

Microwave

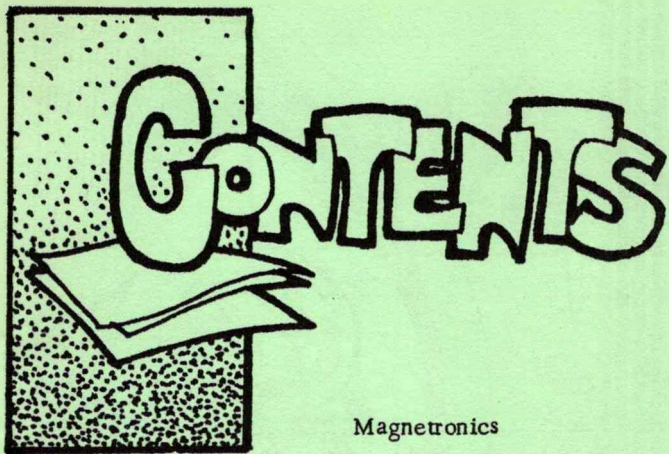
So Leatherbeanie,
shall we inscribe a most
singular outburst?

...Reckon
we might,
milord...

Chronicle and
Introduction of
Admiral's
the City of
1783

S. H. F. 1983

Natty Jophan, the colonial cofan and travelling giant known as Leatherbeanie, visits Lord St. Ghu.
(Brandon Hall - 18th C.)



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 - The fanzine that dimly
 perceives that 'annual' and
 'annish' are not the same thing.

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Stu Shiffman	Cover, 21.
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Harry Bell	3, 24, bacover.
Mike Molloy	25.
Hazel Ashworth	31.
ATom	everything else.

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M "Where are you going?"
 T "To clean my teeth."
 M "Why?"
 T "Because they're dirty."
 M "The car is dirty."
 T "Yes, but it's not in my mouth!"



Magnetronics

THE LUNATICS HAVE TAKEN OVER THE ASYLUM

Okay, so if you've flicked quickly through this issue prior to tackling the editorial, you probably won't have noticed anything radically different to previous MICROWAVES. Well, this ish is basically the same, but this isn't Terry writing.

Last March, Terry was made redundant. In CRYSTAL SHIP 9, John Owen states that he believes more fans should write articles about the horrors of unemployment, lack of finance etc.; I'm not sure I agree. Sure, it's all pretty grim, and I won't pretend

the last year was easy, but good news is always better than bad. If you want that, there are newspapers. This is a fanzine, one which has always been aimed at the lighter side of life. So, Terry is working again - the job has brought its own problems, particularly to Terry's fanac, which is now almost non-existent. Although more satisfying and enjoyable, selling sheet metal capacity, electronic components and assembly is more tiring and time-consuming than lorry-driving. Hence the presence of Elda and myself between these sheets, rather than satin ones.

Tired of shifting cut stencils, letters and illustrations from one place to another and back within Castle Microvore, I enlisted Elda's help to DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. As most of the issue was ready to run, all we had to do was get Vinz to supervise the duplication and compile the ish. So I suppose it's not really our ish after all, but at least all the excellent material lying around unshared is at last in print. You should be grateful to us. So there.

Of course, the bug bites deep. We've decided to continue MICROWAVE ourselves in future, if Terry's interest continues to wane. We may change the name, will probably alter the format. We'd welcome your comments. With regard to content, we want to keep the general tone humorous, whilst introducing a feminine slant. I myself have outlines for articles on patchwork and motherhood, and I'm keen to introduce a cookery slot. Elda has her own ideas. Above all, we want the finished result to be balanced and presented as well as we possibly can.

"A MAN, SIR, SHOULD KEEP HIS FRIENDSHIP IN CONSTANT REPAIR" - Samuel Johnson

As a bystander, I've found fandom somewhat vitriolic of late. There are people lobbing brickbats left, right and centre. I suppose it is a reflection of the world in general. I do not believe that there can ever be total peace in the world, people will never agree completely, and it would be pretty boring if they did. However, my wish is for more tolerance, more respect of other's opinions, and this applies to fandom in particular.

As far as I'm concerned, I feel that if you have anything to say, that you think important, you should stand up and say it. Then shut up, and let others have their say. Present fandom appears to enjoy drawing out

arguments to infinite length. I have witnessed fans recently leaping to other's defence, only to become totally disillusioned and depressed over matters which, initially did not concern them. Whilst their motives were admirable, it was soon apparent that they were beating their heads against a brick wall. Thus several people nearly gaffiated over another's intransigence. Thankfully, it didn't quite happen this time, but similar situations in the past have resulted in the loss of prominent fans.

I suppose what I'm really advocating is more bonhomie, less animosity. Am I being naive in hoping that old disagreements can be forgiven and forgotten? Life is too short to make bad feeling, especially in fandom. After all, it is supposed to be a hobby, something to find enjoyment in, and I don't feel good if I upset someone, inadvertently or not. A 'mundane' friend recently said to me, bitterly, "It's all right for you, you get on with everyone." It caused me to reflect. Although I go out of my way to be pleasant to everyone I have contact with, it doesn't necessarily mean that I agree with all that they say. It takes some effort to act this way, but I believe everyone could do it. I hope that the fandom of 1985 will be a friendlier society. As Neville Chamberlain said, "In war, whichever side may call itself the victor, there are no winners, but all are losers." So let's all take a deep breath and try, eh?

IT IS NOT SO EASY TO FOOL LITTLE GIRLS TODAY AS IT USED TO BE - James Thurber, 'Fables for our times.'

Now don't get me wrong, I've never been happier than since I've been married. Nevertheless, there are times when I wish I was back home with Mum. One of these times is when I'm feeling ill.

Sympathy is short in our household. Dinner has to be cooked even if I feel like dying. Recently, and unusually, I've been plagued with persistent coughs and colds. One evening, during a viral onslaught (oh my God, another medical MICROWAVE?), I was trying to read to Keith, stopping every few words to clear and soothe my sore throat. To my amazement, Terry emerged from the kitchen with a cup of steaming purple liquid, hot blackcurrant and honey for my limping larynx. How kind and sweet of him, I thought, and how unusual to be cossetted. Gratefully, I took a mouthful. Gratefully, I swallowed. Ungratefully, I nearly choked.

"Whatever have you put in this?" I spluttered.

"Just drink it, it will do you good", said Terry.

Another, more tentative, sip.

"But it tastes salty", I croaked.

"Does it?", innocence personified.

"What have you put in it? I'd like to know what to tell the coroner."

"Well, we haven't any soluble aspirin, so....."

"Yes?" questioned I, when he hesitated.

"Alka Seltzer!", said Terry triumphantly.

Grounds for divorce? Possibly, but I suppose it's the thought that counts. Or so he keeps telling me.



Terry.... why don't they send
LOC's like everyone else?

Eldatorial

"WHEN I MAKES TEA, I MAKES TEA," AS OLD MOTHER GROGAN SAID. "AND WHEN I MAKES WATER, I MAKES WATER." James Joyce, 'Ulysses'.

Ok, put those exophthalmic eyeballs back, Margaret and I have declared a coup against lassitude and ennui and have taken over MICROWAVE.

Our dear, not much in evidence, Lord and Master, has been tied up for the past year or so (well, that's what he says, and if it's true, who is she and where does he keep her? I've searched Castle Microvore from the bottom of its bottomless pit to the top of its roof rack - very healthy you know, a good stretch and fresh air at the same time - and I haven't seen hide nor hair of her, not even little bits of either). To be honest, I don't think he's being entirely truthful, I think, of late, he's been wasting his energies on WORKING. I ask you, is that any way for the fief of lands Microvore to behave? He has neglected the needs of his lawful wife and (unlawful) concubine merely to obtain filthy lucre. Well, in a fit of pique, I demanded more of his attention, to which he answered by telling me to pack my

bags and head for the ferine northlands. Where I could earn my keep by converting them ALL to the true faith -- fanzine fandom. "And don't come back until you've learnt your place, wench", was his parting shot.

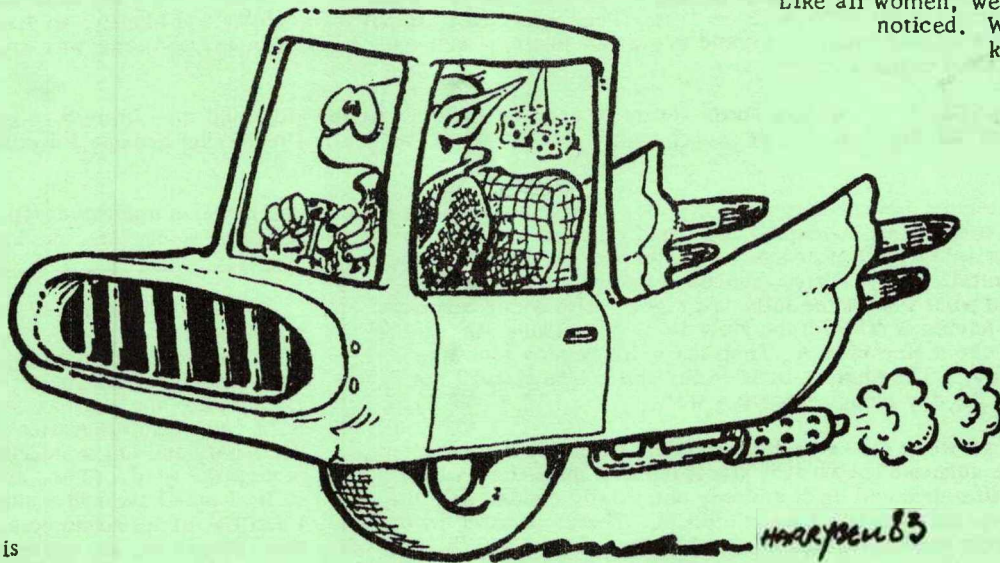
Well, the task was rather like emptying the ocean with a thimble, so I gave up and resumed the use of my more-noticeable talents. The months passed quickly, and I'd nearly forgotten my former life, except to send regular reports (untrue, of course) on how the conversion was going, when I received this frantic message from Margaret telling me of her fears over the demise of MICROWAVE. I couldn't refuse such pitiful pleas and this began months of shuttling backwards and forwards, editing MICROWAVE, producing false conversion reports and trying to stay out of Terry's way.

Well, as you can see, it's worked, after a fashion. As Margaret's already said, future MICROWAVES will be different. We like its friendly style; Margaret feels it needs to be more feminine, I'm not too sure how I'd like to see it changed, possibly it needs more aggression and world awareness. I can see Margaret as the voice of reason and myself as a stirrer of the pots of fandom.

In this issue I will leave Margaret to comment on the current issues of fandom, my northern exile has rather left me out of touch with the issues of today. In fact the only fannish message I've had was a curt 'vote Nielsen Hayden for TAFF, at once' from Terry. Ah well, I can always go back to Chuch Harris, he made me, after all (so he says). But then, will he want me now, since that Avedon Something-or-other, you know, the TAFF what's-its-name, beat me to setting up a fan-club for him. Just cos she speaks sign language! Body language is much more eloquent, according to ATom (Bochanism rules, okay?)

I digress!

Back to the issue at hand.
Like all women, we want to be noticed. We want to know that you care.



Just picking this issue up and fondling through its pages is not what we crave. Communicate with us, write, talk, sing, anything as long as it's directed at us. Unlike the previous editor, we will take notice of your comments and maybe act upon them (particularly if you are under twenty-five, short, dark, good-looking, rich and MALE). We've done our bit, now it's up to you.

=====

YESTERDAY I ATTENDED A 'PISS-UP IN A BREWERY' - AND I CAN CONFIRM THAT THE EVENT WAS ORGANISED TO EVERYONE'S SATISFACTION - Niall McA Robertson

=====

+++++

I AGREE 100%.....BUT.....

+++++

Creative

Random

History

CHUCK HARRIS

Today, Ford's offered me £20,000 and a half-pay pension to piss off out of it; to sling my hook and desist from touching up the tiny Work Experience girls. They would like, to put it forcefully and bluntly, to dispense with my services. It's a lot of money. I could buy a new house, a new car, a new woman, and some new erectile tissuebut I turned it down.

I rationalised it to Sue with horror stories of years on the dole for the kids, and the diminishing value of a fixed pension halving its true worth every eight years, -----but really I'm staying because I'd miss the social life.

The computer has taken most of my job, -- leaving only the most boring bits like numerical filing and such-like. I am seldom fully occupied and spend much of my time on the chat circuit. Every day, the Ladies auxiliary --- Charlie's Angels of course --- arrive one at a time to discuss their brutal, stingy, dirty, drunken, feckless, ugly, odorous husbands and what was on the telly last night. Also which secretary is currently having it off with the Parts Sales Advertising Manager (a vile lecher who makes even A. Thomson in his heyday look like Chuck Wesley). The chat, a little work, and a litre flask of hot coffee helps the day along reasonably well.

Look, last week the Daventry monastery (actually it's a nunnery, but for some unknown reason it is placarded as a monastery. God knows the difference and he is the only one vitally concerned), the monastery was invaded by Chicken Libbers. These, in case you don't know, are very sincere crazies who wish to free the poultry from their penal servitude. They like to concentrate on the nun's chickens because the local commercial batteryhen farmers have picked up a nasty habit of firing large charges of buckshot into their denimed arses. Anyway, in they went, chanting their slogans, "Uhuru, red rooster" etc. and ripping off the doors of the battery cages. They had a problem. Once the doors were off, the idiot birds still stayed in their cages, clucking away and laying eggs galore, instead of dashing for freedom.

I have written to Joy Hibbert and now wish that I hadn't. I wanted to say how I went "deaf in my youth from the constant susurrations of knicker elastic abrading the auditory nerve system," but I can't find susurrations in my bloody dictionary and am wondering if I invented the word. (Tho, come to think of it, I may have had a narrow escape. I don't want her round here, coming the Anna Steul, and snapping her Marks and Spencer dreadnoughts at me and hoping for a miracle.)

I know now exactly how they feel. "It's a bloody horrible place, but I like the company."

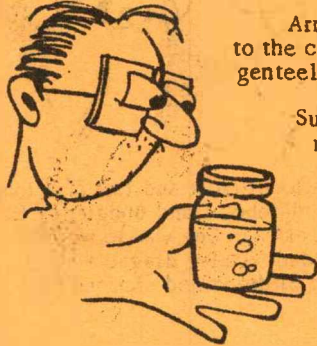
Hospital Day. They changed my hypertension tablets a month or so ago. Since then, along with the other side effects, I've been puffing badly when pulling my golf trolley up Thrombosis Hill. The Doc thought I should visit Northampton General and see the Consultant.

Weeks ago they sent me an appointment card for 9.15 --- bring documentation and Urine Sample.

So, last night I ask Sue for a bottle for the sample. Predictably, the only empty bottles we have in the house are a little brown aspirin bottle and a gallon demijohn recently emptied of Dry White Nerdsteiner. Once again I'm Chuchie Churchmouse without even a pot to piss in.

Eventually we find an almost empty screw top jar of Confiture de Fraise du Bois that Sean bought us on his school trip to France. We scoff the last couple of spoonsful and wash it out ready for the morning.

Now, Sue has a theory that if we get up at sparrowfart and get to Northampton by 8.45 we will miss teeming thousands of other puffing people who will all arrive at 9.15. I point out that attendance times are now computerised to obviate queues and waiting about, but compromise at 9.00. Place pisspot, Steps To The Sun, The Love Dove, and the Daily Mail all into Sue's big handbag and away to the Big City.



Arrive to find Waiting Room S R O, but find two chairs in passage and shift them to the centre of the room. Overcome stagefright and goldfish feeling, sit down and nod genteely to the congregation.

Sue mouths "Give peepot to reception nurse." Comprehension dawns on the third mouth. Reach into handbag and --- here we go again --- the bloody sodding pot has tipped over and the whole thing is awash in cold clammy piss.

What to do? What to do? Ignore little bright pink wife mouthing "O God: O God:", grab handbag and dash for cubicle in Gents. Abandon soggy Daily Mail, pat books dry, mop out bag with toilet paper, and inspect jamjar.

About two teaspoonsful left. Try to top up but discover I am suffering from Gobi Dick. Flush lavatory, think hard about Niagara Falls but still no, er, end result. Consider and reject daft ideas like filling up from tap, or asking Sue to help out ("Congratulations Mr Harris.....from your urine analysis we find that you are two months pregnant").

Decide from vast lob-lollyboy experience that two living spoonsful is ample. Return to waiting room, avoid all the interested stares, and furtively pass bottle to the reception nurse, ----- who promptly holds it aloft as if it were the bloody F. A. Cup and hollers "It's not very much, is it?" All the Big Drippers in the audience look pityingly at Fairy Dew Drop in the middle.

Sue, who has now decided that this is all very comical indeed, inspects her bag for flotsam and jetsam. She decides the Love Dove is for the deep six. She tucks it under her chair and dries her fingers on my blazer. She also finds my half a bar of Cadburys Dairy Milk. She offers it, but I know where it's been and suggest saving it for Sean. Instead she pops it under the chair with the pocket book.

"You could write this up for Terryll," she says to me and the six adept lipreaders in the audience. "You could call it 'Chuch Harris -- Piss Artist.'".....

That's not quite the end of it though. Three hours later after we'd finished the circuit..... X Ray ECG Recod Scan Pharmacy Documentation etc., we returned to the Waiting Room to fix the next appointment and check out. Helpful nurse-receptionist-lost-property-custodian presents us with a damp Love Dove..... and one quarter bar of Cadburys Dairy Milk.....



I've discovered that I am 11 lb overweight so Sue's promptly put me on a diet. I almost envy puny Thomson even though only a matter of ounces stand between him and sand in his face. There's a man who doesn't have to stand up twice to cast a shadow - oh no - he's up and down like a fucking yo-yo before he so much as makes a flicker. Mind, you always were a poor starveling wretch Arf, but this is beyond a joke. I realise that part of the reason is to wheedle CARE packages from kind tourists visiting the Tun, but you are fast approaching transparency. One careless move and you'll find yourself a Slowglass panel in Bosh's next double-glazing saga.

When it comes to the crunch you can never really trust Arfer.....or Ving.....I was thinking about going to a small convention later this year. I have never seen Miss Elda, and would dearly love to rest my eyes on the goddess incarnate and understand why Father Bridge resigned Holy Orders after 40 celibate years.

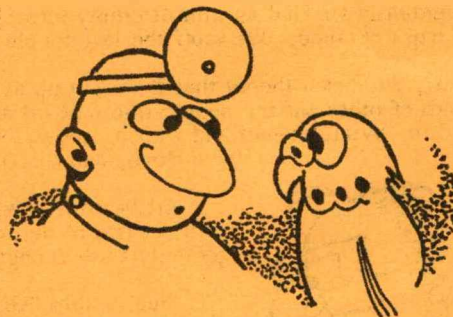
The only problem is that this is just the sort of scenario Ving and Arf delight in. I can just see my good friends setting me up; priming me with strong liquor and then introducing Ms. Hibbert as Miss Elda. Great Sporting Moments! I am crushed to that all so capacious bosom whilst she hollers, "You male chauvinist Pygmalion, you ----- warm, golden loveliness indeed!" I die on the spot and my trusted friends....yes, including Terryll and Miss Elda.... have hysterics on the sidelines. With friends like this.....

Right. I can warn you all this very instant. If I have the slightest doubts we will ALL be down on the carpet whilst I, Charles Randolph Harris, personally check for the sacred paddle of Roscoe

birthmark. None genuine without warranted trademark, and phooey to Dave Rowley breathing on my glasses.

As soon as we told Miss Elda about all this, she sent Chuch a photograph right away. No inscription; no message. Just one word on the back. "Promise?"}}

BUDGIES are always a sure bet. Sue is obsessed with budgies. The only bit of MICROWAVE 7 that interested her was LeeH's mention of those wild budgies of Port Charlotte. She thought she would like to see those. I'd certainly like to see LeeH again. Perhaps we ought to fly to Florida for our hols and then she could look at her birds and I could look at mine.



READER'S LETTERS DEPT.
(To clear some of the
"-" backlog)

Dear Mrs Harris,

I understand your husband has taken up stamp-collecting. If he pesters my old lady again I'll tear his tiny balls off.

Yours faithfully,
(Mr) T. Stamp.

(Elstree)

Buckingham
Palace,
London W1

Dear Subject,

My husband and I thank you for the "-" Subscription Renewal Reminder. Our Privy Purse is engaged (Hah Hah) for the weekend, but we will pop round to the Mint on Monday as soon as they open. It seems ages since the last issue, but wasn't Chuch superb. . . . almost Blochlike. We have no jurisdiction over Hugos, but (in confidence) he will be ennobled in the next Honour's list as a Queen's Beast.

Honi soi etc.,

E2R

P. S. God save me.

Dear Uncle Chuch,

My husband is a commercial traveller. At Brighton I overheard him at the bar saying that he was into oralsex. He assures me this is only his present sales territory. . . one of the new counties lying between Sussex and Middlesex. Is he trying to make a sucker out of me?

Yours,

S. Marriott.

P. S. Chuch was superb.

Happy Harry Harris is the current incarnation, --- a clean-mouthed star elocutionist and last of a long line descending through Pretty Joey, Dobbin, Budgieboy I and Budgieboy II. Unfortunately, he is a very sick bird. Two weeks ago Sue was so worried that she took him to the Daventry Vet. He nodded wisely, diagnosed phylloxera or something, prescribed Chloromycetin birdseed and charged £2 for the performance.

Anyway, Sue wasn't very impressed with him, and her bird was no better. She thought him a quack and a charlatan. He didn't look like a vet. He smelt of gin and wore an anorak. . . . not a bit like Tristan or Siegfried or that other crafty little bugger who was having it off with the home-help. Why! he didn't even drive an old prewar motor. Certainly not the real vet type. Nobody in their right mind would allow this chap to stick his arm up their cow's bottom.

She decided on a Second Opinion and took the bird to Rugby to see a much Higher Up Vet. This one was obviously the real thing. . . vastly more experienced; wore a tweed suit and smoked a pipe, ----- smart and handsome, kindly but wise.

So, wisely, he asked Sue what she thought was wrong. She thought the bird had a tumour.

"Indeed he has," said old wise vet making with the instant diagnosis. "A nasty tumour. Your budgie is not long for this world. Give him this fantastic --- but very expensive-millet impregnated with Interferon and all known vitamins. Pay £4 to the receptionist and come back next week. Thank you."

Sadly, she comes home to break the grim news to the family. Our dicke, little Happy Harry Harris, has the Big C. He is due to fly off the mortal coil at any minute now, to hover over the Elysian Fields crapping on Cherubim and Seraphim instead of yours truly.

So I asked the obvious question. "Why do you have to take him back next week?"

"He needs care."

"Supposing he's dead by then, does he still get another consultation?"

"You mean sod. You've never loved him. You hate birds. I'll never forgive you for Budgieboy II after he had his heart attack. You're rotten thru' and thru'. Just like all your family. None of them loved birds. You were all the same. You were all vile to those poor chickens at Rainham."

"They weren't pets, lover. We kept them for fresh eggs and Chicken Maryland. No-one was cruel to them."

"Yes, breaking their little necks and pulling out all their feathers instead of buying eggs and chicken portions from Sainsburys like any normal decent family. . . . You. . . . you psychopath. And what about Budgieboy II and my poor Mum and the nasty dirty way your father used to wipe his finger around the top of the ketchup bottle before putting the cap back on. So there."

~~~~~

Well, Budgieboy II had a heart attack whilst we were out getting awash at the Captain's Day pissup. Home at sparrowfart. . . Sue making shushing noises. . . dire warnings about The Neighbours. . . nasty threats about Wait Till I Get You Indoors, whilst I softly sing a lone Spaceman's song. . . haunting



refrain from beyond the asteroids;  
PUT YOUR ARMS AROUND ME HONEEEEEY,  
HOLD ME TIGHT,  
SNUGGLE UP AND CUDDLE UP WITH ALL  
YOUR MIGHT.  
OH: OH: I NEVER KNEW, ANY GIRL  
LIKE YEEEW.

Mother-in-law had been budgie-sitting that night. She was waiting at the door, full of tears and self-recrimination. When the bird fell from its perch and lay on its back, feebly kicking its tiny feet in the air, she felt that she must do something. The poor creature was obviously in extremis. She decided to administer half a teaspoon of brandy. The bird still died of course, but it had a sort of happy budgie smile on its little face at the end.

Sue comforted her mum and promised a proper budgie funeral in the garden later in the day. (We like to do things with a proper ritual -- non-sectarian, natch, -- no flushing away the cadaver in this house.)

I added further words of solace. "Never mind, Mum. You Did Right. I'm glad you remembered the brandy in the larder."

She smiled bravely through her tears. "I was so worried," she said. "I got the bottle from the drink cupboard, and a teaspoon, but he could only take just little sips before.....before he Passed On."

Comprehension dawned. "The drink cupboard.....Mum, you didn't.....you, never.....not the cooking brandy from the larder.....you didn't use my worth-a-king's-ransom Martell VSOP \*\*\*\*\* Special Liqueur Napoleon Cognac that I smuggled past the Customs and Exise at Dover? You didn't use my liquid gold, my certified genuine elixir of the gods, on the bleeding budgie?" Almost incoherent, I screamed. "Get a saucer. Wring the little bugger out."

I got the Dreadful Silence.....the full three weeks in Coventry sentence for that lot, and I can't say it was worth it. Even with ice and ginger ale, there was no subtle bouquet, no tang, no frisson reminiscent of the true Cognac grape in that murky little saucer.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Come," said Vinç, "to the inaugural bi-monthly meeting of KTF this very Sunday." I shrugged off the idea. I would have liked to have seen them again---especially Arfer---but I had a match in the morning, and various jobs lined up and this, that and the other. Sue, almost hidden behind fifteen unironed shirts, said I might just as well go.....so I borrowed the milk money for emergencies, topped up on my Barclaycard and off I went. ....full of caution and promises not to drive fast and watch the dials.

And fucked it up right away. I drove about forty miles on the motorway between sixty and eighty in third gear instead of top. Of all the bloody stupid senile things to do this was about the worst. I don't hear the engine over-revving so periodically I touch the gear shift knob to feel the vibration. This time I didn't. I know I should have a rev-counter fitted, but I change cars fairly frequently and it just doesn't seem economic. Fortunately Sue thinks the car sounds okay,---but my self esteem is in tatters and I feel a complete perfect oaf. I can't even remember the last time I drove more than five miles alone, but here I am, wrecking everything the first time out.

Still, eventually we got to Welling. There's a new motorway connection, and it's virtually door-to-door. I did the obligatory Getting Lost Ritual at Dartford, but still arrived in just under two hours.

Find doorstep; stand out of range in case Vinç has waterpistol loaded; door opens and Lo: a scruffy Terryll, staring at me in incomprehensive bafflement. Over his pointy head is a little balloon chonk full of ?????????????? ??????????????????. Either he is fuddled by drink or out of his skull on pot. Then, slowly, slowly, slowly (Lord Christ Almighty) recognition dawns all over his unlovely chops, "Er.....er.....er....CHUCH!"

I tell you friends, it's marvellous being a BNF at Welling in this day and age. I felt like giving him a small tip or a karate throw or something.....

They've been doing the place up since I was there last. The new fan-room upstairs is just the right size for a clubroom. Very nice too, ---carpet, ceiling tiles, white walls, enormous duplicating table, collating shelves ("He forced me to collate on our Honeymoon.") (also "I had to crank his Dick all night.") lots of drink and seven bodies.

Whatever you do though, DON'T have tortoises. We have two of them. They wake from hibernation at least two months before the garden is warm enough for them so you have to keep them indoors and feed them on very expensive lettuce. It would be far cheaper to keep Walter. Most of our hall is fenced off now to form a vivarium (I think). Their excretory habits are vile and disgusting (cleaner to keep Walt too).

Sean likes them though. He has originated an elementary form of communication with them. He hisses and they hiss back. All very interesting; he tried waving a little piece of paper with nine circles on it but the results were inconclusive. They appeared to study it carefully and then pissed all over it. Would this indicate an origin outside the planetary system we know and love?



Arf instantly recognisable and unchanged; no hair loss (not that it was ever abundant), no weight loss, everything still in place just as if he'd been freeze-dried twenty years ago. I was really pleased to see him; instant reassurance that some basic things are immutable and unchanging. And Arf can certainly be basic. He seemed pleased to see me too. He thought I Looked Well. He didn't like my beard. It is a Sean Connery Clipped affair, and I never grew it to tickle Arfer Thomson's fancy and you had better believe me.

Sit down, glass from hyperspace, somebody's elderberry and raisin. Wish I'd thought to bring some home-made plonk myself. Sip, find bird at feet. "Ah," I said, "Joy Hibbert," chastely embracing her, knowing quite well that this was Miss Elda.

And Jophan found that it was so.

I confess that, with Miss Elda, all my impressions are shaded because I feel rather proprietary. . . . just as if I'd invented her. As if I took the cold clay, fashioned it, breathed life into it, omitted the bolt thru the neck and set her on the golden pedestal. I told her I'd give her a badge to wear at the Seacon; "Chuch Harris made me." She smiled nicely, but didn't actually agree to wear it.

She fits in very nicely with the other idiots, and you don't notice the age difference. Vinç is a sort of father figure, and I suppose the other two are sort of elder brothers. Given half a chance Arfer teases the life out of her. She was unwary enough to ask him what "thoats" were and more or less made the afternoon for him. The nicest thing about Elda is that she is really sunny and bubbly and could breathe life into a funeral party.

She doesn't mind me writing her up as a golden raver either.

Next, a little shrunken gaberdine heap in the corner turned out to be Ken Bulmer. Age and trouble have seared him, but he was still sharp and pleasant enough. After all, twenty-four years is a long time; he must have thought I'd aged a bit too.

Opposite Ken was a plumpish, florid, completely white-haired chap who sort of rung a bell (insert Quasimodo joke. . . .) but whom I just couldn't place for about fifteen minutes. And then, Jesus Christ Almighty! Up came the famed memory bank synapses and Lo! Ted Tubb Lives!

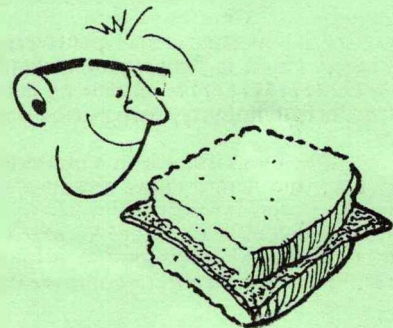
Every little bit was completely unrecognisable except that long lower jaw and that tight smile on one side of his mouth as he talks. He looked very well, but I'd suspect hypertension there too. He is still very good company. I liked "I'm suffering from snow blindness from the empty white spaces rolled into my typewriter," and "They stopped asking me to be auctioneer after I fell off the stage twice in twenty minutes."

Last body was genuinely unknown, but I recognised him from his self portraits on EPSILON covers. I checked with Arf first in case I'd cocked it up, but it was unmistakably Rob Hansen. . . . but a really nice guy and a credit to you, me, and Joe Sainsbury.

Ted found a Harrisquote card "All ejaculation is premature" and wanted to discuss this with Miss Elda. I no longer find it the captivating subject it once was and preferred to talk to Rob about WIZ, and why he is pissed off with Bergeron. Ted gets on to vasectomies he has known and loved. I donate "gelding the lily" and thought I was being highly original, but now I find the phrase in a batch of limericks I've been copying.

Refreshments are now being served. This is a radical new departure and one to be applauded. At the Epicentre you used to get a peculiarly vile cup of tea if you hung around long enough and could find a cup, but now it is all very haute cuisine and lettuce. Chicken last time and pizza today. I am very fond of pizza so I ate two pieces, leaving Arf to assemble an enormous cornbeef sandwich. I did offer him some lettuce. . . . having no use for it myself. . . . but he spurned it as rabbit food. Personally, the way he carries on, I would have thought him eminently qualified, but we'll leave that for now.

I would have liked to have sat down and talked more to Elda, but you know what I'm like in this sort of meeting. . . . a sort of barely controlled riot with me trying to carry out five simultaneous conversations with everybody else scribbling messages. I finish up with snatches of everything and nothing properly completed. It really is a sort of five ring circus. Next time I will talk more sensibly to everybody. . . . but we all know that I won't, it will be just the same as it always is.





# Me Hame Toon

Niall McArthur Robertson

Of all Scotland's cities, Dundee must be the easiest to leave. A couple of minutes walk from the city centre, and you have a choice of a rail bridge, or of hitching across the road bridge, both of them swinging across the wide, choppy Firth of Tay, away to Edinburgh and to England. It is generally accepted that any Dundonian born with a sign of initiative or intellectual activity should sooner or later take one of these exits and never return. By the same token, Dundee is also easy to enter: Irish immigrants once flocked here to work in the mills, and a few from those parts still turn up, despite the fact that there is no longer work for anyone: a destitute Ulsterman recently cadged four shillings off me on the strength of my CND badge. Like many another, he was on the road, just passing through; like the drunk Geordies who've lost their way between Aberdeen and Newcastle, or the Glaswegian doing strange penance for youthful misdeeds. More tricky are the Englishmen, deservedly ejected from their homeland for drunkenness or unwise sexual practices, and all too aware that this is the end of the line. They wander around the city pubs heaping abuse on the stupid drunken Scots, and when rebuked complain that they feel like Jews in Nazi Germany. (next part excised due to possible difficulties with libel laws).

Och weel. Dundee has not yet attained the condition of Glasgow, which is now ringed about and cut across by motorways to the degree that it is very difficult for the unwary traveller to find the place. Nor has the public transport declined as far as that of the poor Glaswegians, none of which have cars, and who have the choice of taking out a mortgage on a bus ticket, or trying to cross a labyrinth of grimy motorways on foot. No, but they are working on it; despite the economic climate, new roads are appearing, designed to confuse and misdirect the poor motorist; roads whose purpose is totally inscrutable, but which we are told have to be built because of the economic expansion which we are told is coming in the 1960's. These plans require that vast, bustling areas of shops and housing be reduced to rubble - but this can be interpreted also as a manifestation of the city's fear of the past....

There's a certain mean-mindedness that resents any sign of past achievement, any suggestion that those who now wear the chains of office might have been equalled - let alone surpassed - by their predecessors. So down come all the old buildings, landmarks, from the old town house in the thirties, through the sixties, when the city's fortunes were in the hands of Provost Tom Moore, proud owner of a demolition company.... There wasn't too much left after he got to work, but the odd remaining monument is still threatened with remarkable persistence. Latest target was the notable and ornate chimney known as Cox's stack (or stalk), which was due to be eradicated as part of a District Council deal with a prominent firm of builders of expensive but shoddy middle-class slums. The middle-sized fuss that resulted when this proposal was made public was enough for the Council to suddenly announce that they'd opposed the plan from the start. Still, I'm sure we'll wake one morning, and no more chimney.

So who are those responsible for this lamentable condition? The worst culprits must be the sprawling, mysterious empire of D.C. Thomson, major employers and producers of the Beano, Victor, and other comics noted for an unusual combination of jingoism, sadism, and surrealism. Trivial? Not in their home city, where they own a lot of the town, with tentacles of unhealthy influence spreading much wider, and a fanatical loyalty from much of the staff (though this is, luckily, dying out). Above all there's the near-saturation of the local consciousness by their papers, the 'Courier' and the ghastly 'Sunday Post', with their masochistic devotion to Maggie's government, and Protestant slave-ethic (prospective employees have to name their old school - hard luck if you had a Catholic education). Urrgh. They represent that school of 'thought' in Scotland which excises the word 'hell' and replaces it with 'heck', the couthy gentility that fears 'the animal' and is prepared to support hanging, flogging, and no end of fearful punishments to keep it at bay.

It follows - for it's no coincidence that Jekyll and Hyde were created by a Scotsman - that there's another side to this, and thus we have the image of the hard-drinking, hard-fighting, razor-slashing thug - 'the animal' in person. I've seen lads with a university education slur their voices, stick out their beerguts and boast of their ability at tearing heads off etc. in order to fit this image. They're most prominent among the Labour administration of the District Council, who combine a caricature leftist pose (pro USSR, PLO, etc.) with some astonishing bloodthirsty rhetoric. Needless to say, their credibility is small - the City's people remain sceptical about the alleged revolution,



and, like most hardmen (those who aren't genuine psychopaths - a much admired breed) they are actually a pretty pathetic and ineffectual bunch who couldn't punch their way out of a paper bag and are no doubt terrified of women ....(ah! The truth about the Scottish male at last! This gives me a lot of satisfaction....)

Neither opposing tendency has much time for the exercise of intellect: the genteel believe in the absolute power of 'common sense', while the hardmen's view is similar to that of the 19th Century Professor who believed that education would make a woman's womb shrivel - except that they think that learning about any subject other than football or pints of lager is likely to make a man's willy shrivel and drop off. Art is, similarly, a practice for the leisure moments of the wealthy, and not for peasants like me, or 'for poofs'. Indeed any form of enjoyment has long been frowned upon. Until recently, one could be thrown out of a wide variety of hostelrys for a too obvious show of pleasure (I'm not sure if that sounds right but what the hell). Most of these places, 'the Mad Dog', 'Pig's Head', etc. have now turned into slick lounge bars - 'Bergerac's', 'Skitter's', etc., and thus any chance of a good night out is negated. The few pleasant drinkingholes attract a clientele of bruisers, fat men who believe Maggie's doing a great job, and 'Militant' sellers, who soon squeeze out the human customers (the SF Society pub, the 'Town & Gown', is an exception - the terrible name deters most customers, but it is a pleasant place). There's still a few pubs where you get that frisson of danger, where you sit and calculate your chances of getting out alive, but these places are more common in Aberdeen, where they're likely to be pretty flash, and it's the bouncers you have to watch. Now about violence.....

Enough of this rubbish. I'm tired, I'm not a well man, and I seem to have lost my way. Terry asks me to 'ramble' but I rant instead. I try to write something light, humorous, and it comes out heavy as lead, full of mistakes, lies (poetic truths, perhaps) and my half-baked speculations on the nature of the Scottish character. You can see why I never did anything with my psychology degree (that, at least, does exist, as does my neighbour's parrot.) I apologise for any of the boredom and heartache I must have caused, and I apologise, too, to those readers who also live in Dundee and know that it is, despite everything, a tolerable place to live (unlike, say, London). My explanation is simply that, though those horrors undoubtedly exist, (and you haven't seen what I was going to say on the subject of violence) there is still a large area of everyday life in which people go about their business regardless. At those times, most Dundonians forget all the nonsense and are as friendly and hospitable a bunch as I've come across. And of course, as I come from Broughty Ferry, it could be argued that I don't 'really' come from Dundee at all, therefore have no business, etc.....

Niall McArthur Robertson.

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MARTIN JAMES

martin james martin james rides the underground  
smiling searching searching smiling this  
the one small face  
he inspects selects rejects all  
those not to his strange tastes

martin james martin james enters her young mind  
lurking licking licking lurking round a  
bright eyed brain  
he inspires conspires requires that  
she joins his special game

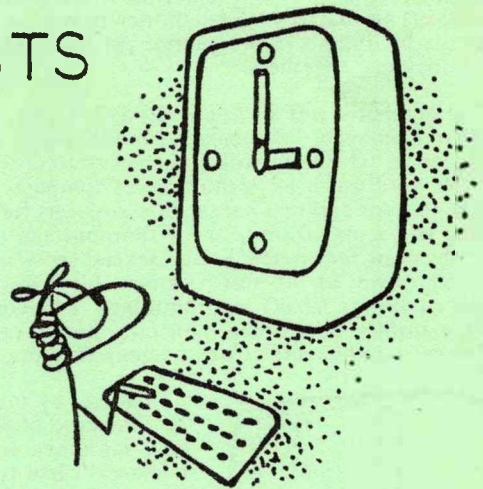
martin james martin james walks London streets at dawn  
watching waiting waiting watching doors and  
alleyways  
she descends befriends extends her mind  
new rules are made

And where will Martin James be tonight?  
Your windows shutter out his eyes,  
but thoughts receive his secret hands  
that close around you like the night,  
pressing hard against your eggshell skull.

Michael Johnson



# ALL THE FIFTY FIRSTS OF OCTOBERS FALL ON THE TWENTENTHS OF NOVEMBERS



LEE HOFFMAN

Did I tell you about time in Florida? It is \*different\* here than in other places I've lived. At first I thought this was just me, but I've discussed it with a number of other people who have noticed the same thing. It gets lumpy as hell. I suppose it's got to do with the heat and humidity, or else our proximity to the equator. Something Einsteinian about time and the speed of light and the rate of the earth's rotation at the equator. Or maybe it's caused by sunspots. Anyway, a given unit of time down here will hold far less activity than the same unit of time up north did. You can only get about half as much done in a day here as up there. People retire from full-time jobs up north, come here, and soon discover that they have far less spare time now than they did when they were working. (There are a few exceptions to this. Some retirees find themselves totally unable to fill a unit of time successfully. I figure they're the ones who get the lumps, while the rest of us are moving through the thinned-out whey.)

Like, when I lived in NYC there was a long period during which I had a regular office job five days a week, spent a lot of weekends on trips to sports car races, camping, or the like, got to the movies, attended Fanoclast meetings (even putting out a slim zine for the club's weekly APA), hung around with friends, and watched a l-o-t of TV.

Now, here, I spend one and a half days a week with my aged parents, I've been attending three two-hour adult ed classes a week, doing some homework and reading, keeping up my Dream Journal and watching Dr. Who. And somehow there doesn't seem to be room in the week for much more than that. I am far from keeping up with my fanac. I was surprised that the last mailing I received from the APA I belong to didn't have query as to whether I was still alive.

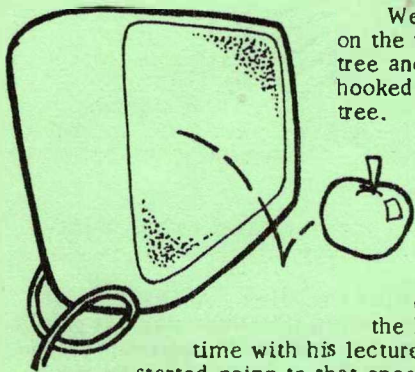
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I was aware of a deficiency in my life. I kept seeing things on TV about computer games, my nephew is a very high level programmer in medical computer research and writes about things I was a long way from understanding, and there were all these commercials that made it seem a home computer was as much a necessity as a telephone. So when the local Adult Ed organization (which is rather ostentatiously referred to locally as Port Charlotte "University" -- don't forget those quotation marks -- it's a far cry from a University) announced a course called Introduction to Computers, I thought I really ought to take that. But since I've got to rev a while before I go into gear, I didn't do anything about it until the next term when a friend told me he was going to take it and asked if I would be interested in going at the same time.

It was a motley crew that showed up for the class. Being evening, there was a good scattering of office workers who were hoping to keep up with the times and learn how to deal with new equipment in their offices, or be ready when the new equipment arrived, there was a dark skinned lady in a sari accompanied by a girl of about twelve or thirteen who said she was from Alabama, there were a couple of teenage boys, one with his arm in a cast, there were several senior citizens who wanted to be able to talk with their grandchildren when they visited, and there was my friend and me. Our instructor was an amiable retired gentleman who knows a lot about some aspects of computers, not much about others, and very little about teaching techniques. (I am astonished that someone so much into computers could be so disorganized in his thinking. But he's a nice guy and fun.)

Since P.C. "U"., being under the State Board of Ed, is always crying poor-mouth (an old Southron expression that means no matter how much money you've got, you always whine about how little you've got) and since they were only charging \$15 per quarter per head for the class, we were stacked two to the computer. Okay, my friend and I took one together.

The computer was an Apple II+ with a color monitor. The first thing we did on it was type in our names and see them displayed. Of course, I made a typo in mine. The little girl of Indian descent kindly showed me how to correct it. Our text book was (fortunately) written for sixth graders. As such, it was actually comprehensible. The first third was a lot of stuff about computers, what they are, what they do and what their uses are, with a section on considering a career in computers for the future. We learned the difference between what we were working on, a mainframe, and a terminal and even had a brief brush with bytes, bits and binary math (thank Ghu I already knew that much!) The second section of the book, devoted to the history of computers, we sort of skimmed. Even so, all this took up a lot of class time, and quite a few of us were sneaking ahead to the third section on simple BASIC programming. Especially the last part on low-resolution color graphics. (The teenage boys meanwhile were doing their own things, completely ignoring the classwork, homework and instructor. They'd only showed up because it was a cheap way to get access to the computers.)



Well, by the end of the term I could do FOR-NEXT LOOPS, and GOTOS, was on the verge of READ-DATA, and had written a graphics program to draw an apple tree and make one of the apples fall off, which wasn't quite working right. I was hooked. I had to sign up for the next class so I could finish debugging my apple tree.

The next course was "Programming 1" under the same teacher. And the course started over at the beginning of programming, going over much the same material in "more depth", from a different much less comprehensive textbook. My friend and I took it together, and began getting into ignoring the teacher and doing our own things. We were taking out library books (the local library has an extraordinarily poor selection of books on computers) and doing home study. We were faunching, avid for time at the keyboard, and bemoaning the fact that the teacher wasted so much of our time with his lectures. The school offered "lab" one hour a day for a dollar a session, and I started going to that once or twice a week, where I could get a whole uninterrupted hour on the computer. By the end of the term, I was still avid.

So we signed up for Programming 2, still under the same teacher. By then he was getting the idea that my friend and I were doing fine on our own and he was ignoring the fact that we kept sneaking stuff into the computer during his lectures. Well, it turned out there weren't enough people signed into several of the classes to satisfy the bureaucracy, so we were offered the opportunity to split up and share class time with the various Programming 1 classes. I was not peachy keen on the idea of sitting still with a cold computer in front of me, waiting through our instructor's lectures on stuff I'd already been through, before I could try my programs. I made a comment like couldn't we double up in Programming 3 instead. But it turned out there hadn't been enough people sign up for that either, and Programming 3 had been doubled up with Programming 1 class already. So my friend and I reluctantly agreed to one of the other double-ups. But then it turned out that that over-filled the class, so the instructor suggested my friend and I simply skip Programming 2 and join the 3 class. Fine!

In Programming 3, there was far less lecturing and a lot more of our being left on our own with the computers. (Partly because the instructor was busy with the Pr# 1 people.) Also, it being the Spring Term, a lot of people were going back north, and the class dwindled until we # 3 people didn't all have to double up. I grabbed a computer of my own. We'd acquired a few Apple IIe's and we had a couple of printers, which I learned to use. I got totally involved in writing a program for a horserace game with graphics. I'd run a printout, take it home, and refine and debug it. Got it working nicely and then got into a rather complex (for me) sorting program. Something where you enter a list of books, giving the title, author and subject, and the computer puts the list into alphabetical order by whichever you choose. Since we hadn't been taught any sorting techniques as of then, I had to invent my own. By the time I got it running, we got taught a technique, and I made changes, using it, simplifying what I was doing. I had a problem with the computer duplicating books by the same author, and it took me a couple of weeks to debug that. The term was approaching an end and it became a race as to which would happen first; whether the last class would be over or I'd get my program debugged. Finally, in the last class session, I succeeded, and it ran the way I wanted it to.

Then I decided to add another nicety, a secondary sorting procedure that would put the titles in alphabetical when the list was sorted by author or subject. I thought how nice it would be to have the program offer you the option of putting the list in a data file when it was sorted. Data files are something we haven't come near touching on in class yet. So here I am with all these ideas, things I want to learn and to try, and the term is over. I have "graduated" from what is being offered at P.C. "U". There is no Programming 4. At least not yet. In the summer term they aren't even offering Programming 3. And the likelihood of my picking up one of these toys for my own home is about as good as an immediate solution to the Arms Race.

So I am seriously contemplating signing up for Programming 2 this summer under the same instructor, grabbing a computer in a far corner, and going through the term ignoring him. Only trouble is, knowing P.C. "U".,

we d prolly have to double up at the computers again. My friend isn't interested in going back now, so I'd prolly end up having to share my time with someone who doesn't know a FOR-NEXT LOOP from a GOSUB. And summer classes are twice a week for a five week term, instead of once-a-week, so it would eat up as much of my time as taking two different classes has this past term. But what the heck... so the yard doesn't get mowed every week... I'd rather play computers than mow any day.

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Following LeeH's piece introducing us all to Port Charlotte, last ish, Chuch Harris made the following comments:

"I wondered about Port Charlotte though. If it was so low lying, would the cemeteries have tombs above ground -- like they do in New Orleans? With the water table just below the surface of the ground, unweighted coffins would float like boats unless they had some sort of bunghole cut in the bottom. Surely they don't just smash a bottle of bourbon over the handles and, 'Ghod bless this box and all who sail in her.' (Memo: the best coffins come from Courtney the aquatic undertaker ----- all boxes specially treated to remain underwater.)"

Which, of course, gave LeeH something to chew over.....

While I am quite an expert on some of the graveyards in Savannah, having spent many of the happiest moments of my childhood in them, I really know appallingly little about our Port Charlotte graveyards, except that they tend to be inland, on some of the higher ground. I do know there definitely are in-ground burials, though I don't know how deep they sink them or whether they provide bungholes for the coffins. In any case, those marbl-faced filing cabinets they keep used-up people in are becoming very popular around here, but this may be because you can pack in so many more corpses per square foot of real estate than with the usual sort of burial.

This brings to mind the story of Dr. Cyrus Read Teed, whose corpse set sail in a galvanized bathtub somewhat south of here. He wasn't launched with a smashed bottle of bourbon and a blessing. He just took off when nobody was looking.

Teed is a \*Significant Character\* in the history of Florida. He was one of the many Messiahs who appeared in the 1800's, a truly fertile time for revelators. Cyrus received God's Word that science had really goofed it on figuring out what the world was like. It's really a great hollow sphere, as any damned fool can see for himself if he'll take the trouble to stand on a beach and look out at the watery horizon. It is quite obviously higher than the land the observer is standing on, the surface of the water obviously slopes gently down from that high point to lap at the observer's ankles. Why, you may ask, doesn't it come rushing down and slop all over the observer's knees? I don't know what Cyrus's answer was, but I personally assume it is held in place by centrifugal force. I attribute my own inertia to a similar force.

Anyway Cyrus informed the world that he was really Koresh the First, and began gathering converts. As with most Messiahs, he and his followers were soon accused of being a bunch of nuts and possibly dangerous, and were run out of town. Like a great many such groups, they fled to California. But even California was not congenial to the Koreshans, so eventually an angel advised Dr. Teed to try Florida. This being nearly a haundred years ago, the Florida Land Boom that was taking place at the time was primarily concentrated on the more desirable properties where the ground was muck rather than sand and agriculture seemed a likely prospect, and/or along the east coast where the climate was hailed as salubrious especially for weaknesses of the lungs. Dr. Teed was able to get hold of some 1600 acres around Estero, south of Ft. Myers, which is something like 25-30 miles south of here. He planned a city which would have streets 400 feet wide forming concentric circles radiating outward from his headquarters. It was a plan remarkably like one proposed for the "Rotunda" Development near here a few years back, except they weren't going to make the streets so wide, and they figured to have a shopping mall at the center. But that's a whole different land scandal.

Teed and his community survived in some form or another until 1908. Actually the community survived even longer, and I was told when I first moved down here that there were still a few Koreshans being held in the area by centrifugal force at the time. Some of the property the community held is now the Koreshan State Park. As to the rest, I don't know. The Real Estate agents prolly got it. That wasn't at all what Teed had in mind. In fact he informed his followers in no uncertain terms that three days after his death, he would be resurrected, and would carry on his work. This was on December 22. It undoubtedly seemed quite appropriate that he should rise again on December 25th. So his followers mounted watch with the corpse to be there to greet him when he got back.

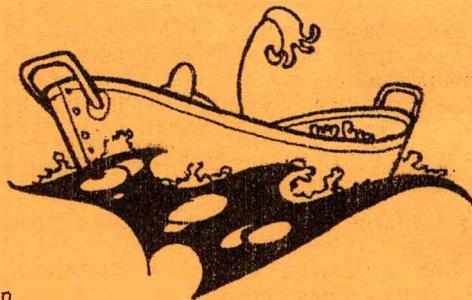
Christmas came and went. Cyrus didn't. But his followers kept the faith. And the corpse. All this, mind you, before the days of air-conditioning. Even so, Southwest Florida was not totally uncivilized. The area had a Board of Health. Eventually it intervened, insisting that something be done about the mortal remains of Dr. Teed, and immediately!

The Messiah's faithful followers were coerced into compliance. The fleshly part of Dr. Teed, what there was left of it, was placed in a galvanized bath tub and interred under a concrete slab on the south end of Estero Island. I am not sure just why they put the slab over him, as enough of them still expected him back at any moment to keep a watch at the graveside, in case being relocated that way during his death confused him and he needed a



guide to get him back to headquarters once he was resurrected.

Well, Dr. Teed was resurrected, as he had promised, though somewhat off schedule, and he must have been confused by the relocation because he never made it back to headquarters. Unfortunately, the delayed resurrection didn't take place until October 1921, and nobody was standing by to act as a guide for him. Possibly because there was a hurricane in progress. The hurricane removed the entire south end of the island, Dr. Teed, bathtub and concrete slab included. Whether the slab was ever found, I do not know, but Dr. Teed and his bathtub were never seen again.



So if you are ever on an ocean voyage and chance to encounter an elderly gentleman asea in a galvanized bathtub, you might direct him toward Florida.



We're a little weak on crimes of violence around here. Mostly it's domestic squabbles and saloon brawls, but I'm sure we have our quota of corruption. In fact the former sheriff was investigated by the State Attorney's Office for misconduct. He was accused not only of having made personal use of a county owned generator while he was building himself a new house, but also of coercing some of the deputies into helping him with the construction work. He was cleared of the latter charge but severely reprimanded for the business about the generator. And he lost the next election.

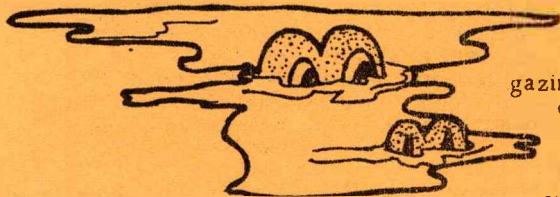
The present Sheriff is now being accused of being altogether too enthusiastic in his involvement along with some other county sheriff's departments in entirely too many "reverse-sting" drug busts. In case you're not familiar with these, they are operations that sound remarkably like "entrapment" (which is illegal). Undercover agents for some law enforcement outfit set up drug deals, and then bust the people they're doing business with. If they confiscate any boats, cars, airplanes or the like, they get to keep them, if there are convictions. From what one hears, this business of confiscation and sale has become a major source of income for Florida law enforcement agencies lately. I know our S. O. has got at least one helicopter, several airplanes, and ghu knows how many boats and cars that way.

But the last one of these our S. O. was involved in got rather messy. It took place at a motel in or near Sebring. Some man who claimed to be an innocent bystander got his car shot up (while he was driving it) by law enforcement officers. They claimed he ran when they challenged him. He answered who wouldn't? How was he to know all these guys in civvies aiming guns at him were cops? The newspapers printed all kinds of rumors back and forth about whether the guy had actually been involved in the drug deal, as the law enforcement people claimed, or had been an innocent bystander fleeing for his life, as he claimed. Now the news is that the whole case made by the reverse-sting operation has been thrown out of court and there is or will be an investigation of this business of reverse-sting operations.



In case you're interested in an update on the alligator situation, the little fellow I saw on the bank by the Bank seems to have grown, and to be well established as a local resident. I see him frequently in the canal behind my parents' house. I have been told that there are actually three (even four) gators hanging out in that canal, but I've never seen more than one at a time, and couldn't swear whether it was the same one or not, though I did get rather a close look at him last fall.

Most of the houses on the canal have seawalls. A few, and the few remaining vacant lots, don't. One of the houses across the canal from my folks' doesn't. The effect is much that of a low bluff rising out of the water at high tide, with a small beach at its foot during low tide. The bluff has a lot of weeds on its face, and a stand of mangroves at its foot. The gator was very fond of hanging out around there, and basking in the sun on the beach at low tide. I was fond of gazing at him through my father's binoculars. Or even with my bare eyeballs. I especially enjoyed it when he yawned.



Well, one day I was there on the edge of my folks' seawall, gazing at him, when he slipped into the water and started upstream, then disappeared beneath the surface. The water in these canals is somewhat silty and very darkly stained by tannin from the mangroves and such. One cannot see far into it. I lost sight of him. Then suddenly I realized I could see him. He was just a couple of feet over and out from the seawall where I was squatting. I was maybe five feet above the water level, so I'd say he was within ten feet of me, just sort of hanging there under the water, like waiting for some careless fish to idle past. I gazed on in motionless rapt fascination. He hung there in motionless rapt anticipation. Then he decided he needed a breath. His eyes and nostrils surfaced. I was certain he'd see me. For a long moment he didn't. Then in a blink, all I was seeing where he had been was a cloud of stirred up silt in the water. He'd finally spotted me. He fled at the sight of me far faster than I could have managed if I had suddenly discovered him gazing at me from that distance. At least I don't think I could move that fast. I'm not terribly interested in finding out.



# The Songs Of Fandom Skel

## 1 - The Song.

"Now millwork it ain't easy, millwork ain't hard,  
millwork it ain't nothing but an awful boring job."

"Waiting for a daydream, to take me through the morning,  
put me in my coffee-break, where I can have a sandwich and a paper."

"And it's me and my machine, for the rest of the morning...  
for the rest of the afternoon...for the rest of my life."

## 2 - Fings Ain't Wat They Used To Be.

Things change. Everything changes. That's the way it is these days. This wasn't always the case, but we are used to it by now. We accept it. Oh, we grumble from time to time, but in general we accept it with as much good grace as we can muster. Let's face it, Mankind is a grumbling animal. It is this ability to grumble, this sense of dissatisfaction, that sets us above the other creatures on this planet. If it rains, a dog simply puts up with it, it gets wet, it exists. A cat gets wet, a worm gets wet, a flower gets wet. A man grumbles. He grumbles so much that eventually another person gets so fed up with the grumbling that he or she invents the umbrella. Think about it. Mankind is the only creature on this Earth to invent the umbrella. Makes us pretty special, doesn't it?

Of course one of the things we grumble most about is all this incessant changing that keeps going on willy-nilly. At heart, as a species, we are Luddites. Change is threatening. If you doubt this, go ask a dinosaur how it feels about change. Something changed, and it was "Goodbye Dinosaurs.". No recounts. No turning back the clock. Just a note through the evolutionary letterbox - "We called round but you were out, so we went away again - signed 'Dinosaur'." The dinosaurs, remember, never invented the umbrella.

It is hardly surprising, accepting the foregoing, that fandom should also change. After all, fandom is simply the aggregate expression of the fans who comprise it at any one time, and as fans change, so too does fandom. In particular, as the nature of fans changes, so too does the nature of fandom. This is an important distinction. No matter how much the fans change, and therefore fandom changes, the nature of fandom will remain the same until the nature of fans changes.

## 3 - Joy Lays It On The Line.

These thoughts have been triggered off by reading John D. Berry's WING WINDOW 7, and in particular Joy Hibbert's letter therein. More particularly the following passages:-

"I got a better insight into the literary quality vs. entertainment argument after talking to Terry Hill at the September Tun. And I suspect, without wishing to sound snobbish, that it's a question of how much and what sort of education you had. Older fans.....would either have had a more scientific education, or at least a less literary one. Younger fans tend to a wider range of education, but with a leaning towards English Lit. as one of the subjects. Older fans (and those younger fans with little education or a scientific one) read only for very shallow entertainment..... I suspect these less literary fans enjoy things that are little more than action-adventure novels.... Since they cannot understand why anyone would want to read anything heavier, I suppose they feel threatened by this apparent greater intelligence, and thus want to make it clear that they believe real fans aren't interested in this sort of thing."



Of course, I've chopped a lot of detail out of her letter, but I don't think I've affected the gist of those remarks that remain. Joy of course is saying that the nature of fans has changed. Actually she is saying that the nature of 'SF readers' has changed, but as the only SF readers that concern us in this respect are those whose interest has led them down fannish paths, I think we can safely apply her remarks to fans and fandom, especially as it was in the context of fandom that her remarks were made and formulated.

#### 4 - Skel Blows A Fuse And Joy Is Proven Correct.

So I'm not perfect ("Can I quote you on that?" asks Cas). In my LoC to John I responded to what I considered the supercilious, condescending tone of Joy's remarks rather than to the content. I mean, so what? I objected to the unspoken assumption that my approach to SF typecasts me. I read fiction for entertainment. Novels are my television. I'd rather be entertained by reading than be entertained by watching. In reading, I am entertained by the author and my own imagination working together. What I object to is the implication that, because I don't read SF to stretch my abilities, to develop my understanding of my fellow man, to give me something to think about afterwards, then I don't read anything else for those purposes, or even seek such satisfaction elsewhere.

A painter might approach a bowl of fruit as an exercise in shape, colour, texture, light, relationships, whatever. I approach a bowl of fruit as something to be eaten. Neither approach is 'right' or 'wrong'. It comes down to personal motivations. The needs I satisfy from one source, you might satisfy from another. The source that provides you with one type of satisfaction might provide me with a completely different type. So, just because Joy has an itch that she scratches with SF doesn't mean that I don't have the same itch. I may scratch that itch in some other way.

However, this implication aside, she is quite correct in her assertion that, whilst most of us use SF to scratch certain itches, they are not necessarily the same itch.

#### 5 - Tales Of Fandom Past.

Of course the nature of fans has changed. We have only to look at the people who became fans in the long-ago, and those who are becoming fans today or in the recent past. Times were hard in those days. You could buy a mammoth and a sabre-tooth tiger and still have change from sixpence - except of course that you didn't have sixpence in the first place. We've heard it all before, but in sneering or laughing at the stereotype we forget the reality that gave birth to it. It was not a time of plenty. For most people, there simply wasn't the cash to go to university. You left school, you got a job. The income was needed, so you took a job - any job.

Obviously, if you couldn't parlay your degree into a management trainee position you had to start at the bottom and, hopefully, work your way up. Starting at the bottom meant that, when you left school, you probably went into a fairly boring, untaxing job. Maybe not 'millwork' as such, but certainly 'millwork' in essence.

You see, fans weren't any less intelligent than they are now, they were simply forced down avenues where they couldn't fully satisfy their intellectual needs. They had all this intellectual energy and nowhere to apply it. They were frustrated. To them Science Fiction was not something to be analysed, it was their dream. It was the dream that got them through the morning. And, by extension, so was fandom. It didn't put them in their coffee-break, where they had a sandwich and a paper, but instead got them through another boring day. It put them into the evening, where they could read a fanzine and do their fanac. SF was the daydream, fandom was where they shared it.

You work and you play. Work was where you worked, and fandom was where you played. Fandom was a magic place, a secret land to which the fan escaped. Work was where you endured - fandom was where you really lived and had your being. We all need intellectual stimulation. We need challenges. The real world wasn't providing any challenge or stimulation, so the fans turned to fandom for these satisfactions. Which is how gafia used to creep into the picture.

Let's face it, the challenges of fandom are as nothing to the challenges of the real world - when you can get them. Couple this with the fact that fans were starting at the bottom (in the real world) and working their way up. The important thing is that they were 'working their way up'. The higher up you get in the real world, the more interesting it becomes. The more interesting and challenging the real world, the less fans found they needed the challenges of fandom.

Of course, this social mechanism is still operating on fans, but it is now operating on a different type of fan - a different nature of fan.

#### 6 - The Mad Dogs Have Kneaded Us In The Groin Again.

Times have indeed changed. No longer is it reasonable for even a young fan to look ahead and see his working life stretching ahead of him as "... me and my machine - for the rest of my life." SF is no longer simply a daydream to get them through their morning.

They are wrestling with reality, because nowadays reality is something that must be wrestled with. It isn't neutral anymore. It is the enemy. It cannot simply be endured, as fans used to endure it in the past. No longer



can you stand idly dreaming through to your coffee-break whilst life sweeps past you, ignorant of your very existence. Now it will sweep past, circle around, and get you from behind when you're least expecting it. At least, that's the way it feels. Let's face it, young fans of the past might have drifted into some dull, unexciting jobs, but one never questioned that the jobs were there to drift into. They may not have been all that exciting, but they were there.

Young people today are angry. Oh, I know that young people are always angry. The young people of every age have been angry, but usually there has been a strictly limited group of things to be angry against. Now it is a greater anger, an anger which is hopeless because they are angry at life itself. How can you revenge yourself on life? Hack, stab. Take that, life! Nothing.

The thing is, we are living the promise, and the promise has proven to be empty, a shallow emptiness. We are now living in the future. Today is yesterday's future. Yesterday we understood that the future would be different. It is. We were told it would be better. It isn't. Oh, we have all the gaudy toys, but they aren't as much fun to play with as we'd hoped. And if, with all our knowledge and planning, we've fucked up yesterday's future, how can we realistically hope to do a better job with today's future? Where is the commitment?

### 7 - A Time For Elaborate Lies.

Like I said, young people today are wrestling with reality. The new fans who are discovering SF and fandom these days look upon these areas as a way of limbering up for the fight - mental toughening-up exercises. Shape up and dance? Shape up and read, man! Every day is just one more battle with life. They don't see Science Fiction as something with which to drift down Life's river. They don't see it as a door to another, more interesting universe. We have been cursed with the Chinese Curse, and this universe is quite interesting enough, thank you very much. Science Fiction is just another weapon to them. Life is out to get them and by golly Science Fiction had better help them get out there and kick life in the balls. And, just as they approach Science Fiction differently, so too there is a difference in their approach to fandom. They aren't looking to share a daydream. What? You must be joking, squire! They are comparing mythologies (thanks Don). They are testing their philosophies, tempering them through fandom.

Fandom is something to be used, not something to be gloried in of and for itself. You can see the difference in the myths that the fans create.

### 8 - The Great Myth Shortage.

There is only really one modern myth - The Astral Leauge. It is a great myth but it is a myth based on negativism. It mocks. It sneers. It is a myth for our time. Our time is a time of sneering, a time of criticism.

Fandom is now heavily analytical. As Joy said, fans these days have a more thorough literary education. They are equipped to take works apart to see how and why they work. And of course, Sturgeon's Law, most of it doesn't, at least not very well. And what of the dream?

They aren't buying dreams.

Science Fiction used to be the genre where quite often the idea was the hero. To such a degree in fact that fans used to say that Science Fiction was the literature of ideas. They still do - they say "Science Fiction is the literature of ideas. About three ideas." The cutting phrase - we are into a fandom of the cutting phrase. We are too sophisticated to display naive enthusiasm. In fact we are too sophisticated to display any sort of enthusiasm. The problem here is that the creation of a myth requires considerable enthusiasm, as well as a degree of naivety. If you worry too much about appearing silly, about being mocked, all you do is play safe. You sit and sneer with the rest. Fannish myths are flights of fancy, and today we have a fear of flying. But we need the myths. We need the magical element to make fandom something more than just a Science Fiction Discussion Group, more than a Topical Issues Debating Society. The myths of fandom are what bind us together as a unique social group. We have to believe the myths. Not believe them in the sense that we think them to be true, but believe them in the sense that we feel them to be important.

Fandom is a unique culture with a social order and a history all of its own. These are important - without them a fan meeting is no different to any other group of half-a-dozen men and women having a good time in one corner of the pub. And we are part of it, ongoing, and we must add our own contributions to this common heritage. I say 'must' because we have no choice. It is something we do simply by being a part of fandom. We are contributing quite a bit, but not much myth. We do not dare to appear silly.

### 9 - I'll Match Your Sillyness... And Raise You.

And now a word from our sponsors. A couple of quotes from fairly recent fanzines. First there's Greg Benford writing in MAINSTREAM 8 back in March 1983:-

"Fandom can teach you social lessons of varying worth, as I have slowly learned to my discomfort. But it retains a certain quality I have found nowhere else. Here, you can be nonlinear and playful and silly, and see some fraction of the world again as a game, undiminished by life's unre-

mitting earnest designs."

Of course, not everyone would necessarily agree with that. What, for instance, does D\*rr\*ll P\*rd\*\* have to say, writing in P\*G \*N TH\* W\*LL (a s\*cr\*t l\*tr\*rs\*b) 38 in March 1984?

"It's interesting that the whole idea of an APA for stuffed toys has provoked withering scorn from certain quarters. I know it's a silly idea, but so what? Heavens, do we have to be deadly serious all the time? I think it's good to do something silly now and then, and have fun in the process... Why should it produce such scorn from those who choose not to be involved?"

Personcely! Why should it? Some people are too worried about appearances. They worry about suffering from guilt by association. It goes like this - They are in fandom, and they are being silly. I'm in fandom, people might think I'm silly too. Greg is right, fandom can teach you social lessons. It has taught me a few. One is - be as silly as you like, but don't bend over. There is always somebody ready to shaft you. Fandom these days is very much a backs-to-the-wall job. But why? How can it really hurt you if I am silly? Can it be a fear that we are all silly in our own ways? If we are, so what? Are we so frightened of the possibility that we have to run around pointing the finger at each other. Hey, he's sillier than I am! We have a right to be silly.

An APA for stuffed animals may not be my own particular brand of silliness, but I will defend to the death (well, being shouted at a bit at least) a person's right to be silly in their own way. Once we start worrying about appearances we might as well all simply subscribe to LOCUS and to hell with actually doing anything. Let's face it, how can any hobby activity that contains things like Joseph Nicholas's sentences worry about looking silly?

#### 10 - A Fault Line In The Fannish Strata.

And of course it all happened quite suddenly. One minute the majority of fans are type 'X', the next they're a different type altogether. With the first post-war generation of new fans the nature of fans, and hence the nature of fandom, changed almost overnight. The magic went away. The new fans were more of a lit-crit crowd. They were still playing games, but they were a subtler type of game, and there was a holding back. A holding back because the games weren't for the fun of playing them. They served a purpose.

D. West wrote, in 'Performance', to the effect that fandom is a performance. True. It always has been. But then he went on and made what I felt to be the most telling statement in the whole piece. I can't quote it, because it isn't really delivered in quotable form. It is scattered all over page 26 of TAPPEN 5. The philosophy appears to be this (and I shall paraphrase like mad) :-

Fans are in competition. The prizes are fame, prestige, and status, (but mostly status, as status crops up more often here than the others). One of the main purposes of fandom, of engaging in fanac, is to achieve status.

And again, to a great extent that seems true these days. The thing is, I don't think that this was always so, at least not for the majority of fans, and I think that this fannish philosophy clearly distinguishes the difference between Fandom Past and Fandom Present.

At first glance you might think that this would be what Fandom Past was all about. After all, haven't I already said that the old-time fans, when they swam out over the dam into the great sea of life, were nothing there but small fry? Did they not therefore see in fandom an opportunity for achieving status that was denied to them in the larger context? Did they not look upon it as a chance to be a big fish, albeit in a much smaller pool?

The superficial attractiveness of this proposition however avails as nought when we face the reality. The vast majority of these fans were small fry in fandom too. They could have gotten much more status by selecting some other hobby activity. Status wasn't what they were after.

True, it is impossible to engage in fandom without achieving some level of status, however insignificant. People make value judgements. We live, we breathe, we make value judgements. Like grumbling, it is the nature of the beast. We like what a person writes, they achieve status in our eyes. If we regularly like what they do, they achieve more. If they piss us off, they also achieve more, but of a negative kind. A person acquires a relative status in fandom simply as a result of a consensus of individual value judgements. It happens. It is inevitable.

But it isn't the purpose, or at least it didn't used to be.

#### 11 - 'Egoboo' vs 'Status'.

On the face of it, apparently similar concepts, though in reality so widely different as to be yin and yang.

'Egoboo' is a bottomless well. You do good you get egoboo. You do better, you get more egoboo. Somebody else does well, they get egoboo. How much egoboo they get is of no interest to me, has no effect on me. The only thing that counts with an individual is how much egoboo that individual gets. There is no competition.

'Status' is relative. Status is all about competition, comparison. It doesn't matter how much good work you produce, if somebody else produces more then they have more status, and you have less. You win an Olympic



Silver medal, that's egoboo. You are second-best, that's status.

There's only one way to get egoboo - do good work.

There are two ways to achieve relative status. Increment your own or pull down somebody else. If you can't get as high as the bastards above you then you can chop the fuckers down. This then is the difference between the two fandoms. Fandom Past was based on 'egoboo', Fandom Present on 'status'.

### 12 - The Hen Or The Egg Question.

Which came first? Which comes first, is more important? In Fandom Past there seems little doubt that it was the performance. You performed for the sake of the performance. The rewards were secondary. Well, the egoboo was tied to and possibly inseparable from the performance. The inevitable status however was purely incidental. It happened. The performance was the object, the status was a by-product of the performance.

What D. seems to be saying is that, in Fandom Present, it is the status that is important, the primary objective. The performance is in effect secondary, and of importance only in so far as how it affects the obtaining of the primary goal. The status is the object and the performance is relegated to a by-product of the attempt to gain status.

Once you accept the fact of relative status as the prime motivation behind Fandom Present, then many things become clear. How then could Fandom Present be other than it is? Obviously, if your primary aim is to improve your relative status then the optimum path is to produce good work (and thus increment your own standing) which criticises the achievements of others (and thus decrease their relative status). To do anything else would be stupid. The problem with this basic approach to fandom is that you tend to approach things negatively. You do not give people the benefit of the doubt, you stitch the buggers up as soon as you glimpse an opening. You get in there and go straight for the jugular.

I don't of course want to give the impression that this is entirely a new thing. Fandom is not homogenous. Back in chapter 10 I talked about "...the majority of fans...". There are 'egoboo' fans in Fandom Present, just as there were 'status' fans in Fandom Past - nor are individuals either one or the other. Most fans' approach to fanac comprises a blend of these two philosophies. All I'm trying to say is that the perceived philosophy of Sixth Fandom /perceived by me that is/, the Egoboo Philosophy, comes across because the majority of Sixth Fandom fans displayed a heavy bias towards that element of their fannish makeup. Conversely, the more prominent fans these days seem to be the ones who display a predominant 'status' side of their fannish personalities. In a way it's a bit of a Jekyll and Hyde scenario. Even fans who are fairly evenly balanced between these two opposite factions within their personality sometimes go off the rails when the Status/Hyde element gets a little out of control. Take Ted White as a for instance...

What, no takers? No takers for a genuine Ted White with not too many miles on the clock and only one owner? Hmmm, maybe that's not too surprising. After all, it has never been one of the most popular models.

### 13 - "I Yam What I Yam".

In a recent fanzine somebody remarked that Ted was the kind of guy who goes around treading on the business end of rakes, and getting hit in the mouth by the handle. Well, Ted does seem to have more than his fair share of run-ins with other fans. I've just been reading SIKANDER 9.5 and one of the things that seemed to come across from the responses to Ted's 'Lost In Oz' piece in issue 8 was that, whilst few disagreed with the contents of his article criticising Australian fanzines, with what he said, they weren't too happy with the way he said it, with his general tone. This I read immediately after a copy of OUTWORLDS 20 (picked up for me as a freebie from the Mexican by Mike Meara) in which there seemed to be a 'Ted White vs The Whole World' section.

Well, Ted has never courted popularity.

I have great respect for Ted. He lays it on the line. He says what he thinks and to hell with the consequences. At time it seems that he has locked horns with just about everyone but his Mom. I have the feeling that he sees fandom as a meritocracy, and that he equates 'merit' with 'status' (after all, isn't that what a meritocracy is about?). As I said earlier, I have great respect for Ted, but that doesn't mean that I think he's perfect. Who the hell's perfect, for fuck's sake? What's more, who's to say what is an imperfection and what is a sterling character trait? All we have is our own personal reactions.

One of the things I dislike about Ted is what I see as his 'status' approach.

Ted of course has developed this sneaky rejoinder :- Put up or shut up. A cunning tactic, this. If you don't have a memory from the planet Krypton then you have little alternative but to go back and re-read the entire fanzine output of the last two years in order to come up with specific instances to support your contentions - by which time of course you have completely lost the impetus of your original remarks. You have also probably died of old age.

Fortunately I only have to go back to a recent issue of Ted's own fanzine, EGOSCAN, to issue two to be precise. In this Ted responded negatively to Eric Mayer's concept of a fan poll. I wrote back to Ted to the effect that I felt he was taking a negative approach. He didn't seem to be giving Eric the benefit of the doubt. This in itself is to me, as I said earlier, indicative of a 'status' view of fandom.

Fan polls are both 'egoboo' and 'status'. You get both from a fan poll. It seemed to me that Eric's idea for a different sort of poll was a perfectly valid alternative, particularly as it was as well as, rather than instead of any existing type of poll. It seemed to me that Eric was trying to hand out egoboo without assigning any relative status.

Eric's idea was that you just mentioned as many good things as you felt like within each category. You weren't limited as to how many mentions, and you made no attempt to rank your responses. The person responding simply dished out egoboo. The relative status emerges purely as a consensus of the individual responses. To the individual respondent, status is irrelevant. The status happens, but it is secondary. Ted's argument was that such a poll watered down the egoboo, until it was meaningless. I don't agree. My contention is that egoboo, honestly given, cannot be watered down. Why limit yourself to a top three, or a top five? If ten, twenty, fifty, or a hundred people have done good work, why not say so? If you are interested in status, then look at the consensus. Where is the problem?

Mind you, one of the things that really cracks me up is that 'Sixth Fandom Fandom' business. I mean, Ted was supposed to be one of its leading exponents, wasn't he? And yet, if my interpretation is correct then his 'status' approach, in whatever degree, has to be the very antithesis of what I see as a Sixth Fandom credo. Thus we see that the 'Sixth Fandom Fandom' claim simply will not fly. It doesn't get off the ground. Ted is vindicated by a basic flaw in the charge itself. So, as I said, not all fans of long standing are what I would class as 'egoboo' fans.

And of course some of today's fans display a non-status or egoboo approach to their fanac. Take the earlier mentioned Terry Hill as an example. I don't think it is strictly true that, as D. West suggests in a letter in a recent WING WINDOW, that he is setting out to be a boring old fart, just that he doesn't give a toss about relative status. In Fandom Present this is a throwback. This is how the boring old farts felt (ie. the people who didn't think the way we do).

#### 14 - Out Of The Closet At Last.

Back in Joy Hibbert's comments in WING WINDOW she was at pains to differentiate between the present day fans with an English Lit based education and those older fans with a more scientific bias to their education. I think this is important, not so much in itself, but in the attitude to fandom that it engenders. Science is concerned with theory and practice. Does it work? You can come up with the most elegant of theories, but once it's disproved it is no better than the phlogiston approach. The scientific approach is empirical. The Lit-Crit approach however is simply a matter of opinion, and the only way to judge between opinions in such areas is to judge the relative status of the people behind the opinions. In Lit-Crit, status matters.

Thus the fans coming into fandom from such an educational background will obviously display similar tendencies.

Well, I'm sorry, but that's one hat I'm not prepared to wear. I'm an 'egoboo' man. I'll take all the egoboo that you want to give me, positive or negative. I don't care which. I don't give a toss for my relative status. Oh, sometimes I will look at a fan-poll and bemoan the fact that I'm not mentioned, but it's not my relative status, or rather the lack of it, that I'm bemoaning, just the lack of egoboo, the egoboo I'm not getting because I'm not there at all.

I may not be a 'millworker' now, but my approach to fanac has been shaped by the times when I was. My work challenges and taxes me. I no longer need my dream to get me through my morning. I go months without typing a stencil. I go to sleep and dream about my work, but... I still think of SF and fandom the way I did back in the days when I shuffled papers and filled in forms.

The thing is, we're all in this fandom together. We must accept the fact that some of us are here for reasons which differ from the current norm. I feel I am part of a persecuted minority. Twenty-to-thirty years ago you might have been in the minority. All I'm asking is that we accept each other for what we are. There is only one D. West in fandom, only one Terry Hill, only one Skel. Let us cherish each other for what we are - let us appreciate the good.

I recently eavesdropped on a conversation between Vinç Clarke and Rob Hansen. Rob said that fandom was the winner for having D. West in it. Of course it is. There can be no argument, surely. We are none of us perfect. We are all amalgams of our good points and bad points. I may have appeared to have been critical of some aspects of Ted White - not of Ted, simply of some aspects of Ted. So? There are other aspects of Ted, and the ones I think of as positive aspects others might feel are negative attributes. But none would deny that fandom would be poorer without Ted. Equally, we would have had a piss-poor fandom recently without D. West. All of our houses contain many mansions.

It isn't up to us to judge each other. We enjoy what we consider to be the good attributes of a person whilst accepting what we consider to be the bad. I glory in what I consider to be the good attributes of D. and Ted and, if I don't agree with them right the way down the line, well, I accept the rest with as good a grace as I can muster...

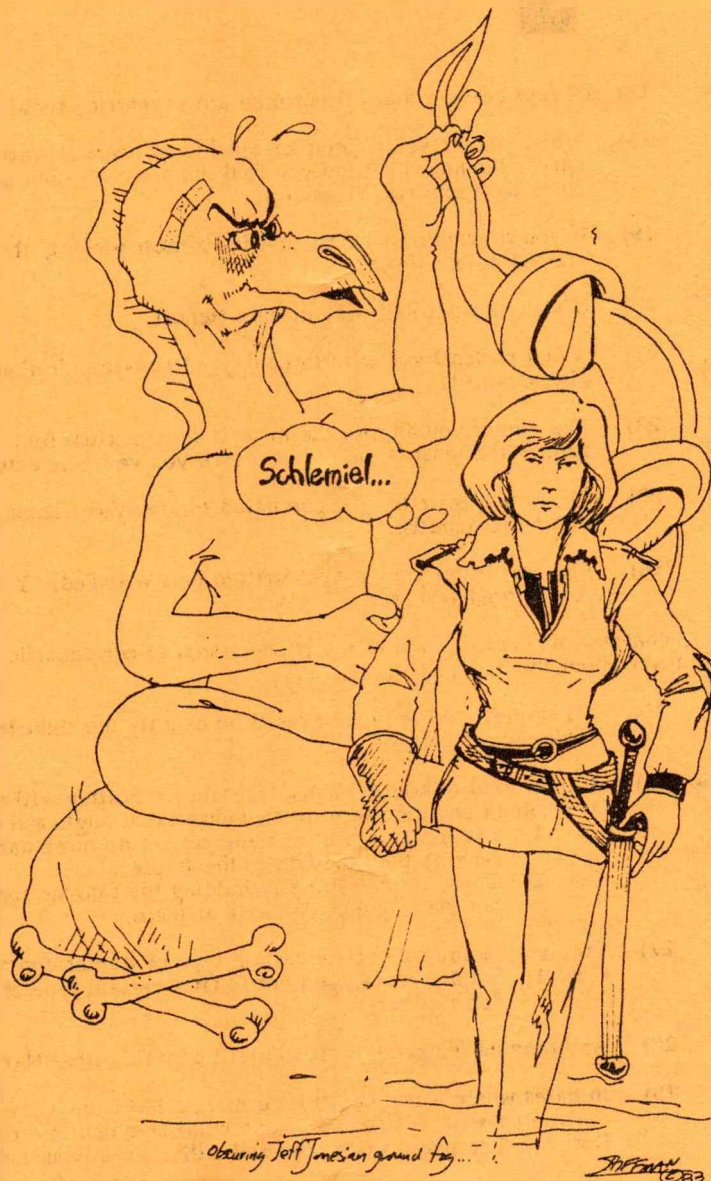


because it isn't up to me to judge. Judge not, lest you be judged - is a statement that implies a fear of being judged. This is wrong. We should not resent being judged out of fear that we will not pass the test, we should resent it because nobody has the right to judge us. I contain multitudes. So do you. Do not expect me to be perfect, because I am not. Likewise, I must grant you the right not to be perfect.

There are aspects of fandom today that I don't like. I have said so, and that is my right. However, I must accept them as aspects of fandom because without them the things I enjoy in today's fandom might never have been.

Each of us is an asshole to somebody else, at sometime or another. We should remember this, for if we expect to be cherished, then we must be prepared to cherish others in our turn - for the good, and despite the bad.

Look, if I can cherish Michael Ashley, the least you can do is give it a try.



# MURPHAN'S LAW

## TAKE 2

Bob Shaw's article in the last ish was only intended to set out the bare bones of "Murphan's Law"; to be "fleshed out" by the creative imagination of the readership's fine fannish minds.

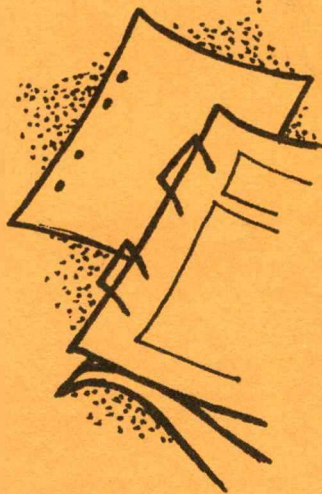
Two readers recognised the opportunity - and between them came up with a further fourteen laws, bringing the total to thirty - so far.

GLEN WARMINGER :-



- 17) All fans believe that all postmen are eccentric, feeble minded, or both.
- 18) When you arrive at a con knacked from hours of travelling and go to bed early, the next morning you find the greatest room party since 1947 went on in the room two doors down.
- 19) If you're pubbing your ish and it's almost perfect, the last page will be printed upside-down.
- 20) Corflu runs out half-way down a stencil.
- 21) A con presents you with three days of non-stop drinking but the beer is always awful.
- 22) The author you admire the most is an obnoxious fool. The author you admire the least is the nicest person you've come across.
- 23) The new typewriter you purchased to give your fanzine a neater appearance won't cut stencils.
- 24) The best letter you've ever written gets WAHFed. Your most childish gets printed verbatim.

MARC ORTLIEB, however, confines his investigation of the phenomenon to one specific area - Staples. Well, if Tucker can start a war about them.....



- 25) All staples used in fanzines will be exactly the right length to allow the back page to fall off.
- 26) Staples used to hold fanzines together for posting will be of such a strength as to break anything short of an industrial strength screwdriver.
  - Cor. 1: Attempts to remove these staples do more damage to the fanzine than they do to the staple.
  - Cor. 2: Those staples actually holding the fanzine together will fall out the moment you look at them.
- 27) Staples guaranteed to fit a certain type of stapler don't.
  - Cor. 1: Staples guaranteed not to fit a certain type of stapler don't either.
- 28) Any fanzine requiring N staples will contain either N-1 or N+1 staples.
- 29) In cases where a one centimetre margin has been allowed for stapling, the staples will be inserted at one point five centimetres.
  - Cor. 1: The pages worst obscured will contain your LoC.
- 30) When removing a fanzine from an envelope, you will always grab the bit of the fanzine with the sharp protruding staple.



# SOMETHING & NOTHING

## Sid Birchby

HALDANE'S WORLD. "My own suspicion is that the universe is not only queerer than we suppose, but queerer than we can suppose... that is the reason why I have no philosophy myself, and must be my excuse for dreaming." --- J. B. S. Haldane, 1927.

An admirable and truly Fortean outlook, which this columnist has long supported! We pass through life in mental blinkers, apart from a handful of subject-evaluations. Our personal world-picture is formed in childhood and unless we are among the very few it stays much the same. We imprint like ducklings following the first thing that moves. Here is a simple experiment to show what exists outside our normal tunnel-vision. You can do it tomorrow in almost any town.

When we walk along a street, our visual attention is usually restricted vertically to eye-level at our immediate location plus or minus a wedge of about 30 degrees ahead of us. This takes in such hazards as holes in the footpath and gives a preview of shop-fronts (which are designed for that purpose) but anything much more than that angle above eye-level does not normally register unless it is something such as a bathroom scene. It's remarkable how the eye registers that.

If we consciously look ahead above the ground-floor angle, all sorts of novelties occur to the sight. The City of Manchester, where I work, displays a baroque wonderland of stone gargoyles, battlements and bearded Gandalf-heads above the sleazy litter of chicken take-aways and space-invader arcades. By a simple movement of the eyes, I can think in a new way and speculate how this Victorian industrial metropolis generated such peculiar architectural fantasies. I can expand my notion of what is possible and to a small degree diminish Haldane's 'queerness' by thinking outside the imprinting. Heaven knows, we need to do something about the world-mess, and that's why this column deals with the oddities of life. They are growth-points.

OBLIGATORY IRISH JOKE. Of course, all the best ones are written by Irishmen, but here is a genuine story of a court case in Rochdale, 1983, about a man and a woman with strong Irish accents, found guilty of trying to obtain goods with a stolen credit-card signed Shantra Mistry. Well, there's no harm in trying.

THE FICKLE FINGER OF FATE. Prime examples of how things go wrong are found everywhere. Our world-picture must be full of holes! There was the exhibition in 1968 at Harrogate by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (the tent fell down); the shoplifter in Barnsley's British Home Stores in 1979 who was grasped by eight pairs of hands because the shop was holding a meeting of store-detectives.

Sometimes, there is no way to win.

BA AND SA. Blinkered thinking is an occupational disease of specialists, and I like the story about the Cambridge mathematician who invited a colleague to visit him on the next Sunday morning "to consider some conundra about pendula." The reply was: "I can think of many better ways of spending Sunday morning than sitting on our ba doing sa." (Courtesy 'Reader's Digest', June 1982).

NARTAZ OF THE JUNGLE. Did Jerry Teeves write his Tarzan satire (MW7) before seeing the latest 'Greystoke' film in all its sweaty atmosphere, or is he psychic?



I am now totally confused and begin to think that Nartaz's mate was not Jayn but Jane of the comic strip, and that she was the original spider-woman ready to drop anything except her secret weapon. I suspect that Nartaz never had a chance: all the time it was "When are you going to fix the kitchen? Why does our tree-house leak? Why do the drains smell like a gorilla's armpits?"

Was he the victim of feminist action? If so, we apes should hang together.

**SMALL CHINESE FEET.** In MW7, I mentioned my new engineering technician from Vietnam, Tish Hong Phung of Chinese parentage, and I am glad to say that he is doing well. He calls me Sir, which makes a change. But his feet are too small. Before I can let him work on site, he must have by law a pair of rubber boots with metal toe-caps, in case he drops a brick on them. However, these are made only in sizes 6 to 10 and his feet are size 4. At first, this was a joke, and then two lady engineers politely said that their shoe size was 3 and that they were getting tired of wearing two pairs of socks in over-sized wellies. Remarks about the genetic effect of binding Chinese feet ceased when small British ones stepped in, but meanwhile the problem is on my desk. Last week, our purchasing genius offered a ridiculous pair of kinky white fashion bootees. French, of course, and fit only for a welly-throwing contest. Or is this what French engineers wear?



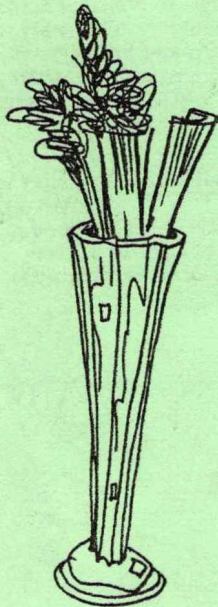
**SLOW DOWN:** We must retain a basic frame of reference, despite all distractions. When the Greek philosopher Diogenes despaired of life and retreated into a barrel he threw in his hand. We don't have to do so: we know more

**MORE BLINKERS, PLEASE:** Once we look above eye-level, we wish we had not done so. We lose our frames of reference and begin to gibber.

(1) Archaeologists at York have found an old woolly sock in a bog. It may be a Viking sock. They have spent some £300 to preserve it.

(2) A Manchester store is selling jars of Russian honey labelled "Bees' Honey" of excellent quality. But what other types of honey are there? Discuss, for not more than 50p a jar.

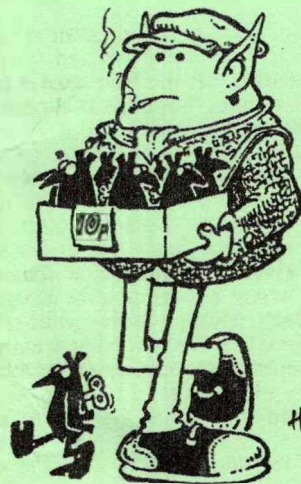
(3) The Law Reform (Married Women and Tortfeasors) Act, 1935, has now been in force since your grannie was a girl. Explain, with diagrams, the influence of Tortfeasors on married women and what single women think about it.



**E FOR EFFORT.** In the days when Harry Turner's fanzine was at its 'zenith', with Widdower verses in every issue, he told me that it was easy: the secret was to set up a situation of running gags, stock characters and cliff-hangers. After a few issues, the fanzine virtually ran itself. Certainly, his fanzine did, though he stopped it too soon for my liking, and the formula has been used by most of the great TV comedy series such as the Goon Show or Yes, Minister.

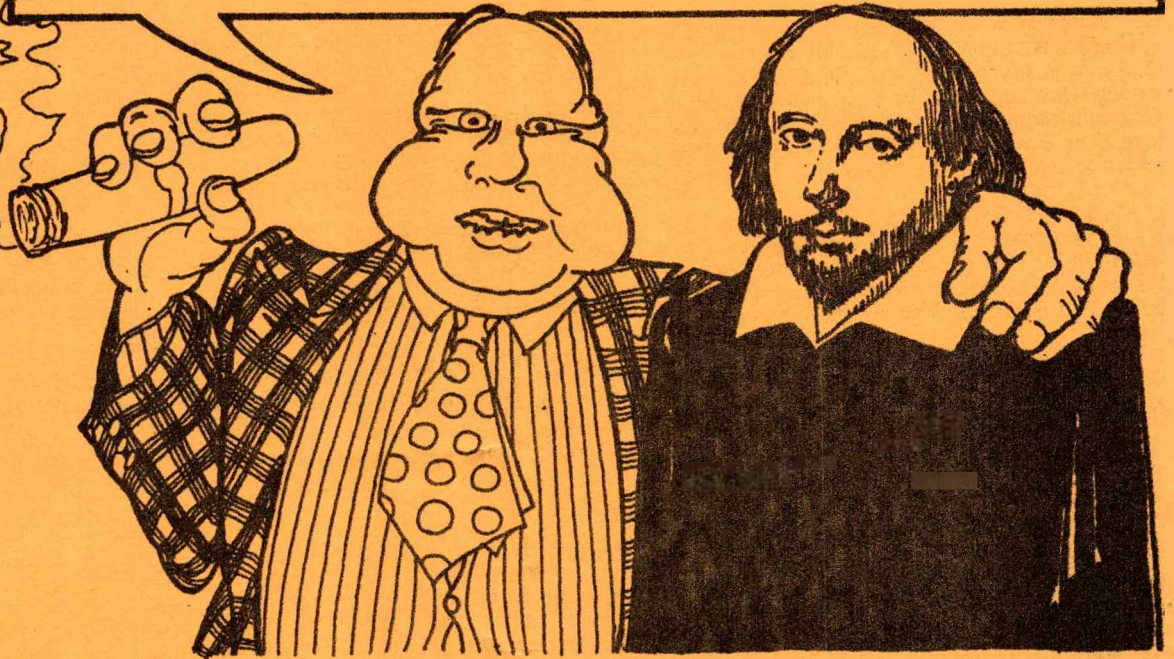
I'll say this for Harry's disclaimer: my column is not hard to write so long as I remember that the mundane world is much dafter than the fannish one.

about the variety of experience, and are more mentally versatile. When Marc Ortlieb asks what celery glasses are, we admit that we do not know whether celery grows in his home-town of Melbourne, but in Victorian England, celery was served in tall glass jars: they are now collectors' items.





**I'M GOING TO MAKE  
YOU A STAR**



# Philip Collins

Recently the amateur dramatics group I belong to had to find some new people to perform its latest extravaganza. To say we had some strange people wanting to audition is an understatement.

Our director, Ian Long, put an advert in the local paper saying that the drama group "Happy Bears With Boots" was looking for new people. (We are called "Happy Bears With Boots" due to Ian's liking for sweet gingerbread bears with chocolate booties. I am just thankful Ian doesn't eat other sorts of sweets; I would hate to be in a drama group called "The Jelly Babies With No Clothes On" for instance.) The advert gave Ian's 'phone number and we sat back to see what would happen.

One of the first answers we had was from an elderly gentleman who announced that we absolutely had to take him on. After all, he explained, his very best friend was once a member of the National Theatre. When asked what his, as opposed to his friend's, stage experience was, he told us the critics had been positively rapturous in their acclaim when he appeared in the Royal Shakespeare Company production of "As You Like It". Suspicious as to why such a prodigious actor should be contacting us, Ian asked him what part he had played. After some hedging he finally admitted that he was only a page boy and he had not actually said anything for his total two minutes on stage. "But I was a very good page boy," he insisted. Before Ian could hang up he was given further details of the man's illustrious career. Apparently he had actually carried a spear in "Macbeth". An equally silent but of course equally wonderful performance.

Later that evening we had a 'phone call from a father whose fourteen-year-old son wanted to join a drama group. Ian explained that he was a bit young for us but suggested they contact the Greenwich Young People's Theatre. "Oh, they're a bit left-wing for us," said the worried father, fearful lest his son was going to be turned into a raving, card-carrying commie.



The next day Ian got a 'phone from another parent. "Hello, my daughter Susan Jones is interested in joining your drama group." Wondering mentally why Susan had not 'phoned herself, Ian gave the details of the audition. Next day another 'phone call. "Hello, my younger sister Susan Jones is interested in joining your drama group." Coincidence? Anyway Ian once again gave details of the auditions. The next day brought yet another 'phone call. "Hello, my niece Susan Jones is interested in joining your drama group." By the day of the auditions we had 'phone calls from six different members of the Jones family, but strangely enough no enquiry from Susan herself.

Only about half of the people who had 'phoned us actually turned up to the auditions. Sadly one of those missing was the ever-popular Susan Jones. Obviously her family was a lot more convinced of her thespian talents than she was herself.

Now whilst we were not expecting any Laurence Oliviers to come along, (although if you do happen to be reading this, Larry baby, you're always welcome), some of the Wallys there had to be seen to be disbelieved. One person seemed to have great difficulty in actually reading his script and speaking at the same time. Another person when asked about his previous acting experience, told us he posed in front of the mirror a lot. A third told us when he went to sign on the dole about six months previously one of the clerks there for some reason asked him if he was an actor. "And ever since I've always thought of myself as an actor." Going by his disastrous audition it can only be hoped that no-one ever asks him if he is a bomb disposal expert.

The auditions also had their sad side. We had one man whose shyness was so acute it was positively painful. It was obviously a great personal effort for him to be sitting in a room with other people. When speaking his voice was so quiet that one had to strain to hear him. Belonging to a drama group would probably have helped him with this personality defect, but we are not expert enough in that field. We felt really bad about having to turn him down, but we really had no other choice.

Despite all these problems we did manage to get together a cast of the right sort of people. As I write this we have yet to perform our play - "Fish 'N' Chip Paper", but hopefully the performance will be a lot less hazardous than the auditions.



There's a tale told in China, of a fair maiden called Nelly, who lived with the Emperor. It being a Royal Farm, the farm lands of the Emperor were tilled by serfs. Being the Royal Concubine's daughter, Nelly could only be married to one of her lofty station, but sadly, her heart belonged to Gus, a serf on her father's farm. Finally, they decided that elopement was the only way to get around this problem. So Nelly, being the enterprising sort, ran off with all her possessions in one small bag, and led her beloved Gus to the place now known as She Tin, not far from the Yang Tse river. (Little geographical aside there) Anyway, said Emperor, finding the fair Nelly gone, led a party after them, and eventually, caught up with Nelly and Gus by a river. Out of her bag of possessions, the enterprising Nelly produced a punt, and punted out into the river with her beloved beside her. Downfall was near at hand, however, because the Emperor had brought with him boats of his own, having foreseen this eventuality, and consequently started out after the two lovers. Seeing that all was lost, Nelly kissed her beloved Gus goodbye, produced a hatchet from the bag and, with one last farewell to her lover, smashed the bottom of the boat, sinking them into the pearl river. In her memory, the devastated Emperor decreed that famous Chinese song be sung every year on the anniversary of their death. Now you can still hear worthy peasants singing those time honoured words "Nelly the debutant cracked her punt and said goodbye to her serf, Gus,....."



It's a deal then. You sell me your soul and I guarantee a new Willis piece .....

Oscar Dalgleish



# Any Post, Dear?

PATRICK NIELSEN HAYDEN,  
75 Fairview #2B  
New York NY 10040  
U. S. A.

Your comments about D. West are way out of line. You have no substantial reason to impute that he would have behaved in anything other than a responsible fashion regarding the administration of TAFF. As you well know, the passage of his you quoted in support of your views had to do with his plans for the disposition of profits made from his reprint anthology, not of TAFF monies. I gather West's reply to this has been "Terry Hill fucks dead poodles." Rather moderate of him, considering.

The race is over: Rob Hansen won, with West doing respectably well. Strange as it may seem to you, we nominated West, for all the usual reasons people in one country nominate a fan sight unseen from the other side of the ocean (interest in his personality and works, desire to meet originator of same, What A Surprise). We're nearly as pleased with the race's outcome, Rob Hansen being a Brit we'd like to meet just as much. Given all that, I think you owe us and the other Americans who voted for West an apology, or at least a clarification of the reasoning behind your sudden conversion to a style of fandom that makes modern evil KTF British fandom look nicey-nice. What has West done to earn this sort of libel, besides not being impressed with your fannish ghods? The fact that I probably like your style of fandom better than West does (as I obviously like West's better than you do) makes me no less offended. Hearty frank give-and-take is one thing. Imputing financial irresponsibility to someone just because they use rude words about your buddies is quite another. Put up or shut up.

⌘ — An apology — I'm sure Terry would give you one if he had said what you're saying he implied. We'd heard that some people took that editorial to mean "D. West will take the money and split to South America" or somesuch, but until your letter arrived, Patrick, we had nothing in writing to confirm this. That editorial was very carefully written not to say or imply any such thing; I suggest to anyone who thinks otherwise that they go read it over again. Terry's interest was in the perpetuation of TAFF alone, although Rob Hansen is a closer acquaintance, and, naturally, there was some bias in that direction. Recent events involving the administration of TAFF have boosted the awareness of fandom at large, and we feel now that TAFF will survive despite lack of effort on any administrator's part. As for the poodles, well, I have had my hair permed, just in case.....⌘

⌘ Apart from Patrick's letter, other response has in general agreed or at least sympathised with the content of the editorial. ⌘

MARK GREENER,  
2 White Hart Close,  
Buntingford,  
Herts.

TAFF is an excellent idea, and it will be a real shame if it falls apart. To this end I'm voting for either Hansen or hold-over-funds (the latter I'm reluctant to do). The problem is that West is a great fanwriter as well as a nice bloke so what do I do? However, I get the feeling he might just be taking the piss out of us all. If he was really that adverse to being sent over to the U.S. of A., why did he agree to stand? At least this years TAFF is the most exciting in recent years: :: I'm sure that he would live up to his obligations. He knows full well what these are and by accepting the nomination he is accepting the obligations. He might just be pulling our dongs. However are we prepared to take this risk?, or are we to take him at face value as a potential despoiler of TAFF? I for one am not prepared to take that risk.

HAZEL ASHWORTH,  
16 Rockville Drive,  
Embsay, Skipton,  
N. Yorks.

Your editorial might not have been fun to write, but I'm sure it needed saying - lots of people must be pretty horrified at the idea of sending a TAFF delegate who neither wants to meet Americans or see their country. I can't see why he wanted to stand unless it was simply the prospect of getting fanknicks in a twist. I can't imagine many people taking it seriously though.

OSCAR DALGLEISH,  
67 Robslee Road,  
Giffnock,  
Glasgow  
G46 7ER

As far as D. West is concerned, I cannot say that I would have been interested in voting for him in the first place, because I have always considered the person sent by TAFF as an indication of the fans voting for the person concerned. Certain individuals have accused the committee of Albacon of not giving much money to TAFF because we "didn't have our arses licked" (my apologies to the person concerned if I misquote), by the person who was eventually sent to us by TAFF from the States. The only redeeming factor that

Avedon Carol possessed at Albacon was that she claimed to be the Armenian delegate, rather than the American delegate, and as such, I can possibly believe that she is not indicative of the nature of the majority of American fans. I, however cannot bring myself to believe that D. West will find the grace to disown himself likewise were we to send him to America. I have seen nothing to suggest that he would be any asset to British fandom, were he to be voted for TAFF, and from what I have read of his work, I consider him about as much of an asset to us in Britain as Avedon Carol was to the Americans.

JOHN D. OWEN,  
4 Highfield Close,  
Newport Pagnell,  
Bucks. MK16 9AZ

Mmmm, I'm inclined to agree with you over the 'West for TAFF' business, even though I have no interest in the fund at all, and never vote. If it's to continue, then sending West to the West is probably the worst thing that one could do. Problem is, will the curiosity of the Americans to meet the ogre over-rule the caution of the Brits who realise that West might wreck the fund for future candidates? We shall undoubtedly see.

JON WALLACE,  
21 Charleston Street,  
Dundee DD2 4RG

TAFF rears its ugly head in all sorts of strange places these days. Personally, I find it difficult to get involved in it, (not really expecting to be nominated, I suppose....) no, but seriously, I haven't any real contact with American fandom; the occasional zine comes my way, usually courtesy of Ethel Lindsay, but I've not really enjoyed any of them. (Hastens to say that the odd American piece in a British zine is interesting in a gloriously-out-of-place sort of way.) So I don't usually worry about who is nominated, who wins etc. I certainly don't worry at all about the American end; These people are totally unknown to me. Having said that (locer backtracks, having examined his ideas more deeply) I think that I agree with you you say that D. West is a less-than-ideal candidate. He seems to have even less interest in fandom U.S. style than I do. Hansen for TAFF.

MARTYN TAYLOR,  
Flat 2, 17 Hutchinson Sq.,  
Douglas,  
Isle of Man

Yes, I take your point about one of the candidates for TAFF. He doesn't seem to be entering into the spirit of things, does he? The Big Ted has a go at him in EGOSCAN 3 for denigrating anthologies and then coming out with his own at a large price. For myself I would have great difficulty in voting for anyone hailing from West Yorkshire just at the moment, quite unreasonably blaming them all for Polley. As you say, Hansen for TAFF (well, he is already, if you think about it...) you know it makes sense.

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

D. West's TAFF campaign methods might provide him with victory in the race. He should get a lot of votes just because he is writing such outrageous things about his attitude toward TAFF and his intentions if chosen for the trip, just as some punk rockers grow rich and famous for behaving in putrid manner on stage. And, if his campaign should fail and he doesn't win TAFF, just think of the opportunity for some fannish Spengler to write a lengthy essay entitled The Decline of D. West. { Of course, it's all academic now. } I appreciate your mention of me and TAFF in the same literary breath, and your reticence in not adding the fact that I might be the natural continuation of improbable candidates following D. West. But I would never stand or run or adopt any inbetween course of action: TAFF candidates should drink, should have the ability to stay up all night at parties and cons, should be able to accept in unruffled manner hospitality in fannish households where children, pets and even fans create chaos as standard living conditions, should be gregarious by nature, and I don't fit any of those job descriptions.

{ We weren't aware of these stringent requirements for TAFF candidacy. Thanks for pointing them out; we'll bear them in mind in future. }

ANTHONY L. TOMKINS,  
364 Great Clowes Street,  
Salford M7 9ET

MICROWAVE 1 to 6, hmmm, too much in all that lot to comment upon. Oh, yes; was loaned all your zines by \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, as I've been sort of out of touch with things fandom for a while. (Oh, no, not another 50's fan coming back; er, well, yes sir.)

Can understand you being poor; you've spent a fortune buying all those pre-war pulps up; no wonder I've not been able to find them, you have collared the lot!

Fandom never was to me, anything other than a part of my life. There are so many things I'm interested in, that Science Fiction has to take its place in the line along with everything else.

MICROWAVE seems to be a nice zine, friendly and not bitchy like a lot on the scene at the moment. I wish I could be more constructive, however don't know where to start from six issues.

{ The fact that the fan who loaned Tony the back issues is, in fact, a hoax, caused Terry to doubt the veracity of his claim to BAFFship. A word or two in the right ears, however, soon established his bona fides..... }

CHUCH HARRIS,  
32 Lake Crescent,  
Daventry,  
Northants  
NN11 5EB

Tony Tomkins? Wow! He's really got the nerve to show his face round here again? We used to call him TT on account of his extraordinary chest development. He could do almost incredible things with a Mars bar, and was widely rumoured to be the fifteen year old sex-object lusted after in Performance. Does he still use the patchouli-scented notepaper for his fanac, and who is he sharing with at Beacon this time? Burgess was so impressed with him that he once gave him a free meat pie, and we know what THAT means. Wow! Born Again TT. Well done and welcome to the show.

{ Er.... any friend of Chuch's, ..... }





VINCE CLARKE,  
16 Wendover Way,  
Welling,  
Kent DA16 2BN

Who can forget the first fan to construct a concordance to THE IMMORTAL STORM and who held a convention in Theydon Bois attended only by himself and his Aunt Thelma? I always thought that his retirement from fandom was hastened by that questioning by M15 after he sent a copy of his fanzine to Buckingham Palace, and I'm glad he's got over that traumatic experience; I hope he'll return my first edition of DARK CARNIVAL now he's back with us again. I certainly trust some other fans don't hold grudges, justified tho' they may have seemed at the time. . . . and, come to think of it, still are.

((( Mmmmm. . . . Wanna talk about it, Tony )))

MAUREEN S. PORTER,  
28 Asquith Road,  
Rose Hill, Oxford OX4 4RH

I enjoyed Skel's 'Little Things'. We seem to be bugged by pretty similar things. I seemed to devote years of my time in my last job unwinding the telephone after the lazy slob who sat next to it and therefore just leaned over to answer it had tangled the cord up completely. There is also the matter of the way the receiver is facing when it's put down. I was apparently in a minority of one at the last place as everyone else put the damn thing down the other way, so when I answered the phone I had to pause and turn the whole thing round, or else speak into the wrong bit without thinking, or try to be lefthanded for the duration, something that didn't come to me very easily. Incidentally why can other people dial with just one hand when I have to use the other hand to hold the phone down, necessitating some pretty nifty juggling, and why can they dial using a pencil when I can't?

I also enjoyed Sid Birchby's pieces. These little nuggets of information and anecdote are so much easier to cope with when you just don't seem to have the time to get immersed in a D. West-length epic, and I rarely do these days, or is this just my inability to concentrate on anything for a reasonable amount of time these days? If I was older I'd think I was starting to go under. As it is I'm forced to conclude that my braincells are just starting to drown under the onslaught of what I drink. Dangerous stuff, this real ale. Either that or the milk I've started drinking. I used to hate the stuff and I'm still not entirely convinced, but it is supposed to be good for me. On a cosmopolitan note, we have two Burmese working in our building for six months. I've only seen them once, but they've registered with the library so their names are written down. We can't pronounce them, aren't even sure how they're spelt, and bearing in mind the intricacies of some Oriental names we aren't quite sure which bits are surnames and which forenames, and if they don't come to the library we aren't going to find out.

The highlight of this issue for me was the piece by Jon Wallace. I've been sufficiently interested in UFOs to have been reading about them since I was ten, and I now have a well-developed set of neuroses which don't like me standing out in the back garden at night, in case one lands between me and the house. Strangely enough, this doesn't seem to bother me once I'm more than several hundred yards away from my home. I love watching the sky although visibility is often poor. We live in a rather built-up area and there is the problem of those awful orange streetlights. I can't even recognise any constellations apart from the Plough, and Orion, but I like to watch for meteor showers when I know that they're coming, and I've twice seen a solitary shooting star. I've seen lots of things that could be construed as UFOs in that they're flying objects and are unidentified but I've usually been able to find a logical explanation. I know Venus the Evening Star when I see it, and I also know that if you face a plane coming head on the light on the front is a bit offputting. I know what navigation lights are like, and I think I can recognise things that are satellites going over. Only once have I seen something that I could find absolutely no logical and rational explanation for, and I really do think of that as a UFO in the accepted 'space' sense.

I was cycling home one winter night, watching the sky instead of the road, as is my wont when there isn't any traffic about, and I'd pulled up at the traffic lights, with about half a mile to go. I suddenly caught sight of a yellowish light quite high up in the sky and moving in front of me, apparently away from me. It's hard to analyse why a light in the sky suddenly seems different from any other light in the sky, but this one was - call it a sixth sense, or intuition of some sort. As the lights changed I was on my bike and pedalling like fury along the road, trying to keep it in sight. Fortunately the road broadened quite considerably at that point and I got quite a good view of this yellow blob as it started to rise in the sky and disappear over Rose Hill up on my right. It just seemed to go up and up until I lost sight of it. I ran through all the possibilities and had listened for an engine noise without any luck, and I was eventually forced to the conclusion that it was something a bit special, that I had finally seen a UFO. I might add that I've always wanted to see one which is why I try to be so thorough about identifying anything, so as not to prejudice my chances as an observer should I ever see anything really strange. The weird bit is that I saw another one two minutes later, literally. The hill is in two parts and I'd lost sight of the first light as I climbed the first bit of the hill. Partway up the second bit of the hill one gets a fairly spectacular view of parts of Oxford at night and a broad sweep of sky so I was admiring all the lights and stars when I saw another of these yellow lights moving parallel with me this time. I actually stopped the bike to watch, rather brave of me on the whole, and it just disappeared from my view, going in an almost completely opposite direction to the other light. I told my husband, who is a sceptic, and also my parents, who laughed, and my colleagues, who also laughed. My mother rang me the following Monday and told me that the local radio station had received a call from a local



astronomer who'd observed similar yellow lights but during the day and who had had a chance to put a telescope on them. Vindication of a sort I suppose, though I don't think anyone still really believes me, because I'm known to be very interested, and people like me make shocking observers on the whole - we're far too subjective. (I really liked the man who had a sighting of the Loch Ness Monster, which allegedly surfaced mere hundreds of yards from his boat, but who steadfastly refused to believe in the creature, even after that - and no, I'm not sure if I believe at all).

One really interesting thing about Jon's sighting is the fact that he had a camera with him, and never got round to using it. So many people who see something inexplicable have a camera with them but they always seem to be awestruck by what they've seen. And the other thing is the variation in what different people all observing at the same time actually see. My own UFO is not space debris. I'm fairly certain of that because I've seen enough meteor showers to know what they look like, and I also saw the falling satellite when it crossed the British Isles, and that was something completely different. That was a beautiful sight, a strange, flickering white light crossing over a perfect early evening sky. Looking at it I became conscious of just how little and insignificant I was standing on my little piece of planet watching a small cosmic drama being enacted.

}} Yup - does sort of knock the old ego a bit, don't it? People do it to you too, not on the same scale maybe, but more often.....}}

GLORIA McMILLAN,  
428 East Adams St.,  
Tucson,  
Arizona 85705  
U. S. A.

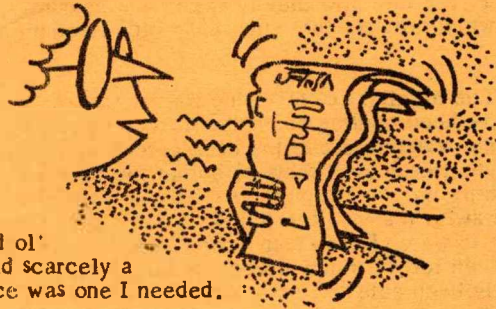
I was so pleased with my 2 Britzines yesterday, I foolishly forgot that the Dragons of Ghu take offense when puny mortals brag. I carried those two lovely zines to campus, looking for someone to buttonhole and tell about this windfall. I found a woman I knew last term in teacher's education class. Delightedly, I ran up to her -- pant, pant -- and began my refrain, "See here? I got 2 British fanzines in the mail today. Oh, ain't

life wonderful. ....?"

(I'm afraid that I did wave them about in plain sight of the unseen spirits. .... and then it hit.)

The woman I was trying to impress said, "FAN-zines?!" \*snort\* That Dungeons and Dragons stuff? I have only found true happiness in Mensa. For years I was misunderstood, exploited, etc. etc. by mere mortals, but now in Mensa I've found happiness at last! Why don't you come to a meeting or two? Maybe Mensa itself doesn't interest as much as in the past, but there's Intell which is even better (upper 1/2 of Mensa); it isn't so political. ...." and so on.

I looked at my zines and held them up as a shield, perhaps, to ward off this form of vampirism (draining my earlier high spirits). The zines were wilting under the force of the woman's breath.



Terry Carr's remarks in your lettercol gave me a real clue to the great appeal of MICROWAVE. It must be a place where people feel a good climate for taking major literary leaps or modest little ramblings, just as in the good ol' 50s! My fannish mentors always said those were golden days. And scarcely a dungeon or a dragon did I see! All in all, I thought the experience was one I needed. Relax and chuckle along with some friendly folk.

You see -- I don't know if it has to do with getting to be 35 -- but so much of my life seems to slip by in encounters like the opener of this letter. Of course, your lettercol reveals some of that, too, but I think there's always a bit more irony there about one's own importance in the vast scheme of things, more self-humor. On the basis of 2 issues, anyway.

}} From a tale of woe induced by the Nemesis Critters to a few words from the Country's foremost exponent on those vile abominations from the Netherworld.....}}

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

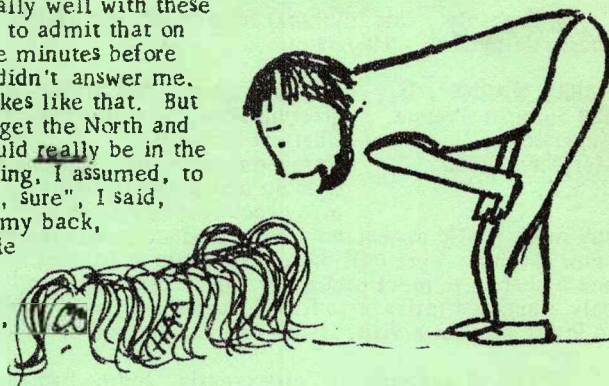
Word was, in the House of Wod, that MICROWAVE was imminent. (Once it arrived, of course, word was that it was eminent, but I wouldn't tell you a thing like that.) The way I know this is that Hazel and I were there at the time, like last week. Wod himself has many aliases. You may know him as A(denoid) Oddwove. Or even Dave Wood. I, personally, know him as That-Fortunate-Bastard-Who-Has-Access-To-Such-A-Amazing-

Equipment-In-His-Office-It-Makes-His-Fanzine-Production-Such-A-Doddle-He-Should-Continue-To-Live-Already? But I usually call him Wod for short. MICROWAVE, we daily heard, was well-nigh nigh except some \*@!?!: @!\* of a cover artist had done disappeared just when he was most needed. Then, the last morning we were there, I skidded into the kitchen on a carpet of Wod's small, amiable, but brilliantly-disguised Tibetan Lion Dogs ('Shitsu' I think they're called but I'm not sure of the spelling and anyway we'd be in danger of getting into all that 'Shit Sue from South Carolina. ....' stuff again.) There was Wod smuggly ensconced in the sun coming through the patio doors, reading the fabled tome. He was also looking at MICROWAVE in his spare moments.

Hazel and I sat sipping coffee and eyeing that quarto yellow blur a bit like Oliver Twist would have contem-



plated a plate of roast turkey and two veg. Every time Wod went to the loo (you know how incontinent he is), we both grabbed. Whichever of us was fastest would just get to a really cliffhanging episode - like wondering whether Chuch Harris would manage to spell 'the' correctly in the next line - and Wod would skid back in on a carpet of dog and we'd have to give it back. (I got on really well with these dogs, when I wasn't standing on them, although I do have to admit that on one occasion I'd been talking to one of the critters for five minutes before I realised I was addressing the wrong end. Fortunately it didn't answer me. I bet David Attenborough never makes embarrassing mistakes like that. But he must have to be pretty careful. I reckon if you didn't get the North and South poles of an African elephant sorted out good you could really be in the shit.) "Will we get one?", Hazel whispered to me (referring, I assumed, to a MICROWAVE 7 and not an African elephant). "Oh, yes, sure", I said, airily, crossing more fingers than I thought I had, behind my back, "When you're a part of the real inner Trufan coterie people don't drop you from their mailing list just for missing writing a letter on one issue", I concluded with a chuckle which was meant to be Fan-of-the-Worldly and reassuring, but was actually a bit high-pitched and tremulous.



It was a little difficult driving 200 miles up the motorway with my fingers crossed, but it paid off. MICROWAVE was waiting for us when we got home, and a fine MICROWAVE too. You seem to have mastered your new typeface potential and visually this issue is much more together than No. 6. The material, as usual, is a treat, and you have maintained a good balance between articles and a live and very lively lettercolumn. And sneaking in a Chuch Harris column like that, in the middle of the letters, by raiding his dustbin for throw-away carbons is a real brainwave. Maybe one issue you could try it in reverse - raid the lettercolumn for Chuch Harris material and throw it in the dustbin. Still, I have to admit the Old Feller is writing better than ever, and his stuff is not only keen and beautifully done, varied and very funny, but also delightfully gussy. I'd expect gutsiness of Chuch, of course, but after 25 years you don't always get what you expect, and scanning the decimated ranks of those remaindered from the Fifties I do occasionally seem to detect slight traces of the Bathchair-on-Bournemouth-promenade-tea-and-crumpets-at-4-and-to-bed-by-8,30-with-a-well-thumbed-copy-of-THE-WIT-AND-WISDOM-OF-HUGO-GERNSBACK syndrome. So it's good to know that Chuch is still truly alive and kicking. Well - kicking, anyway.

Lovely bit of writing of Chuch's about slugs, and I must say I share his feelings. Those things turn me over more than most, and they sure do have the vilest habits. I've seen them eating a worm, and even another dead slug. He must never give up his battle against these creatures. That's what happened on the planet Dune, you know; some careless gardener ignored the slugs for six months and look what they grew into! If Chuch really has tried everything - laser beams, Pershing missiles and all - maybe I'd better let him into the Awful Secret of the Ultimate Deterrent. But it is no light matter and it calls for a near-ultimate sacrifice on the part of the user. I confess I've never had the nerve to do it myself. What you do is scoop out shallow holes in the most obviously slug-infested parts of the garden, and insert into them shallow dishes, half-grapefruit skins or whatever - and these you fill with - dare I say it, even? - BEER! The slugs then proceed to drown themselves in a spirit akin to that at the best Eastercon roomparties. Come to think of it, maybe I could, after all, get to understand the slug mentality in time.

I thought LeeH's piece on how indistinguishable American imperialism becomes from Soviet imperialism very fine and honest. The U.S. record of torture and murder of civilian populations too (sometimes direct, as in Vietnam, sometimes through intermediaries as in Argentina, Chile, the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon etc.) must by now rival Nazi German statistics. (Britain, having been thrown out of virtually everywhere else, still tries to keep its hand in in Northern Ireland. "Concentration Camps? Who, us? Er - well, yes, actually"). As she says, all very confusing. And embarrassing.

But she is getting far too acute at seeing through these 'social games' - even beginning to doubt if she ever really came to England. This is getting serious, Terry: you've got to steer her away from this line of thought. I wonder if my old photos would help - LeeH in a group with Walt, ATom, Larry Shaw, me and Sheila, Chuch, Ken Bulmer and so on? We invented this imaginary (and, we thought, rather unbelievable) town called Kettering and erected Hollywood type sets of streets, railway station, even a Con hotel. And LeeH fell for it - the whole bit. She didn't even suspect that we'd set it all up in a little used corner of South Carolina. It was all very much like the CIA spoof film of Americans landing on the moon and all that other crazy interplanetary stuff. Course that was all pretty sercon - I suppose everybody knows by now that the CIA is just a front for the N3F. Ours was just a Trufan hoax; and now, just as we're about to plan a repeat to get LeeH to 'England' (hee hee) again, she's starting to get wind of it all. Do something, Terry.

⌘ We feel it is our duty to expose this awful attempt by males to once more dupe a poor trusting American girl. Like we always say, you can trust these characters about as far as you can throw a brick chimney by its smoke. Some, however, have a shred of decency in them. . . . . ⌘

JON WALLACE,  
21 Charleston Street,  
Dundee DD2 4RG

You can tell Lee Hoffman that she's right to doubt the existence of England. The whole thing is a hoax, set up by the Europeans against the day when they could offer it to the US government as a forward base for nasty things that they wouldn't want



on their own home soil. Scotland, on the other hand is the only place. And it exists, haven't you seen Brigadoon? No? Aren't you lucky?

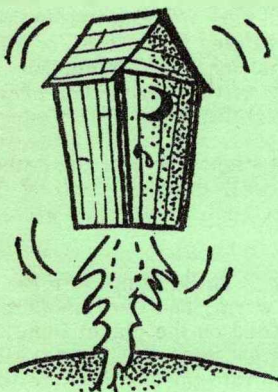
⌘ Probably. One mythical town leads, naturally (to us, anyway), to a near-mythical town - no, not Puerto de la Cruz - Hagerstown. . . . . ⌘

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

The seventh MICROWAVE was another wonderful, hilarious, instructive and en-  
grossing issue, up to the final lines on the inside of the back cover. I believe George  
Charters is the first major member of Irish Fandom to be lost to us. His passing would  
sorrow me under any circumstances but it seems even more poignant because it means  
IF is no longer intact, not even in theory. I suppose it's something like the way so  
many rock fans felt when John Lennon was killed: nobody expected the Beatles to make

any more public appearances or to produce more recordings, but until then, it had been somehow comforting to  
know that they were still there, complete and intact. Worse yet, George was only the second member of IF I  
had a chance to meet personally and it didn't happen. Some years ago he spent several months in Virginia,  
only a hundred miles or so from Hagerstown, and I didn't know he was there until he'd returned home, too late  
to invite him for a visit. (John Berry is the only IF component I've seen face to face.)

⌘ The news saddened Terry greatly, and he had more trouble than you might think writing that last short  
paragraph. ⌘



There was a headline in yesterday's local newspaper that might qualify  
for Sid Birchby's collection: "Williamsport's Explosions Stop / Commode  
commotion calms down" The news story under the headline explains that  
one of Williamsport's residents is happy because his toilet hasn't blown up  
for several months. Williamsport is a small town on the Potomac river  
about six miles from Hagerstown, which has been making changes in its  
sewer system. This man happened to live at the spot where malfunction  
in the sewer lines caused sewer gas to belch violently in the line beside  
his house and each time it happened the commode felt the effects,  
shooting water three or four feet into the air in the bathroom. The  
problem has apparently been solved by the replacement of pressure-  
sensitive sensors in the sewer lines by mechanisms that relieve pressure  
on a timed basis. It's too bad the explosions couldn't have been con-  
trolled because I'm sure the man could have made good use of one  
every time he needed an enema.

⌘ Don't mention enemas to Terry - it's wicked to mock the  
afflicted. ⌘

HAZEL ASHWORTH,  
16 Rockville Drive,  
Embsay,  
Skipton,  
N. Yorks

Bob Shaw's 'Murphan' piece was fun - so good you can't imagine why someone  
didn't think of it before; LeeH's writing was informative and entertaining as usual, and  
ain't she brave to be so casual about snakes and alligators? I know that reading POGO  
makes you feel warm towards swamp critters, but I wouldn't like to put my affection to  
the test. (I have only recently learned enough self-control to face a smallish spider  
without screaming). Chuch Harris's excerpts were superb. Certain people-who-shall-

be-nameless nodded wisely as I chortled through the 'AA Adonis' and evilslug stories, and said 'of course he's  
superb' but I'm not at liberty to tell you who t'was, on account of some o-o-old BAFF custom.

⌘ We thought 'Chuch Harris was superb' was an old BAFF custom. ⌘

I was rather bemused by Dave Rowley's letter. Is he serious? I couldn't make up my mind. The most  
over-the-top remark - about Elda not having much self respect if she allowed you to put her name on the cover  
- did seize up my brain-cells rather. If Dave R. really thinks that self-respect has to do with appearance, and  
that he can monitor the amount other people have from afar, he needs help. "What matters is not what other  
people think of you, but what you think of other people" might do for starters. It got me to thinking about a  
conversation I'd had with Brenda (Dave Wood's wife) the other day in a pub during a Wood/Ashworth holiday  
spree. Brenda was talking about the pressures upon adolescents to keep up appearances as trendy/sophisticated/  
wild, and about her own relationship with her teenage daughter and son. 'Do you remember,' she said 'how  
parents used to make threats about what would happen if you Brought Trouble Home? We all knew what that  
meant. Never be able to lift our heads again. . . . what would Mrs So-and-So say. . . . Worrying about what the  
neighbours would say would be the last thing on my list - the effect of an unwanted pregnancy on their young  
lives is what I'd be concerned about.' This struck me as a very sane attitude. There was a thoughtful silence  
as we pondered the awful hassles of adolescence. 'I'd hate to go through all that again,' said Brenda. Then Dav  
spoke. I listened attentively, as a neo ought: 'My problem, when I was in my teens, was how to get the hecto  
jelly to set'. Oh to be a sweet uncomplicated fifties fan! Later on it occurred to me that it's this same Dave  
Wood, this proliferating illo-man, sometime known as WOD, who perpetrated the dreffle cover that is causing  
some fuss! All of which leaves me rather confused. One thing emerges - don't mess with hecto jelly - at least  
not during your Formative Years.



⌘ We can understand how coping with hecto jelly and puberty could be a problem. Our next writer seems to have trouble coping with reality, period.⌘

MARK GREENER,  
2 White Hart Close,  
Buntingford,  
Herts.

There are many laws referring to mundane life. Have you ever noticed how a soldering iron will always fall point down, and you will grab this point in a desperate attempt to stop it incinerating the carpet? Or how all the letters you get have the same address on even though they come from different people? Or however hard you try, cream crackers don't bounce?

⌘ No. Have you ever tried eating four inside one minute with no liquid intake?⌘

I too saw a UFO once. However as I was in London and my brain was left behind in Buntingford, courtesy of that funny green stuff, I don't suppose I could be called a reliable witness.

⌘ You could probably be called a lot of things, but it's doubtful that 'reliable witness' would immediately spring to mind.⌘

OSCAR DALGLEISH,  
67 Robslee Road,  
Giffnock,  
Glasgow,  
G46 7ER

You can just feel the romance and understanding oozing out of Skel's Little Things or should I say, "Little Things". He's obviously such a dyed-in-the-wool romantic that it would be impossible to change his views. Even so, I hope that some day, he may find that a few well chosen words have more effect than all the actions in the world. Even if I did detect a note of cynicism in the article, I did find it enormously funny. I have often found that it isn't so much how you say something, but what you say, in making a small, insignificant comment. While I was training, one of my female colleagues was given a patient whom she had not seen before. She asked what her weight had been on admission, as it was not on the case notes, an unusual omission. On being told the girl's weight, she was heard to say, "Hell, you must have looked pretty fat when you came in." It was then that she noticed that the patient had been admitted for anorexia nervosa. Strange how little things can say so much.

⌘ Just when you thought that five pages cobbled together out of his letters was enough, you find that the man writes LoCs as well!⌘

CHUCH HARRIS,  
32 Lake Crescent,  
Daventry,  
Northants,  
NN11 5EB

That's a lovely bit of reproduction - as they used to say to Mr Dionne - I don't know how you manage it. I found it all perfectly legible and easy to read. I sympathise with people with sight problems, but surely a magnifying glass is the answer rather than a step backwards to unreduced type format!

And, anyway, ---- I was working out costs on my calculator today and I can't see how anyone could publish a frnz for general circulation nowadays without reduction. I guess that at present you pay 13p domestic postage and 35p foreign. If you didn't reduce print size, I calculate it would be 17p and 49p. Using HYPHEN as an example with a 250 print run split 50/50 Europe and Stateside, it would cost £82 for postage alone before you bought paper, ink, staples and cups of tea for the slip-sheet boy.

At these rates it's just tough titty about Dave Rowley's poor eyes. I suppose literate seeing-eye dogs aren't generally available yet? Perhaps Joy Hibbert could read the next issue to him, skipping any saucy mentions we may make about Miss Elda.

You know, if there's one thing that gets up my nose, it's high moral tones from crapulous do-gooders. So holy Rowley disapproves of the Miss Elda cover. . . . "can't have much respect for herself. . . . standards of Page 3 newspapers. . . . sick joke. . . . cheap humour."

Bloody hell! The only sick joke around here seems to be Dave Rowley. It was an innocent innocuous cover showing a pretty girl with all the naughty bits decently shrouded in a lot of starry gauze left over from the last Finlay portfolio. I know you can see the outside of her left leg nearly all the way up to her bum, but is this such a terrible thing? Just what does he want on a cover. . . . yasmaks and Dunlop wellies?

If this worries him so much, he'll hit the Ultimate Everlasting Orgasm if he so much as glimpses any of those Rotsler nudes with those marvellous uncantilevered knockers which look so fantastic in free fall but sag around the knees in Earth-type gravity. "All that meat," as Father Bridge said. "And no potatoes."

Pax vobiscum, sport.

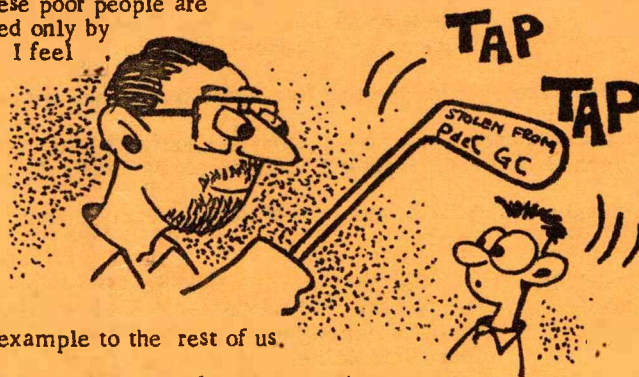
Seriously, this sort of thing is one of the reasons I had so many misgivings when you and Ving decided to fight for a cleaner, friendlier fandom with an end to the Kill The Fuckers attitude. Fandom, it was hoped, would be a decent, better place -- a sort of sweet, cultural Athens. The Golden Age might return once more. The strong would guide the weak in a happy, never-ending procession to the Tower of Trufandom.

Bullshit.

It isn't viable. Fuggheadry is contagious: a sort of Rowley polio virus. Without the occasional planned cull to thin them out a bit, we would all be knee-deep in slobbering halfwits.

Ever since we sprang entire from Gernsback's brow, we have been cursed by these self-appointed critics and carping censors. Dave Rowley is a direct descendant of the dreadful Gert Carr --- Carzan of the APAs --- who sullied and spoilt all the fun that was 6th fandom.

I tell you, -----ruthless....but humane.....action is the only answer. Never, as you well know, would I countenance cruelty or beastliness. Many of these poor people are dim, inoffensive, god-fearing, twits handicapped only by mongolism. They deserve some consideration. I feel they should be treated with respect, dragged quietly from the ice, and clubbed painlessly behind the earhole before being decently processed into trendy (but useful), mimeo machine covers, and parchment slipsheets. The leaders, the hard core of superrugs, should be forced to learn by rote every single syllable of THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR so that they get some idea of what it's all about, and then paraded at every convention, belled, sack-clothed, and chanting "Unclean" as a dreadful example to the rest of us.



Well now, it's not often you find old mate Terry Jeeves in a fanzine nowadays. Fortunately.

I never thought much of that "stow thrones" pun when Walt first used it 20 years ago --- altho' to be fair, Himself was inordinately proud of it, and trotted it out at every opportunity. I can't say that the long shelflife has done much to improve it either.

I don't think you had any real alternative about Miss Elda's con report. I quite see she's upset about it but the point isn't whether it's gospel truth or not but whether a court of law would uphold it. Langford, for a start, would most certainly have slapped a writ on you and then gone to court with a smart mouthpiece to argue that Marks & Spencer's panties are, in actuality, a unisex garment. As for Joy ---well I agree that it shows very little self-respect to carry on like that, but after 14 pints of Yorkshire bitter you could plead extenuating circumstances and anyway, the chap below had his umbrella up so no real harm was done except to Burgess' best suit, and who worries about Burgess?

When she gets to Arfer... Terryll, I just don't believe it. I've shared rooms with him in the past and I swear there has been no sign or indication of such a thing. This was the only piece which made me doubt Miss Elda, illo'd or not. Photographs can easily be faked... and how could anybody photograph their own leg in such an improbable position just to show a purported birthmark of Roscoe's mighty paddle? All right, so that's Arf's new belly button but I still don't believe it. I have to agree about Ving though. I personally think it is no more habit-forming than alcohol, and if the hotel wants to bitch about a couple of blackened teaspoons let them get on with it.

As for your Bonzo, I only hope you bring him to the Metropole. It must be a marvellous spectacle to see him in action. Even "Hunt the Biscuit" must have taken months of patient training.... it's almost unbelievable that he never fails to sniff it out in the end.

Have you tried other hiding places?

It has only just struck me that you are getting all crafty and devious, astute and wily... a strong touch of the A Vincents. Just a few months ago you would have wafed that Rowley effort. Now, thanks to intensive training, you toss him straight into the shark pool with a label round his neck saying "Lunch, anybody?"

Well done, lad!::: There's nothing, really nothing like a good Crucifixion in the letter column to pull in the Hugo votes. I suppose you wouldn't know of a good limpwriscan I could write up for you whilst my hatchet still has an edge on it?

⌘ All that invective and no mention of Thoats? He must be losing his touch! Chuch would, of course, be a prime candidate for the series of articles by BAFFs on their "missing" years away from fandom that Terry Carr suggested in the lettercol last ish. Harry Turner would have been another - if he hadn't got in this pre-emptive strike first!⌘

HARRY TURNER,  
10 Carlton Avenue,  
Romiley,  
Cheshire  
SK6 4EG

I guess Terry Carr must think of us old ex-fans who returned to the everyday world for long periods as having infinite leisure! Where would I find time to write autobiographical details to fill in my "missing" years, when I have a struggle just keeping pace with current distractions? Essentially, it's just a matter of the energies devoted to fanac being diverted to activities that promise to be more rewarding. So after dealing with the mundane necessities, like earning a living and supporting a family and paying off the mortgage, I concentrated my interest (and most spare cash) into drawing, painting and music and such-like cultural areas. The outward and visible signs of that time and effort are an art-history library, and a record/tape



collection of jazz and classical music that currently presents storage and filing problems even after overflowing into two adjoining houses. I can cheerfully spend the next twenty years (if I live that long!) exploring these resources to the full. I could say that I found I got along very well without fandom - relegating it to the "goddamn hobby" category - but admit that it's pleasant to look in on it occasionally to renew old acquaintances and to get to know a few new friends, and see and hear what they're doing - even to know they're still around, like Terry Carr. But a little exposure to fandom goes a long way. Fannish preoccupations tend to be repetitive over the years and I guess they bore me, so that I gladly return to what seem to be more varied and rewarding activities elsewhere. The hell with writing about the unfannish life - what self-respecting fan-editor would want to print it? (Don't tell me, Terry, don't tell me!)

I'VE BEEN TO NEWCASTLE - YOU'D BE WELL ADVISED TO TAKE YOUR OWN COAL - Ted Tubb

And so we come to the Right Honorable Company Of Also Rans, or WAHFs; Jon Wallace, Pamela Boal, Colin Grubb (four times), Philip Collins, Dave Rowley, Colin Fine, Ethel Lindsay, Syd Bounds, Terry Jeeves, Joy Hibbert, Steve Green, Mat Coward, Nicholas Davies, Ken Lake (three times), Mick Molloy, Glen Warmingier (twice), Nigel E. Richardson, Eric Bentcliffe, Marc Ortlieb, Gloria McMillan, Harry Bell (four times), Bryan Barrett (four times), Maureen Elinor, Maureen Porter, Jeremy Crampton, Skel (twice), Sid Birchby, Pete Crump, Lee Hoffman (three times), and rich brown (twice - both letters found us, rich, the one with the wrong address got here first, Sorry for not replying, but the right address is the one up front).

I WOULDN'T PAY FOR IT, BUT I'LL BORROW YOURS - ATom

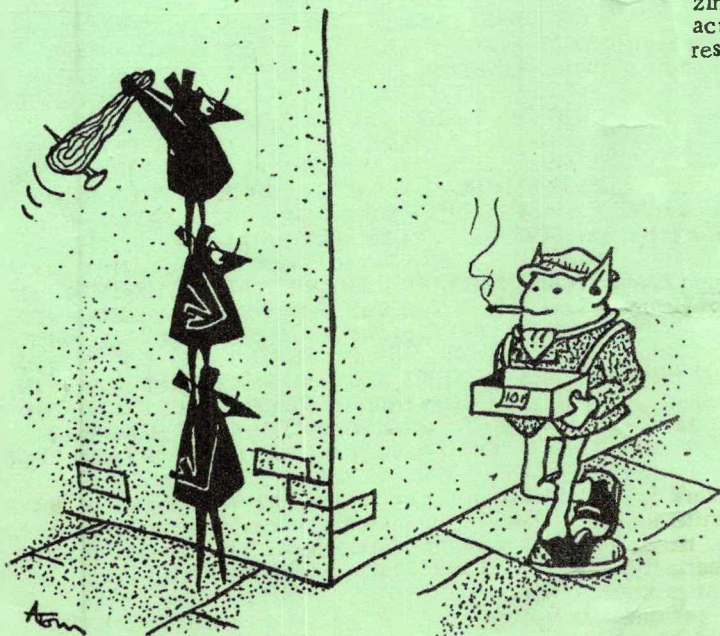
NEW BROOM SWEEPS CLEAN DEPT., let's cut the mailing list to ribbons.



Our records (not necessarily accurate, we will admit), indicate that your interest in this zine is waning or non-existent. We'll stop pestering you after this - unless you're masochistic enough to want us to keep it up and write to say so.



The same records we mentioned above indicate that your interest in fandom and pubbing your ish is a bit suspect. It is even possible that you've given up hope of seeing this zine again, and you've dropped us from your mailing list. If you're no longer putting out a zine, carefully transfer the cross to the upper box, and act accordingly. If you are still publishing, let's resume trading, ok?



IF THIS IS YOUR FIRST ISSUE of  
WAVE you may be puzzled  
at what went before.  
the editors;  
to Stu Shiffman,  
New York,  
case you'll get  
ete set of back  
the cost of  
no other back  
orry.

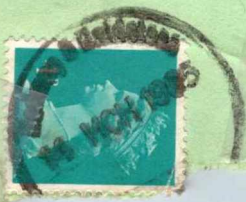




PRINTED MATTER - REDUCED RATE  
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Lee Hoffman, HM-KTF,  
3335 N.W. Harbor Blvd.,  
Port Charlotte,  
FL 33952  
U.S.A.

By air mail  
Par avion



From:- Margaret Hill & Eida Wheeler,  
41 Western Road, Maidstone,  
Kent, ME16 8NE.  
Great Britain.

BAQUOTES

DUNNO WHY I STOPPED GETTING WIZ - MAYBE IT WAS SOMETHING I DIDN'T SAY..... THEY TEACH YOU HOW TO READ EIGHT HUNDRED WORDS A MINUTE BUT NOT HOW TO SPELL THEM. .... I'M A CREATURE OF HABIT, EVEN IF IT IS A DIRTY ONE..... THE FRONT GARDEN LOOKS LIKE A BALD HEAD..... THAT'S ONE OF THE GOOD THINGS ABOUT FANDOM - BRIAN BURGESS DOESN'T REMEMBER ME..... WHEN I THINK OF A SCAPEGOAT I WILL PASS THE BLAME ON..... THERE ARE SOME CHILDREN WHO WOULD BE ALL THE BETTER FOR BEING BITTEN OCCASIONALLY..... TRY NOT TO SCULPT HIM WHILST HE'S PICKING HIS NOSE..... SO ALRIGHT, I GIVE ADVICE - I DON'T ASK PEOPLE TO TAKE IT..... IT GAVE ME AN EXCUSE NOT TO TALK TO JOY HIBBERT..... I WONDER IF THERE ARE ANY MORE WORDS IN THE DICTIONARY I HAVEN'T USED?..... AM I REACHING THAT DREADFUL AGE WHERE THE GROSSER APPETITES REPLACE THE CARNAL?..... THINKING I WAS DEAD, SHE GOT UP AND STARTED RIFLING MY POCKETS..... MY CANARY WON'T STARVE BUT HE'LL NEVER BE A THREE HUNDRED POUNDER..... SOMETIMES I THINK THAT WHAT BORN AGAIN FIFTIES FANDOM NEEDED WAS A GOOD ABORTIONIST..... I WANTED TO FEEL A PART OF YOUR FANZINE..... ISN'T IT FUNNY HOW WIMEN OBJECT TO CLIMBING ON TOP OF THE WARDROBE AS THEY GET OLDER?..... NEXT MONDAY SEES THE BEGINNING OF IGNORE HOMOSEXUALS WEEK - HER MAJESTY WILL CUT THE FIRST SOD..... HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT METHYLATED SPIRITS TASTES LIKE ANYWAY?..... SOME SEX-CRAZED WOMAN HAS GIVEN ME A POSH LEATHERBOUND RUBAIYAT..... SHE HAS PRACTICALLY THROWN EVERYTHING OLD OUT OF THE BEDROOM, AND I DON'T LIKE THE WAY SHE'S EYEING ME!..... HITLER'S BODYGUARD WAS COMPOSED ENTIRELY OF LADY GOLFERS..... THE OTHER STUFF ALWAYS LOOKED AS IF IT WERE MORE AT HOME IN A HYMNBOOK..... I HAVE NO PARTICULAR FEELINGS ABOUT COLD MASHED POTATO SANDWICHES..... SHE WEARS DRESSES LIKE SHE THREW THEM ON AND THEY ALMOST MISSED..... ONE THING ABOUT CHRISTIANITY, IT MAY NOT BE VERY EXCITING, BUT AT LEAST IT'S DECENT..... GIVE A WOMAN AN INCH AND SHE THINKS SHE'S A RULER..... COLD SOUP READY IN FIVE MINUTES!..... IT WAS THE DUVET SHE WAS TALKING ABOUT TESTING - SHE KNOWS HOW EVERYTHING ELSE WORKS - EXCEPT THE RADIO CASSETTE DIGITAL ALARM..... I'M SAVING JOY HIBBERT UP FOR A REALLY BAD NIGHT..... HE IS CURRENTLY ON HIS SECOND WIFE..... AND I KNOW ABOUT VIGOROUS, THANK YOU..... HE TOOK ME INTO HIS 'FAN-ROOM' AND SHOWED ME HIS ABERRATION..... FRENCH LESSONS ARE FREQUENTLY VERY ENTERTAINING INDEED, BUT I THINK YOU'D FIND PERSIAN LESSONS ARE VERY MUCH JUST A PAIN IN THE ARSE..... THE STRAY POSTMEN THAT CROSS THE ESTATE GET UPSET WHEN THEY GET SUDDENLY YANKED INTO A DARK STAIRWELL AND THEIR BAGS RANSACKED FOR FAN MAIL.....  
Hacked from the output of; Glen Warminger, ATom (9), Skel, Last Of The Summer Wine, Bryan Barrett (2), No Place Like Home, Dave Wood, Ving Clarke (4), Walt Willis (4), Colin Grubb, and Chuch Harris (8).