamhanded that everything they said/did made it worse and bigger. If hard up for a specific example, Think Watergate.

I also have an Overall Conspiracy Theory — that there is only one supreme conspiracy, and that its goal is to convince us all that the others, the ones we keep hearing about, really exist. I mean, there's no point in conspiring to take over and rule the world. Bill Gates has already beaten us to it. (Any day now, he's going to buy Nevada and terraform it for human habitation.)

I enjoyed and appreci-

ate your memoir of SaM. Folks who have seen/heard him only in large groups or at a banquet podlum have no idea what an interesting guy he could be in small groups. He was here one evening in the summer of 1951, and the three of us had a really fine time of fannish gab. Nobody's perfect and SaM was no exception, but he did a lot of good in and for the microcosm, and meant well all the way.

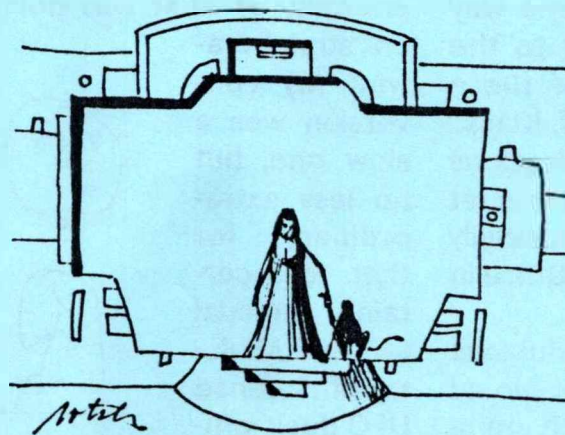
Buck Coulson on rewriting: B.C. (before computers) I wrote novels on a Correcting Selectric. After retyping one



book too many from sloppy first draft I decided Never Again, and henceforth wrote Good Copy (appearancewise, at least) from the very start. This method worked better as I went along; for the last three typewritten books I had to retype only 20 to 25 percent of the original pages. Granted, the editor saw a lot of marker blackout and between-the-lines typed or scribbled corrections!

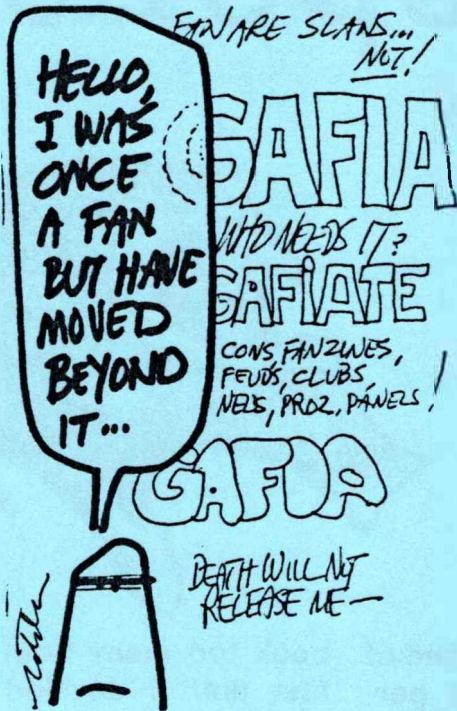
I don't see how you keep all your fannish prose outlets straight, but more power to you.

*Amie:* Your theory about Roswell has a certain plausibility. I can't automatically reject any





theory that lies on the ability of government to make mountains out of molehills.



John Berry. Great Britain

I note your interest in UFO's, and I agree with your observations. I have always been interested in the phenomenon, and I have built up a small collection of UFO books ranging from the way out alien kidnapping to the shrewd execution of these wild claims by Phillip J. Klass.

Several new publications are based on hitherto secret Government files, especially by the Public Record Office in London.

I have always been dubious re UFO sightings, but would not definitely state I am a non-believer. My main obser-

vation is this... If UFOs are crap, if there is no such thing, why do all the world's Governments keep track of them, at considerable expense... and have done so for 50 years.

My other rather telling point is that Nicholas Pope is a rather senior Civil Servant at the Ministry of Defense, was in charge of collating all UK UFO sightings for several years, and he also worked retrospectively, where he could. A year or so ago he published "Open skies, Closed Minds. I quote from page 234...

"As I have pointed out, the subject is one that lends itself to personal prejudice. It is difficult for

career civil servants to shake off their preconceived notions about UFOs to open their eyes to the situations and their minds to the possibilities. I freely admit that I myself failed to grasp the enormity of what was going on straight away. My conversion was a slow one, but no less extraordinary for that. It is certainly unusual for the Ministry of Defense UFO desk officer to come

out and say that some UFO sightings are probably extra terrestrial in origin. It is not that I've gone mad, not that I've made a blind leap of faith, but the conclusion I have drawn is the only one borne out by the evidence."

This is a mighty swipe at the critics... he is the only man in Great Britain who saw every UFO report. But then, he saw the chance of writing a bestseller and has even published a sequel., wherein he considers alien kidnappings.

*Anle: The desire to believe, to surrender to a greater truth, is a common human motivation which I try not to share. In the absence of definitive proof, I am perfectly willing to keep watching the skies - and evaluating UFO material with a skeptical eye.*

Dean Grennell, Mission Viejo, CA

I can confide that no one has a complete backfile of **Grue**, because several of the





earlier issues were produced in a press-run of just one copy. I must have a reasonable file of back copies around the den/office here, but I can't put hands upon them because of my birth defect. I was born without the soul of a filing clerk.

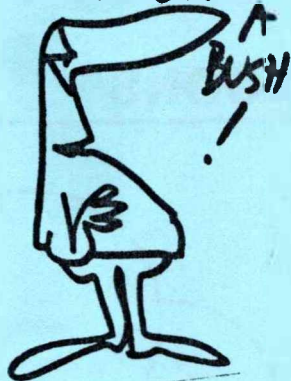
Being taught to read at an early age, say three or so, can have beneficial effects on the IQ. My father taught me to read and write at about age three. I started school at the little local one-room school at age five and happily spent my spare time reading through their set of World Book encyclopedias.

The earlier issues of *Grue* were run off on a Gestetner, using their Royal Blue ink, because it was borrowed from the office of the wholesale heating supplies firm where I worked at the time.

At the present, many young people have their own personal computers. Grandson Michael has one, and I got him some software phonetics and math. I also bought him a small calculator, and he insists on taking it to bed with him at night. With his ancestry, he'll probably grow to a height of seven feet, with an IQ right up around 200 or so.

*Amie:* I understand about the calculator. I did the same thing as a boy. Even today, I still like to take a calculator to bed with me.

WOW! A LOC  
FROM WILLIS!  
AND YOU DIDN'T  
HAVE TO BURN



Walt Willis, Northern Ireland

I must confess I was about to put *Xtreme* away when I came upon your piece about me. I was very impressed by this, so much so that I then and there resolved to read *Warhoon 28* myself, a thing I haven't done in more than 20 years.

Amie's editorial in *Xtreme* was masterly. I appreciated

his analysis of the Roswell Incident, and I agree with his conclusion except that I'm not clear about the extent of the Government's lies and evasions.

The tribute to my writing was quite unexpected, and all the more welcome on that account. Your tribute to SaM was also unexpected, and for awhile I thought the author was Joyce, you were so modest about your own worth and accomplishments. Altogether, it was a spectacular piece of writing. Congratulations!

*Amie:* Your honest surprise at my laudatory comments, together with my inability to resist printing all this juicy egoboo from you, shows both my goal and how far I still am from actually attaining it.

We Also Heard From: Lloyd Penney, George Flynn, Ron Whittington.

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This issue of *Xtreme*  
is dedicated to the memory  
of its original staff artist

**Bill Rotsler**

A great fan, a creative artist  
and a good friend

---



**BALLOONS**

**ROTSLER**

