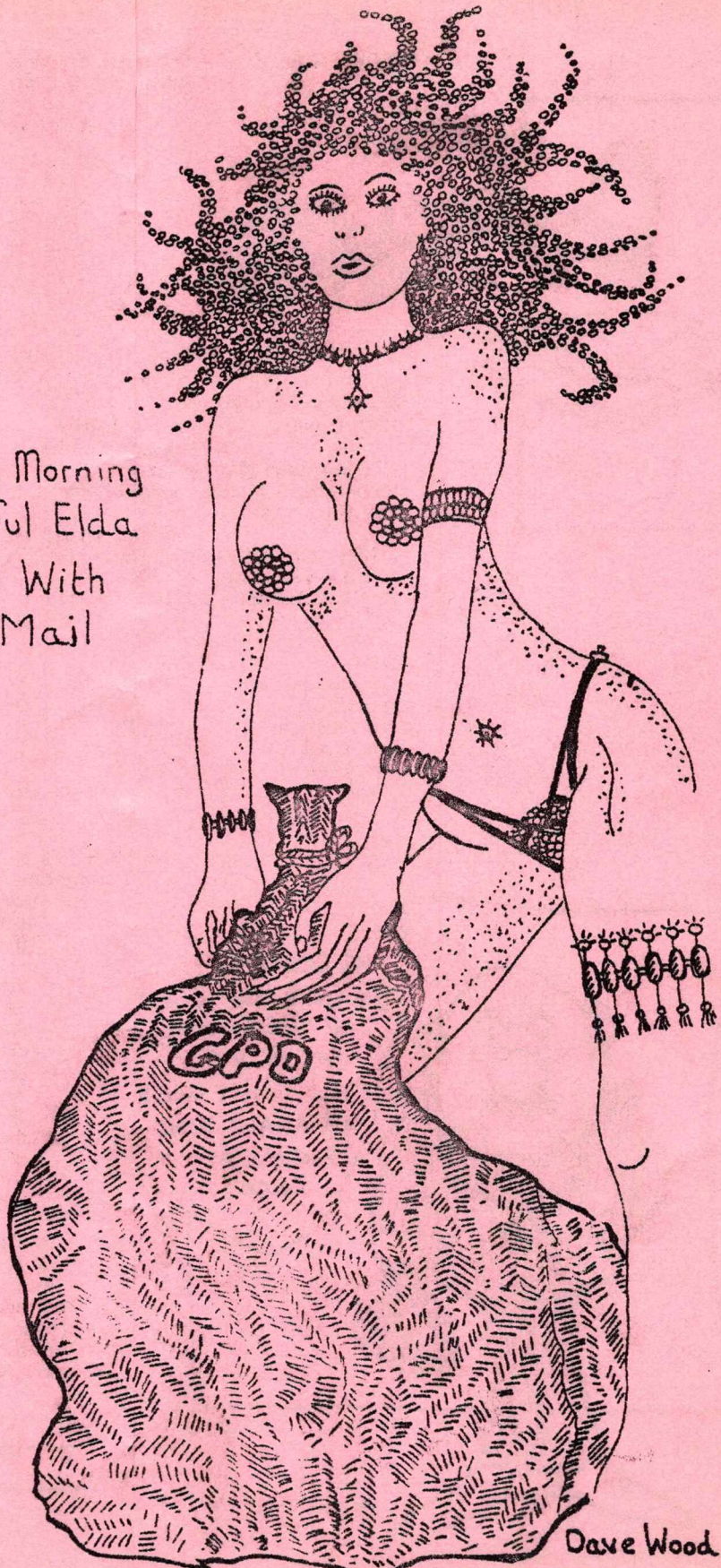


# SHOW-M

Every Morning  
Faithful Elda  
Deals With  
The Mail



Dave Wood



MICROWAVE 6 - The fanzine that wouldn't know an "open pretention to classicity" if it saw one - Vulgar Ostentation, though.....

August 1983 - one month late, sorry.



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Harry Bell	This page, 1, 3, 25, bacover,
Lee Hoffman	7, 29.
John Cook	11, 12, 13.
Terry Jeeves	16, 26.
ATom	All over the place. You can recognise his stuff now, can't you?

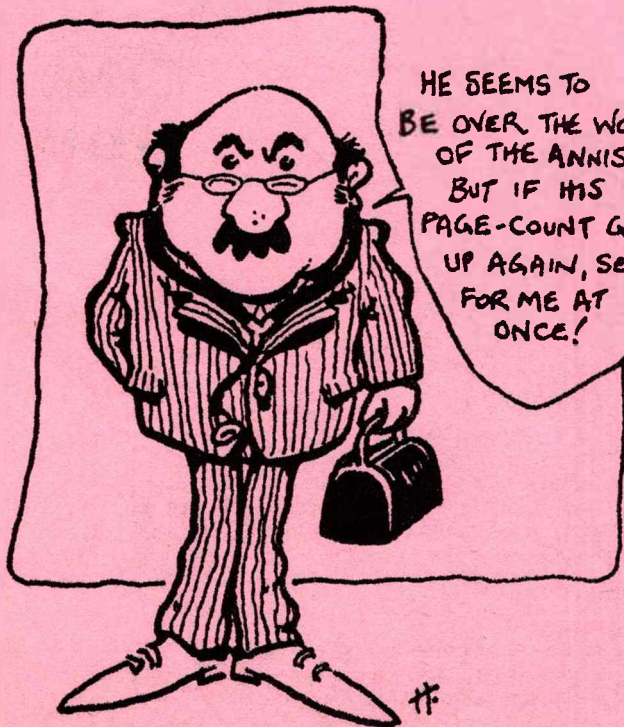
MICROWAVE is edited and published by Terry Hill, from the crumbling ruin sometimes known as Castle Microvore, but more often as 41 Western Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 8NE Great Britain.

If you want to natter, the number is (0622) 20234

Electro-stencils and duplicating by courtesy of Vinç Clarke, KTF's own inky-fingered cranky maestro (that should have been cranking...I think). Most MSS and letters proof-read by Margaret, but not all so there are errors (and no prizes for finding them). If you hit a bit that makes less sense than the rest of the nonsense, it's probably one of the bits that I put straight onto stencil without really planning what I was going to say, so don't blame Marg.

MICROWAVE is supposedly published quarterly (that's four times a year, not once every quarter-of-an-hour, you impatient swine) but every once in a while something will happen (like a heatwave when it was too hot to breathe, let alone type) and the schedule hiccups. Don't worry, it's still more regular than many.

I'VE HAD AMNESIA FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER



HE SEEMS TO  
BE OVER THE WORST  
OF THE ANNISH  
BUT IF HIS  
PAGE-COUNT GOES  
UP AGAIN, SEND  
FOR ME AT  
ONCE!



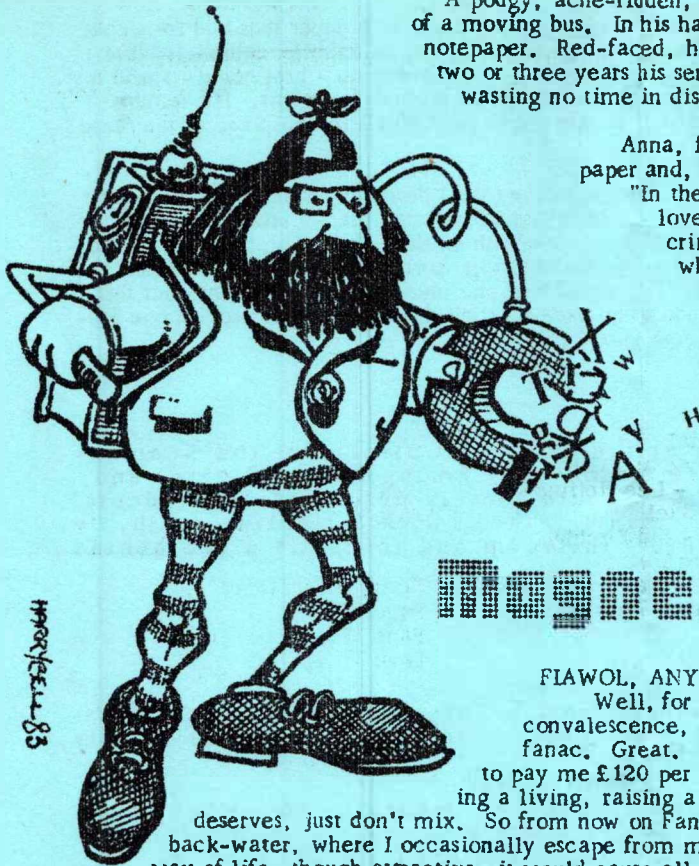
A podgy, acne-ridden, greasy-haired schoolboy struggles down the gangway of a moving bus. In his hand he clutches a grubby, crumpled piece of school notepaper. Red-faced, he thrusts it into the hands of a rather comely wench two or three years his senior, then hurriedly continues to the front of the bus, wasting no time in disembarking the minute it draws to a halt.

Anna, for that is the wench's name, has by now unfolded the paper and, in a hushed voice, reads it to her companion.

"In the immortal words of the song, 'Wild Thing, I think I love you'" As he steps from the bus, his ears, now crimson with embarrassment, capture her final comment, which is to remain forever engraved on his heart.  
"Pillock!"

Now, fifteen or so years later, that same schoolboy examines his memories of these events and finds that he must come to the same conclusion.

-----  
"We can thank our lucky stars that we're not as smart as we like to think we are."  
-----



## Magnetronics

### FIAWOL, ANYONE?

Well, for a while there, fandom was a way of life. Six weeks convalescence, and nearly every waking moment spent immersed in fanac. Great. I could do that full-time, no problem. If anyone to pay me £120 per week to do so, I will. Unfortunately, FIAWOL, earning a living, raising a small boy, and giving a loving wife the attention she deserves, just don't mix. So from now on Fandom Is Just A Goddamn Hobby, ok? As a quiet little back-water, where I occasionally escape from my mundane existence, it is harmless enough. As a way of life, though attractive, it would cause all sorts of problems.

Cost is another consideration. Cheap though duplicating is, it still needs some cash input, cash that I rarely have these days. I think I can Manage to print an issue of no more than 30 pages, four times a year (print, but not post - if you'll just pop round to pick up your copy in future. . . .) - but if the schedule starts getting irregular, then you'll know I got my sums wrong. A few quid stuffed into an envelope should get it back to normal. You very nearly didn't get the last issue because I'd spent all the available money on paper and ink. It came to you courtesy of Vinç and ATom, who put their hands in their pockets, unasked, and "angelled" over half the postage. They have my heart-felt thanks and, I hope, yours too. Why is life never as nice as fandom?

Thanks also to those of you who voted in the ANSIBLE poll, and caused MICROWAVE to appear so often in the ranks of the also-rans. Nice try, gang. What really hurts, though, is that if Vinç, ATom and Elda had bothered to vote (and, of course, could be relied upon to vote the 'right' way), it could have made the top three. Seems Kent TruFandom is not just a bunch of invalids - it's a bunch of apathetic invalids!

### ALL IN A DAY'S QUIRK

An idea from Margaret - no, I'm not taking up her suggestion that I publish only three times a year (at least, I hope i'm not) - not an original idea, but something she came across in one of the women's magazines. Quirks and strange compulsions - we all have them, and there's usually no logical reason for them. As an example, Marg tells me of a woman who 'colour-matched' her clothes-pegs with the items of washing she was hanging out, or another woman who always left a few beans in the bottom of the tin. . . . so they could 'escape'. Marg's quirk is that she must have her meat nearest her on the plate; mine is that my delivery notes should always be clipped to the board by the right-hand edge. We have others, but one apiece is enough to give you the idea. What strange compulsions or irrational quirks do you have? We want to know.

### AND THE GHODS SMILED UPON US - WELL, ONE OF THEM, ANYWAY

Some of you may know of the unsportsmanlike treatment of Kent TruFandom by the false-ghod with the buck-teeth; Roscoe. I mean, kidney-stones, two cases of thrombosis, heart trouble and a transplant op, all in less than six months, is pushing things a bit far, don't you think? We now know more about the insides of hospitals than they know about the insides of us! But the balance has been redressed. Almighty Ghu noticed this callous treatment of his faithful servants, cried "Foul!" and began to move in mysterious ways.

Some time back, I discovered that we'd missed the chance to buy an electro-scanner for a mere £75 by 24 hours, and Vinç suggested I keep my eyes open for a similar deal. Every week I borrowed a colleague's copy of Exchange and Mart and browsed through the duplicator section. Then I found it - "Roneotronic stencil scanner - £80". I rang Vinç and agreed to sink my last £40 into it as a joint purchase. We arranged to go and collect it the next day. Ghu was compensating for Roscoe's meanness. I got home that evening and scanned the local free newspaper, a habit



I'd got into from a desire to have an electric typewriter; having already 'spent' the last of my savings didn't stop me. Ghu wasn't happy that we should get a scanner cheap. No. There, in the pages of a paper that had for weeks carried nothing more exciting than portables similar to the one that I already had, was an unbelievable ad: "IBM Executive typewriter, 15-pitch type, proportional spacing - £40" Ghu was working overtime - how could I spend my £40 twice? I mentioned this surplus in the good luck department to Vin when he phoned that night. His remedy was simple - he now owns a scanner, and I own this typer. If I ever manage to get £40 all in one place at the same time again, then I'll buy my share of the scanner.

I wanted an electric typer because I was getting fed up with pounding (and I do mean 'pounding' - you can't adjust the pressure), away at the old one, using the more expensive 'extra-sensitive' stencils, to produce each ish. Now I've got this beauty, I find it hard to believe that I ever managed an annish on the old portable! I can't make up my mind about this smaller type though; which do you find more readable - proportional (all scrunched up like this) or normal (opened out like most of the rest of the zine)? I've toyed with the idea of double columns, but think it would look scruffy without justifying the text. I don't intend to go back to using the old machine, so, as one fan-ed once said, "You don't pay your money, you don't take your choice."

## CLASS EXTINCTION

(The Scene: A cramped, dingy classroom at the St. Jude College for the Accumulation of Completely Useless, Totally Trivial and Very Boring Facts, Figures and Information. There are a few characters who could loosely be described as 'students' in the room. In the corridor, a bell rings faintly, then, with a tinkling crash, is silent. A scruffy, deformed individual enters the room and takes his place behind the desk in front of a peeling blackboard.)

SIR: (lethargically) "Good Morning, Class."

ALL: (even more lethargically) "Mornin'.....Sir."

(The lecturer removes a tatty bundle of papers from a Tesco carrier bag, consults them, throws most of them into the waste bin, reads through the remainder briefly, then turns his attention back to the class.)

SIR: "Er, marking all your homework will clash with my AA meeting, so I want you all to give me your answers orally. Stop that, Madam Wheeler.... come and see me after class. Right, who's got the answer to question one?"

PRESFORD: (A pseudo-ethnic Druid who has for the past ten minutes been struggling to keep what appears to be a sheep under control in a large duffle bag.) "PLEASE SIR: There was a question before number one."

SIR: "What do you mean, lad, what sort of an idiot sets questions before the questions start?"

PRESFORD: "You do, Sir. You asked us to tell you where the title of the quiz came from. It came from the B-side of "Mighty Quinn" by Manfred Mann and can I be excused the rest of this, Sir, I don't feel well?"

SIR: "Very well, sonny, but take your friend with you."

(Presford struggles towards the classroom door, catches his sickle in his robe, drops the duffle bag, grabs the sheep as it breaks free of the bag, and is dragged from the room, showering the rest of the class in Welsh, bleats and mistletoe.)

SIR: "As I was saying, who's going to be first?"

(Three hands rise from the scant half-dozen remaining; the lecturer indicates each in turn.)

WALLACE: (Token Scot, currently sober.) "Eagles? Chicago? Blood, Sweat & Tears?"

TAYLOR: (Token intellectual, currently on day-release from Manx Pawnbrokers.) "I'd guess at Temptations, "Ball of Confusion" or Buffalo Springfield "For What It's Worth"."

CONNOR: (Token Sailor, currently on parole.) "Only thing that springs to mind is Paper Lace, "Billy Don't Be a Hero" - reborn as Bucks Fizz?"

SIR: "What a brave bunch of wrong answers, and how did you manage to bring Bucks Fizz into this, Connor? The right answer was, of course, The Beach Boys, "Student Demonstration Time", the B-side of "Don't Go Near The Water". Who's got anything for number two?"

WALLACE: "Easy," Momma Told Me Not To Come". Funny, but she never explained how you stop it! Three Dog Night."

CONNOR AND TAYLOR: (Together) "'S'right, Easy, No sweat, Cinch." (etc.)

SIR: "Right! Two points each. How about number three? Someone else...have you got anything, Hibbert?"

HIBBERT: (Token ecologically-concerned feminist, currently eating live plants.) "Er, oh, three was easy too - Mott the Hoople, "All The Young Dudes"."

CONNOR, WALLACE AND TAYLOR: (Together.) "'S'right, Easy, No sweat, Cinch." (etc.)

SIR: "Hmmm, but what about number four, eh?"

TAYLOR: "Huh?"

WALLACE: "Harder. "Good Grief Christina". It wasn't Mud, but it was somebody that sounded like them."

CONNOR: "Only Maidstone bands I know of are/were Mae West, and The Pop Rivets."

HIBBERT: "zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz"

SIR: That's one point for Wallace, none for the rest of you. The group were Chicory Tip. Five, anyone?"

WALLACE, TAYLOR AND CONNOR: (In chorus) "'Canyons of your Mind", the flipside of "Urban Spaceman" by the Bonzo Dog Band. Easy, No sweat, Cinch." (etc.)

SIR: "Three each. Six wasn't so easy though, was it, Connor?"

CONNOR: "No Sir. Only thing I remember about Townshend was he promoted some 11 or 12-year-old girl, and never got arrested!"

(Lecturer looks quizzically at the others.)

WALLACE: "Haven't a clue, inspector."

TAYLOR: "Had to think about this one. Dunno the title, but it must be the B-side of "Something In The Air", by Thunderclap Newman."

WHITE: (Token Yank, currently trying to grow hair or grass (in different places)) "The pianist was not "actually a policeman". He worked for the Post Office."

SIR: "Smartass. Half point to White, two to Taylor and the rest of you dip out again. The title was "Wilhelmina". Any luck with seven, Taylor?"

TAYLOR: "The label is Dandelion, and the only artists I can recall are Joan Armatrading and Clifford T. Ward. Quintessence?"

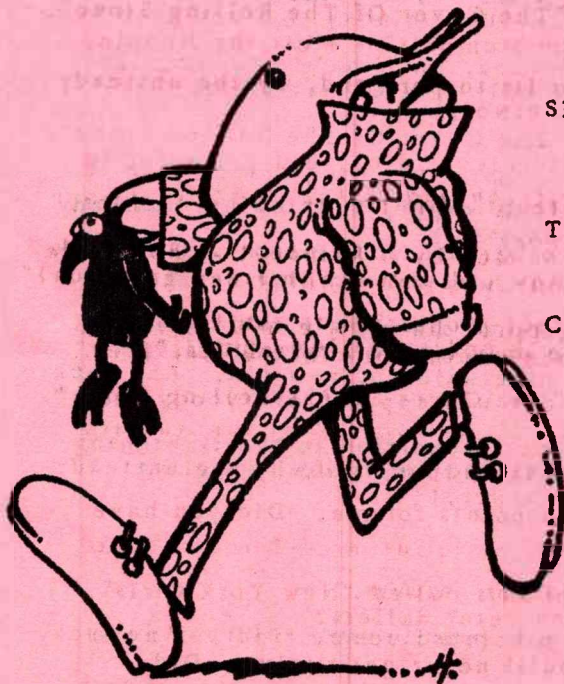
CONNOR: "I know, Medicine Head - "Pictures In The Sky" - Dandelion label."

SIR: "Three for Connor, one for Taylor. The rest of you could try not to snore so loudly. Wake up, Hibbert! What have you got for number eight?"

HIBBERT: "Uh, this is a guess - the artist performing is John Lennon, and the artist referred to is Paul McCartney."

SIR: "One point. Can you do better, Taylor? No? Wallace, then."

WALLACE: "Group must be the Beatles, the





person referred to must be Paul McCartney, and it's probably Ringo Starr, and if all that's right, then the A-side must be "Back Off Boogaloo".

SIR: "Three points. Can you get the other two, Connor?"

CONNOR: "I agree with Wallace, Sir. Except the title is "Early 1970"."

SIR: "That gives you four. The one that you and Wallace dropped was the A-side - it was "It Don't Come Easy". Now, you all got the group right for number nine, didn't you? Did anyone get the title?"

TAYLOR AND CONNOR: (In chorus) "All The Way From Memphis" - Mott the Hoople. Easy, No sweat, Cinch." (etc.)

SIR: "Okay, what about number ten?"

HIBBERT: "The song's by the Wombles. When you said clever dick, did you refer to Mike Batt or an individual Womble, which would be Tobermory, at a guess."

SIR: "I meant Mike Batt. Did anyone get the title?"

(murmurs of "Remember You're A Womble", glazed looks and shaking heads all round)

SIR: "'Banana Rock". Another point for me. How did you do with eleven, Wallace?"

WALLACE: "1975 was a bad year for singles. Everybody was copying everybody else."

SIR: "Cop out! Taylor?"

TAYLOR: "The Milligan man, I presume."

SIR: "WRONG."

HIBBERT: "I know that Steeleye Span did a version of this called "New York Girls", which had funny background noises. Was the Goon Peter Sellers?"

SIR: "Well done, you can go back to sleep now. You'll never get twelve. Did anyone?"

CONNOR: "It has an Alice Cooper/Frank Zappa ring to it - but I'm thinking A-sides."

SIR: "Gotcha, lots of points for me. It was "Vote For Me" by A Raincoat - the B-side of "I Love You For Your Mind Not Your Body". How did unlucky thirteen grab you?"

TAYLOR: "The clues would seem to indicate Dr. Feelgood, but I ha'e m'doots. In which case, "Milk And Alcohol", because it's the only single I remember."

WALLACE AND CONNOR: (In chorus) "Dr. Hook and "The Cover Of The Rolling Stone". Easy, No sweat, Cinch." (etc.)

(a hung-over-looking character rouses itself from its torpor, and, by the unsteady wvering of a limb, indicates that it too, has an answer.)

SIR: "Yes, Skelton?"

SKELTON: "'The Millionaire" from Dr. Hook's "Bankrupt" album."

SIR: "I didn't ask for the album title, Skelton, but otherwise you're right. Any luck with fourteen?"

(Skelton's grip on reality seems to slacken in direct proportion to the tightening of his grip on his bottle. He slumps below the desk and emits low, gurgling noises.)

WALLACE: "'76 was almost as bad as '75."

CONNOR: "No idea."

SIR: "Judy Sill and "Jesus Was A Cross-maker", more points for me. Did you have better luck with fifteen, Connor?"

CONNOR: "There have been several 'manufactured' female bands:- Fanny, Bertha..... so I'm at a loss."

WALLACE: "Little Ladies, made up for Rock Follies and Julie Covington is the Mega-star spawned by the media hype. I've no idea what the song was called."

TAYLOR: "The Little Ladies, for the Rock Follies tv show. I'd guess "Talking Pictures". Depends what you mean by "made it". Julie Covington turned down Evita and became a superb actress. Charlotte Cornwell is a principal player with the Royal Shakespeare Company, while Rula Lenska has recently got the biggest part of all. That's a Roddy McDowell joke."

SIR: "The answer I was looking for, wise-guy, was Julie Covington. Let's finish in grand style - you're all going to give me the right answer to the last question, aren't you?"

CONNOR: "Have you any idea how many "Best of.....Volume ones there were in '66? I could name several."

SKELTON: "Schempty.....Scheme. Hic!"

WALLACE: "'66 wasn't too hot either."

HIBBERT: "zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz"

WHITE: "Hey, Man, I can feel my hair growin'. Or is that the grass?"

TAYLOR: "Woodstock lives. The Lovin' Spoonful and "Jug Band Music"."

SIR: (Sighing) "Okay, so some of you know some of it, and some of you know nowt. I can't waste time totting up the marks - I gotta rush and hand in my resignation. Class dismissed! Mind you don't fall over him (indicating Skelton) on the way out."

(The class members variously dash, crawl, slither or drift towards the door. The curtain descends as a sheep, pursued by an angry-looking Druid, bursts back into the room scattering the pupils in all directions.)

FIN.

(The editor would like to point out that any similarity between the characters portrayed above and any person, living, dead or a member of the BSFA, is probably a fluke of such mind-numbing magnitude that there is little point in pondering upon it.)

#### BRIEF NOTES

I'm still looking for back issues; in view of the response, or rather the lack of it, to my last plea, perhaps I ought to be more specific - I need a copy of MICROWAVE TWO. This will enable me to complete a file of back issues which I will loan to new readers on request. Surely one of you is altruistic enough to part with it?

In the file for the next ish (and perhaps the one after that - space is limited), there is material from: Jon Wallace, Terry Jeeves, Bob Shaw (the real one), Art Thomson and Niall McA Robertson. Plus, of course, stuff from as many of the regular columnists as can remember where to send it.

Many thanks to Chuck Connor for brightening up an otherwise dull weekend, and to all of the Beccon crowd for doing much the same but on a larger scale. Marg, Vin, Elda and myself finally managed to tear ourselves away from the latter at 3 a.m.: Unfortunately, Elda failed to find the young man that showed her the anatomical drawings, but otherwise enjoyed her first con very much.

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# Hush Puppies and Corn Pone

and

## GRITS



Over the years I have added enough of the English English language to my vocabulary to make my way through various Penguin books, Georgette Heyer novels, and BBC documentaries on Public Television, but I have never really adjusted to the difference between British and U.S. usage of the word "corn". It always gives me a start when I read of PreDynastic Egyptians growing "corn" on the banks of the Nile, or some such.

Here in the U.S. corn is, of course, that stuff the Native Americans invented that is popularly known elsewhere as "maize". Personally, I'm glad we call it corn over here. I could live with the idea of maize oil or maize-on-the-cob, but I don't think I could cope with popmaize or maize pone.

Corn/maize has always been a popular crop in the Southern U.S., a staple food in many forms. Like grits. (Actually few people other than real Southern Crackers do like grits.) Grits is ground corn which is generally boiled into a kind of hot slush. Ill-boiled, the way it frequently is in restaurants catering to the tourist trade, it is a slimy mess. Yankees who try this generally decide anyone who would willingly eat it is weird. But properly prepared and drenched in red-eye gravy (from fried smoked ham) it is a joy to the true Cracker gourmet. (There are some Yankees who put milk and sugar on grits and eat it as a breakfast food, but they're weird.)

Along with a plate of fried smoked ham, grits and gravy, one needs a mess of greens and some bread. Corn bread maybe, or corn pone. The essential difference between the two is that corn bread contains egg and milk, a little oil and a dash of salt along with the corn meal (and nowadays probably some white wheat flour and, if it's readymade, store-bought, assorted preservatives) while corn pone is made from corn meal and water with a little baking soda and a dash of salt. The English settlers who got their basic corn recipes from the Native Americans are said to have called these "ashcakes." They differ from "hoe cakes" in having that bit of baking soda in them, and in being baked. Hoe cakes properly are nothing but corn meal and water with a dash of salt, cooked on a griddle, or a shovel/hoe if you want to be really authentic.

Hush puppies are considerably more exciting. They contain corn meal, a little wheat flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, milk, eggs and some chopped onion. They're deep fried in the hot oil one just finished frying up a mess of fish in. (Catfish or mullet are particularly appropriate.)



Most "Old South" cookbooks will tell you hush puppies got their name in slavery days when cooks would make balls of dough from the leftover fish batter and fry them up for the yowling hounds that had been driven frantic by the enticing aroma of all that fish frying. I don't believe a word of it. In some now forgotten but undoubtedly reliable source I have read that among native African dishes there is a kind of fried dough made of meal which is called "cush". It seems likely to me that "hush puppy" is simply a Caucasian corruption of some perfectly good African name for a perfectly good African recipe adapted to the materials available down on the old plantation. Any slave who whipped up a batch of hush puppies after frying ol' massa a mess of fish would be a fool to waste them on a pack of yowling hounds when she could eat them herself.

The appropriate greens to go with all that ham and grits, or fish and hush puppies, would be mustard, collards or turnip greens. Frankly I have never considered any of these edible, but they're traditional. Properly, the greens are boiled with a piece of fat meat from a dead hog until they're limp, and enlivened at the table with a generous sprinkling of vinegar in which hot peppers have been embalmed.

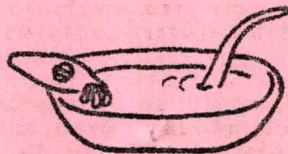
For a sweet dessert to top all this off, one must save some of that corn bread or pone to sop syrup with. Oddly, the preference here is not corn syrup. The true Cracker gourmet prefers cane syrup. At least I do, and I'm half Cracker on my mother's side. (As cook in the family, she gets the blame for teaching me these gustatory perversions.) Cane syrup is nothing like the artificially-flavored sugar syrup generally available in supermarkets. Proper cane syrup is similar in flavor to molasses but somewhat sweeter and not nearly as strong. Nowadays, it's only packed by a few companies and is sold at ridiculous prices, but when I was a kid it could be had cheap from roadside vendors all through backwoods Georgia.

Along with his cornfield, the old time Cracker usually had a cane patch. He might even have his own cane press. This device was powered by a mule ambling in a slow circle turning one end of a long pole, the other end of which turned the press. The juice was boiled down in a cauldron over a fatwood fire (you can't hardly get fatwood no more either.) Then the syrup was packed in discarded whiskey bottles from which the labels had been removed, but into the glass of which was moulded the firm order that the bottles must not be reused. In deference to tradition, contemporary bottlers of cane syrup usually use bottles moulded in the same shape as the most common of those whiskey bottles (but with the admonition omitted.)

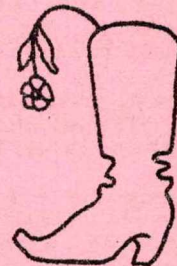
The true Cracker puts a lot of faith in grits and greens. My mother cooks them regularly in the certainty that they give one strength. Maybe so, but a steady diet of corn-dominated Cracker cuisine is sadly deficient in certain of the B vitamins and other nutrients. A century ago, Northern gentility playing tourist in the Deep South considered white Crackers to be as much a different race from themselves as they considered the blacks to be. In time, it was discovered that the large part of the South's White Trash and Poor Black population was merely suffering from chronic pellagra and hookworm anemia. With the introduction of the balanced diet, indoor plumbing and the frequent wearing of shoes, Crackers turned out to be humans who differed from their Northern neighbours in little other than language.

With the introduction of radio, talking pictures and TV, it was postulated that the language differences would soon disappear and that all of the U.S. would come to speak one standard dialect. So far, this hasn't happened. But with the spread of Black Liberation in this country, many of the culinary contrivances that sustained the South's poverty-stricken, White and Black, for a century and more have achieved a certain national currency and dignity under the name "SoulFood".

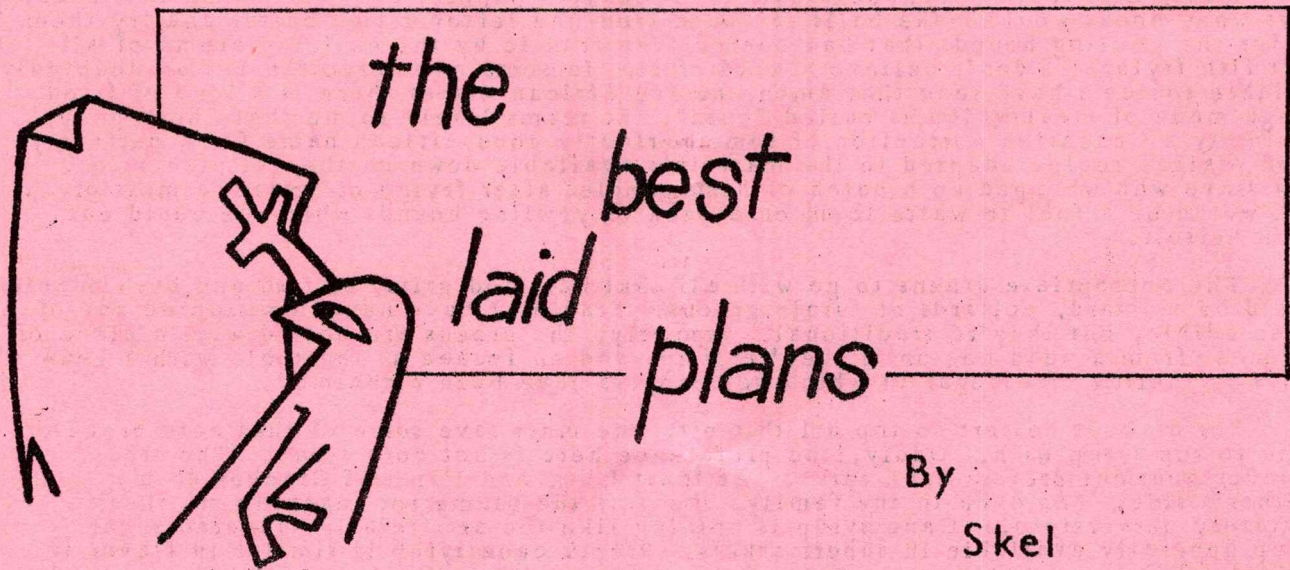
Hog jowls, anyone?



LIZARD SOUP







Sometimes there is an awesome inevitability about the workings of Fate. The workings of Terry, too, for that matter. More implacable even than the Rull, Terry refuses to take even 'yes', a single 'yes' that is, for an answer. Ruthlessly he ignores the pitiful pleas of potential contributors as they grovel and beg to be left alone. Yes, Fate and Terry, separately, are as unstoppable as an avalanche. Separately they are hell-on-wheels, but when they get together, oh boy, you've got no fucking chance at all. Let me quote from Terry's letter:-

"I was chatting with Rob Hansen at the Tun a couple of months back, and asked if he had a spare back issue of STARFAN. He said that he was down to his last half-dozen copies, so there were none spare. He explained that he always keeps six copies of everything he does in case 'They' get wind of his activities. 'They got Skel you know'. So, Skel, could you please tell me the tale of what transpired that fateful night. The sooner the better...."

"Why the hell can't he just settle for publishing a personalzine, like every buggler else?" I asked rhetorically, but it was no use - the hook was firmly set. "You know something," I told Cas, "I think he's right. I think there's an article in there somewhere."

"So write it." she replied. Sometimes Cas's involvement in my fanac completely underwhelms me.

Well, I thought I'd give it a try. I'd had the guilts over the first piece I sent Terry. Not that it was bad (or\*sniff\* that the words didn't follow each other) or anything quite like that. If I hadn't liked it I wouldn't have sent it, but it could have been better. OK, it started out, in the writing, as a letter and finished up as an article. Fair enough, but at the finish it was an article and as such I should have gone over it again and filled in some of the cracks (guess who is typing this up in between re-decorating his living room). I'm sure I could have improved it, particularly the earlier bits where it was still written as a letter. So, I felt that I'd let you and Terry down a bit, and, possibly more important (a thin, ghostly voice intones from offstage, "First of all, to thine own self be true.") I had let me down a lot. Well, regarding me, that was just tough shits, my own fault and all that, but you and Terry deserved better. Hopefully the article he was requesting would make up for it. At least I would feel absolved.

Anyway, this time I vowed that I would do better by us all. This time I prepared a thorough plan of the article-to-be, on paper. Even the plan went through a second draft and eventually filled a page. I researched and documented my sources.

"If properly planned," I told myself, feeling very professional, "the article will virtually write itself." I felt quite smug (what a word that is, 'smug' - nearly 'smog' and nearly 'slug' - smug, smug, smug. How odd, unreal and artificial it sounds, almost like a trade-name for some detergent - one doubtless guaranteed to wash the



smog of slugs. "Get SMUG!" But, I appear to be digressing.....).

I had trouble getting started. "Not to worry." I consoled myself. "Just start. The important thing is to get going. Once the juices start to flow, once you get into your stride, the article will virtually write itself. You can always go back and re-write the beginning later." This thing about the article virtually writing itself, because I had a proper plan (rather than just having the usual rough ideas in my head) had become an article(?) of faith with me. Also, you'll notice, I was talking to myself a lot. Trying to convince myself, perhaps.

So, I slogged through the opening, and the juices remained clogged. Eventually I was lured away from the article by the prospect of something far more exciting, though whether it was to help Cas wash the dishes or to go for a crap, I can't remember. The next evening I sat in front of the typewriter for nearly an hour and couldn't type a thing. I gave up.

"There's an article there somewhere," I said to Cas, "But obviously it isn't one that I want to write."

"So don't write it," she replied, her attention firmly fixed upon Yosser Hughes as she watched a repeat of 'The Boys From The Black Stuff'. Sometimes.....

The following day I returned from work and triumphantly announced that I'd solved the problem - I could write the article after all.

"So write it," she replied, as Ronnie Barker fell down the trapdoor in 'Open All Hours'.

This time however, this was not enough. I needed to explain. "Love is the plan - the plan is death," I explained. She laughed - Ronnie Barker was just returning from the hospital where he'd had his broken leg set in plaster.

"Harlan Ellison was right," I continued. She looked up at this. She feels a close kinship with Harlan, having seen him on a 'Woman's Hour' programme. "It was the plan. The plan was killing the article." I took a deep breath and delivered my final, shattering conclusion. "It was the wrong plan."

"Yes dear," she said, checking the programme schedules now that the credits were rolling past Ronnie Barker's shop-front. With these encouraging words I sped to the typewriter and, without stopping to draw up a plan, started straight into typing.

The sodding thing virtually wrote itself.

Seven pages in one day. I was chuffed-to-little-butties with myself. Mind you, seven pages was a lot more than I'd anticipated. It seemed to take ages to actually arrive at Terry's suggested topic. I remarked upon this to Cas on one of my frequent trips from the dining room (where I was typing) via the lounge (where the TV is situated) to the kitchen fridge (where the beer is kept) or to the toilet (where the beer.... but what the hell, I figure you know what toilets are for).

"Every article," I told her, "has its own ideal length and pace." I was quite pleased with this insight. In the past I have dragged more than one article kicking and screaming towards a premature conclusion when I've become exasperated with its apparent sauntering.

There was however a fly on the horizon, dark clouds in the ointment, etc. Seven pages was the problem. It's all very well, seven pages is, when you're first writing it, when you're creating, when it's fun, but when you're on the second or third draft, when it's work, seven pages is an awful lot. Thank god I'm not D. West! However, when I actually went through it I realised that only about an eighth needed to be substantially changed. The rest could be taken care of in a few minutes with a biro and a bottle of liquid paper.

For the bits that needed re-doing I operated like a low-tech word-processor. I simply took a pair of scissors to the article (is this what an editor means by "making cuts"?) and chopped out the offending sections. ("Then," sneered the purists, "doubtless he took his trusty axe out into the garden and snipped down a tree." Well, sod them!) I quickly sellotaped in the re-written segments and.....voila.... a second draft of a seven-page article in but one evening.

Who needs word-processors?

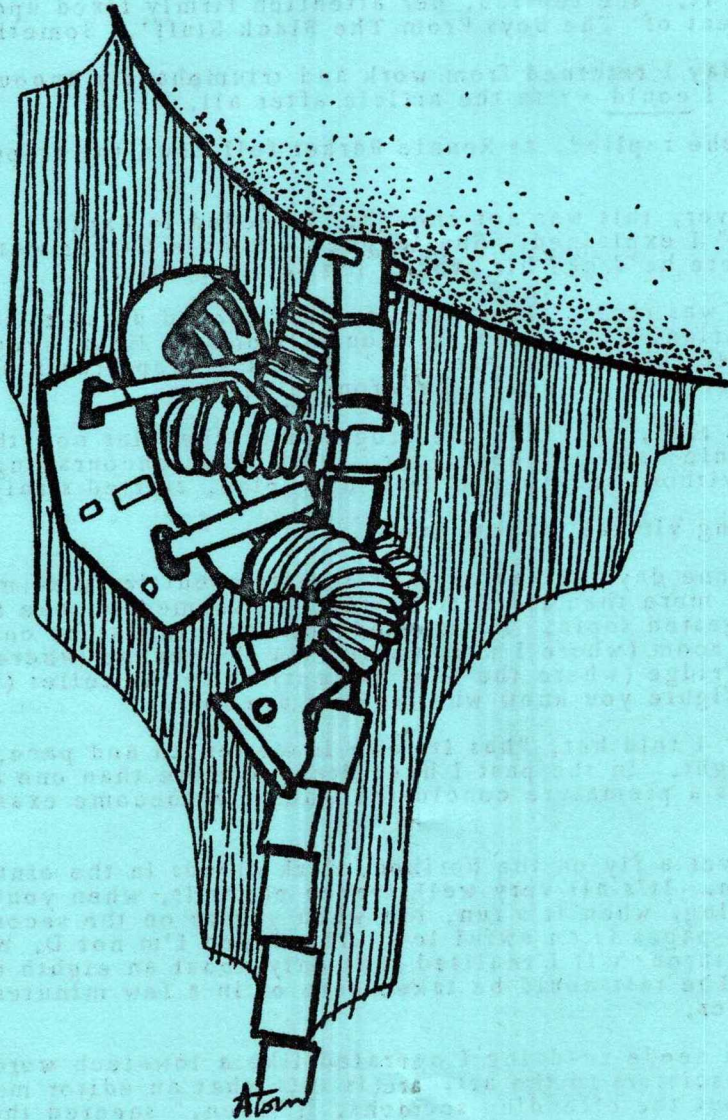


One side effect though - the original article was typed upon my last seven sheets of pastel-pink typing paper. For the amendments I used a rather fetching pale green. I now have, in my files, an article typed, apparently, on pink and green striped paper.

o-o-o

Hmmm, an article about not doing an article that Terry requested, followed by the article that Terry requested, followed in turn by an article about doing the article that Terry requested. "It's a triptych." I told Cas. "It's a triptych for MICROWAVE."

"Don't be silly," she replied. "Whoever heard of a fanzine on three legs?"





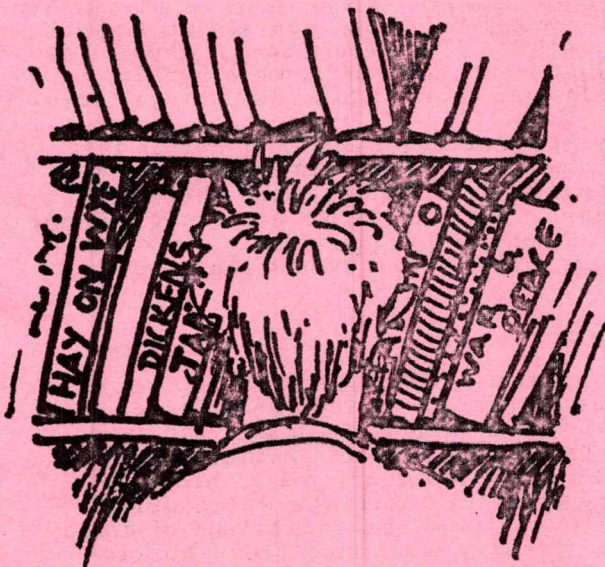
# Something & Nothing

SID BIRCHBY

**HALDANE'S LAW** It was good to read the response to this column, even though Marc Ortlieb thinks there should be a law against wasting the makings of a long article in a short outline. Personally, I'm a haiku-man, and I believe in pruning the leaves in order to improve the blossom. Journalists do this as part of their training, and my grandfather was in the printing trade. As Walter Willis once wrote in a similar context, I've reverted to type. Consider this item from 'The Australian', written by Chris Dawson and quoted in 'Flight' -- not a superfluous word!

"A long-haul airliner was able to cancel an emergency diversion to the nearest airfield when the source of a worrying vibration was identified as a jogger doing an hour's running on the spot in one of the lavatories."

Oh yes, Haldane's Law: "The Universe is not only queerer than we imagine, but queerer than we can imagine." -- and that certainly goes for our small part of it, eh?



**HAY FOR BOOKS** The World's largest second-hand book centre is the little market-town of Hay-on-Wye, in a remote part of the Welsh Border. There are few buses and no trains. When the railhead was closed by Beeching, Hay faced economic ruin, and the streets became full of empty shops. Kilvert, who had lived nearby in Victorian times, would never have recognised it as the bustling town he described in his diaries. Today, it has come to life again, thanks to an enterprising Yorkshireman, Richard Booth, who has turned it towards a new industry which attracts visitors from all over the world. Shops, fire stations, telephone exchanges -- all were filled with books, and most of were genuine second-hand ones, rather than the tedious publishers' remainders which are now so common.

Last year I finally located the back issues of 'Analog' after about seven years -- there are more than 12 miles of bookshelves and it took a little time, you understand -- and I've been thinking what a pity there isn't a Hay

bookshop specialising in SF and Fantasy. Nowadays, there are several bookshops outside Mr. Booth's group -- indeed, he encourages them -- and it would make life much easier for us. If there's anywhere to find the April 1943 AsF, Hay is the place. Also the Bheer is Rheal. (Rhydne's)

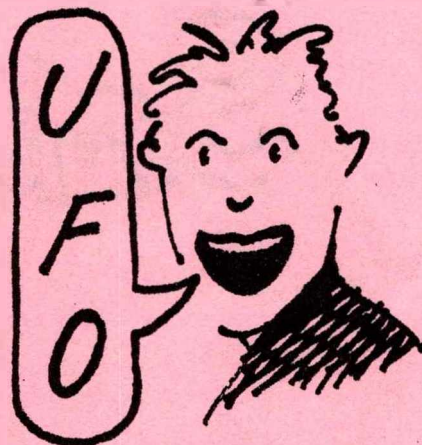


GOOD OLD UFO'S Jim Kendal was one of my engineers. He once told me that he had seen a cigar-shaped object in Cumbria which was definitely a UFO, and I agreed for the sake of peace and because I enjoy the occasional cigar. Thereafter, he often greeted me with a merry cry of 'UFO!', which I thought very comradely until he let slip that it might be interpreted as 'You Eff Off!'. He retired shortly afterwards.

I thought about this last week when watching yet another TV showing of the typical SF convention film, 'The Day the Earth Stood Still'. Come on, everyone, let's hear it for Klaatu, not forgetting Gort the Robot. But suddenly, I took a new look at what it says. Here's this man from a flying saucer telling us to stop the space-programme or else, because we are too aggressive and his Federation has renounced war. Fine, but how?

The Federation has not risen above war, but invented super-police robots which kill aggressors (at some point, I think Klaatu actually likens them to police). This is all very well in fiction, but in 1983, in Manchester, the Chief Constable, Mr. Anderton, created uproar when he decided to arm policemen for an exercise against a particular band of criminals. There were cries of 'Police state!' and so on, although the police in many countries would have done so as a matter of course.

In our present climate of opinion, Klaatu's Federation does seem to be run on the principle of oppression. Its members are no better than we are, and just have better police methods. Better for whom? Not us, not them. Just better for the status-quo. If Klaatu landed today, we'd probably call him a fascist.



FLEA MARKETS FROM MARS? It's nice to find so many flea-markets nowadays. Originally, there was only the one, in Paris, where the goods were displayed on the ground in tasteful patterns. The French never throw anything away. When it can't be used any longer, they sell it as an art-form, and what you bought was not so much an article as a slice of collage. One of the best I ever saw consisted of half a rocking horse with a frieze of rusty saucepans. Nobody was buying, but such admiration!

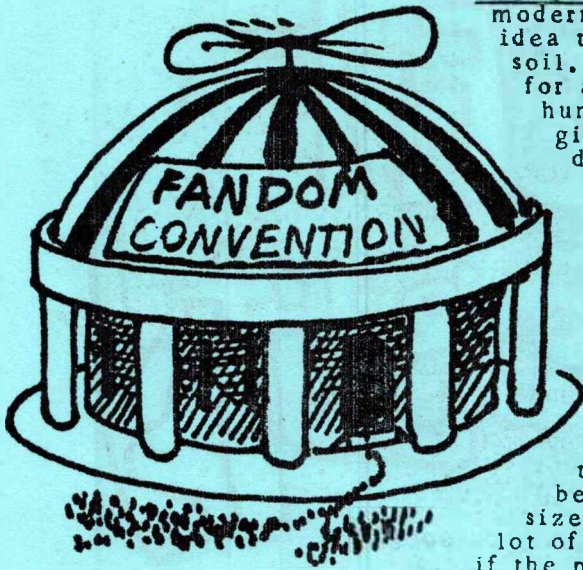
In British flea-markets, everything is on offer in its own right, on the theory that even the most unlikely objects are collector's items to some people, though perhaps not half-rocking-horses. For example, I have a friend who collects celery glasses and had 34 at the last count, although she doesn't like celery very much. For myself, I collect neck-ties and do like celery, but she refuses to swap.

Apart from collectors, flea-markets cater for desperate handymen looking for round-pin electrical plugs or cobblers' tools, and for similar practical-minded folk, but no matter who, there are some items now appearing which seem to be of no earthly use. What about a hair-brush set with fish-hooks, a crash-helmet containing an air-lock, or three matching shoes labelled 'As seen on TV'? For Pete's sake, whose TV? Mind you, this is what the objects look like to me. They may be something else where they were made, but can you imagine a baby-carriage with a row of toys including a floppy red plastic octopus? Not my baby.

Flea-market traders will buy anything that looks saleable, even if it comes in a crate marked Interstellar Nidging Pty. Think of the spooky-food craze for tins of chocolate-coated termites, etc. Said to be Japanese, of course, though there are no termites in Japan. Maybe they have all been tinned, but I think we are being dumped on by Galactic flea-marketeers. What's more, someone is buying all these six-fingered gloves and wrinkled Norah-Batty leg-warmers fit only to cover a tentacle. I'm worried.

BLOOD DONORS The flier in MWS for the Blood Transfusion Service is in a very worthy cause. Did you ever see the cartoon about a hospital patient being told, 'Sorry, your blood group has been discontinued!?' More than a grain of truth there -- without the BTS, a lot of people would die. There is a type of synthetic blood available, but it has many drawbacks, as might be expected. After all, blood is not called life-blood for nothing, and it is a very complex substance which defies duplication. Maybe some day it will be possible to sprinkle the equivalent of dried yeast into sugar solution and let Nature do the rest, but meanwhile, blood donors are essential. It's the easiest way for anyone to save a life. As Terry will confirm, there are harder ways.





EAT YOUR WAY THRU FANDOM My casual remark that modern conventions are too big and that it might be an idea to hold one by invitation only has fallen on fallow soil. Ethel Lindsay writes that 'It certainly makes for a friendlier convention when numbers are in the hundreds instead of the hundreds.\*' Er, yes. I can give a definite maybe on that. Next, Bolton fandom comes in with Lawrence Dean wondering how to draw the line on invitations, and Tom Taylor supplying the answer in a light-hearted solution to the population-problem. I hope it's light-hearted -- he says we should eat babies.

Eating people is wrong, though there are a few I wouldn't mind nibbling, and we really need the fannish equivalent of Van Vogt's Games Machine to decide who should attend the convention and who should not. (I can't bring myself to write 'Elimination Contest' but that's what it amounts to.) Think of the questions we should vote on: 'Which fan would you most like to see exposed on a rock?' Or, 'Which fan has the best taste?' That would be a hard one, unless bite-sized samples could be provided, but I reckon that a lot of fans would be ready to take the chance, especially if the prospect of maximising the gene pool (in Tom's phrase) means what I think it does.

\*My fault, Sid. It should, of course, have read; "...in the hundreds instead of the thousands." It was at the bottom of the page, and probably the last stencil I typed that night, so I plead fatigue. Apologies to you too, Ethel. You can't hardly get infallible fan-eds no more these days.✽

#### ERRATA

I've just received a letter from Ron Bennett, pointing out that Sid made a mistake in his column in MICRO-WAVE 4. I couldn't check Sid's work (I wasn't around at the time in question, you understand) and had no reason to think it necessary. Still, to set the record straight, I'll let Ron tell the story;

"There I was, minding my own business. Literally. Looking after my little market stall in the Leeds Merrion Centre I was, helping the queue of customers waiting to buy my last 3,000 copies of Alpha Flight to form without too much disorder when the ceiling fell in and I found myself lying on the ground, looking up at the sweet little old lady who had just tested the tensile strength of her umbrella by bending it over my head.

"Disgraceful," I could just make her out as saying. "Disgraceful, using the name of a genzine to sell science fiction." The crowd gathered around were shrieking "Fakefan" and "Vile Huckster" and waved rolled-up papers in my face. They chased me down The Headrow where I managed to escape from their fury by dodging into the Odeon complex (I nipped smartly into screen 114 whilst they got snagged with Rocky 42 on screen 97...or was it Rocky 97 on screen 42?).

When I emerged into what was at that time passing for the Yorkshire sunshine - rain - I picked up one of the rolled papers that the bloodthirsty mob had dropped.

It was MICROWAVE 4.

And I can understand their wrath.

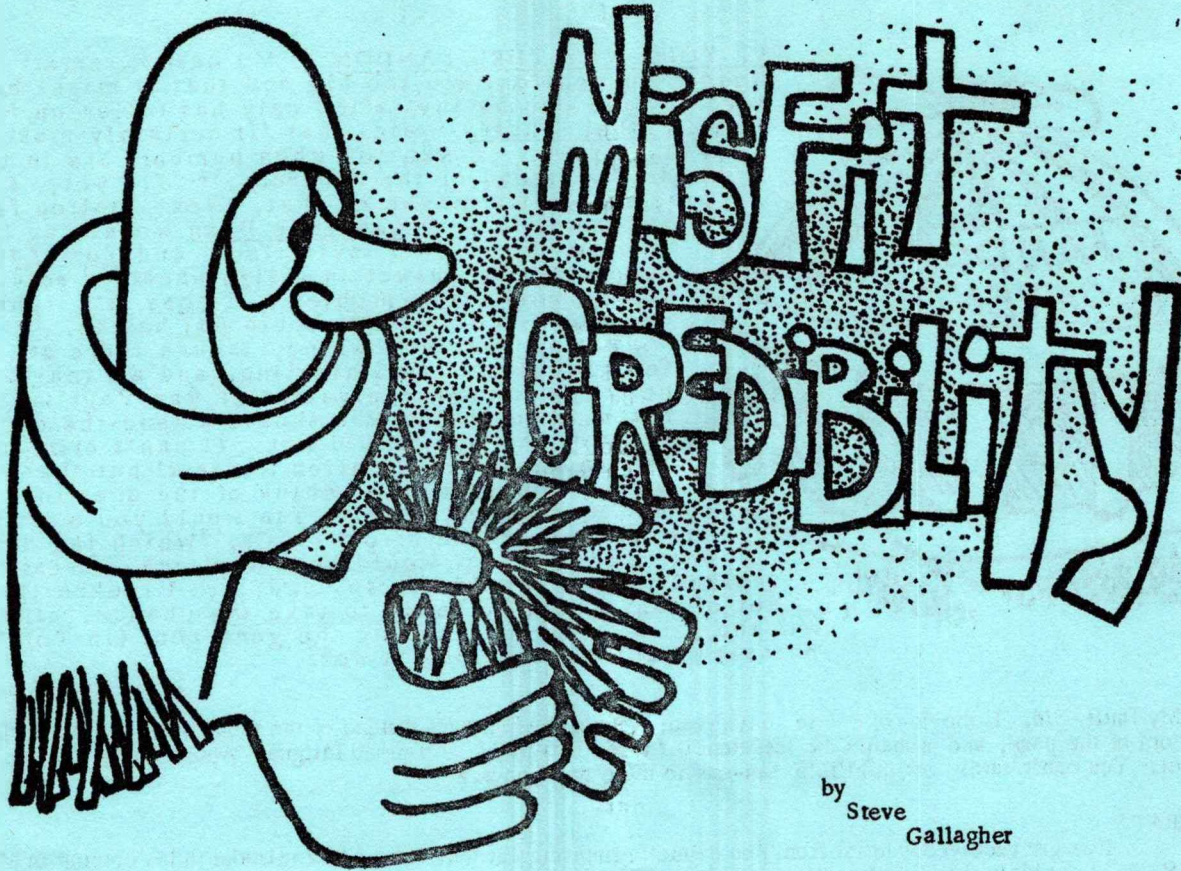
"Long ago," writes Sid Birchby, "I was conned by Ron Bennett into writing a column for his fanzine 'Skyrack'....."

Let me put the record right. Sid Birchby never wrote a column for SKYRACK. Either under his own name or as his alter ego, Phoenix.

Nor did anyone else. SKYRACK was entirely a newszine (Sid wrote his column, and it was just as excellent then as now, for PLOY. You've heard of PLOY....you know how MAD magazine advertises itself as being "Number One in a field of one"? PLOY was number two in a field of one.) but Sid is quite correct about the name deriving from Anglo-Saxon (it means Shire Oak,) but I wish he'd tell all those MICROWAVE readers that the Skyrack Book Service in Leeds evolved from a newszine and not a genzine."

I hope that clears that up. I can understand how Sid could forget which fanzine he wrote for, I have trouble remembering what I've written for my own fanzine and I've only been at it a year - the heyday of SKYRACK and PLOY was a bit further back than that.





by  
Steve  
Gallagher

Sometimes, it's difficult to know what the neighbours must think of me. As skiffy people go, I'm probably about as low-profile as you can get; I hardly even read the stuff anymore, and you wouldn't find me behind drawn curtains dressing up as Darth Vader in front of the wardrobe mirror -- well, hardly at all in the last couple of years, anyway. A few local meetings, the occasional convention, and that's it.

But still, I have to wonder.....

We live in a cul-de-sac of one-storey houses with a country park and a school playing fields running right up to the garden boundaries. It's quiet and there's plenty of greenery, but I'm going to put the brakes on the descriptive stuff right there in case you start getting the impression that we've got a gingerbread house in some rural glade. Dig into the garden, and three inches down you'll bend your spade on half-bricks and builder's gravel and all kinds of crap. The country park, pleasant as it is, was designated as a reclamation area when they demolished a dye works and found that the land underneath was so poisoned and undercut by mineshafts that it wasn't safe for building.

It's an average, middle-class neighbourhood, filled with people who probably dream of somewhere better while they know that there are plenty of places that are worse. It doesn't match my own notions of the ideal place to live, but then neither does my bank balance.

I suppose that the notion of being a misfit is what helps to keep it all bearable. All of the houses look the same, and the economy saloons on the driveways don't look much different, either. When the wind blows up from the valley in the park, an army of TV aerials quiver like herd antennae. Being a misfit definitely keeps it bearable; this is the story of how I managed to get some misfit credibility.

Three years ago, I managed to reach the point where I could make enough money from writing to give up my job. I started to work from home, and I was putting in some very irregular hours. Word first started to get around that I was 'a writer' when my wife used the fact to get out of hosting a Tupperware party (don't ask me how the



two are supposed to connect, because I still don't know), and finally a piece in the local paper blew my cover completely.

It wasn't exactly instant fame. The only direct result was that people started to ring me up trying to sell me insurance and, polite soul that I am, it would take me anything up to fifteen minutes to get the message through that I wasn't interested. And this was only after a really tadpole-splash of publicity. Someone like Stephen King must have to employ a small team of secretaries just to handle the calls from would-be brokers -- or else he just tells them to piss off and then puts the phone down, which is really what I'd prefer to do.

We didn't buy any insurance, but we bought a dog. Our situation seemed to be ideal -- just a quick hop over the back fence and there would be two or three miles of open walks without a car in sight -- and wordless company during the day would help to ensure that I didn't get lonely in my solo occupation. The beast that we bought was an aggressive little husky who likes nothing better than to scare up hares and silently clobber other people's dogs out of sight behind the bushes. Only hedgehogs seem to give her a problem; they don't fight back, which means that in her opinion they don't fight fair. The hedgehogs curl up, and the dog does a little yelping dance of frustration all around them until someone comes to haul her away.

This was what happened in the autumn of last year; but it would hardly be worth a story if it wasn't for the fact that it happened at three o'clock in the morning on a night which had turned unexpectedly cold and brought some frost along with it. I'd been working late, and I'd kicked the dog out to irrigate the garden while I got ready to go to bed; it was while I was in the bathroom that I heard the signals that I'd come to recognise so well.

I went to the kitchen window, and shone a torch out. There, in the middle of the lawn, was some poor sod of a hedgehog with its nose tucked up its behind, thinking that the end of the world had come, while a wolf did a wardance overhead.

She wasn't going to come in on her own; she was like a kid trying to figure out how to get into a boobytrapped box of Smarties. The noise that she was making would soon be enough to wake up two or three of the houses on either side, but I wasn't exactly dressed to go out since I was wearing sandals and a bathrobe.

A word about the bathrobe. It's nothing special, just a standard C&A velveteen model, but on the right-hand side of the chest it carries a treasured Superman logo that I brought back from New York. The logo's already survived two bathrobes, and if it ever wears out I'll just have to find some excuse to fly back and get another. Obsessed, Doctor? Certainly not, and when you've finished that banana, can I have the skin for my album?

I had to go out, but there wasn't time to get dressed again. If I moved quickly, perhaps I wouldn't get cold. I stepped into the green wellingtons that I keep by the kitchen door; and dashed out to haul the husky off.

Hauling the husky off was complicated by the fact that she's stronger than I am. I know some people who race their huskies, and the training rig that they use is the chassis of an old Morris 1000. Two dogs pull it, no problem. By the time that my brute was inside, I was shaking like a scoutmaster at a gangbang.

But there was still the problem of the hedgehog -- I didn't know how it had found its way into the garden, but there couldn't be many ways out. Now, bear in mind that I can't even hurt the feelings of an insurance salesman -- something that's about as easy as bruising the skin of a coconut -- and you'll realise that I couldn't leave the spiny hog out there with the certainty of a morning rematch. So I added an SAS balaclava and a scarf, and went out again.

I used to have this really neat trick with hedgehogs. They curl up tightly into a ball when they're afraid, but you can usually slide a finger in on either side and tickle their bellies. A few moments of this will relax them and loosen them up enough for you to be able to get a better grip and pick them up to move them somewhere safe. It always used to work, but that was until I discovered the New, Improved Hedgehog, Now with 10% Extra Spines at No Extra Cost! The little bastard flexed itself and stabbed me about five hundred times, all at once. God, but it hurt.

Crusader that I am, I wasn't put off. I had some thick rubber industrial gauntlets, but they were in the garden shed and the key to the garden shed was back in the house. I went to get it. The dog shot between my legs, ran straight to the centre of the lawn, and resumed the wardance.



Five minutes later I was sweating, shivering, and in the shed. The hedgehog was still in the middle of the lawn, pretending to be a rock. I found the gloves, which look as if they were designed for handling fuel rods, and went out to shift it.

The hedgehog was no longer a problem, but the torch was; with both hands occupied, I had to grip it in my teeth to see what I was doing. It must have looked like I'd grown a Dalek's eye. The next question was, what to do with the hedgehog?

Simple enough, I'd donate it to next door's garden. My gardening knowledge is sketchy, but I was sure I'd heard some guff somewhere about the hedgehog being the gardener's friend. It's probably a one-sided relationship, since I've never seen a gardener bringing a hedgehog into the local or lending it money when the dispenser rejects its cashcard, but that's how things go. I took the hog across to the fence, which is a waist-high run of wire, and leaned over to place it in the border.

Which was when the lights came on.

The lights were those of the main bedroom of the house next door, the room directly overlooking the garden. They wouldn't have spilled out across the gardens like a bank of floodlights if it hadn't been for the fact that the bedroom curtains were being held open. Two faces were watching me out of the gap.

Let's just go over this for a moment. Green wellingtons, bare knees like a flasher, a bathrobe with a red-and-yellow Superman 'S' on the chest. I was wearing a black balaclava and a scarf, and apparently trying to swallow the dark end of a three-battery torch. It was three a.m., and I was caught in the act of....well, as far as I know, there isn't a name for the act of dropping a hedgehog into your neighbour's garden for no obvious reason. I was doing it in near-zero temperature and wearing Zorro's gloves. I couldn't smile, I couldn't wave.

The curtains closed, and the light went out.

I finished the job, and got inside. My teeth were rattling like nuts in a tin. There was no sign of the dog, but the door from the kitchen through into the rest of the house had been nosed open. So had the door to the bedroom, and when I got in there I found the dog, curled with her nose under her tail in true Arctic sled dog fashion. On my pillow.

Well, if it's misfit credibility you're after, I haven't yet got around to patenting the method. You can design your own superhero costume and get spotted doing something really irrational at some ungodly hour, but I'd suggest you stay away from spiny hogs; too much of that, and we may start to look like some kind of cult.

Still, L Ron Hubbard had to start somewhere....





**ID**

**EST**

#### THE END OF THE WORLD:

It happened a little over a year ago. The phone's ringing startled me. It startled me because it was after midnight and I rarely get calls after midnight. When I answered it, an unfamiliar female voice said:

"Mister White? This is Virginia Hinkle, and I'm calling you because you're Kitten's father, and Kitten is Bridget's close friend, and I wanted to warn you."

Belatedly I recognised her voice. Bridget was her daughter. Bridget and my daughter were the same age and went to the same school. Bridget was a spoiled, over-pretty blonde about whom my daughter complained often. Bridget had serious emotional problems and took them out on her "friends", for whom the experience was a roller-coaster of deeply pledged eternal friendship and gratuitous meanness which led to ugly fights. You couldn't tell from one day to the next with Bridget. When she had occasion to speak to me she was sweetly spoken and a perfect little lady. But when she left messages on my phone-answering machine under the illusion that they would be heard only by my daughter (don't ask me why she thought that would be the case) she was a foul-mouthed little bully. My daughter would have been happy to have seen the last of Bridget after the first year of knowing her, but unfortunately Bridget and her mother lived only a block away, and avoiding her was impossible; she even rode the same school bus and shared most classes with my daughter. Every so often my daughter would come home from school hurt and angry about something Bridget had done -- usually catty attempts to turn Kit's friends against her, and sometimes bullying that turned into hitting. On such occasions we would discuss Bridget and how messed up she was -- my way of letting Kit blow off steam and maybe learn a little about why people do things like that.

It was inevitable that I would meet Bridget's mother, Virginia, who enjoyed taking both girls skating, or fixing their hair and doing girl-type things like trying out makeup. Virginia was divorced from her husband, and living as a single parent with Bridget and her brother, Shane, and she seemed to enjoy doing motherly things with my daughter as well as her own. As a single parent myself, and one who is sublimely indifferent to many of the activities growing girls enjoy, I was pleased to see Kit tucked under Mrs. Hinkle's friendly wing. I don't recall how I first met Virginia but I imagine it was an occasion on which she was either picking up or bringing back my daughter. There were many such occasions. Virginia Hinkle was a lot like a grown-up version of her daughter, physically at least. She was blonde (perhaps bleached-blonde; I never knew for certain whether both she and her daughter bleached their hair or whether it was natural to both, but it was very light, almost white), buxom, and pretty. But her prettiness was the ripe sort that is almost diametrically opposed to real beauty: china-doll pretty, all softness and makeup with no substantial depth. It came as no surprise when I found out she sold a line

by

**TED**

**WHITE**



of cosmetics in her spare time. (I found out when my daughter asked me for the money to pay for the cosmetics Mrs. Hinkle had sold her....)

Superficially it looked like an ideal situation for me: my daughter meets a girl whose mother is attractive and a single parent and lives a block away. There are times when I wish for just such a situation. But Virginia and I had little in common and I realised that almost immediately upon meeting her, so I turned a blind eye to the vague hints that she threw my way on subsequent occasions -- the suggestion that I join them on one of their outings to the skating rink (where I would have had little to do, never having learned to skate and no longer wanting to), for instance.

It is my belief that you can tell a lot about a person by the way their children act. Bridget was one badly messed-up kid. Some of that might well have been the product of the breakup of her parents' marriage, but that didn't explain all of it. Some of it had to be Virginia.

"I haven't told anyone else," Mrs. Hinkle said, "but I wanted to save you and Kitten."

"Ummm," I said, trying to figure out what she was talking about.

"Here's what you have to do," she said. "You've got to take all the canned food you've got and get Kitten and yourself down in your basement and barricade yourselves in."

"Why?" I asked.

"My father," she told me, "is a nuclear physicist in California. He works for the government and he called me to tell me -- he wanted to warn me. He told me not to tell anyone else, but Kitten and Bridget are such close friends, and I had to give you a chance....."

"What's supposed to happen?" I asked, feeling bemused and curious but already starting to doubt the urgency of her warning.

"Well, you know about the planets lining up, don't you? You're a well-informed man, I know."

"Sure, but that's no big deal. They're not really lining up," I said, demonstrating what a well-informed man I was. "They're just in the same quadrant of the sky, that's all."

"That's not all," Virginia said. "It's going to trigger atomic explosions all over this country. That's what my father called to tell me -- and he's a scientist."

I laughed, a sort of depreciating chuckle. "I don't see how--"

"It's going to happen between two and three this morning," she said. "That's only a little over an hour from now!"

"Well," I said, "I'm not sure....."

"Can you afford to take a chance?" she demanded. "Listen, if nothing happens we can both have a good laugh about it, but if it happens -- !"

At this point I still thought I was dealing with an ordinary, well-meaning, if not too bright, adult woman, who had swallowed a load of nonsense and believed it. I wondered if her father was pulling her leg. So I reassured her that I would certainly take all the necessary precautions, thanked her for the warning, and told her that I was sure nothing extraordinary would happen and we'd have a chuckle about it the next day just as she'd suggested. After I hung up the phone I shook my head at the credulity of The Average Person. She probably believed in astrology, too.

Then, after making a mental note to mention it to my daughter, I forgot about it.

The next day when my daughter got home from school she remarked that Bridget had not been in school, and what a relief it had been. That triggered my memory and I told her about the phone call the night before from Bridget's mother. "I guess nothing happened," I said. I could not have been more wrong.

That evening Bridget called Kit, and as soon as the phone call was over, Kit hurried to tell me about it: it filled in some of the missing details. Bridget had called from her father's apartment in Arlington. Her father had taken custody of her and had committed her mother to St. Elizabeth's, the local mental hospital. But that didn't come close to describing the day's events.

Virginia had started the day, just before calling me with her warning, by moving all the furnishings in her house to its basement -- chairs, tables, sofa, rugs, everything -- stripping the ground floor bare. She had two cars, a yellow Volkswagen bug and a Plymouth stationwagon. She loaded as many of their belongings as she could pack into the two cars, filling them with suitcases full of knickknacks and piling clothes swept right out of closets and still on their hangers loosely on top. Whatever room was left in the cars was filled with houseplants. She left only the driver's seat free in the VW; I assume that she left room in the front seat of the stationwagon for both herself and Bridget. ("What happened to the son?" I asked. "He was living with his father," Kit replied. "I think his father got him late last year." Kit detested Shane.)

Virginia left the ignition key in the unlocked VW, and drove the stationwagon with Bridget to a nearby church. She parked the stationwagon in the church's parking lot and took her scared daughter into the church, telling her that Bridget's grandfather (the "nuclear physicist") would be joining them there, bringing the VW with him.



Then the woman and her daughter waited in the church, huddling in its sanctuary.

"Bridget got real scared, waiting there. She didn't know what was supposed to happen, but she told me it was her mother she was scared about not the end of the world or any of that stuff," my daughter told me. "The pews were real hard and uncomfortable and she wanted to go home but her mother made her stay there because she said they'd only be safe in the church. They stayed until the police came."

"Why did the police come?" I asked.

"I don't know. I don't think Bridget knows. I guess the church called them." To this day I don't have the answer to that one; I can only speculate about the kind of behaviour on Mrs. Hinkle's part that would have driven church personnel to call the police rather than someone from Social Services. The police came around or after daybreak, after Virginia and Bridget had spent hours in the church.

"Did Mrs. Hinkle's father ever show up?" I asked.

"Uh-uh," Kit said, shaking her head. "The police called Bridget's father and he came and got her, and he had them put her mother in St. Elizabeth's."

Kit and I went up the block to the Hinkle's house. There, in the driveway, was the VW, the key still in its ignition, its interior filled with suitcases, boxes, clothing, and wilted houseplants. I took the key and gave it to Kit to give to Bridget for her father; I found the car could not be locked because the wing windows couldn't be latched shut. The house had a notice on its front door that said the police had sealed it, and a new padlock held two big staples that had been driven into the doorframe and the door. Apparently they'd overlooked the keys left in the car.

"Pretty weird, huh?" I remarked as we headed back for our house.

"Yeah," Kit agreed. Then she brightened. "Bridget's going to live with her father now, and that means next year she'll be going to a different school." Relief filled her voice.

Later Kit told me, "You know, Bridget's been a lot better since she started living with her father. She's still Bridget, you know, but she isn't nearly so mean." Bridget finished out that school year in the same Falls Church school, but the following year went to an Arlington school, and my daughter hasn't seen or heard from her since then.

I too was relieved. The end of the world had not occurred after all, I had an explanation for that strange phone call (although I'd not be laughing about it with Virginia Hinkle anytime soon), and at last I knew why Bridget was so emotionally disturbed.

**THE GOLDEN ERA OF SCI-FI REVISITED:** Last issue I described the extraordinary Space Jazz album ostensibly "composed" by L. Ron Hubbard as a soundtrack for his book, Battlefield Earth.

I did not say much about the book, assuming that its reputation was already well enough established in fandom. Subsequent events make me think that was an error.

Steve Brown -- the same Steve Brown who turned up the Space Jazz album -- was one of those who had an advance look at Battlefield Earth. The publisher, St. Martin's Press, had given him a xerox copy of the manuscript, which he showed me about a year ago.

"L. Ron Hubbard has written a new sf book," he told me. At the time this was fresh news. "I have a copy of the manuscript."

"How is it?" I asked. The last Hubbard novel I'd read was his 1954 Ace book, Return To Tomorrow, which I remembered mostly for its then-novel use of Einseinian Time-dilatation in FTL space travel.

"Umm, well, it's real slam-bang pulp writing," Steve said. "I haven't read all of it yet."

I don't think Steve ever did read all of Battlefield Earth. Later he gave me a xeroxed copy (from his xerox copy) of the first fifty pages of the manuscript. I'd asked for it because I wanted to read the preface and sample the style in which the book was written.

Let's forget Old Wave vs. New Wave battles, because Battlefield Earth is not relevant to that moribund argument. What Hubbard wrote was older than Old Wave: Battlefield Earth is an indeterminably long piece of third-rate pulp hackwork. Since I threw my copy of the first fifty pages away I can't quote any examples, but I can assure any prospective purchaser that if he or she opens the book at random to any page at all he or she will find a good example of bad writing. The book is not up to Hubbard's standards of the 'forties, much less the standards of today.

Why, then, was it published?

I had an enlightening conversation with one of the sf field's leading editors on this very subject. He had rejected Battlefield Earth, and he had done so despite the fact that he was assured that it would sell very well. "I draw the line at outright prostitution," was the way he put it. "I don't care if it's guaranteed to sell a million copies." His company's integrity remains intact, and St. Martin's Press is laughing all the way to the bank. The book has sold very well. As expected, hundreds -- nay, thousands -- of Scientologists, all of whom have revered "Ron" as God-incarnate for



the past twenty-five years or more, listening with deep concentration to his taped lectures and reading with total credulity his monthly editorial in ABILITY magazine, have rushed to their bookstores to buy out the first printing of Battlefield Earth. They could care less about the clumsy writing and the indeterminable plot. They are every publisher's dream: an uncritical captive audience who will buy what they're told to buy. The book was sold to St. Martin's Press on precisely this basis: "Don't worry; you won't lose any money on this book."

A great deal of money has been spent to promote the book. When fans travelled from Chicago's O'Hare Airport to the Chicon last year they went right past a huge billboard promoting the book. When they got to the con they found large displays with life-size cardboard figures from the book's dust-jacket confronting them.

I think most fans were more amused than impressed by all this hype. They knew who L. Ron Hubbard was.

But some were swayed. I've seen a few favorable reviews of the book in some fanzines. The reviews were not very acute, being more the type one associates with Trekkie reviews of Star Trek books and movies, but clearly the book is not without its fans.

What amazed me though was the report (in FILE 770, among others) that John and Bjo Trimble, long-time fans, one-time bnfs even, had started a Battlefield Earth fanclub! Their avowed purpose was to drum up enough support for the book to get it a Hugo!

No one was too surprised when Charles Platt publicly urged a Hugo for the book; it was clearly one of Charles' ploys to discredit the Hugo Award and as such understandable and forgivable. No one for a single moment took Platt seriously or thought that he actually liked the book; his campaign was obviously a measure of his contempt for Battlefield Earth, compounded by his contempt for the Hugos.

But the trimbles were another story. Once the wheelers and dealers of LASFS, creators of the tradition of convention art shows, and in many respects admirable fans, they had succumbed to cynicism and fan-manipulation in the late sixties when Gene Roddenberry hired them to run his Star Trek mail-order services. The Trimbles sold frames of 35mm film from the Star Trek TV shows, frame by frame, to eager Trekkies. They lived on this kind of Hollywood parasitism for all the Seventies. But this might be excused on the grounds that somebody was going to do it, so why not them, and anyway they were Trekkies of sorts themselves so it was all "in the family."

But the Battlefield Earth fanclub was something else. I cannot believe they actually hold the book in anything approaching high esteem; I wonder if they've even read it. They were paid to put this "fanclub" together, the funding coming from an anonymous rich benefactor. Ironically, their "fanclub" may have been created in response to Platt's campaign. They sent out mailings urging that members of their "fanclub" join this year's Worldcon and nominate Battlefield Earth for a Hugo.

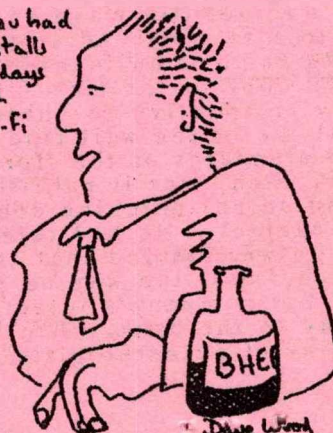
The only thing that stopped them -- and only just barely -- was the fact that they were too late, their efforts begun only a few weeks before the deadline for Hugo nominations.

Battlefield Earth missed a Hugo nomination by only fifteen votes.

Ponder that fact for a few moments, friends, and ask yourself how you would feel if the book had been nominated. And, supposing such a nomination, how difficult would it have been for more "associate members" to join the Worldcon and vote Battlefield Earth its Hugo? Hugos have been "bought" before (Larry Niven's first was the product of the dinners he bought for twenty LASFans in 1967; he "won" by only eight votes over Bob Shaw's "Light of Other Days"), and Platt's contempt for the Hugo may well be justified, but still...no one has ever before mounted such a naked campaign to subvert the Hugos for commercial gain.

Can this be the true "Golden Era of Sci-Fi"?

When I was a lad you had  
to search the bookstalls  
for your SF. Nowadays  
you have to search  
through all that Sci-Fi  
crap for it!





# Any Post, dear?

Scrotum, the old, wrinkled retainer, skateboarded his way down the massive halls of Sildan House. Deftly pinching the Tweenie's pert, young buttocks, he took a left, a right and a further right in quick succession, neatly breaking in front of the Master's bedchamber.

Never satisfied with subtlety, Scrotum kicked in the bedroom door, rolled in low, and came up beside the bed, silver salver and mail still in place. "Steve Martin?" he thought, "Don't make me laugh!"

Under the silk sheets, a fine, young, muscular body stirred - quickly surfacing as the aged butler intoned "Your Mail, Sir." Groping, misguided hands fumbled around the old man's waist and chest, questing and searching for the thick wad of papers and sundry weird articles that were usually delivered at this time of the morning.

"May I suggest, Sir, that we put on our glasses so as to save us both from any further embarrassment."

The green-eyed, brown-haired, maggot-white, ex-bronzed Adonis put on a pair of Coke bottle-bottom lenses, thanked the old man with a punch on the jaw, then settled down to read MICROWAVE 5.

← Seems like a good way to open a LoCcol - and, having started, let's continue with some more edited low-lights from the same missive from..... →

CHUCK CONNOR,  
c/o Sildan House,  
Chediston Road,  
Wisset,  
Nr. Halesworth,  
Suffolk, IP19 ONF

It's really odd that Skel should mention the YEAR OF THE GAY WHALE but, as he did so, I suppose I could do a little early PR work. The YOTGW is to be 1985, following, as it does, the 1984 YEAR OF THE BOMB (which has a manifesto including the repeating of Orwell's TV show (UK) and celebrating the 4th of July by nuking America (USA Chapter) - sadly, the Russian supporters have come forward and jumped the gun (so to speak) and have plans for May 1st. So much for Unilateral Destruction, eh?). By the way, this YEAR OF.... thing is worked on a very strict rotation - no cowboy outfits are allowed to muscle in, such as the YEAR OF THE IMPOTENT BUFFALO tried to do. Oh dear me no. They were quickly rounded up and sorted out, branded 'illegal' by all concerned.

Back to the plight of the Gay Whales. These poor, affectionately effeminate creatures are dying out. They are shy, crazy, mixed-up Whales whose only demands are to be allowed to use under-flipper deodorants, the lowering of consent from 7 tons to 5, no discrimination in schools, and to wear a little Channel No. 5 when going south for the summer.

←and there were sheets and sheets of more stuff like that. I would let you all have a read but I'm trying to cram bits from as many letters as I can into what's left of this ish. So, with hardly a backward glance at the unprinted bits of Chuck's epistle, we plunge forward - to find.... a late LoC on No. 4: →

MOIRA J. SHEARMAN,  
Top Flat, 25 Scott Street,  
Dundee, DD2 2AH  
Scotland.

Swift's song - useless, dreadful, disgusting. I mean, the ONLY way to eat baby is deep-fried, in batter. (Sorry, I feel compelled to make comments like that so that I can't be accused of having maternal feelings). I saw a button in a shop the other day, bearing the caption - "Babies are only kitten substitutes."



Hope your menage-a-trois is still working well. It's not the black satin sheets that cost a fortune, so much as the ceiling mirrors and video equipment. (Only for those of you that get your kicks out of high technology - we are able to enjoy life's more simple pleasures. Just give us a stepladder, ½ pound of margarine and a violin bow....)

I enjoy the great mix you get in your LoCcol (and the rest of the zine). How do you get all these people to write for you? Do you know where the bodies are buried, or did Vin give you the negatives of all his old con photos? Or, don't tell me, it's Black ('scuse me, Lord Denning) Ethnic Magic? Do you draw the pentacle, light the candles and call forth the eldritch fans? Just keep that window shut, and hang the garlic flowers on the lintel.....you never know when you're going to call forth an undead fan!

(When I allow the horizontal pleasures of Madam Wheeler to sway my judgement, I suppose I deserve letters containing strong words in reply:-)

PAMELA BOAL,  
4 Westfield Way,  
Charlton Heights,  
Wantage,  
Oxon. OX12 7EW

Black humour doesn't offend me but it doesn't particularly amuse me either. I would just skip it normally, but when it is followed on by what seems to be a serious suggestion of a very dangerous nature, I do get jumpy. Elda, the word euthanasia, however you look at it, means killing, the taking of a human life (note that one never uses it in connection with animals) by another human being. Governments of any type or hue are never made up of all-wise, selfless, altruistic people, even less are those who implement the laws and provisions as laid down by a Government (be it parliamentary or a dictatorship). If society through its Government authorises killing, for reasons of age or health deviations from the norm (however extreme those deviations may be), it's the thin end of the wedge. It would be impossible to safeguard against abuse of the law, either from mismanagement (those regrettable oversights, the unfortunates that slip through the net that we so often read about now) or from interests other than those of the person being killed. The majority of people meeting an active alert person over the age of 70 will say, "Isn't he/she marvellous for his/her age," because society "knows" that at that age people have no real expectations of any quality of life. It's a short step from killing a person who, when young and healthy, signed a card to say that they did not wish to live in senility, to legalising the killing of anyone over a given age. It might be possible for a person to sign a document refusing their permission to be kept on a total life support system for more than a given length of time (in anticipation of such a possibility) and for such a system to be safeguarded against abuse. I would demand that such a document be renewed annually, not signed in the fervour of youth, and without foreknowledge of possible advances in medical knowledge and techniques. I would not be happy about even that step. If only people who propose such things would talk to people in groups such as Headway, people who have lived with severe brain damage and know how much progress can be made (two year's coma is not inevitable condemnation to cabbage existence), or read the viewpoints of people like Dennis Griffith who has Motor Neurone Disease which is a sentence (a very short one) to a life of severe progressive degeneration - in his words, "Where there is Hope there is Life". There can be no hope where there are laws that take away life.

As for killing disabled babies, you show me the doctor who can say, without there being any possibility of error, that there is no humanity or chance of there ever being any, in a new born body. There is no such person, so the killing (which already happens but is called "allowing to die" or "not officiously striving to keep alive") depends on the value judgements of those on the spot. Legalisation would not make those judgements better, in fact society's approval could well lead to the killing of ever less severely disabled babies. A mother tired from labour, heartbroken by the fact that her baby can never grow into the child she had dreamed about and planned for, can hardly be expected to exercise judgement. I won't dispute the hardships for parents bringing up a disabled child, and I certainly won't dispute the lack of support from society, but I do dispute most vehemently anyones right to prejudge what the quality of a life will be, and to say that the individual would not want to live it. I can cite you so many examples but just two will suffice.

A young boy damaged by cerebral palsy, speechless and unable to do a single thing for himself, in the eyes of others, a thing, a twitching cabbage. When the advances in technology enabled him to operate a speech processor, it was revealed that he had stored up in his mind a vocabulary far outstripping not only that of children his own age but that of most adults. His use of that vocabulary, his powerful imagery, could well lead to him being acclaimed as one of this century's major poets, providing his parents and others around him protect him from the greed of manipulators that leech on to talent.





A teenage girl with Downs Syndrome (a Mongol for those who do not know the term) wrote a letter for my magazine about her life. It was a letter that revealed a great joy in life, a fullness, a richness and a perceptive love of others, such that one feels honoured to read it. Because in many ways her mental development will be forever arrested at the level of a naive, absent-minded twelve-year-old she will always be vulnerable, will always need to be cared for and protected from so-called normal people.

Who dares say that it should be legally possible for someone to decide that these lives should not be lived? Make no mistake, these young people would have been killed if such a law had existed when they were born, the enormity of their disability being apparent at birth; there was no hope of any real quality of life, the doctors did have to strive officiously to keep them alive. Elda, I can live with a society that enjoys black humour but not one that seriously suggests it cannot afford to care for its members that deviate too greatly from the accepted norm.

⚡I'm going to keep my big mouth shut this time, and let the ladies slug it out together. If they'll just take off all their clothes and step this way to the big puddle of mud that I just happen to have ready.....⚡

JEREMY CRAMPTON,  
34 Percy Road,  
Handbridge,  
Chester.

You seem to talk in hushed tones about some of your contributors; I don't know if they're supposed to ring any bells, but I've never heard of any of them - except for V. Clarke, and then only because he's got a funny line in his name. I gather they're the old guard of fandom - fancy still being around after more than 20 years! Or for more than 5 for that matter, as the rapid turnover of BSFA members shows. They must have amazing staying power, so I suppose that explains the amount of mutual back-slapping that goes on in your pages i.e. writing to each other, not you. (Vinç, you still here, ghod I remember you way back when Jules Verne couldn't even write his name, never mind Phineas Fogg!). Sorry, I'm only taking the mickey.

⚡So you are! Some of the people you're talking about haven't caught up with anything as recent as Verne.⚡

HARRY WARNER, Jr.,  
423 Summit Avenue,  
Hagerstown,  
Md. 21740.  
U. S. A.

Tomorrow the first manmade object to leave the solar system is supposed to head out toward the stars. If an unmanned space probe can accomplish such an enormous feat, why should I hesitate longer at the problem of compressing into a couple of crowded pages my LoC on the enormous fifth issue of MICROWAVE? You realise, I hope, the chaos that your publication of this issue introduced into a number of fannish establishments where first drafts of columns about the demise of the big fanzine were ripped up, and stencilled articles on the same topic were doomed never to have ink applied to them. It's a splendid issue, slightly on the improbable side because of the number of big names you appear to have persuaded to contribute. I write "appear" to protect myself, in case the truth eventually leaks out, about how D. West is the real author of everything published under those names.

I'm very glad to know things went well for both of you in the kidney transplant. But I'm surprised to learn about the unpopularity of enemas in British hospitals. When in doubt, give one or more enemas seems to be the rule of thumb in the United States hospitals. At that, you should be glad your problem didn't lead to an impacted bowel, the condition I developed as a result of long immobility in traction after I broke a hip years ago. I had never even heard of impacted bowels until I instinctively created one unaided, and I was even less prepared for the way my physician treated it. Millions of dollars' worth of the latest equipment was lying around that hospital, there were hundreds of highly sophisticated drugs in its medicine chests, so I thought my doctor had gone mad in that awful moment when I realized he intended to heal me with nothing more complicated than his index finger. (A moment later I wanted to grit my teeth in pain but feared I would bite off the tip of his finger if I did so.)

⚡Some months back, I had a similar examination for a 'bowel spasm' or somesuch. The doctor told me; "This may be a little uncomfortable." Within seconds, my reply was; "Only from where you're standing, Sunshine!"⚡

Finding a new article by Walt Willis in a fanzine is in the same category as his thought that he might find a radio capable of picking up the Jack Benny show. (In point of fact, my radio can pick up the Jack Benny show each Saturday at 9 a.m. from a station in my home town, Chambersburg, Pa., and my television set can tune in Jack Benny telecasts at 12:30 a.m. over the CBN cable channel six nights a week.) His article is curiously like the opening portion of a wonderful novel by Conrad Richter, "The Waters of Lethe", whose central character, a transparently-disguised disguise of the author, goes back to where his people had lived a half-century earlier, before the area is inundated by a dam, and suddenly finds himself in the past; it could be considered either science fiction or fantasy.

⚡Onward, ever onward...to....another late LoC on No. 4! When will these people learn that you gotta be prompt!⚡

PAUL VINCENT,  
25 Dovedale Avenue,  
Pelsall, Walsall,  
West Midlands,  
WS3 4HG

Liked the 'Legalise IT' theme, but you've all got it wrong. Believe it or not, last year was IT year, IT being an acronym for Information Technology, as in mucking about with computers, word-processors and all that sort of hi-tech-gloss nonsense. I was really impressed at the end of 81 when I discovered this fact. My spine tingled at





the thought of life in glittering IT year. Cash would be a thing of the past, all our homes would incorporate soft-voiced English-speaking computers which would turn on lights for us, select and cook all our meals, and even entertain us with impressions of HAL and the Daleks. Gosh! Wow! But it was not to be; 82 came and went and the majority of folks are blissfully unaware that IT year came and went with all the impact of a Eurovision Song Contest. My theory is that the powers-that-be decided to outlaw the idea and suppressed all public information about IT year. Well, can you think of a better reason why no-one but me seems to have heard of IT year? Obviously they slipped up and let me find out about it. Hope I finish this epistle before they come for me.....wait, they're here...they're wearing white coats.....oh, it's only the TV repair man. Actually, I suspect the real reason for IT apathy is that nobody gives a toss about it. Quite right too, these computers can look after themselves. ~~¶You wouldn't think so if you could read my mail. Sometimes I think half the flaming readers work with/at/on/around the damn things!¶~~

And now to Chuck Connor's quest for the reversible-face illo. In Martin Gardner's excellent book, "Further Mathematical Diversions" (awful title, but great reading for puzzle fans), there's a whole chapter devoted to this very subject. The relevant quotation is: "Peter Newell, a popular illustrator of childrens' books who died in 1924, published two books of color plates of scenes that undergo amusing transformations when inverted: "Topsys and Turveys" (1893) and "Topsys and Turveys No. 2" (1894)." So there you go, Chuck; as long ago as that. It'll be interesting to see if anyone turns up an earlier example. That was easy, next? ~~¶How about a problem I've been having with chickens and eggs?¶~~

MAL ASHWORTH,  
16 Rockville Drive,  
Embsay,  
Skipton,  
North Yorks.

My first reaction when I heard that satisfying CLUNK on the doormat was 'The cat's fallen downstairs'.

My second reaction was 'Good Ghod it really is MICROWAVE 5; I wondered what that lazy bugger was doing'.

My third reaction was one of mounting excitement (this was due to a Barclaycard statement for £170).

My fourth reaction was 'Well, now it's here, how the hell do I get into it?'

My fifth reaction was 'Making these bloody staples is what's keeping British Steel in business I bet'.

My sixth reaction was 'How the bloody sodding hellfire do I get into the thrice-accursed thing?'

My seventh reaction was '  
(but I know you don't print that sort of thing in MICROWAVE).

My eighth reaction was 'Well, at least now I can complete my ANSIBLE poll form'.

You'll be pleased to know that I have written MICROWAVE 5 in for 'Best Stapling'.

Let us say not that I enjoyed MICROWAVE 5 but that I am in the process of enjoying it and am trying to put things down on paper about my enjoyment as I go along. It is great. If anyone tells you it has the look of a Fifties fanzine you can reply 'Yup'. If anyone tells you it has the feel of a Fifties-fanzine you can reply 'Yup'. You can then add that it has the writing and the animation and imagination of an Eighties fanzine and that it is one of the forerunners of the return of Fun Fandom. Doldrums there may have been, in Fandom, but I get a distinct feeling that the Eighties are going to be a lot of fun, and MICROWAVE is already pointing the way. There are a lot of good writers about - very good writers - and even if all us re-animated old fogs faded away again tomorrow, it wouldn't make much difference.

Christina Lake fr'instance. I am rapidly becoming a Christina Lake fan (Christina Lake Appreciation Society, anyone?) She does a lovely line in these whimsical little fantasies, behind which I think I feel an influence that I know well but haven't yet managed to pinpoint. I think, peering squinchily into the future (I usually encounter a Serious Temporal Blockage located at around Opening Time) I may even be able to descry a Christina Lake Anthology a-building. (A crafty way, n'est-ce pas, to get her to write many more such?)

And I already am a Skel fan. His piece on Copyright Laws and providing prestigious libraries with fanzines is very nice, the best I've seen on this theme. Back when Tom White and I were publishing BEM I subtitled it, in a fit of inanity, 'Bradford's Exquisite Magazine'; of course we did our patriotic bit and sent a copy to the Brit. Mus. Then I started getting requests from Yorkshire Public Libraries for copies of 'Bradford's Exquisite Magazine' (if you've ever seen a copy of BEM you'll know what a laugh that was!) - so I sent 'em. They sure didn't request a second one! It truly is a pity, though, if the dear old Official Keeper of Printed Books at the British Museum has been quietly mummified. We all got quite fond of him and you certainly had to admire his diligence and devotion to fanzine-collecting. As a matter of fact I once suggested that he be nominated as a TAFF candidate on those grounds.



Seems like you is notching up a lot of 'Bests' this time around. ("A mere something and notching", I hear you mutter; don't worry, I have days like that too.) ATom's superb story is also the best Goon piece I ever remember reading. I didn't know he could write like that, the nauseatingly multi-talented swine! Because - as I may have said before - his artwork has just gone on getting better over the years too. Illos like the one on page 4 are just topnotch - superb technique creating a unique atmosphere and the whole combined with a Ray Nelson-like insouciant offbeat humour. Or, put another way around, I liked it.

As for Walt's delightful little cameo, what can I say? Pristine. Perfect. (Didn't she use to sing with a group called 'Chickenshack'? Or isn't anyone around here old enough to remember that?) I sometimes think that if all those small minds who believe their way to fannish fame is through knocking Walt ever manage to produce between them just one piece of a calibre equal to Walt's normal standard of writing, not only will I be amazed, not only will they be amazed, but Fandom will be better for it (and amazed as well, of course). So there. «You amaze me.»

JOY HIBBERT,  
11 Rutland Street,  
Hanley,  
Stoke-on-Trent,  
Staffordshire.  
ST1 5JG

An enema isn't supposed to be boiling surgical spirit, it's supposed to be warm soapy water. Though I've never had one, and don't intend to, I can understand academically why they are considered arousing, but what I can't understand is how anyone can enjoy it knowing what the after-effects are going to be. (By the way, the person who showed me the Sadie Stern magazine that I mentioned before also recommended an enema based on tabasco sauce. Thought that'd make you wince).

I thought that Plymouth Brethren weren't allowed to have anything to do with non-Plymouth Brethren, even to the extent of not being able to contact their families if they were converted to Pbism. They sound a right miserable lot anyway, and having written that it occurs to me that Chuch might have lost a relative to them, so I'd better shut up.

Dave told me a while ago that people might not be so obnoxious as they seem, but might just be winding me up, as the saying goes. I rather doubted that, and still do, but it did occur to me that I could wind as well as the next person. Should be fun.

Funny, I always thought Swift was a satirist. Everyone except Tom thinks so too. Most spontaneous miscarriages happen very early on, but later miscarriages and abortions could be used as nutrition for anyone with a strong enough stomach. «The less said about the curry at the first Albacon the better.»

Niall hasn't really got the hang of cons or he would have noticed that everyone ignores the fannish elite except the fannish elite.

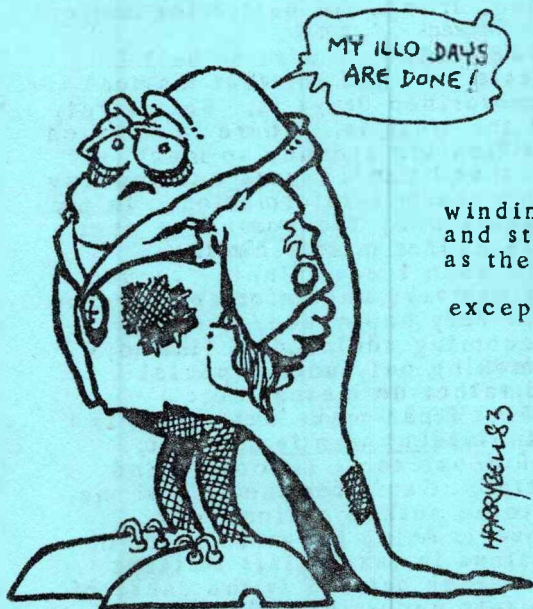
EUNICE PEARSON,  
32 Digby House,  
Colletts Grove,  
Kingshurst,  
Birmingham.  
B37 6JE

I am very sorry to see you've joined the 'let's-kick-Joy' bandwagon. Okay, so Joy takes some things seriously that others get their kicks from ridiculing, but I think you should

be looking more at what the jokes are about. From what I've read of her, Joy finds jokes in

which the punchline humiliates women, offensive. So do I.

Would you expect a cripple to laugh at a joke aimed against cripples? No. «Some years ago, I was a member of the local PHAB (Physically Handicapped/Able Bodied) Club. I got to know the other members well, particularly the handicapped ones. I found the jokes that they cracked about themselves and their colleagues were of of a nature that, had I made the same remark in a pub I would have been labelled as sick. So cripples do make jokes about cripples, and other cripples laugh at them.» So why is it, that when a woman fails to laugh, she's labelled humourless. Try having a laugh at impotency. To me, that's hilarious. But I would never make a joke about it because it would offend and hurt many men. There ain't no such consideration the other way though. Of course, I know you would never make a sexist joke, Terry, you're a very nice guy. «I might, I refuse to limit my scope just to avoid offending a particular person or group of people. Last ish, Marg and I wrote a pun filler that could have offended blind people. Nobody complained. Why the hell should I give women any more consideration than any other group of individuals? Surely equality makes women as much fair game to humour as any other section of humanity i.e. drunks, Scots, beaureaucrats, Irish, hang-gliders, and any other bloody sub-division you care to make.» But I just wanted to demonstrate that it's not a sin to point out that jokes are no laughing matter. They invariably reflect topics that a person knows are socially unacceptable but in which he secretly believes. (Racism etc.) Laugh and the





whole world laughs with you? Not on your life mate. Someone, somewhere will always find some joke offensive while people still ridicule the Irish/women/catholics/Jews/Dutch/(the Americans use the Dutch as the butt of their jokes, as we do the Irish) Blacks/mother-in-laws etc. «I always thought the Americans used Poles or Pollacks. Anyway, the other day, this Polish guy living in Holland told me a great one about a black American-Irish Jew who went..... sorry, mustn't waste space. A few words from our resident expert on Mermaids, Elitism and Ethnic Cooking.»

LEE HOFFMAN, (HM-KTF),  
350 N. W. Harbor Blvd.,  
Port Charlotte,  
FL 33952,  
U. S. A.

I have never been much for mentioning artwork in LoCs. This is abominable, but I think it has to do with my cultural/generational orientation. Or my right-brain/left-brain schism. My right and left brains don't talk much with each other. With other people, my left brain does almost all the talking.

My right brain just sits around enjoying things, like ATom covers, without ever verbalizing its appreciation. A sad state of affairs, since ATom covers and illos certainly deserve to have something said about them. But I feel sort of silly saying "Gee, I like your ATom covers and illos". Ah, what the hell, I'll say it anyway. "Gee, I like your ATom covers and illos." «You're right. Not enough people tell the artists how good (or, occasionally, bad) they are. Artists need egoboo too!»

I also like your introductory paragraphs leading in to MAGNETRONICS. By the way, that line about "This is the first, and in all probability the last, MICROWAVE ANNISH" is a little frightening in its implications/possible interpretations. I prefer to think you mean you won't be doing any more ridiculously B\*I\*G issues rather than that you don't expect MICROWAVE to last another year.

In my more pessimistic moments -- make that my most pessimistic moments, I might agree with the Space Jazz puff that Ted quotes about "... the sound of the future." But generally speaking, I hope for better for mankind.

Re THE CANNABIS SMOKESCREEN, I wish to hell I knew what the truth about grass is. And for that matter what the truth about other proscribed drugs is. Better yet, I wish everybody knew what the truth is. There is so much "authoritative" information floating around, so much of it mutually contradictory, that I can't figure out any way to sort the information from the mis-information. In my own somewhat limited experience, the worst I've ever got off grass is depressed and/or mildly nauseous (except that one time when I was spinning around in outer space which was very uncomfortable). The best I've ever got was very happy and/or sound asleep. Far from becoming addicted, I find myself interested in smoking only under special circumstances. I'd rather do mescaline.

Anyway, as best I can make out, grass is no worse than the individual who is using it, which can be said of booze too. (Nicotine and caffeine and that stuff in chocolate are a different matter. Can't for the life of me understand how the public can allow that kind of stuff to be pushed on innocent children...) According to the current propaganda, booze is doing far more harm in the U. S. than grass, yet the gov't is busy spending millions in tax dollars to fight grass, while reaping the bucks from the use of booze (if drunk driving is the cause of so many deaths, why license drinking places that are barely accessible except by car?) None of it makes logical sense. But then, what does?

DAVE ROWLEY,  
11 Rutland Street,  
Stoke-on-Trent,  
Staffordshire,  
ST1 5JG

To be non-elitist one would have to be of independent means, to be able to afford both the time and cost in production of a fanzine which wafes no-one. Print runs would have to be in the thousands, combining memberships of at least the last Eastercon, BSFA, local sf groups, or, to go to the other extreme, type it up and send it to

yourself only. «Parochial elitist swine! That list would only cover British fans, what about the U.S., Australia and New Zealand? You'd have to do foreign language editions, too. And then you'd only be covering sf fans, what about all the non-fans, eh? The only group you could safely exclude and still avoid charges of elitism, would be the same people that comprise the only sub-sector that Eunice would not object to me making jokes about; dead people!»

CHUCH HARRIS,  
32 Lake Crescent,  
Davenport,  
Northants.

I never thought you'd bring it off.....all that lovely top grade stuff.....page after page of it.....a delight by Ari....."the best Goon story I have seen in three decades; in fact, the only Goon story I have seen in three decades," he hissed. And a unique momentous piece by Himself.....and I wonder if Richard Bergeron is taking orders for WARHOON 28 Vol. 2?.....(but the inside story of the crafty way you finangled it is even better, hmm?)



That's a fine piece by Dave Hicks, but he does tend to oversimplify. The lack of enthusiasm for blood donations is not just laziness. There are religious doubts, physical fear, pseudo-scientific caution, and - most of all - selfishness. You would be surprised - astonished and amazed even - at the incidence of complete and utter selfish bastards in our society.

Now, Fords are an enlightened firm about blood donations. We have a twice-yearly mobile collecting clinic which calls on us, and sets up all their paraphernalia in the canteen. We pop over and give a pint of blood for posterity when we can fit it into the working day. We get a 20 minute zizz, a cuppa tea and a biscuit and that lovely glowing feeling of moral superiority. It's just about the most civilised thing you can do nowadays. You have quite possibly....realio, trulio.....saved someone's life and hooray for you, you deserve to feel good. God loves you: so does the vicar.

So why does the percentage ratio of Ford donors stick at 25%? Selfishness, squire: NOT laziness. Their creed is not 'do unto others.....' It is 'Fuck you Jack, I'm alright' and they don't give a tinkle - not even when their own family has needed blood in the past. Monsters and Philistines every goddamn one of them.

Especially the \*\*\*\*\* No, this is serious: something I feel deeply about. Compulsion, of course, is out, but I do believe that some states in the U.S. have found a better answer. When transfusions are given they ask the patient's family either to pay the going rate per pint....or replace the blood used by donating themselves. It needn't be the same group, but it must be the same quantity. They have a sort of Tupperware party to pay off the debt, and a very good idea it is too.... but don't ask me what happens if you've no friends, relatives, or money.....

Incidentally, Walter Himself has one of those very rare blood groups and used to be called out in the middle of the night to donate sometimes for emergencies. These groups command very high prices indeed in the U.S. clinics where they buy blood commercially. I wondered if he'd ever been tempted to sell the odd quart during TAFF trips when he was very short of cash, and was foolish enough to ask.....

Evidently, it's rather like Sex - laudatory and marvellously enlightened if you give it away free, but vile, reprehensible, and descending to the depths of whoredom if you take money for it. We may well prostitute our genius, but NEVER our blood-line.

So there.

Later - much, much later. I started this weeks ago; before God cursed me again. I got the flu, the brats got colds and Sue - trust her to be ostentatious - got whooping cough. The place has been a pesthouse; you'd think it was Kent Trufandom. As the least unwell, I was nominated cook, dogsbody, mop-it-up-and-wash-the-bucket-man. I do the attractive little meals on trays and the hot lemon drinks at 3 a.m. I've no comfort, no solace, no joy - except for MICROWAVE and the tiny pleasure of going out into the garden, shaking my fist at the heavens and screaming; "Why ME??? WHY ME??? AREN'T YOU SATISFIED YET?????"

And, Terryll love, He heard me. Verily. Whuffo you say? Almost immediately he sent round the 70-year-old nymphomaniac from down the road to enquire after my sick family. No grapes, no little bottle of whisky, - just enquiries...but it was a Kind Thought. Civilities finished, and remembering my vast Medical Experience gained as a loblolly boy under Horatio Nelson, (no, not that far

under), she hoisted her chemise and Exposed Herself. (No, honestly, this is all Gospel). Well, her tummy anyway. Rash all over....pustules....chicken pox, and her on the old age pension!!!

"You bloody stupid wretched cow," I thought. "My wife sick as sick can be and you come parading in here in that state when she's got no resistance at all."

Edge her along the passage to the front door. "Don't like the look of that, Mrs. Newton," (and you can say that again, sport) "you better go down the doctors'. It looks like chicken pox to me. Or herpes."

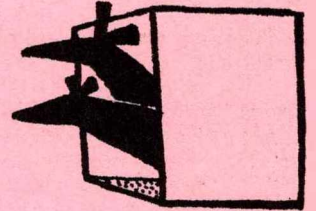
"Can't be chicken pox at my age," she screeched.

"Ask the doc," I said, "HE'll know more than me, dear, ---but I wouldn't... ..er....."

"Oooh! I shan't..." she said. "The dirty devil..."

But I shut the door quickly. If A Vincent has finished his moat, you might ask him to get up here sharpish with his shovel, ---before I have further revelations.

Well now, all I said about Joy Hibbert was that she was "sure-footed, sensible, and informed." I was thinking of a sort of intellectual chamois. So what's all this





editorial chat about her ability to take anything seriously? Squire, I think you are not only trying to drop me in it, you are trying to poke me under it. (Yup.)

Is it my fault the woman fascinates me so that I read her letter time and time again when I should be memorising Mal Ashworth? (Yup.) I pore over all this lovely chuff about housekeepers, breeders, and supplementary income providers, and thrill to that last message; "Sex at 8, while it's still safe."

Wow! Is that a.m. or p.m., dear? Is hubby on the night-shift, or don't we want to miss an episode of CROSSROADS or.... fandom has certainly changed since I was a tad; we never allowed free advertisements.

(Even later.... it's so long since I started this I'm surprised that the first paragraph isn't in hieroglifics... hierogrifics.... sod it... Sanskrit.)

I did want to mention Walt's latest. I have read it over four or five times so far and like it very much. It's completely different from what he used to write.... more skilful and aimed in a much lower key. It teeters dangerously on the edge of sentimentality ...but then, it's supposed to. As always, I wish I could handle words like that, but when I try I get pathos, bathos and flippancy (Attorneys-at-law.)

I wonder though if this presages a permanent return to super fanac? Why not ask him for a column? You could always call it "THTOOT" or something.... (I've always wanted to do a column called Something.)

PAUL VINCENT,  
again, and he  
still hasn't  
moved!

The reason this LoC's late is that for days I left M5 lying around the house under the impression that it was a telephone directory. Bloody hell, it was a big zine! The postman says he won't sue as long as I pay for him to have his hernia operation done privately, poor bloke.

If I ever published anything with that number of pages, every ish would be an annish, my typing speed being what it is(n't).

Say, I've had an idea! If you're going to Novacon, bring along your bottle of Lactulose for some evil room-party capers. That would outdo even the pie-assassinations of yesteryear. Talk about the shit hitting the fan!

Liked the GDA story, it'd be nice to see the GDA back in action, since I missed it first time around (hell, I'd only just been born!). On the whole, there do seem to be a lot of reactivated fans about just lately, brushing off the accumulated dust and cobwebs of years of gafiation. I'm really pleased to see this happening at a time when lots of new faces are also appearing (e.g. me!). There's a lot of new and revived fanzines about all of a sudden, and this can only be a Good Thing, whatever the BNKTFFs say. What with 'Shallow End' being sent out as bait to hordes of unknown fans, and the formation (Real Soon Now) of a Brum Group apa for fans old and new, the current fanzine boom should continue to reverberate for some time to come. Great! Looks like I started my own fanac at a prime time. (Any time is prime time if you put in enough effort to make it so.... I think.)

While I've got your attention, put me down for membership of the Elda Wheeler groupies club; I think you've inadvertently created a star, there. (I think Dave Wood is taking memberships, he sent me no less than three covers featuring her, so he should be.)

TED WHITE,  
1014 N. Tuckahoe St.,  
Falls Church,  
VA 22046.  
U.S.A.

I don't think I've seen a fanzine quite like MICROWAVE 5 since the fabled EYE 3 in the long-lost 'fifties -- and ATOM's line about being "an old fan and not retired" echoes with resonances of that fanzine. Has it really been more than 25 years...?

Well, yes. Nowadays few bother leaving out the middle letters of words like "fuckling." We've come a long way, haven't we? (You see, Kay? Three letters and we're modern.)

I certainly can't object to Steve Green's piece on "The Cannabis Smokescreen." I was one of those unlucky fans who had only to have a couple of drinks before I became violently sick, and it was a stroke of luck for me when I discovered that pot produced for me a fine high without any unpleasant side-effects. I'm sure this is why it is illegal in virtually all alcohol-consuming cultures: ours is a culture that says we must pay for our pleasures. Alcohol is all right because it produces hangovers for all but the lucky few. Tobacco is also okay because it causes cancer. But marijuana, which even the Consumer's Union says has no harmful side-effects, is dreadfully sinful for exactly the reason that it produces pleasure without demanding payment.

We used to think, back in the sixties, that once "our" generation of pot-smokers was in control of the government marijuana would be legalised. Today its use is pervasive in American society -- lawyers, legislators, even cops smoke it (I once paid a dental bill with an ounce) -- but, as Joy Hibbert accurately notes, the move towards legalisation seems to have stalled, or even retrogressed.

As a science fiction fan with a Fine Mind and Broad Mental Horizons, I recognise that we are Living In The Future Today: we have available to us a whole pharmacopia of substances with which to alter the ways our minds/brains work, and if we make intelligent use of these drugs we can definitely improve what nature gave us. I have found, for instance, that smoking pot changed my metabolism so that I no longer react to alcohol as if it was a deadly poison (which of course it is); I can drink moderately, socially, without incipient illness or even a hangover. And if I drink



immoderately (which I rarely do, but once in a while the temptation overcomes me), a little cocaine will straighten me out enough to restore to me the equilibrium I enjoy when I drink only moderately. The problem, of course, lies with all those clods who are incapable of using drugs intelligently and binge on them. Cocaine seems to be the latest scourge of such people but I can remember when it was amphetamines. The line between use and abuse has been muddied by the media, and these days to admit to any form of drug use is to open oneself up to charges of being a dread "drug abuser." Oh well.

I do object to Steve Green lumping together as "hard drugs" heroin and LSD. I've never tried heroin (I once bought an \$80 "hit" out of curiosity, but kept putting off trying it while waiting for the "right moment" and eventually lost or misplaced it -- it was a tiny amount -- with little feeling of regret), but I have "tripped" hundreds, maybe thousands (who keeps track?) of times since I first tried peyote in 1959. LSD (and the other related psychedelics) is not a trivial drug, nor something to be taken as casually as a toke of marijuana, but the term "hard drug" connotes to me a perjorative sense that I feel should not be applied to acid.

Not all the material in the annish is up to the standards set by the better contributors (like Vinç, Walt, Art, Et and Al) and although the Terry Jeeves left me cold it was at least decently written, while the Pete Presford struck me as incoherently organised and almost as incoherently written. I can't recall reading anything by Presford before (only references to him) and if this piece is typical of his work I'll happily forego reading anything else with his byline attached to it.

By contrast, Margaret shows a fine hand with words and has written as "fannish" a piece as anyone might have hoped for. Encourage her, Terry: she should write more. ~~I try~~, but she won't believe that all the praise for her work isn't out of sheer politeness. She does have a piece in Vinç Clarke's THEME - first ish due Real Soon Now, honest - perhaps that will do till I can get her going again?\*

Arthur's Goon story was a treat -- he writes far too little -- and reminded me that Goon Bleary was here in D.C. recently, attending a convention of fingerprinting experts, and had his picture on the front page of the Style section of the Washington POST. He did not contact any local fans, and I hardly expected him to (he had, after all, once refused to see Terry Carr and me when we went to his front door in the company of Walt Willis), but when he was in New York the following week he accepted an invitation from Moshe Feder to a party at Andy Porter's apartment -- and never showed. I gather John is pretty much removed from fandom these days.

Mal Ashworth seems to be writing, here, like a man who has been on a desert island for years and upon being rescued talks non-stop to make up for all those years of silence. There is so much being said, both in and between the lines, that I wish Mal had paused several times to take deep breaths and slowed down to treat each incident and idea more fully -- making of his "Nonsense and Insensibility" (great title!) two or three or more pieces of equal length. ~~Perhaps there will be more Ashworth material in future issues, who knows? And of course one day he'll publish ROT 6, or so he says.~~\*



~~That'll have to be it for the LoCool, there's not enough space to do anyone justice, and I've got yards of WAHFs to get through. So, We Also Heard From:~~  
Alex Stewart, Terry Cuthbert/Blackie Fortuna, Sydney J. Bounds, Ted Tubb, Pam Wells, Lee Hoffman, Jon Wallace, D. Willis (yes, the ultimate in fannish crossbreeds; D. WILLIS!), Mike Kennedy, Martyn Taylor, Terry Jeeves, Harry Turner, Eric Bentcliffe, some wally who writes on brown paper bags, calls himself "The Spanner", and gives his address as 29 The Kremlin (needless to say, he/she/it didn't get a copy!), Pete Presford, Bob Shaw (the real one), Steve Green, Dave Langford (who thanked me for sending him the fifties fanthology!), S. Manderson (who's a sucker for Gernsbackian portmanteau words) (twice), Pete Crump (twice), Eunice Pearson, Harry Bell (four times, thanks Harry), Skel (twice, and several triff tapes), Ted White (again, advising me on the use, or rather, non-use of this type-face), Nicholas Davies, John D. Owen (twice), Mark Greener (twice), ATom (lost count, lots), Martin Tudor (twice - well almost!), Mike Johnson (who sent some poems, one of which I may use one day - unless he gets fed up waiting and demands them back), I. M. Walsh, Mike Lewis (twice), Terry Broome (twice), Roger Sjolander, Ethel Lindsay, Dave Wood (must be 4 or 5 times), Mike Ashley (not the one in Mitcham), Ron Bennett and probably a few others that I've now mislaid.\*

Ruthless mailing list cull time is here again, in fact is overdue. Check the boxes below, if there's a cross, follow the instructions or murmur quietly to yourself "Goodbye, Terry."

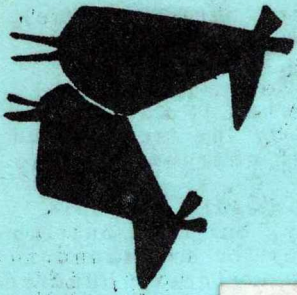
\*\*\*\*\*

\* \* To receive further issues, you need  
\* \* to write a LoC, renew your sub,  
\*\*\*\*\* send artwork, send stamps, start  
pubbing your own ish or even  
send money if you must!

\*\*\*\*\*

\* \* Your idea of "Trade" and mine  
\* \* differ radically. I don't want to  
\* \* force you to publish, but I haven't  
\*\*\*\*\* seen a copy of your zine for a long time.  
If you don't want to trade anymore, fine.  
I won't if I don't hear from you, ok?





From: Terry Hill, 41 Western Road,  
Maidstone, Kent, ME16 8NE  
Great Britain.

Lee Hoffman, HM-KTF,  
350 N. W. Harbor Blvd.,  
Port Charlotte,  
FL 33952,  
U.S.A.

By air mail  
Par avion

PRINTED MATTER - REDUCED RATE  
PRINTED MATTER - REDUCED RATE  
PRINTED MATTER - REDUCED RATE

### BAQUOTES

I ALLUS DID WONDER WHAT THE COLLECTIVE NOUN FOR 'POCTSARCDS' WAS; IT SEEMS IT IS 'TRCICKLE'...WHO THE HELL IS POGO POSSUM?...THIS IS ONE OF THOSE NEW-FANGLED 'SPELL-IT-YOURSELF' LETTERS... NIALI DOES TALK TO MULTI-STOREY CAR PARKS. AND THEY ANSWER BACK:...SO, LET'S NOW BEAT ABOUT THE BUSH...IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED, THIS IS THE USUAL'...I'M ALSO COLLECTING FOR HYPERACTIVE SLOTHS, -INSOMNIAC TSE-TSE FLIES, AND DESTITUTE HERMIT CRABS....THE ONLY PLACE I COULD FIND TO SIT AND DRINK A COFFEE WAS THE LOO SEAT...NEXT TIME I'LL TRY AND GET A LETTER TO YOU IN TIME TO BE WAHF'D...TRY NOT TO PUT MY LOC NEXT TO ONE FROM THAT BASTARD SHAW IN FUTURE...WE AT THE KREMLIN HAVE BEEN INFORMED OF SCURRILOUS ATTEMPTS TO SMEAR THE NAME OF COMRADE ANDROPOV...BEING A CHRISTIAN SCIENTIST'S FINE, UNTIL YOU GET APPENDICITIS...I STILL RECKON 20p FOR A CUP OF TEA'S A DAMN SIGHT BETTER VALUE THAN A FIVER FOR TWENTY MINUTES:.... DID I MENTION THAT I PICKED UP MY COPY OF THE PERFUMED GARDEN IN THE EPISCOPAL THRIFT SHOP?...THE DRAWBACK IS THAT MOST OF THE TIME I'VE NO IDEA WHAT I'M DOING...AUSSIE BEER'S BEST USE IS AS AN IMPROMPTU SHOWER ON HOT DAYS...NOT SOMETHING I NORMALLY DO WITH FANZINES BECAUSE THEY'RE TOO THIN...REMEMBER JOEL NYDAHL, NUDGE, NUDGE, WINK, WINK...NORMALLY I WORK WITH STUFF STRAIGHT FROM THE MONKEY'S KIDNEY...ROT 6, WHICH MAL A IS NOT WORKING VERY HARD ON AT THE MOMENT...DON'T BE DECEIVED, HE'S NOT HALF AS NICE AS HE LOOKS... SO LONG AS IT DOESN'T ENABLE YOU TO CHEAT AT THE POLE VAULT...THAT ALWAYS PUTS THE FEAR OF GOD UP THE CLERGY...SORRY ABOUT THIS LOW-TECH CORRESPONDENCE...HE LOOKED AS DRUNK AS A MAN WITH TWO GLASS EYES...

Baquotes from (in deliberately unrelated order);  
Alex Stewart, Dave Wood, Chuck Connor (2), Ted Tubb, The Black Adder, Jon Wallace (3), Joy Hibbert, Steve Green, Mike Ashley (2), Moira Shearman, Skel (3), Terry Broome, David Steel (yes, the Lib/SDP one), Ethel Lindsay, Mal Ashworth (2), Mark Greener, and one unknown - the brown-paper-bag specialist.

Obligatory Rude Article:

STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...

ELDA WHEELER INJURES NEO IN HOTEL BEDROOM AT BECCON...NEO REPORTED LATER TO BE 'ONLY BRUISED'...NO LAW SUIT EXPECTED...MISS WHEELER'S ONLY COMMENT; "I WAS PROVOKED!"...EXPERTS ARE CHECKING HER BODY FOR FINGERPRINTS ..."DIFFICULT TO TELL WHOSE ARE WHOSE"

STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...

