

# Dither

May be Ross Chamberlain's Fanzine  
for Apa V #8: June 1994

Ross may generally be reached at 2200 S. Ft. Apache Rd.,  
#1227, Las Vegas, NV 89117-5714 ☎ 228-2600 or -2850

reasonably, "but when you're hot there's only so much you can take off." But then, she used to go out without a coat in midwinter in Cleveland.

I'll acknowledge to having been pretty miserable with the heat from time to time over the years, given the ghastly humidity in New York, Cleveland and other localities near large bodies of water. And even inland...though then generally due to overexertion or foolish overconfidence in hot weather. ("Ross?" Somebody says, unconvinced. "Overexertion?? Nahhhh...") But I'll still take it over freezing: shivering and huddled into oneself, exposed skin surfaces stinging, eyes watering and the tears turning to ice... Yuk! Double yucchh! Ak!, even... (exit, stage right...)

I'll ascribe it in part to having been raised in warmer climes. My first five years or so were in the foothills of the North Carolina Blue Ridge, pretty temperate, but then my father, a fisheries biologist for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, was transferred to San Carlos, Arizona, an Apache reservation about 90 miles east of Phoenix. We lived there only about a year and a half, I think, but of course that was then a significant portion of my life and proportionately significant to my development. I don't now remember any traumas from the heat,

USE THE WORD "SUMMER" IN A SENTENCE. Um, well, okay... "Summer better at this than I am." How's that?

Like any kid, at least of school age, I think, I preferred summer over the rest of the year. This has generally stuck with me, and indeed I find it difficult to relate to folk as like winter better. Not in terms of other things—Joy-Lynd and I get along pretty well all in all, and yes, she would tend to take winter over summer given her druthers—"You can always bundle up if you're cold," she explains, quite

though I do remember being warned not to taste the poisonous water that dripped from our air conditioner... (In retrospect, I guess it was really a humidifier or swamp cooler type thing.) And we did temporarily move to McNary, a town about 60 miles northeast of San Carlos and higher in elevation,

for reasons not clear to me then, but I was told later it was to escape the heat. My main recollection of McNary was that our neighbor collected snakes (live), and was more than happy to show them to us. This included rattlesnakes, and I recall mostly that my folks, including my sister (mid-teens at the time) was

---

## A Day at Inspiration Point

Behold a written sky of cloudy words  
Sometimes a clear blue thought peeks through  
And in rare moments a satorial sun  
Illuminates the day, bon-motley hue

Strange how the night may creep  
Into that domain of thought and hide  
From the insight of light, and weep—  
Or bare one's eyes to luna and the stars

Ross Chamberlain - 4/8/94

---

unhappy about this, and I wasn't too certain about it myself. This could be partially false memory... I don't remember Elinor, my sister, as being typically frightened of snakes. Maybe it was just that this guy's snakes got loose sometimes... Yeah, probably that was it...

From Arizona we moved to Texas. Dad was based at College Station (home of Texas A&M and the Texas Aggies) from 1944 (I had my 7th birthday shortly after arriving there) to 1950 or '51

or so. We didn't move away until 1952, but Dad retired earlier for health reasons. Thus my really formative years were spent there.

We used to say College Station was about 100 miles north of Houston and 200 miles south of Dallas—looking at a map it's actually closer to 75 and 150 respectively, on a dogleg, but what the hey hey. The point is that we didn't experience the awful humidity that Houston has (Elinor took nurses' training and got her RN at Hermann Hospital in Houston, so we got that word from her) and I hear tell Galveston is insufferable.

I do remember jumping across the sidewalks in College Station in summer to avoid burning my bare feet. You also had to watch for sand burrs in the grass (ouch!) but these were a part of being a kid and going barefoot.

Of course, my folks would feel it necessary to get me out from under foot with things like swimming classes, vacation bible school and, one year, a class in tap dancing—I never went to summer camp until the year we moved away from Texas. But these occupied only a portion of the summer

months, and while there were chores to be done there was plenty of time for play and mischief and all the good things a kid looks forward to during school vacation.

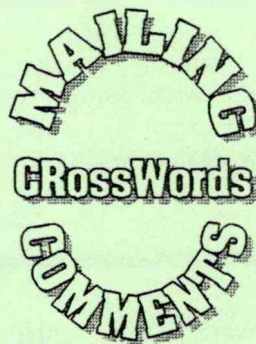
And it was away from the academic atmosphere—something I never learned to love. I never liked being organized, herded, pressured into the patterns of society. This is probably unfortunate in some ways, because while I never really became an out-and-out rebel—I had things too good for that—I missed out on a lot of things, both neat stuff and plain ordinary stuff most people learn to deal with... Eventually I built a shell that took a lot of pain and effort to pull away in later adolescence and, I guess, has never been completely eliminated. But I did have friends and shared good times in those Texas years, especially in those three "free" months of summer.

All these things are undoubtedly what formed my preference for summer over winter... But in later years, I think maybe spring has taken precedence as my favorite season. Go figure.

I can do one tap step learned from that class...

---

**PowWow** - Joyce Was my copy of this missing text overleaf? Just checking... That was indeed a sad tale of thwarted creativity on the part of the doting mother. I do say doting, because I otherwise don't get the idea of someone old enough to be described as "senior" who is only attending the convention for their son, who, one would guess in context to be old enough to take care of himself. But at least the couple seemed to be enjoying themselves.



**Sercon-Navigation** - Tom I am among those who never noticed any oddity in your attire, or noticed what you were wearing at

all. It may even be that I wasn't there on that occasion, which could account for it, since I doubt me much that I was anywhere near as bemused as you appear to have been at the time. Still, I do recall seeing you about now and then. So the operative term there is the word "as" since bemusement is a fairly normal state for me without chemical enhancement. And the pipe didn't really get around to me anywhere near often enough for that...

**Implosion** - Arnie I'm looking forward to the major work of your con report (and obviously I'm not alone in this). Also to the further examinations of



your study of phannish philosophies—which (I gather from an internal use of the second person) you extracted with only slight modification from your response to Ted. It occurs to me that if you expand the number of possible conceptual approaches to Fandom to 12 (possibly incorporating non-zine areas) you could develop an astrological theory in which the fannishness, dear Brutus, lies in our stars, not in our selves...

**Apa-Tizer - Ken** So, Ken, have you researched it? Are all deserts alkaline? I think about the Great Salt Lake and recall from the very little I know about chemistry (I didn't even have it in high school) that salts are combinations of alkalines and acids. I don't know what kinds of terrain consist of largely acid soils... Oh, well, I'm out of my territory (he said acidly).

**Encumbrance - Karl** Yes... the confidence of knowledge. It's a fine feeling to recognize that you have an expertise in something—I have felt it, now and then. It does have its flip side

—and I don't mean a discouraging sense of *not* knowing something (he said flippantly). That long ago lost its pain—for me, at any rate. It's the shock of discovering you're wrong about something you thought you *did* know. That can be discouraging. It's one of the reasons I tend to be quiet among animated conversationalists—too often I blurt out an unchecked "fact" only to have its fallacy immediately pointed out to me...

The other reason is that even when I do have my facts straight, too often I can't get a word in edgewise. But that's another story...

**John re - JoHn** So, you've eliminated the semi-colon from your colophon, hey?

Psychic TV? I figured that for a Chicago band, possibly the house band for WGN. Starring Toyota Jackson? No, huh? Owell...

Looks like that's what I can manage to do this month for Apa V the 8th (I yam I yam).

Ross



This is called recycling old stuff as fill...

(Appeared in SFC a long time ago.)