



Terry Carr

FANDOM HARVEST

INTRODUCTION BY ROBERT SILVERBERG · ILLUSTRATIONS BY GRANT CANFIELD

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Fandom Harvest

Terry Carr

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Introduction

Bob Silverberg

He has been a fannish legend an implausibly long time; but then, he got an early start. Back around 1949 or 1950 the letter columns of the prozines of the day (*Famous Fantastic Mysteries*, and the like, all of them as remote to modern-day sf-readers as the archaeopteryx is to modern birdwatchers) were frequently occupied by knowledgeable, incisive comments from a San Franciscan named Terry Carr. And out of San Francisco came actual fanzines from that person, and cartoons and essays for other people's fanzines, and to me everything he did seemed terribly suave, elegant, poised and mature. Of course, I was only about fifteen years old at that time. He, apparently, was reading the stuff that I was doing for fanzines back then, and evidently it seemed just as suave, elegant, poised, and mature to him. Each of us regarded the other as a Big Name Fan and himself as a mere neo. I had no way of knowing that the suave, elegant, poised, and mature Terry Carr was actually a year or two younger than I was. Nor was Terry aware that I, though his elder by a little bit, was still just a wet-behind-the-ears boy barely past puberty. We didn't know these things about each other because we had never met, and we had never met because we lived three thousand miles apart – I was a New Yorker then – and neither of us could afford to go to conventions. We were both just high school kids, after all.

Eventually we did meet, years and years later, at the 1958 Worldcon in Los Angeles. By that time we were well along into our early twenties. I had grown a beard, sold a lot of stories, won a Hugo, gotten married, been to Europe, and was generally living a suave, elegant, poised, and mature life, or so it seemed to me most of the time. Terry – here the slight age difference between us was at its most manifest – was still in college and had not yet begun growing beards, selling stories, winning Hugos, getting married, or going to Europe, though in the course of time he would get around to doing all these things. But he still struck me as notably suave, elegant, poised, and mature, except for one thing. He was still writing for and publishing fanzines. So was I, more or less. (I still am today, more or less.) But I wasn't doing much of it – fandom already seemed to me a part of my adolescence, a

pleasant place in the past that I liked to revisit for sentimental reasons – and Terry was in the thick of it, a Publishing Giant, a superfan, engaged in hypergolic fan activity of the sort that used to be called *crifanac*, and for all I know still is. I couldn't help thinking that anyone as suave, elegant, poised, and mature as Terry Carr ought to get his nose out of the mimeograph now and then and set about launching the major professional career he was obviously destined for.

Well, now, that was more than a quarter of a century ago. Terry eventually got around to a major professional career. Not as a writer, really: he is a far from inconsiderable short story writer, with work like “The Dance of the Changer and the Three”, “Hop-Friend”, “They Live on Levels”, and “The Winds at Starmont” to his credit, and he has written one very fine novel, *Cirque*, and may some day get around to writing another; but though the quality of his work has always been very high, his stories have been so few and so far between that it is hard to regard his writing career as a major one. His editing career is a different matter. After a couple of years working at a New York literary agency he moved over to Ace Books as Don Wollheim's assistant, and by 1967 or so was responsible for a paperback line of his own, the Ace Science Fiction Specials. You may remember some of the titles in that series: *The Left Hand of Darkness*, *And Chaos Died*, *Rite of Passage*, *Synthajoy*, *The Year of the Quiet Sun*, *Past Master*. For a couple of years (all those books appeared within a couple of years!) Terry's Specials series was state-of-the-art publishing in the science fiction world. He was also editing a couple of short story anthology series – *Universe* for original material, *The Best Science Fiction of the Year* for reprints. And then there were all manner of oneshot projects which would take me a good many pages to list – *An Exaltation of Stars*, *Science Fiction for People Who Hate Science Fiction*, *Classic Science Fiction*, *A Treasury of Modern Fantasy*, and on and on and on.

I think a case could be made for Terry Carr as the most significant science fiction editor of the past fifteen years. In an era marked by extremes – from wild literary experimentation in the late 1960s to nitwit commercialism in the early 1980s – he has consistently and creatively taken a middle path, which is not to say a rigid or conservative position. As an anthologist and as a book editor he has struck a wondrous balance between literary values and storytelling values, between intellectual content and emotional content, between depth and breadth. And because he has worked with just about every

worthwhile young writer of the past two decades, he has been able (quietly, persuasively) to exert a powerful influence – a beneficial one, I think – on their development. He is a major figure indeed.

So much for Terry Carr the pro. You don't really give a damn about that side of him, anyway, or you wouldn't have bought this book, which in its very expensive way preserves a whole lot of ephemeral stuff out of the nutty fannish microcosm, and has practically nothing to do with science fiction in any direct way. But I think it's impossible to understand his fannish career without knowing why he has been so successful as an editor. After all, it would not be difficult to suggest that a man who is still futzing around with fannish things after more than three decades is merely a victim of arrested development, worthy more of pity than praise. But the fact is that Terry perceives fan activity as part of a wide spectrum of endeavour; it is not a way of life for him so much as an aspect of life, and, holding it in perspective as he does, he has been able to maintain an active fan career over the decades without ever giving the impression that it is an unnatural act to be doing so. So too in his professional career: he keeps everything in balance, the lunatic fringe of the New Wave over here and the idiot fringe of the sword-and-sorcery crowd over there, and steers an even course between them. He is a very sane man, is what I am trying to tell you.

And fandom is fun for him, today as it was thirty years ago, which is why he can move serenely from a panel on contemporary trends in the science fiction novel to one on contemporary trends in mimeograph technology and be perfectly at home – charming, informative, amusing – at either one. The present fat volume of his contribution to fannish literature (which must be less than one percent of his entire fannish corpus) demonstrates that. You can open the book anywhere and find a vital, engaging record of a lively mind's activities. Whether reading of the old Berkeley fan crowd – a fannish *Doonesbury* populated by quasi-real characters, “Ron” and “Boob” and “Miri” and “Carl” and the rest – or hearing tales of his surrealistic conversations with the implausible but quite real Sidney Coleman, or stumbling with astonishment into the audacious piece that offers Sergeant Saturn speaking in the voice of T. O'Connor Sloane, you will not find a paragraph that is less than delightful. There is a fine but useful distinction, now sadly neglected, between the amateur and the amateurish. The pieces in this book show a magnificent amateur at work who is never at all amateurish. It is an amazing performance. In its fifty-odd years of

existence fandom has produced a good many masters of fannish prose, but only a handful of titans, and Terry Carr is one of them. When the fannish Mount Rushmore is carved, up there on that big cliff overlooking the Tucker Hotel, we will surely see Terry's suave and elegant features on it, alongside those of Walt Willis, Bob Tucker, and Charles Burbee. Is there a fifth writer who belongs in that august assemblage? I doubt it. High praise indeed, and well deserved. Of course – speaking as a fan of the same era who chose to deviate into proac instead – I do sometimes wonder what would have happened if Terry had taken the same route I did, peering into fandom from just outside the magic circle but giving most of his energies to professional work. Why, I suppose he might have been famous by now. That would be very nice for him. But then we would not have, among many other things, the installment of “The Infinite Beanie” for November 23, 1970, that gives us Harlan Ellison's one-sentence review of Barry Malzberg's *Mothers of the Bloody Vengeance*: “It made me feel as if I had a pellucid aardvark in my spleen!” Terry Carr, because he has remained a fan all these years, preserved that line for posterity. I am enormously glad he did, instead of opting for Hugos, best-sellers, fat royalty checks, long autograph lines, and all that stuff. Anybody can be a rich and famous writer, if he wants to badly enough. But what would it profit us to have five fat trilogies of pseudo-Tolkien fantasies by Terry Carr on our shelves if it meant giving up his account of one quick interchange of wisecracks with Damon Knight at a Nebula banquet fifteen years ago? That would be an ugly trade-off indeed. No – let him be rich and famous in some parallel universe. In this one we have enough fat trilogies as it is, but only one *Fandom Harvest*, and that's the way I prefer it.

Bob Silverberg
May, 1984

INFANT · a · STUFF



THE YOUNG T. CARR
(with apologies to MARVIN)

Fantastuff

I was very young when I joined fandom in 1949 – twelve years old, to be precise. I wrote a lot of sf short stories, some of which actually got published in this or that fanzine. But the first real fanzine material I wrote was the column “Fantastuff”, which appeared in Charles Lee Riddle’s *Peon* from May 1952 to February 1957. It was composed of short items, of which I offer a brief sampling here.

DOARWAYS TO DOUGH: A new writer by the name of Graham Doar seems to have made quite a bundle with his story “The Outer Limit”. Though it was his first published story, it saw print first in *The Saturday Evening Post*, then was heard over the air (*Dimension X*), and finally was broadcast by TV (*Out There*). When you consider that the *Post* pays about \$1,000 per story, you can see how lucrative this one must have been.... More on Doar: After selling initially to the *Post*, where did Doar wind up next? His second story appeared in *Amazing Stories*, the bottom of the field.

THESE FOOLISH THINGS: In the July ’53 *Fantastic Adventures* there’s an autobiography of E.K. Jarvis, together with a picture of the man. Trouble is that the picture looks suspiciously like a drawing. Coupled with the fact that “E.K. Jarvis” is in reality Robert Moore Williams, one would think that the autobiography isn’t completely on the up-and-up.... But that’s nothing new: the June ’38 *Amazing* carried autobiographies of both Polton Cross and John Russell Fearn. Of course, “Polton Cross” is really John Russell Fearn, so...

ANCIENT HISTORY: “All science fiction readers will be agreeably surprised to learn that the book *When Worlds Collide* by Edwin Balmer and Philip Wylie will be shown on the screen in the near future.” So said the book reviewer in *Amazing Stories* some time ago, and added, “A last admonition: don’t wait for the film, acquire the book and enjoy it.” Ah, the reviewer was wise when he suggested that some time ago... in the October 1933 issue of *Amazing*, to be exact.

SO YOU THINK YOU’VE GOT TROUBLES: When Dell reprinted Clifford D. Simak’s latest novel in paperback, they changed the title... with the result that the cover sports the following: **FIRST HE DIED** (*Time and*

Again).

JUST PLAIN HMMM DEPT.: *Shadow of Tomorrow*, the PermaBooks anthology edited by Frederik Pohl, carries a cover-comment by H.L. Gold: “An outstanding new collection of science fiction... tops!” Eleven of the seventeen stories in the book are from *Galaxy*.... Just to even things up, Groff Conklin’s PermaBook *Crossroads in Time* contains, out of eighteen stories, nine from *Astounding* and one more from *Unknown*. On the cover: “A fine job!” – John W. Campbell, Jr.

ADD INFINITEMS: Tom Swift is back. Yes, that ingenious purveyor of inventions will soon be Rube Goldberging again, in a new series. This time, however, it’s Tom Swift, Jr., who does the mental gymnastics, and the series is by “Victor Appleton II”. What amuses me is that Tom Swift, Jr., is portrayed as a blond young man with a crew cut. Ah, progress.

STUFF ’N’ NONSENSE: Ray Thompson, in a letter printed in *Thurban* issue 3, said: “I’m appalled by the seemingly contagious disease of failing to separate two different sentences with more than one comma.” Warren Dennis’s answer goes like this: “Thanks for your letter, your comments will help determine our future policy.”

NOTABLE QUOTABLES: From an ad writer in *Writer’s Digest*, June 1955: “How to write science fiction that sells! Here’s your chance to watch a master at work, to learn from one of the top men in the field – H.L. Gold. Gold’s new book, *The Old Die Rich and Other Stories*, is a veritable ‘how-to’ of successful science fiction writing.” Anthony Boucher, *F&SF*, August 1955, on the very same book: “The construction is apt to be episodic, the story line veering, and the author seems to have no understanding of the rigorous demands of imaginative logic; the contradictory and confusing title story is, for instance, a very model of how not to develop a promising time-travel notion.”

THE PERFECT SQUELCH: At a recent meeting of the local fan group, Bill Knapheide was taking great pleasure in showing off his knowledge of astronomy. “How far away is Venus at its closest approach?” he asked us. “How far is the orbit of Uranus from that of Neptune?” Finally he had quoted all the figures he knew on the planets, so he asked, “Tell me, how far away is the star Antares?” Frank McElroy looked at him pensively for a moment, then countered, “You mean from my house or from here?”

Inn a Mist

Skipping forward a few years (thus bypassing my teen years when I wrote an appalling amount of fanzine material that was well worth bypassing), we come to the time when I was publishing *Innuendo*. *Inn* began with the June-July 1956 issue and continued till December 1960, though I didn't start writing long editorials till the sixth issue, when Dave Rike had dropped out of coediting the zine. From that November 1957 issue till the end of the fanzine's run I wrote long, anecdotal editorials about fandom in Berkeley; here are the best of them:

November 1957:

Since the end of summer various fans have been trickling into Berkeley, California, setting up residence for the fall semester at the University of California. Dave Rike moved here first, followed soon by Carl Brandon, then by me, and finally Pete Graham. Ron Ellik came up from Southern California to join the group.

Dave and Carl moved to a different house soon after arriving, but in order not to confuse people with two quick changes of address they simply arranged to have their mail forwarded. Ron Ellik and I didn't know of their move at first, so one day we dropped by at their old address. When the landlady answered to our knock we asked for Dave or Carl and she told us they'd moved.

"Lands!" she added, "those fellows are awfully popular! All the time people come here asking for Dave Rike or Carl Brandon. My heavens, I've had more callers for them in the month they were here than for all my other tenants put together."

"Well," said Ron, "they're probably two of the most fascinating people alive. People all over the world know of them."

"Sakes alive!" marvelled the landlady. "All over the world – imagine that! Who are they? Where do they come from? What do they do?"

"They're well-known figures in certain literary circles," I said. "Their works have been published both here and abroad."

"Are they going to the University?" asked the landlady. We told her yes. "What are they studying?" she asked. She obviously agreed that David Jesse

Rike and Carl Joshua Brandon were two of the most fascinating people in the world.

“I’m not quite sure,” I admitted, and this seemed to add something to the veil of mystery around Dave and Carl which the landlady had discovered.

“I’m pretty sure they’re both in the physical sciences, though.”

“You mean they don’t follow their writing careers?”

“Well, with them writing is more a labor of love,” said Ron. “Sort of a hobby. They don’t try to make money from it.”

“Lord above! Isn’t that something. And they both seem so young to be so accomplished.”

“Sometimes in the literary world things like that happen,” I said. “It’s people like Carl and Dave who make the field of English letters so worthwhile.”

“Well, it certainly is a wonderful thing,” said the landlady as we left.

We went off and visited Dave and Carl at their new address, and told them of the conversation with their former landlady. They said that the only visitors they’d had last month were Ron and me when we had had to return three or four times in one day before we’d found them at home.

A week or two later, when again visiting, I noticed that Dave was writing a letter to Dick Ellington, and using the new address. I reminded him that they’d decided not to use this new address so that they wouldn’t confuse people.

“Oh, that’s part of a plan we have now,” Carl said brightly. “Whenever we write to someone we know will never ever visit Berkeley, we use the new address. But with people who may someday come here, even years from now, we use the old address. Thus there will be a constant stream of people going to that address over the years, asking for us. Just think of the effect this will have on that landlady!”

February 1958:

Just after publishing the last Inn, Dave and I and Ron went down to Los Angeles for the weekend. We drove around meeting several of the people down there, and dropped by at Charles Burbee’s house to deliver something; we ended up staying for dinner and the rest of the evening.

It wouldn’t be right to visit Burbee and then not recount a Burbee anecdote or two; however, I didn’t find time to take notes. But I do remember the matter of the LASFS’s onethousandth meeting. Burbee had received a notice playing up the fact that the next LASFS meeting would be a gala

celebration commemorating the fact that LASFS had held one thousand consecutive meetings. He got a big kick out of this. “One thousand consecutive meetings,” he chuckled. “Consecutive – you know, that means one right after the other.” He laughed again. “One thousand meetings, one right after the other!” he marveled.

Ron went back down over the Christmas holidays, and while there taperecorded the New Year’s Eve party which Burbee attended. Burbee was sitting on the floor with several other people, playing poker; at one juncture a LASFS fan came in, saw the glass next to Burbee, and said, “Well well, Burbee, is that home brew you’re drinking?”

“No,” said Burbee. “It’s my urine specimen – I never waste anything.” When Ron played the tape for us, Pete Graham shook his head and said, “I thought Burbee only *wrote* things like that.” Pete hasn’t met Burbee yet.

Sometimes we refer to Pete Graham as The Young Man in a Great Big Hurry. When we first moved to Berkeley we hardly ever saw Pete, since he was always busy with something or other, either the University newspaper *The Daily Californian* (of which he was a staff member) or studying. Whenever he’d drop by he’d always say he had to leave in a few minutes because he had something important to do quick. The name Pete Graham, Young Man in a Great Big Hurry, got hung on him, and we kidded him about this.

One day recently he phoned me, and I could hear him laughing on the other end of the line. “You remember that name you’ve been joking about? – Young Man in a Hurry? Well, this morning I was delivering the *Daily Cal* to the professors’ offices, and it was raining. I was driving from one building on campus to another, stopping and dashing through the rain to drop off the papers, then running back to the car. Well, this one time I was running through a real bad downpour with my head down to keep the rain off my glasses, and I ran flat-out into a damned *tree*.”

Just an incident in the life of Peter Graham, Young Man in a Great Big Hurry.

Then there is Ron Ellik, World Traveler. Ron is, of course, well known in fandom for his hitchhiking, especially for the time he hitchhiked across the continent to the New York world convention and back again. Ron is probably the best-known hitchhiker in fandom since Claude Degler.

A couple of nights ago, Carl, Ron, and I were walking around on campus, just talking and passing time, and Ron got to making these

terrifically squirrel-type bad jokes. Finally it got to be too much for Carl and me, and I said, “Ron, why don’t you hitchhike across the country again?”

“Yes,” said Carl, in that low, friendly, sincere tone of voice he has, “why don’t you do your trick for us?”

August 1958:

A few years ago the center of fanactivity in London was the legendary White Horse Inn, where the London Circle met every week.

Imagine our delight when we discovered that the nearest liquor store to our Dwight Way slancenter was called the White Horse Inn. We had visions of constructing the rest of the Tower to the Moon out of bheercans from this establishment of legendary name.

Unfortunately, things didn’t work out suitably for that. The first time we visited the place was shortly after Dave had lost his wallet, and with it his I.D. card proving that he was over twenty-one. He did, however, have a 9" x 12" photostat of his birth certificate, which he brought along in a Manila envelope. Marching into the White Horse Inn, he picked out some bheer and brought it up to the counter. The salesman, a dull fellow with myopic mental horizons, took a look at Dave, who was twenty-three and looked it, and asked for an I.D. Dave showed him the birth certificate, removing it from the Manila envelope with a flourish.

Now, this document, larger than a fanzine and much more official looking, had in the past served as identification for Dave whenever needed. To say that it mollified liquor salesmen is an understatement – it completely demolished them. But not this staunch upholder of respectability. He peered at it, turned it over, turned it upside down, read it two or three times, and muttered, “Yes, sir, this certainly does prove that David Rike is over twenty-one. *Now* – who is David Rike?”

“I am,” said Dave.

“Well, do you have some identification?” said the salesman. Dave explained that he had lost his wallet and that was why he’d brought the photostat along instead. “Yes,” said the salesman, “but how do I know you’re David Rike?”

Ron and I were with him, and we offered feebly to identify him, but the guy apparently didn’t feel we were reliable references. He said he would freely admit that David Rike was twenty-three, but that he didn’t know who David Rike was. We went away.

Ron ventured the opinion as we left that should Dave ever want to buy

liquor there again with just the photostat, he should have his name tattooed on his posterior. “After all,” said Ron, “who *else* would have the name Dave Rike tattooed on his ass?”

Several of us in Berkeley recently published a volume of Burbee material – the best of his writings over a span of fifteen years, titled *The Incompleat Burbee*. Totalling over 100 pages, it sells at 75¢.

The thing has been selling well, and we’ll probably have to run a second printing. Fortunately, we saved all the stencils, suspecting that such a volume would be a fannish best-seller. I doubt that you’ll ever see it listed as a Book-of-the-Month Club Selection, but that means nothing. Charles Burbee, within his own very select field, is a best-selling author.

I wrote to him and told him this. When we first published the thing and announced that copies would be for sale, Burb laughed and predicted a total sale of one copy. However, we have now sold about twenty dollars’ worth, and I crowed over this to Burbee. “Why, we are even able to mail it at book rates,” I told him. “You are the author of a book, Burbee!” Burbee laughed.

“It is selling so well,” I told him once, “that we’re thinking of issuing it again in two parts, Volume One and Volume Two, each selling at 50¢. This is an old publishing trick. Then, if it continues to sell, we will print each article separately and sell them at 10¢ apiece, calling the series The Little Burbee Library.”

We’ve had a lot of fun with this Burbee collection. One of Burb’s favorite stories about Laney is the one about how he, Burbee, mimeographed *Ah! Sweet Idiocy!* for Laney, but forgot to save a copy for himself. Laney was selling them at some fantastic price which was thoroughly as ridiculous as the 75¢ we are charging for *The Incompleat Burbee*. A couple of months after it was published, Burb discovered his lack of a copy, and he said to Laney, “Meyer, I don’t have a copy of *Ah! Sweet Idiocy!* Since I ran it off for you, you will of course be happy to give me an extra copy.”

Laney looked at him and said with his mouth, “Copies of *Ah! Sweet Idiocy!* are available from the publisher at \$1.00 a copy.”

Burbee loves to tell this story. He will chuckle and shake his head in amazement, even after all these years, at the thought of Laney trying to charge him money for a publication he had mimeographed himself.

Well, we published *The Incompleat Burbee* for the occasion of Burb’s birthday party this year. We took copies and distributed them to all the guests at the party, who chortled and laughed and guffawed as they paged through it.

Burbee wandered around looking proud and confused and reluctantly modest, until at last a thought struck him and he came up to a couple of us and said, “Where is my copy of this collection of high-class material which I myself wrote?”

“Copies of *The Incomplete Burbee*,” we said in unison, “are available from the publishers at 75¢ a copy.”

We had been rehearsing it for days.

June 1959:

I was sitting in the bar at the Solacon when Ted White came in and said, “How would you like to run for TAFF?” Well, I figured it was a good straight-line (“All the world’s a straight line” – Steve Allen), and while I was trying to think of something witty to reply Ted went on to say that he and Boyd Raeburn and Ed Cox and John Champion, or some such cosmic-minded group, had decided the night before that I should run for TAFF.

I’m afraid I couldn’t think of any witty remark to make. I just sat there for a moment readjusting my mental processes while giving an imitation of a fan seriously considering the awesome idea of running for TAFF. I had a noble expression on my face, I think. Finally I decided, Well, if these intelligent, respected fans think I should run for TAFF, maybe they’re right. So I muttered nonchalantly, “Ghod yes! Ghod yes!” And I think I threw in some sage epigram, too, like “Goshgeewhizwowboyoboy!”

And so I found myself running for TAFF, and by the end of the year both Don Ford and Bjo had entered the race.

And here I am, running against one of my star cartoonists. (*Innuendo* had the best cartooning staff in the world, you know, surpassing even *The New Yorker*, *Punch*, and *Captain Billy’s Whiz Bang*.)

Yes, Bjo is opposing me, and after all I’ve done for her, too. After I raised her from the veriest neo to her present status of star cartoonist of *Innuendo*. Why, when I began running her cartoons in *Innuendo* she was an absolute unknown, except among such people as Harlan Ellison, John Magnus, George Young, Art Rapp, Roger Sims, and so forth. I said to myself, She would make a fine fannish cartoonist; I will lend her my aid. And after one LASFS meeting I drew her aside, so as not to embarrass her, and I said, “I recognize your undeveloped talent, and I am willing to lend you my aid in becoming a fine fannish cartoonist. If you will work up a portfolio of fabulous fannish cartoons I will consider printing some of them in my sterling fanzine alongside the work of the top names in fandom.” She opened

her eyes wide and clasped her hands and said in an awed whisper, “Gosh, Mr. Carr, I... I don’t know what to say. I mean, I really, really appreciate your interest, and I’ll do my best, honest I will, and I hope maybe one or two of my efforts will be worthy of your fanzine.”

Ah yes, that was the Bjo of old. She was as good as her word, too; she sent me some of her efforts. I had to redraw them, of course, drawing on my solid experience as the creator of the Face Critturs. But there *was* talent there, and it came to the fore under my expert guidance. I wrote gags for her to draw, and once even scripted a comic strip for her to work with.

Yes, I printed her work, and the fans found it good. They even said she was a fabulous fannish cartoonist, just as I’d known they would. And the name Bjo became known for fabulous fannish cartoons, while a legend (largely started by me) was built up around her as a fascinating fannish personality... sort of a fabulous Bjo-like character.

Yes, Bjo wormed her way into my good graces and accepted the rewards of being my protégée... and now the worm has turned. Now she is running against me for TAFF; like one of fandom’s mad dogs she has – hmm, no, I guess I’d better be careful about how I toss these fannish clichés around.

Anyhow, Bjo is still a star cartoonist for *Innuendo*. What the hell, we have to make allowances for these artists.

Which reminds me of a Burbee story. The last time Miriam and I were in the L.A. area, we spent Saturday afternoon and evening with the Burbees, as usual. During the course of the afternoon I got to thinking about Burb’s article, “Love at 80 Degrees”, which we had reprinted in *The Incomplete Burbee*. I asked Burb who that article had been about, since he had mentioned no names in it, and he told me.

I asked, “But why did you make it such a point not to mention his name? There was nothing derogatory in the article.”

“Oh, I don’t know,” said Burbee. “It seemed like a good idea at the time. I don’t know exactly why. I mean, you ask us artists –” He stopped. “You ask us artists –” A strange expression came over his face. “You... ask... us... artists...”

Suddenly he burst out laughing. “You ask *us artists* –” he said again, and whooped and laughed and slapped his knee. He fell to laughing so hard that he could hardly get his breath. He dissolved into laughter, bellowing, “...us artists!” and setting off again into gales of mirth.

Soon he was laughing so uncontrollably that he left the room, and

through the doorway we heard gradually diminishing bursts of guffawing and murmurs of "...us artists!"

In a little while he came back into the room, and said with a stony face, "You'll have to excuse us artists."

I don't think Burbee considers himself an artist.

We've finally heard a Kris Neville sermon. Readers of *Inn* may remember that a couple of transcriptions of Neville sermons, supplied by Elmer Perdue and Tom Condit, were printed in early issues of this highclass rag. Well, I've been faunching ever since to hear Kris deliver one of them in person, because from those samples it was obvious that Kris Neville gives the most outrageous sermons in the world.

And late last year I got my chance. Miriam, who shared my avidity, started begging Kris to sermonize for us at a LASFS meeting. Kris has liked Miriam quite a bit, it seems, ever since he ran into her at a wandering hall-party at the Solacon and said to her, "Jee-sus Christ, you look like a gal who sings union songs!" and they burst out together with "Solidarity Forever" and "Joe Hill" and "All I Want" and like that.

So Kris couldn't refuse her request to sermonize, and he took his stance, one hand on the table ready to pound, a can of beer in the other. "My subject is greed!" he proclaimed. "Gree-e-e-eed, the damnation of humankind! *Greed*, which leads all to perdition and torment!"

He peered angrily, suspiciously at us. "You are all greedy," he said. "Within each of you is the seed of avarice, jealousy of the riches of others, and just plain damned *selfishness*! Now you all know –"

At this point some playful LASFSer snatched his can of beer away from him, only to find that Kris had already emptied it. Kris laughed a lingering, evil laugh. "So shall it come to pass to you all!" he shouted, whirling back to us. "For when you shall gain your greedy ends, then shall ye find your hands full of *nothing* – the sands of life sifting through your fingers, your life empty, only the dregs of beer and spit in the bottom of the can and hellfire awaiting you below!"

His eyes narrowed to slits as his face broke into an absolutely demonic smile. "And you will *suffer* in the fires of hell," he said. "Oh my, my, my, how you'll suffer!" he said softly, "in eternal torment, unbearable and everlasting..." His voice trailed off and he seemed to be lost in a pleasant reverie.

Suddenly he pounded the table. "Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's

goods!” he shouted. “*Thou shall not steal!* For unto him who is greedy shall come vengeance, the wrath of God!”

He quieted; his voice became smooth, unctuous. “You must not be greedy, my children. You must learn to live under the rule of God, Who loves you. You must return His love with full heart, repay His kindness in creating you and giving you this lovely world in which to make your way. You must be loving, my children, and generous.”

He smiled benignly upon us, an expression that was subtly like his earlier demon’s smile. He smiled upon us, and said softly, in conclusion, “You must give to the Church, my children.”

February 1960:

The night after Halloween we got together with Djinn Faine and Gordy Dickson, Dale Rostomily, and Poul & Karen Anderson and went bar-hopping in North Beach. We had a ball. I remember in particular Dale and Gordy having a discussion over beers at Vesuvio’s; Dale contended that a man does nothing new after the age of twenty-five. “Everything you do after that is just a variation on something you’ve done before. So maybe you take up sculpting at thirty – but I’ll bet you were whittling when you were a kid, and that’s basically the same thing.” Gordy argued that if Dale wanted to use such definitions, then really he should say nothing new happens after the age of *fourteen*. And they got busy defining their terms.

It suddenly struck me that the word “whittling” was a pretty ridiculous word. You know how it is sometimes, when you think about a word in a particular way and suddenly it seems like you’ve never heard it before and it seems absolutely unbelievable that people should try to communicate in such syllables. If you think about any word long enough it’ll get to seem ridiculous to you.

I mentioned this to Poul. “I don’t believe in the word ‘whittling’,” I said. And I went on to outline a fantasy story I’m going to write *Real Soon Now*, about this fellow who has strange psi powers and one day gets to thinking about the word “shelf” and decides he doesn’t believe in it. And at that moment there’s ghodawful crashing all over the house as all the shelves in his house disappear and things come tumbling down. And the story goes on from there, with more and more things ceasing to exist as he ceases to believe in their names.

Poul nodded and agreed with me that it’s awfully easy to disbelieve in words sometimes. He said “gasoline” was the silliest word he’d ever heard.

“Think of those ridiculous syllables... gass-oh-leen. And backwards it’s ‘enilosag’. Sounds like a patent medicine from Indiana.”

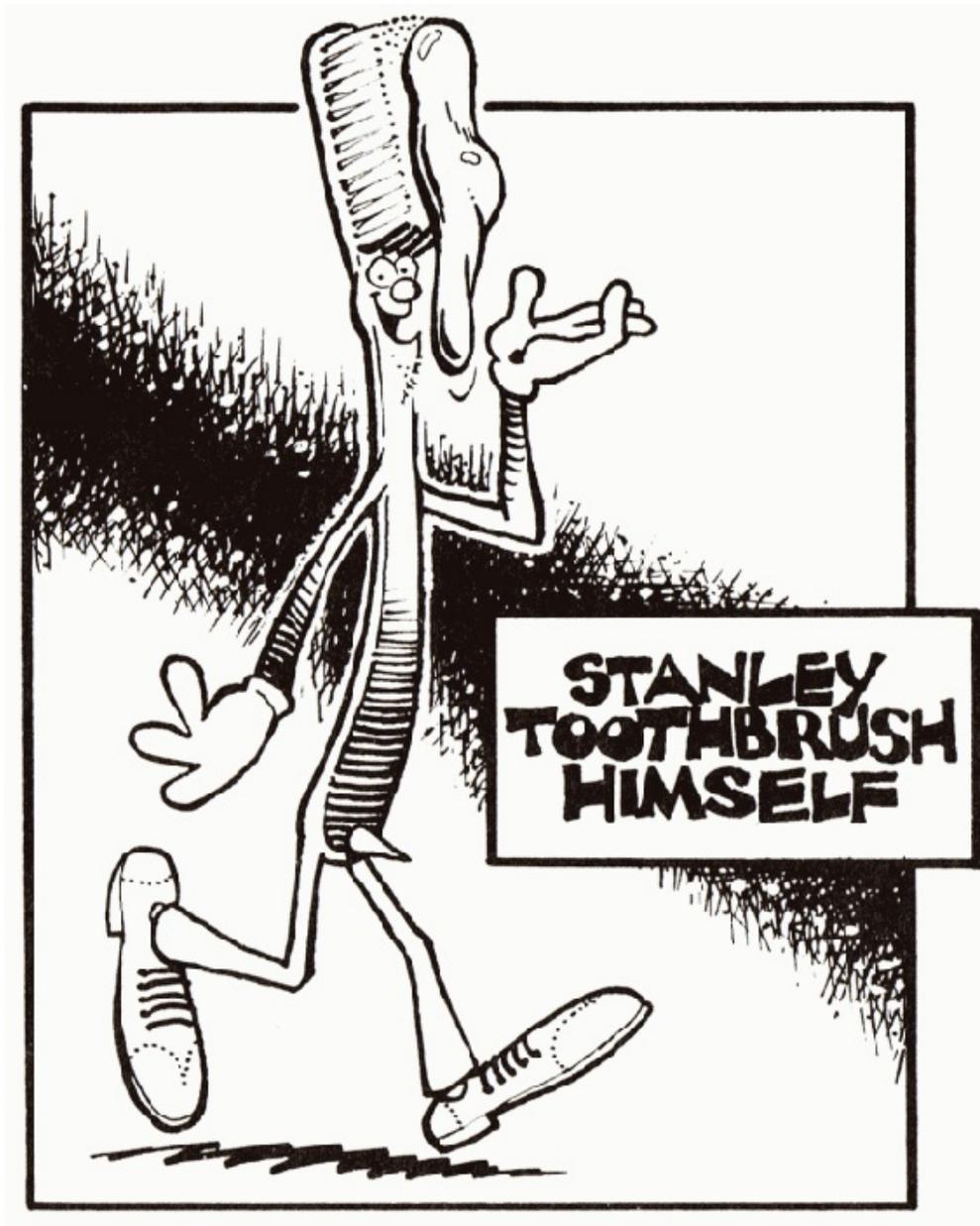
A thought struck me when he said that. “Did you come here in your car?” I asked. Poul said yes. “Well, I’m afraid you’ll never get home,” I said, “because all the gasoline in your car just disappeared. Now there’s nothing in the gas tank but patent medicine from Indiana.”

But Poul shook his head. “No, no,” he said, “we have a Morris Minor, which uses *petrol*. There’s still a small, hard lump of petrol in our gas tank.”

“Why a *small, hard lump*?” I asked.

“It just sounds like that,” said Poul.

The foregoing conversation provided the basic idea for one of my stories when I began writing professionally a few years later. See “Stanley Toothbrush”, which was published under the byline “Carl Brandon” in the July 1962 issue of *F&SF*.



December 1960:

We've been having trouble getting used to our mimeo, the Iron Maiden. It's a fantastic machine – Jerry Knight says it looks vaguely Victorian, but it isn't really that old. It was made in the '20s, and cost about \$900 new. It has enough gadgets to justify the price, though. Automatic counter, automatic slipsheet, automatic inking, automatic roller-release... It's an electric-powered job, with four speeds.

Jim Caughran took one look at the automatic feed-mechanism and said it would never work; it was too complicated.

I guess it really does look that way. We've had a lot of fun demonstrating it to visitors. First, you see, you put a stack of paper in the feed-tray, slide the paper-guide up to the back of it and screw it down tight. Then you jack up the feed-tray to exactly the proper height, using a lever on the side of the machine. When it's at the proper height a little red marker flips up on an indicator. Then you put a stack of slipsheets in the automatic slipsheeter, clamp them in and flip up the lever that engages the roller. Then you set the counter, adjust a knob for vertical placement of the text on the page, and set the speed lever for slow, medium-slow, medium-fast, or fast. Finally, you pull out a little catch in the drum handle to disengage the handle, and press a switch to turn the machine on. (If you forget to disengage the handle it of course spins around as the drum turns, and if you get too close you can get hit by the handle and break a wrist or get yourself emasculated.)

I suppose all this sounds pretty complicated, but I assure you my description is misleading; it's actually much more complicated than that. For instance, I haven't described the inking process or mentioned that in order to start the machine the drum has to be in exactly the right position; there's a red line painted almost all the way around the drum except for an inch and a half where it's black and says *STOP HERE*. You have to line this up with an arrow on the carriage; otherwise it won't start.

It's all very confusing and nerve-wracking. Whenever I use the machine I bustle around adjusting all these dials and levers and switches and such, and then just before I turn on the power I always feel a little flutter in the pit of my stomach as I wonder if I've adjusted everything I'm supposed to. It's a disquieting feeling, because the machine *looks* like the sort of thing that, if its dials and such aren't just right, might start eating the walls or boring to the center of the Earth.

When we first got it, Miriam insisted that she wanted to learn how to run it, so one day I showed her. I loaded the feed-tray and the slipsheeter and adjusted everything just as I've described it. I said, "Now watch," and pressed the *ON* switch. The machine hummed. I waited, but it didn't start; all it would do was to hum.

"What do you do to start it?" Miri asked.

"It's supposed to be going now," I said, "but it isn't."

"Is something wrong?"

"Yes, something's probably causing it," I said. So I checked every adjustment I could think of – about twenty – and didn't find anything wrong.

“Maybe the belt from the motor to the drum has slipped,” I said. I went and got a screwdriver and opened the back of the machine. But all seemed well inside.

“Maybe it’s something *serious*,” said Miri. “We’ll probably have to call the repairman.”

“Let me look at the insides some more,” I said. “I may be able to figure it out.” So I sat on the floor and peered here and there and fiddled with this and that for half an hour. I frowned and pursed my lips, and at the proper intervals muttered “Hmmm,” or “*Ah-hah!*” But I really didn’t know what the hell I was doing.

So at the end of the half-hour I stood up and wiped my brow and shook my head. “I don’t know,” I said. “I just don’t know.”

And about that time Miri noticed something, and said, “You had the drum in a position with the arrow on the red line. No wonder it wouldn’t start.” And she turned the drum to the correct position and pressed the *ON* switch, and the machine started up immediately, ka-chung ka-chank, while she looked disgustedly at me.

“From now on *I’ll* run this machine,” she said. So I slunk back to the desk and typed some more stencils while the machine purred along docilely for her.

Half an hour later Ron Ellik arrived. I could tell it was Ron before he even got near the door, because he was singing at the top of his voice, “Younger than Henstell are you, / Gayer than Liebscher are you...” I greeted him sourly and told him what had happened with the machine.

“She says I’m incompetent,” I concluded, “and she doesn’t want me to run the machine any more.”

Ron had been chuckling during my description of the hassle with the machine, but now he broke out laughing loudly. “Carr, you’re a genius!” he said between bellows of laughter. “If I didn’t know you better I might think you hadn’t planned that. Now *she’ll* be doing all your mimeographing. Sneaky old Terry Carr!”

So I laughed along with him, and admitted that I probably was a genius. But of course the fact is that I’d simply made a stupid, elementary mistake at the right time.

Bill Donaho and Dan Curran threw a Christmas party on December 23rd which was as crowded as all Donaho-and-Curran parties are. And crowded as it was I missed hearing several fascinating conversations halfway across the

room – like the one Miri had with Art Castillo about his long article in the latest *Habakkuk*.

All I heard was Miri saying, “Art, I’m sort of confused about that article. I mean, am I imagining it or was it really all about shit?”

“Yes,” said Art. “It was about shit.”

“Well, what *about* shit?” said Miri.

While the subject of Art’s *Habakkuk* article was going on in one corner of the room, Donaho brought out some letters of comment on the issue to show Ray Nelson the comments on *his* article therein.

“Ah!” said Ray. “Egoboo! I have to have my fix! Egoboo!”

Ray’s wife Kirsten sighed and said to Bill, “You shouldn’t have showed him that egoboo.”

“Why not?” I asked. “Will he be unbearable for hours now?”

“Hours?” said Kirsten. “*Days!* Do you know what happened when you wrote about him in the first *Fannish?*”

“No, I don’t,” I said. “What did I write?”

“Ah,” said Ray. “Tell him what he wrote.”

And Kirsten quoted me. “You said, ‘Ray Nelson, making a re-entry into fandom after too many years, appeared primarily in *Innuendo* and *Fanac*, but his Globly cartoons, symbolic comments on societal themes, served to remind fans that he was one of the truly great talents in fan history.’ When he saw that he got in the bathtub and asked for a peanut-butter sandwich and had me read to him what you’d written over and over for three hours.”

I was croggled. “He... got in the bathtub... and ate a peanut-butter sandwich, and... and...”

“I like to eat peanut-butter sandwiches while I’m soaking in the tub,” Ray said. “It’s so *sensual!*”

“Well, I suppose so,” I murmured. “But... you had to read him what I’d written over and over, for *three hours?*”

“Yes,” said Kirsten.

I scratched my head. “Gee, Ray,” I said, “I didn’t know you were such a *fan* of mine!”

In 1961 I moved to New York City and joined the editorial staff of *Void*. I combined *Innuendo* with *Void* and continued to use “Inn a Mist” as the title of my editorials in the latter fanzine.

October 1961:

I missed out on a Hugo this year, and I didn't even notice. *Fanac* was nominated again for the fanzine Hugo, but I was so sure right from the start that *Habakkuk* would win that I didn't even get worked up when I was waiting for news from Seacon. As a matter of fact, when I heard that *Who Killed SF?* had won the award my immediate reaction was to sit down and send Bill Donaho a card saying "You was robbed."

I wasn't really too concerned about the Hugo this year anyway. I've written in the past about how badly Ron Ellik and I wanted another Hugo for *Fanac*, so that each of us could have one – but that situation no longer pertains. We do not especially want another Hugo; no. (Well, if someone were to call us to the podium at the awards presentation and press a Hugo on us we wouldn't be cloddish about it, of course.) Ron and I have evolved an alternative plan for the disposition of the single Hugo that *Fanac* has, and it is a thing of egoboo and a joy forever.

We have separate custody of the Hugo, you see – Ron keeps it for a while and then passes it back to me and I keep it for a while. This is the way it's been ever since we got it, and I must admit that on the face of it this *modus operandi* seems like nothing but the compromise that it is. Ah, but we have gone beyond the simple and basic. Our fine minds have devised a scheme for making a Good Thing out of this.

The basic plan remains the same: Ron has custody of the Hugo half the time and I have it the other half. But one day it occurred to us that now that I'm on the East Coast Ron and I will probably only see each other at conventions. Hence, the passing back and forth of the Hugo will have to be done at these conventions. This is the perfect setup for perpetuating our own egoboo for years and years to come.

We have decided that each time, instead of simply handing the Hugo to the other person, we are going to make a fullscale presentation of it. Whoever had it last will stand up at the largest room party we can find and, cradling the Hugo lovingly but unostentatiously in the crook of his arm, will deliver a long speech on the vast and dreadfully important contributions made by the other to the publishing of *Fanac*, the stabilizing and sensitive guidance of fandom, and the cause of world culture. He will wax eloquent about the tremendous store of talent and unstinting energy poured into the publication of *Fanac*. (There is an opportunity here for getting in a little self-egoboo, too: it involves such casual phrases as "...no one knows better than I..." and "...working side by side with me...".) At the end of this oration he will present

the *Fanac* Hugo with a flourish to the other party, amid great swells of applause and cheers and whistles and stomping of feet.

Ah, it will be glorious. And as I say, this will take place every year... back and forth between us. Year by year we will become more polished in our presentation speeches; golden words will roll from our tongues, egoboo drip from our lips in a steady stream. (Sounds rather slobbish, doesn't it?) Each year at the world convention the *Fanac* Hugo will be presented thus.

Eventually, we assume, this ceremony will become a tradition, as integral a part of the fan scene as the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace. The Presentation of the *Fanac* Hugo... ah, what a fine tradition.

Ron, don't forget to bring the damned thing to Chicago.

February 1962:

Void is such a carefully put together, neat fanzine that it might surprise you if you knew the dreadful morass of paper, notes, patched stencils, broken pencils, and just kipple that permeates the office in which it is produced. It is my firm belief that, were one to look at any typical Ted White fanzine and then be given a tour of Towner Hall/QWERTYUIOPress, that one would be unable to make the correlation between the neatness and order of the fanzine and its wildly disorganized source. In fact, one would be much more likely, given one look at Pete Graham's neat, tidy apartment in the slum-district of East Filth Street, to assume that such a neat fanzine would much more likely have been planned and produced there. This merely displays the uselessness of applying logic to fannish realities.

Around the office here we refer to the five-inch-thick covering of half-read fanzines, unfinished manuscripts, letters-of-comment, scribbled addresses, and kipple which covers every available surface of every available desk, bench, and most chairs in terms of some amusement. That is, sometimes we do. I'll admit that there are times when, faced with the frustration of finding the bottle of correction fluid when he needs it, Pete will shout, "For Chrissake, why doesn't someone clean up this CRAP?", but these are exceptions.

There is an unwritten law at Towner Hall, and that is that whoever puts anything down, anywhere, must be prepared to find it missing if he turns his back for even a moment. No sympathy is given to anyone who loses something around here; it's his own fault. He should have known better. Just last week Pete and I were here, and we decided to go out for a hamburger. I started to put on my coat. That is, I looked for my coat. Naturally, I couldn't

find it.

“Where is it?” I said, frowning with a growing suspicion. “Your coat?” said Pete. “Did you by any chance make the mistake of putting it down somewhere and then taking your eyes off it?”

I hung my head. “Yes,” I whispered guiltily.

“Well then it’s probably down at about the Eocene level by now,” Pete said, and we started burrowing into the heaps by the door.

It only took us twenty minutes to find it, and in the meantime we’d found the beach towel Pete had lost last summer, twelve *Void* subscriptions postmarked from January to April, a *WIN WITH WILKIE* button, a Currier & Ives print, three vintage colonial coins which Walter Breen swore weren’t his, and what seemed to be an Indian burial mound with about twenty-four dollars’ worth of beads and trinkets – a rich hoard which we subsequently sold to Ye Village Noveltie Shoppe on MacDougall Street.

Encouraged by our success, the lot of us began excavations in the back of the office, where (under 75 unassembled copies of *The BNF of Iz*) we unearthed a mastodon tusk, the lower jaw of an Allosaurus, and a faded Tucker pocketbook with some ferns pressed between its pages. (Analysis later showed that the ferns dated from the Carboniferous Age.)

Under the desk where the mimeoscope sits we found shale about five feet down, with the skeletons of strange-looking amphibians and fish, fossil impressions of what seemed to be some kind of single-celled creature, and Bob Bloch’s birth certificate. We tried digging deeper, but we ran into a substructure of some incredibly hard black metal which none of the specialists we’ve consulted has been able to identify. The only clue we have is something that looks like writing along one part of it; however, it’s not in any language we know and though we’re grateful to Avram Davidson for spending long hours on a translation we’re not at all sure what to make of the fact that he insists it says, “Here is the race that shall rule the sevagram.”

But I digress. The point I was trying to make was that Towner Hall is sort of a mess at times, and therefore... well, let’s see, what was the point of all this supposed to be?

Dammit, I wish I could find my notes.

After *Void* 28, February 1962, lots of things changed in New York fandom, and *Void* 29 was a long time coming. In fact, it wasn’t till 1969 that it appeared, by which time *Void* had lost a coeditor (Pete Graham) and gained two new ones (John D. Berry and Arnie Katz).

Which explains the beginning of my editorial for that last-gasp issue:

January 1969:

Ted White opened the door and I strode in singing, “We are the *Void* boys, we make a *lot* of noise; we hit out at random, singing songs of fandom, for we are all coeditors of *Voi-oi-oid!*”

“I’m glad to see you’re in the mood,” Ted said.

Arnie and John, newly canonized *Void* boys, gathered round and asked, “How does the song go, again?”

Ted and I linked arms, did an impromptu softshoe, and sang, “...for we are all coeditors of *Voi-oi-oid!*”

“*Voi-oi-oid!*” sang John, tipping forward an imaginary straw hat.

“*Voi-oi-oid!*” sang Arnie, twirling an invisible cane.

“Oy,” said Robin.

An understandable reaction, perhaps, since Arnie and John haven’t yet had time to master the intricacies of the polyphonic harmonies of the *Void* Boys’ Theme Song. But nothing could quench our fannish fires; today is a day to live in fannish history. Today a legend springs phoenix-like back to vigorous life; today the June 1962 issue of *Void* goes to press. Or, as former *Void* coeditor Pete Graham once said to a young lady who was at the time one of *Void*’s White Slaves, “It’s time to put out again.”

Ah, and what an inspiring fannish scene there was in the newly reconstituted *Void* offices. There was John typing away on a stencil at one table, and Ted typing his separate but equal stencil at another table. Arnie hovered over John, who abruptly spat a dirty phrase (“*Riverside Quarterly!*”); and Arnie said, “Ghod has punished you with a typo.”

We used to have this stock line we used, back in the Towner Hall days, when one of us fannish jiants got thirsty for a Pepsi or a bheer or something. We’d turn to one of the neofans who were constantly in attendance, like Andy Main or Steve Stiles or Dick Bergeron, and we’d say, “How’d you like to make a BNF happy?” And sometimes, if we were lucky, the neofan so addressed would say, “Goshwow, sir, that there sure does sound like a fabulous fannish idea, sir. How do I do it?” We’d hand him a quarter and say, “Go out and get me a Pepsi, will you?”

But after a while the neofans stopped hanging around us, or they became BNFs themselves, so we were reduced to trying to con each other into going out for drinks. And that was the real reason why Towner Hall broke up; we

ran out of neofans. Don't let Ted con you with his talk about rent and utility bills and all; that's just Marxist revisionism, a shallow economic theory of fanhistory. Nossir. The truth of the matter is that we ran out of neofans.

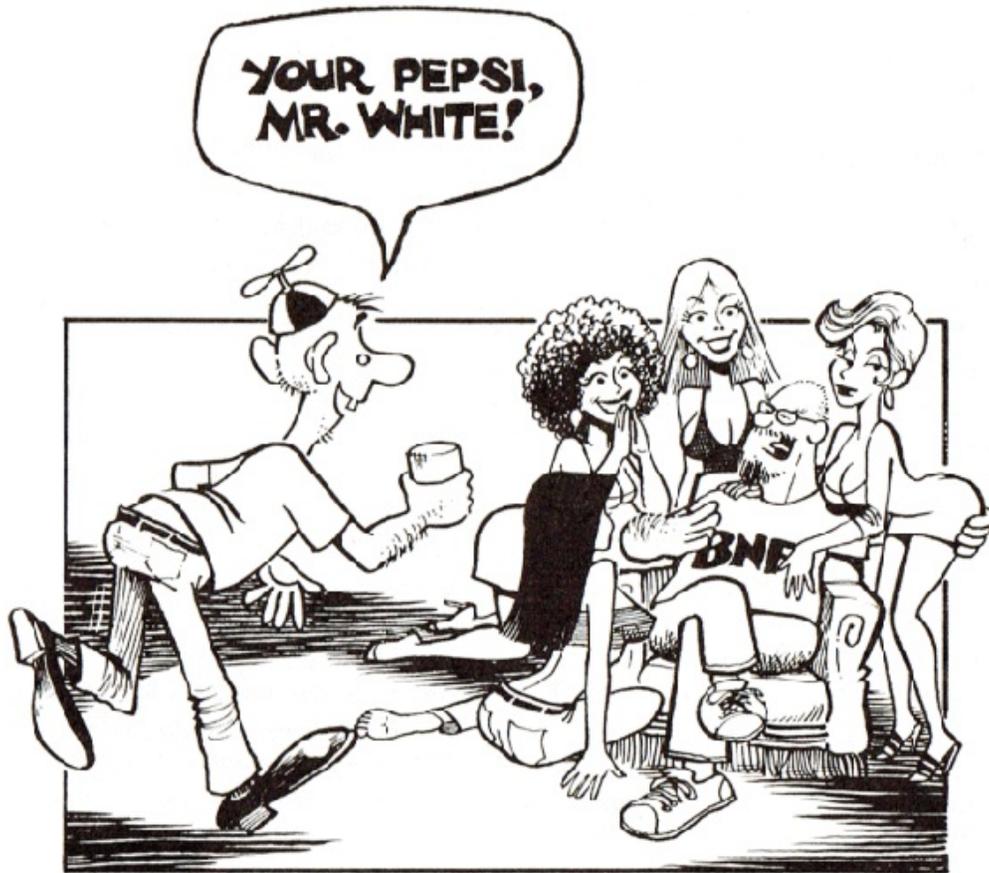
This Neofan Theory of History, as I like to call it ever since I made up the phrase in this very line, no doubt applies to other pivotal events of fanhistory too. When Moskowitz and Wollheim fought over who should put on the first science fiction convention back in the '30s, wasn't the struggle really over who should gather the most neofans to fetch Dr. Peppers for them? When Laney broke away from LASFS, wasn't it most likely over who should be kept supplied with potables by the neofans in the club? When Degler blazed his way across fandom, was he not perhaps searching for hitherto undiscovered pockets of soft-drink-bearing neofans?

When Donaho accused one of his hitherto best fan-friends of being a child molester, do you suppose the culprit's real transgression was in luring away young fans who might otherwise have been available to fetch wine for Big Bill?

The search for eager neofans with whom to surround oneself is a basic fannish urge, more basic than the need for quantities of mail, more important than the dread fear of running out of corflu, more crucial than even meeting one's apa activity requirements. I don't want to sound Freudian about this, but I mean it's *basic*. (For that matter, Ted has been known to sidle up to bright-eyed neofannes at conventions and murmur, "How'd you like to make a BNF happy?" He wasn't married then, of course.)

But seriously, think of it: Would *Cry* have folded in the early '60s if there'd been enough neofans around to fetch and carry the home brew? *Hyphen* underwent a renaissance when neofans like Ian MacAulay and George Charters brightened the Irish scene.

And that's the secret of the *Void* Coeditors Plan. When the operating editors at any given time find their energy flagging, it's a signal to start looking for new neofans to bring into the fold, either as White Slaves or actually making honest fen of them by dubbing them coeditors. Sometimes we forget this precept for brief periods of six or seven years, but we always come back to it eventually. Greg Benford started it, you know. When he got a little tired, he looked around and found this young fellow named White, and a dynasty was born.



THE PROPER USE NEOFANS

I'm not going to write a Baycon report, but there was one thing about the most recent worldcon that I've got to mention. That was the First Fandom meeting, and the waves of speculation to which it gave rise.

The First Fandom meeting wasn't open to just anybody, you know. You couldn't just walk in off the street, fresh from breaking windows on Telegraph Avenue, and get into the First Fandom Meeting. No. You had to prove you'd been breaking windows on Telegraph Avenue prior to January 1938 or thereabouts. And that left a lot of us out.

So naturally we were curious. I remember one evening in particular, sitting around the floor in the *Galaxy* suite with Evelyn del Rey and Fred Saberhagen and Sid Coleman and Larry Niven while Harlan held forth with

dialect jokes. Evelyn turned to Carol and said, “I’ve heard these. What other parties are there?”

Carol mentioned several, including the First Fandom gathering. “But we can’t get in there,” she said.

“Why not? What do they do there? Do they perform some kind of arcane rites? Do they sacrifice virgins on a pyre of old *Electrical Experimenters*?”

And all of us had to admit that we had no idea of what might go on at a meeting of First Fandom. We turned to others around us and asked them. No one there had ever been to a First Fandom meeting, nor had anyone ever heard a meeting described. We were stumped, and we sat in silence as we brooded upon the matter.

At length, Sid Coleman leaped to his feet. “I have it, I have it! A vision has been granted me, and I... have... seen... what... happens... at... First... Fandom... meetings.”

“Tell us!” we cried.

“Well,” said Sid. “I see them all sitting there, all the ancient First Fandomites.” His voice softened as the party around him hushed. “I see them,” he said, “all of them. The venerable ones, the forefathers. They sit in a circle and in silence, parchment-skinned hands clasped over the knobs of their canes. I hear the soft smacking of their lips, sometimes a sigh, sometimes a vague chuckle. Then one of them... one of them manages to *remember*. A name from the mists of the past comes to him, the name of one of the Original Greats. He leans forward; he smacks his lips; he wheezes softly...”

We all sat enthralled, hanging on his words.

“The others in the room notice that one among them has... *remembered*. They lean forward on their canes, straining to catch his words. His lips slowly open, he draws a rheumy breath, and he says, ‘Ed... Earl... *Repp*.’ And then the room is filled with aged gasps and whispered cries... and all the First Fandomites *tap their canes in unison on the floor*. They’re signaling that they remember and they approve... And, after a while, the tapping stops. Ed Earl Repp is forgotten again; the First Fandomites sink back into their chairs, to wait for someone to remember another name... another name from the annals of dawn...”

And all of us at the *Galaxy* party said, “Yes. Yes, that’s how it must be.”

Except Evelyn del Rey. “I can’t stand it,” she said. “I’ve got to see this for myself.” She got up and left, and actually managed to get into the First

Fandom meeting – no doubt on the arm of Lester, whose normal speaking voice breaks windows on Telegraph Avenue.

She came back and sat down again, and she was silent, her face ashen. “What was it like?” we asked, clustering around her.

But she shook her head and gave a small, distracted laugh. She said faintly, “There really are things we weren’t meant to know...”

NOTHING PERSONAL,
CHUCK; MY HEART
SAYS "YES" BUT MY
MOOD RING SAYS "NO".



SOMETIMES EVEN BEING A **BNF**
ISN'T ENOUGH...

The Fan Who Hated Quotecards

During these years I kept on writing fiction, but I switched from science fiction to fannish stories – including a lot of Carl Brandon’s pieces. But some of the fannish fiction I published under my own name was decent, starting with “The Fan Who Hated Quotecards”, which originally appeared in *Uneven*, December 1958. *Uneven* was published by Miriam Dyches, whom I married the following month; the marriage lasted till mid-1961, and soon after it ended I moved to New York. You’ll be reading a lot more about her in several pieces to follow. (She’s now Miriam Knight; she still lives in Berkeley, and we remain friends.)

Quotecards were a fannish fad of the late 1950s; they were small cards on which fans typed funny sayings, and they were passed around as lagniappe in correspondent’s letters, usually with the legend SHORT-SNORTER QUOTECARD. SIGN AND PASS ON. The fad died out about the time I wrote this story.

It’s been a couple of years since any of us has seen Chuck Tigert, but we still talk about him every now and then. We’ll be sitting around at a club meeting or one-shot session or something and one of the guys – usually George Denison – will say something like, “Seven quotecards today. *Seven lousy quotecards!*” Then we bust up laughing and we’re off on a bit of reminiscence for a while.

Chuck was quite a guy. He wore glasses sometimes, and he was fairly short, but he had a hell of a build. When he was first attending club meetings he was all redhot for the girls – he’d just finished high school and to him a fanclub meeting seemed like a school social or something, especially since so many of us were teenagers and at that time there were so many girls in the club.

He was dating this one girl in the Club – Claire, a real honey-blond with this figure. But all of a sudden they stopped seeing each other and hardly talked at meetings, even. It wasn’t long before Chuck told some of us what had happened. They’d started some heavy petting and all of a sudden she stopped him. He said what’s wrong. “After all,” she said, “science fiction fans of all people should be able to look to the future.” Chuck said she was

too God damned much of a fan.

But later he got pretty involved with fandom himself. He got to flexing his biceps for us and telling us that that arm was the one that cranked out fifty pages or more of fanzines a month, for ghodsake. And there's a story that George Denison tells about Chuck that later, when he got so well known in fandom, he was trying to make time with this femmefanne and she wanted him to say some love-words or something to her. Well, Chuck must have been pretty bad at it, because she got completely cold and said why couldn't he be *poetic* once in a while. Chuck blew up and said, "For Chrissake, I'm a *BNF*, isn't that *enough*?"

Chuck started publishing in the middle of the Seventh Fandom ruckus, when I wasn't much more than a fringe-fan myself. In six months he'd worked his way right to the top of the heap, if you want to put it that way. Chuck always did, anyway. He said that fandom was like anything else, you had to work like mad if you wanted to get anywhere. "I never knew a guy who could take a dame to bed without working his ass off for it, and fandom is the same way," he said.

And he went at fandom like he was on the make. He had two zines going for a while, *Clockwork* and *Here There Be Tigert*. *Clockwork* was a monthly mag, and he prided himself on its regularity, as you might guess from the title. *Here There Be Tigert* was shorter, and usually appeared more often – it was one of the "snapzines" that were appearing so much then, like Barry Balint's, and John Magnus's, and Charles Wells's and so forth. It was the thing to do then.

Well, he had these two zines, and he really played them for all they were worth. He had this driving urge to get to the top, to be a BNF, to be a force in fandom or something like that. Not through conceit – I'll give him credit for more than that. It was just that there were a lot of things he didn't like about fandom, and it seemed the most natural thing in the world for him to try to change them. The only way he could do that, he figured, was to gain some sort of stature in the field.

Clockwork was the zine he used to set himself up at first. It was a pretty decent zine, all in all. He never had Willis or Bloch or any of the really top writers, except maybe in the letter column now and then, but he had a pretty good eye for new talent, and he developed his own stable of writers, as he called them. George Denison was one of them, of course – he had a column in there. And there was Marty Beyne with his "Fanhistory Rewritten" series,

and Sylvia Harrison's cartoons. Ron Ellik did fanzine reviews for him for a while, I think.

Well, by his fourth or fifth issue Chuck was really hitting his stride. The letter column had expanded to around ten pages an issue – that's with Sylvia's cartoons padding it out a bit, of course. Chuck often bragged that he wrote fifty letters a week, and that probably wasn't much of an exaggeration. The guy spent all his evenings writing letters, and he was a fast typist. I don't know who he corresponded with in particular, but George says his letters were mostly fan-politics of one sort or another. "Smoke-filled envelopes", George likes to call them.

I remember that he started getting irregular in his attendance at the club meetings then, because he spent so much time at his correspondence. When he did come to meetings he invariably started a harangue about how the rest of us ought to get into fandom more, not just sit around at meetings talking. "Get off your cans!" he'd say. "You guys are completely unknown in general fandom!" And we'd tell him we *liked* just reading and talking about stf and that fandom could go hang. He finally said, "Oh Christ, forget I even brought it up. You guys would just go join the N3F anyway."

Along about this time Chuck decided to start his snapzine, *Here There Be Tigert*. He always used my mimeograph, of course. It's funny how he could make that thing reproduce a neat page when I couldn't run off anything that looked better than one of Ray Thompson's things. He wrote fanzine reviews in the zine to start with – long ones, maybe a page or more on each zine – but before long he was expanding his opinionating to more general topics. He got off onto this kick against the apas for a while, saying they were draining the lifeblood of fandom away. "Fandom's Never-Never Land," he called them, "where they build castles in the air and argue over how many mailing comments can dance on a pinhead."

Well, he went on for several issues, a week or two apart, and naturally his opinions started quite a bit of controversy, of which he printed as much as he could. He was attracting a lot of attention to himself, all right.

But he was also expanding his list of correspondents, and it got to the point pretty soon where it was a choice of dropping some correspondents or spending absolutely all his time writing letters. He chose to drop some correspondents, and unfortunately a few of them got mad about it. First thing he knew, good old Chuck Tigert was involved in two or three feuds.

If there's anything that will undermine a fan's reputation in fandom, it's

feuding. Fan-feuds rarely are conducted on a strictly honorable or even logical basis, and as is usual Chuck came in for some pretty heavy personal attacks. One fan jumped on him for a typo he'd made in *Here There Be Tigert*, and harped on that for all it was worth. Chuck got really mad about that – after all, there he was publishing this thing almost every week, and trying to keep up with his correspondence and *Clockwork* too, and then this guy started yapping about a simple little mistake like spacing wrong when referring to *Destination Moon* as “George Pal’s hit movie”. You can’t really blame Chuck for getting mad.

But he went overboard himself in his reply, and some of the language he used wasn’t in the best of taste – probably not even legally mailable. After all, as somebody (I think it was George again) wrote in the next issue, swearing was an old fannish tradition, from Tucker to Burbee, but even they had purposely invented and used circumlocutions like rosebud and fugghead.

Chuck around this time was in his greatest period in fandom, but he was already starting to slip, at least as far as his plans for fannish fame and influence were concerned. You can’t maintain a respected position when you’re under personal attacks like Chuck was, and especially not when you’re as thin-skinned as Chuck. He got blasted, he blasted back, and before long even the formerly neutral fans were making cracks about *Here There Be Tigert* being run under the law of the jungle, and so forth. You know how fans are. To make it worse, he wasn’t able to keep his monthly zine very regular, and one of his critics sent him some Ex-Lax that Christmas.

Chuck might have pulled out of the slump – he was pretty hot-headed, but he had good sense underneath – if it hadn’t been for the beginning of quotecards right then. I don’t know who originated the things, but the first ones Chuck got were from Harry Enevoldson, the guy who’d teed off on him over the *Destination Moon* typo. I remember the night Chuck came over to my place to run off an issue of *Clockwork*, and he brought these two quotecards from Enevoldson with him. “Son of a bitch,” he said, “look at these things. I’ll bet old Harry-butts thinks he’s really come up with something fabulously fannish here.” He showed them to me, but I didn’t think much of the matter at the time.

Chuck didn’t get out another issue of *Here There Be Tigert* for a couple of weeks after that, and in that time he got about a dozen more quotecards, including some more from Enevoldson. Well, in his next issue Chuck cut loose with a blast at quotecards. He knew by this time that Enevoldson hadn’t

originated them, but that didn't matter. He said they were just the sort of crap that Enevoldson would go for anyway.

I'm afraid he wasn't very coherent in his blast, though he managed to come up with some of the most bitter prose ever written in fandom. What was really griping him about the things, he said, was that their only purpose seemed to be for fans to show off what big wheels they were by signing them and sending them to some BNF. Then, he said, other fans would get the impression that these guys were corresponding regularly with the big names. He went on for paragraph after paragraph on that, but my favorite line was, "Quotecards are the most perverted form of self-gratification that fandom has."

I doubt that even Chuck was surprised when his tirade drew heated comments from other fans, but he kept up the crusade, slipping in comments about quotecards even in the fanzine reviews – those of them he still had time to write. He was in so many feuds by now that his correspondence was stupendous – and of course Chuck was never one to let an insulting letter go unanswered. Enevoldson, of course, was his prime opponent in the feuds. He wrote two letters to Chuck which Chuck printed in full, replete with editorial interjections. But behind the scenes, the feud was even hotter. I doubt that many fans know that Chuck once paid almost a buck postage to send Enevoldson a jagged stick, labeled "Short-snorter shaft. Ram it and pass on."

Well, when you come right down to it, there really isn't much you can say about quotecards, either for them or against them, and before long the subject started to peter out. I guess the whole thing would have been blown over in time, except for something that happened when Chuck was stenciling *Here There Be Tigert* number 11. He was just about done with the issue, and it had been pretty mild, on the whole. He started digging around in his notes for some other things to write on to fill the last page – and just then the mail came.

At my house that night running off the issue, he explained to me: "I was sitting there when I heard the mailbox clunk, so I got up and got the mail. And God *damn* if there weren't *seven lousy quotecards* in the batch! Now *son of a bitch!* I haven't got *enough* trouble trying to keep up with my correspondence, but I have to mess around with reams of bastard *quotecards* too!"

Here There Be Tigert number 11 will probably be remembered as the most incoherent issue of all. Chuck went completely overboard, writing two

or more pages right on stencil. He ended up by saying that if anybody sent him any more quotecards he was going to keep them, bighod. "I'm going to start a *collection* of the damn things," he wrote. "I'll file every one I get, until I've got them all, every one. Maybe that way I can keep them out of circulation!" Three weeks went by before I heard from Chuck again. He showed up at my place one night with ten stencils under his arm, ready to mimeograph. I told him my mimeo was on the blink just then, which it was – the roller wasn't engaging properly. But he hardly heard me; he just stormed into my den and slapped the first stencil on the drum. "Don't bother me with excuses," he kept saying. "I've got some of the most classic insults ever seen by man in this issue. I invented at least five new Anglo-Saxon idioms, right on stencil!"

"What happened this time?" I asked.

"*Happened?* I'll tell you what happened! Since the last issue I've been getting more God damned quotecards than ever before! Enevoldson has started a bastard *campaign* to send me quotecards! He calls it the Tigert Shafter's club, or T.S. for short!"

I had to laugh at that.

"Very funny, very funny!" he snapped. "But I fixed *their* asses – I saved every single quotecard, just like I said I would. And last night I put them all in the center of the basement floor and *burned* the damned things. They made a pile a foot high, I swear to God! They flared up and threw sparks all over the damn place. My goddam *collection* nearly caught fire! I've got a *Startling* with the best parts of a Bergey cover burned away to thank Enevoldson for." He stopped. "What the hell's *wrong* with this idiot mimeograph, dammit!" he said. He'd been cranking the machine all this time, hardly paying attention to the way the paper just got torn to shreds.

"The roller doesn't engage," I said again. "It won't run; you might as well give up."

That didn't stop him, though. He just muttered something and started cranking again, only faster. And the sheets of paper ripped all to hell as they went through – if they went through at all. "What the hell *is* this thing, a confetti machine?" Chuck said, and kept trying to make it feed properly.

There's nothing more frustrating than trying to use a machine that's acting like that. Chuck stood there bitching and swearing and turning the crank round and round, then trying to fix the roller, trying it again, and swearing even louder. Finally, after he'd already wasted half a ream of paper,

he threw back his head and yelled at the top of his voice, “*BALLS!*” and started cranking furiously, the paper tearing and shredding all over the mimeo table and floor. Then he stopped cold and very deliberately and silently cleaned everything up, removed the stencil from the drum, picked up his stencils and paper, and stalked out.

He turned in the doorway and said, “Why don’t you get a God damned *hektograph?*” and slammed the door.

George says that after that he came to him and wanted to use *his* mimeograph, but George read the stencils and said he wouldn’t allow them to be run on his machine. Chuck blew his stack, told George what to do with his column in *Clockwork*, and left.

He hasn’t been heard much from since. That issue of *Here There Be Tigert* never appeared, and *Clockwork* folded too. The last I heard of Chuck he’d graduated from college and had a job as a salesman somewhere, making close to \$25,000 a year on commissions.

Every now and then George and I get together, sometimes along with a few of the older club members, and we talk a bit about him. But George never has told me what was in that last issue. He says he doesn’t use that kind of language.

THE EXPERTS SPEAK OUT ABOUT
TRUFAN'S BLOOD



Trufan's Blood

This next story is a bit akin to the Carl Brandon writings; it isn't a direct parody of anything, but I wanted to write something with the flavor of a fannish folk-tale and I based the plot loosely on the legend of John Henry the steel-drivin' man. "Trufan's Blood" first appeared in *S---* number 2, July 1959, which Miriam and I published for SAPS. (The fanzine title *S---* stood for SAPS, of course, but there were a few prudes in the organization who thought we were hinting at something else, and we changed the title to *Ragnarok* after the first year.)

Yeah, they say Eric Lee was born a fan and stayed a fan till the day he died. Born in a messy fan-house while his daddy was out trying to collect for a story Gernsback had printed, took one look at a Leo Morey cover painting and bawled his lungs clear; was washed in bheer, bit the umbilical cord himself, and said, "Man, that afterbirth looks just like a Wesso drawing!"

The way they tell it, he cut his teeth on *Wonder Stories*, and that's why in a little while all the science fiction pulps had ragged edges instead of trimmed. Oh yeah, he did a lot of bad, just like any other fan ever born – and he was a fan through and through, all right, 'cause that was just the way he was made. He could turn a mimeo-crank as easy with either hand, he could scan a page of print and pick out his name every time it was there, and he had fingernails that worked as good as any staple remover you ever saw. Why hell, he could tell how good a stencil would cut just by smelling it, or tell you the idiosyncrasies of any duplicator ever made, just from the name and model number. He knew all about fandom, and that's because he was raised a fan right from the beginning, and he grew up a fan.

He was right in there at the first world convention, and the things he did there were too interesting to appear in *The Immortal Storm*, but you'll hear about them now and then when fans gather over a hot mimeo or a cold drink. He was at the rest of the conventions, too, drinking and feuding and even teaching Tucker how to swear like a trooper. He lived a lusty fanlife, all right, and I guess he was about the dirtiest talking fan anybody ever knew when he took it into his head that he wanted to be. Because he could do about everything, well enough, if he wanted to. There wasn't ever a fan who could

one-up him and get away with it, either, because he had a head on his shoulders and he used it.

He came into fandom sort of careful, like he was feeling his way in, like a prizefighter in the early rounds, getting the feel of things. He didn't publish a fanzine till he was near ten, and even then he used some other name, never mind which because I guess he had his reasons for wanting it secret, but you'd recognize it if you heard it. He messed around writing for the prozines under still another name, but even though he came near to revolutionizing the field in some ways, he got tired of it and pretty soon the story was out that this writer was dead, died at a tragically early age, and a legend grew up around him. You've heard the stories, you've read the articles in fanmags – all of 'em about a writer who was just a penname that was let die because young Eric Lee got tired of it.

He spent the war years and the later forties doing a whole lot of things, most of 'em in fandom, but I can't tell you the names he used because I'm not sure of them. The people who tell his story exaggerate a little, and I don't think he could have been Laney and Speer and Rapp and Wollheim all at once, that's stretching things a bit. But maybe it *is* true that he was Degler, because Eric Lee had a sense of humor a mile wide. Nobody ever proved it, but they say that when the FBI was investigating Campbell and Cartmill, Eric Lee was investigating the FBI. He never did say just why, but once he did wink and say he'd wanted to know how come *they* knew so much. Oh, Eric Lee was a devil, all right.

Well, along about 1950 he got tired of fandom, and he dropped out of sight for a while. Nobody seems to know what he was doing in those several years, but there've been a lot of guesses, and I suppose I can say that the names Joel Nydahl, Charles Lee Riddle, Shelby Vick, Ken Slater, and even Jack Vance got mentioned a lot. But I don't think anybody ever guessed right. I think Eric Lee really did quit both fandom and science fiction, quit 'em cold, right up to the convention in 1959, in Detroit. Eric Lee was a fan all the way, and there's never been a fan that didn't go gafia for a while, and I guess he just did it in a bigger way than most fans, the same way he did everything else.

But you can't say that he wasn't a fan even during that spell of gafia, because really, gafia is just another form of fanac when you come right down to it, it's something that all fans do and I guess that pretty well defines it. And it's for sure that when Eric Lee turned up at the Detroit con he knew

everything that had been going on. He walked right in and replaced Bjo as moderator of the fan-publishing panel when the Committee found out that she couldn't make it, was caught in a traffic jam somewhere with cars stopped for blocks all around her. And then he filled in for Doc Barrett on the collectors panel when Doc got called away for an emergency, and the tales he told of his collections, one in Charleston and one in Yonkers and another in Fresno, have had Ackerman and Moskowitz drooling ever since. "I've got them all, every one!" he said, and he meant it, too.

Well, after that there was no stopping him, he could write his own ticket anywhere. The BNFs were clammering for him to pub a fanzine so they could write for him and there were three magazine publishers after him to edit for them. H.L. Gold even wanted him to do a fanzine review column for *Galaxy*, and I guess that shows something. But he didn't pay them no mind, he just went ahead with whatever he wanted to do, which was quite a few things.

First off, he joined FAPA, SAPS, OMPA, The Cult, and even the NFFF APA. He said he'd decided to become the compleat fan – which I guess you can blame John Berry for, he was there at that con – and besides all his apazines he started two fanmags for general circulation, one that was purely fannish in nature and one that was all about stf and fantasy. He published each of them monthly, one at the beginning of the month and one on the fifteenth, and they ran to fifty pages an issue, which was ten or fifteen pages more than his apazines averaged. And they were good, too, all of them, and they took top position on every poll taken in fandom.

But that wasn't all. No sir, Eric Lee had set out to become the compleat fan, and he meant it. Right after that Detroit convention, he started campaigning for the '61 convention to be held in Fresno, California, which was where he was living at the time, mostly. And he was so popular and knew fan-politics so well that when he walked into the business session at the '60 worldcon he hardly even had to make a nomination speech, he had the '61 convention in his pocket already. And believe me, beating the Seattle bid would have been a good enough trick for anybody, but Eric Lee did it easy as anything you ever saw.

The next few months were kind of hectic, what with Eric Lee still publishing all those fanzines of his plus the Progress Reports on the Frescon. Oh yeah, he started publishing Progress Reports right away – one every two weeks, and every one full of news about things lined up for the program.

John Collier as guest of honor, Ray Bradbury as toast-master at the banquet, Ted Tubb handling the auction, speeches by Heinlein and Campbell and Sturgeon and just about everybody else you'd care to name, including Ronald Henderson, the first man to step foot on the new manned space satellite.

Things went on like that right up to September, convention time, and then everything blew up, just like you've heard. You see, Eric Lee had been up to his old tricks, with pennames sprouting up all around him, and it came out after a while that there hadn't been a single fan in Fresno except Eric Lee himself, he'd filled out the roster of the convention committee with pennames. Well, that left him to do all the work, and though I guess if anybody could have done it it would have been Eric Lee, it turned out that even he couldn't do it.

Trouble was, he had the annishes of both his fanzines coming up right at that time too. He'd promised a hundred and fifty pages for each of them, and Eric Lee was always as good as his word. So two nights before the Frescon, Eric Lee was working over his mimeo, running off five hundred copies of every page, most in two or three colors. It was a lot of work, and even though he had an electric mimeo to do it on and he had the speed control turned up full blast, still the work wasn't coming along fast enough because the phone kept ringing with fans and pros who had just arrived and wanted to meet him or see him again or find out what he was doing on the convention, or what they had to do on the program or precisely how much time they had or something. It was always something.

And Eric Lee kept running back and forth from the phone to the mimeo, hurried all the time, until pretty quick he hardly knew what he was doing, it was five in the morning and less than half the issue was run off and the phone was still ringing. He'd planned a five-day convention, and I guess that much programming needs a lot of last-minute coordination.

Nobody knows just how it happened, though there are tales told about it, just like there are tales and speculations and plain wild guesses about everything Eric Lee ever did. But sometime early in the morning, Eric Lee stopped answering the telephone, and everybody figured that he must have gone to bed at last. They didn't think much about it.

But came that evening, and Eric Lee wasn't at the convention hotel, and people started to get worried. He didn't show up all night, and then the next morning, the first day of the con, and he still wasn't answering phonecalls, so a bunch of us finally piled into a car and drove out to his place. We couldn't

get an answer to the doorbell, either, so we tried the door and it was open. We went in and looked in his bedroom, but he wasn't there. Then we went downstairs and found him.

He'd got his arm caught in the mimeograph, it was a hell of a thing to see. That mimeo must have been going at a hundred copies a minute, and Eric Lee's hand had somehow got caught in the feeding mechanism and pulled in. There were bruises and blood all over his face from where the crank had repeatedly smashed him in the mouth and nose as it kept spinning, his hand getting torn up in the revolving works of the machine and his arm being dragged in. One of the blows of the crank must have knocked him out, or he could have turned off the motor and got his arm out and got to a phone or made a tourniquet to stop the flow of blood from his mangled arm.

As it was, he'd died from loss of blood, still unconscious. When we got there the mimeo was still humming and the metal was hot, but the drum wasn't turning because Eric Lee's arm had finally stopped it.

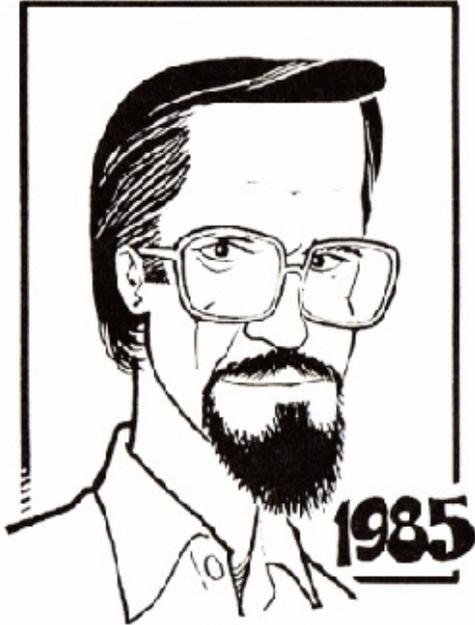
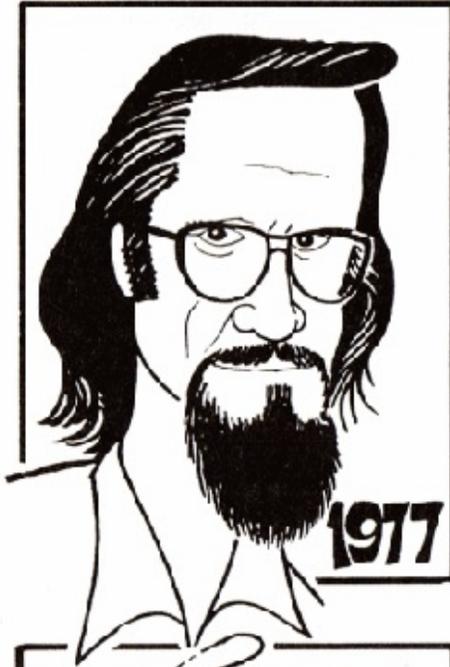
We had that convention anyway, though it didn't turn out to be the fabulous success that it had promised to be. Everybody tried to keep things going, tried to keep the jokes and the drinks flowing, but the whole thing was a flop, and we all knew it. The speakers gave their speeches and the fans laughed at the right places, but there weren't many of them that enjoyed themselves.

Later on, months later when the shock had worn off a little, the legend of Eric Lee got started, and I've told you a little about that. It's not surprising that a legend got going, because Eric Lee was a pretty amazing guy, and I believe a lot of what was said about him. But there's one part of the legend that I can't go along with, and I'd be just as happy if it got forgotten.

Yeah, they say Eric Lee was born a fan and stayed a fan until the day he died. And they're right, too. And they say he had the blood of a trufan in his veins, and that it showed up purple, the color of Ghu, when we walked in and found him slumped against the mimeo.

I think they're going a little too far.

FOREVER TERRY CARR



Forever and Fandom

This next story is a mood piece, modeled after the type of science fiction best exemplified by Don A. Stuart's "Twilight" and "Night". I kept it short, and worked a bit of irony into it. It appeared in *S---* number 3, October 1959.

In that original publication, I put an interlineation at the end saying, "I wonder if I should have typed that with nonstoparagrafing."

On rainy days I sit in the hardbacked plastex chair on Floor 714 staring out the glass and thinking long fan-thoughts. Once or twice I have been interrupted in my reveries by Hastings, my closest friend these past few years. He says that on such afternoons my face holds an expression half peaceful, half regretful. It is neither, really: my feelings when I reminisce are far too diverse to be characterized so simply. For I remember many things – long-dead friends and correspondents, forgotten fan-causes, discarded dreams. Conversations in which I took part centuries ago come back to me at such times – lines from fanzines so old that I keep them sealed in stasis pop into my mind, and sometimes I can even remember the fresh, minty smell of stencils. But sometimes the past – the long, long past – is dim.

I have lived five thousand, two hundred and sixteen years and fifty-seven days. I can pinpoint it so exactly only because I am a fan, and therefore can refer to my files – the official records have long since been destroyed, of course.

I am an old fan – yes, and tired. The years, the centuries blend together in my memory; whole eras of fandom are lost to me save when a chance remark in one of today's duralloy fanzines calls to mind a pun made in 3170, a fan seen at a con in 2102 (was that one on Io, or Callisto?), or an illustration published in 4246. The fandom of today – and of many centuries past – seems pale and lackluster to me. Fans live all over the civilized universe, porting between galaxies instantaneously (and yet – and this amuses me in a strange way – fanzines are almost as slow in the mail as ever). There are so many fans, so many fanzines, that I use a comp to keep track of them. At present it has a directive to call my attention only to those fanzines which mention my name. I am not very interested in the farflung fandom of today; I

maintain subscriptions to all the fanzines, but participate seldom. Perhaps only a decade ago I wrote a serious article on focal-point fanzines, and the fans voted it the most humorous and whimsical article of the year. I have not contributed to a fanzine since.

And yet, now and then, there *are* things in the fanzines which interest me – pieces which, for a moment, bring back to me the sense of wonder that I had in fandoms past. Science fiction, of course, is long dead and forgotten by all but me. Interstellar travel is a matter of instantaneous ease, commonplace; the other planes of existence (what used to be called, quite nonsensically, “other dimensions”) have been discovered and found to be devoid of life and inimical to us; time-travel has been proven impossible. But once in a very great while, when reading a modern convention report, of gatherings traveling from galaxy to galaxy between sessions, dead stars blown up as part of the programs, I can revive my almost forgotten sense of wonder, remember the glory that was science fiction, and think of E.E. Smith and World-Wrecker Hamilton.

But for the most part, I have only a few friends – for I shy away from friendship, knowing everyone but I must die – and would find life quite unbearable if I weren’t so rich.

Yes, I am rich. I deposited my twenty dollars way back in 1968, my records testify, and in two centuries withdrew it with accumulated interest, redeposited some of that – and in such a manner have built up a fortune. I laid my plans well in those first years.

There were seven of us chosen. It was called an experiment, and so it was – not in the *possibility* of immortality so much as the *feasibility*. Could a person stand to live forever? The experiment was kept secret, we seven were given the injections, and records were kept for over five hundred years, during which time not a hint was released to humankind – because year by year, decade by decade, it became increasingly more obvious that immortality was unbearable. And we seven could not even kill ourselves.

Simmons was the first to go. He was an architect who devoted his first centuries to constructing greater and greater structures – but as the years wore on him, as life palled, his creations became more and more outre. At the end (I have heard this story only in a roundabout manner, and do not even know what name he was using by that time) he built a gigantic cathedral, shaped like a surrealistic cross, the acoustics of which caused the bells to sound perpetually offkey; he consecrated the structure to the Prince of Darkness,

and by the use of drugs induced idiocy in himself and sealed himself in concrete in the top of the cathedral. No doubt he lives to this day, but in his idiocy he is as close to non-awareness as he could make himself.

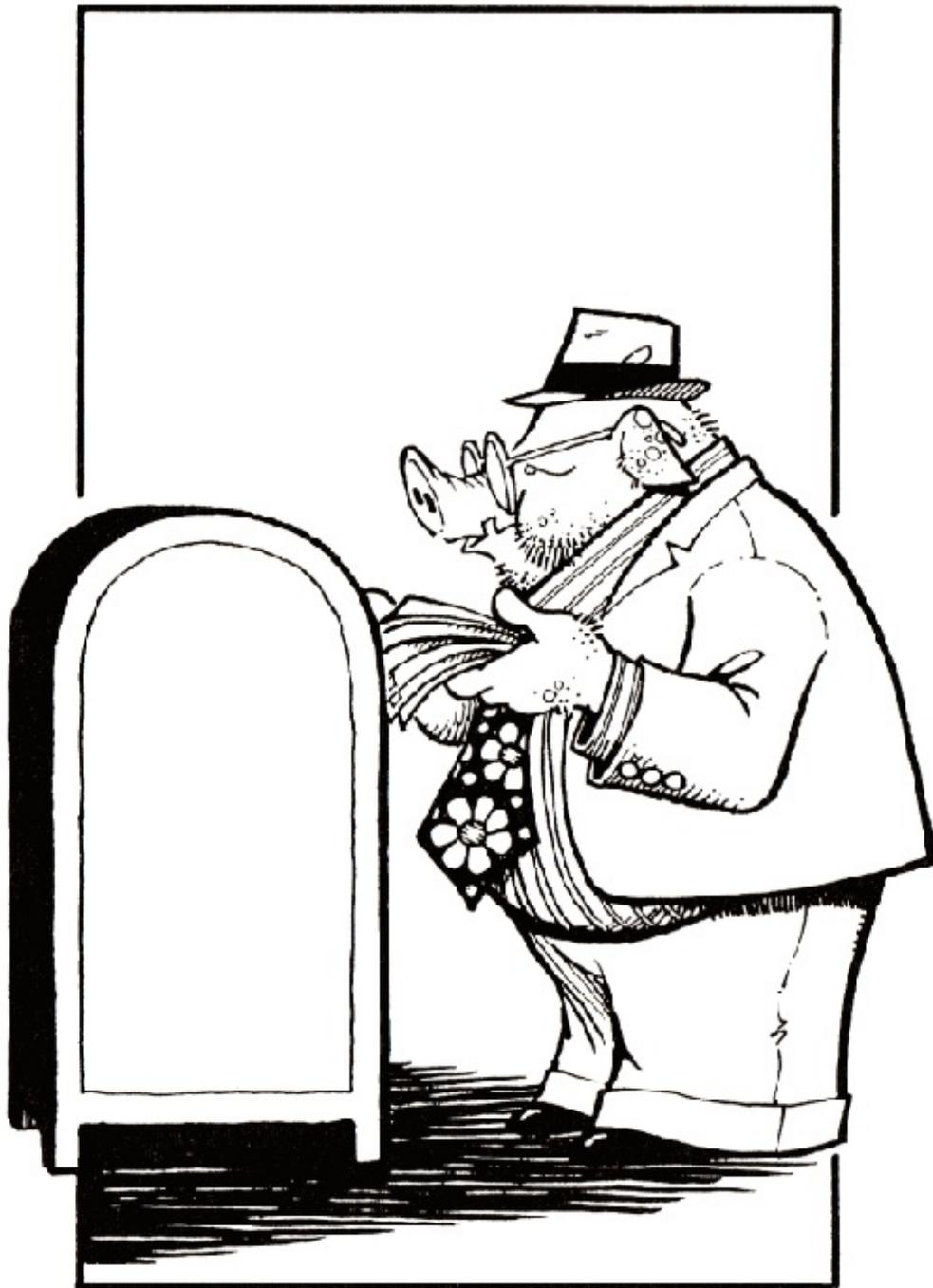
Over the centuries, the thousands of years, all but I found some such method of near-suicide. The man originally known as Ehrmann, a person of average intelligence and no particular skills, cast himself into the flaming heart of a star – an unfortunate choice, I am sure, for though his body no longer exists, still he must be *aware*. And yet he has only that – awareness. No sensory perceptions, no hands or legs with which to do things. I suppose he too is mad, there in his awareness-world: I hope it is a happy madness.

The rest all choose methods of more or less practicality. It is unnecessary to enumerate them, and I prefer not to think of them. For I am the last, and I avoid such thoughts.

For I do not *want* to cease existing. I am a fan, and though others have forgotten science fiction, I remain, and I have its memory within me. And I remember fandom – the very *first* fandoms – and that memory should not be lost either.

So I remain. I live, I remember, staring out the glass into the rain which has been scheduled. It is like a sensory program. I check the schedule, and spend the rainy days with a parade of memories. I let my eyes wander over the portion of my collection which is on Floor 714, and sometimes I smile to myself.

I have never asked Hastings, but I am sure it must be a strange smile that comes to me at such times. For I smile like that when I think that I cannot afford to die – I must live till the end of fandom, and complete my fanzine collection.



ANOTHER PIG MAILING

Another Pygmalion

A lot of stories get written because an author read something he thought had a good idea but poorly handled. In fact, whole careers have begun that way, just as in the writer's school ads that show someone tossing a magazine across the room and saying, "I can do better than that!" (Lester del Rey is an example. When he criticized a story in the January 1938 *Astounding*, his girlfriend challenged him to do better, so del Rey wrote "The Faithful" and sent it to John Campbell; two weeks later he received a check for his first sale.)

Sometimes it happens in fandom too. In 1954, Walt Willis wrote to the editors of *BEM* that he thought an article by Harlan Ellison was "lamentably underdeveloped", and added that he was writing a piece on the same subject. In 1959, I read a story by John Berry in *Cry* that left me similarly unsatisfied, so I wrote "Another Pygmalion". *Cry* published it a few months later, in the October 1959 issue.

Ray Norworth was somewhat of an institution in fandom by his twenty-fifth birthday. He published three of the most popular fanzines of all time, and was an artist of consummate skill in all media, and a writer of such ability that he had been disqualified from fannish popularity polls on the grounds of unfair competition. He had attended practically every convention in the U.S., had held important posts on the committees of five of them, had participated as speaker, auctioneer, and toastmaster on countless occasions, and had contributed to fannish culture the Egoboo Cocktail, which produced an euphoria equal to receiving unsolicited manuscripts from Willis, Grennell, Tucker, Bloch, Burbee, Meredith, Leman, Berry, and Boggs on the same day, plus a postcard of comment from Norworth himself.

Norworth regarded his fannish achievements with both pride and frustration. More and more of late he felt that there were no more roads open to him, no more challenges in fandom. Each article he wrote, each brilliant fannish story, seemed only a variation on a theme he had handled ten times before. He always managed to come up with a new twist, just as his drawings continued to explore some new technique, just as he managed original on-

the-spot puns at conventions – but he was deriving less and less enjoyment from his talents these days. There had to be something else that he could do to revive his fannish enthusiasm before Final Gafiation set in.

Thinking thus, on his twenty-fifth birthday he shoed fifty admiring fans from his home, complaining of a sudden attack of aching engrams. (“I washed my head today, and now I can’t do a thing with it,” he said.) Then he went slowly up into his Fan Attic and sat morosely before his typewriter, his eyes running slowly over the rows of his fanzine collection. Perhaps here he could get some inspiration.

His eyes lit on the blue taped spine of the first *Best of Fandom* anthology. Yes, perhaps something in there – wasn’t Carl Brandon’s “My Fair Femmefan” reprinted in that volume? He took it down from the shelf and leafed through its pages. Yes, here it was – perhaps the only piece of fannish literature he had wished he’d written himself. He began to read it for the thirty-seventh time.

Half an hour later, he put the volume down and stared dreamily at the wall in front of him. His eyes rested on a point two inches above and one inch to the right of his 1964 Fan Calendar, with its full-color photograph of John Berry in the nude, but his thoughts were far away.

The theme of Brandon’s masterpiece, the age-old theme of Pygmalion, had suddenly struck him. The idea of taking a rank neofan, teaching him all about fandom, and making a BNF of him overnight through brilliant tutelage, had caught his fancy and fired his imagination. *Here*, by Roscoe, was a challenge worthy of him!

He thought back to the party that afternoon. Several neos had attended; surely one of them could make a good subject for the experiment. Let’s see... there was Scott Alding, who had come along after seeing and admiring Norworth’s cartoons in *Hyphen* number 40. No, he wouldn’t do – he hadn’t even asked why the cartoons had had nothing to do with science fiction. A *complete* neofan was what he needed, Norworth decided. Harvey Lehman? – he’d discussed stf all the time he’d been there. But come to think of it, he’d been engrossed in the political wisdom of Robert A. Heinlein’s stories. So much for him. There’d been a man named Klaus Obrecht who’d talked about space travel – no no no, he wasn’t a neofan at all; he’d come to offer Norworth a position as public-relations man for a new missile center.

Abruptly Norworth’s head jerked up from his meditations and a smile broke over his face. Larry Vaughan! Norworth had run into him just the day

before at a newsstand, reading Belle Dietz's column in *Fantastic Universe*. Said he only bought the mag to read the fanzine reviews, because the idea of amateur publications struck him as being far more fantastic and whimsical than any of the stories he'd read. Now *there* was a promising neofan!

In five minutes Norworth had him on the phone. "Larry my boy, this is Norworth!... Oh, the engrams are much better. Just a slight headache from reading too much, I guess. Called a friend of mine who's an accountant and had him come over and audit my books. Worked like a charm... I'm feeling much better. Can you come back over? Want to talk to you."

And within the hour Norworth and Larry Vaughan were sitting comfortably in the Fan Attic, and Norworth was turning on the famed Norworth charm.

"Fandom is a hell of an enjoyable pastime," he was saying. "It's a *creative* hobby, Larry – gives you free rein to develop your talents. You want to be a writer, don't you, Larry?"

"Sure," said Vaughan. "But I don't think I'm good enough yet..."

"Nonsense!" said Norworth amiably. "See here, I heard that remark you made this afternoon about *Astounding's* stories being so weak these days they ought to change the name to *Campbell's Soup*. You've got a *fine* sense of humor... not to mention good critical insight, obviously. You'd make a good fan, and I'd like to help you."

"Help me?" said Vaughan. "Gee, Mr. Norworth, that would be swell."

"Good, good!" said Norworth. "Now, take this file of *Quandrys* home with you and read 'em. And here's a copy of *Fancylopedia II* – it's a bit outdated by now, but that can't be helped; it will do. Read this stuff, and call me when you're finished. You go on home right now and get busy."

Together they went downstairs. As he ushered Vaughan out the door, Norworth clapped him on the back and said, "And don't call me 'Mr. Norworth', eh? The name is Ray. Listen, within a year you'll be voted the Best New Fan of the Year, and I'll want to be on a first-name basis with you! Now go on, and have fun with that stuff."

"I'm sure I will, uh, Ray," said Vaughan. "I think I'll enjoy being a fan. You see, my father was a printer, and I'm merely reverting to type."

Norworth's chuckle stopped when he shut the door. "Oh, brother!" he said to himself. "If I don't watch this guy he'll be inventing Ackermanese within two weeks!" And shaking his head he went off to bed, muttering something about Campbell's Soup as he went.

During the next several weeks Norworth kept loaning fanzines to young Vaughan – *Grue*, *Psychotic*, *Space-Warp*, *Burbeezines*, Jan Henrick’s *Touchstone*, all six *Best of Fandom* volumes, *Cry of the Nameless*, *Outworlds*, and even his personal files of his own fanzines, *Fanforah*, *Saturnalia*, and *Norworth’s Follies*. He explained in detail just how Tucker had managed to die so many times, why fans were always worrying about the eggplant over there, the story behind the Bheercan Tower Cataclysm of 1961, why dapper and distinguished Burnett R. Toskey, Ph.D., was considered evil, and many, many more such things. Larry Vaughan listened, nodded, tucked fanzines under his arm, and went home to read some more.

In two months Norworth decided that his protégé was ready to contribute to some fanzines. He said, “Larry, you’ve got to be very careful of the things you write at the beginning of your fancareer, because no matter how big a name you get to be later, the fans will still keep digging up what you’ve said in years past and laughing at you. For example, when you were reading those old issues of *Cry*, remember, you laughed yourself silly at the part where Busby said he was tired of writing a review column. Well, maybe you’ll never get to be a steady reviewer for *The Saturday Review* like him, but the things you write now *will* be dug up and quoted years from now when you’re a big name.”

“I’ll be careful, Ray,” said the young man. “Look, I’ve already got some ideas. I’m going to write this story about a guy who’s marooned on a mining asteroid when his supply ship gets hit by a meteor. He’s got supplies to last him for another month, and another supply ship can maybe –”

“Fine, fine!” said Norworth. “And to while away the time until the next ship gets there he joins fandom, eh? Of course, you might have trouble making it convincing, because if he’s marooned how does he mail his stuff? But I guess you could call it ‘One-Shot Found in a Vacuum Bottle’ or something...”

“No, no,” said young Vaughan. “This won’t be a fannish story, but straight science fiction. See, this supply ship may be able to reach him in time, but –”

Norworth laid a hand on Vaughan’s shoulder. “Don’t write science fiction for fanzines,” he said. He shook his head gravely. “Just not done.”

“Oh,” said Vaughan. “Well then, how about a fantasy? I have this real neat idea about a vampire who joins this bloodbank...”

“Nor fantasy either,” said Norworth. “Just write fannish stuff, Larry.”

You see, if you write stf or fantasy for the fanmags they'll all say you're just not good enough to sell, whereas if you write fannish stuff they won't even stop to consider if it's a bit amateurish. After all, where would I be today if I'd been writing science fiction for the fanzines? Fans would compare me with the pros... Poul Anderson, Robert Silverberg, Isaac Asimov. And my stuff wouldn't stack up, naturally. They'd call me The Horse's Asimov and so forth. Or the impoverished man's Poul Anderson. You see?"

"I guess you're right," said Vaughan. "Then how about a story about a very young fan who never knew what fandom it was, because he didn't know how to count past ten yet?"

"Good, good!" enthused Norworth. And together they talked of other possibilities for Larry Vaughan's fannish writing. Norworth suggested humorous touches here and there, told Vaughan when a pun or witticism he planned had been used before, and gave him a few ideas of his own for stories and articles. It was one in the morning before Vaughan left Norworth's house, but he had enough ideas to keep him busy writing for months.

And for the next several months he did keep busy writing. Under the older fan's expert guidance, Vaughan's writing skill proved to be considerable. His writings were extremely popular right from the beginning, and as he learned more and more from Norworth they got better and better. He wrote "I Talked with a Fan from Two Hundredth Fandom", "The Poo Will Get You", "Mortimer Eggplant Saves Fandom", and such articles as "Conventions Are Fun If You Can Stand 'Em" and "Fans I'm Glad I've Never Known".

Seven months after Norworth first took on Larry Vaughan as his protégé he decided it was time the young man published a fanzine.

"Now look, Larry, the most important thing is neat repro," said Norworth. "If the zine is well-produced the top writers will contribute, but if it's messy and hard to read you won't stand a chance. Just remember that a mimeograph is an unruly beast that will overink, misfeed, or jam up at the slightest provocation. When you're running a mimeo, anything that can go wrong definitely will. It's the nature of the beast. So be careful, and be prepared. Get yourself a big spiked club to threaten it with – it won't do any good, but it'll make you feel better. Learn some really violent cusswords – you'll need 'em. And above all, learn never to turn your back on a mimeo, because the moment you do it'll drip ink on your shoe."

And with such advice as this, including some choice words on stencils and correction fluid and an anecdote about a fan who had tried to use fountain-pen ink in his mimeo and was blue in the face for weeks, Norworth sent Vaughan home to start publishing his first fanzine.

Vaughan titled it *Neoglyphics* and, in typical fashion, filled the first issue with his own writings. Norworth had taught him how to construct a fannish article, how to plot a story well, how to lead up to a punchline, how to use interlineations to best advantage – all the things a good fan had to know – and Vaughan had learned well. The letters of comment all registered amazement at the quality of the zine. It wasn't long before the top writers were writing for *Neoglyphics*. Norworth himself did a cover for the second issue and contributed an article to the third. The fanzine was becoming quite popular.

Vaughan visited Norworth again eleven months after that first night. Norworth, having invited him over, met him at the door, a slight frown furrowing his forehead.

"Come in, come in," he said. "Ah, upstairs. Have something to show you, Larry."

Upstairs, Norworth said, "Larry, you remember that when I started teaching you about fandom, I said that within a year you'd be voted Best New Fan of the Year."

"Sure," said Vaughan. "I guess you meant in Les Nirenberg's yearly poll. That seems to be the main one these days."

"Yes, in his two-pager, *ATNTFWP*. That stands for All The News That Fits, We Print – but I guess you know that."

"Yes," said Vaughan. "I know just about everything one person can know about fandom, I guess, thanks to you. And of course I know a lot about science fiction, too, on my own."

"Not important," said Norworth, waving a hand in brief dismissal of science fiction. "The point is, Larry, that I got an advance copy of *ATNTFWP* today, the issue with this year's poll results."

"Did you win some award?" Vaughan asked. "I thought they'd disqualified you because you were too good."

"Well, they have, of course," said Norworth. "That's why I was surprised when this came today, airmail, with a note written on the envelope saying 'Congratulations!'"

"Then you *did* win something!" said Vaughan.

For answer, Norworth just shook his head and handed the younger man Nirenberg's fanzine. "Read that," he said, and sat back in his chair to watch Vaughan unfold the fanzine and read it, thinking to himself of his last birthday, when he'd read a piece by Carl Brandon and had first got the idea of tutoring young Vaughan. How ironic, he thought: a piece by Carl Brandon!

In a while, Vaughan put the fanzine down and looked at Norworth. "That's quite an award," he said. And then he burst out in a full-throated laugh. "Quite an award!" he managed to say between guffaws. "I'm the Best Hoax of the Year!"

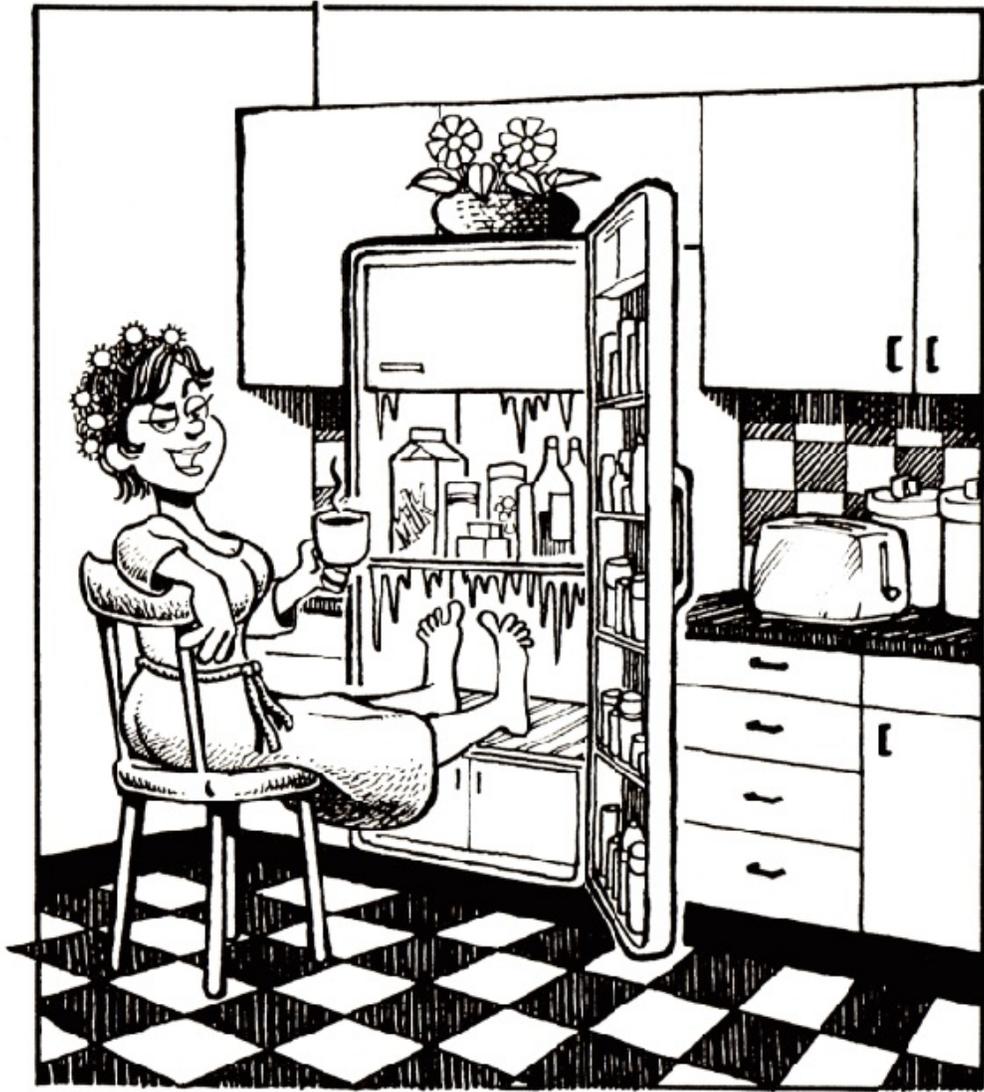
"I'm sorry," said Norworth. "I didn't even think of this. I just wanted to see how good a fan you could be. I figured you'd enjoy it, and there'd be no harm done."

To Norworth's surprise, Vaughan did not seem at all upset. "Oh, there was no harm done," he said. "I was coming over tonight to thank you. You've taught me a lot about writing, and I appreciate it. I even brought over some beer." He reached into a sack he was carrying and drew out two cans from a sixpack and opened them. "What the hell, Ray, I don't care if fans thought I was a hoax of yours. Drink up!"

Norworth smiled weakly. "Shall we drink a toast to hoaxes?" he said laconically.

"No, no," said Vaughan. "Let's have a toast to the craft of writing. You remember that story I was going to write about the guy marooned on a mining asteroid? Well, I expanded it to 20,000 words, and Damon Knight just bought it for *F&SF*."

And as Ray Norworth stared blankly at him, Vaughan raised his can of beer and said, "Me and Asimov, Silverberg, and Anderson. Cheers."



"I'LL BE IN TO BED IN A MINUTE, DEAR!"

Perchance to Dream

I told you you'd be reading more about Miriam. She was (and is) a colorful character, with unusual habits and a whimsical sense of humor; she provided me with good copy for a number of columns and even a couple of separate articles about her. Here's one from *Triode* 18, May 1960.

When Miriam Dyches and I were married, F.M. Busby wrote us a very amusing letter about how we should have known that married life wouldn't be a bed of roses *all* the time. "After all," he wrote, "*lots* of men snore, Miriam, and I've heard that *all* women have cold feet, Terry."

The letter went on to say that someday he wanted to get someone to do a cartoon of a woman sitting on a chair with her feet in the fridge, calling over her shoulder to her husband in the other room, "I'll be in to bed in a minute, dear."

Bob Bloch wrote us a similar letter, saying that I'd have to reconcile myself to the fact that wives keep the bathroom so cluttered with cosmetics, stockings, bath salts and so forth that husbands can't even keep their razors in there, and that furthermore I'd just have to get used to Miriam's bobbypins.

Well, I chuckled over these letters and appreciated the sentiments behind them, but I must rise to Miriam's defense. She does not have cold feet, she doesn't use bobbypins, and there's plenty of room in the bathroom for my razor, with *inches* to spare.

In fact the only problem is that Miriam sometimes talks in her sleep.

Now, some husbands might find this a great comfort. Presumably any indiscretions on the wife's part would be disclosed during such nocturnal soliloquies. Miriam, though, dreams about the *darnedest* things.

One night she almost scared the pants off me with one of her dreams – in fact, I believe she would have if I'd been in the habit of sleeping fully clothed. She started murmuring, "Whose fanny? Whose fanny?" I muttered something, sleepily, on the order of what-are-you-talking-about, and she said, "There's this *fanny* sticking out of the sand. And it's... oh! *Mabel's* fanny! *Poor Mabel!*" And she started to cry and seemed very upset.

"What's the matter?" I said, coming a bit more awake, and alarmed.

"Poor Mabel!" wailed Miriam. "Those kids buried her in the sand, with

just her fanny sticking out! And they're using it for a *pillow*! Oh, poor Mabel!" And she began to weep uncontrollably.

I felt a cold shiver down my back, visualizing the scene. The kids had buried this poor girl alive, and now were lying around resting their heads on her dead buttocks protruding from her shallow grave. It was a ghastly scene. I had the idea that Miriam was reliving some childhood experience that had long been buried in her subconscious mind, engraving her day and night.

I rolled over and shook her. "Wake up, wake up!" I said.

"Wasamatter?" she mumbled, coming to consciousness. "What's wrong? Is it morning?"

"You were having a nightmare," I said, and I proceeded to tell her what she'd said in her sleep.

"Did that really happen?" I asked.

Suddenly she started laughing. "No, that was just a dream my girlfriend Nancy had years ago," she said. "It never really happened at *all*."

Another of her dreams was quaint, too. From what I could gather, it seemed she was trapped in this house when a strong earth tremor occurred, and she babbled incoherently about things falling off tables and lamps shattering against walls and ceilings falling in. It was one of those times, though, when she could hear me talking to her and would answer while still asleep. But she wasn't very coherent – something about wanting to write her name on her leg so she would know who she was, and cracker-crumbs in bed bothering her.

"You're not making any sense!" I complained drowsily.

"Well, would you want cracker-crumbs in your bed if the house was falling in on *you*?" she wailed.

Miriam doesn't always have nightmares, of course. Far from it – she usually dreams little fantasies that make quite amusing listening. Lately she's come up with a recurring dream about the Detroit fans, which seems odd in view of the fact that she met them only very briefly at the Solacon. In the middle of the night she is wont to burst out suddenly with, "Terry, wake up! Fred Prophet's here, and Bill Rickhardt and Howard DeVore and Roger Sims! They've come all the way from Detroit to visit! Oh, those crazy Detroit fans!"

The first time we didn't think much of it, and when the dream came back a couple of times we laughed over it. "I don't know these people at *all*!" she said. "*Some* of them I haven't even met!"

But the dream kept coming back. These nights when she has it she just nudges me and mumbles, “Terry, they’re here again.” Good grief.

Fandom Harvest

We come now to the column I wrote for *Cry* from January 1959 till August 1962. *Cry* was a monthly fanzine with a long lettercolumn every issue; those two facts made it the ideal publication for the prolific and egoboo-loving fanwriter I was in those years. I contributed columns to most every issue for the first two and a half years, my output there slowing down only when I moved to New York and began concentrating on professional writing. It was a popular column – it was even voted the number 1 column in fandom in 1961 – so it's not surprising that this book bears the same title.

There's a lot more here about my first wife Miriam, in the earlier selections, but in the later columns I began writing about Carol, whom I married in late 1961. Altogether, these selections made up something over half the wordage I wrote for the column.

April 1959:

Lee Jacobs and Ed Cox presented their electric mimeograph, the Iron Maiden, to Berkeley Fandom several months ago. Since then, it's been sitting at Ron Ellik's house, unused and unusable. Several things were wrong with it, not the least trouble being that the motor wasn't connected to the mimeo itself, besides which there seemed to be some missing parts. We've been sitting around wondering what to do about it for some time now, looking at each other now and then and saying, "We've got an electric mimeograph. How does an electric mimeograph work?"

Our troubles seem to be over now, though. Yesterday Dave Rike picked up the mimeograph to take back to his place with him. He says he is going to fix it, and we have faith in him.

You see, Dave Rike is a big fan of mimeographs. He collects them, in fact. I believe he already had two or three when he picked up the Iron Maiden. He says he likes to tinker around with them.

I was once going to write a Carr Factual Article about Dave Rike. It was going to be about how much he likes mimeographs, and how he was continually buying used mimeos to add to his collection. The punchline was going to be: "Well," I said. "Fifty mimeographs... that's not too many."

But it really isn't necessary to exaggerate the truth about Dave Rike and mimeomania: the truth makes good enough telling by itself.

When Dave picked up the Iron Maiden, he looked it over gleefully. "Look at that roller," said Ron. "All caked with dried ink. It's pretty messed up."

"Mmmm," mused Dave, "yes, it *is* pretty bad." His face suddenly lit up with joy. "Gee! I guess I'll have to put in a new roller!"

"And look here," he went on, fiddling around in the interior of the machine. "This will probably need adjusting, and I'll see what happens if I take *this* out."

"Sounds like a lot of work," Ron commented.

"Well," Dave said, "I work all day, see, and when I get home I like to have something to fool around with."

"Why don't you get a woman?" Ron said.

"Women cost too much money," said Dave. "A mimeograph is what I need."

Ron Ellik has been ogling girls again. Not content with ogling Burbee's daughter, he has even gone so far as to take me up on my offer to let him chase girls now that he's twenty. He had a date last night, and he has another date tonight. Two different girls.

"You mean you're playing the field?" asked Miriam, shocked. Ron nodded. "Terry," said Miriam, "did you give Ron permission to *play the field*?"

"Well, not specifically," I said. "But I did say he could chase *girls*, not just *a girl*."

"But he seems to be catching them!" Miriam protested. "What about *that*?"

"Well, I haven't caught anybody yet," Ron broke in. "It's just that this girl said I could chase her to a movie tonight."

"Oh," said Miriam.

"Besides," Ron went on, "what's so special about me taking girls to movies? Everybody does it!"

"I don't," said Miriam with relentless logic.

Ron just sat there, a broken fan. "I give up," he muttered. "I'll phone her and say I can't make it. Then I'll see if Jim Caughran can go with me instead." He went away.

But I think he took that girl to the movie anyway. I wouldn't put

anything past that Ron Ellik.

August 1959:

Ron Ellik and I were talking a few weeks ago about Fabulous Seattle Fandom, and I said, “You know, I’d really like to go to Seattle and be there for a *Cry* publishing session.”

“Yeah,” said Ron, a reflective look coming over his face. “Imagine it – publishing a forty-plus-page-issue in one day!”

“Well, I don’t think they do all the *stenciling* on *Cryday*,” I said. “After all, for the last several issues Elinor seems to have averaged twenty-five stencils per issue, and *nobody* cuts twenty-five stencils in one day... I don’t think.”

“You never can tell about those Seattle fans, though,” Ron said. “They’re publishing dynamos.” And we went on talking for a while about Fabulous Seattle Fandom and how astounding it is.

Now, I suppose this may sound a bit odd, since Ron and I are two original Publishing Giants, but these Seattleites are fans to be reckoned with. Why, just recently in SAPS John Berry wrote that he considered Seattle a sort of Fan Heaven – *this* from a fan living in Belfast, which is almost a Mecca of fandom!

Yes, they’re astounding people up there. I can see one of those *Cry* publishing sessions now... Buz has laid aside a refrigerator-full of home brew, the rendezvous time has been set, many stencils are already prepared. Comes the appointed hour and fans begin to arrive. Tosk, Wally, Blotto Otto – in they straggle, leading Garcone hissing and spitting at the end of an eleven-foot pole.

Elinor starts rushing around looking for stencils that have been cut in the days past. She finds them in bureau drawers, shadowy corners of the Fenden, under the breakfast dishes, rolled up behind Buz’s ear, hidden behind the couch by one of the dogs, under a bed pillow, on the back of the toilet, stuck in with Buz’s underwear so that the mint-scent will be imparted to them, filed in the pages of the dictionary under “S”, maybe even one hanging on the clothesline to let the correction fluid dry.

The stencils all collected, a typer is hauled out to the Fenden and set up on an applebox and Elinor starts typing the WEALSOHEARDFROM section. There’s a five-foot-high stack of unopened letters next to her, and she simply holds each up to the light and types whatever comments she can read. Toskey is busy slapping stencils onto the Gestetner and running them

off, phwoom-phwoom-phwoom. Buz has also brought a typer out from the house, and he is working on the last page of the prozine reviews. He wears a badge saying "I Am Renfrew Pemberton, not Shelby Vick". He mutters, "Why didn't Gold let it fold?" and reviews the latest *If*.

Now things are humming along nicely. Elinor finishes the lettercol and throws the last of the unopened letters into the incinerator. In a few moments, the latest *If* follows it. Buz grabs another stencil and says, "All right, whatta we got?" Otto, who has been assisting with the duplicating, grabs the already-run pages and the to-be-run stencils and starts calling off names and titles.

Buz says, "Who wrote the fanzine reviews this time? Brown, yeah... and Lichtman again too, eh?... okay... Gerber too?... Did we print 'em?... Oh well, he won't mind if they were cut... Es Adams wrote some too?... oh, only five zines, that's okay... and Pelz some?... *who* else?... Belle, yeah, and Stone, and Pauls and Durward and Cameron and Mercer and Caughran... look, why didn't you just note down all their ratings and make a one-page graph?... yeah, and Meyers and Koning and Moran and... *who*?... *Ted White*?... oh, you rejected them, not critical enough, okay... Look, this contents page is already half-filled just with the byline for the damn fanzine reviews."

Otto finishes the fmz-review column and goes on to other material. "Next piece is a story by..."

"John Berry, yeah, what's the title?"

"It's called 'Horse's Erse'."

"Oh yeah, that's the one about fanspeak with an Irish accent. What comes next?"

"Well, Carr got his column in for once... and there's E. Maximus Cox..."

"Is that a title or a byline?"

"Byline. Title is 'The Demolished Tiger, Burning Bright'."

"Ghaaa..."

And so it goes, until the contents page is finished and the stencil is whipped off the platen and onto the drum and the last page is run off. Then they all survey the stacks of pages to be assembled.

"I need a beer," says Buz.

So beers are poured all round and midst quaffing and gay fannish chatter the pages are laid out in order and the assembling begins. Only fifty-five copies are assembled and stapled when Elinor says, "Hey, you know we left out pages 18 and 19?"

The staple remover is brought, all copies are unassembled, the missing

pages inserted, the copies restapled. Fabulous Seattle Fandom looks at the stacks of *Cry* that are finished, and turns to the stacks of unassembled pages still remaining. They face them with determination.

As Buz puts it, "So it's one in the morning and I've got to be up at six-thirty; so even the crickets are asleep outside. Do we care if there's still three hours of work to do? Are we daunted?" His eyes are the color of cold steel, and a half-smile plays at the corners of his mouth.

"Maybe..." says Tosk, surveying the mailing list.

"Well, we held it down to fifty-four pages this issue," says Elinor. "Of course, we had to reject that unsolicited stuff from Lemman and Tucker and Bob Shaw and Sid Birchby and Jack Speer, and we cut Warner's ten-pager to three pages, but we held it down. We ought to be proud."

"I *am* proud," says Otto. "I'm a proud fan, and tired."

"*But are we daunted?*" says Buz again, pounding the table.

"Hell, no," says Toskey. He grabs the assembled copies and dumps them into a large box. "We always come through," he says, piling the unassembled pages in on top. "*Cry* will live on!" he shouts, throwing the mailing list into the box too. He takes a sturdy rope and ties the box firmly for mailing.

"Now... what's Ted White's address?" he says.

September 1959:

Last week Ron Ellik came through town on one of his endless hitchhiking trips. It seems every time Ron gets settled into a chair he suddenly gets this urge to be On the Road again. I've seen the symptoms many times: his head jerks up, his eyes open wide, his breath begins to come in short gasps. He twitches nervously and not even the cold bottle of root beer at his side seems to offer him solace from his inner urge.

"What's wrong, Ron?" I say.

"I... I've got to go," he says. "I've got to go..."

"First door on your left," I say helpfully.

"No, no... I mean I have to leave. I have to... to go somewhere.

Hitchhiking. I have to feel the pavement beneath my feet, the swoosh of air as car after car passes my outstretched thumb. I have got to go on another trip!"

And then I hang my head sadly, for Ron Ellik lives under a Curse. Doomed forever to hitchhike the highways of North America, without surcease, without rest. His life is one long highway, and at the end is... what? Perhaps rest. I hope so.

Because it's really soul-shattering to see the wanderlust come upon Ron, to see him lift the face of one who is cursed and stagger blindly for the door. There is a legend, the legend of the Flying Dutchman, doomed forever to sail the seas. Ron Ellik is like that.

Ron Ellik is the Flying Squirrel.

Anyway, as I started to say, Ron stopped off for an overnight visit with us last week. The same evening, Trina Castillo came over for dinner between sessions at the modeling studio where she works. The four of us sat around the table and ate while the fannish conversation flowed like wine.

At one point Trina said, "Ron, you're a BNF. How long have you been in fandom?"

"Oh, since 1952 or '53, I guess," said Ron.

"Hah!" said Trina. "I've been in fandom longer than you! I discovered fandom in 1951!"

Ron looked at her dubiously. "What part of fandom did you discover?" he asked.

"Oh, I was writing letters to the prozines," said Trina, "and some New York fans wrote to me. That's how I met David McDonald and Martin Jukovsky."

Ron smiled. "David McDonald and Marty Jukovsky," he mused. He chuckled briefly.

"Well, what's wrong with that?" said Trina.

"Oh, nothing, I guess," said Ron, "only it seems a little like discovering Pismo Beach."

After dinner, Ron fell to baiting Miriam. He picked up a couple of her characteristic figures of speech and started tossing them back at her. This is an old Berkeley Fandom gambit which was used extensively by Pete Graham in particular. And now Ron was using it on Miri.

One of her pet expressions is "You drive someone crazy!" She utters this on occasions such as when someone (usually me) cracks an obscure witticism and expects her to get it, when someone changes his mind five times in quick succession, and such. Ron is given to such forms of mental torture, and Miri had been opining all evening that Ron drove her crazy.

Ron picked up the phrase. At appropriate and sometimes inappropriate moments he would say to her, "Miriam, you really drive someone crazy."

He kept on saying this for a half-hour or so (invariably leading Miri to say the same about Ron) until it became obvious that the joke was wearing

thin. Then he turned to me.

“Terry,” he said, “your wife will never become a Berkeley-type fan. She doesn’t think in a Berkeley way.”

“You drive someone crazy,” I said to him.

“You really do, Ron,” said Trina.

“But it’s just a gag,” Ron protested. “Why, we used to pull this stuff on each other all the time, don’t you remember?”

“Sure I remember,” I said. “But you’re right, Miri doesn’t think like a Berkeley fan. Her *Weltanschauung* is completely different. This sort of word-tennis seems to her to be just running a phrase into the ground.”

Ron nodded sagely. “Thus she refutes Berkeley,” he murmured.

A little later Trina left for the studio, and Ron, Miri, and I sat around talking into the wee small hours. One of the things we talked about was the upcoming *Fanac* Poll, which tries to determine fandom’s favorite fanzines, writers, cartoonists, and so forth.

“You know, Terry,” Ron said, “I think we’re missing a bet on this poll.”

“How’s that?” I asked.

“Well, we’re not getting anything out of it for ourselves,” he said.

“What do you mean?” I snorted. “We got *tons* of egoboo on the poll last year! *Fanac* was voted favorite fanzine, *Innuendo* third best, and both of us made it into the Top Ten Fanwriters of the Year.”

“Yeah,” Ron said, “but this year we’re distributing ballots with other fanzines besides *Fanac*. We’re probably not going to place so high this year. And anyway, I’m not talking about the egoboo. I mean we’re not getting any *money* out of the poll.”

My eyebrows shot up. “Fandom is just a goddam hobby,” I intoned piously. “Fans shouldn’t hope to make money on their fanac.”

Ron smiled slyly. “Ah, but what if people were to *offer* us money?”

“What do you mean by that?”

Ron shrugged. “Well, what if someone slipped us five bucks and mentioned that he’d always wanted to place in a Top Ten Writers poll...”

“You mean we should accept bribes!” I said, horrified.

Ron’s eyes narrowed to mere slits as he smiled. “Well, call it accepting payment for services rendered,” he said. “We just accidentally count fifty extra votes for our friend in the Top Writers category...”

“But that’s *monstrous!*”

“It wouldn’t really be like accepting bribes,” Ron went on. “Just doing a

favor for a friend. And surely you'll agree that only a friend would give us five bucks out of the goodness of his heart!"

"A friend indeed!" I snorted.

"Of course," mused Ron, "I wouldn't do that for just *anybody* who gave us five bucks."

"You mean... you mean, say, if Willis wanted to beat out Berry as top writer this year, you'd...?"

"Well, yeah, sort of. I mean, that's a hotly contested position between them. They should be willing to pay more than just five bucks for it..."

"Oh, *horrors!*" I moaned.

"...and if Willis were to give us ten or fifteen, say, we could mention to Berry that it was a lot of work compiling the points-totals, and we didn't have much time left over after working to make money to keep us and ours alive. *You know* – we could lay it on about how we just couldn't see how we'd be able to do a proper job of counting the totals in the Best Writer category, and maybe we'd make a mistake in counting and Willis might win..."

My head was reeling at the monstrous iniquity of Ron's idea. Willis and Berry trying to outbid each other in bribing us for Poll positions? But these fine fans would *never* do such a thing!

Nor would I ever accept a bribe!

"Ron!" I cried. "Ron, get hold of yourself, man! Come to your senses! We couldn't do such a thing! Why, it could undermine the whole fabric of fandom! Fandom is built solidly upon the rock of just deserved egoboo – to hand out egoboo for money would make a mockery of all that is clean and pure and decent in our microcosm! It would be like that nightmare you keep having about the Tower to the Moon in a windstorm! Ron, we couldn't *do* it, Ron!"

During my impassioned outburst Ron's expression had gradually changed from one of greed and cunning to one of surprise, then realization, and finally, now, of remorse.

"Oh, how could I ever have thought of such a thing!" he blubbered, crying on my shoulder. "I must have some evil spot upon my fannish soul! Oh, woe! Oh, woe, woe, woe!"

I patted his head. "Don't fret so," I said forgivingly. "You have obviously repented your evil thoughts. You see the light now. You are redeemed."

"No!" he sobbed. "Not redeemed yet! I must dedicate my life to serving

fandom in order to make up for my evialness! I must pour my *all* into a creative fannish endeavor, to keep fandom a worthwhile way of life! Fandom is a Holy Cause, and I must serve it!”

“Gosh,” I said, “you mean we’re gonna put out *Fanac* weekly again?”

Ron froze. He raised his tear-stained face, dried it with his handkerchief, and frowned. “Pub *Fanac* weekly?” he muttered. “That’s a lot of work.”

“But it would be for the Cause,” I said.

“Well, yes, but let’s not get hasty about this,” said Ron. “I mean, let’s keep our feet on the ground. Let’s look at this logically. What are we getting so excited about?”

“About your evial plans,” I reminded him.

“Oh, those. Oh! – those!” said Ron. “Well, heck, I was just kidding about all that anyhow. Good grief!” And he took a long pull on his bottle of root beer and leaned back in the chair and relaxed.

“It was all pretty silly anyway,” said Miriam a little later. “You’re supposed to be a Berkeley fan, Ron, but Berkeley fans are sensible, and if you were you’d have known that that whole idea was silly anyway. Fans don’t have any money to spend on bribes.” She pointed a finger at him.

“You’ll never be a Berkeley-type fan,” she said.

“You drive someone crazy,” said Ron.

October 1959:

About a month ago we had a visitor from down around Santa Barbara, California – a fellow named Andy Main, who is interested primarily in the venerable fannish pastime of collecting, but who is beginning to make his way into more fakefannish circles too, via subscriptions to *Void*, *JD-Argassy*, *Yandro*, and *Fanac* (The Aristocrat of Hugo Award Fanzines). If we had any effect with the subtle subliminal persuasion we bludgeoned in between discussions of indexing and preserving collections, he’ll be a new *Cry* subscriber by now. During the usual wandering conversations that occur between fans, Andy mentioned having seen an ad on the back of a Rice Krispies box for a hektograph offered for only 50¢ and two box tops. This immediately set me to thinking.

Obviously, the hekto offer is only the first step. Next, no doubt, Sugar Corn Pops will offer a postcard printer for \$1 and three box tops. A pack of five stencils will be offered for an extra quarter, and if you throw in a fourth box top you’ll be able to get a tiny bottle of correction fluid.

Kellogg’s Shredded Wheat will then come out with an offer of a full-

size mimeo for only \$2.50, fifteen box tops, and the completion in ten words or less of the statement, “I love to eat Kellogg’s Shredded Wheat while slipsheeting because...”

By that time, the flood will be in full force. Cream of Wheat will offer a spirit duplicator, Shredded Ralston will give mimeo ink and ditto fluid, Quaker Puffed Wheat will offer master units in boxes of a hundred and paper by the ream, and eventually Post Tens will be giving electric Gestetners as premiums.

Ah, that will be a great day for fandom – I hope. The only thing that bothers me about the rosy future I’ve outlined is that these offers may give rise to an entirely new fandom, a group of amateur publishers whose fandom will be centered around breakfast cereals. There will be zines like *The Kellogg’s Clarion*, *The Post Intelligencer*, and *The Saturday Morning Shredded Wheat*. The entire history of our fandom will be recapitulated. Some Will Sykora type will organize the ICA – the International Cereal Association – devoted to furthering the cause of the breakfast cereals in the world of today. Nonfans will sneer at “that crazy Snap, Crackle, and Pop stuff”. A radical group of youngsters will rise and try to organize the new fandom into a political body which will seek to uphold the superiority of gruel from Moscow. Collectors will rise, writing in their fanzines of the difficulties of keeping their Puffed Wheat in mint condition. Conventions will be held, at which new cereals will be world-premiered and speeches given on the nutritional, gastronomic, and esthetic qualities of breakfast cereals. A faaanish faction will ultimately develop whose members will claim that they’re fakefans, because “we don’t eat that stuff”. And a Sam Moskowitz type will bemoan the fact that the latest breakfast cereals have lost the Sense of Wonder.

Yes, I regard the possibility of such developments with much trepidation. Ghod, isn’t one fandom such as ours enough?

Miriam was still pretty much of a neofan when we were married and so I’ve been doing a little bit of tutoring. I moved in the bulk of my fanzine collection, about five shelf-feet from which the crud has been weeded out and only the top fanzines remain, and have been feeding her selected zines to read, meanwhile trying to explain the historic context of each.

It got pretty confusing for a while. Mainly, because Miriam is quite a fast reader, and I never could keep up with what she was reading or had already read. Now myself, I’m a slow reader, and I suspect that I get a certain

amount more from reading than she does – as a fast reader, she doesn't absorb the full effect of various styles of writing, and often skips over allusions with hardly a notice. But by ghod she gets a lot read in a short time! Things got really confusing for a while when she was reading, one right after another and sometimes alternately, issues of *Psychotic*, *Quandry*, *Le Zombie*, *Outsiders*, *Inside*, and *The Science Fiction Fan*.

Some things don't change over the years in fandom. If she was reading a book review I seldom had to explain the context, and if somebody said *Astounding* wasn't as good as it used to be we could skip over that because apparently *Astounding* never *was* as good as it used to be, and that was quite clear. But there were times when she'd come across a reference to a Ted White in an early-'40s fanzine and I'd have to explain that it was a different fellow from *our* Ted White (he is "our" Ted White, isn't he?); or when somebody referred to a fan named Frank I'd say no, this was an older fanzine and it didn't refer to Frank Dietz but probably to Frank Paro or Frank Wilimczyk or Frqnk Robinson – at which point I'd have to stop to explain that Frank M. Robinson was the very same fellow who is a big-name pro now and wrote such things as *The Power* and that his name was spelled Frqnk because somebody once made a typo. And then she'd say that they should have spelled Frank *Wilimczyk's* name that way because it would have been even more nutty, Frqnk Wilimczyk, and by that time even I would be confused.

Or maybe she'd run across in *Le Zombie* a review of a fanzine published by Eric F. Russell in Sydney, Australia, and I'd say no, that wasn't *Eric Frank* Russell the pro writer, just as today's fan Will J. Jenkins wasn't Murray Leinster. And Miriam, who's been reading stf for years but never paid much attention to bylines much less pennames until she got into fandom, would raise an eyebrow clear up to her bangs and ask why in the *world* anybody would think Will Jenkins was Murray Leinster, like the names weren't even *vaguely* similar, and I'd explain that Murray Leinster was a penname for Will F. Jenkins, and she'd say oh yes, everything was clear now, Will F. Jenkins was an incredibly bad typist who had once somehow typed his name as Murray Leinster ghod knows how and had been known by that name ever since, and the middle initial F. probably stood for Frqnk, wasn't that right? And what fanzine did he publish anyhow?

December 1959:

In the last *Cry*, Rick Sneary wondered why I don't write more serious

stuff in my columns. “Terry is all wit and personalized chatter,” he claimed. And he said he thought I should “pass on news, comment, and mold opinion,” which are, he says, the purposes of a columnist. Now, I don’t especially agree with Rick on that last part, but in my typical wishywashy manner I’ll refrain from arguing. But I would like to clear up a misconception of his.

It isn’t really true that I’ve had nothing serious in this column. Why, I started out with a review of the Year of the Jackpot, and have since considered such matters as the renaissance at Ziff-Davis, the possibilities of serious fannish fiction, and some aspects of TAFF of which I took a Dim View. (Taking a Dim View is one of the purposes of a columnist, surely. In fact, you might even say that I Viewed With Alarm a bit, and that’s even more serious.)

I don’t want to be cast in the role of a dilettante. I am a serious young man with serious young ideas, in search of a serious young fanzine in which to express myself. I don’t really want to spend my life telling Burbee anecdotes and Squirrel jokes – I want to talk about more important things. I want to consider the worldwide implications of sputniks, the literary and political shortcomings of Heinlein, the effects of Seventh Fandom on the Cultural Revolution in the West.

I want my writings to have a scope. I want them to Mold Public Opinion and create a shining future for us all. I want to write penetrating critiques with such titles as “Neo-Romanticism in the Writings of Les Nirenberg”, “Pseudo-Campbellism in *Astounding*”, and “Whither Burnett R. Toskey, Ph.D.?”

I visualize myself as a young man with heavy dark eyebrows and and outthrust chin and smoldering gaze – sort of a combination of J. Edgar Hoover and Wally Weber. I think of myself as the Hope of Fandom, surveying the fan scene calmly, ready at the drop of a fuggheaded remark to burst into print with terse, clipped prose exposing Evils in our microcosm and suggesting farsighted, dynamic courses of action to overcome them.

I’d really like to write more serious stuff, as Rick suggests. I’d like to pass on news, comment, and mold opinion. But I really can’t afford to. Fandom thinks of me as a light-hearted writer of fan-froth, and I must live up to that image.

Why hell, if I wrote something like Hamlet’s soliloquy, the fans would just chuckle at the clever way I mixed my metaphors. And if I wrote the

Gettysburg Address they'd say my punchline wasn't very funny.

At times I've tried to inject a note of solemnity into my writings. In February I wrote an anecdote about talking to Rick at Forry Ackerman's birthday party last year. Rick was saying that he'd just realized that he'd become a member of the Old Guard of Fandom, and at that point I realized that I'd been in fandom ten years myself. This anecdote was heavily laden with Sense of Wonder and Pathos. Two creaking oldsters, thirty-one and twenty-two years old, were depicted standing there in Forry's hall, amid prozines extending all the way back to the beginning, ruminating on past follies and approaching senility. My ghod but it was touching. I wept just a little while writing it.

But nobody noticed; they thought it was just chitterchatter.

In fact, I'll bet most people think this column is chitterchatter too.

January 1960:

"The focal point of fandom is in the middle of our living room table," I said to Ron Ellik.

"What?" he said. Miriam's head popped around the kitchen door and she looked quizzically at me.

I pointed at the *Fanac* Hugo, residing proudly in the middle of the table. At either end sat Ron and I behind typewriters, stenciling *Fanac* with a welter of correspondence piled around us.

"The Hugo. The Hugo is the focal point of fandom," I said. "It's symbolic."

"You may be right," said Ron, dabbing correction fluid on a ghastly typo – he'd misspelled Rich Sneary's name. Miriam disappeared into the kitchen again.

"Well, it's certainly a better symbolism than all the other stuff we've been talking about," I muttered. Ever since we got the Hugo people have been saying that it was a phallic symbol, and there's been much joking about such things as how one should polish it without making the whole operation seem obscene.

The Hugo has been going back and forth between our place and Ron's ever since he brought it back from Detention. We split custody of it, with him having it one month and me having it the next. And of course we both have visiting privileges too.

Over the Christmas season, Miriam and I have the Hugo here. It resides in the middle of the table again, with a few small Christmas tree ornaments

attached and a little angel on top. Fan visitors raise eyebrows when they see it. Nonfans are speechless.

When Ron accepted it at the Detention, he followed up a gag of Kelly Freas's by saying something about hoping *Fanac* gets another Hugo in 1960. But he wasn't talking about bookends. He was just hoping we could each have one – because eventually Ron is going to move back down to Southern California, and that would make separate custody of one Hugo a mite troublesome.

Actually, we *do* both have awards, sort of. A couple of issues ago in *Fanac*, I was typing a Westercon progress report item and misread Guy Terwilleger's handwriting for a moment. I almost wrote that the 4th of July, 1960 would fall on May Day. Actually, it was supposed to read "Monday". I caught the mistake, and wrote a brief item titled *FANAC NEVER MAKES MISTAKES*.

And while I was typing that on page 2, Ron was making another of his colossal typos on page 3. He's always making typos; just a few issues before that he'd reported on the wedding of Djinn and Gordy Dickson, saying that "Theodore Cogswell gave the bridge away." In this particular issue he wrote, "Some of the best wartwork in fan-press-dom today is appearing regularly in *Amra*..."

Soon after the issue had been distributed, he left for a visit to Los Angeles. There was a combined meeting of the Yerba Buena Leprechauns and the Little Men at Poul & Karen Anderson's house, and Miriam and I got there early to help with preparations. George Scithers, publisher of *Amra*, also got there early. He had an award for *Fanac*. It was a tower of salt shakers, taped together, with a banner attached to the top saying *WAMRA WANNUAL WARTWORK AWART*.

Ron wasn't there, so I had to accept the award. Pooh – Ron got to accept the Hugo at the Detention, and I had to accept the Wartwork Awart. Sometimes I think my soul is full of weeds.

I asked Scithers, "Is this award to be in perpetuity, or do we have to pass it on to another winner next year?"

George mused a bit. "Well," he said, "if sometime during the next year *another* fanzine boasts that it never makes mistakes, then on the next page says *Amra* has some of the finest wartwork in fan-press-dom, then you'll have to pass the award on. But otherwise, the award is in perpetuity, yes."

So Ron and I both have awards for *Fanac*. But we don't pass the

Wartwork Awart back and forth – as far as I’m concerned, that’s his. And we need another Hugo.

We here in the Bay Area count ourselves extremely fortunate to have among us a young man who has traveled far and wide in this world of ours. Jim Caughran, by virtue of having a father who is attached to the American Embassy, has spent months in Pakistan, has traveled in Egypt, Switzerland, Italy, and in fact it seems like nearly all points west of Pakistan. He is a veritable Traveling Giant among Traveling Giants.

He’s sort of been capitalizing on this, in fact: he wrote two articles during 1959 telling of his travels – one in *JD-Argassy* and one in *Quixotic*. I remember that Boyd Raeburn and I got to discussing Jim in our taperespondence one time, and Boyd said that Jim didn’t make full use of his experiences. “Why, how about that bit about the time he spent in Rome,” Boyd said. “He said, ‘We landed in Rome and I went to my hotel, which was lousy, and went to sleep, and got up and caught another plane the next morning.’ Now does *that* make any sense? There he was in an ancient capital of the world, a cultural center with centuries of history and tradition behind it. And he tells about how lousy the hotel was!”

I fear that Boyd has missed the whole point of Jim’s travelmanship. The point being, of course, that Jim wasn’t *impressed* by Rome. Why should Jim Caughran, Traveling Giant Foursquare, be impressed by Rome? It was just another of many fabulous cities he’d visited, just another stopover in a trip halfway around the world to Berkeley to go to college. Rome wasn’t important to him.

Anyone who has met and talked with Jim about his travels can see this. He is debonair and sophisticated, even if he is naive. He is constantly dropping statements into conversations like “The weather wasn’t too good when I was in London last,” or “That sounds like a very dirty phrase in Urdu.” It’s the utter ease and savoir-faire with which he says these things that causes conversations to stop and all faces to run to gaze awestruck at him for a moment. Like saying “...when I was in London *last*.” The perfect oneness of such a phrase is mind-croggling. A typical Jim Caughran sentence begins, “Funny thing *happened* to me on the way to Cairo...”

Ron Ellik and he are living together on the Berkeley campus these days, and I fear Jim’s travelmanship is beginning to tell on Ron. Whenever Jim mentions one of those exotic-sounding names Ron can be seen to wince, and turn on Jim. “*Cut it out!*” he hollers. Ron can’t stand it; he says Jim drives

someone crazy.

At the Yerba Buena Leprechauns' Christmas Party, Jim was going around with a problem. "I don't know what to do this summer," he said to me. "My father invited me to come visit him in Pakistan for the summer, but I don't know if I want to or not. I was just *there* a year and a half ago."

I looked around for Ron, but he was out of earshot, so I didn't worry about his peace of mind. "I guess it's a tough problem, Jim," I said consolingly. "I think you'll just have to decide for yourself whether or not Pakistan is worth it to *you*. I mean in the cosmic scheme of things, of course." And I edged off while Jim stared blankly at me. By the time he'd seen through the doubletalk I was clear over at the other end of the room with Ron, and we were telling somebody about one time when we hitchhiked to Los Angeles. Somehow that story didn't have the *zip* that evening that it usually has.

But Jim really does overdo it sometimes. This traveling seems to go to his head on occasions. Once Miri happened to mention that she thought Chinese waterpipes were very interesting looking, and Jim said, "Next time I'm in Hong Kong I'll get one for you."

"*Cut it out, dammit!*" Ron hollered. "Fergodsake, you've never *been* to Hong Kong!"

Jim subsided with a soul-felt chuckle.

But one day I'm afraid Jim is going to push it too far. He's driven Ron to the ropes, so to speak, and Ron will bounce back one of these days. I sure hope Jim takes it easy, because I hate even to *think* of what Ron's fury will be like, or what dire form of retribution Ron might exact.

There's nothing so dangerous as an outraged squirrel.

March 1960:

Some of you may remember reading references here and there to the fact that I have written a long report on the Solacon which was to appear in Norman Shorrock's *Space Diversions*. Well, after a year of far-reaching personal difficulties Norman assures me that the report is all run off and now awaits only the completion of the rest of the issue before being mailed out. He sent me an advance copy of the final, edited version, and in the process provided me with some material for this month's column; it seems that, for some reason which he didn't explain and which I can't quite figure out, he edited out everything I said about Al Ashley's presence at the con.

I kind of hate to think of that conreport appearing without a mention of

Ashley, because to me his presence there symbolized an important facet of the con, and of Los Angeles itself. L.A. is an area rich in ex-fans who are continually crawling out of the woodwork, and though I seldom think of Al Ashley as a gnurr I must say that his emergence at the Solacon was one of the most memorable occurrences of the con for me.

Al Ashley, of course, is a legendary man. He was one of the dwellers in the Battle Creek Slan Shack, that fan-stuffed house whose name became a common term for all such abodes; he was a Brain Truster of FAPA, one of the men whose intelligence and profuse literacy kept FAPA alive and interesting through the dark fanyears of World War II; he was the publisher of *Nova*, one of the most beautifully produced of all fanzines; and most of all, he was the inspiration for countless pages of hilarious stories and anecdotes by Charles Burbee and F. Towner Laney. One of Burbee's funniest articles was "You Bastard, Said Al Ashley", in which Burb detailed a few of the many situations which had caused Ashley to utter that immortal phrase.

Miriam and I were walking through the Solacon lobby with Bill Rotsler when suddenly Bill raised both eyebrows and said through his beard, "Well I'll be... There's Al Ashley over there!"

Miri and I were probably even more amazed than Bill, and we begged him to introduce us to Ashley. Bill seemed reluctant at first – "He might not even remember me!" – and about that time I went off somewhere to do something. I think I went to the bar to tell Burbee the news. While I was gone Miri managed to persuade Rotsler to introduce her, though.

The way she tells the story, Bill said to Ashley, "Al, this is Miriam Dyches; she's been dying to meet you." And Ashley said a polite "How do you do? I'm flattered, but I can't think why you should want to meet an old has-been like me." And Miri said, "Mr. Ashley, would you call me a bastard?"

Ashley was taken aback. "Why, I'd never call a nice young lady like you anything of the sort!" he protested.

"Oh, *please*," said Miri. "*Please* call me a bastard! It would be so fannish!"

But Ashley was adamantly polite; he refused to call her any such thing. Finally Rotsler saved the day by suggesting that Ashley call *him* a bastard, which Ashley did with good grace. And Rotsler smiled that twinkle-eyed smile and asked Miri if she was satisfied, and she said oh yes! it had been glorious! and Al Ashley walked off shaking his head.

I heard about all this when I got back from the bar a few minutes later, and I was quite taken by it. How quaint! I didn't see Ashley for the rest of the day, but I told the story to everybody I talked to, and they were all fascinated too.

Ashley showed up the next day, and before I could get to him I'd heard from at least four more people that they'd met him and that he had obligingly called them bastards, every one of them. It had developed into a minor salutation; when you met Al Ashley you said, "How do you do? Will you call me a bastard please?" And Al Ashley, in his quiet and dignified manner, always did.

I finally met him myself just before the costume ball; Burbee introduced me to him. "How do you do, you bastard," I said. "How do you do yourself, you bastard," he said.

He seemed to be enjoying the whole thing by this time, but he was puzzled. "I still don't quite understand it," he said. "Why does everyone want me to call them bastards?"

Burbee explained about the article he had written, and Ashley stared briefly into subspace and said he thought maybe he remembered the article but he wasn't sure. Well, it just so happened that I had my copy of *The Incompleat Burbee* up in my room, as well as an extra, so I went upstairs and got them both. The extra I gave to him, and in my own copy I had him sign his autograph at the head of "You Bastard, Said Al Ashley". He read through the article and chuckled as an ex-fan chuckles at memories of his fanning days (which is exactly the same manner in which one chuckles at the follies of youth). And when he finished reading the article he turned to Burbee and said slowly, with feeling, "You bastard."

It was a scene I'll never forget.

This month's column is being written in Seattle, at the home of the Busbys. Miri and I and Bill Donaho and Dan Curran came up for a few days' visit at a time that coincided with the arrival of Dick and Pat Ellington, who are staying with relatives in Seattle for a few days prior to coming on down to Berkeley to set up residence. Jim Caughran has been up here too – he flew up, apparently in an effort to prove himself a greater traveling giant than we are. I must say it was a rather silly feeling to travel 900 miles and have Jim Caughran meet us at the door. We'd known he would be there, of course, but we'd forgotten about our counter-plot of bringing up the mail that had collected in Berkeley since his departure and handing it to him when he met

us at the door, tipping our hats, and leaving again.

Oh well, if we'd done that we would have missed a whole lot of fun. Besides, it wasn't really necessary: Jim has been one-upped in traveling jiantship twice during his visit. Before he left he was musing around Berkeley, muttering, "Let's see... should I go to Los Angeles or Seattle this week?..." (I tell you, Jim Caughran can get *unbearable*!) So after he decided on Seattle, Dan Curran went to Los Angeles, and immediately upon returning he came up here to Seattle with us.

And he can't even get away with dropping his famous line, "Next time I'm in Hong Kong..." any more. He's never been to Hong Kong, of course, but he's always delighted in dropping that phrase into his conversations, simply because it infuriates people like Ron Ellik. But as I say, he can't do that any more, because when we met Dick Ellington we found that Dick *has* been in Hong Kong. Jim just doesn't *dare* drop that goddam line any more.



June 1960:

“My ambition,” said Ray Nelson, “is to do a full-color oil painting of my bellybutton for a fanzine cover.”

We were sitting in the living room of the Carr residence, Bourgeois

House, after a Golden Gate Futurian Society meeting. In the kitchen a game of poker was in full swing, next to us Dave Rike was turning off his tape recorder on which we'd just played a correspondence tape from WSFA, and in the bedroom some fans were calling long distance to the Disclave to send greetings. I hoisted my beer, feeling vaguely like Morgan Botts, and said, "Do you think the world is *ready* for your bellybutton?"

"Maybe not," he said. "Maybe the world isn't ready, at that. But *fandom* is. Fandom is always ready for anything."

I reflected that with people like Ray Nelson around it was a fortunate thing that fans had a certain amount of elasticity in their psyches. Actually, of course, this bit about bellybuttons wasn't all Nelson's fault; like so many of the sillier things in Berkeley fandom, it had been started by Miriam.

"I have this *thing* about bellybuttons," she had told Ray a few evenings before. "They fascinate me."

"Oh?" Ray had said vaguely.

"Do you have a bellybutton?" Miriam asked.

"Well... yes, last time I looked," Ray replied. He undid a button from his shirt and peered. "Yes indeed, I do have a bellybutton," he said. "I'll draw it for you."

And he took pencil and paper in hand and drew his bellybutton from life. It was quite a sight. He'd draw a line or two, then peer intently down at his navel, then draw another line or two. In a few minutes he was finished, and handed the drawing to Miriam.

"Good ghod!" she exclaimed. "What realism! What artistry! What *feeling!*"

Ray had smiled modestly, and somehow someone had managed to change the subject. And the next day Miriam had thrown the drawing out. "I really think it's an *awful* drawing," she told me, "but I didn't want to tell Ray that. I mean, you can't go around insulting people's bellybuttons."

But when Ray had come to the GGFS meeting he'd noticed that his drawing was gone.

"I thought you'd have it framed!" he'd said.

And Miriam had had to tell him that she'd thrown it out. "I mean, bellybuttons are very nice, Ray, but you drew yours so *big*."

And that was why we were sitting there in the midst of the fangathering talking about bellybuttons.

"She shouldn't have thrown it out," Ray said to me. "I had great plans

for that drawing. It was to be the first of a series.”

“A series?” I said.

“Yes. I was going to do a series of drawings of fans’ bellybuttons. It was a *great* idea!”

Dave looked up from the taper. “A thought-variant type thing!” he exclaimed. “Maybe you should sell the series to Campbell!”

“That was in the ’30s,” I said. “He probably wouldn’t be interested today, unless you went around discovering fans’ bellybuttons with a dowsing rod.”

“Well, I could do that,” said Ray.

“Sure,” said Dave. “If Campbell can print articles about thiotimoline, he can certainly print a piece on bellybuttons.”

“You could call it Great Bellybuttons of Western Man,” I said.

And at that point Bill Donaho came over and said he had some more illos he wanted me to stencil for *Habakkuk*, and gave me a sheaf of Atom drawings. I looked through them and stopped short.

“Miriam!” I said. “My ghod, come here and look at this Atom illo!”

She came over and looked at the drawing I held up. It was a little cartoon of a bem, complete with the usual Atombem bellybutton. Only this one was *different*.

“It’s got *hair*!” Miriam exclaimed. “Good lord, it’s the hairiest bellybutton I’ve ever seen!”

Ray peered over my shoulder quizzically. “Well, that really is something!” he said. “A whole new concept – hirsute bellybuttons!”

And for the rest of the night Ray Nelson could think of nothing but bellybuttons and the limitless artistic vistas that had opened up for him. I think now he wants to do a bellybutton mural. With hair, of course.

You see the sort of thing Miriam starts around here? She’s incorrigible.

I wrote an article about her for *Nomad* No. 3, called “Miriam Carr, *Enfant Terrible of Fandom*”. It was about how wacky she is. Everybody seemed to like it; for a month after it was published people were coming up to me and congratulating me on it.

“Don’t congratulate me!” I said. “I just wrote down some actual, true happenings. Miriam really did those things.”

“Did she really want to serve the salad in ashtrays?” Honey Wood asked me.

“Clean ashtrays,” I pointed out. “Sure, she did that.”

“Terry, you’re being unfair!” Miriam objected. “I showed those ashtrays to Karen Anderson, and she said that if *she* had them, she’d serve baked fish in them!”

I didn’t know what to say.

Anyhow, the article started a few things in Berkeley fandom. Just a couple of weeks ago, at a party at Bill Donaho and Dan Curran’s place, a roomful of fans spent an hour discussing who was sillier, Trina or Miriam.

“When Miriam is being silly, she knows it,” said Bill: “But Trina doesn’t seem to *know* when *she*’s being silly, sometimes.”

“That’s because I *am* silly,” said Trina. “It’s an inherent part of me. I Am The Only True Silly.”

“Before Trina was, I am,” said Miriam.

And the practice of lying has become widespread around here since that article appeared, too. I don’t mean vicious lying, or really dishonest lying. As I explained in *Nomad*, the idea is to say something absolutely *preposterous* in such a natural, deadpan manner that you’ll be believed.

A good example of this occurred just three days ago, when we were visiting Lou and Cynthia Goldstone. For some reason we got to talking about fan-artists, and Miriam said, “Ralph Rayburn Phillips really *does* draw with a severed rat’s tail, you know.”

Lou’s head jerked around, and he said, “*Really?*”

And Miriam admitted she’d been lying. That’s part of the code – you have to admit the lie promptly. After all, the whole point of the game is getting that wonderful shocked reaction, that brief moment of belief. Anything beyond that would be *de trop*.

Well, Miri and I aren’t the only ones who lie like that anymore. All of Berkeley fandom seems to have adopted the game.

Several weeks ago, for example, Miriam was kidding Ron Ellik about his weight. We do this constantly, usually just to be kidding and sometimes for the very important reason that Miri’s made a cake or a batch of cookies and we want to eat it all ourselves. Ron is goodnatured about it (though he’s adamant about getting his share of the goodies), but sometimes he strikes back.

“How much do you weigh, Ron?” Miriam asked him.

“A hundred and seventy pounds, naked,” said Ron.

“Oh,” said Miriam. Then she thought a minute, and said, “But how do you know how much you weigh? You don’t have a bathroom scale at your

place.”

“No,” said Ron. “But I weigh myself on the scale at the drugstore on the corner.”

“Oh,” said Miriam. “...*What?* A hundred and seventy pounds, *naked?* At the corner drugstore?”

“You should have known that was a lie,” Ron said mildly. “There *is* no drugstore on the corner.”

October 1960:

I’ve been reading fanzines for over ten years now, and though I must say that on the whole I’ve been pleased and satisfied with the scribbling presented, still it seems to me that there has been an important omission. I’ve read countless thumbnail histories of science fiction and various sf mags; I’ve read biographies of the important people in the field; surveys of the trends and ideas and styles in science fiction. I’ve read praise for John Campbell, Sam Merwin, Tony Boucher, Hugo Gernsback, Don Wollheim, and just about every other editor the field has ever had. That’s why it’s hard for me to understand the complete omission of praise for the greatest editor that we’ve seen in this field: T. O’Conor Sloane, Ph.D., who was Associate Editor of *Amazing* while Gernsback was publishing it, and Editor in full from the time Gernsback left until Ziff-Davis and Ray Palmer took over in the late ’30s – in all, a period of about ten years.

During that decade *Amazing* published a good deal of top science fiction; such men as David H. Keller, Jack Williamson, E.E. Smith, John W. Campbell, Miles J. Breuer, Francis Flagg, and many others appeared regularly in its pages. It was an important decade in the development of science fiction, and yet Sloane is seldom mentioned; fan historians seem to prefer to write about *Astounding* during that period rather than *Amazing*. They point to the pioneer work done by Campbell late in the ’30s as *Astounding*’s editor, or to the meteoric rise of Stanley G. Weinbaum in *Wonder* and *Astounding*; they remember fondly the Brundage covers on *Weird Tales*, or the work of Wesso or H.V. Browne. *Amazing* and T. O’Conor Sloane rate barely a mention, for some reason.

Mentioning the artists used by other magazines – and we mustn’t forget Frank R. Paul, who left *Amazing* when Gernsback did – perhaps provided an important clue to why *Amazing* isn’t remembered fondly today. For during the ’30s almost all the artwork in *Amazing* was done by Leo Morey, one of the most lackluster artists in stf’s history. One can’t get the great nostalgic

feeling looking through a file of magazines sporting Morey covers that one can get looking through the mags bedecked by Brundage or Paul covers.

This is not, of course, a fair way to judge a magazine; the judgment should be made on the basis of the stories more than anything else. But I think this sort of thing – the personality of the magazine, the “feeling” one gets by looking through its issues – is the criterion which has caused Sloane’s *Amazing* to come up short in the reckoning of the historians. *Amazing* under Sloane seemed pretty dry stuff, there’s no doubt about it.

Nevertheless, in this essay I intend to concentrate on this aspect of Sloane’s editorship – the personality of his mags – and try to show why I rank him as one of stf’s greatest editors. Because, to me, *Amazing* under Sloane was just as much fun as any magazine ever published in the field.

I’ll say little about the artwork, except to mention that for all his faults Morey was underrated. He did come up with a fair number of good covers and interiors – some of them copying Paul, of course – and if anyone still thinks all his covers were dull he might remember that a 1934 Morey cover had no fewer than six nudes on the cover, five of them females, one of the latter complete with *four* bare breasts. You’d never have seen that from Frank R. Paul!

Sloane’s forte, though, was in the editorial personality that was prevalent throughout the issues he edited. One of my most pleasant pastimes is leafing through my old *Amazings* reading his story blurbs and the lettercolumns with the wonderful titles he would give the letters and the straight-faced replies he always came up with. As I’ve mentioned, Sloane seems to be remembered as a singularly dull and pedantic figure, but from the evidence of his blurbs and such it’s hard to think that this can be true. If Sloane was as pedantic as it seems on the surface, then indeed he must have set a new record for such things – but frankly, some of Sloane’s editorial comments read to me like the height of deadpan humor, and I simply can’t imagine anybody writing some of those blurbs seriously.

It’s always puzzled me how a learned, dry, dull man such as Sloane is assumed to have been could ever have got mixed up with a stf magazine in the first place. Stf had very little respectability then, remember; it was just beginning its long uphill fight out of the crackpot category. I think Sloane must have realized how silly some of the stories he printed were, how ridiculous were many of the comments he received from his readers, and how far-fetched were the “scientific” ideas of his authors. By reading his blurbs I

get a picture of a patient, learned man who yet had an insidious sense of humor about him which kept him going even when he had to deal with brash youngsters criticizing Einstein and making like literary critics about the works of 17-year-olds who tried to sound older by using their middle names in their bylines (G. Peyton Wertenbaker, for instance). It was a thoroughly ridiculous situation; Sloane must have realized it. And he must have had a sense of humor; I categorically deny that he was always as serious as historians and fans have assumed.

For instance, there was this blurb from the December 1933 issue, for Otis Adelbert Kline's story, "A Vision of Venus":

This is a very nice short story, verging on the short, short order, and will be enjoyed by all of our readers. We have not had a story by Mr. Kline for some time and we are sure this one will be welcome. There is a love motif, but not of an order to excite opposition from our readers.

A lot of people probably took that blurb straight, and thought "Good heavens, what a bore Sloane was!" And that seems strange: haven't we had countless satires on youngsters who read stf but blush at Bergey covers? Isn't one of the oldest fan-satire themes "Sex and Stf Don't Mix"?

Remember Cleve Cartmill's definition of a fan? "I am a science fiction fan. I am twelve years old. I don't like stories with sex in them. They make me feel funny."

I think Sloane simply knew his readers for what they were, and was following a practice of straightfaced humor in his blurbs.

And make no mistake about it, Sloane was a superb satirist. He had a way of going on for several sentences in his terribly dry manner, as above, and then hitting you unexpectedly between the eyes with an absolutely ridiculous punchline. Remember this blurb from the March 1930 issue, for G. Peyton Wertenbaker's "The Ship That Turned Aside"?:

Perhaps because so little definite information can be obtained on the subject of the fourth dimension, authors with good imagination and an interest in scientific theories find in this subject a fertile field to work in.

Why, after all, might it not only be a thin and penetrable veil of vibration or radiation that separates the third dimension from the unknown and mysterious fourth?

G. Peyton Wertenbaker's reputation as a writer of scientific fiction is established. He gives us some surprising and unexpected good turns in this bizarre tale of travelers in unknown space and in the fourth dimension. Besides, this story is a true literary classic.

Notice the snapper at the end? What skill the man had for misdirection! He writes on for three paragraphs about authors with good imagination and scientific extrapolation and such, and then in the last sentence, as if it were an afterthought, he blithely adds that the story is a true literary classic! A dry pedant, indeed.

Sloane was often very whimsical, it seems to me. Glancing through the *Amazing* lettercolumn, "Discussions", I'm continually amused by the titles given the letters. Most of them are just dry and stodgy ("Some Carefully Thought Out Criticism"... "Some Curious Views About the Moon – A Suggestion for a Story"... "An Appreciation of Our Artists and Stories"... etc.), but others strike me as something that Sloane stuck on the letters with a little grin and a shrug: "Although a Flattering Letter, We Publish It"... "A Letter of Very Breezy Criticism"... "An Author on the War Path"... etc.

John W. Campbell, Jr., was a regular contributor to the lettercolumns for some time, usually arguing with E.E. Smith. Once a reader jumped into the fray and picked apart one of Campbell's theories, and Sloane promptly titled the letter "One on John W. Campbell, Jr."

Another of my favorite Sloane-isms was the letter saying that *Amazing* was slipping (this was in 1931), which Sloane titled with his characteristically strange syntax, "The 'Downfall' (!) of *Amazing Stories*, But It Is Not Falling Down". I tell you, the man was a genius.

Of course, all geniuses are sometimes hard to understand, and I confess that I'm a bit confused by one of Sloane's little peccadilloes. He had a strange habit of writing blurbs that made it absolutely pointless to read the story – he'd synopsise the whole plot in the introduction, like this one for Stanton Coblentz's "In the Footsteps of the Wasp" in August 1934:

Mr Coblentz is one of the best liked authors with whose works we have been favored. In the present story he appears in the role of a short story teller and very ingeniously brings everything to a happy conclusion where a whole nation is rescued from tyranny and almost extinction. We are sure our readers will enjoy it.

After a blurb like that, I visualize Sloane leaning back in his old leather-

upholstered chair and mentally adding, "...if they bother to read it." To tell the truth, such blurbs by Sloane have never bothered my appreciation of the stories concerned, because actually there was seldom much suspense or emphasis on plot-twists in the Sloane *Amazing*. The writers of his day just weren't interested in plotting, I guess; certainly the type of blurb Sloane so often wrote makes it seem as though he too assumed this. What *was* interesting to them (and, presumably, to Sloane) was the science and the extrapolation embodied in the stories. Certainly when he presented such a lovely satire as Miles J. Breuer's "The Gostak and the Doshes" he declined to mention the satire and instead advised:

But be sure to read the story when your mind is thoroughly clear and rested. There will be a marked difference in your reaction.

Sloane knew very well that his authors sometimes got pretty far out with their theorizing.

I wanted to mention in this survey another of my favorite Sloane-isms, but I can't seem to find it in the issues in my collection, which is admittedly incomplete. But I remember it clearly, and it somehow sums up for me the personality that was T. O'Connor Sloane, Ph.D., the conservative, cultured, formal-mannered yet whimsical science fiction editor. In his reply to a letter from a reader in Australia, he wrote, "Thank you very much for your well thought out letter of criticism. We are always pleased to hear from our readers in the Antipodes."

Isn't that terrific? Where today can you find a stf editor with such old-world charm as had T. O'Connor Sloane? I regard it as a great loss to us all that Sloane is no longer connected with the field.

All sorts of visions float before my eyes. What if Sloane hadn't left the field? What if, after Ziff-Davis bought *Amazing*, Sloane had come back to the field, perhaps as the editor of *Startling* or *Thrilling Wonder* in the '40s? It's very interesting to try to imagine how he might have edited a science fiction magazine in a different era. To imagine, for instance, T. O'Connor Sloane as Sergeant Saturn in the *Startling* and *TWS* lettercolumns. Here was one typical quote from the Sergeant Saturn era, answering a customarily rude letter from a reader:

Wart-ears, you must have slipped that letter in while ye Sarge was squeezing the juice from two jars of Xeno for his matinal uplifter. Go dip your head in a pail of aqua pura as punishment – and hold it

there until ye Sarge tells you to take it out!

I really can't imagine Sloane writing anything like that, of course. Written by Sloane, it might have come out more like this:

One wonders, Wart-ears, if perhaps one of our companions consigned the above rather breezy letter to the stack of those for publication while this humble officer of our dear planet was engaged in partaking of liquid refreshment. However, we are always pleased to hear from any of our readers.

Of course, this immediately brings to mind another amusing thought. What if Sloane had been editing the *Planet Stories* lettercolumn, say, during the heyday of such flagrantly offensive letterhacks as Edwin Sigler? We might have read:

We are always pleased to hear from our racist readers in the Old South.

Or what if Sloane had been editing *Astounding* when van Vogt came up with "The World of Null-A"? He might have written some such blurb as:

Mr. van Vogt has proven his popularity, and this story will surely add to it. It combines many virtues such as swift pace, intriguing situations, and colorful scenes. But be sure to read the story when your mind is thoroughly clear and rested, as it might make some sense that way.

June 1961:

Conversations with Two Straw Men:

Oskar McSnee dropped over to visit the other night. He comes by every few months to deliver three or four fanzines he's published since his last visit.

We got to talking about the *Cry* poll.

"What do you think of this question about whether or not fandom is a Way of Life?" I asked him.

He frowned thoughtfully and thrust out his lower lip. "I answered yes," he said. "I know some fans would laugh, but I believe in being honest about it. After all, that's what's so great about fans – they're honest. They don't put up a front for themselves, like people in Mundane. So I just said, yes, fandom is a Way of Life."

“How did you interpret the question?” I asked. “I mean, do you figure it meant *Is Fandom a Way of Life for you?*, or maybe *Should Fandom be a Way of Life?*”

“I didn’t think about it much,” he said. “Either way, the answer is yes. Fandom *is* a Way of Life – for me, and for a lot of fans. And it’s a good thing, too.”

“How so?”

“Well, it’s obvious! For one thing, fans make the best kind of friends – they’re intelligent and open-minded. They’re able to look to the future. They’re not hung up by conventional modes of thought – superstitious ethics, and senseless ideas of ‘manners’. For instance, can you imagine the reaction a frozen-assed nonfan would have had if I’d dropped by to visit *him* at eleven o’clock at night during the week? He’d be moaning for hours about how he had to get up the next morning to go to *work*, for ghodsake. Yet *you* didn’t even raise an eyebrow.”

“Of course not,” I said mildly. “That’s the sort of thing I expect from fans.”

“Right,” Oskar said. “Fandom has its own set of values; fans don’t automatically assume that the usual Mundane Thing to Do is necessarily Right.”

“Fans are pretty open-minded, all right,” I said. “What else makes fandom a satisfactory Way of Life?”

“I was coming to that. What I’ve been leading up to is that fandom is a society in miniature. It has its own ethics, like I said. And – at least in a fan-populated area or certainly during a convention – there’s really no need to associate with nonfans at all. When I go to the movies or a concert or anything, I get together with a bunch of others from the fanclub and we make up a theater party. There are always fans visiting me, or I’m visiting other fans. You can always find someone in fandom with your own interests, so where’s the need of associating with nonfans?”

“Don’t you have a job?” I asked.

“Oh, sure. But I don’t socialize with the people there. They’re nonfans. God, you oughtta *hear* some of the stupid conversations they have!”

“Well, I hear quite a few in fandom. Some fans seem stupid, too.”

“Yeah, but you’ll notice that the really fuggheaded ones aren’t really *fans*. They’re members of the N3F or fringe members of local clubs. Once in a while you run into a fugghead type publishing a fanzine, but have you

noticed how out of place a perpetual fugghead seems in fandom?”

I nodded. “He seems completely out of step.”

“That’s just it,” said Oskar. “Fandom is different from Mundane, and anybody who acts Mundane is like a square peg, in fandom.”

“And vice-versa, of course,” I said.

Oskar paused for just a second, his train of thought momentarily derailed. “Oh, you mean a guy who acts fannish in Mundane will seem fuggheaded. Well, naturally, you have to shift gears going from fandom to Mundane, because they’re both self-contained and self-consistent ways of living and thinking.”

“And you pick fandom as the superior one,” I concluded.

“Definitely. It’s more rewarding to an intelligent, literate person. I don’t think I really discovered myself until I got into fandom. I was always frustrated, one way or another. My school friends laughed at me, I was afraid of girls, never could see the sense in sports. But since I got into fandom I’ve opened up. Never used to be able to talk with people – I was too self-conscious. But now I even go around flirting like crazy with girls. You should’ve seen me at the Pittcon!”

“You get along better now with nonfan girls too?” I asked.

“Well, not much. I still clam up with *them*. It’s probably because we don’t have anything in common. But if a girl is the fannish *type*, I can talk to her.”

“That sounds reasonable,” I said. “And anyway, nonfans live in Mundane, not fandom, so who needs ’em?”

“Right!” Oskar said. “Fandom is a Way of Life. Mainly, because there are girls in fandom. Hoohaw!”

“Do you think very many fans agree with you on this? I mean, about fandom being a Way of Life?”

“Sure,” he said. “More and more all the time. You remember that Gafia used to mean doing more fanac to get away from the Mundane world, and now it means quitting fanac to get away from it all? Well, that’s a good indication of the change that’s come over fandom. The whole idea of Fandom Is Just a Goddam Hobby is dated – when that phrase was coined Gafia still meant escaping into fandom. But fandom has developed tremendously since then, and there are a lot more hardcore fans now – it’s possible for fandom to be more than just a hobby now. It’s a world in itself, like I say – and a wide, wide world it is, too.”

We sat in silence for several seconds. Then a smile crept onto my face.

“Something occurs to me,” I said. “When fandom is your whole world – when you’ve rejected Mundane – well, what do you do when you get sick of things? Everybody gets fed up now and then – but what do you do when you’ve got a hobby that’s become a Way of Life, and you get tired of even that?”

Oskar grinned right back at me. “That’s easy,” he said. “Read a science fiction book.”

We sat in longer silence after that. Then Oskar said, “Look, I hate to leave so soon, but I’ve got to get up in the morning – you don’t mind, do you? I’m going to L.A. tomorrow; the Fan-Hillton mob is having a kite-flying contest.”

He put on his beanie and went out into the night.

The next evening I visited Homer Aquanill, and I told him about my conversation with Oskar. Homer is a pretty intelligent guy, even for a fan, and I like to discuss things with him. He’s a good conversationalist: pick up any subject and he either has an opinion on it or he’ll think one up fast.

He was a bit appalled by Oskar. “The trouble with him,” he said, “is precisely that he believes in this Fandom Is a Way of Life nonsense. It’s not that he’s stupid – he’s pretty sharp, really. But he’s a fugghead; you don’t have to be stupid to be a fugghead. Oskar is the cleverest fugghead I know.”

“He’s written some pretty good fannish stuff,” I said.

“I know,” said Homer. “He’s had me breaking up with some of his stuff – really funny. But when I get finished laughing I always think, too goddam bad he’s so limited. He *is* limited. Everything is fandom to him. You remember how he told you he felt at ease with nonfan girls If They’re The Fannish Type? Well, that’s the whole thing with him – it isn’t so much that he likes girls who are the Fannish Type. It’s more that whenever he meets a girl he likes he automatically decides she must *be* the Fannish Type. Whatever the hell *that* is.”

“I think I see what you mean,” I mused. “One time he told me that he thought James Joyce was absolutely great, and Very Fannish.”

Homer nodded. “That’s the idea. If he could only realize that things can be good whether or not they have a damn thing to do with fandom... Well, we all bear our psychological crosses – intelligence doesn’t help much sometimes.”

“Do *you* think fandom is, or could be, a Way of Life?” I asked him.

“You publish quite a bit these days.”

Homer frowned thoughtfully and thrust out his lower lip. “Obviously,” he said, “it *can* be. It *is* for Oskar. But it shouldn’t be, I don’t think. Fandom is too limited.”

“Fandom doesn’t *have* to be limited,” I said. “How about this New Trend stuff? – discussionzines, ideazines, or whatever you want to call them. Some fans think it’s the greatest thing since Null-A.”

Homer nodded emphatically. “It’s certainly a step in the right direction,” he said. “The trend is rapidly bursting hell out of the narrow ‘fannish’ traditions. And it’s bringing a lot of new blood into fandom too – nonfans are at last able to figure out what a fanzine is. You show them a fanzine with three conreports, a juicy bit of character assassination, and an article on some esoteric aspect of fannish history, and they’ll throw it down in confusion and disgust. But you can show them a copy of *Discord* or *Kipple* and they’ll understand most of it right away. Hell, when I was a neofan I used to hide all the fanzines I got so my nonfan friends wouldn’t see them. Now half of my nonfan friends are *writing* for my fanzine. That’s important: with the fancolumns gone from the prozines, this new recruitment of nonfannish types will be about the only way we’ll have to get new blood into fandom. And the new fans will change fandom even more. This may be a whole new fandom starting!”

“Yes, I’ve noticed that,” I said. “In fact, most of the discussionzines are loaded with articles charting the esoteric pathways of fannish history.”

Homer raised a contemplative eyebrow at me for a moment, then said, “That’s just a phase; it’ll pass. Meanwhile, worthwhile discussions on a variety of subjects *are* going on all the time. That’s the important thing.”

“Do you think,” I asked, “that if the present trend continues to the point where all the stops are out and discussions go on in fanzines on every subject under the sun – the Mundane sun – that fandom will maybe become a worthwhile Way of Life? In such a case it wouldn’t be nearly so limited.”

Homer nodded. “Yes, definitely. Once fandom stops being so goddam ‘fannish’ it will come into its own. It will be something worth spending all your time on, if you feel like it. It won’t be a Society in Miniature, like Oskar says, but a full society in its own right. It will become part of the wide, wide world itself. And what’s wrong with making life in the whole world your Way of Life?”

“Nothing whatsoever,” I said.

We sat in silence for a few seconds.

“But,” I said, “once you’ve made fandom – which is so narrow that it can only serve as diversion, a hobby – open up and become as wide in scope as the whole world... well, what do you do then for a hobby?”

Homer can sidestep a trap every time. He grinned broadly at me and chuckled. “Why, then I simply go fly a kite.”

We both laughed then, knowing the discussion was finished.

A few minutes later I got up to leave – but I had a sudden thought, and asked Homer if I could borrow a few prozines from his collection. He said sure, and I looked through his shelves and got a few interesting mags.

As I walked home I smiled to myself. As I’d suspected, all of Homer’s old prozines had the covers ripped off them.

October 1961:

This will be about Jim Davis – The Very Same Jim Davis Who, as he is known in certain circles of Berkeley fandom these days. I spent months regaling Ron Ellik, Joe and Robbie Gibson, Rog and Honey Graham, and a few others with stories about Jim when we all first got together in late 1957. For a while there it seemed impossible to steer the conversation onto a subject that wouldn’t cause a reflective glaze to come to my eyes and have me saying, “That reminds me of a story about Jim Davis...” It got so that when I would say, “That reminds me of Jim Davis...” Robbie Gibson would say, “Is this the very same Jim Davis who...?” And so he became known as The Very Same Jim Davis Who.

I first met Jim in a street fight; we were fighting each other. This was back in grammar school, maybe fourth or fifth grade. Jim had just moved to the neighborhood.

It seemed that that morning some kids had been picking on one of Jim’s younger sisters, and Jim had stepped in and stopped them, and slapped them around a bit in the process. Since the kids were younger than Jim, this was considered an outrage. Several of us stood around angrily saying that something oughtta be done about it. We decided we’d all go and Get Him – a perfect example of child vigilante-ism. So that afternoon about four of us surrounded Jim on the street, one of us told him off (pronounced the sentence, so to speak), and then we took turns fighting with him.

I stepped in once myself. Immediately I swung and hit him on the mouth; at the same time, he slugged me in the pit of the stomach. We stood there, each of us, shocked; then we stepped back and circled each other

cautiously but oh so threateningly. We sneered menacingly at each other and said dirty words. We did this for ten minutes, in fact.

Then somebody else in the group got impatient and pushed me out of the way and started circling with Jim himself. It was pretty silly.

But then one of the guys got down on hands and knees behind Jim – the old trick wherein the guy in front simply steps forward and pushes, and the other guy falls over backwards, tripped by the fellow crouched behind him. It's a pretty nasty trick, actually.

I saw the guy crouching behind Jim and all of a sudden I felt kind of bad about this ganging-up. So I took one step forward and kicked the fellow crouching, right square on the seat of the pants. He fell forward on his face with a holler, looked up at me and started swearing a nine-year-old's blue streak. I took off and ran like hell for home, with the rest of the guys, minus Jim, chasing me. I beat them all to my door, and slammed it in their faces.

Meanwhile, Jim just walked home.

I saw him for the second time the next day. I was at the corner grocery store buying a popsicle, and I turned around and there he was. "Hi," he said self-consciously.

"Hi," I said. Then I didn't know what else to do, so I handed him half the popsicle. We walked out of the store and stood on the corner.

"What d'you wanta do?" he said.

"I dunno," I said. "Let's go climb that big tree by the school yard." So we did.

Thereafter we became close friends. Together we built wood-slat sleds and waxed the runners, for use on a long hillside near our homes. There's almost never any snow in San Francisco, of course, but this hillside was covered with high, wild grass which in autumn would become dry and brown. We could start our waxed sleds at the top of the hill and shove off and go racing down to the bottom, the grass flattening beneath us as we went. At the bottom of the hill was a swamp, with a short rise just before it; that rise always was enough to stop the sleds. Well, almost always: once Jim got going very fast and shot up and over the rise to land with a whoop in the water and reeds.

We also played cars quite a lot. I've described at great length in some fanzine or other the elaborate and sometimes ingenious networks of roads, hideous, secret cutoffs and so forth we dug out of the dirt in a nearby vacant lot. We always played cops and robbers, and we were, of course, always the

robbers. The cops invariably ended up in pits, or driving off cliffs or speeding round corners head-on into blank walls; we saw to that. Oh, we were antisocial little boys.

Later on, Jim turned into a juvenile delinquent. Sometimes I went for rides with him in cars he had stolen for the night, and we had mad drag-races up and down Mission Street. Jim was car-crazy. Eventually he was sent to a reformatory for car theft, and I didn't see him for almost a year. But even in that reformatory, sixty miles from San Francisco, he had a profound effect on San Francisco fandom. He was the first link in a fantastic chain of circumstances leading to the great legend of San Francisco fandom: the time Boob Stewart was investigated successively by the U.S. Post Office, the California Youth Authority, the State Police, the Interstate Commerce Commission, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Bureau of Narcotics. The tale has been told often: how Boob wrote to Long Beach fan Larry Balint, using some gag-stationery he'd made up headed *FROM THE DESK OF BOOB STEWART* with a drawing of a toilet next to it, using all sorts of obscene language, forging my name to the letter for a gag, using a return address on the envelope that read "Hubbard Dianetics Institute", and so forth – and then accidentally misaddressed the letter. The people to whom the letter was delivered turned it over to the Post Office, and from there it went along the chain enumerated above until one evening Boob had a friendly visit from Officer Sorrelli of the San Francisco Police. He was just sitting there in his room, no doubt grumbling to himself that that goddam Balint owed him a letter, when Sorrelli came in and asked him what he knew about marijuana being grown and cured at Log Cabin Ranch School, a state reformatory.

Jim Davis had written to me from Log Cabin, and had thrown in a passing remark about marijuana being cured behind the stove in the kitchen. I had mentioned it to Boob, who'd mentioned it in his letter to Balint. And it was that, mainly, that got all those officials shook up.

Boob nervously and embarrassedly explained to Officer Sorrelli about fannishness and gag-stationery, ha, ha, and apologized for the obscenity and some of the other stuff in the letter. Then Sorrelli asked who this "Terry" was who'd signed the letter. Boob explained that he'd just signed it that way for a gag, but apparently Sorrelli was tired of jokes; he called me. I convinced him that I hadn't written the letter, and then he asked me what I knew about this remark on marijuana and who was this Jim Davis character who had told us

about it.

Jim had by this time been out of Log Cabin for a week or so. I gave Sorrelli his phone number and then as soon as I hung up I tried to call Jim to warn him – but Sorrelli dialed faster than I did (Fastest Index Finger on the Force) and I only got a busy signal. A little later I went over to his place, and he met me at the door.

“Boob just called me!” he said joyfully. “He was up to his old tricks again – said he was a cop or something. Asked me about that crap I told you about marijuana at Log Cabin.”

“Oh Good Lord,” I muttered.

“But I played along with him,” Jim said. “I said, ‘Yes, you just wanta get the facts, ma’am, just the facts; I understand,’ and things like that. He really got wound up – that Stewart is a nut!”

“Jim...” I said.

“So finally I told him there wasn’t any more damn Mary Jane at Log Cabin because I’d brought it all back with me and had it stashed under my bed. I invited him over to blast with me. Then I hung up.” Jim stopped talking and laughed like mad.

“Jim,” I said, “that wasn’t Boob. That was a cop, named Sorrelli. He called me too. He’s serious.”

Jim’s face did three successive doubletakes as he thought of what he’d said to Sorrelli. “Oh God...” he said.

So anyway, Officer Sorrelli visited Jim and Jim told him about how he had been kidding (Sorrelli must have been ready to lose all vestiges of a sense of humor by this time), and nobody got in any serious trouble. But there sure was a lot of excitement around here for a while.

Oh, Jim was the wild type, all right. One time he got into a knife-fight with a kid at a boarding school (the kid had been stealing stuff from Jim’s locker, and words had led to...) and damn near got killed. He ended up in the hospital undergoing five blood transfusions and seventeen stitches in his midsection.

Later on, he told us about the fight in typical Jim Davis fashion. “It didn’t even hurt when he knifed me,” he said. “We were circling around, feinting and so forth, and then all of a sudden he sticks me in the belly with his blade. Then he wiggled it around inside a little... it sort of tickled. He took it out and called me fifteen names, mostly in Spanish. I grabbed my gut, and it was all bloody... I felt sick, and cold all over, and I passed out. But it was

funny, you know... when he wiggled that thing around, it tickled.”

And a few months after that, Jim tried to kill me.

He was over at my place one Saturday night when my folks were out; we were just sitting around watching TV and talking. It got late, and I got tired, and I told him to go home. He didn't feel like going home yet, and he didn't. I kept telling him to go home, getting sleepier and more grouchy. He just laughed it off and wouldn't take me seriously. Finally I said by damn I was going to throw him out. He thought that was great.

So I grabbed him and started wrestling him to the door. I got a bit rough, and all of a sudden he got mad. He picked up an ashtray and put it behind my ear and pressed there, hard – it hurt like hell. I shoved him away from me, backhanded him across the face, and jumped him. We went to the floor, with me on top, and while he was still dazed I pinned his shoulders. Then I just sat there wondering what to do next.

All I'd wanted to do was get him out the door, and now here we were on the floor. “Goddam it,” I said, “I could break your face in if I wanted to right now – I've got you pinned.” He kicked his knees up and caught me in the back, and I shifted back to hold his legs down too.

“Listen,” I said, “if I let you up, will you go home? I don't want to fight with you, Jim.”

“You sunuvabitch, I'm gonna kill you,” he said. And he meant it; all of a sudden it hit me that he meant it. And knowing how much serious fighting he'd done and how little, serious or unserious, I'd ever done, it bothered me. This guy could be dangerous.

He writhed under me all of a sudden, unbalanced me for a minute, and managed to get his knife out of his pocket. It was on a long chain attached to a beltloop, and it was a heavy knife; he grabbed the chain and swung the knife at me. I managed to catch it and get him down again. Then I unhooked the chain and got the knife away from him.

“Gimme my goddam knife!” he hollered.

“If you want your knife,” I said, “you'll have to get it.” I tossed it out the door, which had been standing open all this time, onto the porch. Then I let him up.

He went for the knife immediately. He didn't bother getting up; he crawled like billyhell across the room on hands and knees after that knife. And I went crawling after him, because I wanted to shut the door the moment he was outside. (As we went crawling along some part of me suddenly

realized how ridiculous this must look, and I almost laughed.)

Jim got outside, grabbed the knife, and turned and swung at me. I slammed the door just in time and heard a heavy THUNK! on the outside. I locked the door. Then we swore at each other for a while and Jim went home. Later I opened the door and looked at the quarter-inch deep dent the knife had left in the wood. Then I went to bed.

The next afternoon the phone rang, and I answered it. It was Jim.

“Ter’?” he said, sort of sheepishly. “You still mad?”

“No,” I said after a moment. “Let’s go play basketball.” And we did.

Not too many months after that Jim joined the Air Force to get away from home. He was stationed in Newfoundland, and we corresponded a little during his hitch, but by the time he got back we were almost strangers. I was at the University of California (and already telling stories about The Very Same Jim Davis Who) and one day he showed up at Harrington Hall. “Let’s go play miniature golf,” he said.

His car was outside – a ’56 Ford that he’d bought from his mother. We drove down into Oakland and played till midnight, and then he drove me back. We were coming up Telegraph Ave. when we stopped at a light next to a little 1927 Snit or something, driven by this 16-year-old with a blond hanging on his arm.

Vroom vroom, went the Snit.

Jim looked over at him, a huge smile across his face. He’d put in a ’57 Mercury engine the week before. Vroom vroom, he said.

The light changed, and we roared off. Jim shifted from low gear straight into high and blasted down the street like a madman.

We caught up to the little 1927 Snit six blocks later, at another stop light.

“What the hell have you got in that thing?” Jim asked.

“My dad builds race-cars,” said the kid, and blasted off as the light changed.

That’s about the only time I ever saw Jim get dropped in a drag-race, though. He was car-crazy, as I said, and he always had his cars fixed up for dragging. And he was never satisfied with them; he always had something else he wanted to do.

The last time I saw Jim Davis was in 1959. He said he was getting married.

“I’ll be damned,” I said. “Congratulations, you old sunuvabitch. When?”

“I’m not sure yet,” he said. “As soon as I get my car fixed up, anyway.”

I talked to his mother six months later. Jim wasn’t married yet, and he didn’t have his car finished yet, either. And I wasn’t surprised.

I heard from his mother again early this year. Jim is married now – to a different girl than the one he was engaged to in ’59. He’d reupped in the Air Force and with the bonus they’d given him he’d finally finished his car.

Then he’d wrapped it around a pole and gone off and gotten married.

December 1961:

Not too long ago I changed addresses again, and in the process of getting settled into the new apartment I applied for a phone. Now, in New York there is a horrendous charge for the installation of a new phone, but they don’t charge you if you’ve had a phone before and are just transferring. I told them that I had had a phone in Berkeley and gave them the number there (THornwall 1-0400, as many Berkeley fan visitors can testify); they said they’d check my account and I undoubtedly could bypass the installation charge.

About a week later I went down to Towner Hall, and Ted told me that I’d had a call from a Miss Arbuckle or something at the phone company, and handed me a piece of paper with a number and an extension to call. So I did. I sort of wondered why they’d called me c/o Ted, whose number I’d given them as a temporary number until my phone was installed... by this time my phone *had* been installed. But I chalked it up to the telephone company’s usual efficiency.

Somebody answered my call, and I said, “Extension 32B, please.” There was a great whirring and clicking and somebody else answered. “Miss Arbuckle, please,” I said.

“Who?” said the voice.

“... er... Miss Arbuckle, or something like that. She called me this morning and I wasn’t here but a fellow who took the message said her name was something like Miss Arbuckle. It might be Arbogast. Or Harbinger. Something like that, anyway.” I felt that this was an admirably concise statement of the situation.

There was a brief lull, during which I could hear the young lady at the other end breathing very regularly.

Then she said, “Well, do you know why she called you, sir?”

“It was probably in reference to a phone I just had installed.”

“I see. And what is your phone number?”

“You mean the number of the phone I had installed, or the one I’m calling from?”

“The telephone which was installed.”

“WAtkins 4-3069.”

“Oh, you’re a WAtkins 4 exchange. Then you want Extension 37X.” I tried to protest that 32B was the extension number that had been given to me, but again there was a great clicking and whirring and a voice saying, “Please give this call to Extension 37X,” and another saying, “All right,” and more whirring and clicking and a general to-do, and finally a brand new voice said, “37X.”

“May I speak to Miss Arbuckle?” I said. I knew it was no use.

“Who?”

“Miss Arbuckle, or Arbogast, or maybe Harginger or Argyle. I’m not sure of the name, but she called me this morning when I wasn’t here and someone took the message to call her back, whatever her name was. They gave me a different extension number, but when I called that extension they transferred me to you. It’s probably about a new phone I had installed. I’m not too sure.”

“Why were you transferred to this extension?”

“Apparently because the number of my phone is WAtkins 4-3069.”

“I see,” she said. Then she breathed for a while. Finally, she said, “I can’t think of anyone in this office by any of those names. Can you give me a better idea of why she was calling you?”

“Well, when I applied for the phone I listed a Berkeley number as a reference, because I’d had a phone before.”

“In Brooklyn?”

“No no, in Berkeley. Berkeley, California. I had a phone there, and I told them about it so that I wouldn’t have to pay an installation charge here. They said they’d check on it, just to make sure; possibly there was some confusion because I just sent off my final payment to the Berkeley office last week, but I sent it airmail –”

“Oh, well then you *did* want another extension.” I opened my mouth to say something (though I hadn’t the slightest idea of what I was going to say), but there was another whirring and clicking and she said, “Please transfer this call to Extension 32B,” and the switchboard operator said, “All right,” and after more clicking the first voice that I’d talked to said hello to me.

“Hi,” I said. “It’s me again. Extension 37X said I should talk to you after

all. I'm the fellow who was calling Miss Arbuckle or whoever she is."

"But there's no Miss Arbuckle in this office," she said. "Or anyone with a name that starts with an A, for that matter. Have you any idea why you were transferred back to this extension?"

"Well, it happened when I told them that I'd listed a previous phone in Berkeley, California. They were going to check on that, and possibly there was some confusion there." I stopped, but she didn't say anything. "I mean, there might have been some confusion," I said lamely.

"And you say the phone you had installed is a WAtkins 4 exchange?"

"Yes."

"Well then it seems to me you should be dealing with extension 37X. This is all very strange." I opened my mouth and there was another whirring and clicking; I began to wonder irrationally if I might be a robot. "Please give this call to Extension 37X," she said.

The switchboard operator said, "All right," and there was some more clicking and she said, "Boy, they're sure bouncing you around, aren't they?" I liked her.

"Extension 37X. Hello."

"Hello again. Extension 32B insists I should be talking to you."

This time she sounded irritated. "I don't see how that can be," she said. "Will you hold the line for a moment?" There was one click and then silence on the line. I held the phone to my ear, wishing that I could hear the conversation that was obviously going on between 37X and 32B on some other line. It lasted for a while.

Eventually there was another click and 32B said, "What was the name of the person you were calling again, sir?"

"Miss Arbuckle," I said. "Or something like that. Do you have anyone in your office with a name *anything* like that?"

There was a silence, and then she said, "Well, we do have a Mrs. Farburk. I'll ask her." There was a muttered conversation and then the voice came back on. "Yes, apparently you wanted to speak to Mrs. Farburk. However, she is out to lunch right now. What is your number?"

"WAtkins 4-3069," I said. "Or do you mean the number I'm calling from? That's WAtkins 4-3617."

"Thank you. I'll have Mrs. Farburk call you when she returns from her lunch hour."

So I hung up and forgot about it. A little later Avram Davidson dropped

by, and I sat around talking with him and Ted White and Andy Main. I told them all about what had happened. Andy said that it certainly was a wonderful thing.

Then the phone rang and I answered it.

“Mr. Carr?”

“Yes.”

“This is the New York Telephone Company. I’m afraid I’ve asked Mrs. Farburk about why she called you this morning, and she has no idea. She got out your file and said there would have been no reason for her to call you. We’re sorry to have caused you all this inconvenience.”

“That’s all right,” I said. “I hope Mrs. Farburk feels better soon.” I hung up.

Half an hour later the phone rang again.

“Hello – Mr. Carr? This is Mrs. Farburk at the New York Telephone Company. I tried to get in touch with you this morning, but you weren’t in at the time.”

All this clicked into place in my robot’s mind and I decided I didn’t want to go all the way through it again. “I meant to return your call, but I forgot,” I said.

“Well, Mr. Carr, we inquired at the Berkeley office about the telephone number that you listed there, and it seems they have no such listing. Was the number THornwall 1-0400?”

“Yes it was. But of course this was a couple of months ago that I had that number; conceivably it could be out of service right now.”

“I’m afraid there is no THornwall 1 exchange in Berkeley. That exchange was canceled about a year ago.”

“But that’s fantastic,” I said. “I had that phone number up until July of this year. It really existed. And it worked, honest it did. I got calls at that number constantly. There must be some mistake; could you check it again? I mean, that’s fantastic.”

“I’m sorry, sir, but I have before me right now a list of all the exchanges in the country, and there is no TH 1 in service anywhere. The list was published in June of this year.”

I thought for a moment, and finally I said forcefully, “But that’s *fantastic*. Look, a friend of mine from Berkeley is here, he’s just moved here, and he still has his list of phone numbers from Berkeley; I’ll have him check it in case I’m remembering the wrong number.” I asked Andy Main to check

it, and he did. I had the number right.

“No,” I said into the phone, “that was the number. Are you absolutely *positive* there’s no such exchange?”

“Absolutely, sir.”

“This is New York, New York, in the United States, isn’t it? September 1961? John F. Kennedy is president and Robert Wagner is mayor?”

She laughed. “Yes, sir.”

“But you’re telling me I don’t exist!” I cried.

Avram Davidson, who’d been listening with the rest of them to my end of the conversation, said to Ted, “Say, what’s that blur over there by the phone? It looks a little like somebody with a beard, but it isn’t very distinct. And it’s fading.”

Ted peered at me. “There’s nothing there,” he said with finality. “That’s just a hairy mouthpiece.”

“Operator, there really was such a phone, and I had it!” I said frantically.

“Well, we’ll check it again, but I don’t think it will do any good.” She hung up.

So I talked to the others about it, and Ted suggested that I call Berkeley Information myself. I did so.

After three thousand miles of whirring and clicking I got Berkeley Information. “Hello,” I said. “Tell me, do you have a THornwall 1 exchange in Berkeley?”

“Pardon me, sir?”

“Is there a THornwall 1 exchange in Berkeley?”

“Yes, there is,” she said.

So I explained as briefly as possible what had been happening. “They say there was no such number and in fact no such exchange,” I concluded.

“But that’s fantastic,” she said. “Of course there is. I have a Berkeley phone book in front of me now, and I see three, four, five... oh, a lot of THornwall 1 numbers.”

“Well,” I said, “would it be possible for you to call the New York office, Extension 32B, and talk to Mrs. Farburk and tell *her* that?”

“Oh, I’m sorry, sir, I couldn’t do that.”

“You couldn’t do that.”

“No, sir. That’s entirely out of my jurisdiction.”

“Well, is there anyone else out there I could talk to who might be able to help me? Someone higher up, perhaps?”

“Well, I could give you the Information Supervisor, if you want to give it a whirl.”

“Yes, please.”

More whirring and clicking.

“Information Supervisor. May I help you?”

I explained the situation. “You *do* have a THornwall 1 extension in Berkeley, don’t you? And I’ll bet if you check your listings for June 1961 you’ll find one for Terry Carr at 1818 Hearst Avenue, the number being THornwall 1-0400.”

There was a faint rustling of pages, and she said, “Yes, sir, I do find that listing.”

“Well, could you call the New York office and tell them about it? These poor people here are terribly confused.”

She paused, and then sighed and said, “All right, I’ll do that.” So I gave her Mrs. Farburk’s name and extension and she said she’d call that afternoon.

“When you talk to her,” I said, “Tell her that it’s too bad the Yankees lost the pennant to the Dodgers this year.” I hung up.

The next day Mrs. Farburk called me.

“Mr. Carr,” she said, “we rechecked your Berkeley phone and found that we made a mistake. There certainly is such a listing in Berkeley, and I’m terribly sorry for any trouble we may have caused you.”

“Oh, that’s all right,” I said. “It was fun.”

March 1962:

I am not the type of person who ordinarily goes to sales. Anyone who knows me can probably tell you that I detest shopping, regard Christmas and birthdays as dark days, and sometimes wish my friends would never get married. Boy, do I hate shopping.

But anyhow, yesterday Carol and I went to a sale, and though it wasn’t her birthday or anything like that I bought her a present... a fairly expensive one, at that.

You see, it wasn’t an ordinary sale. It was a sale of Surplus Egyptian Originals. The necklace is 4,000 years old.

It happened like this. A few days ago Pete Graham called; he said he’d gone up to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to look at their exhibits of ancient Greek art and while he was there he ran into this sale. “They’re selling scarabs and some pottery and jewelry and so forth – all ancient Egyptian stuff.”

“Urk,” I said. “How much?”

“Well, it depends. The jewelry gets a bit expensive, but they have all sorts of stuff that’s cheaper – a whole lot of shells selling at 25¢ apiece, for instance.”

“Shells?”

“Yeah, shells. You know, sea shells... ancient Egyptian seashells.”

“That doesn’t grab me,” I said. “Shells are shells.”

“Well, they have a lot of other stuff. Necklaces and all.”

“What are the necklaces like?” Carol asked.

“Well” – he waved his hands – “most of them just look like macaroni. Colored macaroni, on a string. They’re not very fancy. Some of them are nice, though – but they’re more expensive.” He thought for a minute. “All that ancient Egyptian stuff, on sale there. Why, that’s fantastic.”

“Not as fantastic as all that,” I said. “The Metropolitan has the second-largest ancient Egyptian collection in the world – second only to the one in Cairo. And let’s face it, the Egyptians were making jewelry and scarabs and so forth for three thousand years before the birth of Christ... that’s a *long* time, and it figures they might have turned out a surplus.”

“Yeah, well, you might go up and look around,” he said, and we said we just might. And we did, yesterday.

The first thing we did when we entered the museum was make a beeline for the Egyptian exhibits. We’d been there once before, a couple of months before, but that day they’d closed shortly after we’d arrived and while I’d run from the bust of Ramses II to the Hatshepsut sphinx to the beautiful miniature statue of King Sahure the guards had shooed us out. Hurried and harried, I’d turned at the door and snapped, “You have no *ka!*” (The *ka* was an ancient Egyptian near-analogue of the soul.)

Yesterday, though, we had plenty of time to tour the exhibits and we saw them all, including the tomb of Peryneb, lord chamberlain in the Fifth Dynasty (2560-2420 B.C.), which has been totally reconstructed in the museum. And when we’d seen the exhibits I asked a guard about the material they had on sale.

I didn’t really know what to ask him – I mean, I seldom go to sales of ancient Egyptian work – but I finally just said, “I understand you have a sale on Egyptian materials.” I halfway expected him to say, “Yes, it’s down in the bargain tomb,” but instead he just nodded and pointed to a showcase down the hall.

We went there, and sure enough there was a whole lot of the stuff. Most of it was fairly dull... broken pottery, those damned undistinguished little seashells, some extremely lackluster scarabs, several faded statuettes, etc. There was a real bargain in Neolithic chipped stone... they had a dozen or so at 50¢ to \$2.00, great stuff if you like that sort of thing. (All the prices were round numbers, by the way; no Neolithic arrowheads at \$1.98.)

Most of the jewelry was dull, too. Most of the exhibited necklaces we saw were huge and bulky, fine workmanship but gaudy. Large balls of gold strung together... things like that. The necklaces on sale were not so fancy, of course; these were mostly simple bead-work, and by damn most of them *did* look like colored macaroni. But there were a few nice ones.

These were more expensive, of course. They were done in faience, an artificial material of brilliant turquoise blue. It was a less expensive material than gold, of course, but it was also less gaudy and, in these necklaces at least, used more delicately than most of the gold-work. These were probably not the former property of Egyptian queens and princesses, as so many of the pieces of jewelry in the exhibits were, but instead had probably belonged to court ladies of one degree or another. They had all been restrung, the original strings having decayed with the passage of time, and new clasps had been put on... clasps modeled on ancient Egyptian originals.

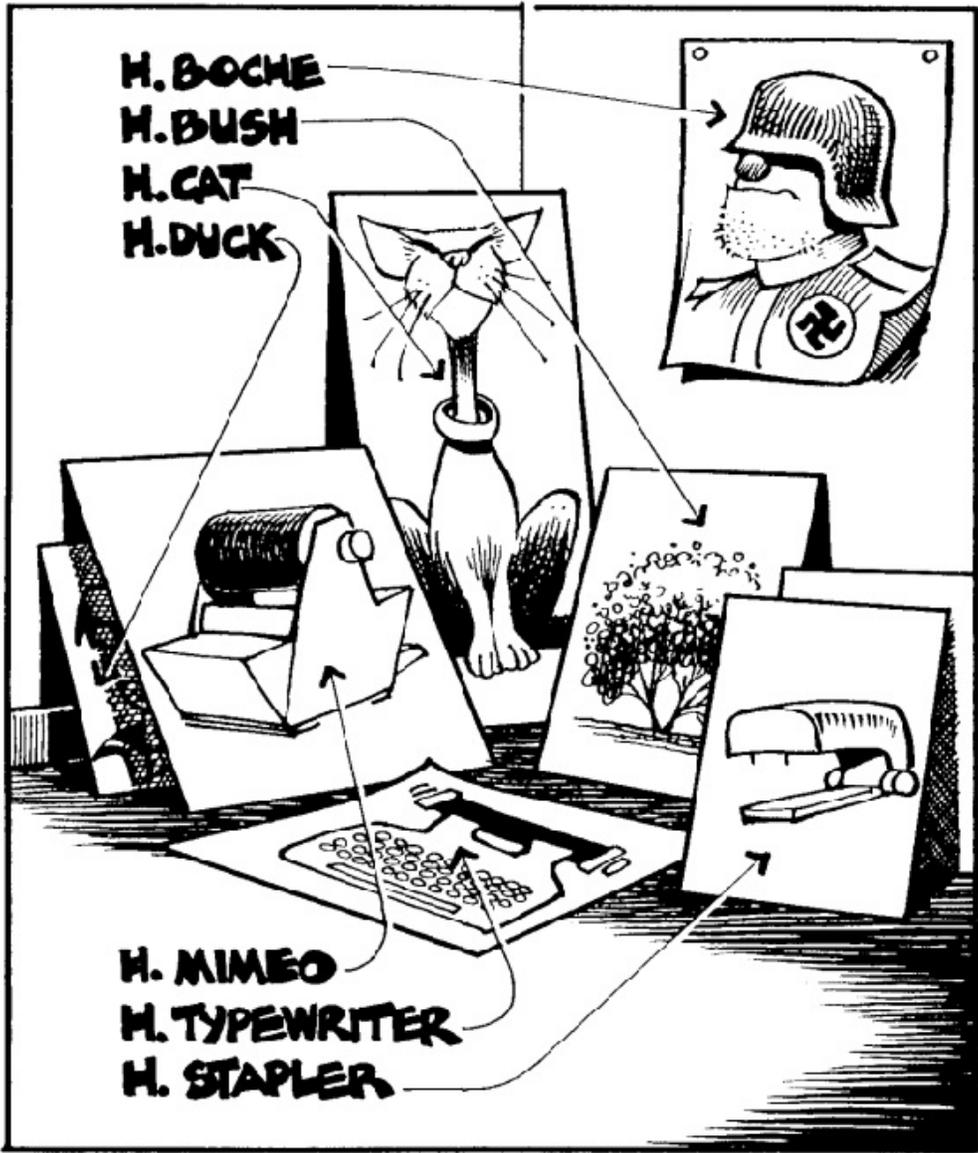
Carol found one that she loved... one of the delicate blue faience pieces. It was from the Twelfth Dynasty, c. 1900 B.C. We had it brought out from under glass and looked more closely at it, held it and weighed it in our hands (so light!), and asked if they'd take a check. They would, but they'd have to hold the necklace till the check cleared (yesterday was Sunday). So we wrote them a check and got a receipt and left.

Last night I called Ted White and told him about it. He was mildly fantisted. "I don't know which is more intriguing," he said, "the fact that it's four thousand years old or the fact that you paid twenty-five dollars for it."

"You have no *ka*," I muttered.

But you know, maybe he's right. After all, for twenty-five dollars I could have financed a nice thick issue of *Lighthouse*, with first-class bond paper and photostenciled illustrations, maybe some in two or three colors, fancy headings and envelopes to mail out the issue. Twenty-five dollars would pay for a real nice *Lighthouse*, I betcha.

But who'd read it four thousand years from now?



HIERONYMUS OBJECTS

The Hieronymus Fan

Who says fannish fans never pay attention to science fiction? There was plenty of commentary on John Campbell's "Hieronymus Machine" in fanzines – so much, in fact, that it gave rise to the following story in *Ragnarok* number 6, July 1960.

"I was looking through some old fanzines today," said Evan Saxton to me, "and I came across a zine published by one of my old fan-friends. It brought back memories."

"How so?" I said.

"Well, he was sort of a fabulous fellow, you might say. Sometimes he called himself the Hieronymus Fan."

"The Hieronymus Fan?"

"Yes. You see, he was in sort of peculiar circumstances – an actifan who didn't have a penny to his name. He couldn't buy paper, stencils, duplicating equipment, or even a typewriter for himself. Yet he maintained memberships in two different apas for a couple of years, and corresponded with fans and wrote for several fanzines."

"That sounds impossible, without any money at all," I said. "Did he freeload off other fans?"

"No, no, nothing like that. It all started when Campbell went on his Hieronymus kick – listen, sit down and have a beer and I'll tell you all about it."

I opened a can of beer and settled comfortably into a chair. "Tell me all," I said.

Well (said Evan Saxton), like I say, it started with Campbell. Before the Hieronymus stuff in *ASF* this fellow was always wanting to be active in fandom, but the best he could do was attend an occasional club meeting and sometimes write something for somebody else's fanzine on a borrowed typewriter. But I remember the night he discovered the Hieronymus theories. He came dashing into the clubroom, excited as hell. "Look!" he said, waving a copy of *ASF* around. "Read this!" A few of us raised eyebrows, some of us yawned; to tell the truth, we were used to fans dashing in hollering about Campbell's editorials, and we weren't much interested any longer. But he

explained the gimmick to us – about machines that didn't need moving parts, and psi powers and all that. Seems he'd been doing quite a bit of outside reading too, and correlating his data. He said he thought there was something in it. We told him to go ahead and try it out and let us know what happened. But I don't think any of us took him very seriously.

A couple of weeks later I saw him again. He said he had something to show me.

"It's my new typewriter," he said. And he brought out the goddamnest thing I'd ever seen. It was just a big piece of cardboard, with a drawing of a typewriter on it. It had all the keys of the keyboard, all of them labeled and all the parts of the typer drawn in carefully. But like I said, it was just a big piece of cardboard.

"It's a Hieronymus typewriter," he said.

"I'll be damned," I said.

"Let me show you." He sat down in front of the thing and started typing. He didn't even roll a piece of paper into the machine – I mean, he *couldn't* have; it was just a goddamn piece of cardboard. But as he typed there was this clitter-clatter, just like a typewriter, rattatattattattattattawhappitydatdatdat *ding!* Like that. And a piece of paper emerged from the cardboard, right where it would have come out if that damn thing had been a real machine.

"I'll be damned," I said. "How do you do it?"

"There's some mysterious mutant strain in my makeup which makes me different," he told me. "I have very strong psi powers, so I make it work."

"Why, that's fantastic," I said.

"I've applied for membership in FAPA," he said. "I can publish now, you see."

I thought about that for a moment. "But you don't have a duplicator," I said.

"I'll build one," he said. "I'll get some more cardboard."

He did get into FAPA some time later. And he did build a mimeograph. You know, Martin Alger once put out a FAPAZine with complete plans for how to build your own mimeo for three dollars and seventy-five cents – of course, you had to have your own lathe. But this guy didn't worry about that – he didn't *need* the lathe. Nor the three dollars and seventy-five cents. He got a big piece of cardboard and drew himself a mimeograph.

When he offered to show it to me I couldn't resist – I halfway believed it

would work even before he demonstrated it for me. After all, the typer had worked. So he brought out this cardboard mimeo and set it before me. “Look at it closely,” he said. “All the parts are drawn in, to scale.”

I did look closely... and there was something missing. I mean, *besides* metal, and rubber for the roller, and a felt pad and all. His mimeo didn’t have a crank.

“How do you expect to run this, even if it will work?” I said. “There’s no crank.”

“It doesn’t need one,” he said. “It’s electric.” He set the counter, jabbed the place on the cardboard marked *ON-OFF*, and all of a sudden the thing started to hum, and there was a swish-click, swish-click – and pages began to pile up where he’d drawn a papertray.

“I’ll be double-damned,” I said.

I picked up one of the run-off pages and read through it. It was a page of mailing comments, and they were duplicated as well as most any fanzine I’ve ever seen. Oh, nothing spectacular and Boggs-like – I guess even psi powers have their limitations – but a pretty good job of mimeography all the same.

“Did you type these stencils on, ah, your typewriter?” I asked.

“What stencils?” he said. I let that pass.

“I’m going to finish up the zine tonight,” he told me. “Why don’t you stay and keep me company while I type?”

God help me, I stayed. I watched him sit down with the mailing next to him and type mailing comments. He’d pick up a zine and flip through the pages, waving a dowsing rod over them. When the rod dipped he’d stop and read that section, then type out a comment or two.

“What in the name of all that’s holy are you doing with that damned dowsing rod?” I shouted all of a sudden. I’ll admit it, my nerves were getting a bit short by that time.

But he wasn’t offended. He just looked at me calmly and said, “I’m looking for hooks of comment. I don’t like to use checkmarks, you know – it messes up the zines. So I’ve adapted another psionic principle.”

“You and your goddam mysterious mutant strain,” I muttered.

I spent the whole evening watching him type his mailing comments, then run them off on that fantastic thing he called a mimeograph. When he’d finished he talked me into helping him assemble the zine.

We were just finishing up and stapling the last copies – I don’t have to tell you what kind of stapler he had, do I? – when it occurred to me to ask

him why he didn't make himself an automatic assembler.

"Well, I tried it," he told me, "but it was too complicated. I couldn't figure out how all the parts worked, and I just got a big mess when I tried the thing out. So I burned it."

I told him that was the first sensible thing he'd said all evening – which, come to think of it, just shows how far gone I was by that time.

Anyhow, he put out several other fanzines during the following months, but eventually, as with so many fans, he gafiated. I guess even psi powers are no guarantee against the scourge of gafia. He just sort of faded off the scene, and the rest of us in the local group tried to cover up as best as we could. And I guess that's the whole story.

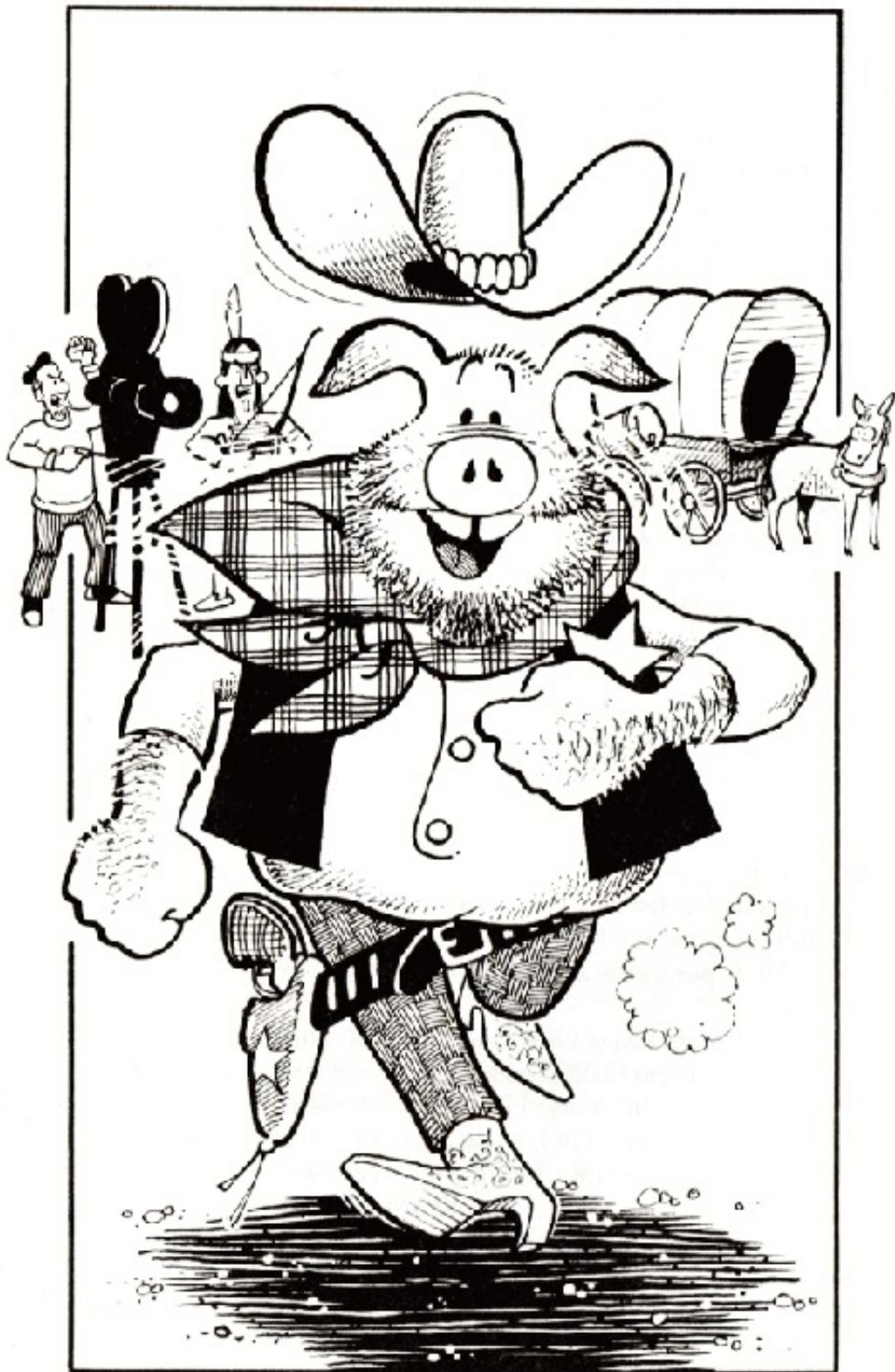
Evan Saxton sat back in his chair (he'd been leaning forward intently during his monologue) and sighed. I opened a can of beer and handed it to him to cool his overworked throat.

"That's quite a story," I said. "But even granting it's true, it still puzzles me."

"Puzzles you?" he said, smacking his lips after a long swallow of beer. "Why's that?"

"Well, I don't know," I said. "But you said something about trying to 'cover up' when he gafiated. And frankly, Evan, I've never heard of this guy anyhow – you must have done a mighty good job of 'covering up'. Who was he, anyhow?"

"Oh, you've probably heard of him," Evan said. "I told you, he was the Hieronymus Fan – Carl Brandon."



THE FASTEST HAM IN THE WEST

The Fastest Ham in the West

1959 and 1960 were the years during which Bjo and others sparked a renaissance in the LASFS. One of their most noticeable projects was Unicorn Productions, an amateur film group that first made *The Genii*, based on a Fritz Leiber story, and then *Wrai Ballard, the Musquite Kid*. Miriam and I got involved in the latter, with odd results, as you'll see in the following piece which appeared in *Shangri L'Affaires* number 52, September 1960.

It seems like only a few months ago that Miriam and I received the SAPS mailing containing Lee Jacobs' *Wrai Ballard, the Musquite Kid*, the latest of the Ballard Chronicles which Lee has been writing all too sporadically for several years now. I can remember it clear as anything... leafing casually through the zines in the mailing ("Where's my name? Do you see my name?") and coming across Jacobs' story. I remember how my eyes lit up and I said to myself, "Ah, I'll have to read that soon."

I've often wished since that I *had* read it. Because just a few weeks later I found myself acting in a movie version of the story, speaking lines in scenes which I couldn't place in their relationship to the whole of the story. Gee, what a silly feeling.

It happened this way. A few weeks after that SAPS mailing came out, Ron Ellik said to us, "Unicorn Productions is going to film 'Wrai Ballard, the Musquite Kid'. Bjo says she wants you and Miri to play yourselves in the movie – you're in the story, you know."

I think we said something vague and noncommittal. I mean, what would *you* say if somebody asked you to play a part in a movie? And mainly, what would you say if Ron Ellik told you *he* was going to be the star?

Anyway, just a few days after that there came this letter from Bjo which asked us point-blank if we'd play the parts. It was a three-page letter; that question only took a few lines, of course, but the letter ran to three pages because she went on to make suggestions regarding costuming, shooting dates, and so forth. She seemed to have a lot of it worked out already.

Well, what can you *do* when Bjo asks you to do something? We flipped a coin and it came up yes.

A few days later we saw Trina Castillo, who'd just returned from a party

in L.A. She said she'd heard we were playing ourselves in this movie, and congratulated us. We nodded. Then I had a thought, and I said, "But Bjo couldn't possibly have had our answer by the time of the party! Who said we were going to play the parts? Did they say it was definite?"

"Sure," said Trina. "Bjo said so, anyhow. I think so."

"I'll be damned," I muttered. "I've a good mind to go down there and let them set up their cameras and scenery and microphones and all and then demand \$10,000. Then if they say no I'll stalk off the set and call Louella Parsons. *Collect.*"

But I wasn't really mad, of course. Actually, from the moment I'd heard that they wanted us to play parts in the movie I'd known that we would. Things that that Shaggy crowd does have a sense of inevitability about them. As a matter of fact, I think I told Bjo that when we were making the movie. "Bjo," I said, "from the moment you people started on this movie I had a sense of the inevitability of it all. I *knew* it would get messed up like this!"

But I see I'm getting ahead of my story.

Miri and I went to Los Angeles to attend the annual surprise birthday party for Charles Burbee (which was actually a surprise party for *Isabel* Burbee, but that's another story). As it happened, we traveled down with Lee and Jane Jacobs, who had been visiting the Bay Area the week before. I told Lee that I hadn't even read his story yet, let alone a shooting script, and he fished out a copy of it for me to read on the way. Unfortunately, I got interested in a book that Jane had brought along instead... a novel about ancient Egypt. I'm a *nut* on ancient Egypt. I reclined in the back seat of the car and read avidly through the book, at times pausing to wish we were making a movie of *that* story instead. You see, there was this priestess...

But I digress.

We got to Lee and Jane's home in Van Nuys early in the afternoon of Saturday, and stopped there so they could unpack from the trip and we could have a beer or two. Van Nuys is considerably in the north of the L.A. area, though, so we had to go on pretty quick: we still had to stop at Miri's grandmother's place, where we were staying for the weekend, before going out to the party at Burb's that evening. Lee and Jane dropped us off there and went to the party.

It must have been close to ten o'clock by the time we finally got finished chatting with Miri's grandmother and connected on a ride to the party. The party was in full swing when we got there. I talked with multitudes of people,

and Miri got into a card game, and there was all this lovely food to eat and so forth – we didn't get home till some ridiculous hour of the morning. We just hadn't wanted to leave, you see, it was such great fun, and... well, to tell the truth, Miri was busy most of the time cleaning up at the poker table. It's *hard* to leave when you're winn... having a good time, so we ignored Bjo's occasional anguished bleats that we were all supposed to be in Long Beach, thirty miles southwest of L.A., at 9:00 in the morning to start filming. The whole concept of being anywhere except in bed at nine that morning seemed like something out of another world anyway, so it wasn't hard to ignore her.

The next morning dawned early. I dragged myself from bed and kicked Miriam. "Get up!" I snarled. "We have to go and make a hilarious movie today!" Miri hissed at me and rose too.

Halfway through breakfast Al Lewis arrived to pick us up. "The sun is shining and it's a beeyootiful day!" he said cheerfully. We finished breakfast in dour silence and got in Al's car. He drove us to Fan Hill.

There were people there, and they seemed awake. They even spoke recognizable English and smiled now and then. I hated them with passion. But somehow they herded Miri and me into Al's car again and we all went to Long Beach, where we were to rendezvous with Ron Ellik at a motel that had a covered wagon out in front. The covered wagon was a prop, like. Another group of fans was picking up Burbee and would meet us there, too.

Well, we found Ron, and we went to the motel and parked the car, and Al went to speak to the motel owner about hooking up the equipment to his power outlets. And it seemed that the owner wasn't there.

We shrugged, with the ease people get when they don't much care anymore. The fans who were to pick up Burb weren't there yet, so we decided to forget it for a while and go have lunch.

We left a note on the car for the others and went to this place a block down the street. It was early afternoon by now (I must confess that we hadn't got up at quite nine o'clock), and as we gazed down the menu we found ourselves actually feeling up to enjoying a meal. In fact, we were starving. Not even the ridiculous prices could deter Miri and me – "What the hell," she said, "we'll eat out of my poker winnings." So we picked out a batch of things to eat, and settled back for a waitress to take our orders.

We waited half an hour. Then we waited half an hour more. Bjo, Burbee, Bill Donaho and that crew showed up – they'd eaten lunch at Burb's. Some of them joined us and we continued waiting for a waitress. It was

getting just a wee mite ridiculous.

Finally John Trimble took a napkin and wrote on it, in big black letters, “*FOOD, LIKE!*” He mounted this on a fork and ran it up to see if anybody would salute it. A few other customers laughed, and a waitress sneered.

But eventually a waitress came by; she dumped a glass of icewater on John’s head as a sort of token of something or other, and then apologized. She was very nice about it. She took a napkin and wiped off the water from the table and all. Brushed some of it into John’s lap, of course, but what the heck.

And eventually, about 3:00 in the afternoon, she brought us some food. We wolfed it down and left. Somehow, in the rush and confusion, we forgot to leave a tip.

We all trooped back to the motel, where Al Lewis had succeeded in finding the owner and getting things straightened out about the power. They began to set up the equipment.

While we were waiting, Miri and I grabbed a script and asked somebody what we were supposed to do and say, what scenes to read, and so forth.

Ron told Miriam she had it easy; all she had to do was say, “Don’t be such a kook!”

“You mean I only have one line?” Miri asked.

“Well, sort of,” Ron said. “That’s all you say, mostly, but you say it about eight or ten times. With varying inflections, I guess.”

So Miri wandered around the motel parking a lot for a while, muttering, “Don’t be such a kook! Don’t be such a *kook!* *Don’t* be such a kook! Don’t *be* such a kook! Don’t be *such* a kook!”

I said to Ron, “Seeing as how Miri and I are playing ourselves, do you think we should try Method Acting?” He frowned at me.

Then Bjo came over and she and Miri held a consultation about Miri’s costume and makeup. Miri had on a squaredance dress which fit the western motif pretty well, and somebody had brought a sun bonnet for her to wear. Bjo had brought some theatrical makeup for her. Everything was pretty well thought out.

“The only trouble is,” said Miriam, “I didn’t bring any shoes.” She raised a foot to display a bright red pair of slipper-socks she was wearing.

Bjo sort of wilted. “Oh well, we’ll shoot you from the waist up,” she said.

I wandered off to where Burbee was standing. He was to play the part of

Big Daddy Busby, and he'd been provided with a long, moth-eaten beard for the occasion. He also had about the most ridiculous western hat I'd ever seen – ghod but he looked silly! I laughed and laughed, and then said:

“Well, Burbee, I hear you have a big part.”

“That’s true,” he said slowly, “but I don’t take it out and show it to anybody.”

Al Lewis came by and I asked him what scene we’d be shooting first; he pointed it out to me in the script. It was this scene where Wrai Ballard, the Musquite Kid (Ron Ellik) and his sidekick Cyclone Coswall (John Trimble) come riding up to a covered wagon whose occupants have just been attacked by Indians. Big Daddy Busby (Burbee) had the first line; he was to say, “Waaall, I’m as pleased as a faned with a Bloch article!”

I read that and said to Al, “I’ll bet you anything you care to name that Burbee won’t read that line straight.”

“You’re probably right,” Al said.

So I went over to Burb and said, “What’s your first line, Burb?”

Burbee dragged out his script and paged to the scene. “Let’s see...” he muttered. “Oh yes, here it is... ‘Waaall, I’m as pleased as a faned with a Burbee article!’”

“I knew it,” I murmured.

“Waaall, I’m as pleased as a faned with a Carr article,” said Burbee.

“That’s still not quite it,” I said.

“Waaall, I’m as pleased as a faned with a Rotsler wench!” Burb said.

I went away.

I leaned against a car and studied the script a bit. The scene went something like this: Big Daddy Busby, as the Kid and Coswall come riding up, introduces himself. “I’m F.M. Busby, and this is my child bride Elinor,” he says. “And this is –” He is indicating Miriam and me. I’m leaning against the wagon, with an arrow in my shoulder; I stand up with great effort of will and break in, “I’m Terry Carr and this is my wife Miriam. We were just –” And Miri says, “Don’t be such a kook! You lean back and rest, and don’t go exertin’ yourself like that!” She turns to the Kid and says, “They got ’im in his typin’ shoulder! Do you think he’ll be all right?” And the Kid looks at me and says, “Shucks, it’s just a flesh wound; we’ll take him to the doc in town.” They help me into the wagon, and in a little bit there comes from the wagon a bloodcurdling yell as somebody is taking the arrow out of my shoulder.

Well, that’s how the scene goes... of course we didn’t shoot it all at

once. They had it all planned out for closeups and panning and group shots and so forth, so it could be filmed in bits and pieces. I don't think they trusted any of us to remember more than two lines at a time. And come to think of it, they were probably right.

Burbee came over and stood beside me. "I'm F.M. Busby, and this is my child bride Elinor," he said, in a perfectly conversational tone of voice.

"Practicing your lines?" I said.

"I'm F.M. Busby and this is my child bride Elinor," he said, and wandered off.

I shook my head and went over to where Bjo was helping Miri with her makeup. "What about this arrow I'm supposed to have in my shoulder?" I asked.

"Oh, I almost forgot that!" said Bjo. "Bruce! Bring the arrow for Terry!"

Bruce Pelz dug into a kit and produced a plonker arrow... you know, one of those with a suction-cup on the end that you shoot from a spring-powered toy gun. He handed it to me.

I turned it around in my hand a few times. "But that's ridiculous!" I muttered.

"No it isn't," said Bjo. "You'll be holding your shoulder, naturally, so you'll have your hand over the suction-cup. It'll look fine. And if it does look ridiculous, so what? This is *supposed* to be a ridiculous movie!"

"Whoever heard of an arrow without feathers on it?" I asked.

"Okay, we'll get you a feather," said Bjo. They rummaged around and took a peacock feather from a hat.

"But that's even more ridiculous!" I shouted.

"Of course it is. Here, tie it onto the plonker." And they took a piece of string and tied that peacock's feather onto the end of the plonker arrow.

I shook my head in wonder and went over to Burbee again. "This is the arrow I have in my shoulder," I said.

"I'm F.M. Busby and this is my child bride Elinor," said Burbee.

I couldn't stand it. I went over and talked to Bill Donaho and Dick and Pat Ellington. None of them was in the movie (though Bjo had once talked of casting Bill as the covered wagon), but they'd come down for Burbee's party and had come out to watch the filming and help out in any way they could. We gabbed a few minutes, and when I saw Burbee again he'd changed his line a little bit. "I'm F.M. & E. Busby and this is my child bride Elinor," he said.

“But F.M. and E. Busby are two different people,” I said.

“No, they’re not,” Burb said. “I’ve seen that name countless times, in fanzines and fanzine reviews and even in the *Fantasy Amateur*, which is an official publication. I’ve even written letters with that name on them myself. F.M. & E. Busby. That’s one person. I know it is.”

“They are *two separate people!*” I shouted.

Burbee smiled calmly at me and said, “I’m Ephemandee Busby and this is my child bride Elinor.”

I wandered off again, muttering, “Well, they might be sixteen-year-old twin brothers.”

Eventually everything was set up and we were ready to start shooting. And I guess at this point I’d better explain about the preposterous way we had to shoot those scenes.

You see, this motel was right beside one of the main streets in Long Beach. There were streams of cars going by almost all the time, and of course they made noise as they passed; this could play hell with the sound track. But fortunately there were stoplights fairly near on each side of us, and for about a minute they would stop traffic from passing by in either direction. We had to shoot the scenes in sequences of a minute at a time. Bruce Pelz was stationed out by the street, and when everything was ready (“Places, everybody! Quiet on the set! How about it, Bruce?”) Bruce would peer each way and then call out, “Okay!” and then it was “Camera! Slate... Action!” and we’d try to get through a scene before a horde of cars roared by.

Well, we managed to shoot that whole scene in less than three hours. Burbee actually said his lines straight when it came time for actual takes (and I think we were all secretly disappointed), and Miri and I did a little emoting and mugging for the camera. I haven’t seen the rushes or anything yet, and I can’t know for certain, but I’m pretty sure I remained impassive during most of that scene. (Bjo later said, “Terry ran the gamut of emotions from A to B,” quoting an old Dorothy Parker line.) I mean, I just couldn’t think of much to do – have *you* ever tried to register pain from a suction-cup plonker with a peacock feather tied to it that you’re holding against your shoulder? It was all I could do to keep a straight face. (Between takes I would wander around holding the arrow to my shoulder and saying brightly, “It only hurts when I try to act.”)

Ron broke me up during one rehearsal. It was the sequence where he was to look at my shoulder and say, “Shucks, ma’am, it’s just an arrer,” and

so forth. That was how he pronounced it in the western accent he'd made up.

We were rehearsing this bit and Ron came up and peered closely at the arrier. Then he looked up at Miri and said, "Shucks, ma'am, it's just an error. I could fix it myself if'n I had some correction fluid."

"*Cut!*" shouted Bjo. "Ron Ellik, don't be such a *kook!*"

I guess I should mention that that seemed to be everybody's favorite line of the day. "Don't be such a kook!" we would say to each other at every juncture. It was infectious – probably the best line of its type since Al Ashley called Burbee a bastard. I remember, for instance, another time when Bjo called Ron a kook. It was halfway through the second take, when she suddenly noticed that Ron was wearing glasses during the takes. "Whoever heard of a western hero who wore glasses?" Bjo hollered at him.

"Shucks, ma'am," said Ron, "if'n you want me tuh be able tuh hit anything with muh shootin' here I *gotta* wear my glasses."

And about that time we noticed that John Trimble had been wearing his sunglasses during the takes. Oh well... it *was* supposed to be a ridiculous movie.

And now we come to the scene that was my Big Scene of the day. I wasn't even on camera, but I loved it. It was the place where I was in the wagon and Mrs. Busby (Ingrid Fritzsich) was taking the arrow out of my shoulder and I was to holler out in pain while some scene or other went on outside for the camera.

Well, Ingrid and I were in the wagon and Ron (the Kid) was leaning out talking to Burbee/Busby, see... and during the rehearsals Ron was having trouble remembering his lines. So he took the script and propped it up against the buckboard, out of sight of the camera, so he could refer to it if he got mixed up during the take. And finally everything was ready; we all knew what we were to do, and there was a lull in the traffic. "Camera! Slate!... Action!" Ron leaned out of the wagon and gestured to Burbee as he began his first line.

"AAAOOOOOOOOOOWWWWWWWWWCCCHHH!" I hollered at the top of my voice. I put my all into it; it was my last line of the afternoon. I saw Ron's back jump and the hair on his neck raised up a little bit.

Ron started to say his line again.

"Eeech, ooch, ouch... eech... yowp... urk," I said in the background. Somehow Ron made it through a few of his lines.

"Ooch, eech, yikes," I continued; "urk... awk... kaffkaff..." Ron's voice

as he finished his lines betrayed the fact that he was barely controlling the urge to break up laughing... or maybe to turn around and strangle me, I dunno.

But he did manage to finish his lines, and just before Al Lewis (who was directing the camera) could call "Cut!" I said, "Ooo that stings!"

"Cut!" said Al.

"That came across loud and clear on the sound track," reported Don Simpson, who was in charge of the sound system.

"All right, you, you can go back to Berkeley right now!" hollered Bjo. "You'll never get a job on another lot in this town!"

I grinned from ear to ear.

That was, as I've said, my last scene of the afternoon, so I wandered down the street to where Miri was sitting in the Ellingtons' car. "What was all that racket?" Miri asked me.

"Oh, I was stealing a scene," I said.

There were a couple more scenes to be shot with Burbee in them that afternoon and they got through with them in pretty short order. Still, it was almost sundown when I saw that they were about finished and went back to the set.

"There's just this one last take," said Al. "Let's get through it without any mistakes. Bill, what is the light reading?"

Bill Ellern, who was in charge of the light-meter, gave Al a reading. They conferred a bit. All of a sudden Al burst out, "WHAAAT?! *What did you say?* You've been figuring it how?" Bill said something to him that I didn't catch, and Al's face turned white.

Bjo came over. "What's wrong?"

"I've just discovered," said Al, "that we've been shooting all afternoon with the wrong light exposure. All these scenes will be overexposed; they may even be unusable." Bjo fixed Bill with an icy stare, and declined to call him a kook. Bill obviously felt miserable enough.

And that was how the afternoon ended. Bill drove Miri and me back to Miri's grandmother's place in South Pasadena, and told us that if the scenes were unsalvageable he'd pay for round-trip tickets for both of us to fly down again to reshoot them. He was really feeling bad about it.

We had dinner and went off again for more shooting that night. This time it was at Dean and Shirley Dickensheet's apartment, and Miri and I had just this one scene to do. It was the one where they bring me into the Doc's

office to get the arrowhead out of my shoulder. Jim Caughran played Doc Eney, and I guess he did all right, considering. I mean, there's this one bit of business where Doc is getting ready to probe for the arrowhead and he hands me a lettering guide and says, "Here, bite down on this; it'll help a little." Or at least he's *supposed to* say that. As it happened, under the hot lights and tension following "This is a *take!*" and the realization that if he goofed a line he'd cost these people good money for film and such, Jim got a little shaken up and just forgot to say anything at all about the lettering guide he handed me, except "Here." I don't think I've ever felt quite so silly in my life as I did when Jim handed me that thing and mumbled, "Here," and I sat there realizing that the camera was rolling and this little bit of business suddenly was making absolutely no sense. I didn't know what else to do, so I looked at it quizzically and put it down with a sort of "oh well" type shrug.

But it didn't matter, as it turned out. It seems the scenes shot that night got light-struck somehow, and we had to shoot them again a month later anyhow. (The scenes we'd shot that afternoon with the wagon turned out kind of muddy, I hear, but they were salvageable.) Unicorn Productions packed its gear into trunks and came up to Berkeley to re-shoot the scenes that needed it... and thereby hangs a tale too, but let's let somebody else write that one.

...Oh, are you still wondering why I never read Lee Jacobs' original story? I dunno exactly. In Berkeley we have a saying: "All the thrill's gone out of it." This was originally an allusion to an anecdote in Kenneth Patchen's *Memoirs of a Sky Pornographer*, wherein there was this fellow who carried a dead mole around with him which he would fondle from time to time. He just liked the feel of it, I guess. But eventually he gave it away. "All the thrill's gone out of it," he said.

I don't know why all the thrill's gone out of *Wrai Ballard, the Musquite Kid*. Do you think getting mixed up with the movie had anything to do with it?

I guess I'll read it. I certainly *intend* to read it. I'm sure I will someday soon.

The only trouble is that if I do, I'll ruin one of my favorite lines: "Read it? Hell, I've *lived* it!"



**FIRST DATE OF NEANDERTHAL
& CRO-MAGNON MEN**

Basic Research Is Not Dead

Soon after I moved to New York in late July, 1961, I began selling science fiction. Avram Davidson accepted half a dozen stories in a row and Don Wollheim bought a novella that he published as half an Ace Double. It was while I was working on the latter that I wrote the following for Andy Main's *Bhismi'llah!* number 7, April 1962.

In my capacity as the Young Hope of Science Fiction, I was doing some research the other day for a story I was writing. It suddenly occurred to me that in order to keep the sequence of the tremendous time span involved (this was a story with Scope) I had to know a few elementary dates in the prehistory of Earth.

Mainly, I had to know the dates of the emergence of Neanderthal Man and Cro-Magnon Man.

Now, all my reference books are back in Berkeley. Had I been there, I could have simply dragged out my Americana and checked the dates, or referred to half a shelf full of books on prehistory that I've accumulated over the years. Unfortunately, I was not in Berkeley; I was sitting here at Towner Hall, and offhand I could not remember the information.

There was no encyclopedia or other reference work on the subject around. So I did the next best thing: I asked Walter Breen. "I haven't the faintest idea," he said.

"Oh, come on," I said. "An *approximate* date – give or take ten thousand years. I mean, what the hell."

"I really couldn't say," was about all he could say.

Avram Davidson walked in. "Avram," I said, "in my capacity as the Young Hope of Science Fiction I need to know the dates of the emergence of Neanderthal and Cro-Magnon Men, respectively."

He gazed at me silently.

"Neanderthal and Cro-Magnon *Mans*?" I said.

He shook his head. "No, you were right the first time. But I'm sorry, I don't know the dates you need. Why don't you call the Museum of Natural History and ask them?"

"Oh... shucks..." I muttered bashfully. "I don't think they'd be interested

in my little story.”

“It wouldn’t hurt to call,” he said. “Here, I’ll look up the number.” And he did.

So I called the Museum of Natural History. Someone answered, and I asked for Information.

“What kind of information?”

“Well... information having to do with the prehistory of mankind,” I stammered.

“What exactly is your question? We have several curators under that classification.”

“Well, specifically I wanted to know the approximate dates of the emergence of Neanderthal and Cro-Magnon –”

There was a clicking on the other end. A new voice said hello.

“Can you tell me,” I said, “the approximate date of the emergence of Cro-Magnon Man?” (I thought I’d start out with a smaller request.)

The woman on the other end seemed vaguely irritated. “Just a moment,” she said shortly, “I’ll ask our Cro-Magnon Man.” She went away, leaving me a bit bemused. The Museum of Natural History has a live Cro-Magnon Man as resident expert? Strange visions began to form in my mind, but then she came back again. “Cro-Magnon Man first appeared approximately twenty-five thousand years ago,” she said.

“Thank you,” I said – then, before she could hang up, I hurriedly went on, “Now can you tell me the date of the emergence of Neanderthal Man?”

There was silence on the other end, and heavy breathing. At length she said, “Just a moment,” and went away again.

Two minutes later she came back (I had a mental picture of her walking the length of a block-long hall to ask the proper curator this question) and said coldly, “Which Neanderthal Man?”

“Err... Oh, any old Neanderthal Man. I mean, whichever was first. I just want an approximate date.”

“There were two,” she said. “There was Progressive Neanderthal and Plastic Neanderthal.”

“Whichever was first,” I said.

She dropped the phone (I jumped) and went away for another period of time. When she finally came back she said, “Plastic Neanderthal Man first appeared about a hundred and twenty-five thousand years ago.”

“Thank you,” I said.

“Do you have any more questions?” she asked icily.

“Err... no. No. Thank you very much.” I hung up.

There was perspiration on my brow. It had been an ordeal, a severe trial of my self-restraint. You see, I’m devilish. Hand me a straight-line and it’s hell for me to resist trying to say something funny. For the last five minutes of that conversation (which was mostly spent holding the phone while she walked that long block to the curator’s office) I had been wrestling with myself.

Plastic Neanderthal and Progressive Neanderthal... I almost told her I knew about Progressive Neanderthal, that the subspecies had first appeared at Minton’s on 52nd St. in the early 1940s and that a great deal of scholarly disagreement still raged about the art of this group. But I held that urge in check. It was comparatively easy.

What got me was when she asked me if I had any other questions, in that icy tone she had. She made me angry. What the hell, I had just asked a couple of simple questions. She had deserved to be put on.

I really wanted to do it. The words were almost out of my mouth before I clamped down on them and instead muttered a few thanks and hung up.

I almost said, “Just one more... can you tell me who pitched the first game of the 1929 World Series?”

But I’m glad I didn’t. If I had, chances are she’d have said, “Which team?” and then I’d have been stuck.

Buddha with a Lightbulb

In addition to joining *Void's* editorial staff in 1961, I teamed up with Pete Graham in coediting *Lighthouse*, which was begun as a FAPazine and then grew a whole lot; by the time it folded in 1967, it was averaging sixty or so pages an issue. My editorials for this fanzine tended to be more serious and topical than my other fanwriting, but a few of them seem appropriate for reprint. Here's the first selection, from the August 1962 issue; it achieved the distinction of being sold later to Paul Krassner's iconoclastic humor magazine *The Realist*.

Every now and then I have a, what you call a mystical experience, like. This one happened in New York's Chinatown, when Walter Breen, Carol and I went down there to eat late one night a couple of weeks ago. It was a night like any other in Chinatown: the narrow streets were crowded with Occidentals squinting at all the neon, the Orientals sat on steps reading the *New York Times*, the cops cruised by looking wary, and the telephone booths had pagoda-like roofs atop them.

We stopped in front of a Chinese curio shop. It was closed at this late hour, but there was a light in the display window. There was this Buddha statuette, see, about a foot high, and it had a lightbulb in its head. It was, like, adorable. Just adorable.

"Aaaargh!" said Walter. "That's one of the most disgusting things I've ever seen! A Buddha, with a light bulb!"

We looked closer at it. It was otherwise a fairly standard Buddha, sitting in the lotus position with hands in lap. There was a small pan or something in the hands.

"What's in the pan?" Carol mused. "Mexican jumping beans?"

"No, I think it's an ashtray," I said.

We walked on. "The thing is," Walter said, "I can imagine some dumpy middleclass housewife from Atlantic City coming by and seeing that and thinking it's just *too too wonderful*, and rushing in to buy it. It's been in the window for months now; I don't see why some idiot hasn't bought it."

"Maybe they won't part with it," I said. "Maybe it's the household altar. After all, the Chinese are becoming assimilated, and maybe they think the

lightbulb is appropriate to a statue of Buddha, the Enlightened One.”

“*Aaaargh!*” said Walter. There’s no reasoning with him.

But I was profoundly moved. I think the Buddha with a lightbulb may signify a cultural breakthrough of tremendous importance, a plateau at last reached on which spiritual and practical values come together and blend in peace, harmony, and the eternal light of Mazda. For too many millennia have we worshipped our gods in darkness. The murky mists of futility crouch around the feet of the godhead, like smog on Calvary. It is time that we answer the pragmatic question which is at the end, the essence, of all human philosophy: What’s in it for me?

I envision a new kind of Christ-figure; I see the Lamb of God at last becoming a ewe, and giving milk instead of blood. We must bring Christ into our homes in a truly real sense. No more the dead-end idolatry of the Figure on the Cross: henceforth we shall use His crown of thorns for a coat-rack.

And that isn’t all; for a cultural revolution, to be truly significant, must embrace the world, and be embraced in turn by it. It is perhaps chance that this revolution has begun in our own country, but having seen the seed glowing atop Buddha’s head we must carry it forth and plant it in other parts of the world. Perhaps it is a fitting task for our Peace Corps.

I see, for instance, a statue of the four-handed Vishnu. It is very nearly as always, done with the loving care and consummate artistry of the East. But no longer shall it be merely a spiritual figure, an idol, a dead end in itself. No. In keeping with the meeting of the spirit and the belly of mankind, the mystic and masticate, the eternal and pragmatic Yin and Yang of our existence... the new Vishnu will also serve as a Lazy Susan.

This is only the Beginning.



HATRACK

Confessions of a Literary Midwife

From late 1962 till early 1964 I worked for the Scott Meredith Literary Agency, just as other people ranging from Lester del Rey and Damon Knight to Barry Malzberg have done. I wrote about my experiences there for *Lighthouse* number 10, August 1964, and later revised the piece for the *Nycon3 Program and Memory Book* in 1967. What follows is the latter version.

For about a year and a half I worked for a literary agent, Scott Meredith, and it strikes me that I might tell you a bit about my experiences there.

There's a saying in the publishing business that any agent who advertises is a crook, but this isn't completely true. (I don't know exactly how that saying ever got started, come to think of it – agents are not, after all, doctors, nor even psychiatrists, though at times I've thought that people who seek an agent should really be looking for one of the latter.) Scott advertises in *Writer's Digest*, but his ads are true enough – there's the usual salestalk about how many writers have found fame and riches through the agency, followed by a listing in some detail of services and terms, including specified commissions for working with bonafide pros and fees for reading and if necessary criticizing work by writers who haven't sold yet. The success stories are true – Richard S. Prather submitted his first book to Scott with a reading fee, and Scott has since parlayed his Shell Scott novels into a million-dollar contract with Pocket Books; an unknown called Sal Lombino joined the agency back in the fifties, and as Evan Hunter he now makes hundreds of thousands per book; etc. The reading fees are higher than those charged by other agents, but the potential returns are a lot better too – which is to say, if you've got a story or book which is good, Scott is in a position to get you a good sale on it. No other reading-fee agent I know of is worth a damn.

I landed a job with the Meredith Agency in 1962 by answering an employment agency ad for an editorial position. I had an interview with a woman at the employment agency who warned me the job was with “an agent who sells a lot of science fiction and junk like that”. I told her mildly that I didn't mind, because I'd been writing and selling science fiction myself. I guess she decided we deserved each other, because she sent me up to the agency's offices on Fifth Avenue.

The job was what is formally called Associate Editor, but it's usually referred to at the agency as "running a pro desk". It can best be described as a sort of sub-agent position. The setup is that Scott himself handles the really big deals of the agency, or the touchy negotiations, etc., while the general run of the agency is handled by the men on the pro desks, of whom there are currently five. The agency's clientele – somewhere over three hundred writers in virtually every field, including not only stf writers like Arthur C. Clarke, Philip K. Dick, J.G. Ballard, Lester del Rey, Brian Aldiss, etc., but mainstream authors like Norman Mailer, P.G. Wodehouse, Andre Maurois, Paul I. Wellman, Irving Schulman, and more – is divided among the pro desk men, each of whom is responsible for most of the correspondence, manuscript reading, submissions, negotiations, and so on concerning his list of pros. Scott reads all incoming and outgoing mail in addition to that which he handles himself; he also sets policy and makes a lot of the touchy decisions that come up even on a \$35 sale.

For example, we took on a writer who had been selling regularly to *Amazing* and *Fantastic*, at 2¢ and 1½¢ a word respectively. He was, like many writers, in need of quick cash, so when Fred Pohl, to whom he'd submitted one of his stories for *Galaxy* (rates 3¢ a word), said he could use it in *If* at 1¢ a word, we had a problem. Should we take the money now, or call back the story and try the 2¢ a word markets first? Scott said neither – we'd shoot for a compromise with Fred, asking for 1½¢ a word, the author's base rate so far. After some negotiating, we got the 1½¢ a word, and everybody was happy.

The matter of when to ask for more money – and how *much* more – is a problem. Scott once told me the story of how he'd negotiated the movie sale of John Christopher's *No Blade of Grass*, for instance. Christopher was at the time a total unknown outside the stf field, though this novel had just been sold to *The Saturday Evening Post*. Scott submitted a copy of the manuscript to a producer who'd said he was looking for something "different", and a little later a call came in from Hollywood. It was the producer: he was interested in the property, and offered \$25,000 for it. (Figures here are only approximate; I don't remember the exact ones.)

"I could have just taken the \$25,000 – it would have been Christopher's largest sale by far. He would have been happy, I'd have been happy, and the producer would have been too. But there was something in his tone of voice, a trace of either nervousness or maybe just indigestion, that made me think he

really wanted that story badly. So I told him I'd want \$100,000. He said absolutely no, then hemmed and hewed and finally said he might be able to raise it a little. He said he'd call me back the next day.

"The next day was a Saturday, and I'd given him my home number. I was running around making arrangements for a visit of some relatives, and keeping as near to the phone as I could. He called at 1:00 that afternoon and offered \$45,000, top offer. I told him I had houseguests coming in an hour and I didn't have time to play games; I said \$100,000 and hung up. Then I sat by the phone for an hour and sweated blood until he called back and we settled on \$85,000."

Scott is an interesting, largely enigmatic person. I've met people who dislike him intensely, and others who think he's the salt of the earth. I never got to know him well, but I did see a lot of Scott the businessman, which is his most important facet. In the office he's genial, casual, but always on his toes. He thinks quickly, and can be surprisingly effective in getting you not only to do things his way, but to agree with him about them. After a while I got to know when I was being manipulated, and how, but I always had to admire his technique. I had a few arguments with him, most of which I lost, but win or lose I always learned a lot about dealing with people.

One of the times I won was when I wanted to submit a really oddball article to a magazine which seldom bought non-staff-written pieces. Scott said it was a waste of time; I claimed it was a longshot but worth taking – and anyway, where else could we send it? So the article went to that market, and a couple of days later Scott called me into his office. He had a letter in his hand.

"What would you say," he asked me, "if I told you we'd been offered \$150 for that crazy article? Think we ought to try for more money somewhere else?"

I said, "Hell, no – nobody else would buy it. Let's take the \$150 and count our blessings."

He nodded. "That's what I'd say too. As it happens, though, they're not offering \$150 – it says \$500 here in the letter."

Surprises like that were always pleasant – more so than you might think, considering that the manuscripts were not, after all, my own, nor was the money. But when you work with an author as his agent for a while you get to identify with him. I even got rather fond of a couple of confessions writers, and God knows there's nothing I hate more than confessions stories.

One of the other nice surprises I got was also a bit disquieting. I was negotiating the sale of a hardcover book which nobody at the agency, me included, figured had much of a chance. A small publisher liked it, though, and asked me to call and discuss terms.

“What do you think we’ll get for it?” I asked another member of the staff.

He shrugged. “They’ll offer \$600. If you talk well, and the stars are right, you’ll get \$750, maybe \$800.”

I decided to shoot not for the \$750, but for a thousand, so when I got on the phone with the editor I said, “Let’s settle the matter of price first. How about \$1,250?”

“Fine,” he said.

I did a doubletake which I hope wasn’t audible over the phone, then went ahead and concluded negotiations on royalty rates, subsidiary rights, and such. When I reported the sale to Scott a little later, his eyebrows went up. Then I went back to my desk and brooded about how easily I’d gotten twice what we’d figured to get. If I’d asked for \$1,500, or \$1,750...?

Not all of the work I did at the agency was with the professionals, by the way. Whenever something would come in from a new writer that looked good, it would be given to one of the pro desk men for reading and marketing. I also handled some of the agency’s correspondence with aspiring writers, as well as interviewing them when they came into the office. Some of those guys were real kooks. One fellow came in to discuss his poetry book, and he insisted on reading several of his poems aloud to me – with gestures. It was mostly love poetry, abominably bad, but he snuck in words like “breasts” and “thighs” here and there, so he thought it was daring and commercial as hell. I tried to be polite.

A middle-aged woman came in one day with a book that she claimed was guaranteed to be a tremendous bestseller for any publisher bold enough to bring it out. It was a compilation of twenty years of her diaries, showing conclusively that she had been the victim of continual persecution by the International Jewish Conspiracy. But the trouble was that the Jews controlled the magazines and book companies, so no one would buy it, she said.

One guy who for a time was calling me long-distance every day from California kept telling me he was a personal friend of Irving Schulman. I kept telling him that was nice. My phone friend was a beatnik type who blasted around the country on his motorcycle, occasionally laying up somewhere to

write stories. He finally sent one in, and it turned out to be a clumsy but sickeningly sweet little tale about a truck named Mollie that went to the Mardi Gras and had a good time.

Another of my frequent correspondents was a guy in college who was writing a novel. In fact, he'd been working on that novel for four or five years, as letters in the back-correspondence files showed. Every week or two I'd get a letter or note from him saying he was just about finished with chapter eight, or revising chapter six, or he had a great idea for the fight scene in chapter eleven. I'd write him back an encouraging note saying we were all looking forward to seeing it when it was done, and in a little while along would come another letter telling me how well the tenth chapter was shaping up. I had about come to the conclusion that he wasn't writing a book at all, that it was all a monstrous put-on, when one day along came the manuscript. It wasn't bad, either, and as I recall we asked him to do some revisions and send it back. I imagine he'll have the revisions done in about five years.

Having seen a lot of work by aspiring writers while I was at the agency, I can tell you that most of them are either ludicrously bad writers or just plain cranks. The classic example of the former, a story which is still talked about at the agency in amazed tones some seven years after it was submitted there, was a science fiction short about a guy who was in some terrible trouble, people were chasing him and trying to kill him, and this went on for 5,000 words until the climax. He was trapped, hanging by his fingers from a bridge hundreds of feet over a rocky gorge, and his pursuers were stamping on his fingers to make him fall. Then the author wrote, "Oh, I forgot to mention that he had wings. Spreading his wings, he flew away and..."

There probably isn't any classic example of a crank – each is amazing and/or appalling in his own way – but the one who stands out in my memory is the man who wrote in to say that he'd done an article telling what had happened when a Negro family had bought a house in his neighborhood. He mentioned stone-throwing, burnt crosses, threatening letters, mobs beating up the Negro children, and a few other things. "They finally had to move out," he wrote, "which proves how effective these methods are. I would like to see my article in print so that white Americans across the nation can be told how cooperation and neighborhood planning can protect our homes against BLACK encroachment."

Scott sent that letter out to me with a note that said (and this is a direct quote), "Please tell this animal that we don't see a market for it."

Between the nuts and the incompetents there *were* a number of new writers who came up with good manuscripts, and it was always a pleasure to see them. I know that a lot of times I'd work particularly hard to sell a script by a beginner. I did sell a good number of them, too – books to Macmillan, Harper, Putnam, and others, stories and articles to magazines in any number of fields.

To get back to nuts, though, one of the ones I had to deal with from time to time was one Pete Graham, who was wont to call me during office hours for various reasons. If it was a busy day and I didn't want it to be too obvious that I was just talking with a friend I'd intersperse our conversation with things like, "*No, no, at least two hundred dollars!*" or "*Well, I can't help it, he says you've got to cut thirty thousand words out of the middle.*"

One day right at closing time, when all the typewriters in the office had been shut off and people were putting on coats and preparing to go home, the phone rang and the switchboard operator told me, "Ray Bradbury's on line 01, for you."

Heads swiveled around all over the office. I picked up my desk phone and said hello.

"Hello," said Pete. "I've written this seven-hundred-word novel, it's all about a little boy with a jack-o'-lantern in Kansas, and I wonder if you'd –"

"*You crazy asshole!*" I yelled, and all around me jaws gaped open.

When I resigned from the agency in March 1964, it wasn't because I didn't like the job. The real reason was quite simply that the field I'm most interested in is editing, not agenting, and Don Wollheim offered me an editorship at Ace Books. So that's where I'm working now, primarily on the science fiction books there. If you'll wait about a year or so, maybe I'll write an article all about what money-hungry, argumentative, unreasonable s.o.b.'s agents are.

MAN'S BEST FRIEND*



*** PICK ONE**

AFTERWORD: 1967

It's been over *three* years since I wrote the foregoing article, but somehow I never got around to writing the promised sequel about the vileness of literary agents. The reason is not laziness: actually, it's just that

agents aren't vile or unreasonable at all, so there was no article to write.

I really did half-expect to find that, from the viewpoint of an editorial chair, agents such as Scott Meredith would look like antagonists. On the contrary, though, I've found that agents are usually a pleasure to deal with; they may fight you for more money or better contract terms or whatever, but they do it politely and sensibly, whereas when an editor deals directly with an author he often runs into temper, easily wounded egos, and a near-total lack of knowledge of the realities of publishing.

Seeing the agenting business from an editor's position has given me some perspective on it that's been surprising. An agent really *is* in a better position to argue with an editor than would be the author himself. For one thing, there's the matter of experience: the agent usually knows the kind of price a type of novel or short story or article can command at the various markets open to it, and he knows the approximate terms he can get from different publishers. Thus, when an editor wants to buy something from him, he isn't apt to haggle for an unrealistic price or preposterous contract terms. He *will* argue when the terms offered are below what he feels he can get for his client, but seldom are his demands really exorbitant. (Except in some high-powered negotiations like those for Christopher's *No Blade of Grass*, where the exorbitant demand is just a means of settling on a good compromise.)

The agent's other prime value is his lack of strong personal involvement with a manuscript. If a story gets rejected five times in a row, many unagented authors will lose confidence in it and throw it into a drawer; not so with the agent, whose ego isn't damaged by the rejections – he'll just keep on submitting it until it sells, or until doomsday, whichever is first. Conversely, if an author turns in a script that's really substandard, the agent is usually impartial enough to be able to recognize that fact and will often talk the author into withholding the story from submission in order to avoid a loss of confidence from editors seeing an inept job from him.

No agent is perfect, of course, just as no editor and no author is. But by and large I think that agents like Scott Meredith, Bob Mills, Lurton Blassingame, Henry Morrison, Ted Carnell, Virginia Kidd, and others who are prominent in the science fiction field do a lot to earn their commissions. They're the unsung middlemen around whom the publishing business often revolves.

So much for that expose. But buy me a drink sometime and maybe I'll

tell you the real dirt about us editors.



Jeff Wanshel Called Me on the Phone the Other Night

Here's a final piece from *Lighthouse*, which reports just about verbatim the conversation concerned. Over the years I've had a lot of phone calls from ex-fans who check in now and then to keep in touch, and the conversations are sometimes a lot more bizarre than was this. I remember in particular the ex-fan who called me in the late '60s and told me he'd been doing acid from time to time:

"I was vacationing on a Caribbean island and I decided to drop a tab and go down to the beach to watch the sun come up. So I did, and I was sitting there on the sand in a lotus; everything was peaceful and the sky started getting lighter and lighter and lighter, but I didn't see the sun rising. Finally I figured out that I was sitting on the west shore of the island."

This earlier conversation was originally published in *Lighthouse* number 12, February 1965.

Yes he did, actually and literally. This wasn't as much of a shock to me as you might imagine, since ex-fan Jeff Wanshel has called me on the phone several times since he disappeared from fannish ken a few years ago. He always says, "What's new in fandom?" and I tell him, and he goes away apparently resolved to have nothing more to do with fandom, for nobody hears from him again until the next time he calls me.

Conversations with Jeff usually start out with me asking brightly, "When's the next issue of *Fanfaronade* coming out?" I ask this not only because *Fanfaronade* was a fine fanzine, but also because I was to be a co-editor of its next issue. This started back in 1961, when *Void* had four co-editors, Steve Stiles and Alan J. Lewis were co-editing *Sam*, the Lupoffs were gathering a stable of contributing editors, art editors and such for *Xero*, Pete Graham and I were co-editing *Lighthouse*, etc. Jeff thought he ought to get in step with fannish destiny, and decided to have a guest co-editor each issue; I was to be the first, and I even wrote an editorial for him. (It was about a snowball fight among Andy Main, Andy Reiss, Ted and Sylvia White, Carol and me during the first snow of the winter of 1961-62, so it may be a bit

dated by now.)

Usually Jeff answers my question by saying earnestly, “Well, actually it shouldn’t be too long now. I have most of it on stencil, and I think I’ll finish it up soon. It’s got all sorts of great...”

But this time he just laughed.

“What’s been happening in fandom lately?” he asked, changing the subject.

So I told him about the Pacificon and the Boondoggle and about all the people who’ve been married lately.

“Les Gerber?” he said. “But... but...”

“Andy Main, too,” I said.

“*Andy Main*? But isn’t he a bit young to get married?”

I reflected briefly that this was an odd question to come from Jeff Wanshel, fandom’s boy-genius, but then my mind clicked into focus and I realized that had been a while back.

“Andy’s twenty-one now,” I said, and Jeff paused while his mind too clicked into focus.

“So what have *you* been doing?” I asked him.

“Oh, nothing much...” he said vaguely. Then he added, “Actually, that’s not true – a lot’s happened to me. Like for instance I got my nose smashed in a fight.”

“A fight?” I said. “What was it about?”

“Oh, it was about a sandwich?”

“A *sandwich*?” I paused, and made scratching noises as though I were writing all this down. “Jeff Wanshel called me on the phone the other night and told me he’d had his nose smashed in a fight over a sandwich.”

“You’re not going to write an editorial about this, are you?” he asked.

“Of course. Fandom is panting for news of its favorite son, Jeff Wanshel. What else is new with you?”

“Well,” he said, “I was elected president of my senior class in high school and now I’m going to college.”

“What are you majoring in?”

“Oh, I don’t know yet. Maybe it’ll be English or something. I’ve been writing, and I’ve taken up painting too – quote abstract expressionism unquote.”

“In other words, you’ve become an arty feller.”

“Yes. Also, I’ve come out of the closet,” he said, deadpan.

“Jeff Wanshel called me on the phone the other night and told me he’d come out of the closet,” I said.

“That’s not true, Terry Carr! Don’t print that!”

“Well, it sounded like a good explanation of why you’d quit fandom,” I said.

“Actually, I’m not quite sure how that *did* happen,” he said thoughtfully. “I just sort of drifted away, and all of a sudden I realized that all I was getting in the mail were copies of *Fanac* and announcements of Lunacons, and I realized I wasn’t a fan anymore.” He paused. “Anyway, I’d become all social and everything, and I was going out with girls a lot, so I didn’t have time for fandom. Besides, who can write chitter-chatter about his sex life?”

“Oh, I don’t know,” I mused. “You could have given it a whirl.” He didn’t reply to that, so I went on, “Are you planning on a triumphal re-entry into fandom soon, now that you’ve given up girls and come out of the closet?”

“You bastard,” said Jeff Wanshel. After a moment, he said, “Actually, of course, I’m always planning on a triumphal re-entry into fandom, but somehow I never get around to it. So I thought I’d call you up and you’d get me –” He paused. “I was going to say ‘excited’, but I know how you’d interpret *that*.”

“You meant I might inspire you,” I said innocently.

“Yes. But never mind – if you write that editorial I won’t be able to re-enter fandom. They’d throw me out of conventions and everything. Anyway, tell me, are you still working for Ace, and are you still the Young Hope of Science Fiction?”

“Well, I’m still working for Ace, anyway.”

“How about Ted White? Is he working? – Oh yes, he’s assistant editor for *F&SF*. God, it seems like all the fans I knew in the Village have moved away to Brooklyn, and they’re either married, working, or gay.”

“Well, that’s the way of the world,” I said. “You can’t stop progress.”

“I guess not. Anyway, look, I’ve got to hang up – I’m at a wild party in the Village, and the cutest boy just walked in...”

“Jeff had to hang up, because the cutest boy...”

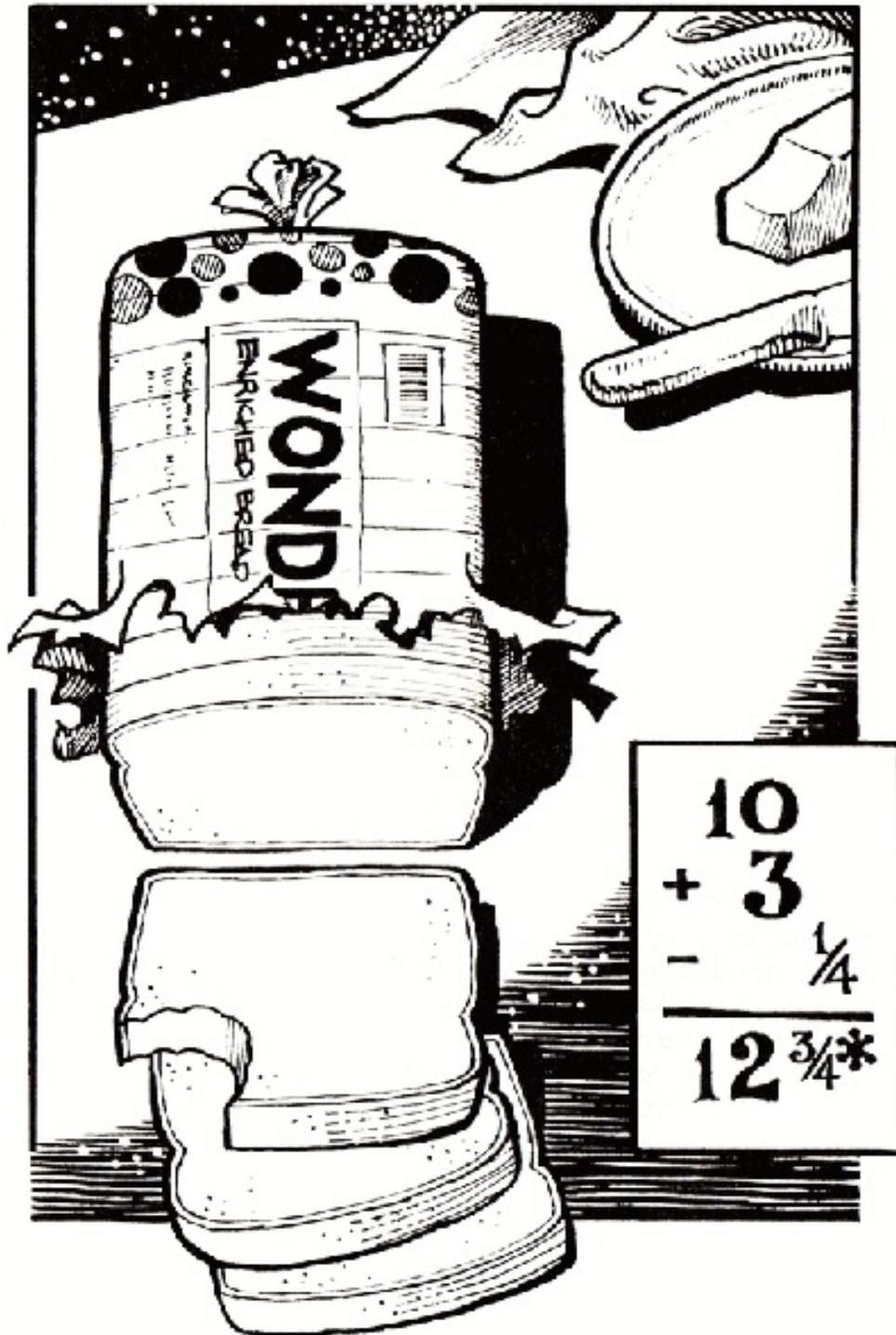
“*Don’t print that!* I’m only joking.”

“Don’t you feel you have to explain anything to me,” I said reassuringly. Then we hung up, and Carol said, “Who was that?”

“That was Jeff Wanshel,” I said. “He called up to tell me he hadn’t come

out of the closet.”

CENSUS of WONDER



*not counting the heels

Census of Wonder

This is a piece that I wrote at white heat, first draft on stencil, for FAPA. It had no title when it first appeared in *Diaspar* number 11, November 1968; Dick Bergeron picked it up for *Warhoon* and made it the first installment of my column “the fannish i”; Ted White reprinted it under the title “A Modest Manifesto” as the Guest Editorial in *Fantastic* for October 1969.

Whatever it was, it expressed my true feelings at the time I wrote it. My predictions didn’t prove true in subsequent history – I didn’t foresee the reactions of the ’70s and ’80s – but the piece remains as probably the best statement of things in fanzines of the period from which it came, and that’s why I choose to reprint it now. Never mind what’s happened since I wrote this; it represents what a lot of us thought and felt then.

“I’m leavin’ here this morning
with a smile upon my face
I’m beginning to think there’s
hope for the human race.”

– Nillson

A fascinating thing is happening in fandom these days. It’s also happening in science fiction itself, and in the great World Out There. Primarily it’s happening Out There, really, but that science fiction people should be not only responsive to mundane movements but in some ways in the forefront of them is a source of surprise and hope for me.

There’s this cultural revolution taking place right before our eyes, and I say honestly that nothing has so jogged my sense of wonder in many years. I’m not talking solely of hippies and pot and love power or lack of same, though they’re all in there too; I’m not talking about the New Wave as such, either. (As a matter of fact, I think “the New Wave” is already an outmoded concept, as I hope to get around to explaining a bit later.) All these things are part of the revolution, together with Marshall McLuhan and the black revolution and *Laugh-In* and Eugene McCarthy and the Baycon. Student power. Vietnam.

A random list of “In” phenomena and controversies? No, not quite. For the first time in a long while I believe I see truly hopeful signs for people the world over (if we have any luck at all continuing to stave off the bomb). Because this time it isn’t just politicians making promises; this time it isn’t just disgusted societal dropouts writing bitter polemics in verse and prose because not enough people agree with them to make political or social action practical; this time there’s a tremendous and growing body of opinion in favor of change in this country, and the revolution is gaining momentum. It’s the kids, the 17-year-olds who’ll be voting in the next Presidential election: for once they’re going to shape the future, rather than being shaped by it.

Look at the *Smothers Brother Comedy Hour*. Pretty standard format, with songs and jokes and skits and the union-required dance numbers, and at the end of the hour the cast stands and waves while the credits roll in front of them. But notice that several of them are holding up two fingers in a “V” sign. If you don’t know what that means, ask the cleancut honor student next door; *he* knows.

Today in the mail I got a fanzine that was as bad a crudzine as any I’ve seen since the great days of *Thurban 1* and *Looking Backward*. It was ineptly typed, crudely written, badly reproduced, with execrable artwork shakily stenciled and book reviews that were often just plot summaries and a story of which I had only to read three random lines to know there was no need to read more. But: the editor, the contributors, the lettercol hacks were at least talking about the right subjects for once. I was astounded; not only were they praising Delany and Lafferty and Zelazny and putting down John J. Pierce and Sam Moskowitz, but there were filler quotes from Dick Gregory and Bob Dylan and Archibald MacLeish, and in the middle of the book reviews was a review of Yevtushenko’s new book of poems. This from a group of young fans probably about fourteen or fifteen years old.

They didn’t understand it all, they wrote some silly and naive things, but give them a few years, Meyer.

There was a discussion of the “New Wave” at the Milford Sf Writers’ Conference last summer, and one of the main points raised was that the new writers mostly came to fiction writing by way of poetry. But poetry is dead, you say; no one has paid attention to it outside college classes since the twenties, or at best since Dylan Thomas died. Wrong. Poetry has snuck back into popular culture disguised as song lyrics: Donovan, Bob Dylan, Lennon-McCartney, John Phillips, Marty Balin, Paul Simon, Janis Ian, Brian Wilson,

Leonard Cohen... they're just a few of the people on the rock-pop scene who are mixing poetry and melody, raising rock from the oop-shoop atrocities and pop from the depths of moon and June. The kids are listening to the words today, not just the beat, and the words are giving them a new kind of consciousness, a poet's consciousness.

Fancy words, but I don't mean anything fancy by them. That's just the point: poetry is no longer fancy; it's commonplace. Poetry is, if you will, a non-linear medium as opposed to the point-by-point development we're used to in most fiction, science fiction or mainstream. And this *is* a post-McLuhan world, where the techniques of television commercials are among the most sophisticated forms of communication ever developed. *Laugh-In* exploited a number of these techniques, with a pair of stand-up comics about as talented as Martin & Lewis and a flock of gags straight out of vaudeville, and suddenly it's the hottest television show in years. Richard Lester showed us in *A Hard Day's Night* that collage scenes can add a new dimension to the movie screen, and half the directors in the world, including Lester himself, have been copying the idea ever since, with mixed but interesting results.

Non-linearity is an approach you wouldn't expect to see flourishing in science fiction, a form of fiction until recently measured primarily by its rigorous attention to logic, which is linear as hell. But so much of the most popular art today ignores logic – it's a-logical – that it's clear the forces spotted by McLuhan are at work here too.

This can go too far, I believe. Chip Delany told me last week, "What most intelligent people like about science fiction is invention, ideas, new juxtapositions, new viewpoints. What they don't care about at all is plot." I don't believe this for a moment, but I do agree that the emphasis has shifted away from simple story-values – and I mean on the part of the readers as well as the writers. *The Einstein Intersection's* plot is rudimentary, but it has so many other things going for it that this doesn't matter. And is anyone going to tell me he voted for *Lord of Light* for the Hugo because of its plot? (*LoL* does have a fine, and rather complicated, plot – but how many of you were concerned enough with it to work it all out? Was it, therefore, of prime importance?)

What's happening outside our little world of sf and fandom is obviously having a profound effect on the microcosm. The Baycon? Carol came away with these impressions:

The convention hotel is a sprawling, gothic semi-circle. The

oxygen inside is inadequate and you must thread your way to the emergency room, the square, stapled-on patio, to breathe. Here it is not the same. You look up into the night and find a lighted attic window, the outlines of a madwoman holding a candle. The fire exits are laundry chutes, you were told; you don't want to think where they end. The corridors are wide and winding. They have absorbed every known type of halitosis and breathe it back at you while you wait for the elevator that never comes. The rooms have a simple push-button lock and outside Berkeley simmers with "incidents" that threaten to spread to the parking lot, the lobby, the incense-clouded light show. A knock at the door brings silence inside. Maybe it's only a *Star Trek* fan wanting to get in. The coffee shop is a prop, the waiting room to somewhere else. Somewhere else is a huge expanse of tables supervised by waitresses who order the food from the Leamington. (Is that where the laundry chute ends?) Nothing is real. Joe Frap from IBM turns up high in love beads, and somebody's grandmother is freaking out in the pay toilet. The revolution is happening now, inside and outside. Meanwhile, back where the action is supposed to be, the Scotch and bourbon flow at the usual rate and the people are talking shop while all the shops are boarded up and the hotel radio pipes in acid rock from nine to two a.m. The costume ball is redundant. "What's new?" is not an idle question.

That's a good capsule commentary, though I'm sure a lot of fans and pros won't recognize the con *they* were at in its descriptions. Not surprising: it was an amazingly fragmented convention – not just because the hotel was sprawling, or because so many attendees had to find rooms at outside hotels like the Leamington, but because there were so many different types of people there it was a potpourri of conventions. As in years past, it splintered off into an sf convention, a fannish con, a Burroughs dum-dum, a comicscon, a gaggle of monster fans and a babble of Star Trekkers; this time, though, add the generation gap. A lot of hippies came over from the Haight-Ashbury or up from Telegraph Avenue, but these weren't outsiders; the hippies are very turned on to science fiction these days. (They are even going through some of the growing pains regular sf fandom has to endure: water-brotherhoods à la Heinlein, even Scientology. I had a flash-fantasy about hippie first, second, even seventh fandoms, but I resolutely shoved it aside as too grotesque.)

Conversely, a surprising number of the newer, younger sf readers are turned on to hippie phenomena. When Harry Harrison, seconding Columbus's bid for the '69 worldcon, asked the audience what kind of music they'd want at the costume ball, the response was an overwhelming "Rock!" And though it would be impossible to judge how many of the fans – and pros – were turned on to other things at the con, I do know that a criminology major at Cal dropped by the con to go out to dinner with his brother and said, "I was in the lobby for five minutes and I saw at least four narcotics agents I know by sight." There were no arrests, however, nor even raids that I heard of.

Yes, a lot of generation gap. The newer fans and the hippies were sometimes indistinguishable; the First Fandomites must have been appalled. Norman Spinrad, Roger Zelazny, Harlan Ellison were surrounded by the young fans; the older fans seemed to be flocking to Larry Niven and hailing him as the second coming of E.E. Smith. The Baycon was so fragmented in these various ways that it seemed like a collage-con. And maybe it was: maybe the Baycon was the first of a new kind of sf convention, the post-McLuhan convention.

I know that one of the standard lines of the con was "Isn't this a *weird* convention?" Nobody could quite seem to put a finger on the theme of the con, the running set of topics and preoccupations that would characterize it in our memories later. (As, for instance, the NYCon3 was the "New Wave" convention, and the '68 Lunacon was where everybody argued about *2001*.) This one wasn't unified in that way, so it seemed strange. Yet despite numerous gripes about the hotel, the banquet, the lack of air conditioning, etc., when it was all over the feeling seemed to be unanimous that it had been a fine, fine con, and the conreports I've seen so far seem to bear this out. Maybe (just maybe – I'm only speculating) this is another sign that sf fans no longer feel the need for a totally ordered universe, a logical, linear environment.

McLuhan again: In the tight little island that used to be our in-group, patterns could be perceived and defined; in the global village that has now stretched its borders to include our territory, phenomena pile on top of one another and must be understood like a collage.

I'm not in favor of all this, either the fannish and sfnal aspects or those of the world around us. As a white man, I'm threatened by the black revolution even though I'm in favor of most of its goals; the probabilities are that I'm going to have to give up some of the more gracious aspects of living

I've worked for as that revolution progresses. I don't think I'll begrudge giving up my fair share to repay the dues my father and his father never paid, but the nature of revolutions is that many people get hurt, lose more than their "share". I also hold a little corner of my heart aloof from the very, very nice talking and writing and singing about Love that we hear from the flower children. I think the hippies' emphasis on love is fine, perhaps beautiful; but it's too often naive. I know they believe love is the answer, I know they want to love everyone and have everyone love everyone – but *why* do they believe it, *why* do they so desperately want it? The hippie phenomenon is a middle-class one: kids from well-to-do homes get sick of the hypocrisy and materialistic values, so they drop out, leave home, and try a new kind of life. But what was the underlying emotion they had when they made this decision? If hate is mixed in there, what better psychological prop than a commitment to love? When that gentle kid in the Village hands you a flower next spring, don't doubt that it represents love – but remember the fertilizer that grew it. And don't be too surprised if, on a day when he just can't make it, he dumps the fertilizer in your hand instead.

Norman Spinrad has written a very powerful novelet about just this; it'll be in the next *Orbit*. It's about an acid-rock group that grooves behind the H-bomb. It's well worth reading – and after you've read it, you might take a look at the jacket for the latest (as of Nov. 2, '68) Jefferson Airplane album, *Crown of Creation*. It shows the group superimposed inside a beautiful color photo of a mushroom cloud. Crown of creation?

As for the effects of the cultural revolution inside science fiction, I don't like the idea that plots are irrelevant, as the non-linearists would have it. I happen to like a well-plotted story – it's not the only kind of story I can appreciate, but it's one of them. Fortunately, of course, the changes that are upon us won't be universal; we may have a swing away from pure storytelling in favor of other techniques of construction, but I don't believe that even at the height of the reaction there will be a serious lack of people interested in writing, publishing, and reading plots.

I think I see some evidence of post-McLuhan attitudes in fanzine publishing already and I don't always like them. There was a fanzine I got a month or two ago, Bill Kunkel's *Genook*, whose editorial was almost a model of non-linear development: page after page of commentary on this and that subject, usually to do with rock or politics or fans, but with no unifying theme and frequent little trip-outs, flash-fantasy shticks of imaginary

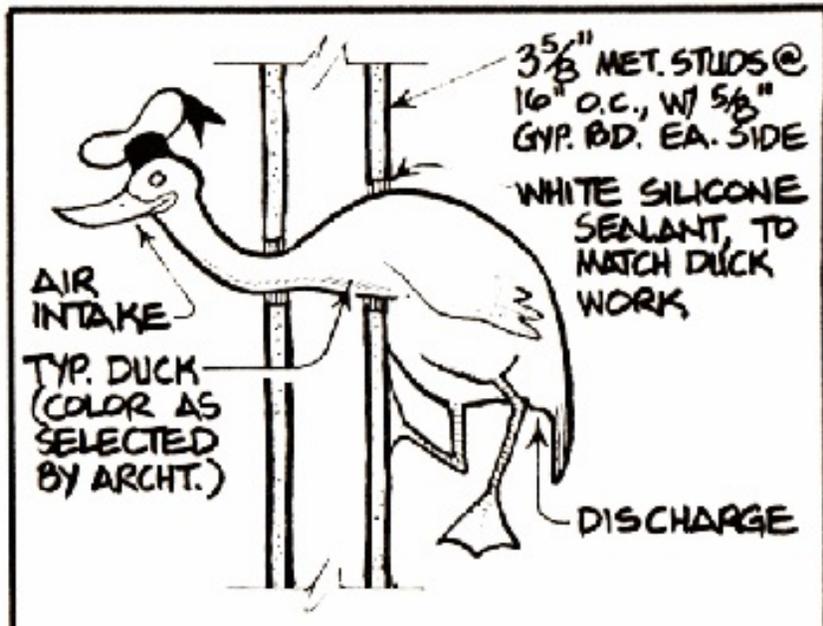
conversations brought to mind by the preceding topics. It was a mixed bag, but on the whole I thought it was one of the best fanzine editorials I've read in years. Still: the guy was very much on top of what he was doing; he was *good*. I doubt many fans could handle that form, and I suspect that a bad editorial of that type would just read like an interminable Betty Kujawa letter. (Betty Kujawa is a nice person. She writes godawful letters, though.) For that matter, if we get a real spate of collage-type fanzines, might we not find ourselves faced with a mailboxful of *Dynatrons* every day? Marshall McLuhan, what're you doin'?

But enough of negativism. It's easy to spot the flaws and excesses in a new movement, particularly one so amorphous as this one during its beginnings. My caveats notwithstanding, I'm excited by the new vistas opening up before us. The less rigid consciousness of our mixed-media world, the greater commitments demanded by the issues that are producing violence and misery in our country, the long, *long* overdue challenging of our accepted values... all these and more are changing our world right now. They are having a vastly more profound effect on the world than space flight, our great dream for the past several decades, is likely to have for a century. It's possible that we wouldn't be able to recognize the world of 1988 if we were transported there now; the revolution has that much potential.

Oh, the "New Wave"? I said earlier that I think it's an outmoded concept already; what did I mean? Simply that the "New Wave", as best it could be defined by those either in favor or opposed to it, was a matter of experimental styles and constructions, sometimes of attempts at new subjects. But that's all superficial, symptomatic. What's happening now, what the "New Wave" began, is a new consciousness, more flexible attitudes, a realization that science fiction has come alive again as a possible contributing force to changing the future. I think a lot of us lost that hope when sf's warnings about the Bomb failed to stop anything and when our pet, space flight, became a political propaganda tool, bread and circuses. It seemed for a while that we were on the wrong track, and maybe we were; at any rate, when sf's writers and readers show (as we are showing) that we're in tune with the very real and very important changes that are reshaping our environment and us, then it seems to me our old sense of lasting excitement must come back. I know it has for me.

And you know? – it feels exactly like the sense of wonder.

PRO* HUMOR



TYPICAL DUCK PENETRATION

AT PARTITION TYPE 'A'

NOTES:

1. CUT TO FIT, BEND TO SHAPE, & PAINT TO MATCH IN WORKMANLIKE MANNER.
2. DO NOT "GOOSE" DUCK AFTER INSTALLING.
3. FEATHERS MUST BE KEPT WET OR TREATED SO AS NOT TO EXCEED SMOKE GENERATION OF 50 OR FLAME SPREAD RATING OF 25.
4. SECURE NORTH & SOUTH WINGS TO PREVENT EXCESSIVE FLAPPING.
5. INSTALLATION TO COMPLY WITH U.L. # 678 & N.F.P.A. 216-843-9200 (REVISION 23).

* PRO ARCHITECTS, THAT IS (SUCH AS THE ILLUSTRATOR OF THIS BOOK)

Jack Gaughan: The Pro

I didn't write much for fandom in the late 1960s; I was too busy working for Ace Books (where I was editing the original Ace SF Specials, among lots of other things) and moonlighting by writing sf stories like "The Dance of the Changer and the Three". But in 1969, Jack Gaughan was chosen as the Professional Guest of Honor at the St. Louis world convention and Ray Fisher asked me to write a piece about him for the program book. I was delighted to do it, because I'd been working with Jack a lot at Ace and we'd become friends.

Incidentally, despite what I said about Pro artists not winning awards, Jack won the Hugo that year as Best Professional Artist.

When I was very young I used to get extremely puzzled sometimes about the attitudes editors had toward some artists. I mean, here would be this artist, X, whose work was beautiful, imaginative, meticulously done, visually and conceptually exciting, and I'd ask, "Why don't you have X do more stuff for you?" and the editor would shake his head and mutter something about deadlines, or temperament, or his ulcer.

And a day or two later I'd pick up a copy of this editor's magazine and I'd find a cover that was... well, the spaceship was recognizable as a spaceship and the humans were anthropomorphic, and I guess it didn't misrepresent the story it illustrated or give away an O. Henry ending or anything. But it didn't do anything to or for me; it was just sort of there. Needless to say, it wasn't by X; it was by somebody who'd done nine out of the ten last covers for that company, and somehow I'd never even noticed his name.

"Oh Christ," I'd moan, "why do they bother with these nothing covers? Why don't they have all the covers done by X?"

Later on, when I became wise in the ways of the world, I found out the answer to that. X was a groovy artist, all right – when he was in the mood, and when you could get hold of him on the phone, and when you didn't have to worry about when he turned in his painting. Which is to say, he wasn't reliable, so publishers didn't rely on him. When he did his thing it was lovely, but it wasn't according to schedule.

There's an author, a pretty good one, who writes for me, and whenever I call him about a deadline for one of his books he says, "Do you want it good, or do you want it Monday?"

The same thing happens with some artists – some of the very, very best ones.

Which is why they don't get more assignments – for covers, interior drawings, or whatever. They're not pros; they're really hobbyists, doing their drawings for themselves and then selling them after the fact.

There's nothing wrong with being a hobbyist, of course; in fact, there's a lot of *right* with it. But publishing science fiction books and magazines isn't a hobby, so it has to be done by the pro rules, which include regular, relentless deadlines. A lot of times, if it isn't there by Monday, it doesn't matter if it's good or not: somebody else's work that was handy and bearable had to be slipped into its spot and everything sent off to the printer.

The guy who can turn in work that's printable and on time, every time, is what's called a Pro, and he's blessed by every editor in the business. He probably doesn't win awards or sell more copies for you, but he's there to keep the customers in the auditorium until the temperamental star shows up, late as usual.

By and large, those are the two kinds of people who produce the material you see in the sf books and magazines: the Pros, and the Stars.

But now and then God decides that editors aren't such wretches that they should have to undergo unalloyed torment and anxiety every week and every month of their lives (they'll get enough Hell after they die), so He sends them a gift: a Star who is also a Pro. Maybe it should be called a miracle, but I don't believe in miracles. But come to think of it, I'm not sure I believe in Jack Gaughan, either.

Jack Gaughan is one of those... *phenomena*... who very occasionally show up on editors' doorsteps. If you look very carefully at his forehead, you'll see that it says there in the tiniest of calligraphy, *God is not dead. He asked me to tell you.* (If you look there and don't see this message, maybe it's because only editors and art directors can read it.)

Jack Gaughan is one hell of a good artist. Everybody has his own favorite Gaughan drawings and paintings: maybe the drawings he did for Jack Vance's *The Dragon Masters*, or for Fritz Leiber's *A Specter is Haunting Texas*, or the covers for *The Ghosts of Manacle* by Charles Finney (Pyramid), or *King of the World's Edge* (Ace), or the "muck-man" cover he

did for *Galaxy* several years ago. (That's one of Jack's own favorites, for personal reasons. You see, Jack's always had this urge to do a good old-fashioned science fiction cover where the alien monster is carrying off the beautiful heroine, but when you work for high-class magazines like *Galaxy* you don't get much chance of that. "You'll Never See It in *Galaxy*", after all. But one day lo! along came this manuscript for which he was to do a cover, and there was this monster who carried off this girl through the swamp, see, and you *know* what scene Jack painted. If you see him smiling for no apparent reason – if there's no drink in his hand, for instance – it may be that he's thinking about that.)

There are reasons why Jack is so good, of course. Sure, he went to art school, and he was a personal protégé of Hannes Bok, and he's studied the classic painters, engravers, and illustrators and can shoot the jargon all night if you want. But there is more: he loves doing art, and he does it all the time. He carries a big thick sketchbook everywhere he goes, and he uses it. He sketches people on the subway, scenes by the river, his wife Phoebe looking pensively out a window. Or he writes notes to himself: theories about art and life, techniques to try, effects to aim for. That's why a Jack Gaughan drawing done in July 1969 probably doesn't look too much like one done in May; he's been thinking and experimenting and changing bit by bit every day. When I last looked through one of his sketchbooks-in-progress, it was No. 78 or so; but that was a couple of years ago, before he moved into the country, so he's probably up past 100 by now.

Jack cares about what he does. He researches his work – his studio walls are lined not only with art books, but with illustrated references of all types: source books on astronomy, animal anatomy, fashions through history, machinery, electronics, you name it. He's so conscientious that he even reads the stories he illustrates, every single one of them. You might be surprised how many big sf artists don't; they just read a plot synopsis, or the opening chapter, or maybe just fake it all the way, basing their drawings on a title and a guess. Not Jack – he reads the stuff to get the *feeling* of a story, and he puts all his art and craft into making a representation of that story that will complement and compliment it.

That's why Jack is a Star.

As I said, we all have our own favorite Gaughans; and no matter what yours is, it's a cinch that you remember it with special fondness. You probably take out that book or magazine every now and then, just to look at

his art for a while.

And there's one thing more that's a cinch about Jack Gaughan paintings and drawings: every one of them was turned in on time, and nobody got an ulcer worrying about whether or not the art would be there when the deadline was. He makes it good *and* gets it in on Monday.

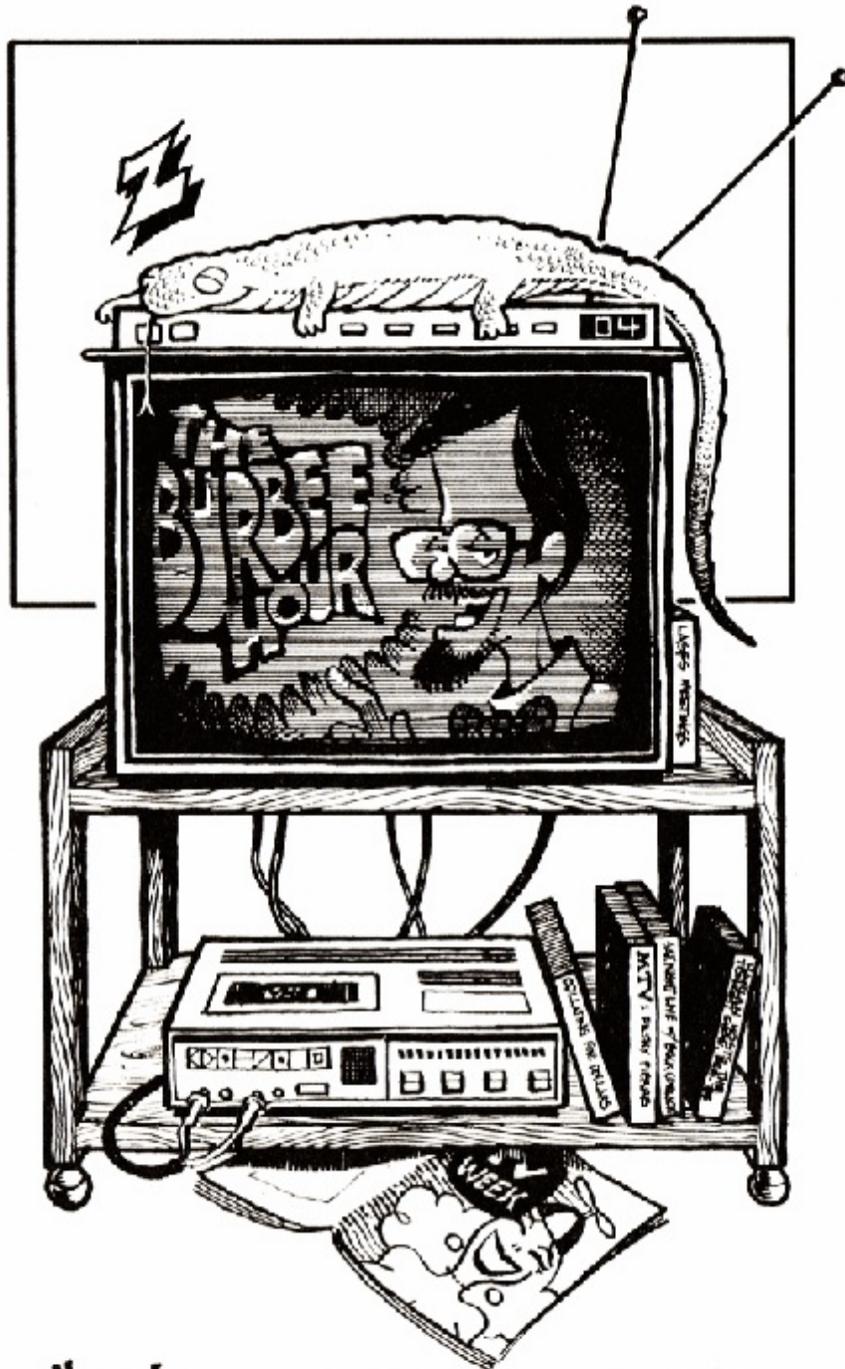
Because Jack is a Star who is also a Pro.

I thought I'd tell you all this because Jack is, after all, the Pro Guest of Honor at this convention, and if you should happen to run into him at some party where he's decided to, ah, sing... well, I wouldn't want you to think he's being honored for that.

No; it's because Jack Gaughan is a Star. And a Pro. And, by the way, a Good Man.

In fact, if you want to know the truth about *my* favorite Gaughan, I'll tell you. It's him. Himself. *Jack Gaughan*.

When he stands up at the banquet as the Pro Guest of Honor, clap like mad. I'm going to.



**"WE'LL BE BACK FOR MORE FUN
WITH BURB & HIS GUESTS, BUT
FIRST, THIS IMPORTANT MESSAGE..."**

the fannish i

Dick Bergeron reprinted from my FAPAZine the piece I now call “Census of Wonder” as the first installment of a column titled “the fannish i” in *Warhoon* number 26, so when he was gathering material for the next issue Dick asked me for another column. I wrote the following three-part piece for *Warhoon* number 27, September 1970, hoping that the parts would blend into a whole that would explain why I hadn’t felt the fannish call for several years. As it happened, the next issue of *Warhoon* – the Willis issue – wasn’t completed till nearly ten years later, and that didn’t include letters, so I had little idea of how my column had been received by the readers. However, Ted White mentioned somewhere that he hadn’t gotten around to reading *Wrhn* 27 till years later and that when he read my column he felt it still applied to the state of fandom in 1975 or whenever it was. Fortunately, there have been great changes in fan-publishing in recent years.

I Had a Dream

What a peculiar dream it was. I dreamed we were all on television.

In my dream it seemed I was watching the tube, and without any noticeable translation the mundane world of TV as we know it was transformed into the phantasmagorical world of fandom.

It must have been during the 11:00 o’clock news. Somehow, before I knew it, the weather forecaster had turned into Andy Porter, who grinned at the camera and said, “Hey, guess what the humidity’s going to be tomorrow.”

I sat bolt upright. I rubbed my eyes. I slept on.

Charlie Brown came on the screen, sitting behind a newsman’s desk and looking grave. “Today’s body-count from the thoroughways between New York and Boston...” he began, but I shuddered and switched channels.

And there was Dick Geis doing a talk-show, and lined up as guests next to him were Piers Anthony, Harry Harrison, and Harlan Ellison. “I understand you’re in town to plug your latest novel,” Dick said to Piers, and instantly I switched away.

On the next channel Buck Coulson was interviewing Harry Harrison, Piers Anthony, and Harlan Ellison. He said to Harlan, “I understand you’re in

town to plug your new feud,” and hurriedly I punched the *OFF* button.

I sat shaking for a while. What was this? Had the science fiction nuts taken over? Had SFWA managed to gain control of the FCC? Or had General Sarnoff and the rest been SMOFs all along?

Curiosity overcame me: I turned the set back on.

It was the *Doris Day Show*. Everything was as God intended it: Doris was cute and wholesome and just a little bit, just nicely kooky. The show was a situation comedy in which such unlikely things happened that it might have been a LASFS meeting. In fact, it *was* a LASFS meeting, and Doris Day had disappeared; Bjo was now the star of the show. The funny thing was, the plot didn't seem to change.

“Far out,” I murmured and changed channels again. Who could say what wonders might lie before me?

On the *Smothers Brothers Show*, I found Greg and Jim Benford introducing Share a Little Tea with Pat Lupoff, who said, “Here's a handy hint for all you freak fans out there: sniff your correction fluid. Go on, just sniff it, breathe it in. Isn't that groovy? Sometimes I spend all day just typing one stencil and making all the typos I can. Wow, sometimes I get a really long word and I can make two or three typos right there; so if you know any groovy long words, why not write in and let me in on them? Meanwhile, peace, and don't forget to come to the rally where we'll all be burning our Heicon membership cards. Victory through vapors.”

Then Leland Sapiro came on and said that in response to enormous public demand he'd consented to run for TAFF, and he started a campaign speech that seemed to be all about the theme of sin and redemption in the lettercolumns of last year's *Science Fiction Review*. I switched away.

I found another talk-show, this one run by David Frost, or was it Eddie Jones, and he was interviewing Liberace, who turned into Forry Ackerman before my eyes. “How would you, in fact, define love?” Frost/Jones asked him, and Forry said, “I remember a day in 1927 when I first found a copy of *Amazing Stories...*”

“Spa fon,” I said in bemusement, and off I went to a different channel. This one had *Laugh-In*, starring... good lord, was that Ted White and me? We were going to a closed-door fan party in someone's sauna, and of course nobody had any clothes on. There was Harriet Kolchak hitting Isaac Asimov over the head with her purse, and there was Sam Moskowitz saying, “I don't mind when the hippie fans say their New Wave stories are psychedelic, but

they're going too far when they claim Doc Smith was a speedfreak." Then over the screen flashed the legend *YOU WILL ENJOY THE HEICON. THAT IS AN ORDER.*

I couldn't take it, not even to see myself doing Dick Martin routines. So I turned the knob, and I was just in time to catch the ending credits for the News Special of the Month: *The Secret World of Richard Bergeron*. Gee, too bad I missed that one.

From there on it was all downhill. Another news program came on, and the news was dull and depressing, just like the stuff you read last week in *Locus*. And to cap it all, on came Harlan, who'd just won his nineteenth Hugo, and just as he was explaining to the crowd that he was donating the trophy to Clarion up leaped John J. Pierce, who shot him right on-camera and was dragged off yelling, "Sic semper novus ordum!"

I sat bolt upright in bed, cold sweat bathing me. And it was many long minutes before I was able to convince myself that it had only been a weird dream, that I was now back safely in the comfortable world of fandom as it really is today.

Where Have All the Flowers Gone?

With this issue of *Warhoon*, fandom has a great fanzine in its midst for the first time in almost two years – since the last issue of *Warhoon*, in fact.

I suppose a lot of people haven't really noticed, but fanzine fandom is in a pretty bad way these days. When fanzines like *Beabohema* and *Locus* are considered at the top of the field, and Charlie Brown and Piers Anthony get nominated as best fan writer of the year, then I find myself picking out the *TV Guide* from the day's mail before I investigate the mimeographed envelopes.

Fanzine fandom, mark me, is turning into a cultural wasteland. It's appalling. Once we had faneds whose personas colored every page they published; now we get people who can write a year's worth of editorials and remain faceless shadows. (Quick, tell me what Frank Lunney's like.) Once upon a time, you see, there were people in fandom who were writers. I don't mean people who made their money turning out stories for *If* or Lancer Books, but real writers, people who could communicate feelings, ideas and experiences with words on paper. Most of these people were fans, not pros, and they were perfectly happy to be fans-not-pros. They weren't sf groupies whose ego ideals were Dean R. Koontz or Jack Wodhams.

It may sound a bit weird to hear me creebing about how much attention fan-publishers pay to science fiction, considering that I'm an occasional sf

writer who likes to see comments on his stories, and a working editor who clips and saves every review of the SF Specials, but I'm thinking now of the things we gave up for all this stfnal discussion. We gave up Norm Clarke writing about the funny things in a jazzman's life; we gave up Mal Ashworth's gay, mad legends of Lancaster fandom; we gave up Dean Grennell exchanging unforgivable puns with Walt Willis and Bob Bloch and Chuch Harris; we lost the totally individual comic outlooks of Charles Burbee and Calvin Demmon, and we lost the lovingly engraved essays of Redd Boggs, and Bill Donaho's unlikely anecdotes that were all true, and a hundred more things like them.

There was a time when an unknown fan like Bob Leman could publish a thin fanzine like *The Vinegar Worm*, filled with nothing but his own writings on any subject under the sun, with *no letter column at all*, and despite the fact that he hadn't been asked to contribute to David Gerrold's anthology fans would actually pay attention. Nowadays Creath Thorne comes along with *Ennui* and people say, "Yeah, not bad; hey, did you see what Robert Moore Williams said about Alex Panshin in *SFR*?" *Ennui* doesn't seem to come out anymore.

Fandom as it's constituted today often seems to be a mass of protoplasm flowing thermotropically toward the nearest source of friction between professional writers, yearning for the heat and not really caring whether or not there's light. The ego tripping of someone whose claim to fame is that he sold a story to *Venture* is rushed into print; crotchety third-rate pros from the south write "the truth about" the New York publishing scene and are read diligently; temper and belligerence take precedence over talent, and sometimes I get the feeling John Campbell's editorials would be the most popular thing going if only he'd write about science fiction instead of his personal stereotypes.

People wonder why TAFF doesn't capture fandom's imagination the way it used to. Well, aside from the fact that it's simply an outdated idea to exchange delegates between European and American conventions as though that were a novelty, there's the fact that we used to elect TAFFreps largely because we wanted to read what they'd write about their trips: in a fandom where it isn't particularly fashionable for mere fans to do anything interesting with words, who cares about trip reports?

The whole orientation these days, as I see it, is that science fiction is something vital, visionary, and Pretty Damn Important, and we can show our

perceptiveness by lionizing the golden people who actually produce it. Interview them, review their stories, drop their names. This is a value system that makes fans into sycophants, or at best second-class citizens. In the latest *SF Commentary* Bruce Gillespie complains of bad writing in a story by an ex-fan, and it follows as the night the day that he must add, “Once a fanzine writer, always a fanzine writer?” Oh boy.

Well, science fiction *is* vital, visionary, and important, now and then and to varying degrees. But when seventy-five fanzines a month scramble to review the latest harvest of the newsstands you just know that most of that loving attention has to be going to waste on stories of somewhat limited quality. (Did you know that the *Dictionary of American Slang* reveals the original meaning of “crud” to be “Dried semen, as sticks to the body or clothes after sexual intercourse”?) It would be a different matter if fan critics devoted most of their comments to the best stories, but in a year when Piers Anthony’s *Macroscope* is nominated for the Hugo we have proof positive that too many fans can’t tell the difference between a novel and a kitchen sink.

Today it’s seldom that I can read reviews for either entertainment or insight. Book and magazine reviewing has become the refuge of a mindless fandom, just comments on one story after another, a reflexive spewing out of emotional reactions in the form of sentences, with seldom any connections, extrapolations, or conclusions. I read the reviews of a book to get the consensus of reactions to it, but to get any insight into the book I usually have to read it myself.

It might actually be better for the state of fandom’s own creativity if there weren’t so much really good science fiction being done these days. Back in the dog days of science fiction, the late fifties when Randy Garrett, Bob Silverberg, Harlan Ellison, and a few others wrote so much boilerplate for a living that the pro field clearly didn’t deserve much attention, the fans had to rely on themselves for entertainment, so we had fanzines – great fanzines – like *Oops!* and *Hyphen* and *Grue* and *BEM* and *Discord*. They did talk about science fiction – when there was something worth talking about. Some of Walt Willis’s best fan writing was in his commentaries on John Campbell, and when Redd Boggs chose to review a book his comments were usually better than his subject.

I think the attitude of current sf fans is that science fiction is a continuing story wherein each writer and each book or magazine is another

character or event in the ongoing chronicle. And when this attitude prevails, when a fanzine like *Science Fiction Review* serves its most important function as a checklist of who's mad at whom and why, then the news fanzine comes into its own as a publication read not so much with interest as with concern.

Which makes the task of a newszine publisher a lot easier, as a glance through a file of *Locus* certainly shows. *Locus* is evidently edited on the assumption that the ideal newszine would be produced by a computer, chock-full of facts whose ordering and interpretation are up to the reader. It's a long way from the irrepressibly cavalier attitude Ron Ellik had when he reported the news for us in *Starspinkle*. From the sixth issue: "In the Feb issue of *Horizons*, Harry Warner poses six pages of questions which need answers if his history of fandom (1939-1959) is to rank with Toynbee and Macaulay." From the eighth issue: "Dave Rike totaled his car on the way to the Sierras on 9 March – he took a snow-bound curve too fast, and slid off the road. Beyond being amazed that his car slid off the road, Dave was unmarked by the accident; he rescued his popcorn from the wreck, gave the remains to the wrecking-truck crew that came for it, and went home after looking around the mountains."

None of that is great writing, but it *is* writing, it does communicate the fact that there was a human being rather than a clipping service behind the typewriter. Maybe the reason we have so few fans who come through fanzine print as full-fledged people now is a quasi-religious delusion that fans aren't as "alive" as pros in some mystical sense, which is a little like thinking the audience is less real than the players.

But it's comforting to see that there are still a few people around who recognize fanpublishing as a process of creation rather than plaster-casting. There are fanzines like *Egoboo*, *Nope*, and *Focal Point*, all good fanzines though none of them is a great fanzine; but they have the potential. There was, in an issue of *Granfalloon* a year or two ago, a most beautifully conceived convention report by Ginjer Buchanan that told what happened at the SFCon in the form of a parody of Harlan Ellison's "I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream". There are the fan artists/cartoonists both old and new: George Barr, Tim Kirk, Alicia Austin, Steve Stiles, Doug Lovenstein, and Bill Rotsler. There are seasoned fan writers like Harry Warner, Ted White, and Bob Tucker who've managed to remember that a writer should contribute more to an article than his byline.

And, of course, there's this issue of *Warhoon*. Fandom now has a great fanzine in its midst for the first time in almost two years.

White Rabbit

Carol and I couldn't make it for the whole week of this year's Milford Sf Writers's Conference, but we did drive up Friday night and stay for the festivities through Sunday. The final Saturday night party is traditionally a blast, what with the influx of all sorts of people who couldn't get away during the week. Sometimes, if the Conference has been wearying or even depressing, the party is muted and tentative in its hilarity, but this year the week was reportedly very good, and I believe it, because the party was great.

In particular there was Gardner Dozois, a good young writer with an open face and flowing blond hair, doing his Igor routine. Igor is his alter-ego as Dr. Frankenstein's assistant and he speaks huskily in such phrases as "Igor like that. Ho ho. Make Igor sweat." At one point it got so catching that five people stood in the kitchen discussing literature in Igor-talk. "What think of Nabokov?" "Ho ho! Igor love Nabokov. Vonnegut make Igor sweat too." This sort of thing is heady stuff to experience, believe me.

At 2:30 a.m., while I was having a serious intellectual discussion with A.J. Budrys about why blurb-writing isn't strictly speaking an artform, suddenly here came an entire conga line made up of most of the people at the party, singing and laughing, undulating in one door, across the room and out the other. "How did this happen?" I asked as they passed, and Kate Wilhelm explained in some perplexity, "Damon asked me to rub his back, so I did, and then Gordy started rubbing my back, and here we are."

I shook my head disapprovingly. "What kind of people are you?" I shouted at the passing parade. "Look at you, some of the most respected names in science fiction, writers everyone looks up to for inspiration and leadership, and this is how you act. Noblesse oblige, dammit, noblesse oblige!" But they only chortled the more as they danced by.

Joanna Russ was collecting titles for science fiction books all night. My favorite was *Rogue Molecule*, but there were other goodies like *Gynecologist to the Stars* and *Dangerous Vegetables*. Separately, Norbert Slepian (sf editor at Scribner's) and I were discussing titles for anthologies along the lines of Critics' Choice. Damon wandered into the room just then, so I said, "It could be *My Fifteen Favorite Science Fiction Stories Except for Those by Damon Knight*." "Hey, wait a minute, I protest," Damon protested. "Oh, sorry, Damon," I said. "How about *The Fifteen Worst Science Fiction Stories*

of All Time Except for Those by Damon Knight?” “No, no,” he said, and went away.

There were a batch of people there from Clarion, none of whose names I caught except for Ed Bryant; the rest were Jack and Joe and no last names. Very good types all of them. They made up part of the Milford youth contingent which foregathered in the basement around drums and electric organ and guitar to jam rock while those above charted the future course of speculative fiction. Kate’s son Chris, who’s fifteen or sixteen, owns the drums and manned them while Charles Platt worked the organ and Jim Sallis doubled on guitar and harmonies. When I went down there they were doing a Steppenwolf blues, with Gardner Dozois banging on a tambourine and Gordy Dickson watching Jim’s fingering on his guitar. Later they jammed up something called “Obligatory Fellatio Blues” in honor of the surprising number of fellatio scenes in workshop stories the preceding week. “Oh, it’s the obligatory fellatio scene,” had been a line much in use during the Conference.

All this may not paint quite the picture you expected of a Milford Conference, but it’s the kind of thing that happens when creative people get together to have fun. Still, logical as it may be, it does strike me that things are getting a bit weird when the Milford Mafia becomes a bastion of fannish fandom.

The Infinite Beanie

In 1970 and 1971 Arnie Katz was publishing *Focal Point* just a few blocks away and he asked me for a column. I said I didn't have time to write one but maybe could from time to time select excerpts from the mailing comments in my Lilapazine *Gilgamesh*, whose circulation was about thirty. He said fine, and "The Infinite Beanie" ran for over six months, till Carol and I moved to California.

After the first several columns I got into the swing of things a bit and wrote a number of pieces specifically for *FP*; that's why you'll notice them getting longer as you go.

October 12, 1970:

Yesterday Tom Purdom called; he was in town to buy some sheet music for recorder, because New York City is apparently the only place you can get good sheet music for recorder. Most people you ask them, "What're you doing in town?" and they tell you something boring like their sister's getting married; Tom Purdom you ask him that, he says he's here to buy sheet music for recorder.

We were talking about blurbs on books and I fell to fantasizing about doing blurbs that really tell why the book's being published. Notes from the editor, that kind of thing. "This novel is no damn good, but there's going to be a movie based on it." "We had to buy this stupid short story collection to get this author's real neat novel *The Ecology of Infinity* – now *that* you should read." "I commissioned this book because I wanted to know something about the subject myself; I wonder if anyone else is interested."

Carol and I are both complete Antonioni freaks; I'll bet if we were to make up a specially written wedding ceremony for ourselves, as several fan-couples have been doing lately, it wouldn't be based on stuff from Tolkien or Gibran, but more like this:

Terry appears at doorway to church, looks in uninterestedly, wanders away. Comes back a little later, drifts down side aisle, examining walls idly. Minister hurries to Terry, shoos him to altar; he complies readily enough, but begins to talk quietly about his experiences as a boy supporting his six younger brothers by taking pictures of flattered U.S. matrons in piazzas. He's

looking at a point somewhere to the left of the minister's shoulder all the time.

During this Carol appears at the door, stands motionless for ten minutes, framed there with a perfectly powder-blue sky behind her. "Ach, she is impossible," exasperates minister, who goes down aisle and pulls her by the hand up to the altar. Carol's face is emotionless, blank, beautiful; she idly runs her fingers through her long hair. Church bells sound from above; Carol jumps, shivers, rubs her arms as though cold. Terry goes over to holy water font, leans into it, says, "Pronto?"

Minister brings him back to altar. "Now, do you Terry Carr, etc." Terry gazes at him, considering it, or perhaps wondering if he should tell the minister about the greying businessman he saw shot in his back yard that morning. Minister makes impatient gesture, changes question to "Do you Terry Carr *not* take this..." Terry doesn't answer; satisfied, minister turns to Carol, repeats, "Do you take..." Carol is listening intently, as though the intonations of his voice might give her the key to an existential enigma she hasn't thought of in years. But she's not surprised to learn nothing from him, so she whispers, "Yes, why not?"

"I now pronounce you man and wife," says minister. "You may kiss the —" But Carol and Terry have both wandered away; they're surrounded by well-wishers none of whom they know, who take them to a reception at which the minister becomes lost and the whole wedding party spends the night searching with candles through a dark and empty castle. The minister is found, but Carol and Terry aren't. *Locus* reports the incident on page 5, in the same paragraph with a list of what's coming next month from Belmont Books.

"Everybody's arguing so much about the New Wave," I said to Sid Coleman, "that you ought to make up one of your famous witty insults to raise the caliber of the debates." Sid thought for five seconds and said, "Vermilion Sands is the Levittown of the New Wave."

October 26, 1970:

Carol and I visit Leo and Diane Dillon fairly often, since they live nearby and are very groovy people. Leo is a man with an instant fantasy-trip for all occasions. The first time I met him he immediately began to describe his plan for making a shoe with a false top. The foot went into the bottom, but the top half was covered by a flap that could be raised by a string that ran

up inside the pants leg to one's hand in the pocket. The idea is that you're standing there talking prosaically with someone, and you pull up on the string so that the top of your shoe peels back, revealing inside... a fried egg.

This kind of humor takes a mind that's a bit warped, but it's my kind of warpage. On a recent visit we started talking about the myth of alligators in the New York sewers (you know the story: parents used to give their kids baby alligators but then they'd start to grow and the parents would realize that if they didn't do something soon they'd have a full-grown alligator in the house, so they'd flush the alligator tads down the toilet into the sewer system, where they'd grow up).

"But what in the world do you suppose they'd live on, down there in the sewers?" I asked.

"Oh... rats and things like that."

"Rats," I mused. "How would they catch them, I wonder. Do you suppose they *run them down*?"

"That's exactly it!" Leo said. "They're *trained*, by the Department of Sanitation, to catch rats. That's the real reason we have alligators in our sewers."

After which I went off into a fantasy about the home of the Chief of the Department of Sanitation having a sign on its front door reading, "*WARNING: These Premises Protected by Attack Alligators*", and by that time, as you can see, things were getting pretty strange.



November 9, 1970:

“I dunno if I’ll have time to run these off for you,” Dick Lupoff said as I thrust a sheaf of stencils at him.

“Gee, Dick, you’ve got to,” I said. “I’ve typed right in the stencils, ‘Mimeography by Dick Lupoff.’ Everything published in fanzines is true, you know.”

“Perhaps so,” he countered, “but are stencils full-fledged fanzines before they’re run off?”

Sadly I took the stencils back from him. “I could win this argument if

you were a Catholic,” I muttered.

November 23, 1970:

We went and visited Damon and Kate Knight at The Anchorage last weekend; Sid Coleman was along with us. On the trip up, Sid told how he and Earl Kemp and a couple of others started Advent:Publishers in 1956. They were sitting around talking, and they got to enthusing about Damon’s book reviews. “Somebody ought to put them all together into a book.” So they wrote to Damon and asked him if he’d be willing, and he said okay, and the company was capitalized for \$500 including all printing, paper, and shipping costs on that first book. “I did the proofreading myself on the first edition,” Sid said. “Have you read the first edition of *In Search of Wonder*? Well, I’ll give you some idea of it: After it came out, Earl Kemp said to me, ‘Sidney, you couldn’t proofread “cat”.’”

At The Anchorage we spent the evening in the living room, where we sat around and chitterchattered in the Milford manner. We were talking about the hoax bestseller *Naked Came the Stranger*, which a couple of dozen newspaper writers wrote as a satire on Jacqueline Susann and which Bernard Geis Associates, a company known for their explosive bestseller novels in that tradition, made into a quick bestseller even after the writers blew the gaff to the papers.

Anyway, we were talking about this and I suggested that the time was ripe for a science fiction bestseller of this type. Michael Crichton’s *The Andromeda Strain* had shown us, after all, that sf can make its way solidly onto the bestseller lists, even though – or maybe especially if – it’s a rotten book. So we began to put together this Jacqueline Susann science fiction bestseller. “It has to be not too far out, near-future stuff that’s scary but plausible, right?” “Right, and it’s got to have a strong sex theme.” Kate hit it right on the head: “The time is 1975, and it’s proven that the Pill has long-term effects that only show up after a woman’s been taking it for ten or twelve years. It causes cancer of the womb, maybe.” “Yes, yes!” we chorused. “And the hero is involved in this study to find out how its effects on the different races compare, and he finds blacks aren’t affected at all.” “Right! And naturally the story gets to the papers and they make a big thing out of it, and there’s all this racial tension escalating, with the blacks saying ‘We’ll live to bury you’ and the whites and so on just scared and mad at the world...”

It was fun, but we never put it all together. Instead we got onto a party

game that was sort of spinoff from Logogenetics, about which Damon once wrote a very funny piece for *Hyphen*. The bit here was that Sid would make up a title, author, and then a review of the story in the style of a particular person, and the key words would be filled in by each of us in turn without knowing what the context was: “Gimme an intransitive verb in the past tense,” etc. On our first try we came up with *I Wiggled with the Slimy Pussycat* by J.G. Ballard, which Judy Merrill reviewed thus: “An honorable achievement in combining labor with metaphysics, without losing sight of incoherence.”

This was obviously so cosmically *right* that we kept right on. *Mothers of the Bloody Vengeance* by Barry Malzberg prompted Harlan Ellison to say through our mass-ouija: “It made me feel as if I had a pellucid aardvark in my spleen!” *Centipedes Without Feet* by Ed Earl Repp got this review in the Damon Knight manner: “This has all of the guilt-ridden pride of James Sallis without his benevolence, and in addition it has graciousness I can only sense as virtue.”

Damon didn’t think too much of the latter review, so he himself roughed out the sentence structure for his review of *Creatures of Milford* by Norman Spinrad and it came out: “This green epic has all the ponderous munificence and sensibility of a chimney falling downstairs.”

Sid said, “But why just stick with science fiction writers? How about a passage in the manner of a well-known mainstream writer?” Thus we got *The Spoon in the Fast Bed* by Henry James, with the opening sentence, “To the policeman, Harry was an evil, a docile gentleman, or perhaps a spiritual virgin.” The title was a washout, but the quote is good, I think.

“How about TV commercials, our modern art-form?” I asked. So Sid blocked out a brief one, and we got:

BOY: “Melissa, I despair to tell you this, but you have dainty underarms.”

GIRL: “What, me?”

Later, at the bidet: “They say Cheer works wonders for dainty underarms.”

Amused by this, Sid tried another:

Two brain surgeons meet in the driveway.

FIRST BRAIN SURGEON: “Why are you throwing away your spoon?”

SECOND BRAIN SURGEON: "It's lost all its bouquet."

FIRST BRAIN SURGEON: "Here, try Alpo; it never fails."

SECOND BRAIN SURGEON: (Sniffs deeply) "That's a real crock."

And so Damon tried one, which came out like this:

"I don't like eggplant."

"Why not?"

"They're grungy and flaccid."

"Here, try this one."

(Eats eggplant.) "Why, it's groovy."

"Brillo has taken all the sog out of it."

"Argh!"

Damon was even inspired to Logogeneticize a poem with us, as follows:

Beneath the crawling butterfly the people doctor slept.

His billowy nose was full of blood, his little finger crept

Up to his stomach, pickling the candles of his brains.

He scanned the thoughts of all the creamy rains.

We discussed submitting this to *New Worlds*, but were afraid to.



I hate stories about people's kids most of the time, except a lot of people I know have groovy kids. Avram Davidson writes me occasional snippets about Frodo Ethan, who's fantastic. The last one was a conversation.

AVRAM: "Do you want some jam?"

ETHAN: “Yes.”

AVRAM: “Yes what?”

ETHAN; “Yes, absolutely.”

And Diane Dillon has a wryly amused way of telling about how their son Lee, five years old, hates to go to bed and has developed a variety of gambits for avoiding it. One night Leo and Diane got him to bed, only to have him pipe up three minutes later, “Can I have a glass of water?” The water being brought, five minutes later he asked for another cover. “Listen, kiddo,” Diane told him, “you’re not fooling anyone; you could’ve got the blanket the same time you got the glass of water, which you could’ve got before you went to bed in the first place.”

“Yeah, well,” said Lee, “what can you do? That’s the kind of kid you got.”

And I like to tell the story of the dinner we had at Steve and Grania Davis’s, where Frodo Ethan, Grania’s son from when she and Avram were married, described something that had happened that had really gassed him. “Did it blow your mind, Frodo?” asked Bob Lichtman.

Ethan frowned for a moment, thinking about it. Finally he said, “Only in the good sense.”

December 7, 1970:

Last year Norman Spinrad came through town on his way to Europe and we got together a party; and at the party we fell to talk of the Milford Mafia. Fred Pohl at that time was kicking up a behind-the-scenes rumpus in SFWA about how the Milford Mafia was an Eviol Conspiracy to Control the Nebula or some such; he was going all out against the Milford Mafia. “But you know, there really is a Milford Mafia,” Norman told us. “Apparently they have one guy in Milford who controls all the pinball machines or something. But I got this fantasy, see: This guy hears that Fred Pohl is going around badmouthing the Milford Mafia, so he calls headquarters about it and the next thing you know there’s this gravelly-voiced torpedo in Fred’s office, *leaning* on him...”

Sid Coleman was in town one weekend and he told a marvelous story which I’ll now re-render weakly. I’d just told him Walt Willis’s anecdote about getting a transatlantic phone call from Harlan while Ken Bulmer or someone was visiting, and Ken was most impressed; he asked Walt if he often got calls from the States and Walt replied, “Only when it’s important.”

Sid said the best chance he'd ever had to be impressive like that was once when he'd been invited to speak at a physics conference in Europe and they'd asked him for the title of his talk and in typical Sid fashion he'd forgotten to reply. So one morning there's Sid, happily asleep with this young lady he'd been dating for a couple of weeks, and the phone rings. "Will you answer it, please?" he asks her, and she does. Mutter mutter on the phone and her eyes get wide and she says, "It's long distance, from Geneva." Grumpily Sid sits up and takes the phone; the caller is the head of the physics conference, and he says he *must* have the title of Sid's talk right *now*, he's frantic. Sid says, "For Christ's sake, Carlo, it's seven o'clock in the morning here – call me back at noon!" and he hangs up.

"Now *that* was one impressed girl," Sid chortled.

Saturday around noon Tom Disch called and said he was depressed and didn't know what to do with himself and we invited him over. The four of us sat around all day and all night talking, sometimes being serious and sometimes being silly. Tom Disch is a good person to sit around and do nothing with, even when he's depressed (though actually that went away before long). We worked out fantasies like the Worst Possible Encounter Group, where you're locked into a room with all these people you can't stand, and the group leader is a tape recorder that can't adjust its program when one encounter game after another goes awry, and the doors won't open till the whole weekend's over. But Tom said that although that would be truly horrible, he wouldn't really mind it all that much, since "I'm addicted to adrenaline, and it doesn't matter what particular emotion it is that gives it to me. My favorite reading matter are the headlines in the morning paper; they never fail me."

We also talked about our nominations for the program of The Most Disastrously Bad Convention in History. I don't remember the whole list of things, but it was stuff like Piers Anthony as Guest of Honor, Hal Clement as toastmaster, the First Fandom Hall of Fame award going to Robert Moore Williams, and like that. One special panel we figured out would have rarely-seen but fascinating writers and speakers like Kurt Vonnegut, Peter S. Beagle, and, say, Stanley Kubrick, only the panel would be moderated by Sam Moskowitz, who wouldn't let anyone else say anything.

Speaking of awful conventions reminds me of the NyCon3 in 1967, which wasn't an awful con at all, but had been expected to be in some quarters, on

the basis of New York fandom's past record of interclub feuding. However, all went marvelously well right up to the banquet, the high point and touchstone of all worldcons, when suddenly there was Moskowitz telling his interminable oompah joke while Lester del Rey waited to give his GoH talk and Harlan as toastmaster insulted everybody and tried to drown out SaM with theremin music from a tape recorder, and suddenly everything was an absolute shambles. After the banquet we came across Ted White, who was co-chairman of the con, and Sid told him, "Ted, I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen it myself – you snatched defeat from the jaws of victory."

Speaking of quotes I like, as I was a page or so ago, Dick Lupoff used to come up with some of the damndest things when we'd be sitting around breathing improved air. My favorite one was: "Oscar Wilde was just a mnemonic hook on which to hang Aubrey Beardsley."

The following is an actual unretouched verbatim transcript of a conversation at the dinnertable chez Carrs one night:

TERRY: The placemats are wrinkled, did you notice?

CAROL: Sure. That's because you put them near the window where they get wrinkled.

TERRY: I didn't put them there, you did.

CAROL: Well, maybe so. But I put them there temporarily and you're the one who left them there.

December 21, 1970:

Avram Davidson, bless him, continues to send me gassy reports on his conversations with his son Frodo Ethan, such as the following:

AVRAM: This egg-slicer used to work better before someone whose name I won't mention fooled around with it.

FRODO: Give me a name.

AVRAM: Well... Frodo.

FRODO (indulgently): *No, no... Frodo was always very good about that. Someone probably tried to slice a rock with it.*

I wrote back to Avram and told him that despite his enormous and impeccable talents for fantasy writing, in the final balance he might best be remembered as his son's Boswell. Which led me to this sample from the *Life of Frodo Ethan*:

"Awakening at 8 in the morning, I called on young Frodo. 'Sir, it is time to rise.' Frodo: 'No sir, you are wrong. I believe well-bred hobbits do not

emerge from their chambers before nine at the earliest. Perhaps ten.’ I began leafing through the Trilogy, while young Frodo slept on.”

Avram hasn’t answered yet. When he does, he’ll probably send me a ten-page Dialogue on the philosophy of orders of reality in different brands of ice cream, written in the mode of Plato.

Did I ever tell you about the time I met Jesus Christ? It was in the Village, while I was puzzling out how to change a flat on the Renault, which I’d had then for maybe two months; the spare tire was bolted underneath the trunk in front, and I couldn’t figure out how to get at it to get it out. While I was kneeling in the gutter looking things over I noticed two sandal-clad feet (clean) right next to me. I did a classic pan upward, taking in his immaculate white robe, long blond hair, and serene expression: he had the whole trip going. “Maybe I can help,” he suggested, in a voice that made Mike McNerney sound raucous. So he consulted the operator’s manual and translated for me how to unbolt and swing out the spare from underneath, and I ended up handing him the bolts as he put the fresh tire on. Quiet and gentle he was, and spake hardly a word. When we were finished we thought of offering him a little money in thanks, but we knew that would be a no-no, so Carol asked tentatively if we could give him a lift anywhere; but he just smiled and said no, and went off down the street beatifically.

Jesus Christ in the Village, wow. Well, if He did come back, where would you *expect* to find Him... Atlantic City?

Sid Coleman was visiting us one weekend early this year when Damon and Kate Knight came over for an evening’s visit. It happened that Damon and Kate left before midnight, with the result that we, and Sid in particular as I recall, sat and fretted intermittently for hours afterward about what bores we must have been to drive them away so early. It turned out later that they really did have to leave when they did, and a subsequent weekend visit to The Anchorage produced much more satisfying late-night conversations, but Sid will no doubt appreciate the following true story more than most anyway.

We were invited to the Dillons’ for dinner last weekend, and arrived to the pervading scent of a beautiful leg of lamb. The conversation over dinner had that magical brilliance that only a touch of madness can confer. We heard the latest stories about Leo’s family and the people who lived in the neighborhood, and we countered with scandalous tales about *you*, probably. Outrageous fantasies were conjured – including a deaf and dumb man who

became a Freudian analyst so that no one would notice – and ridiculous ploys were detailed.

“You know,” said Leo, “I’ve been looking forward to tonight all week long. Next week’s Thanksgiving, but the hell with that – *this* is the celebration I knew I’d enjoy the most.” “Yeah,” said Diane, “he even told the kid we weren’t going to celebrate Thanksgiving at all this year. He said we’d get a great big turkey and cook it with lots of stuffing and cranberry sauce and all, and then send all of it to the poor people in Africa and we’d just eat baby food and beans.” “Right,” said Leo; “*tonight* is when we *enjoy* ourselves!” Then he fell asleep.

So did Diane.

Leo’s head hung over the back of his chair; he snored softly. Diane had slumped forward on the table, her head in her arms. “I get so sleepy after dinner,” she murmured.

Leo snapped upright, blinking. “Boy, I really feel so groovy tonight; it’s so good to –” And he fell back, snoring.

Carol and I looked at each other, and at them: they didn’t move a muscle. Carol shrugged; I shrugged. We got up, put on our coats, left a note, and tiptoed out. We were home by 11:30; Carol watched a Bette Davis movie on television and I read some terrible science fiction magazines in my faithful search for good stories to reprint in *World’s Best SF*.

The next afternoon Leo called. “Hey, we really feel lousy about last night. What happened, we wanted to be sure everything was clear and free and we wouldn’t have anything nagging at us the least bit, so we stayed up all night the night before getting out a couple of jobs. Neither of us had slept since two nights before.”

Naturally we forgave them, especially when Leo invited us over again for this weekend. Naturally we believed them; we know it’s common practice with them to stay up all night to finish a job at the deadline and many’s the time I’ve picked up the cover for one of the SF Specials at their place at 8:00 in the morning, on the way to work. And naturally, as Sid Coleman will understand, somewhere inside we were convinced that all that was irrelevant, that if only someone with a sparkling personality had been there they’d have been up talking animatedly till dawn.

Well, that’s water under the bridge; new challenges constantly arise. Monday Leo called again, to cancel out for this weekend. “Have you ever had chicken pox?” he asked us. Carol said yes; I couldn’t remember. “Well, don’t

give up hope; if you haven't had it before you may get it, because I just came down with it. The kid had it all last week. I must've been already contagious when you were over here Saturday night."

So now I have fourteen more days to wait to find out if I'm going to come down with chicken pox. In a way I'll be disappointed if I don't – after all, how many 33-year-olds have the chance to get both tonsillitis and chicken pox the same year?

January 18, 1971:

I have a sort of guilty secret that I've been keeping dark for most of my time in fandom. Well, I mean, I'm not really *guilty* about it, but it makes me seem sort of like a weirdo among high-type fans whose interests are intellectual and spiritual. What it is, I really dig sports. Even all-American type sports like baseball.

Now, it's true that Harry Warner, who likes to pretend he's a timid man, has made his addiction to baseball public fannish knowledge for many years, and last year Gordon Eklund admitted much the same thing. Neither of them was ostracized from fandom, but I notice there were no hordes of crypto-baseball-nuts who rushed into print to shout "Me too."

Well, I not only like to watch baseball, I even used to play it, like on an organized team with uniforms and everything. Not professionally, you understand, but fairly close to it. I played for a team in the Class AA sandlot league in San Francisco, which as I recall is two notches down from the beginnings of semi-pro ball. If I were to choose a fannish parallel I guess it might be writing a column for *SF Review*.

I got mixed up in the netherworld of baseball because of my brother, actually. Allan is seven years older than I am, and always has been, except for those months when he's eight years older. He used to be a baseball nut when he was in high school; he was a pitcher and he started in the Class B league, moved up to Class A and eventually to AA. My parents and I used to go watch him pitch every Sunday, and the smell of liniment was a familiar one Sunday evenings. My memories are no doubt colored by the hero worship of a younger brother for the older, but he was *good*. Good fastball, sharp curve, good control, and he mixed his pitches well. My opinion isn't all brotherly admiration, either, because it's a fact that he had a helluva won-lost record and usually led his league in strike-outs.

When he was nineteen or twenty he got a tryout with San Francisco's pro team of the time, the Seals of the Pacific Coast League (one step down

from the majors). They liked what they saw and gave him a contract. The whole family had a celebration, and then the next day Allan got his draft notice. He went into the army, spent two years in Korea fooling around at the motor pool, and when he came back his arm was gone. I don't mean shot off or anything, just that two years of no pitching messed up the muscles in his shoulder somehow; when he tried to pitch after that he said he could feel a muscle popping in his shoulder with every pitch. He was good for one or two innings before it would get to hurting too much, and for several days after, his arm would just sort of hang limp.

Well, you know all the clichés about how younger brothers are supposed to fulfill the dreams of older brothers. Instead of quitting baseball when his arm went bad, Allan became a manager of a Class AA team, played second base and pitched short relief. To keep in shape he used to work out with me; he bought me a catcher's mitt and I'd catch while he continually tried to work his arm back into shape. It didn't happen, of course, but I learned a lot of respect for catchers: Jesus, did you ever try to sit on your haunches and try to catch a curve thrown at you at 90 mph?

I hated it, if you want to know the truth. What I wanted to be was not a catcher, but – surprise – a pitcher. I used to go over to a nearby public park with Boob Stewart and we'd take turns pitching to each other off the mound. Allan walked by with some friends one day when we were doing this and he stopped to watch me pitch for a while. A light came to life in his eyes and he came out to the mound saying, "No no, let me show you what to do..."

A few weeks later, after an intensive crash-course in pitching from Allan and a friend of the family who used to pitch major league ball, I was put on the roster of the team Allan was managing. In sandlot ball, teams usually took the names of whatever business or fraternal organization could be persuaded to ante up the loot for uniforms and equipment; thus I played for the Moose. (Pete Graham once came to a game when I was playing, and had a hard time keeping a straight face all afternoon. "I'm sorry," he told me later, "but seeing you in that uniform with MOOSE written across the front just broke me up.")

I'll never forget the first game I pitched, especially the first pitch I threw. The catcher, who was an experienced old guy probably in his thirties (I was nineteen), came out to the mound after the warmups as the first batter for the opposition team sidled into the batter's box. The catcher knew I'd never pitched a game before, and he figured I'd be nervous. He was right. He

said, with the wisdom of experience, “Listen, on this first pitch, don’t try to get fancy or anything. Just throw me the fastball sort of medium speed, and concentrate on getting it over the plate, that’s all.” I nodded, my mouth too dry for a verbal reply, and he trotted back behind the plate. He went into his crouch, flashed one finger between his legs meaning fastball, and I took a deep breath, wound up and delivered, trying as hard as anything to get that damn ball over the plate.

It was over the plate – right down the pipe, letter high. The batter swung, *crackkkk!*, and they’d still be chasing that ball if there hadn’t been a high fence in left field. He got a double.

The catcher came out to the mound. (After one pitch?!) “Maybe you better put more on the next one,” he said.

So I bore down, and got out of the inning with only two runs scored on me. I pitched two more innings, gave up a couple more runs, and then got tired. Hey, pitching is damn hard work; it’ll get you beat out faster than basketball even.

I pitched in four or five games more after that, and played the outfield in a couple. My lifetime won-lost record is 0-1, and I’d like to explain a little about that game I lost. It was a 5 to 3 loss, but the two runs that beat us were unearned. What happened, there were men on second and third with two out, and I was throwing a lot of low curves to the batter. I got him to hit it on the ground right at the second baseman, and that should’ve been that. But the second baseman booted the ball – it went right through his legs, and two runs scored. The second baseman was my brother.

Don’t think I ever let him forget what he’d done, either.

I don’t want to pretend that I was a good pitcher. I *wanted to* be, because I knew it meant a lot to Allan and my parents too, who came to all the games. But it’s hell trying to be a good pitcher every Sunday when you’re Official Arbiter of the Cult during the week. I had a good hard fastball that I was a little wild with, and a big ole roundhouse curve that wouldn’t have fooled anybody if they hadn’t been so deathly afraid of my wild fastball. But I actually had a high strikeout ratio, close to two an inning. I’d rear back and fire that fastball toward the plate till I had two strikes on my man, then I’d come in with the roundhouse curve, which started out looking like a fastball that was wild high and inside and then just drifted casually down and over the plate. I struck out a whole lot of batters who dropped to the ground in fear.

As a batter my record was just the opposite: *I* struck out. Pitchers aren’t

expected to be good hitters, of course, but I may have set a record. My lifetime batting average was .000, and every one of those times at bat was a strikeout except two. Once I was walked, by a pitcher who must have *really* been inept; I died on first base, though, when the next batter grounded out. And once I actually connected with the damn ball enough to put it into the playing field: I topped a soft grounder right back to the pitcher. But I damn well ran it out.

I also hit a home run once, but unfortunately it was foul. One pitch later I struck out. That happens a lot to us power hitters.

We had kind of a funny team; as I mentioned, the catcher was an old man in his thirties (or maybe even forties, I dunno; he was partially bald, anyway). The third baseman was a guy who'd been born with a bad right arm, so that in order to throw the ball to first he had to do a windup longer than the one I did from the rubber. That was okay with ground balls hit to third, because he could really zip it once he got the throw off, but one game the other team decided to bunt on him. It was one of my first games, in fact, and at the time I was under managerial orders to let those bunts be handled by the third baseman. So the first time they bunted I let it go to the third baseman even though I would have had a play. He fielded it cleanly, then did his whole windup before throwing to first. The batter was safe by four strides.

I'm not an indecisive person. The next time they bunted I pounced on the ball myself, whirled and made a perfect throw to first to get the batter.

That was the third out of the inning, and as we trotted to the dugout I noticed the first baseman shaking his head.

"Whatsamatter?" I asked him. "I threw that guy out by a mile."

"I know," he said, "but why did you throw me a *curve*?"

Well, ah...

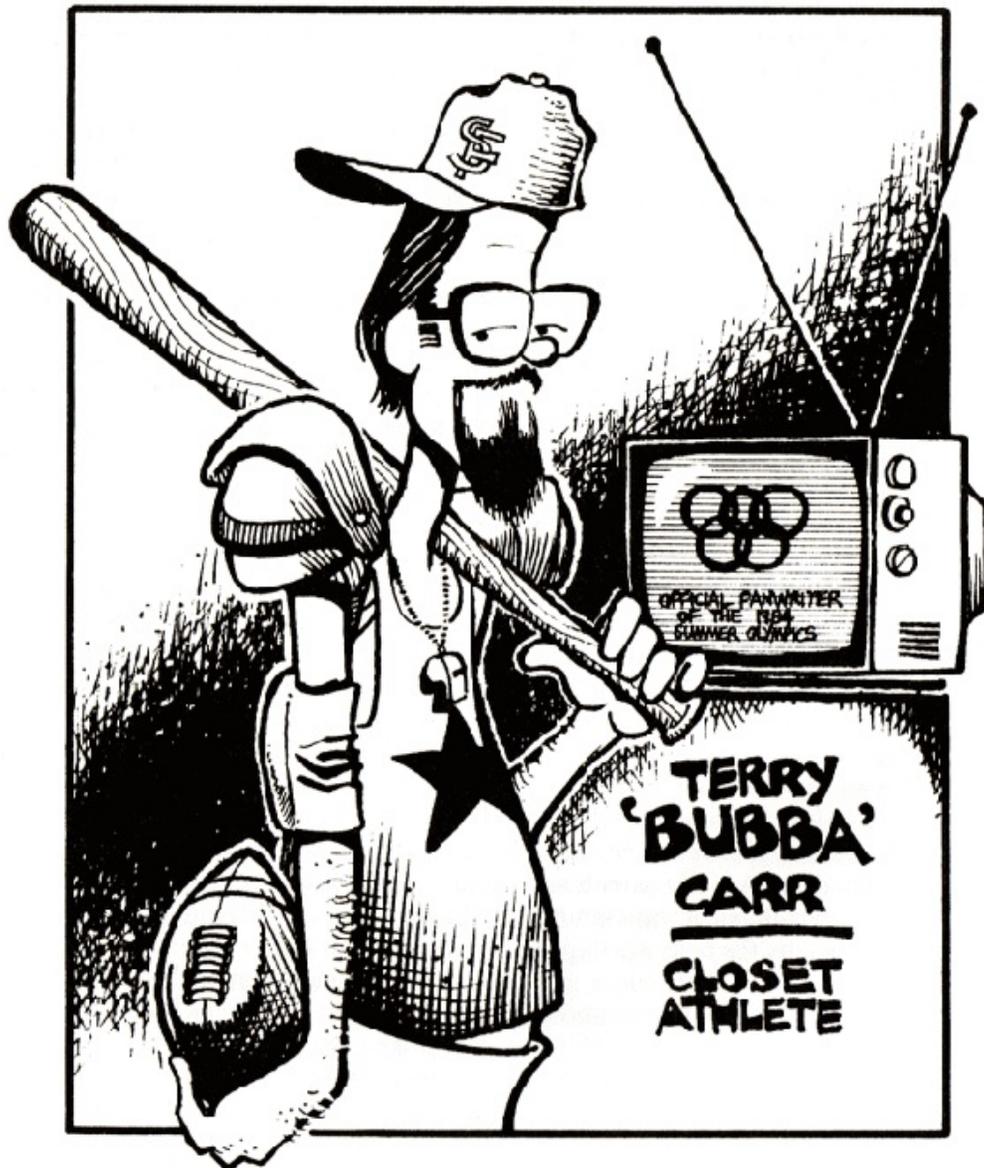
Look, let's face it, sandlot baseball isn't really a precision trained sport. And Class AA is a funny league to be in, because it's populated not only by kids just learning the game, like me, but also by older players with lots of experience but maybe not enough talent. And in case you're wondering why any team would play a third baseman with a malformed throwing arm, I'll mention that he hit close to .400 that season.

It was the only season I played baseball. Next year I moved to Berkeley to go to college there, and I decided to give up the fast life of the diamond for the studious halls of academe. Berkeley fandom formed itself around Ron Ellik, Pete Graham, Dave Rike, and me, *Fanac* was begun, *Innuendo* went

into high gear, and we spent our free time on things like *The Incomplete Burbee*.

I guess the baseball world didn't really lose another Sandy Koufax when I quit the game. Still, I occasionally have these fantasies of mound duels with Bob Gibson or Nolan Ryan. You know, Ryan throws a lot like I used to; I wonder if he was ever one of those kids who stood with their fingers looped through the fence to watch me –

Nah, that's ridiculous. Does Alicia Austin study DEA's artwork for pointers?



February 1, 1971:

Sid Coleman came to town to spend New Year's Eve with us, and we took him over to a small party at the Dillons'. We entered to find Leo and Diane sitting around the kitchen table in semi-darkness rapping with a few friends from the neighborhood. This is the typical scene at their place; sometimes I think it must go on at all hours of every day, though I know that couldn't be true else how would they have got their cover paintings in on time? Not that they usually did, of course. Anyway, we came in and sat down, and someone said to me, "We're talking about ghosts."

"What about ghosts?" Carol asked.

Leo said, "He was telling a ghost story – go on, man, tell the story for them." So the guy told an A-number-one ghost story complete with mysterious meanings and deaths in the house and all.

When it was over, Leo asked me, "Did you believe that story?"

I temporized, then said, "Well, sure, I believe those things happened, but I don't necessarily think the explanation of ghosts is necessary."

"Uh-huh," said Leo. "Well, what about you, Dr. Coleman? You're a *physicist*, for chrissake. What's your opinion of this ghost story?"

"Yes, Sid," I said, leaning forward, "what does a representative of hidebound, repressive, orthodox science say when he's presented with evidence of supernatural phenomena?"

"What do we say?" said Sid. "Why, we just say, 'Feets, do your stuff!'"

March 1, 1971:

Ever since I let the news out that Leo and Diane Dillon had been "fired" from doing the covers for the SF Specials I've been getting letters about it: people asking if it's true, asking me why, some even cursing my name for being such a low-life bastard. "Just because some of the books aren't selling, that's no excuse to shaft the Dillons," one letter told me coldly.

Well, look, I think the Dillons are incredibly good artists, and it hurt me more than it hurt you when I had to call up and say, "I've been told the Specials aren't selling as well as they should and it's because of the covers. So we're going to change to a different cover artist." Hell, Leo had to console me, not the other way around. I loved their covers; the original painting for *The Left Hand of Darkness* is framed on my wall at the office.

But the sales of the recent Specials really haven't been what they might be. Oh, they weren't disastrous, no, and a number of the books did very well indeed. But most of those books were really good, and it's a terrible disservice to good books and good writers to publish them in such a way that

they don't sell lots of copies. In the last three years there have been nineteen novels that were nominated for the Nebula Award: of these nineteen, ten were Specials. With a series like that it's just insane that a book by, say, Walt and Leigh Richmond should sell better.

The trouble was that when we've published space operas at Ace we've put spaceships and red monsters on the cover, and it's monsters and spaceships that make the average newsstand browser recognize a paperback as being science fiction. The Dillons aren't interested in painting monsters and spaceships month after month; they took the job in the first place with the understanding that they could paint whatever they wanted, and I didn't want to break that agreement. So we'll get a new artist, who'll paint monsters and spaceships – though, since this series is still the SF Specials, they'll be classy examples of the genre. Maybe we'll do the monsters in pastel.

Don't weep for Leo and Diane. They're among the most sought-after artists in the book field, and they make a lot more money from the work they do for Time-Life Books or Fawcett Premier than we could ever pay them at Ace. When you visit them and look in on their studio you find incredibly beautiful sketches and partially finished paintings there. "That one was due last Tuesday," says Diane, "and we were supposed to have twenty-five double-page spreads done for a history of Hawaii last *month*." For the Dillons, the SF Specials were an extra job every month that they didn't need and which they did for less money than they could get anywhere else. They did them out of friendship and love for the freedom to paint what they wanted.

Let me tell you a story about Leo and Diane Dillon, artists. They were given an assignment by Time-Life for three "classic" books, things like Homer and Chaucer that have had hundreds of covers and illustrations done for them. Leo and Diane wanted to do something different. So Leo phoned the art director.

"Listen, on these books you gave us... you mind if we do something that's sort of original? Kind of different, maybe?"

"Sure, I guess so," said the art director. "Uh... what do you mean by different?"

"Well, we were thinking for instance of doing a tapestry."

"A *tapestry*? That sounds great, but, uh, you know the jobs are already budgeted, so we can't pay you anything extra."

"We know. That's okay."

“Well then, fine,” said the art director. “Say,” he added, “I didn’t know you’d ever done tapestries.”

“We haven’t,” said Leo, and hung up.

So they did a tapestry for one of the books. For the second book they did a bas-relief in wood. And for the third, what the hell, they did a stained glass window.

No, of course they’d never done a stained glass window before. But it was beautiful. All three of the jobs were. What would you expect?

A couple of weeks ago I was talking about the Dillons with someone who said, “I guess with a schedule as busy as theirs they never got a chance to read the novels themselves.”

“Never read them?” I said. “They read every one of them; don’t be silly. I’ve had lots of letters from the writers, exclaiming how well the covers illustrated the books.”

The difference with the Dillons was that they didn’t just pick out a scene or a character to paint, they read the whole book and illustrated the themes. That, of course, was one of their troubles, from a commercial standpoint, because your average casual reader wouldn’t know a theme if it bit him in his collective unconscious.

A few examples from the Dillons’ SF Special covers: The painting on Lafferty’s *Past Master* is dominated by the face of Thomas More, he of the title, and a profile of a Programmed Person, or android. More’s face is dark and lined with experience and humanity; the Programmed Person’s skin is transparent pink, showing the too-simple workings within. There’s more to the painting, lots more, particularly the three secret rulers of Astrobe, who, strangely, cast shadows that are quite unlike them. Does that sound like Lafferty’s *Past Master* to you? It sure does to me.

Or look at the painting on the cover of D.G. Compton’s *Synthajoy*, his novel about the recording of people’s perceptions during peak experiences so that they can be replayed into the minds of those whose lives have no peaks. It’s a very simple painting: the main figure wears a helmet that connects to machinery tended by very serious researchers; but the background, the machinery, the technicians, the helmet, and even the head of the subject are done all in a pale purple, while the body of the person wearing the helmet swirls with rich colors. How can you illustrate a book more directly than that?

Their painting for Keith Roberts’ *Pavane*, a beautiful novel about an

alternative world where the Catholic Church reigns supreme in the 20th Century and a mass revolt is building and bursting, shows a priest blessing the masses... but the masses are storming out from under his robes, fists and clubs raised. Instead of a crucifix, the priest wears around his neck the insignia that Keith Roberts designed to represent his imaginary world. (Roberts, an artist himself, loved this cover.)

Another Compton novel, *The Steel Crocodile*: a novel about, among many other things, a computer research center wherein human pretensions to godhood are brought to a *reductio ad absurdum* conclusion. The Dillons' painting shows a group of figures who might be human or might be just monkeys reading printout tapes that come from a Tower of Babel. For the cover of Joanna Russ's *And Chaos Died* they painted the face of the protagonist, Jai Vedh, who in the novel meets the telepathic Evne and falls in love, is locked in love, with her: on the cover his mind blows upward and reconstitutes into an upside-down portrait of Evne. Their cover for Brunner's *The Traveler in Black* is a portrait of the Traveler, whose duty it is to bring scientific order out of Chaos; bright, magical colors swirl beside him, but he grasps them in one hand and they emerge as straight, coherent rays of color... dull color.

One of my favorites of all the Dillon covers is the one they did for Tucker's *The Year of the Quiet Sun*. That's a time travel novel, as I guess you know. How did they represent time travel? They borrowed a technique from Marcel Duchamp, the artist who shook up the art world fifty years or more ago with his paintings of figures moving in time: "Nude Descending a Staircase" was his most famous. So there's Brian Chaney painted in the same technique, moving through time, receding into the distance... and in his forehead, if you notice, he carries with him the image of Kathryn van Hise, the woman he loves. (Leo and Diane handled the time travel theme differently a little later when they did their cover for Compton's *Chronocules*: in this painting we have successive portraits of Roses Varco, the figure forming, fragmenting, re-forming; he moves across the painting and is unchanged, while in a small trilogy of profiles below him Liza Simmons, who didn't travel in time, is shown as a young woman, in middle age, and as an old woman.)

And how thoroughly have you explored their cover for Ursula Le Guin's *A Wizard of Earthsea*? Sure you see the portrait of the wizard. But do you see the shark? The mouse? The sailing ship? That's an appropriately fantastic

painting. (The portrait of the wizard, incidentally, originated as a pencil sketch Diane did of herself one night in a coffee house, working from her distorted reflection on the side of a glass. I saw this in her sketchbook and loved it, and told her so; and the next month there it was as the central figure in the cover painting she and Leo turned in.)

But the flow of Dillon paintings for the Specials has stopped; Mr. Mediocre wants spaceships so we'll give him spaceships. I can't help feeling that a golden period of sf art has ended, a victim of economic necessity, otherwise known as the American Way. I had lunch last week with George Ernsberger of Avon, who said he knew just how I felt because he'd just had to make the same decision about an artist named Don Punchatz who'd done a lot of imaginative science fiction covers for his books, including that beautiful one for Bob Silverberg's *Nightwings*... but every book for which he'd done the cover had been subpar in sales, so back to rocketships goes Avon too.

Leo and Diane Dillon were nominated for a Hugo as Best Pro Artist(s) last year, and the year before. They didn't win, but they'll probably be nominated again this year. May I respectfully call your attention to the extraordinary qualities of their work, and suggest that you consider voting for them? This year will be your last chance.

April 12, 1971:

I'm still recovering from all the socialac that surrounded the recent Nebula Awards Banquet: all sorts of people in town, parties, lunches, house guests. Sid Coleman and Kate MacLean were both staying with us, in different rooms, and Friday night we were joined by Sid's friend Mitzi the lawyer for dinner out and then general talk and tomfoolery back at our place.

Mitzi was talking about how as a kid you often misunderstood what words mean. "I asked my mother what D-r-period stood for and she told me it meant doctor. So for years I thought we lived on Riverside Doctor."

"Oh, that's great," said Sid. "And did you get confused about Street Patrick, Street Catherine and so on?"

"Yes," said Carol, "and then there's the Avenue Maria."

How was the Nebula banquet, you ask? Well, I thought it was fascinating. For one thing, there was Lester del Rey serving as toastmaster even though Lester refuses to be a member of SFWA because he's opposed to the group. So naturally you know the kind of thing he said during his time with the mike: he roasted the organization's practices and pretenses and

officers and publications, all in his dry jesting way but scoring a couple of hits anyway. The SFWA officers sat at the head table and pretended they weren't turning blue. Various SFWA members later complained that Lester's tirade had been in bad taste, but I just thought it was funny. Lester, of course, was wrong in most of the things he said, but nobody who's annoyed with SFWA this year can be all bad.

There were also the customary talks by One (1) Scientist and One (1) Editor, and half of these speeches was good. Isaac Asimov, who was pressed into service at the last moment to make the presentation of awards, did a good job overall, though of course there was the unfortunate announcement of the short story award. Isaac looked at the list of winners that had been handed him and said, "For best short story of the year, the winner is... *The Island of Doctor Death* by Gene Wolfe!" Much applause around the room, and Gene Wolfe rose to walk to the podium, and then Gordy Dickson was whispering intensely into Isaac's ear. Isaac's eyes grew round. "You're kidding!" he wailed. Gordy whispered at him some more. "He's not kidding, folks," said Isaac. "Gene Wolfe, I'm sorry, you didn't win this award after all. The winner in the voting for best short story of the year is *No Award*."

The list of winners Isaac had showed the winners and second and third place stories; he'd seen "No Award" listed but thought it was a joke. So for thirty seconds Gene Wolfe had won a Nebula and then it was snatched away.

We were at a table that included Isaac, Sid Coleman, and Harlan Ellison. Isaac and Harlan have had a machismo rivalry shtick going for years now, like a running gag that died once but keeps coming back to haunt its murderers. (The Running Gag is probably one of those Little Known Game Animals that Dean Grennell writes about for some hunters' magazine: you know, like the Colossal Blunder, the Nameless Dread, and the Dark Foreboding.) This evening Isaac pulled from his pocket a slip of paper and said to Harlan, "Two days ago I made an appearance at the University of Something-or-other." (Isaac wasn't unsure, I am.) "The rate for one appearance was \$1,200 – you see here where it says the figure? And what, you may ask, did they pay me such a respectable fee *for*? The answer is here on this line: see, it says 'Stud Activities'."

Harlan looked, and indeed that was what it said, without even a period after the first word to indicate it might be short for "student". Harlan shook his head in distress. "They paid you more than they paid me!" he moaned.

Sid said, "Isaac, may I see that?"

“By all means,” said Isaac. “Here; gaze upon it and envy me to your heart’s content.”

After a minute Sid looked up from his perusal and said, “But Isaac, I don’t see anywhere on here where it says who was supposed to pay the \$1,200, them or you.”

Later, after the banquet was over, SFWA threw a big open party in the Oak Room of the Hotel Algonquin, at which Damon Knight started peanut-throwing fights with everyone within range, then when his fire began to be returned he hid behind Carol, next to whom he was sitting. Carol says she didn’t suffer any permanent brain damage as a result of the bombardment, but god knows what they’ll think of to do at these Nebula banquets next year. Maybe water-pistols.

The other day I called Damon Knight on the phone, and he said, “Hi, whaddya know?” He always says this when someone phones him, every time for as long as I’ve known him.

“You always say that,” I said. “What do you mean, what do I know? I don’t know anything or I’d mention it. Why do you keep asking?”

“Well, I want to find out what you know,” he said.

And suddenly a great light dawned for me. “Oh, is *that* what you want to know. Well, why didn’t you ask?”

“I did. I said, ‘Whaddya know?’”

“Yeah,” I said, “I guess you did at that. Well, here’s the sum total of everything I know: The Universe is a giant ever-expanding sphere of silly-putty.”

There was a pause, then he said, “I’ll be damned. That’s what A.E. van Vogt said at the Rio Conference.”

“I didn’t know he was talking on the subject,” I said.

“He wasn’t, but that was what it sounded like he was saying.”

Nearly ten years later I revived this column again for Patrick and Teresa Nielsen Hayden’s *Telos*. Again, most of the material came from *Gilgamesh*, which was by then my personalzine, with a circulation of fifty or sixty. These pieces are therefore not just excerpts from mailing comments, and are thus longer. The final section here was in *Izzard*, *Telos*’s successor.

November 1980:

I’m writing a new story. Actually, it’s an old one that I started in 1962,

but I got busy finishing *Warlord of Kor* in time for its deadline and somehow never wrote the last half of this one even though it had an okay idea and I knew the whole plot; the beginning languished in my “files” until late 1979, when I was acting as agent-surrogate for Leanne Frahm, a new Australian writer who’d been a member of an sf writing class I’d taught in January. I’d sold several of her stories to U.S. markets but it seemed to me that she was running short on ideas, so I lent her the first half of “Horn o’ Plenty” and asked if she’d like to finish it. Leanne sent back a draft of the rest of the story and it seemed pretty good to me, so I set to writing the final draft.

It feels good to be writing again, which is a strange feeling to me since I usually hate writing. (I love having-written.) But the signs have been on the wall of my unconscious for a month or more; evidently I miss writing, because I’ve been having all sorts of dreams lately that have obviously been stories in the making. First I dreamed a fascinating story in which Carol and I bought a Berkeley house through an agent and, in tearing down the wallpaper so we could repaint the room, found bookcases behind the wallpaper that contained many strange books: outré tomes on arcane and fantastical subjects. I explored the basement and discovered the previous owner’s office and library; there were boxes of diaries from the 18th Century, some in printed book form and more handwritten – all seemed to deal with demonology. Notebooks in the desk there contained elaborate diagrams and computations on the same subject.

We managed to get in touch with the seller of the house, who was the sister of the last owner. “Who was he?” I asked. “I hope you don’t intend to turn this into a parking garage,” she said. “What happened to him?” “Isn’t that chandelier nice?” It was obvious she was hiding something, and I thought, *I ought to tell Stephen King about this...* Then I woke up.

Last night I dreamed a Robert Heinlein novel, one of his juveniles. No, not one he ever wrote, but I could tell. I was a penniless teenager who became friends with a crewman of the awesome spaceship hovering over my city; he gave me a tour of the ship, and later I snuck in at night with a friend to show it to him while most of the crew members were away on leave. A cataclysm struck when we were in the engine room; the skeleton crew above were killed or injured and we found ourselves in control of the ship. *God damn, this is great stuff!* I thought, and woke up.

I chuckled faintly at myself and went back to sleep. I was marooned on some other planet where the (human) society had evolved around the produce

of enormous trees whose fruits, large magenta grapes growing in the topmost levels, had strange, unspecified psychic properties. *Wonder how soon I'll find out these people are telepathic*, thought I... and woke up again.

Well, I've always had to work out story endings the hard way.

But the thing that strikes me is that in eighteen years of professional writing I've never before had science fiction dreams, nor indeed any that suggested plots for stories to me. Sure, I've heard of other people dreaming stories (Carol dreamed her short story "Inside", then wrote it in two hours after waking), but it's a totally new experience for me and I find it both weird and delightful.

...Nah, I don't have any particular plans for writing down the stories I've dreamed: they're all novels, and my next novel is already fully outlined, on paper. It even has an ending, which is more than I can say for these dreams. Speculation: The subconscious can provide fascinating situations for stories, but only your rational mind can work out solutions and endings. (The Person from Porlock was really Coleridge's subconscious pounding on his door, asking for help.)

"I'm calling because you're either famous or going to be famous very soon," said Bob Silverberg.

"No shit?" I said laconically.

"No shit. Take a look at page 4 of this morning's *Chronicle* and you'll see that someone named Eagle Sarmont has taken off from New York in a motorized hang glider, heading for Paris. If he gets there he'll make history – and he says he changed his last name because of a science fiction story about people who fly by strapping wings onto their bodies; wasn't that your story 'The Winds at Starmont'?"

Bigod it was. I'd glanced at the *Chronicle* story but hadn't actually read it; after Bob's phone call I did. I immediately decided to send Sarmont a telegram of congratulations if he made it, identifying myself as the author of the story that had evidently had a part in turning him on: I might even get a chance to meet him.

But it looks like he won't get a chance at the world's first hang glider crossing of the Atlantic, for the latest news I have at this writing (July 23, 1980, four days after Sarmont left New York) is that he's hung up in red tape in Canada, where the transport department can't decide just how to categorize his vehicle – essentially a hang glider powered by a snowmobile engine. At least that's the official story: I heard on the radio that in truth they just don't

want him to take off over the Atlantic from Canada because if he should go down into the ocean the Canadians would have to conduct a massive search for him, and they don't want to spend all that money on someone who isn't even a Canadian citizen.

(Later news:) Eagle Sarmont's hang glider was impounded by Canadian authorities as unsafe, and I've heard nothing further about him. It wasn't quite as crazy a venture as it sounds, however: Sarmont (who was born Joseph Carter Whitmore but adopted his present name legally: "'Sarmont' came from the name of a mountain in a favorite science fiction story," said Associated Press) is twenty-eight years old and a veteran pilot of more conventional aircraft; he owns a business in Santa Cruz, California, that makes graphite tubing for gliders. His plan was to fly from Canada to Greenland, Iceland, Scotland, and finally France, with a back-up crew in a conventional plane watching over him. He had planned to land on this or that island each evening.

But the Canadian authorities wouldn't let him try, so I guess now I'll never be famous. On the other hand, the flight *would* have been risky even with safeguards, so maybe I should be glad that I haven't "inspired" someone to go out and get himself killed.

July 1982:

The Academy Awards were presented recently, and as I watched the show I reflected that Hollywood's penchant for presenting awards to people like Ingrid Bergman, Art Carney, and Jack Lemmon, evidently more on the basis of their being "old troupers" than for the quality of their performances, is a lot like the recent Hugos and Nebulas that have gone to, say, Arthur C. Clarke and Theodore Sturgeon: not because the given work is so great but because these authors have been writing so long and so well that they've built up loyal audiences. In fact, there are quite a few obvious parallels between the Oscar ceremonies and the Hugo or Nebula banquets. The Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award is obviously Hollywood's version of the E.E. Evans Big Heart Award; the "Special Awards for Distinguished Lifetime Contributions to Film" are just a ripoff of our Grand Master Nebulas; and Johnny Carson is trying to do an imitation of Bob Bloch as MC.

Considering all this, maybe it's time we turned tables a bit and appropriated some of the hoopla of the Oscar ceremonies for, say, our Nebula banquets, especially since it's clear that one of their prime purposes is to attract attention from the Great Media Out There. How about a special

production number at the next banquet with Anne McCaffrey, Isaac Asimov, and Juanita Coulson singing a medley of Sci-Fi's Greatest Hits, such as *The Green Hills of Earth*, *Thunder and Roses*, and *The Rocketeers Have Shaggy Ears*? Maybe we could assemble a collage of film clips from past award ceremonies, to include Robert Heinlein appearing miraculously at the door just in time to accept one Hugo after another, or Isaac Asimov announcing a Nebula Award for Gene Wolfe, only to announce as Gene made his way to the podium that actually he'd made a mistake and the actual winner was No Award. ("Accepting for No Award will be Roger Elwood.")

For that matter, maybe the winners of awards should take a cue from the Oscar winners, and give acceptance speeches something like this: "I'd like to thank my agent, Scott Meredith, and my editor, Ben Ferman, and my copyeditor too – where would we authors be without those unsung little people who move our commas around? ha ha – and the cover artist, Kelly DiGaughan, and especially to my instructor at the Clarion Workshop of 1970, who told me, 'Someday, kid, you could be another Lin Carter.'"

Well, maybe we shouldn't go that far. But surely we have to include at the opening of the ceremonies an announcement of the terribly secret method by which the votes have been counted: "Nominations are made by the members of the Science Fiction Writers of America, in a careful evaluation of who their friends are, and are counted by a computer programmed by the members of the MITSFS. The results are a complete secret to everyone except for the employees of the Associated Press and UPI, whom we notified a week ago because we know they won't publish them anyway."

Sidney Coleman makes fairly frequent visits out here, during which times he and I like to go off hiking around the hills of the Bay Area. On a recent visit we went for a walk on Mt. Tamalpais – with mixed results:

It was a beautiful day, for openers; the rains had stopped several days before, we'd had a windy night that cleared the air and made for great vistas from the heights of Mt. Tam (as we old hands call it), and the day dawned bright and sunny. I packed a lunch and Sid and I were off by 11:00, drove up near the top of the mountain and commenced our hike on one of the multitudinous footpaths that run horizontally through the high meadows. The trail petered out after half an hour but we continued on, picking our way through gulleys and copses and pausing to sit on a 30-degree slope and eat lunch while we gazed down on Stinson Beach at the foot of the mountain and Point Reyes curving out in the distance, and we spoke of life, the sweep of

human history and the pretenses to which man is heir. “My friend the Turk is always co-opting famous people from the past as fellow Turks,” said Sid. “He told me, ‘Attila was a Turkish name, you know.’ I said, ‘Ah, you think anybody who rode a horse and was an enemy of civilization is a close relative.’ He turned to his wife and said perfectly deadpan, ‘We don’t know anyone named Geronimo, do we?’”

Sid also told me that the Israeli word for headlight is “silb”. That’s the singular, of course: one headlight. Two headlights are called *silbim*. (Isn’t that trademarked? Will the makers of Sealbeam headlights try legal action to remove this word from the Hebrew language, as Coca-Cola tried to suppress “Coke” as a generic word for colas?) In return I told him the derivation of the word *silhouette*: it was named for Etienne de Silhouette, Minister of Finance in Paris in 1759. He was very strict in economic matters and anything done cheaply and sparsely was nicknamed “à la Silhouette”.

Refreshed by our lunch and the intelligence of our conversation, we continued our hike – and “turned left at the wrong pine tree”, as Sid later put it. We got lost in the middle of a manzanita forest, had to force our way through the trees by breaking down branches, and were soon descending a steep slope through endless pines and ferns. The forest seemed endless, and eventually we realized we weren’t going to get out of it till we’d gone all the way to the bottom, to the town of Stinson Beach. We ended up following a fast and rocky creek whose falls were frequently rather clifflike, forcing us to cross and recross the creek, chancing a slip and a broken leg every time. But we got out without mishap, coming out in the back yard of an old woman who was tending her garden and seemed a bit nonplused to see two sweaty strangers emerge from the trees. We hitchhiked back up to the car and got home only an hour and a half late.

“It was an Adventure,” I told Sid. He agreed: “The only thing that can be said for stupidity is that it leads to adventure.”

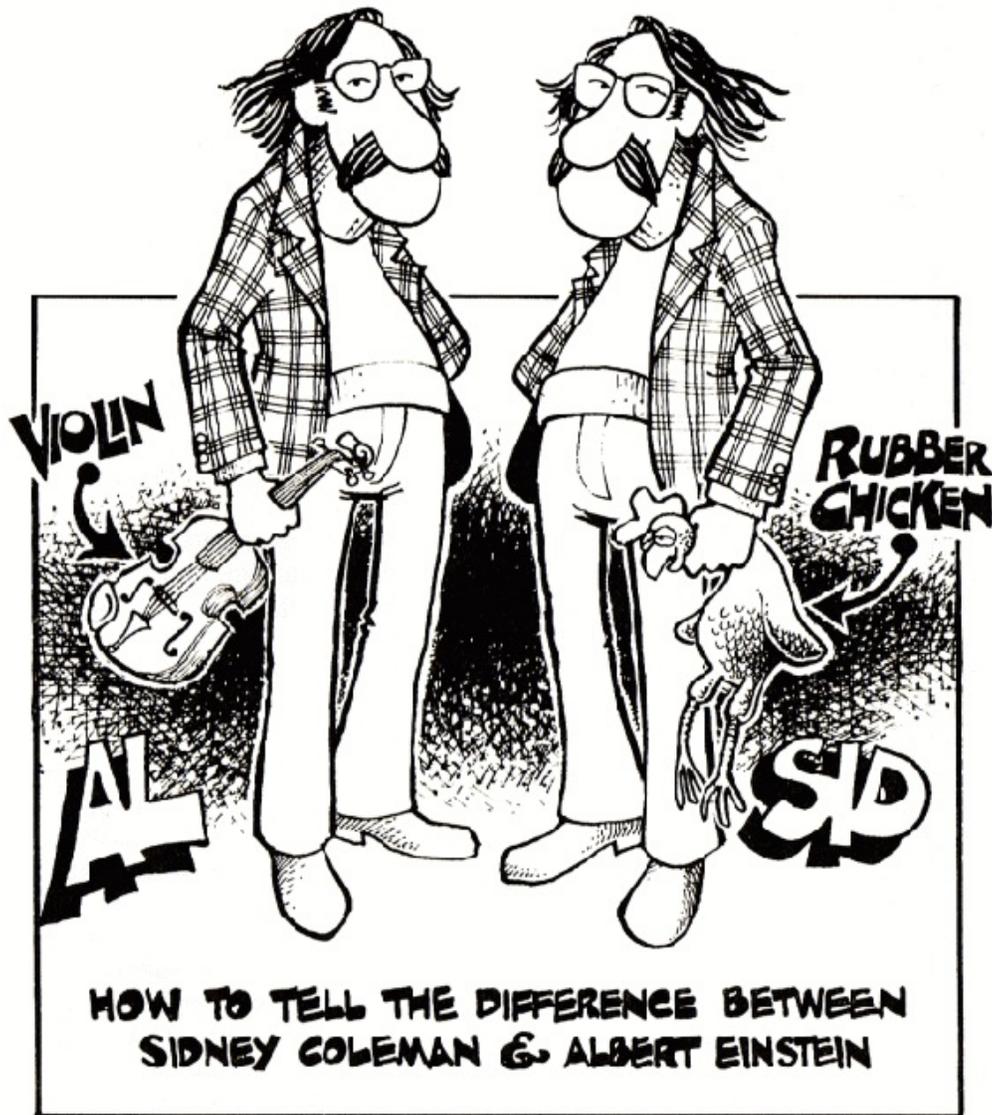
So we arrived late but contented at Lou and Cynthia Goldstone’s for dinner. Also there that evening were Tim and Jewel Lobdell, old friends of Steve and Grania Davis with whom the Goldstones have become friendly. Sid was a bit worried about the possibility that he might have picked up a dose of poison oak during our hegira, but Jewel explained that some people are immune to it. “If you haven’t had it by your age, you’ll probably never get it,” she said.

“That’s what all the girls tell me,” said Sid.

At another point Tim was telling us that he'd grown up in a section of Brooklyn where all his classmates were Jews. "I didn't even know I wasn't Jewish myself," he said. "When did you find out?" Carol asked him, and Sid was abruptly thrown into a fantasy: "It was at the age of thirteen," he said. "His father came to him and told him, 'Boychik, there is something I must tell you. Ve are goyim.' 'Oy gevalt!'"

We weren't able to go hiking the next weekend because the rains came back, so our recreations had to be indoor ones. Friday night we had dinner out with Sid's brother and sister-in-law, at a local steak-and-lobster house where our waiter confessed rather queasily that he was a vegetarian. (He also said to Sid as we were leaving, "Pardon me, but has anyone ever told you that you look remarkably like Albert Einstein?" Since *everyone* has told Sid this, he gave his standard reply: "Actually, the effect I was aiming at was more like Ringo Starr.")

Saturday afternoon Sid and I sublimated our energies with a game of Scrabble. Let me warn one and all: don't play Scrabble with Sidney Coleman if you have any particular ego investment in winning, because he plays the game like Jimmy Connors plays tennis. At one juncture, while the game was still close, I mentioned to him that he'd added his score wrong and given himself an extra ten points – so he took off the ten points and then scored 160 points on his next two moves. Aargh. The hell of it was that he did it using letters none of which was worth more than three points. (I once did beat Sid at a game of Scrabble, but that was solely because I made a 90-point play on the last turn of the game; I'm sure if Sid had had another move and seven vowels in his hand he'd have scored 200 points by forming the name of some Hawaiian flower.)



You think conventions are getting preposterously expensive? I've thought so for quite a while. I remember once sitting around with Carol, Marta Randall, and Ed Bryant in the plush surroundings of L.A.'s Century Plaza and drawing up plans for the "Expensicon", which would be held in a hotel where there's a coin slot next to every closet and if you don't drop in a quarter each hour the hangers automatically deposit your clothes on the floor. Anyone can attend the Banquet free, but there's a glass partition between the stage and the audience, so if you want to hear what's being said you have to pay for earphones. (When Heinlein's speaking, the earphones clamp onto your head and you have to pay a dollar to get them off.) Checkout time is 8:30 a.m., and your room rent doubles every five minutes thereafter; if you don't make it by

9:00, you have to wait till the next day. The hot water in the showers requires a nickel a minute, and you can't deposit more than a nickel at a time. Room service is handled by the Mafia.

Then there are the coin slots for the elevators – a nickel to get in, and too bad if the elevator's full. Plus a quarter to get out, of course. The Masquerade costs only three dollars, but you can't leave till it's over unless you can *prove* that you're *really* about to throw up. (By the time you've proven it, it's too late.) The panels have varying rates: two dollars for "How I Got Into Fandom", with panelists from the seventies; 50¢ for the same panel with unknowns like Lee Hoffman, Bob Shaw, Ted White, and Ed Wood. Five dollars for the Jerry Pournelle interview and also for the "Women in SF" panel that's being held at the same time, but you may pass from one to the other if you wish. The film program is \$4 for anyone not dressed as Yoda.

The airlines give you a special Convention Rate: 50% extra. This helps assure that most of the convention attendees will be local walk-ins.

Somebody asked me "What's new?" at a party at Liz Lynn's, and all I could say was, "Gee, I dunno, I mean, life goes on and I meet different people and I do this and that, but when you come right down to it, my life's just the same and only the names and places change sometimes." She took a toke and said, "You know, I'm not really up to any cosmic discussions right now." I said, "Sorry, I really wish I could tell you that my entire life has changed in the past two days, but that just isn't true."

– And by one of those Laws of Fate, a brief silence had happened in the room as I was talking, so everyone heard me say, "...my entire life has changed in the past two days..."

Soon I discovered that even though people had started talking again, most of them kept casting sidelong glances at me, and this made me feel so strange that I excused myself and went into the kitchen to pour myself a healthy slug of Perrier water. (It was that time of night.)

September 1983:

Patrick and Teresa don't believe in the existence of Sidney Coleman, that fannish bon vivant about whom I've been telling stories for twenty years. Every time I begin to launch into a new anecdote of Sid's exploits, a cynical expression appears on their faces and they say, "Ah yes, Sidney Coleman – how's his grandmother in Sacramento?"

But Sid really does exist, and there are now documents on file in the

Alameda County Courthouse to prove it. Yesterday, you see, he was married there – to Diana Teschemacher (now Diana Coleman), a distant relative of the legendary 1920s jazz clarinetist Frank Teschemacher. Sid and Diana came out to the Bay Area a week or so ago for a visit, scheduling their marriage during their stay here because Sid’s family lives here.

They had to get blood tests first, of course, and Sid was directed to the County Health Clinic for these. “We walked in and found that everybody working in there was Hispanic,” Sid told me. “I didn’t know whether to ask for blood tests or the number three combination plate. The walls were covered with pictures of Third World families with carefully limited numbers of well-fed, healthy children. After the blood tests, they gave Diana a wedding present of a diaphragm.”

They were married yesterday in the Alameda County Courthouse, and last night Carol and I had dinner with them to celebrate. Afterward we came back to our house and proceeded to get sercon, as *Pong*’s editors would put it. We talked of many things, among them the method by which Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle collaborate on their novels. “They both have word processors,” Sid said, “and they’re connected by telephone lines so that each of them can feed his day’s writing to the other’s word processor; then the other one makes suggestions for changes and they arrive at a final draft that way.”

The Silicon Valley industrial espionage scandal is big news in the Bay Area right now, and this gave me an idea. “Literary espionage via computer-tapping programs!” I cried. “You plug into their word processors and steal the text of their next novel and then sell it for publication before their book comes out! Then you go back to your computer tap and *rewrite* their book, so they won’t be able to sue you!”

Sid seemed to feel that this idea was sound, and we went on to talk of other forms of technological manipulation. It started when Diana said she thought *Star Trek* fandom was a blight on the face of science fiction. “If only it had never gotten started, things would be so much better,” she said.

“That’s it!” cried Sid. “What we need is a time machine. You know the old science fiction theme of going back in time to murder Hitler – instead, we as true science fiction fans will go back to kill Bjo Trimble before she could organize *Star Trek* fandom! Only Bjo had the contacts and the organizational abilities to get that movement going. We’d be doing a great service for contemporary esthetics!”

Well, maybe. Sid went on to expound upon the concept of kitschmeisters. "It's a tightly controlled guild," he said. "For your rite of passage they send you alone into the forest with nothing but a penny, which you have to change, using nothing but your teeth, into a souvenir cable-car token. Even then, before you're accepted into the guild, they give you a gross of ashtrays and you have to paint Taiwan telephone booths on the bottom of each of them."

It was, as you can see, a high-level intellectual conversation. But all good things come to an end, and at 11:00 Sid told us he and Diana had to leave. "We newly weds have certain obligations," he said. "There must be blood on the sheets and all that. Sorry, but we have to make these sacrifices."

"For God's sake, Sid, don't slash your wrists!" I implored as we ushered them out the door.

I'm sure he didn't. So remember, Patrick and Teresa, Sidney Coleman lives!

July 4 and 5, 1982, were the dates for the first Berkeley Writer's Conference, organized by Debbie Notkin and Lizzy Lynn and held in a two-room suite at the Marriott. Despite its name (chosen for obscure purposes) and the presence of a number of writers, this was basically just a non-con, occasioned by the fact that absolutely no one from the Bay Area was interested in attending the Westercon in Phoenix. "Phoenix in July?" we cried, remembering how hot it had been during Iguanacon. (Miriam Knight had set off barefoot across the baking plaza to go to the huckster room but had to turn back when her feet began to blister; those of us wearing shoes hadn't fared much better.)

Carol and I arrived at the suite about 9:30 the first night and found the rooms packed with people: Debbie, Lizzy, Grant Canfield, Rebecca Kurland, Patrick Mason, Steve and Grania Davis, Lisa Goldstein, Larry Verre, Jim Killus, Tom Whitmore, Dave Stout, Rachel Holmen, Jeff Frane, Ellen Leverenz, Dick and Pat Ellington, Mikey Roessner-Herman, and a flock of people from last year's Clarion conference, at which Lizzy had taught.

I was greeted with much enthusiasm. "Oh, Terry, I'm so glad you're here! Where's Sid Coleman?" Everybody expected us to bring Sid with us, but I had to explain that Sid and Diana had sublet an apartment for their stay here and Sid would be along later. "Oh well," said Lizzy; "it's nice to see you anyway."

Debbie said, "I wonder what will happen when Sid and Rebecca are in the same room. Will the Ultimate Joke be made, and the universe die?"

“There’s no nitrous in here,” I pointed out, glancing meaningfully at Larry Verre. “The universe is safe, for tonight anyway.”

I began meeting the new Clarionites. “What year are you?” I would ask, and eventually it struck me that we should designate different symbols for each year, so that I could ask instead, “Oh, you’re from Clarion? What’s your sign?”

I mentioned this to one of them, Terry Boern, who said, “Oh, you mean like The Year of the Killer Flu, The Year of Nervous Breakdowns...”

“That’s every year,” I said. (I’ve taught at Clarion three times, and I know that the amount of work done in just one week by an instructor is harrowing; it must be a lot worse for the writers who are there for six straight weeks.)

I wandered into the other room, where I found Clarionites from somewhat earlier years – Mikey, for instance, and Cherie Wilkerson who’d come up from Long Beach. There were other out-of-towners too: Sherry Gottlieb, Jane Hawkins, Jon Singer. The latter two were busily chatting when I said to Jane, “You came all the way from Seattle to talk with Jon Singer?”

“Well, we do live fifteen hundred miles apart,” said Jon, who lives in Boulder, Colorado.

“Yes I know, but you’re omnipresent, as befits a legend,” I told him. He seemed bemused by this: Jon Singer, the Legend.

A bit later I found myself sitting next to Jon during a lull; he said, “I’ve been learning some interesting things lately.”

I can recognize a topic sentence when I hear one. “What things?”

“Well, I’ve been studying Ericksonian hypnosis. Do you know about that?” I said no and he proceeded to tell me about it at length. It was very interesting, but I kept being distracted by the feeling that I was reading an issue of *Mainstream*.

Debbie came by, and I asked her what she’d thought of the latest *Universe*. “Gee, Terry,” she said, “I really wasn’t crazy about it.”

I said, “That’s what I figured.”

“Really? Why so?”

“Because you didn’t make it a point to tell me how terrific you thought it was, which you’ve always done before. Listen, you have to tell me what you didn’t like and why. Everybody tells me in detail about why they like my anthologies, but nobody gives me any negative feedback. Tell me all about everything you hated.”

She looked faintly nonplused. “Let me smoke some more first,” she said, and went away.

Sid came in, there were loud hosannahs, and after a while I got to talk with him. No ultimate jokes were made (Rebecca was in the other room), but we did make plans to go hiking the next day.

And that was what I did on July 4th: I joined Sid, Diana, and Ellen Leverenz for an eight-mile hike at Sunol Wilderness. I could’ve sworn six of those miles were uphill, but it doesn’t compute. Sunol is one of the local parks set aside for picnicking and nodding politely to resident cows and cruising hawks. The scenery is beautiful, and the weather was perfect: not a cloud in the sky, but not too hot for climbing thirty-degree trails.

We even encountered a couple of the less often seen creatures of the fields. We came to a watering trough for cattle and found two ground squirrels trapped in the water, which had evaporated to so low a point that they couldn’t reach the rim. One of them was desperately lunging out of the water over and over, unsuccessfully. Diana got a fallen oak branch and put it in the trough leaning against the side so that they could climb out. The one that had been making frantic leaps quickly scurried up the branch and disappeared into the tall grass, so drenched that its tail was matted and it looked like a rat. The other one glanced at the branch, shrugged, and continued to laze in the cool water.

When we stopped for lunch a few minutes later we watched hawks circling; I munched my sandwich and said to Diana, “That one up there looks awfully contented; I’ll bet it just caught the squirrel you freed and had it for lunch.... Hey, don’t look so stricken; you’ve merely aided in God’s Plan.”

We continued our hike, and Sid and Diana told us stories of their trip out here from Cambridge. “We stopped at the Corn Palace in Mitchell, South Dakota,” said Sid. “It’s a building filled with tourist attractions, a full city block square – except that Mitchell, South Dakota isn’t a full city – and the roof is decorated with minarets with buffaloes painted on them and American flags flying atop them. All of the walls are richly inlaid with corn bobs.... After one has seen the Corn Palace, one is never the same again. That which was formerly obscure becomes clear, and vice versa.”

He showed us a picture of the building; it had been printed in Australia.

As we climbed on up the hills, we began to fantasize about how to meet women in Marin County singles bars. Sid said, “A good opening line is, ‘Say, didn’t we meet in an earlier incarnation?’”

“And the clincher,” I added, “is, ‘Your ashram or mine?’”

The hike took longer than we’d figured; we didn’t get back down out of the hills till 5:30, and had to hurry back because a big fireworks display was scheduled that evening on the Berkeley Marina near the convention site and nobody would be able to drive in after 7:30. On the 45-minute drive home, Sid explained to us all about the current big news in physics, magnetic monopoles. Theoretically, it seems, there’s no reason all magnets have to be bipolar, but till recently no one’s ever discovered a monopole; now someone at Stanford claims to have found one, but everyone in physics is very dubious. A hoax? “More likely experimental error,” Sid explained.

By this time they were dropping me off at home, where I showered, changed clothes, and ate dinner, but Carol and I decided it was too late to make it to the Marriott before 7:30, so we waited a couple of hours before setting out. I sat down and read a bunch of *Universe* submissions while waiting, putting my tired feet up to rest them a bit.

Good thing I did, because at 9:30 Carol and I still couldn’t drive all the way to the Marriott; we parked across the freeway and hiked in, a twenty-minute walk through hordes of people streaming out from the fireworks display.

When we got to the convention suite, we found a room full of people with balloons. “All *right*,” I said, “where’s the nitrous tank?”

It was in the corner, and we began to partake of it. Mikey Roessner-Herman had evidently been working on it for a while; as she took a hit, I saw her slip to the floor near me.

“Aha, hitting the deck already,” I said.

Her grin didn’t fade a bit. “But I landed *centered*, you’ll notice. I am always centered.”

“I know. When you die, the tombstone will say, ‘Here lies Mikey... dead center’.”

Which was enough to send all the nearby balloonists into flights of laughter. (Larry Verre smiled, like he does.) Aha, I thought, this augurs well for the party: cheap jokes will work.

A little later, according to the flaccidity of my balloon, Grania Davis did her Jewish Mother Trip for the ’80s on me: “Now Terry, be sure to take in some air with it. Think of all those little brain cells struggling for life.”

“What cells?” I muttered. “What brain?” I wandered back to the nitrous tank and found Carol standing next to it, between inhalations conducting a

high-level conversation with Steve Davis.

“You know,” I told her, “at any other convention you immediately head for the bar and stay there all weekend; here I find you ensconced next to the nitrous.”

She chortled. Good party.

In the other room I passed by Ellen Leverenz as someone asked her, “Do you know any monopole jokes?”

“Sure,” she said. “In fact, I know two of them.”

I chalked up a mental point for her and made my way over to Rebecca Kurland. “So listen,” I said, “here you are in the same room with Sid and the world hasn’t come to an end. What happened?”

“Oh, oh jeez, Terry, ever since somebody brought up that I’ve been afraid to get near him. I mean, people would just be disappointed; we have such different styles...”

“That’s true,” I said. “Sid is clever, witty, knowledgeable...”

“And I’m brilliant. No, we wouldn’t mesh.”

Rebecca constantly underestimates herself in this way, I reflected as I drifted on. In fact, I drifted a lot, and the party did too. I ran across Debbie Notkin, who said she was in no condition to tell me why she hadn’t liked *Universe 12*. “The responsibilities of running a convention...” she said vaguely, and went away.

I felt a little vague myself, and merely watched bemusedly as Ellen Leverenz met Jon Singer. “You made that monopole joke,” he said. “Are you a physicist?”

“No; actually I’m a biologist. I’m working on a study of frogs’ ears – they’re very interesting...”

Jon waved a hand. “Let’s not get started.”

Debbie’s eyes grew wide. “Jon! I didn’t think you even *knew* those words!”

And indeed, a little while later, as Carol and I were looking for someone to drive us back to our car, we discovered Ellen busily telling Jon all about the peculiar qualities of frogs’ cilia and such. Poor fellow, he still has too many brain cells, all of them inquisitive. A Faust for the ’80s; he’ll end up selling his soul to somebody wearing Spock ears for the secrets of Vulcan cuisine.

But eventually Carol and I got a ride back to our car, and we left. The party was fading anyway: nobody had made the Ultimate Joke, Jon Singer

still had his soul, and I still didn't know what was wrong with *Universe 12*.
Hell, *I* thought it was terrific.



KARMA

Instant Karma

I had been nominated for the Best Fanwriter Hugo in 1971 and 1972 but placed second both times. When Charlie Brown moved from New York to Oakland in 1972, he persuaded me to write a column for *Locus*, and though the three installments of “Instant Karma” I produced were a small part of my fanzine writing, *Locus*’s high circulation may have tipped the scales: in 1973 I won the Hugo for Best Fanwriter. This was the column in the November 17, 1972 *Locus*.

We’re off to see the Beagles,
Peter and Enid and all.
If ever a Peter S. Beagle there wuz,
Peter S. Beagle’s the one becuz
Becuz, becuz, becuz, becuz, becuz
He’s the one who lives down below Santa Cruz!

The drive from the Oakland Hills to the wilds of Watsonville is beautiful after a rain, and since we had a respite in the rainiest autumn since 1849, the Santa Cruz Mountains were freshly green and glowing in the Sunday sun... exhilarating surroundings just right for composing terrible Ogden Nashian rhymes.

You may think Carol and I were visiting the Beagles because Pete writes fantasy stories, but you’d only be partly right. Pete and Enid are animal people, and we’re connected to them by ties of puppy. That is to say, our three-month-old part-coyote, Kiowa, is the sister of their pup named Maya – in fact, it was they who got Kiowa for us. Pete said, “Come down and meet Kiowa’s sister,” so off we went.

The Beagles live in a long white house at the end of a dirt lane in rural Watsonville, ninety miles from us. The place used to be a farm, but they don’t work the land, contenting themselves with keeping a few horses and ducks and chickens and geese and dogs and cats and turtles and birds and iguanas. Most of these, the smaller ones anyway, live in the house, along with the usual assortment of books and paintings (lots of unicorns) and a boy, Danny, and a girl, Kalisa.

Maya, the new pup, is beautiful: fawn-colored, sleek, gentle, looks just like a coyote. You'd never suspect she's related to our black-and-white klutz, let alone that they're littermates. "You know what Kiowa did?" I said to Pete. "She chewed up the spine of Sprague de Camp's *The Ancient Engineers*." Pete sighed. "Ah well. Someone here ate the spine of *The Lord of the Rings*, but I won't mention her name."

Pete looks exactly like his photo on *The Last Unicorn*; he's warm, intelligent, soft-spoken. Enid is warm, intelligent, and pretty, with long rich blond hair. She's much taken currently with their newest housemate, a flaming red parrot named Homer who hops up and down indignantly when he thinks he isn't getting enough attention. Pete's favorite of the animals seems to be the kestrel falcon, an elegantly beautiful bird who perches on his hand while he feeds it raw meat, speaking gently and occasionally stroking its feathers. Being a bit leery of sharp beaks, I played with the half-dozen dogs and the roomful of cats, wall-to-wall fur of all descriptions, all purring. Makes you feel like a character in *Barbarella*. All Beagle animals are friendly and cuddly; if Dick Ellington's contention that people's pets tell a lot about them is true, then the Beagles lavish a lot of affection on theirs.

Pete writes about a page of manuscript every day, working all day in his tiny office out in the barn. He's done two hundred pages of his new novel about Farrell (see "Farrell and Lila the Werewolf", *New Worlds of Fantasy* 3). "Do you know how it ends yet?" I asked. Pete said, "I can see some of the scenes, but I don't know yet how I'll write them. I like the heroine; I hope Farrell has sense enough to stay with her." Pete is the kind of writer whose characters tell *him* what they're going to do, not vice versa.

Currently he's working on the screenplay for a movie that Gregory Peck is producing, to be directed by the man who did *Anne of a Thousand Days*. It means money in the bank to finance the long months of one-page-a-day novelizing, and Pete writes screenplays quickly. The new one is based on the autobiography of a teenage boy who sailed himself around the world in a small boat. Pete did an earlier one that may go into production next year: "We were talking about monster movies, and we discovered that we always liked the monsters more than the humans. So I wrote this one with the monster as the hero."

Pete is a baseball fan; he and Enid go to Giants games during the season. "But I don't stand up for the National Anthem anymore... unless there are a lot of people sitting near us who are taller than I am." Pete is short. "In fact, I

don't like any national anthem at all except the one of Thailand, or maybe it's one of the other Southeast Asian countries. It begins, 'In the sandal-wood-scented temples of dragonland...' Ah, if only we had a national anthem like that!"

We stayed the afternoon and evening, had dinner, talked of books and animals and baseball and people. A warm, relaxed day. As we began the drive home the rain began again, and it hasn't stopped yet.

MODERN FANNISH TERMS



Fansprach

I'd started working on *Innuendo* 12, the revival issue, in 1971, but after moving back to California I found that the fannish muse had left me, taking with it my enthusiasm for *Inn* 12; the stencils for the new issue lay dormant. I did manage to generate enough enthusiasm in 1974 to write an editorial for the new issue, but other matters commanded my time, so I used the material for the editorial in my FAPAazine, *Diaspar* 16, November 1974.

"You and I are in the backwaters of today's fandom," Charlie Brown told me.

This was the same Charlie Brown who copublishes *Locus*, the indispensable newszine that is *Fanac*'s successor on the material plane. (*Fanac* has no spiritual successor in today's soulless fandom, as you know.) It was the same Charlie Brown who just a year ago was undergoing querulous attacks from all fannish quarters because *Locus* had won so many Hugos.

"I can't keep up with all these new fans," Charlie told me. "They're all named Mike, for one thing. Mike Glicksohn, Mike Glycer, Mike Gorra – who can tell them apart? Their last names all start with G."

"Mike Glicksohn wears a hat and drinks IPA," I explained kindly. "Mike Glycer is the only Mike G who lives on the west coast. Mike Gorra is a football player who makes a lot of typos in his fanzines. He's probably an offensive line-man."

"Who is Mike Gorra?" Bob Silverberg asked.

"Who is Gregory Kern?" Charlie countered.

"I think it's Brett Sterling under a penname," I said kindly. Turning to Bob, I said, "Mike Gorra published *Banshee*, the fanzine that had an article by Burbee in which he said you reminded him of a beer can."

Bob pondered this. He said, "That must be because Burbee regards beer cans as the source of truth and beauty."

"Yes, that was how he explained it," I said.

"I mean," said Bob, "I'm not shaped like a beer can – I'm smaller on top than I am in the middle."

"Well, maybe he meant you remind him of a crushed beer can," said I.

We were standing at the checkout counter of our local Lucky supermarket, the secret meeting place of Fabulous Oakland Fandom. I often

run into famous Oakland fans there.

Sometimes they run into me. In fact, just then Dena Brown ran over my foot with her shopping cart. “Hi, Terry,” she said kindly.

“I hope your shopping cart is insured,” I said.

“Why? Did I hurt your foot?”

“No, but I have whiplash,” I said. I writhed in semblance of agony.

“I can’t keep up with these new fannish dances,” said Charlie.

“You can’t get whiplash from getting your foot run over,” Dena told me reprovingly.

“It’s possible,” I said in my best Tatum O’Neil imitation. “Stranger things have happened. Didn’t you sprain your foot just by walking around at the Westercon?”

Dena is always coming down with weird maladies. Last year she hobbled around on crutches for months because she’d damaged the cartilage in her knee. “I’ve been watching too much football on television,” she explained. So I lent her my copy of *The Thinking Man’s Guide to Pro Football*, hoping that would enable her to get through at least the pre-season without injury. But on the last day of the Westercon, distracted by thoughts of driving 350 miles home, she sprained her foot while walking to the car. I did most of the driving home.

“I should’ve gotten you a copy of *The Thinking Woman’s Guide to Pro Football*,” I said to her as we passed through King City, “but no one’s ever written one.”

“None of your sexist remarks,” she said.

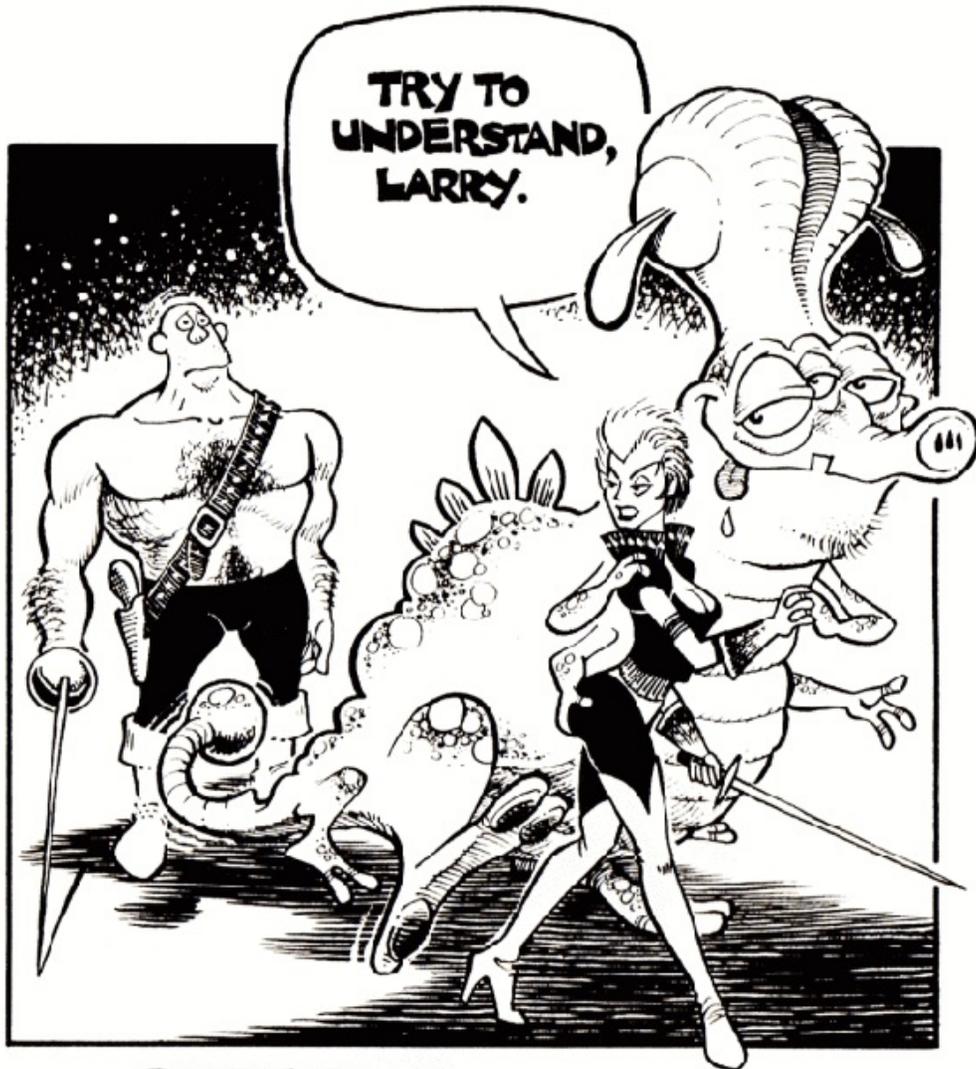
“I am not now nor have I ever been a sexist,” I said (rather wistfully). “I’ve always felt that persons are as equal as men.”

We passed a young person whose air of wholeness struck me as extremely manifest. “Wow,” I said, “did you see the bazooms on that person?”

“I can’t keep up with all these modern fannish terms,” said Charlie.

“Neither can I,” I said consolingly. “You’re right, we’re both in the backwaters of today’s fandom. But it doesn’t bother me. I think of myself as a bright flower in the quiet backwaters of fandom while the hectic mainstream rushes by, bubbling and frothing on its way to the latest Planet of the Apes convention.”

After a moment Dena said, “I think David Gerrold is funnier,” cutting off the conversation and everything else.



**SUPERIOR
ALIEN
TECHNIQUE**

You've Come a Long Way, Baby

In recent years I've done a lot of public speaking, so let's end this compilation with one of my speeches. This one was delivered at Oregon State University on March 5, 1975 and later published as the Guest Editorial in *Amazing* for November 1975. However, I wasn't paid for it, so this counts as fanwriting.

I must add that no one in 1975 knew that James Tiptree, Jr. was actually a penname for Alice B. Sheldon.

I wish I'd been able to arrange to have a screen set up here, and a slide projector, because I'd like to be able to illustrate what I say tonight with pictures. As it is, I guess I'll have to wave my hands a lot.

You know those ads for Virginia Slims cigarettes, the ones that say "You've Come a Long Way, Baby"? They always start with a faked photo from about 1910, done in sepia tone, showing Mrs. Elspeth Suffragette sneaking a cigarette in the wings after the premiere performance of *Rite of Spring*, only to be discovered by her husband, who turns her over his knee and spansks her. Then they go on to show us how much improved women's position is today – a sleek and sexy model stands in the midst of a group of admirers, boldly smoking a cigarette while several of the men try to cop feels on her pack of Virginia Slims.

Well, I don't know about you, but I find these ads extremely funny, in a black-humor way. What they're really saying is that we've progressed so far in the last sixty-five years that we now allow women the right to kill themselves however they see fit to do it.

There's been a lot of discussion lately about how science fiction, always in the forefront of western culture, has reflected the growing emancipation of women. People point to writers like Ursula Le Guin, Joanna Russ, Pamela Sargent, and Vonda McIntyre as examples of how much serious attention we're giving to women authors these days, and they say that time when male thoughts and male values defined the ideas of science fiction has gone forever. There is, in fact, a lot of truth in that – we've always had women science fiction writers, from Leigh Brackett to Margaret St. Clair to Zenna Henderson, but their acceptance and popularity in science fiction has usually been based on traditional sexist values; i.e., Leigh Brackett was and is such

an accomplished writer of adventure stories that she's earned the Ultimate Accolade, "she writes like a man"; Margaret St. Clair broke into science fiction writing stories about a suburban married couple of the future named Oona and Jik, who faced dire problems like garbage disposals that sucked their whole kitchen into the fourth dimension; and Zenna Henderson has always written stories about rural lady school-teachers who showed their feminine sensitivity toward telepathic alien children.

Modern sf novels like *The Left Hand of Darkness* and *The Female Man* are a great step forward, but the suspicion remains that these presentations of non-male consciousness have been so widely accepted by the men in the audience because they just seem like views into the minds of one other kind of alien creature: women. (Years ago James Gunn wrote a story built around the idea that women actually are aliens from another world – after all, women are able to find things their husbands can't, like socks and ties they've misplaced; and women have cold, clammy feet at night in bed.)

Well, it's true that the revolution hasn't completely won out in science fiction, but I can tell you that women really have come a long way. See, I'm editing an anthology for Harper & Row titled *Classic Science Fiction: The First Golden Age*, which will reprint the best stories from 1940 to 1942, and naturally this has required me to read all the science fiction magazines published during those years. Some of the things I've run across in those old stories are *really* eye-opening, and in the spirit of good clean black humor I'd like to share them with you.

The early '40s were the heart of the pulp-magazine era in science fiction, when every magazine seemed to have a cover showing a half-naked woman wearing only a skimpy brass brassiere and a brass chastity belt, with a huge alien monster leering and clutching at her with his tentacles. This might sound, offhand, like a typical scene in the life of any woman, but those covers were aimed at men, not women – so in addition to the woman and the monster, they always featured a heavily-muscled hero who swept the lady behind him as he pointed his ray-gun at the beast.

(In case the women in the audience miss the archetypal relevance of this scene to men, I refer you to a novel by Dan Greenberg titled *Chewsdays*, in which the hero wakes up in the middle of the night imagining he hears some slimy monster emerging from the coal cellar, obviously come to rape his wife, and he breaks into a cold sweat, because *who knows*, maybe this monster has better technique in bed than he does.)

Most of the women in those stories of thirty-five years ago were either delicate flowers who cried “What does it all *mean*, Rock?” and then fainted dead away, or, if they had any strength of character, they were cold-hearted temptresses who were out to take over the Earth and do unspeakable things to men, like telling them their peepes were too small. Some representative titles from the period were “The Dragon-Queen of Jupiter”, “Princess of Chaos”, and “Prisoner of the Brain-Mistress”.

You see, thirty-five years ago science fiction was almost the exclusive province of male readers. John W. Campbell, who was at that time the king of the science fiction editors, always wrote long chatty editorials in *Astounding* that had the style of an after-dinner speaker at the Elks Club. When he previewed van Vogt’s *Slan*, he wrote, “Gentlemen, it’s a lulu!”

The best one-line summation I’ve ever seen of the attitude of early science fiction toward women was in a story by Sewell Peaslee Wright titled “Priestess of the Flame”, published in 1932; he wrote: “Women have their great and proper place, even in a man’s universe.” But to get the real feeling these writers had toward women, you have to notice not the philosophical epigrams of self-conscious pulp writers, nor even the amount of quivering female flesh displayed on the covers of those old magazines, but rather, the offhand, taken-for-granted remarks that showed up in the course of the stories published there. For instance, here’s a conversation between a man and a woman that appeared in Frank Belknap Long’s story “Brown”, published in *Astounding* in 1941. The man is a space explorer, trying to explain to his fiancée why he feels he has to leave her side to go off on one more space trip:

He: “The urge to reach out, to cross new frontiers, is a biological constant.”

She: “It isn’t in me. A woman seeks new frontiers in a man’s arms.”

Or how’s this? – from a story by S.D. Gottesman in a 1942 issue of *Future Fantasy & Science Fiction*:

“Art and I were desperately in love with Miss Earle. Despite her obvious physical charms, we discovered that she was a woman of much brain-capacity.”

It makes you wonder if the standards of feminine beauty in those days included a sloping forehead and a small brainpan.

Here’s a quote from a story by Nelson S. Bond in a 1942 issue of *Amazing Stories*:

The heroine has just seen, for the first time, the time machine that her

boyfriend has invented. The author writes, “Helen, being a woman, got right down to fundamentals. ‘It’s not streamlined,’ she said. ‘I don’t like the color, and the dashboard isn’t pretty. Where’s the cigarette lighter?’”

Even when the women in these stories aren’t behaving like Stepford wives – even when they figure out the solution to some problem that’s baffled the hero – their thought-processes are shown as being no better than those of an actor in a commercial for some new instant coffee. David H. Keller wrote a story called “The Pit of Doom” that appeared in a 1942 issue of *Future*; it included a scene in which the hero and heroine were attacked by hideous flying monsters. After the hero has fought them off, the heroine tells him the creature that attacked her was a female. “How do you know?” he asks, and she says:

“Feminine intuition. That one who had me when you killed it was not trying to tear my throat ... She was trying to get the jade necklace ... A man would not have acted that way.”

Well, all right; these examples just go to show how little the male writers of those days knew about women. What about female writers? Was their consciousness as badly in need of raising as the men’s was?

To my mind, the greatest woman writer of the pulp era of science fiction was Leigh Brackett, who took the hackneyed materials of space opera and made from them a long series of beautiful and poetic stories. Her plots, her backgrounds, and her characters were cut from the same cloth as the works of he-man adventure writers like Edgar Rice Burroughs and Robert E. Howard, but she was frequently able to transcend the form in which she wrote. In a 1942 *Astounding Stories*, she wrote a story in which monsters come out of the Pacific Ocean to attack humans, and when one of the monsters wraps its slimy tentacles around her heroine, Brackett writes: “Her face was set with terror, but she didn’t scream. She fought.”

A little later, after the monsters have been driven off, the hero asks her, “Why haven’t you fainted?” The heroine says simply, “I haven’t had the *time*.”

You might wonder why in the world any sensible man would want to hang around with women of such delicate temperaments that the merest touch of a slimy, malevolent beastie would be a good excuse for them to cop out into unconsciousness, but that would only show that you don’t understand men any more than they understand women. These heroines were only the kind of women of whom pulp-magazine readers dreamed thirty-five years

ago, after all; they have nothing to do with the kind of women men want today. To prove that, let me give you a description of the Perfect Woman, as described in a 1940 science fiction story. This is from one of the “Adam Link” series by Eando Binder, which recounted the adventures of a super-strong, super-smart robot – named Adam Link – whose only difference from the traditional robot was that he had human emotions. Which meant, among other things, that he found one day that he wanted a wife.

At first, Adam Link didn’t understand what it was that was lacking in his life; but finally his best friend, a human man, noticed the way he was moping around, shedding rust, and he reminded him that “...I suggested you make another robot, give it the feminine viewpoint, and you were automatically her lord and master!”

This stuck Adam Link as a good idea, so he promptly went to his laboratory (every character in pulp science fiction stories had a laboratory, even the robots) and he made a robot with the feminine viewpoint. You’ll probably be astonished to hear that he named her Eve Link. And what was she like, this perfect wife he created? Well, here’s Binder’s description:

“She was demure, but not meek. She was intelligent, but did not flaunt it. Deeper than that, she was sweet, loyal, sincere.”

Now does that sound to you like the kind of wife a man of 1975 would manufacture for himself? No no, we’ve progressed far beyond such crude ambitions. Haven’t we?

Last year Joanna Russ and Poul Anderson wrote articles in *Vertex* about the image of women in science fiction, and Poul pointed out that “already in its youth American science fiction was more favorable to women than any other pulp writing...” (What a nasty thing to say about other pulp writing.) As one instance, Poul referred to the Gerry Carlyle series of stories, written in the early ’40s by Arthur K. Barnes, as showing “a woman operating independently on the interplanetary frontier.” So I made it a point to pay particular attention to the Gerry Carlyle stories, and – in Poul’s words about something Joanna said – “There is a measure of truth here, but also a great deal to mislead.”

Gerry Carlyle was an interplanetary hunter, and she was the greatest of all interplanetary hunters, bringing back slimy-tentacled beastie after slimy-tentacled beastie, with nary a faint. In one of his stories in a 1941 *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, Barnes wrote:

“Gerry Carlyle had fought her way to the top of the most exacting of all

professions. Success was not won by resort to feminine stratagem, nor by use of her amazing beauty. Gerry scorned such wiles. In a man's world, she competed with men on their own terms. Her success was due to hard work, brains, courage, and the overwhelming effect of her forceful personality."

Now *that*, by damn, is a description of a woman any of us could live with, even today.

I liked it so much I kept on reading the story – and guess what happened? When the climactic fight-scene came, Gerry's fiancé Tommy Strike waded into the fray, and Barnes wrote:

"Gerry stood staring at Strike with her lips parted, her eyes shining. She was experiencing that strange emotion – a compound of awe, fright and admiration – that every woman knows when she sees the man she loves in two-fisted action."

Well, listen, this story was written thirty-five years ago for an audience of mostly adolescent pulp-magazine readers, so we shouldn't be too surprised. Anyway, in the end Gerry Carlyle outwitted the villain all by herself, so who cares if her boyfriend got in a few punches first?

Still, if that was the best science fiction could offer then in the way of depicting an "independent woman", you'll have to admit that we've really come a long way since. A couple of years ago Joanna Russ wrote a short story called "When It Changed", which appeared in *Again, Dangerous Visions*; it opened with a lost Earth colony on some distant planet where all the men died long ago and the women learned to reproduce parthenogenetically. They've established a workable and happy society and pretty much forgotten, over the centuries, that men ever existed. Then a spaceship from Earth happens to land on the planet, rediscovering this lost colony, and the men in the crew go around looking amazed at how plucky and resourceful the little ladies have been, and telling them rather pityingly that their long exile is over, *The Men Are Here*. The women just look at them blankly and wonder what the hell they're talking about.

The story promptly won the Nebula Award as the best short story of the year.

Okay, so that's one blow for sexual rationality, struck by a woman science fiction writer. What are the *men* writing these days?

Well, at least they seldom have their woman characters faint at the drop of a tentacle. But there are still stories appearing that display some odd ideas about women. The most startling example of this was a novelette by Philip K.

Dick that appeared last year in *Fantasy & Science Fiction*, called “The Pre-Persons”. As it happens, it’s a very clever, witty story – as you might expect from Phil Dick, who’s one of the best writers in science fiction today. But it’s also... Well, let me tell you a little about it.

The time is the not-too-distant future, when the United States has passed a law making it possible for parents to have their children executed at any time up to the age of twelve, at which point a child is legally defined as having a soul and therefore ineligible for execution. (The rationale is that once a kid can do higher math, like calculus, then he or she has a soul.) Now, you might assume this has nothing to do with sexism, since it isn’t only male children who get snuffed out, but girls too. However, the story is actually a protest against the liberalization of abortion laws, which is primarily a feminist issue, and the villain of the story is the hero’s wife, who is depicted as a castrating bitch completely lacking in maternal instinct.

At one point she says to her husband, “Let’s have an abortion! Wouldn’t that be neat? Doesn’t that turn you on?” She isn’t even pregnant; she was to have her I.U.D. removed so she can *get* pregnant, so she can have an abortion. She says, “It’s the in thing now, to have an abortion.”

A little later, the hero wonders to himself, “Where did the motherly virtues go to? When mothers *especially* protected what was small and weak and defenseless?”

When this story appeared, a number of women took exception to it. So did a number of men. Still, you have to admit it was a story that couldn’t have been written for a 1940 science fiction magazine: even misunderstanding between the sexes has achieved a degree of sociological sophistication since the early days.

And there are some male writers in the field today who are able to show some insight into the female point of view. A little over a year ago, James Tiptree, Jr. published a story – again in *Fantasy & Science Fiction*, the same magazine that published the Phil Dick story – called “The Women Men Don’t See”. It tells of two women, completely alienated from our male-dominated society, who meet some creatures from another planet who have come here exploring; the women promptly, with no hesitation at all, ask to leave Earth with the aliens’ expedition.

As one of the women says to the narrator of the story, “I’m used to aliens.” And he says, “Men and women aren’t different species. Women do everything men do.”

She says, “Do they? All the huge authoritarian organizations for doing unreal things. Men live to struggle against each other; we’re just part of the battlefields.”

He says, “Men hate wars too.”

And she shrugs, and says, “I know. But that’s your problem, isn’t it?” Then she gets into the aliens’ ship and takes off for spaces unknown.

We really have come a long way, people.

And right here, more than at any other time, I’d like to have that slide projector and screen to set up, so that I could show you my idea for a science fictional variation on those Virginia Slims ads. It would start with a reproduction of an old pulp magazine cover, done in sepia tone, showing Gerry Carlyle sneaking a smoke beneath a Venusian *tobac* bush while a slimy-tentacled monster roars down on her intent on doing God-knows-what. And it would end with Gerry going calmly off into the bushes with the alien beastie – because who knows, maybe he *does* have better technique than we do.

Unsolicited Afterword

John-Henri Holmberg

“I think it’s a wonderful thing that when you grow up, you want to emulate your father.”

“I wouldn’t do that! I *like* my father!”

– *The Smothers Brothers*

People have different ambitions. Some of us want to become President; others dream of being the first man on Mars; I have heard of a few wanting to climb the Southwest Face of Everest, making a billion dollars, winning the novel Hugo, or editing the Ultimate Fanzine. As for myself, basing my life and career on those of Terry Carr may seem like a peculiar ambition, but has nonetheless been the core of close to twenty-five years of fan existence.

Let me tell you how this all came about.

A long time ago, when I was thirteen and had just published my first fanzine, a famous Swedish fan on the verge of *gafia* gave me a box of fanzines he had otherwise intended to throw out. I spent the next several weeks poring over this treasure; the box contained hundreds of Swedish and foreign fanzines, many of them already old and a few of them in languages I couldn’t read.

Some of them I read over and over, and a few of them I have never forgotten. They shaped my fannish career. And those that struck me most powerfully were a stack of *Fanacs* and another small pile containing a few issues each of *Innuendo* and *Void*.

This is probably in itself rather weird. At the time I was the fairly typical neofan of those days: slightly overweight, clever enough to be able to cut all gym classes at school while still retaining a passing grade in gymnastics (this was due to a mutually satisfactory business arrangement with my gym teacher; I did the posters for his student travel business, and he gave me a C), totally immersed in Robert A. Heinlein’s juveniles and all set for the imminent arrival of the space age or at least a shipload of kindly aliens. I lived and dreamed science fiction, and the fanac I was involved with was all very serious and, if you excuse the word, constructive. But then so was Swedish fandom; the leading fanzines of those days were (aptly) named

Science Fiction News, *Science Fiction Times*, and *Science Fiction Forum*, and when someone wanted to put a little fun and games into it he would publish a oneshot called *Forum Scientiae Fictiva*. We were indeed a bunch of hardcore stf types in Sweden.

But I had these fanzines, and I spent the nights alone in my room in my parents' house in Stockholm reading through them and gradually I was transformed. Ganymede and Alpha Centauri might still be okay in their way, but they were as nothing compared to the paradisaical Berkeley which began to take form before my inner vision. And in a choice between meeting Oscar the spacesuit and the Grey Lensman, or Boob Stewart and Carl Brandon, what was there really to choose? My views of fandom shifted alarmingly, I folded the very serious fanzines I had been publishing, and spent the next years trying to find more pieces by these fabulous Americans who had reached out to touch my soul across thousands of miles and several years by means of a slightly damp cardboard box. Instead of yearning to travel to the stars I started to yearn for Towner Hall.

Like the young Clark Kent I had found my miraculous North Pole dome of instruction, and when I finally set out from it to return to active fan life, it was perhaps not really as Superman but as close as I could get: from 1964 on, most of my worthwhile fan writings were published under the penname 'Carl J Brandon, Jr'. I started a Swedish imitation *Fanac* and later a fannish personalzine called *Gafiac*, both as by Carl, who soon became a popular Swedish fan in his own right. And the type of material Carl wrote was different from anything so far written in Swedish fandom: through the late sixties and throughout the seventies, a sometimes dominant fannish strain faithfully modelled on the kind of fannishness which characterized *Innuendo* and *Void* and *Lighthouse* developed in Sweden. Those who have no first-hand knowledge of fandom on the European continent may not find this terribly strange; I can assure you that it is. Swedish fannishness is American in tone and content, and so very different from its counterparts in Italy, France, or Germany. Swedish fans have seen the Light: few of them are unaware of Roscoe, they faithfully insert the extra "H" into otherwise disgustingly mundane words, they have been known to gather at convention parties to tell apocryphal stories of Burbee, Laney, Eney, and Ted White.

Which all, I guess, is some kind of illustration of the claim that people are supposed to create their own environment. Being too young and too far away to have been a part of the real Berkeley fandom, I had to make my own

Berkeley fandom at the time and place where I happened to be. Which is how Terry Carr came to be the Secret Master even of Swedish fandom, and how this book came to exist. It's not just a testimonial monument, you see. It is really an insidious attempt to snare the minds of today's fan generation away from the latest *Star Wars* concordance and make them over into the kind of fannish writers there used to be – the kind characterized by the outmoded ambition of having something of their own to say.

A few years ago I was talking to a couple of other fans, and someone suggested that since I did have a publishing company, even if small, why not hasten its economic downfall by publishing books of fan writings? Peculiarly, this struck me as a great idea, mostly because I came to think of Terry Carr. And this is where I will say a few quite serious words, because there is, as I hope you have discovered for yourself unless you happen to be one of those types who read afterwords before starting on books, something very special about Terry's fan writings.

The two words which come to my mind are “thoughtful” and “compassionate”.

Terry has written just about every kind of material imaginable in fanzines, from news notices, fan fiction and parodies to mailing comments, columns, major essays and personal reminiscence. But no matter what the form of his writing, it has always been distinguished by the fact that he has refrained from writing at all unless he has had something to say: some previously not thought of or obvious idea, comment or aspect to put forth. His thoughtfulness obviously does not lead to dullness or earnestness; rather, as in all good humorists, it stems simply from the fact that he takes things seriously. If anything is worth doing at all, including being funny, it is worth doing well, worth being discussed and improved. Throughout this book you will find his thoughts on fandom: why it exists, what it means, what it can offer and what may be important about it. They are worth taking very serious notice of.

Again, even at his funniest, Terry's writings are low-key, personal, and compassionate. He does not stoop to the all too common fannish custom of being funny at the expense of someone else. Terry Carr's humor is wry and ironical more often than slapstick, understated more often than not. And the most striking aspect of it is, to me, that Terry cares about the people he writes about. Even when they behave peculiarly or madly, they are still friends, still people, and still worthy of respect.

It may be that it is by this particular aspect of Terry's writing I have been most impressed, and most influenced – the fact that he does care, does write about other fans with understanding and compassion even when reporting on their most grotesque antics. In this he differs from most other humorists, both in and out of fandom.

As this afterword, I notice, is starting to differ alarmingly from the slightly strained witticisms you normally expect from publishers who put their two cents' worth into the books they issue. So I'll add just one more thing.

The sad truth, you see, is that I don't really know Terry Carr. Although I've met him a few times at the odd (and sometimes even odder) convention, I find that I still somehow regard him with much of the same awe I felt at thirteen when his *Innuendo* pieces revealed a whole new kind of fandom to me, and so I often feel that I shouldn't impose on him. After all, a Swedish neo can't hold that much interest to a truly big name fan.

But on the other hand, in another way, I do believe that I know Terry Carr, just as you probably to some extent know any writer whose work you have read, and lived with, and been influenced by. Through his writing I have at least formed a very distinctive picture of Terry Carr the fan, as well as of Terry Carr the man.

And that fan, and man, is a person whom I like very much indeed. Which is something you can say all too seldom of the personalities glimpsed through books or fanzines, and which is certainly reason enough to publish *Fandom Harvest*: it gives you the same kind of chance I've had to read, enjoy, and get to know Terry Carr.

I hope you like him too.

John-Henri Holmberg
Stockholm, Sweden
June 1986

Illustrator's Credits



**GRANT
CANFIELD**

Ebook Note

Many thanks indeed to Carol Carr, Bob Silverberg, Grant Canfield and John-Henri Holmberg for allowing this ebook reissue of Terry Carr's *Fandom Harvest*, a collection which I have loved ever since it first appeared in 1986. Further grateful thanks are due to Claire Brialey and Pat Charnock for eagle-eyed proofreading, and to Robert Lichtman for research work in his fanzine collection.

The text is unchanged apart from corrected typos, this brief extra note, and a few restored US typing conventions. For example, the 1986 Swedish typesetters never used dollar or cent signs: "\$1.98" (confirmed from a scanned copy of *Cry of the Nameless* at Fanac.org) became "1.98 dollars" and so on, while strange Continental quotation marks »like this« were imposed throughout. Since Terry Carr himself selected the contents of *Fandom Harvest*, the urge to add extra material has been resisted – but at some stage I hope to produce an ebook of the complementary collection *The Incomplete Terry Carr* (1988).

David Langford
May 2019

On closer examination, *The Incomplete Terry Carr* isn't really a "complementary collection" – too much of the material included also appears in *Fandom Harvest*. The follow-up ebook took the remaining pieces from *The Incomplete Terry Carr* as a starting point, added a great deal more uncollected and elsewhere-collected fanwriting by Terry Carr, and appeared in June 2019 as *Fandom Harvest II*. This second ebook is substantially longer than the original *Fandom Harvest*:

- <https://taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?x=FanHarvest2>

David Langford
December 2019

The End

This free ebook is exclusive to the unofficial TAFF website at

taff.org.uk. If you enjoy reading it, a donation to TAFF is a fine way to express your appreciation.

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