



...and now, Dr.
Schrödinger --
just what have
you done with my
little brother?

THIRTY

NOVEMBER 84

FAPA

#189

DOUBLETHINK

It's hard for me to understand how the same person wrote the following two passages:

"...Thank you, God. If my whole life up to this moment was lived just to be here ready for today, it was worth it."

"Give up this shit about registering all guns ... which to begin with means only law-abiding citizens because the criminals aren't going to register their guns anyhow. ...If I had my way any citizen could own a gun. ...Personally I'm for the eye-for-an-eye school!"

I'm in complete accord with the 1st quote; in fact, I had almost the identical experience one day up here at Anchor Bay, & I said almost the identical words to myself. I even wept a little at the sheer joy of it. "A feeling of profound gratitude" is the way Ingmar Bergman put it in one of his movies.

I don't have 17 acres—not even one, in fact, but I feel just as grateful, not 1/50th thereof. Such things aren't matters of measurement or logic.

How then could I feel fear and hate toward my fellow man unless I had certain nole that somewhere certain persons were scheming to take away from me all that I have worked so hard to attain? Indeed, it's hard to imagine how anyone could take it from me. Some by-the-book bureaucrat or banker myt do it with the stroke of a pen, a mindless murderer myt shoot me dead, or the worst, some careless idiot with a match could send it all up in smoke. But the ocean, the forest & the mountains would still be here, & I could start over & build again. Even if I were ruined financially, I could still contrive some way to come here & enjoy it all. Even death cannot take from me the feeling I've already experienced.

And so I keep no guns, although I'm here alone much of the time. I am a builder, a creator, not a destroyer. Of course guns don't kill people all by themselves, any more than cars or knives or pipe wrenches do, but that's a silly argument, if you stop to think about it. It's a silly argument especially if you don't stop to think about it. A car can take you to faraway places you myt never otherwise get to; a knife can carve a beautiful image in a piece of wood; a wrench will help to build something useful & convenient. You can't build or create anything with a gun. A gun is made for death & destruction only.

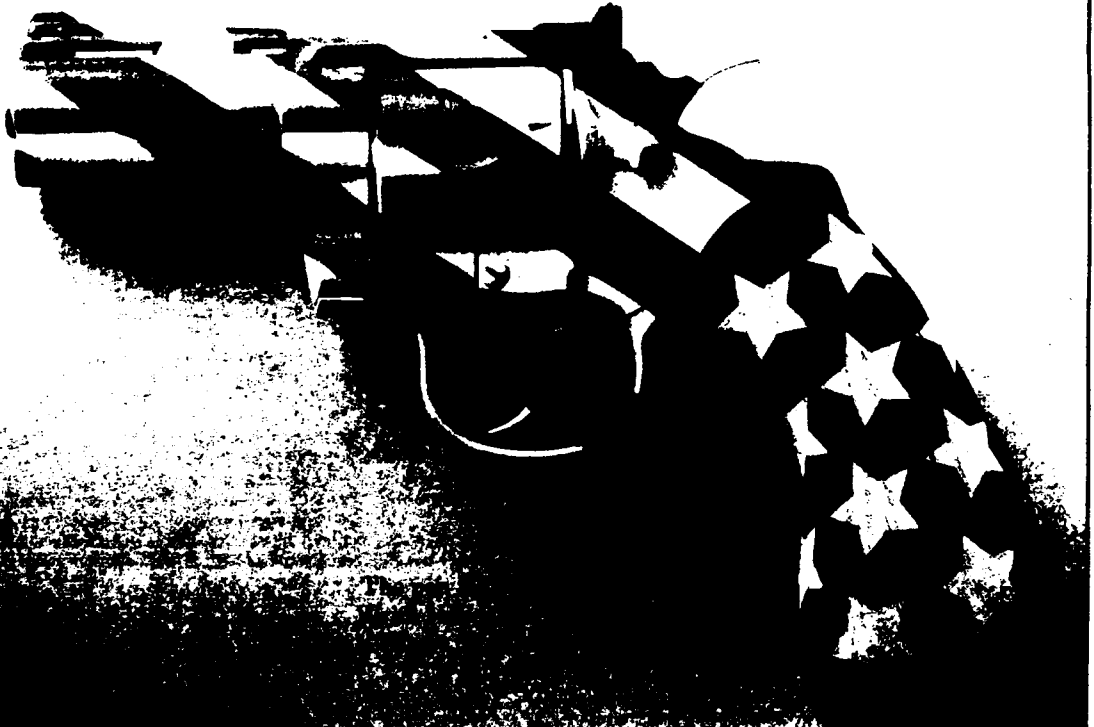
If I had my way, NO citizen could own a gun. The "eye for an eye" school has been around since the first apeman picked up the first rock--& it doesn't work. I think it's time for something a little more advanced. We probably aren't ready for the Turn the Other Cheek School yet, but there's a lot of room in between. As HG Wells put it, "The man who first raises his fist is the man who has just run out of ideas."

Perhaps the feeling about owning & using guns, like the feeling of profound gratitude that comes over one from time to time, is also not a matter of measurement or logic, which is why Gregg Calkins gets so steamed up about it & is able to separate the builder & the destroyer into tidy little compartments in his brain.

What passes for logic in his, Tom Perry's & other's treatment of the subject is strictly NRA propaganda hogwash. I doubt that I'm going to change any gun lover's mind, but I think it's only fair that the rest of you get to consider some of the propaganda from the other side for a change, for it seems to me that logic & measurement is all on the side of Handgun Control, Inc., & not with the NRA (National Rifle Assn).

**IN 1980, HANDGUNS KILLED
77 PEOPLE IN JAPAN.
8 IN GREAT BRITAIN.
24 IN SWITZERLAND.
8 IN CANADA.
23 IN ISRAEL.
18 IN SWEDEN.
4 IN AUSTRALIA.
11,522 IN THE UNITED STATES.**

GOD BLESS AMERICA.



HANDGUN CAN BE BEFORE IT STOPS.

Now please--spare me the rejoinders about damned lies & statistics. I'm well aware that HCI is doing a little card-stacking here, so let's reshuffle & see what we come up with. Care to cut, Mr. Calkins?

First, lets ajust that fig for our friends down under. Only 17 million people down there & 230m in the US, so we have to multiply Oz deaths by about 13--OK? Sorry, mites, that bumps you up to about 54, & about the same for the others. You myt even get those bloodthirsty Israelites well up into a healthy three figures.

Second, I'll admit that violent places like South Africa & the USSR have been conveniently left out of the comparison. But then, it's hard to get figures on *anything* out of places like that. I do know theyre slytly ahead of us on prison population, and if you count their *official* snuffings, this might bring them up to a more respectable total such as ours.

But when all is said & done, look at the adjusted figures, & something is still dreadfully wrong. 213 TIMES the killing here that takes place in the country most similar to our own? And they've tuf handgun control laws while we dont? C'mon kiddies--if it waddles like a duck & especially if it goes KVACK!, one wdnt exactly be jumping to conclusions if one harbored a strong suspicion that Hagar's duck is lurking about the premises.

I don't know about BHLs (bleeding heart liberals), bcoz Ive never met one (I do seem to keep bumping into stoneheart-stonehead-rightwing rednecks, tho)--but HCI is not too concerned about interfering with the pleasures of deer hunters and other rifle-bearing twits (I except those who eat what they kill) & *does* call for a strong "Use a Gun-- Go to Jail" law. So get your target str8 bfor u go squeezing yor sarcasm pistol, Calkins.

However, HCI goes beyond mere simple-minded retribution. Punishing people who do bad things has only small borderline deterrent ef-

fect. HCI is trying to deprogram as many as possible of the people who have been brainwashed by the NRA or well-intentioned but mistaken individuals like Calkins, Rotsler & Perry. In addition, they recognize th need to get the ninth head of the Hydra, the gun manufacturers. The Merch-ants of Death, like the Mafia, have been around and recognized for a long time, yet still they prosper-- why? I think it's bcoz theyv bn able to bamboozle the avg insecure American male (aided & abetted by their propaganda arm, the NRA) with a succession of boogie men.

First there wer those dirty, bloodthirsty, redskin savages. The adjectives became part of the word of course, just as Damyankee was later to do. You hav to hav an enemy, otherwise how cd you sell such dangerous toys? People wd soon realize that guns were much mor trubl than they were worth.

Then there wer all those freed slaves just dying to get revenge on the white man by busting in at the least opportunity & raping the "flower of southern womanhood." (Not too unreason-able a suspicion, come to think of it, considering what the white man had done to the black woman and especially the black family).*

Now we hav the "commies." Seems to have come full circle. From dirty redskins to dirty reds, but it's the same old bullshit. We need some bad guys to project our evil onto so we wont hav to look at it & do something about it. In the meanwhile our real enslavers use this all too human tendency to manipulate us to their benefit. While we are busy looking under the bed & behind every bush for the commies, our real enemies r busy ripping off the environment and us, selling us shoddy goods or junk that we dont even need at far too much profit, & the Real Commies are coming one step closer to "burying us" whichever way you want to take it.

The cold-eyed chess players in the Kremlin have much more in common with the cold-eyed gnomes in Geneva

by Barbara Lautman

Handguns in the Wrong Hands

In the debate on the handgun issue, statistics are employed to point up the national scope of the problem, bolster arguments and provide authoritative data about handgun violence in America. Studies, reports, F.B.I. data, and academic papers show categorically that legislation is necessary to keep handguns out of the wrong hands and provide a safer environment for our citizens.

But as important as statistical arguments are to our policy-makers and citizens, raw numbers cannot always convey the horrifying tragedy of handguns in the wrong hands. What follows is a sampling of recent incidents—all of which could have been prevented if our nation had tough federal laws to keep handguns out of the wrong hands.

Lake Worth, Florida: On March 30, Paul Bounds, released from a mental hospital that day, bought a handgun at a sporting goods store. Lake Worth required no background check or waiting period for handgun purchasers and therefore, no one discovered that Bounds was a mental patient and was out of jail on bond for aggravated assault and kidnapping his ex-wife. Twenty-five minutes after Bounds purchased his handgun, he murdered his estranged wife and then killed himself. According to the *Palm Beach News*, Police Sergeant Stu Winterson said, "This homicide wouldn't have occurred if we had a cooling-off period for purchase of handguns in this state."

On April 23, another Lake Worth man purchased a handgun at 9 a.m. at the same sporting goods store where only weeks earlier Paul Bounds had purchased his handgun. At 9:27 a.m., Roy Knapp murdered his estranged wife, then turned the handgun on himself. The *Miami Herald* quoted Lake Worth Police Lieutenant Marty Kerner: "There's no accountability in handguns in Florida. It's killing us."

In response to these tragic shootings, the Lake Worth City Commission recently passed an ordinance requiring a waiting period and background check for handgun purchasers. Tuppen's Sporting Goods, where both handguns were purchased, no longer sells firearms.

Shelton, Washington: Five-year-old David was accidentally killed by his 4-year-old brother after the two found their grandfather's loaded handgun under a bed. The .38 caliber revolver went off while the younger brother was playing with it.

Atlanta, Georgia: A 4-year-old boy accidentally shot and killed his

2-year-old sister, Jacqueslyn, with a .22 caliber handgun he found in the family car. Police say the boy mistook the loaded weapon for a toy, playfully aimed it at his sister and pulled the trigger.

Rossmore Rapids, North Carolina: A 3-year-old girl was accidentally killed with a handgun while playing at a neighbor's home. Police say the loaded .32 caliber automatic had been left in a bedside nightstand.

Des Moines, Iowa: A 5-year-old boy was shot and killed by his 8-year-old brother while the children were visiting their uncle. According to police, the handgun had been left loaded on a dresser. The older boy apparently thought the handgun was a toy cap gun.

Clearly, a national law to require handgun safety training and a waiting period and background check for handgun purchasers might well have prevented these tragedies. Handgun owners must learn how properly to maintain and store their handguns. Local police should be allowed enough time to determine if a purchaser is a convicted felon or has been committed to a mental institution. A "cooling off" period might well prevent those shootings which occur in the heat of anger or despondency.

Through enactment of these basic precautions, handgun violence in America can be reduced. The lessons of these tragedies is simple: Congress must act now to prevent America's handguns from falling into the wrong hands.



& Wall Street, than they do with the avg Russki scabbling to make a living just like us.

Nobody else noticed much, but I think it was significant when American and Soviet farmers began an organization to sit down together & talk ways of promoting peace & both govts hastily put the kibosh on THAT!

I wish Khrushchev, with all his bluster & shoe-pounding, was back in there. At least we had a little dialog going, & I agree with Chuck, (Harris?) that K was speaking metaphorically, that the communist sys-

tem was inherently superior and that the capitalist system wd eventually collapse & they wd bury us, just as I will attend the funerals of both you & Burbee, bcoz I am a Better Person, have a Fine Fannish Mind, A Sensitive Fannish Face & Broad Mental Horizons.

Now if you believe as I do, that capitalism, with all its faults, is still several jumps ahead of Soviet communism, then a K-type Ukranian is just who I want in there, basically sitting around waiting for us to collapse (altho I'm sure he wdnt b above trying a few trix to help it along a little).

6
On the other hand, if u secretly fear that capitalism really is weak, & that the avg American is so dumb that he wd vote Communist in a minute if given half a chance, that we are in a last ditch battle against the inevitable, then keep it up; vote for Reagan. When he dies, find another actor, another Hollow Man, who will spout cliches & platitudes, and most important, follow orders from th Pentagon & arms mfrs. Continue to spout the same C&Ps yrself, of course, & you can bring it all about within ten yrs, Gregg, for its as nice a textbook case of the self-fulfilling prophesy as I have ever seen.

I cd go into chapter & verse on our foreign policy, but I'm running out of time and space for this issue, I think Eney cd (& shd) handle it more competently, & as Chuck said, I probly wont chng yr mind a bit, altho if you listen, as u promised him, I have hopes tht reason will ultimately prevail.

However, after you read this pgf, I'll probly have blown the whole thing. You personally don't terrify me as you do Chuck (altho the fact that u represent the majority or at least the controlling minority does give me pause), but your trog rationalizations annoy me bcoz I believe you are capable of thinking for yrself. What happened was that you annoyed me so much that I stopped procrastinating & renewed my membership in Handgun Control, Inc., sending them a healthy donation.

E N D

OPTIMISTIC/PESSIMISTIC (cont. from p. 7)

let the crystal ball stay clear instead of clouding it up with a lot of sword & sorcery nostalgia crap.

In fact, this focus on the past (wch shocked me so much when I returned to fandom) adds to the case. How much more pessimistic can you get than to turn away from the future altogether--as if there weren't going to be one?

END

all that energy now; I certainly wdnt waste it that way. I'd waste it catching up with all the genzines I shdv loct; maybe even read some of those stax of F&Sfs...

Quotes & COMMENTS
(cont. from p. 16)

Another interesting coincidence: we hav two Siamese: Suki, the mother, & Solomon, her son. But just what is a "sooky" cat? Pat & Kari named them after previous cats who had passed before I joined the family, & Suki seemed just a vaguely oriental & thus appropriate name for a Siamese. Which leaves me stuck with Solomon. Oh well...

"...a wonderful, timid, sooky cat."
"...Elaine and Frank already had Solomon"

"I wish I could remember more about the yrs before I was sixi..."

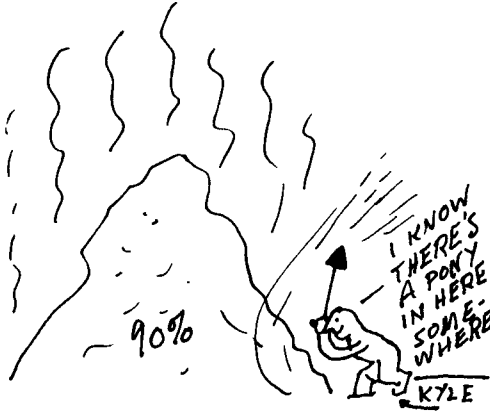
"In dreams is where really interesting things happen."

Me too.

A while back I dramatized some of my goofier dreams in *Yhos*, hoping others wd do the same & speculate about them, but I didnt exactly start a stampede. I'll look forward to yrs, & maybe start writing mine up again.

END

OPTIMISM OR PESSIMISM?



I found Fred Lerner's question in *Lozgeornost* 6 hily provocative & regret that I cant do it justice in thish. I hope that it will spark a good discussion & that I'll be able to get into it at greater length nexttime, but cdnt resist the urge to spout a few glittering generalities.

I agree with Schwartz and other critix* who call it pessimistic. At least, the bestuf is. But "fear & despair"?--no. It also depends on your definition of the genre. Skipping the various jokes, we know that theres a different df for almost every fan or scholar in the field. I'm talking about mostly hard or soft sf, or anything that can be stretched a bit & called "literary" bcoz I think thats what Fred is talking about. (I refuse to use the neologism "hard core," wch is gaining currency, bcoz it sounds too much like porn).

1. Williamson, Jack. *H.G. Wells: Critical of Progress* (Baltimore: Mirage Press, 1973. See also bibliography in Frank McConnell's *The Science Fiction of H.G. Wells*, Oxford Univ. Press, 1981. (paper)

This "pessimism" is a change from the so-called Golden Age, when we still lived in the backwash of the 19th century faith in "progress" (that "science" & or teknology wd eventually solve all our problems) & Verne-Gernsback attempts to shore it up long after Wells & the "fin de siecle" had pretty much polished it off.

But the Golden Age itself (Asimov, Heinlein, Sturgeon et al, followed shortly by Bradbury) was the final breakaway, & post-war disillusionment & nuclear terror completed the long overdue demise of Victorian-Edwardian optimism. The postholocaust jeremiad (or as Brian Aldiss called it, "the cozy catastrophe") almost became a genre in itself. If we were to run down thru the list of Hugo winners, I think the case wd b pretty clear, but unfortunately the Great Big Saw draws neara & neara to Vera.

As for problem solving, I dont think sf has gone back on that, but theres now a much more realistic reassessment of what the problems are & that the solutions are nowhere near as easy as the early sf seemed to think, especially those works that seemd to say that more gadgets & even truly scientific breakthrus wd lead us to Paradise.

Then of course, theres all the ANTI-sf, starting with CS Lewis and Bradbury & coming down to the present thru the New Wave (however you wanto define THAT!) Ellison, Disch, Dick et al.

Dave Kyle's fangohspeech at Constellation made an interesting summing up of this theme. He made a rather plaintive call for fans to revert to the critix, activists and promoters they once were instead of the passive star-worshippers theyve become. I second the motion to that but cant go along with his notion of sf itself returning to the Gernsbak era. I agree that sf shd look to th future again, but if a hard look at that rosy glow over the distant mts seems more likely to b The Bomb than the lites of a new Utopia, at least (continued on p. 6)

Ortlieb's DORMOUSE
13: "...excuses for
my failure..."

"...I've had no real-
ly inspiring Car-
rollian thoughts in
a while."

"...it's safe to
drive like a bat
out of hell in busy
weather..."

"...there
is no letter 'h' in
the word 'author'..."

Goldberg's HAWAII
#7.5: "... when I
am romantically in-
volved with some-
one, I also get in-
terested in the day
to day part....You
might call it the
missing link since
I see it so rarely"

Snickerberg's SIL-
VERSNEE: "...the
very limited radio
fare available here"
(Barea)

(cont. on p. 16)

This Hamletype dithering annoys me. I'd much rather you'd go ahead & write something about Alice, sex, drugs, rock&roll, hard-ons or anything but a page and a half about how you don't have anything to say & we probably wdnt like it anyway. Go ahead & spout off & let US be the juj. For one thing, I think it's neat to have a Carroll expert among us (besides Warner) & I'd love to hear you take off on the proposition that Alice is the third most quoted work in the English language. I have forgotten where I heard it--is it true? And if so, (I don't care if its really 4th, 5th or 6th--I know its up there right after The Bible & Shakespeare) is this bcoz of a great number of quotes or a few oft repeated? You cd make at least a year's series out of it.

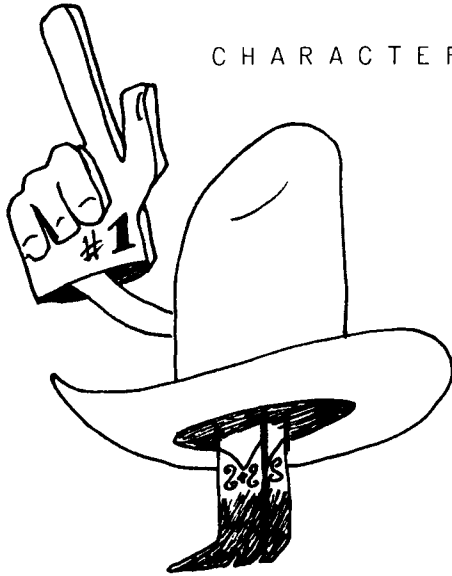
Well, maybe I wont get a ticket, but I'll still slow down in bad weather, thank you--especially on the road to Anchor Bay.

Well, maybe not as pronounced in Oz or New England, but it sure does in standard Midwest American. My first wife kept her New England accent long after we came to California, & whenever she was shocked at or displeasd with me she wd say "Ahtha!" I wonder what Bosky says to Hlavaty?

I too, love "making compromises & working out the details," & I thot I was the only one. Were you an only child? My observation of most people over a lifetime leads me to think that they never lose the sibling rivalry conditioning of early childhood. I can remember even as a kid playing sandlot baseball, if there was a close play at second & no umpire, I wd rather give it to the opposition & get on with the game than stand around & yell or even fight about it & break up the game, which I bemildredly watch happen on many occasions. This was in a predominantly Italian naborhood where very large families were the rule. I've also seen many scream and carry on just as "outraged" when they knew they wr wrong as when they were right, or believed they were, & then smirk about it afterward if they were wrong & happened to win the dispute.

Come, come, Robert; either you havent done your research or youre tremendously picky. I'm also enjoying a new cassette deck (same old truck), but in a different situation. I'm talking really limited--on the road to Anchor Bay. Up around Petaluma KTIM, the trad jazz - big band station fades out & I switch to KQTE in Santa Rosa wch is similar, but without a real moldy fig DJ such as Bobby Dale or Jim Watt to work in as much Dixieland as possible. When "K-cute" gets too cute for me or fades out around Jenner, I go to KKHI, the classical station, wch hangs in there until about Fort Ross. After that, its just plain zip--but now, oh the luxury of slipping in the new Artie Shaw Grammercy Five, Oscar Peterson or Buddy Rich!

THE AMERICAN CHARACTER



One day I was having trouble concentrating on whatever else I was doing, & I realized, hey, there are people all over the world who wd help others in an emergency, & there are many Americans who wdnt, so what's so damn American about all this? What is the "American Character," anyway?

Well, I'm not about to get heavy into it, bcoz there are scholarly cats like Max Lerner and David Riesman who have done volumes on it, & I cdnt top them, but I wd like to do my 2¢ worth & see whathe rest of you come up with.

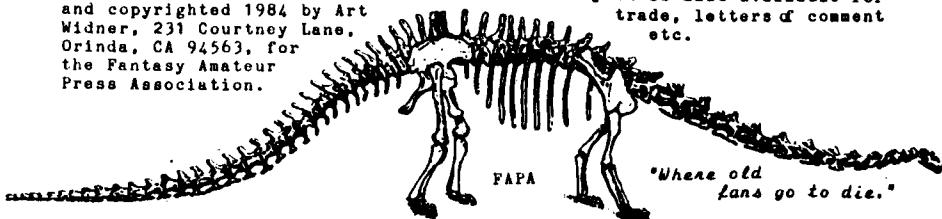
I made up a list of characteristics, then sat back and peered at it with one eye squinted & rotatated it a bit like a dime store kaleidoscope, and some interesting patterns began to appear.

For one thing, it struck me that this list was close to one that wd describe the avg adolescent. Not only that, but when I squinted my right eye & peered thru my left, it came to me that this list wd not only do a fair job of describing the American Character, but wdnt be far off the mark in telling us something about the Muskovites as well. I use the term "Muskovites" deliberately, rather "Russians," bcoz I think it more accurately designates who's running things, & reminds us that the rest of the USSR is even more wildly polyglot & variegated than we are. As for our own "Muskovites," I dont mean some secret cabal of the "North-eastern establishment," but the heartlanders, the people who live between the Alleghenies & the Sierra-Cascades or whose families migrated from there in the last generation or two. They are the people who voted for Nixon,

When I'm home in Orinda, I usually have radio station KTIM-AM on for background. Occasionally, when a piece of extra good Chicago-style Dixieland comes on, I stop & listen. Once in a while I will talk back to a particularly irritating commercial or one of the more egregious Reader's Digesty "public service" announcements. Sometimes I will even shut it off, but most of the stuff I pay little attention to, like Helen Hayes dispensing grandmotherly advice about this'n'that so they can sneakily cut to another tape of her hyping medical insurance, or like Norman Vincent Clockwork Orange Peale telling little anecdotes of individual heroism or self-sacrifice for his spot called *The American Character*.

Yhos is written, published and copyrighted 1984 by Art Widner, 231 Courtney Lane, Orinda, CA 94563, for the Fantasy Amateur Press Association.

Yhos is also available for trade, letters & comment etc.



especially the second time, not so much bcoz they liked him like they liked Ike, but bcoz they were scared shitless of McGovern, who is, ironic - ally, one of their own who got his eyes open.

Reagan, they love. He is even better than the dear, departed John Wayne, who was a little rough around the edges & inclined to haul off & DO things, instead just amiably talking about them.

So the average American, the "Silent Majority" of Nixon, the "Moral Majority" of Falwell, the Good German who deplores racism but looks the other way when the Nazis cut loose,¹ really is the majority who runs things, or at least the largest minority, who governs by default bcoz the others can't get themselves & their act together.

So--ho!--to the list(s): He has a slite list from port, you myt say. Then again, you myt not.

My American is characterizd by innocence & ignorance, impulsiveness, a tendency to polarized attitudes with a low toleranœ for ambiguity, a victim of the myth of the self-sufficient, "rugged individualist," suspicious of even *basic* social interactions or collective effort, materialistic but unrealistic, power-oriented yet paradoxically appropriating the underdog role in his perceptions of the larger society.

I use the male pronoun deliberately, bcoz I feel this is still a male dominated society, & that while many American women share the above traits or applaud them in their men, many more men than women wd approach

1. I was browsing thru the encyclopedia one day & was surprised to discover that the largest immigrant component of our population since we became a nation, was not English, Scotch, Irish, Italian, or African, as I mytv guessed, but German! The others came in great waves, but my Kraut ancestors got off to an early start, & have continued in a steady stream ever since.

the abstract type I am attempting to sketch.

Perhaps the Viet Nam tragedy illustrates the innocence & ignorance of the avg American better than any other example I myt choose. Just recently I talked to a young (35?) VN vet down at the Rusty Anchor bar, & he was the classic case. Volunteered, full of "patriotism" & good-hearted desire to "serve his country," completely bewildered when he got there & cdnt tell the people he was spozd to protect from the "enemy" without a scorecard--or even *with* a scorecard! After a bit he began to find a way to cope with this devil's brew only to be subjected to newly arrivd officers who were even dumber than he was. They wd order him and his buddies into certain death for no good reason at all--but just to be Doing Something. He was wounded trying to save a comrade, & he tells th story with wry humor, like something out of M*A*S*H.

He was shot in the chest, for wch the standard emergency treatment is placing the cellophane from a cigaret pack over the wound, to keep blood in & infection out, & to aid breathing.

Unfortunately, in his case, the piece of cellophane was too small & got sucked into his lungs & the doctor had a helluva time getting it out.

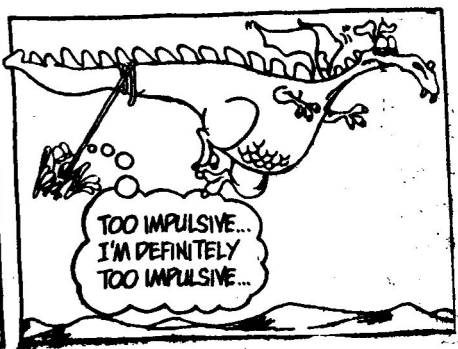
I'd like to make it clear at this point, if I haven't before, that I'm offering my hypothetical portrait of the avg American without judgment. I'm just telling it the way I think it is. How it shd or shdnt be I'll leave to another time.

But I must say that I admire my friend Jim more than I can say. Unlike many of those who went thru that green & orange hell, he is coping. He still has nytmarees & "delayed stress syndrome," & has to watch his consumption of alcohol, but he has his act together. If I had had to make that scene, I think I'd now be in a rubber room.

ANYBODY WHO LIKES TO PLAY CHICKEN IS
A TURKEY



© 1985 Tribune Content Services, Inc. All rights reserved.



Impulsiveness probably goes along with polarizing and a low tolerance for ambiguity. ("Better dead than Red.") The average American is really schizo on "Law'n'Order." When the law is slow to resolve a complex issue, or there is difficulty in establishing guilt in a heinous criminal case, Joe American reverts to the old vigilantism, ready to take the law into his own hands. We no longer have the 60-80 lynchings per year that were still taking place in my youth, but the attitudes still persist.

Irving Howe tells of his shock during WW2, when he went to a military post movie one evening, where mostly enlisted men attended a showing of *The Ox-bow Incident*. When it turned out that the lynchers in the story had the wrong man, the young soldiers in the audience were outraged. They felt cheated—that justice had somehow been denied. If you have the lyncher's simple sense of justice, it's important that you also have a sense of the infallibility of simple reasoning to always find the guilty party. That the mob (to say nothing of trained policemen) can sometimes make a mistake was something they (the soldier-audience) didn't want to hear.

Today, we have *Dirty Harry*, whose popularity, I suspect, is that he is very American in his frustration with complicated procedures, short on "boring" talk and long on violent action. Of course, the "procedures" are carefully set up to be *really* unnecessary, there is not the slight-

est doubt of the guilt of the accused & Harry fills the vacuum left by Shane, but with a modern gritty realism Shane never had. John Wayne is gone, but the myth lives on in a new form.

Incidentally, Gabler & Lyon have pointed out how clever Eastwood & the makers of the *Dirty Harry* series are in varying the villains so they can't be accused of political or cultural propaganda. First you have a left wing creep, then a right wing creep, a white creep, a black creep etc.

We are still a frontier society, even tho the frontier disappeared a hundred years ago. The modern suburbanite still has a bit of the "rugged individualist" Daniel Boone in him, or likes to think so.

When he spots smoke from another chimney less'n a mile away, he can't pick up and move over the next mountain, so he does the next best thing, wch is to interact with his nabor as little as possible. High fences, hedges, and the good ol' RV help a lot. Joe says he's saving on motel bills & plane fares, but I wonder if he ever sat down & figured out how many trips (with other people doing the work) he cdv taken b4 he got that Winnebago paid for. Every time I get behind one of those mothers lumbering up a twisty mountain road, I dont know whether to be sorry for the driver or just plain irritated.

Of course, I shd talk. I have my "cabin" in Anchor Bay, wch is a sort of RV w/o wheels, bcoz Ive

crossed the last mountain and found what I was looking for.

But at least I'm aware of what I'm doing. I wd b willing to bet, that even here in C/RAPA PI, (which isnt exactly crowded with typical heartland Americans), if I gave a word association test, most of you wd react to a certain word with an unfavorable, or at least wary, response. The word is "collective." C'mon now, be honest. Didnt you lst associate with a "Russki collective farm" or something of the sort? But a] "collective" means is a pooling of resources so that a group can realize certain benefits that it cdnt individually.

I ran across this illusion of independence & rugged individualism (coupled with a corresponding distrust of interdependence) not long after I arrived at Diablo Valley College, about 1960, when the beautiful rolling hills just west of the college were still empty. I can recall driving to school one morning & stopping for a mama pheasant & her little ones to cross the road. Wow! I thot gratefully, what did I do to deserve this?

I had been involved with a small struggling consumer's co-op back in N Weymouth, Mass, but there were none in LA, so when I got to the Barea, I gladly joined the Berkeley Co-op, wch had two branches in Walnut Creek. Thru the BC, I heard about co-op housing loans wch were govt guaranteed & available to groups who wanted to develop their own tracts & live in them. 4%, folks; the same as a GI loan!

Well, I casually droppd this info at faculty coffee breaks, along with "Hey, wdnt it b nice to have our own development practically as an extension of the campus; walk to work every day? Nice big lots, community swimming pool, rec hall & party room, maybe a workshope equipped with all the latest stuff we never cd afford individually? How about a playground in the center for the kids, located so they wdnt have to cross any streets?

Pretty soon I had 6-8 teachers who were interested enuf to come to meetings & start to talk turkey.

I figured we wd need a minimum of ten who wd put up maybe \$1000 apiece to get the thing rolling.

Well, it never got off the ground. A kilobuck was big money then, most of us were just starting our careers & families and didnt have two nickels to rub together. But if they were as hot to trot as I was, they cdv done what I was prepared to do, wch was to go in hock to the limit--go for broke.

We needed to go out & sell it to a few others, but we cdnt do it. What really killd it more than anything else was when we talkd to the govt man & found that it had to be a "true" co-op to qualify for the guarantee. What is a true co-op? Well, in housing it means that title to all the property remains with the association. If you want to sell out, you sell your house back to the co-op at a fair price agreed on by all the members (updated periodically). The co-op then sells it to a new member, presumably someone with co-op ideals etc., approved by the membership, and he/she comes in with eyes wide open, everything fair and aboveboard.

This means, of course, that the group had to be fairly close-knit and trust each other to a hi degree. Joe American (even a group of intellectual, liberal teachers) just isnt ready for that sort of thing. Not only was it difficult to convince others, but we found that only about half the original core were really convinced themselves that this was the way to go.

We began to get silly arguments like, "You mean to say if my wife wants to plant petunias by the front door & the group doesnt like it, she cant do it?" or "Well, it's MY house, isn't it? Why cant I sell it to anybody I want and maybe make a profit?"

I answered that it was 99% probable that his wife cd plant jellyfish if she wanted to, and wd he rather trust his options & life style, the quality of his house and grounds etc to a take-the-money-and-run developer, or a group of friends and colleagues?

One guy actually swallowed & said that even if it was just a narrow little lot cheek by jowl with a lot of other little narrow lots, at least he cd say "this is MINE; my own little castle."

* s * i * g * h *

That was that. Today, those lovely rolling hills are covered with ordinary tract homes; nothing terrible, but nothing very special, either, as we mytv had. Some faculty members live in these houses, having paid double or triple the price, & laboring to pay triple (& more) the rate of interest they mytv paid. Some of them cdv retired earlier, free & clear of mortgage payments.

It was no skin off my ass; I had a GI anyway, & in 1974 I trusted some people & sank it into a "community" project, wch our Good American Orinda nabors fot tooth and nail with demented frenzy, doing everything they cd to stop us short of actual gunfire. They almost did us in. Some of us had to bail out, but a tuf core hung in there, & today I own half a palace hi on a windy hill in one of the poshest parts of the best part of America. Well, second best, bcoz the best is my funky recycled octagon overlooking the ocean at Anchor Bay, & I got that bcoz I trusted a junkie --but that's another story. I think Ive made my point.

My next point I wont dwell on, bcoz its related to the foregoing. We Americans are materialistic but unrealistic. We buy the hype of the Power Elite, who say "Sure, you can make it all by yourself. Franklindid it. Carnegie did it. Anybody's kid can become president. Just stay away from those red labor unions. In fact, any organization is apt to be influenced by the commies." How many people have you heard say with pride, "No thank you; I'm not a joiner."?

If Joe American doesnt worship power, he at least admires it a great deal. It's been painful to watch Detroit slowly & reluctantly coming to terms with the fact that fossil fuels arent infinite. Of

course, it really isnt "Detroit" (in the sense of some conspiracy fighting a rear guard action to preserve the dinosaur buggy) but what they know damnd well sells.

Drag racing seems to be uniquely American. Perhaps youve noticed that I share many of these "American" attitudes, but this power mania I dont, especially as it translates to automobiles. I havent ownd an American car in more than twenty years, & probably wont, altho if the resentment of Japan becomes translated into trade restrictions & or Detroit gets really competitive, I myt. But drag racing & Indy trax seem silly to me. They remind me of the apocryphal Spartan who bragged to the Athenian that they had a man who cd stand in the marketplace all day on one leg. "Foocy!" said the Athenian, or whatever Athenians said in such circumstances, (Pshaw? Heck? Shucks? Leg-shmeg--abee gesundt?) "Any goose in Athens can do *that!*"

Sports car, or road, racing seems to me to be much more of a real sport. Americans engage in it, of course, but notice that Watkins Glen, Laguna Seca, Sebring etc, are on the coasts. I cant think of one track like Nurbergring or Le Mans that exists in heartland USA. And we have nothing at all like the Mille Miglia.

Power trips & bully psychology are also evident in our lack of sportsmanship (altho we give lip service to it) when close plays are called against the "home" team. "Kill the umpire!", "Shoot the ref," "Winning is the only thing," & "Nice guys finish last."

On my visits to Australia & Great Britain, I was surprised to hear the audience applaud skillful plays by members of the opposing team. I used to do this at American sporting events, but got a lot of dirty looks for my trouble.

George Carlin has developed a funny routine out of comparing baseball & football metaphors. Football of course, is full of military terms,

such as "hitting the line," marching down the field" etc, whereas baseball talks of "sacrifices," "going home" etc. There's no doubt that football has shouldered aside baseball as our "national game," & perhaps its becoz of this need for at least the *feeling* of power.

But lets not kid ourselves that baseball is a nice, civilized game like its cousin cricket. Since Babe Ruth & the long ball, power has been increasingly emphasized, and the old pitcher's duels & games of finesse & strategy, battles of wits, have bcom progressively rarer. Then there always have been such sportsmanlike devices as spiking, charging into the catcher (as opposed to artfully sliding & evading the tag) & the potentially lethal beanball. After two of wch (real or imagined), the batter is duty bound to charge the pitcher, & both dugouts must empty & have a large, class A rhubarb bfor the game can go on.

And who was the greatest player of all time? A feisty, fierce, totally aggressive "gotta win" southerner, name of Ty Cobb. And "nice guys finish last" wasnt said by Vince Lombardi or Lyle Alzado, but Leo the Lip.

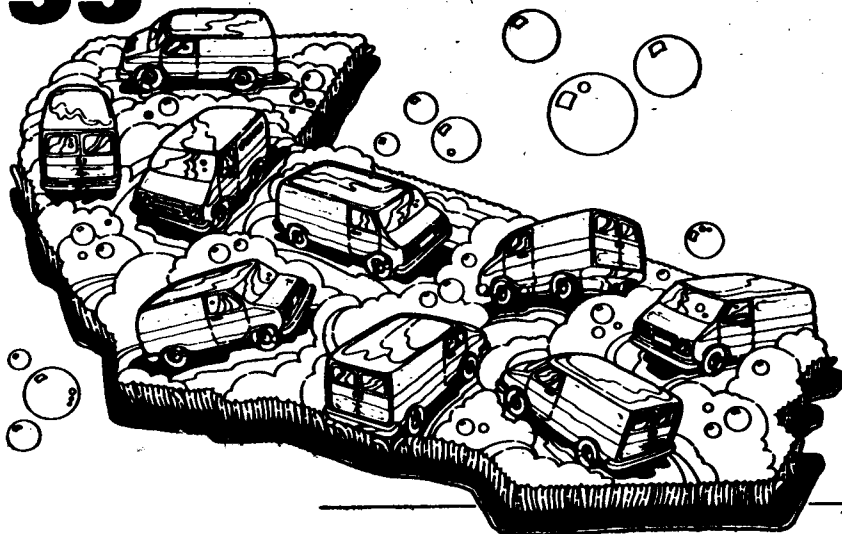
Even basketball is changing from a game of deception & ballet grace, to the sheer size of the "big men" & the slam dunk.

The psychologists tell us that people on power trips are so bcoz they essentially feel powerless & insecure. I think the shrinx are right; at least it explains why many of the powerful whine & snivel & put on their underdog suits whenever anybody stands up to them & gives them a dose of their own medicine.

Mr. Richard Milhous Nixon is perhaps the best case in point. He gleefully played his "dirty tricks" & "stonewalled it" as long as he cd, but when his time was up, look out, folks, get out your rubber life raft--here comes the flood of crocodile tears. I said I wasnt going to be judgmental about all this, & I think Ive stayed pretty objective up to now, so please permit me one little aside:

There was an old fellow from Whittier,
Who liked to play knittier & grittier,
But when the knitty got gritty
He appealed to our pity.
Did you ever hear anything shittier?

Bigger Means Best



OK, I got that off my chest; lets be serious again. Another case: Mr. Smear himself, Sen. Joseph McCarthy, had the whole country by the tail for a while, but when Ed Murrow & a few others had the courage to point out that he wasnt so much a patriot as a demagogue, he clutched his crotch & hollered foul. "Im being smeared!" he cried. The list goes on & on, but Ill confine myself to one more, & this is not limited to conservatives, altho it ill suits them the most, since they own the "media" they bitch about unfairly singling out their venal behavior for attention. The outcry seems loudest when there really is some dirty work at the crossroads. These "underdogs" are the invisible topdogs as long as things are running smoothly & the graft is being paid on schedule, but if somebody accidentally turns on the lites while their hand is in the cookie jar, it suddenly becomes "invasion of privacy" and "yellow journalism." The marvel is that so many buy this baloney, and at the same time eat up all the crap handed out by *The National Inquirer*. I can only conclude that its The American Way.

Then there's xenophobia. In spite of all our claims to the "melting pot," there are still quite a few lumps in there. The fear of the stranger is still strong in Middle America, even when "the stranger" is our own children. Did we learn anything from Kent State? Not much. Last nite, Jean Kirkpatrick, speaking to the Republican convention, was lambasting the Democrats. What the heck, you say, thats all part of the game. The Demos do the same at their party. Not quite, if you noticed the qualifier, wch she repeated several times, to a greater roar of applause each time.

She called them SAN FRANCISCO Democrats, & all those Good Americans knew just what she was talking about. She meant all those kooks & wackos & queers out there on the west coast, who are having all that awful kinky sex on welfare and draining away all our hard earned tax exempt securities & oil depletion al-

lowances. Those xenos--why dont they go out & get a job & a haircut too! Mr. Bush called Moscone Center "The Temple of Doom." If pressed by the rotten media he wdv had to say that he meant the facilities were poor in comparison to Dallas, but we Good Americans know what he was getting at, dont we?

These are the same upright souls who come out here on vacation from Des Moines and Duluth & Peoria, helping to finance all the worst sleaze on North Beach & Market St, places no self-respecting San Franciscan wd go.

The middle-aged women who come into the Rusty Anchor after their shift in the general store to relax with a glass & a smoke bfor they go home to fix dinner are also good Americans (without the capital G), pretty much sharing their husbands' beliefs & attitudes.

Not spring, but dark Heineken was the mischief in me, & I wondered if I cd put a notion in their heads. I asked them what they thot of Gerry Ferraro. (This was bfor all the hubbub about \$ came up).

They showed remarkably little enthusiasm. I thot maybe it was Ferraro, but they cdnt get too excited about Feinstein either, so I concluded that they just werent quite ready for the idea of a woman veep.

I asked about ERA, & they thot they cd go for equal pay for equal work, but they werent too crazy about the rest of it. It made me think of that joke about the difference between a conservative & a moderate Republican. A conrep is against change; in fact, he can get pretty charged up about the status quo ante. A modrep is willing to have a *little* change--but not right now.

I didn't tell that joke to them, tho.

Looking back over what I've written, it seems to come off rather negatively, wch is not what I intended. All in all, I'm not ashamed of being an American, & many of these same characteristics have their good side as well.

If we are innocent, ignorant & impulsive, it has led us to be the most generous of modernations. I know of no precedent in history for a conquering nation to treat defeated enemies as we have treated the Axis powers. And what a pity that all the treasure we have poured out to the Third World has not been matchd with an understanding that wdv made friends for us instead of enemies.

If we are polarized in our thinking, inclined to shoot first & ask questions afterward, there are times when an uncompromising attitude is called for, to hold fast to an ideal and not accept less than the best.

If we are suspicious of social interactions, there are times when we shd be. When a bureaucracy, govt or otherwise, begins to take on a life of its own and starts pushing around the people it was intended to serve, then blow the whistle, good & loud. Unfortunately, the individualism myth leads us to pay most of our attention to govt, & not enuf to abuses in the pvt sector.

If we are too worshipful of power, there are also times when extraordinary effort is called for, when the "will to win" is needed, as in WW2 or in the magnificent achievements of NASA.

Will the complex set of traits that make up the "American character" be sufficient to cope with the stresses & strains of the 21st century? Well, you'll be living in it, so I leave the answer up to you.

-30-

(cont. from p. 8)

But I dont know what youre crabbing about in any location within ten miles of the Bay. We have two all-classical stations: KKHI & KIVE (both AM & FM), four "educational" broadcasters that are about half classical: KQED, KPFA, KCSM & KALW, and three all-jazz to semi-jazz outlets: KJAZ, KTIM & KBLX. I dont know of any metropolitan area that has more. Seattle-Portland seems to be pretty good, but I didnt exhaustively search the dial.

Gillespie's DREAMS & FALSE ALARMS:

"I didnt learn to ride a bike until I was fourteer"

Welcome! I hope that youll enjoy FAPA as much as we will enjoy you. DAFA takes its place in the top ten right off the bat.

I think I learned to ride a bike bfor I was 14 by dint of begging or bribing my playmates to let me ride theirs, but I didnt get my own until I was 18, about the time others wer getting cars, & I bot it with my own money. I cot up when I was 21, however, & the *Anthropomorphic Automobile* saga got started. That story appeared in *Yhos* #s 24, 26 & 28; be warned; I'll send you copies if you betray the slytest interest.

"hit parades...my'own Top 10 favourites."

Amazing! I used to make up my own "Hit Parade" & dragoon some of my early correspondents into doing the same, but the only one who matched my dedication to this witless activity was Les Croutch, a Canadian whom some of you may remember in the days bfor we knew there were such things as fanzines. After all, one had to do *something* to pass the long, empty days tween one ish of *Astounding* & the next. Wd that I had

(cont. on p. 6)