

A Taste of FRAP

Selections from
Robert Lichtman's
Classic Fanzine

Edited by
Arnie and
Joyce Katz

FRAP

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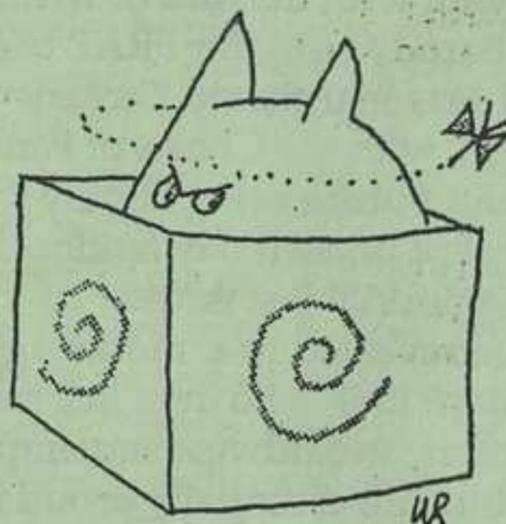
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Editors' Preface

We've long admired Robert Lichtman, the man and the fan. His current fanzine **Trap Door** is the best-written and edifanzine of the 1990s, and the earlier **Frap** strongly influenced our zines. It is a pleasure for us to have the chance to put our admiration into the tangible form of this compilation.

A Taste of Frap is produced by Arnie and Joyce Katz (330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107) for Silvercon 2, April 2-4, 1993. Special It is available for \$2 from the publishers. Publication date: March 23, 1993.

Doorway



Selections from Robert Lichtman's *Frap* Editorials

(from *Frap* #2)

Our first subscription comes from an Alexandria (Virginia) fan whom we haven't even heard of before, much less known for four years. He writes: (sic):

Dere m r L chtmnn,

Please kep s ending me yoeur "fan zine".

Science ely ours,
r y

R. E Ney

We are sending this issue of FRAP to Mr. Eney against our better judgement, because he paid for it, and for his benefit wish to present a public statement regarding FRAP and its place in present-day fandon. Mr. Eney, you should be aware from the outset that FRAP represents but a small and perhaps insignificant part of the great expanses of 1963's fandom.

Present day fandom is not reflected accurately in the pages of FRAP to any great extent because FRAP pays but lip service to

the main streams of contemporary fannish thought, which are Serious Discussion and Comic Books. May we suggest in all earnestness that you widen your fannish contacts, if you have not already done so, to include the more worthwhile aspects of both main streams.

Serious Discussion is perhaps most readily available in easily digested form in the pages of a magazine called KIPPLE which is published by a Mr. Ted Pauls at 1448 Meridene Drive, Baltimore, Maryland. A large part of KIPPLE is consumed by Mr. Pauls perceptive and often witty commentary on the contemporary scene in the world around us, things that effect us every day, and the rest of his magazine is taken up largely with quotations from the Baltimore Sun, one of our nation's leading newspapers. I am sure that you will find KIPPLE a satisfying and cogent commentary on world affairs and Mr. Pauls will be more than glad to furnish you with subscription information.

As for Comic Books, may I suggest a magazine that is published in the same city as FRAP by a gentleman of my acquaintance. May I suggest MENACE OF THE LASFS, published by Mr. Bruce Pelz at Box 100, 308 Westwood Plaza, Los Angeles 24, California. If you should enter a subscription to this thought-provoking, entertaining, and frequent publication, you will possibly learn more about comic books and comic

book fandom than you may really care to know.

This section has been presented as a Public Service.

Since this is the Christmas season, I have of course been toying with the idea of writing a Christmas fan parody story for FRAP based on that creaky old seasonal classic, Dickens' A Christmas Carol, with the Ghosts of Fandom Past, Present, and Future being Highly Representational of present day fandom as outlined in my editorial last issue.

All this will be revealed to a middle-aged discussion fandom BNF who lives in a small town in the Great American Midwest and employs a downtrodden but still essentially proud fannish fan, "Dean" Crachitt, to stencil and duplicate his focal point fanzine of discussion fandom. ("See this article by me on nuclear disarmament, Crachitt?" "Yes, sir." "Words to live by, Crachitt!") He is a paragon of discussion fandom, sort of a "Redd" Boggs. It is to him that lesser fans look for their opinions and whenever he changes his mind on a basic stand regarding some Grave Issue, all discussion fandom is plunged immediately into war. Non-violent war, of course.

Well, one night after putting out the latest issue of his fanzine, our middle-aged discussion fan retires to his bedroom and falls asleep (by the expedient of counting Negro voters in Selma, Alabama, in his head until he dozes off). After a time, he is awakened by the sound of a mimeograph machine being operated in an echo chamber. On come the Ghosts.

In sequence, the Ghost of Fandom Past will hark back to the days of 1958 and 1959 when people mouthed their cigars like long lost friends, when VOID was coming out monthly, when Bob Lichtman hadn't known any fans for four years or more, and all that. Then the Ghost of Fandom Present will come on and cast an aura over the discussion and comic book phenomena, presenting pictures of fans dressed up like Superman and Donald Duck (the latter being daringly authentic by not wearing pants), of discussion fans picketing stf conventions the committees of which have refused to take any political stands, of close-up scenes of people arguing over what fantasy world character they will dress up as this week, and of groups of

people talking with each sentence ending in an exclamation point. The Ghost of Fandom Future will come on finally and reveal a Novum Fandom in which Koning has ceased to be self-conscious about faanish fandom, Deindorfer has returned to his former cutting writing style, and there are monthly VOIDS and FRAPs, and an A BAS every year with each Derogation better than all its predecessors.

In the meantime, we are presented with scenes of "Dean" Crachitt and his wife, who is a femmefan, laboriously typing out master units for a faanish fanzine they manage to get out every two years or so, while their two young sons, Calvin and Andy Crachitt slowly turn out pages from these typed masters on a hektograph made of an old cookie pan. In the end, of course, the discussion fan is so moved by the three Ghosts of Fandom that he immediately becomes apolitical, folds his fanzine without refunding any money to the many subscribers and, borrowing copies of A BAS, GRUE, FRAP, and VOID for inspiration, turns into a faanish fan and writes heaps of choice material which Crachitt publishes in his newly monthly faanish fanzine, now mimeographed on the ex-discussion fan's mimeo.

Well, as I say, this idea occurred to me and I thought I might write it up to put the readership of FRAP in the proper festive holiday mood, but then I decided not to do because this sort of thing is worth talking about at a party but not writing down.

(I'd like to wish you an essentially happy holiday season, nonetheless.)

A funny thing, as they say, happened to me on the freeway the other morning. Here I was, driving along in no particular hurry on my way to school, listening to the rock and the roll on the early-morning radio, when on comes this swinging music and on comes this swinging voice singing:

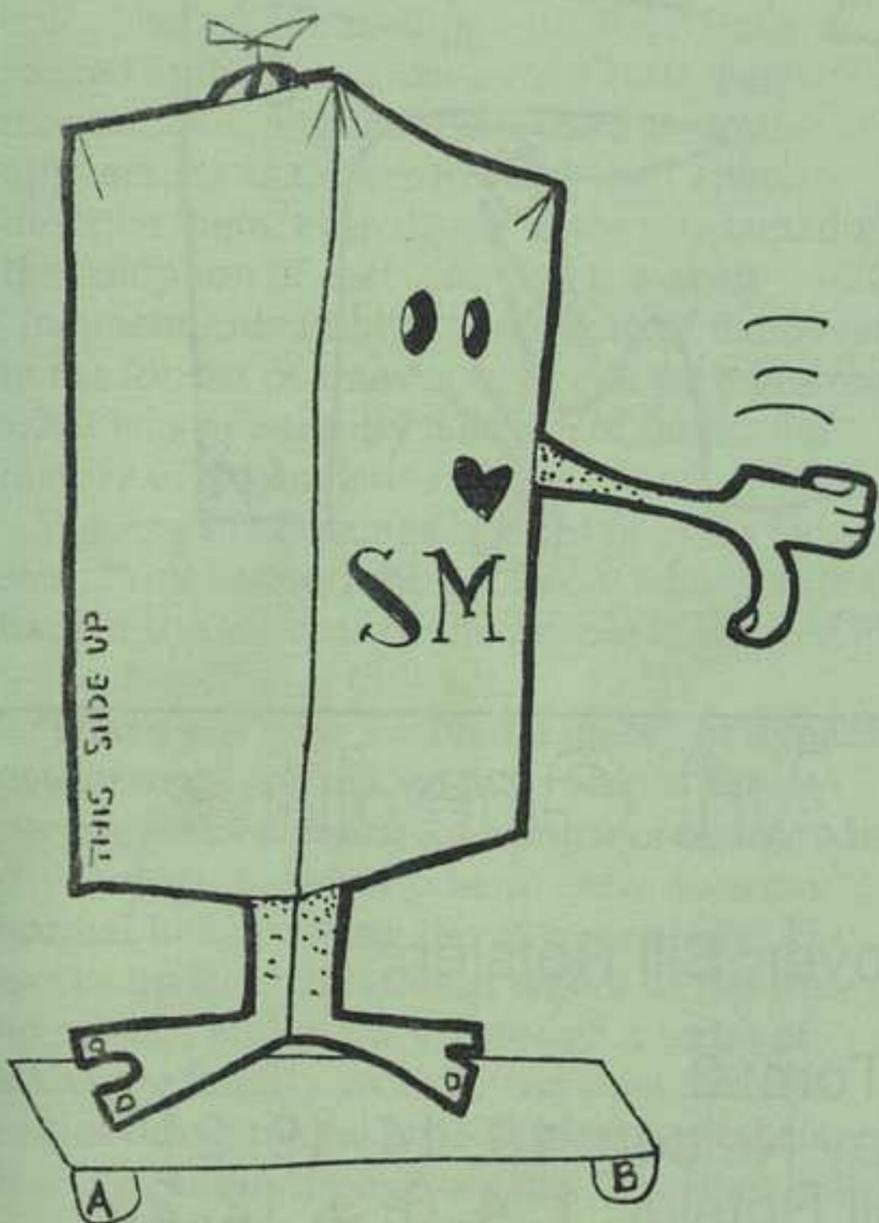
"Alber's flapjacks...flappity-flappity-flappity-fappity-flap-flap-jack-jack-jack...mmm, man, they're sooo good..." and so on in that vein.

Well, I am not ordinarily a fan of flapjacks. There is something basically subversive about flapjacks. I prefer a good, old-fashioned American pancake, heavy-laden with whipped butter and thick syrup, a mouth-watering imagery. But I am a fan of this sort of musical patter, even when it is in the

form of a commercial, and so I listened enraptured for perhaps a minute more as it went on.

When it was all over, my mind commenced to wandering, as minds will do, until the announcer said, offhandedly, "That was Slim Galliard." It took a minute for this to sink in, but I know my Kerouac catechism nearly as well as J.G. Newkom, so after a while I croggled, made a mental note of it, and went on to think about other matters, like the traffic jam just ahead of me.

But the idea of a character from a beat generation novel doing singing commercials kept coming back to me with insistent regularity. This was an entirely new concept to me, and as one will do when one is on the way to school and in no particularly hurry, I began to consider it and to elaborate on it.



Just imagine what might happen if beatniks and characters in beat literature took over the singing commercial industry. I can see it now. (Actually, I cannot imagine such an occurrence, but I can employ stock devices with the best of them, although I am no Burbee nor even a Benford.)

I do not mean to imply that soon we might be hearing commercials for "POT. THE INTERNATIONAL JOY SMOKE", for there is no extensive market for this particular type of euphoric in the Land of the Free.

But think of it. Think of William Burroughs being somehow persuaded to do a commercial for an adding machine company. Imagine Dad Deform, Shiva, or Scratch Vatic lauding the merits of the American Express credit card plan. Carl Solomon boosting tranquilizers. Dean Moriarty extolling the virtues of the Sealy mattress. Allen Ginsberg staunchly defending Mother's Cookies with a love that is more than love. ("You can say anything about me you like, but don't you say nothing against my Mother's.") The possibilities are almost endless.

"Buf, shiffuh," I said to myself after the fashion of our Canadian Friends, "it is never likely to happen. The beat generation is passé, Corso is getting married to the missionary's daughter, Burroughs is in Tangiers. I don't think he's coming back. It's sinister, and anyway advertising executives wouldn't want a bunch of unwashed beatniks tracking up their red carpeted offices and preaching to them about the evils of thought control."

As I drove on to school, lingering sadly in the realization that I would never get to hear a singing commercial for Skippy's Peanut Butter performed by Ray Nelson.

To Slim Galliard, the world was one big flapjack.

Until not too long ago, I had a pretty big fanzine collection which took up all available space on some twenty shelf feet of storage area I have out in the garage where I do my fanning and which threatened imminently to topple over onto the floor. It was a magnificently huge collection, but of course, there were things in it that were of relatively little use to me, such as three years of SAPS mailings, complete runs of crudzines, and so forth, which I would never conceivably want to read ever again, but which were there just because, goshwow, they were Complete, By Ghod.

Well, obviously something like this cannot go on forever unless you are Forrest J. Ackerman and have unlimited space for expansion in the form of an entire house, plus garage. So, since I thought that I was going to be moving out of town pretty soon, I periodically went about weeding out my collection each time I straightened it out. At first, this process consisted only of removing complete runs of magazines such as YANDRO and SPACE CAGE, magazines which are of passing interest when they come out but which assume all the significance of last week's copy of TIME magazine when you have read them and used them up. This practice put a considerable dent in my collection. However, since at the earlier stages of this weeding-out process, I tended to regard complete apa mailings as being, somehow, sacrosanct and inviolable holy writings, the process was short circuited.

But soon it came to pass that I needed a lot of that 20 feet of shelf space for some books that had been piling up on the bookshelves in my room and one evening the whole pile of apa mailings got torn apart. I went through about eight feet or so of the combined output of five different apas, kept perhaps a foot if it, and carted the rest of it away. It is some sort of commentary on the quality of apa mailings that I kept approximately 10%.

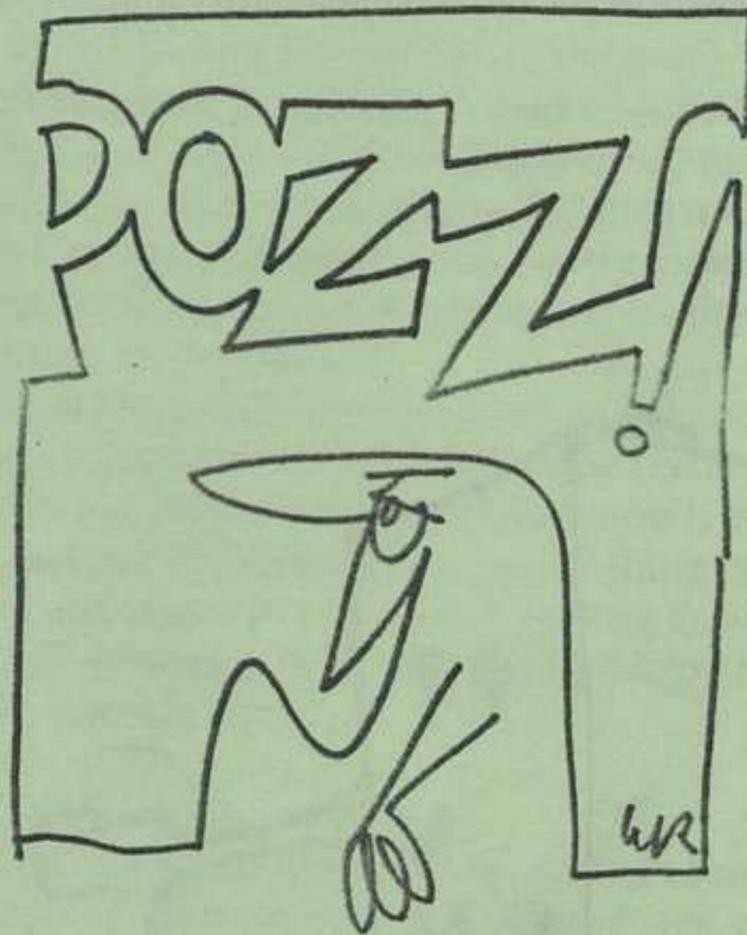
Doubtless, at this point, the Collecting Fan has raised the hackles on his hack (whatever they are) and screamed, "Mighod, did he throw away that stuff?" The answer is, of course not. I sold most of it. Some of the earlier stacks of stuff I gave away because I didn't feel like making any Big Deal of its disposal. But the later stacks and stacks of it, by far the bulk of it, I sold at pretty good prices. A complete set of that non-pareil discussionzine, KIPPLE, weht for \$3.00. A copy of "Why is a Fan?" in good condition went for \$1.50, and one in not-good condition for 75 cents. My complete set of XERO netted \$10.00, almost complete profit. (I heard that in Washington some fan paid \$28.00 for a similar set. These comic book fans! Where do they get the money?)

I made about \$40.00 on the used fanzine market in one hell of a great big hurry and used it up mostly at the Westercon. If I hadn't sold all those fanzines, I still would have gone to Westercon, but I wouldn't have had as much fun.

It is amazing the number of dinners and drinks you can net from a pile of junk SAPSazines.

As they say in medical books, elimination is a recurrent and continuing process. I plan now to break down the remaining magazines into groups by publishers and file them in filing boxes. Future build-up of crud is being circumvented at the time of entry into my sphere of critical influence, and by the time I eventually leave this area of the country, I hope to have the collection pared down to the point where it will extend over no more than three shelf feet, neatly boxed.

This has been an essay on Selective Completism, the gentle art of throwing out fanzines for fun and profit. Next Issue: Fandom's Three Foot Shelf.



Art Credits

Cover: Bill Rotsler

ATom: 3

Ray Nelson: 10, 14, 19, 24

Bill Rotsler: 1, 4, 6, 9, 12, 23

yo (from *Frap* #3)

Last week a number of us were sitting around at Kal's in Los Angeles after the LASFS meeting and I was thinking about my editorial for this issue. I was marshalling an intricate and fantastically complicated argument in my head which would prove beyond any shadow of a doubt that I was unable to write anything due to lack of any ideas when Phil Castora, who was sitting next to me and who was nattering about SAPS, began rifling through a handfull of fanzines he had in his hand.

I saw some unfamiliar titles and so I turned to him and said, "May I see that handfull of fanzines you have in your hand?" He gave them over to me and I sorted out the two that had attracted my eye.

Both of them were dittoed on colored stock. One of them was called Witdip and was dated Spring, 1901 and also January, 1964. The editor gave his name in the colophon as "Herman Gessler of Switzerland". The other was a Worldip and was dated Spring, 1904 and also January, 1964. The editor gave his name in the colophon as "Victor Emanuel, Rei d'Italia". I looked at the two fanzines in a close, perfunctory manner, noticing that they were as similar in appearance as the sentences I used above to describe them, even down to the proclamation in the colophon of each one that it was an "Incunebulous Publication". Both of them were in the format of a newspaper and each presented what was apparently a bunch of fabricated history of journalistic fashion.

Waving the fanzines in front of Phil's face, I said, "You know, I think I know what it is that's happening to some of the people in the LASFS".

"Yes?" said Phil Castora.

"I have just now evolved a theory of dynamic psychology, Freud-like in its scope. These people may be the first example of retrograde psychological development. How does the normal human being develop mentally? He works up from childhood where he has little or no contact with reality, through a series of elaborate fantasy worlds, and then perhaps settles down to one well-worked out fantasy world at about the age of nine. If he likes that, he may stick to it for awhile, as for instance some

girls still play games with dolls and some boys with toy guns, up until the age of 12, or so. But eventually the fantasy world drifts or is forced away as he gets more involved in life and after screwing himself up on involvement with life a couple of times, he eventually finds himself. It's all a matter of development."

"Well, yes," said Phil Castora.

"But have you noticed what has been happening in Los Angeles? A few years ago these people entered fandom as apparently well-integrated personalities. Then Coventry began to be popular and people each picked out an identity so that they could participate in this group fantasy world.

When everyone had a secret identity, things really began to swing. Coventry stories began to be acted out in real life, just like children act out their fantasy worlds. Why, there were almost a couple of lawsuits over Coventry stuff that crept into the real world."

"I remember reading about that in FANAC the other day," said Phil. "That happened about two years ago, didn't it?"

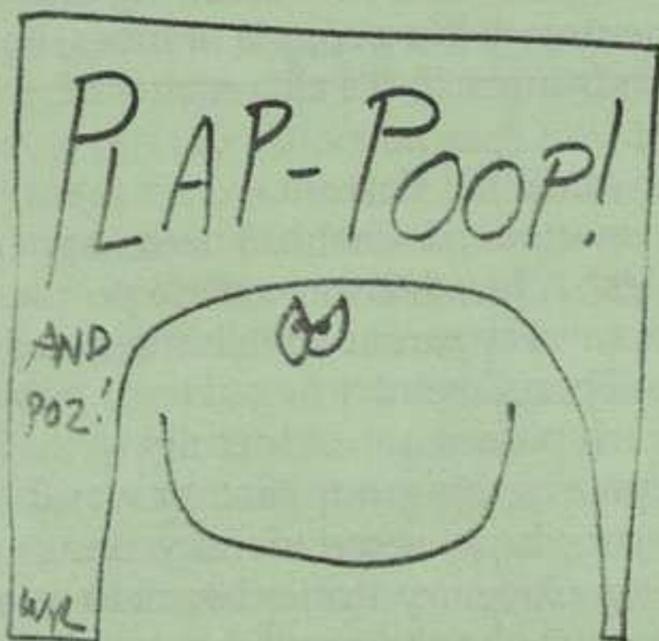
"Yes, but now Coventry is passe. People around here aren't satisfied anymore with just one secret identity. A need is being felt generally for multiple identities. That's where this new game, DIPLOMACY, comes in. It's some sort of board game, like MONOPOLY, where the players each take on the identity of the ruler of some European power around the turn of the century. They have wars, and intrigues, and all that; it's just like the real world except that it only exists in their minds and on the DIPLOMACY board."

"Why, that's fantastic!" exclaimed Phil Castora.

"Yes, these people are working backwards. They've started at the top of psychological development and are backing down the slope, a little faster than they came up it. When they feel the need to add a new secret identity, why, they simply start another DIPLOMACY game. Bruce, for instance, is apparently in two games, judging from these magazines. It all adds up."

"You're right, you're right," said Phil Castora, nodding his head.

"But don't you see what this means? We can take advantage of all this. These people pay money for their DIPLOMACY games...they'll go to any length to get what they want. And now we know what they'll want next. We know which way they'll jump. All we have to do is go around the area and find an



old, abandoned nursery school and buy it up cheap. Something like this will be heavily in demand soon. We can charge people according to how long they want to stay in the nursery...daily, weekly, perhaps even monthly. We'll provide them with games like hopscotch jacks, and tag. We'll give them rubber balls to bounce, sand to build castles, toys to play with. To heighten the situation, we'll dress them up in little kids' clothes and put the girls' hair up in pigtails. For the more extreme cases, we'll provide diapers and rubber pants. We'll give them everything they need to be totally out of contact with reality."

I waved my hands expansively. At this point things began to break up and Phil had to go catch a ride home, so I never found out his reaction to this idea. But about a week later I was talking to Greg Benford on the telephone.

"You were all wrong in your article last issue," I began, and I told him about all these latest developments. I told him I thought it would make good editorial material for FRAP. But it did not strike him as a good idea. He said it would be good material for a psychological casebook, but that it was strong, much too strong, for a fanzine.

"You're right, Meyer," I said, and hung up.

A copy of this issue is going to the Offices of the American Institute of Psychological Studies.

The other day, Calvin Demmon and I went to a Mexican delicatessen in Gardena for a late lunch. Sitting on the front steps of the building eating burritos and sipping cola, we noted that while the establishment had been empty when we arrived, there was now a huge crowd of customers inside. The parking lot was jammed. All this was true, I observed.

"That's how Duncan Hines must have gotten his start," said Calvin Demmon. "Only he sort of messed things up for himself, just leaving little signs behind saying 'Duncan Hines Ate Here'. He should have left something more tangible to prove his existence and his appreciation of the food he ate."

"Who was Duncan Hines, anyway?" I asked.

"Oh, some old bum who conned a lot of restaurant owners into feeding him free because he had a fancy sounding name."

"But Duncan Hines became rich and famous," I observed. "I think we should be like Duncan Hines, only go several steps further than he ever did. Instead of leaving behind an old tin sign saying 'Duncan Hines Ate Here', we should leave behind a power-actuated recording, 'The Belch of Calvin Demmon'. It would be activated by a push-button and would give children and the proverbial 'young-at-heart' something to do while they were waiting to be served".

"That would be just like at the Museum of Science & Industry," said Calvin Demmon.

"Yes," I said, "and come to think of it, we could take this several steps even further and really become rich and famous."

"What do you have in mind?" inquired Calvin Demmon.

"Well, as you may know," I began, "it was out of the Duncan Hines seal of approval at f&e restaurants throughout the nation over that the Diner's Club system of credit cards got its start. Only that's all for people who fancy themselves 'gourmets' and are willing to pay, or be charged, high prices for stuff like frogs legs, chateaubriand, and other unpronounceable things".

"Yes, yes, but get to the point," said Calvin Demmon.

"I think we should start up a credit card system for poor people," I said, waving my hands expansively, "for people who can't afford to eat at f&e restaurants and don't care for frogs legs, anyway, but Know What They Like. We could install our 'Belch of Calvin Demmon' machines at hot dog stands, taco

stands, and cheap greasy spoons all over the United States, Canada, and Mexico. And for people who were traveling and eating at these places, we would have a credit card similar to Diner's Club, but with several important differences."

"Tell me more," said Calvin Demmon, sipping his cola.

"Well, for one thing," I explained, "instead of receiving a statement in the mail every month, like you do from the Diner's Club,

you'd receive a threatening letter demanding payment or else, instead. Even if your account was right up to date."

"Sounds good to me," laughed Calvin Demmon, choking on a bit of burrito.

"And," I concluded, "and, if you couldn't afford to pay, there would be a set-up whereby you would be required to go to the greasy spoon in your area and pay off your debts there."

"How?" asked Calvin Demmon, blinking his eyes.

"By washing dishes, of course," I said.

IN MY BLACK LEATHER JACKET

By Ray Nelson

In my black leather jacket and my neat blue jeans,
I'm the beatnik boy who makes all the scenes.
Got a pad in North Beach, I'm a man of means.
Whatever's coming off, I'm with it.

In my black leather jacket and my scraggly beard,
I dig any sound so long as it's weird.
When they launched the Sputnik, I only sneered,
Whatever you're gonna do, I've done it.

If you think it ain't right
to Stay up all night
Reading poems and digging the Bird,
If you ain't a poet
And you let the cats know it,
I know what you are, "square"'s the word.

In my black leather jacket and my sandal shoes,
I can paint abstractions and play the blues.
Got a gambling system that just can't lose.
You found me a job? You take it!

LOG of the Honeybee

By Redd Boggs

"FIFTY CENTS! Sh---shucks! I can phone New York for only a dollar." This was my comment upon learning from the operator that the toll charge on a phone call to Garden Grove is 50 cents for the first three minutes. "In fact, I could drive all the way to Garden Grove for a buck and talk to Bjo vis-a-vis."

"Yes, sir," said the operator, her tone clearly implying "You do that, you schlub, and stop bugging me."

I brooded about the matter for a few days. Sunday dawned bright and sparkling, as it sometimes does even in smog-bound southern California. My spirits brightened with the sunshine. I said to Bill Blackbeard, "I have business to discuss with Bjo and I feel like driving out there this afternoon. Why don't you come along and go halves on the gas? In that way it will cost us only the equivalent of a three-minute phone call to Garden Grove."

"I'd like to go," wailed Bill Blackbeard, "but my spare time is so limited and today I have things to do, things to write..."

"This lively day is no day to spend in a hot, stuffy apartment, writing," I told him, "while the sun shines warm and the Babe leaps up on his mother's arm..."

"I have things to do, things to write," Blackbeard said coldly.

"Besides, I am going to invite a luscious morsel of femininity to accompany us. Namely, Edith Ogutsch ..."

"When do we leave?" said Blackbeard faunchingly.

I phoned Edith to discover this vital information. She said she couldn't go at all. "I'd like to go," she wailed, "but my spare time is so limited, and today I have things to do, things to write..."

"This is your opportunity," I told her, to cut things short, "to go on an excursion with two

only for the gas. Buoyed up by this unexpected display of altruism, we sailed happily toward Garden Grove on the Harbor/San Diego/Long Beach freeway. We had no trouble until we arrived within three blocks of Bjohn's. At that point we found ourselves hopelessly lost in the mazes of Eastgate. Blackbeard and I had been to 5571 Belgrave only once, the very day the Trimbles moved out here, and all the twisting streets looked alike to us.

We blundered around and suddenly found ourselves in front of 5571 Belgrave just as if we had planned it. But the house looked deserted on this glorious Sunday afternoon. There was no VW in the driveway, and tacked to the front door of the house was a note addressed to somebody named Laura. Blackbeard knocked without hope, then borrowed a pencil from me and a blank card from Edith to compose a note to Bjohn to tak to his door along with the note to the mysterious Laura.

While Bill scribbled the note, Edith said to me, "Did you notice that street back there named 'Wild Goose'? The Trimbles ought to live on Wild Goose if you're going to drive out here very often. If you had any wit, you'd have written or phoned in advance."

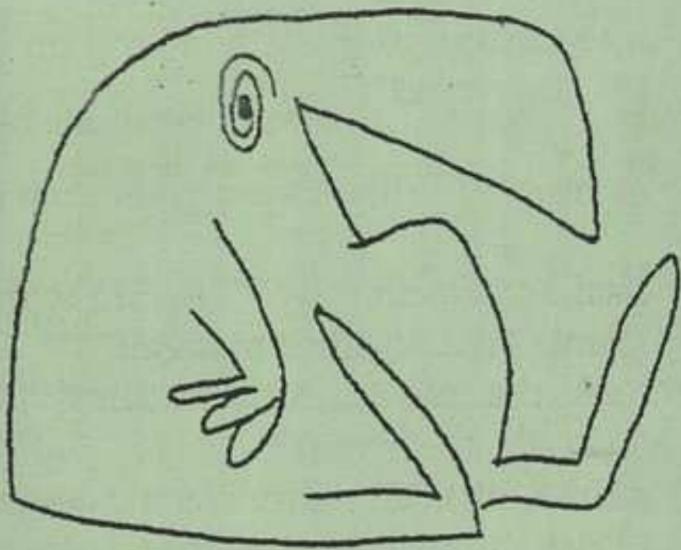
I cringed down in the corner of the car. "You talk just like a woman," I told her.

"But I am a woman," she said.

I uncovered my eyes and looked at her in surprise. "By God, I think you're right," I told her.

To prevent the trip from being a total loss, we decided to stop in Long Beach at Perlou's ice cream parlor. Blackbeard and I manfully ordered seven-scooped masterpieces, a banana split and a tub, respectively (\$1.15 a piece), while The Ogutsch, fretting about her waistline, modestly asked for a two-scoop dish. She ordered chocolate and maple nut, but when it came, it turned out to be chocholate and peppermint. She doesn't like peppermint. But instead of registering a complaint, she viewed it as an act of God that would further enhance the neat expanse of her waistline, and pushed the scoop of pepermint onto me. In partial recompense, she sampled several flavors in the rococco masterpiece of ice cream they set before me. By the time I had consumed everything in sight, I felt slightly bloated.

"Imagine! A thousand bars are open in town and we go to an ice cream parlor," marveled



handsome, witty hunks of manhood. Namely, Bill Blackbeard and myself.

"I have things to do, things to write," Edith said coldly.

"Besides, this is no day to spend in a hot, stuffy apartment, writing," I told him, "while the sun shines warm and the Babe leaps up on his mother's arm..."

"When do we leave?" said Edith faunchingly.

We didn't leave quite as promptly as we planned. After picking Edith up at her apartment, we discovered that the Honeybee's front door on the passenger side wouldn't latch properly and we wheeled into the nearest service station to have it repaired. Visions of the freeway strewn with Ogutsch haunted us. This was while we still cared what happened to her.

The station attendant repaired the car door and poured some gas in the tank and charged

Blackbeard.

"It seems like the fannish thing to do," I said.

We staggered back to the car and calculated the shortest way to the freeway. As we glanced at the street map, I calculated that we were in the very neighborhood of Paul and Ellie Turner, where the Noncon party was held over the Labor Day weekend.

"I propose to visit them," I told Edith and Bill. "I faunch for the sight of sensitive fannish faces this splendid afternoon."

They both wailed something about having things to do, things to write, but I was at the wheel of the Honeybee, and turned in the direction of the Turners.

A knock at the door of 541-A East Pacific Coast Highway brought better results than we'd experienced at 5571 Belgrave. A startled-looking Ellie Turner peered out at us. One could drive miles farther and never behold a more sensitive fannish face. She immediately began to apologize. 'Her house', she said 'was in a mess'. Actually, aside from a few toys scattered around, it looked fine to me...and she had been digging in the garden and she was a mess, too.' Of course, it is impossible for Ellie Turner to look a mess, so we disregarded her apologies and followed her out into the cool and shady backyard.

Paul Puckett showed up while we chattered, adding another sensitive fannish face to the gathering. He inquired after Paul Turner, and we learned that the bearded director of the LASFS was buzzing around

the mountains in his sportscar. Puckett and Ellie fell to discussing math, especially something called set theory. Edith looked to me for an explanation realizing, no doubt, that I am a universal genius (cf Bloch's "A Way of Life"). "Set", I told her, "was the ancient Egyptian god of evil." That seemed to satisfy the trusting young lady.

The Turner kids roused from their afternoon nap and came rushing into the backyard. Susie climbed on her tricycle and young Mark climbed on his mother, and the sun shone warm and the Babe leaped up on his mother's arm. After watching the kids roam a while, Edith reminded me that she wanted to get home in time to watch a movie on TV called "Love in the Afternoon", and we'd better get started.

We pulled up in front of Edith's apartment just at dusk.

"We made it," I said triumphantly. "The Honeybee has successfully completed another mission!"

Edith and Bill looked at me and said nothing. "It was a lovely day," I said, "wasn't it?"

"Was is right," said Edith. "The day is lost, wasted." "I have things to do, things to write," snarled Blackbeard.

I cringed down in the corner of the car. A tiny wisp of compassion stirred in the stone heart of the Ogutsch. She handed me a small lace hanky to dry my tears, and said charitably, "Don't worry. It's not your fault that your plans turn out so badly. You do quite well for a man without brains."

I felt better right away. I may be stupid, but I knew that I had been right in spiriting Edith and Bill out of their apartments on this splendid afternoon.

For after all, it had been a lovely day.



Grunt

A column by
Calvin Demmon

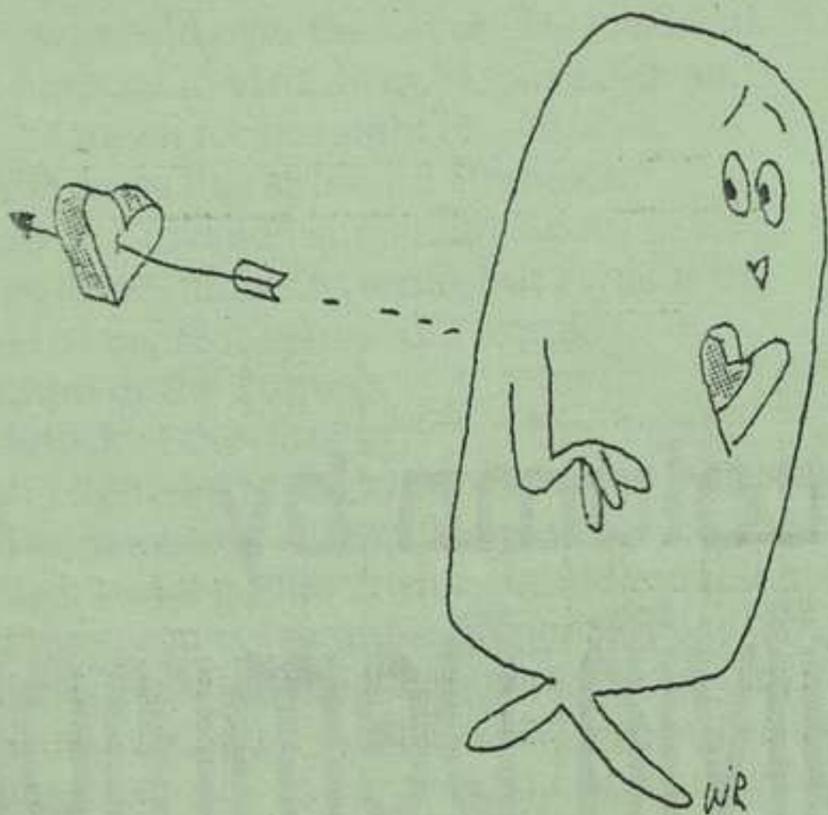
A PUBLIC APOLOGY TO GEORGINA CLARKE: Dear Mrs. Clarke: I did not know that you used to publish a fanzine called "Grunt" until Rick Sneary called it to my attention. By that time I had already published two or three issues of my own "Grunt" and had a short column in MINAC with the same title. My gross mistake in this matter has left me simpering in dismay because I realize that it is not good for two fanzines or columns to exist...even if widely separated in time...with the same title. Therefore, beginning immediately, I am taking the liberty of changing the name of your fanzine from "Grunt" to "Pomade". Thank you for your cooperation.

BOOK REVIEW: The Bold Saboteurs. Chandler Crossard, Lancer 72-635, 50 cents.

I got my copy of this from a pretty young lady named Barbara, who had four of them. Some faans write an opening sentence like

that and then leave you hanging, asking "Who is Barbara?" and "Has the Reviewer Slept with Her?" I certainly don't want to leave you in the dark. No, I haven't even touched Barbara, who is a wild and sexy young UCLA acquaintance of Mr. Lichtman's. This is not to say that I do not have an uncontrollable lust for her, however. Barbara, if you are reading this, you now know my dirty little secret. But I digress...) The point I started to make here is that I'd never heard of this book, which was first published in 1953, until Barbara mentioned it, and it's such a startling and beautiful book that I can't imagine why.

This book is written in the language of nightmares (my nightmares, anyway), although you don't begin to realize this right at first. It spins its spell on you and then suddenly you find that it has also been spinning a noose around your neck. The narrative moves casually from "reality" (the adventures of a young boy who, among other things, steals and sweats for his money) to "unreality" (the internal adventures of the same young boy) without warning. The first time this happens, you do a justifiable double-take and begin



reading back a couple of pages to find out what the Hell is going on. Because these inner experiences aren't the sort of thing you usually discover in a book about a young boy. He is not dreaming about laying all those young high-school broads, nor is he drifting down a stream on a raft fishing for catfish. He is involved with the business of life, and you are quite conscious of the presence of the author, older than the boy, shaping and directing what happens.

Since everyone is now bleeding from an example, take this one: the boy and a friend of his are sitting in an auditorium, in an audience of thousands. On stage is a drunk whom the boy recognizes. He whistles at him and the drunk waves, then stands up and begins to read a long speech. He calls it a letter to the conscious from the unconscious....

"...Think of all the long years I have suffered in the shadow of your so thinly and insecurely

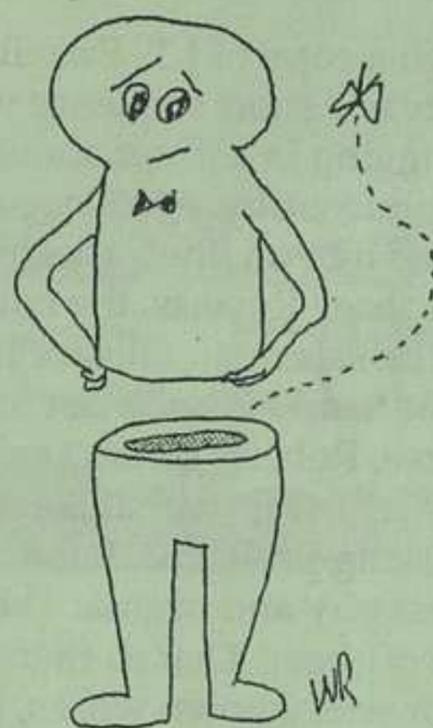
bright self, denied, unspeakably lonely, forever drowning in my unseen tears, locked up like a dribbling monster brother with two heads, troubled darkness my only home. While you, my prodigal one, when wherever your foolish fancy pleased, met with celebrities you longed after, partied, sang your silly voice into gravel, danced your skinny legs off, drank champagne from ladies' soft, cupped hands, got laid from here to 125th Street, sullenly lying that you were single and always had been, exploded brilliant puns that unbeknownst to you I had processed the uranium for years ago, sowed insights like wild oats before your horse-faced friends and, in general conducting yourself like a man who had no obligations or commitments to anyone but himself never caring one scintilla whether I lived or died or did both simultaneously so long as I kept my mouth shut and behaved myself...

"...But I am warning you. I must get better treatment, I must get more recognition, or else I shall be forced to take certain extremely unpleasant measures. And when I say unpleasant, you can count on it that I really mean unpleasant..."

Well, the temptation is strong to print the rest of the passage, but I won't. Good books are always somehow greater than the sum of their parts, and if I were to convey the spirit of this one to you I'd have to copy it verbatim from page one to the end. I suppose I should add that I don't care what the book jacket says, this isn't the sort of "starling, terrifying experience" that leaves you shuddering for days after...it's not "lewd" or "horrible", although the mechanism by which this is accomplished isn't quite clear at first. It's like falling down drunk and skinning your knee: the anesthetic is the simultaneous cause and cure of the pain. Anyway, you will not throw this book down and go screaming into the night in terror. If you're looking for something like that, better stick to E.A. Poe (which, come to think of it, doesn't affect me, either).

Go and buy it, even if you have heard of it before. Don't be a book snot. I was a book snot over Catch-22 while everybody else was reading it, and only discovered how good it is when Terrence and Carol Carr talked me into reading it. But I digress...

happy
JIM BENFORD
chatter



BEAT ME DADDY, EIGHT TO THE BAR...A while back Tony Wright, Joe Miller, and I parked the car on the U.S. side of the border and walked the half mile to the downtown area. It looked like the cowtowns one sees in western movies, except for the old cars. In fact, Tijuana looks just like an Oklahoma town of the 20's.

I had heard of the enterprise of the natives, so I wasn't surprised to see gangs of suspicious looking Mexicans standing on street corners. When we'd crossed at an intersection, we'd be besieged by a long line of pimps saying in a bright cheery voice, "Taxi, fella," followed by "Wanta piece of ass" in a low conspiratorial tone. We walked around till we found the Blue Fox and went in. The gaudy signs outside said NO COVER CHARGE but we couldn't get in until we bought a beer. The interior was essentially a brothel with a floor show. There was a stage and an inept combo (who played background for the strippers) at the back of the ground floor. The stage was surrounded by tables and the tables were surrounded by girls trying to drum up business. I noticed that some collegiate types had brought dates for some strange reason. They spent their time sipping beer and trying to look sophisticated. The rest of the upstairs was a whorehouse. There were four stairs leading up to the rooms, with a steady stream of girls and customers.

The floor show was crude enough to be boring and we soon lost interest. Since our table was next to the stage, our inattention was apparent to the stripper who was finishing her act. To attract our attention she came over and threw her

unattractive self against Tony. He called her something in Spanish that I didn't catch. She did though, so she picked up an ashtray from the next table and threw the ashes on Tony. He threw his beer on her. She started yelling. The manager came over along with several girls. Everybody stood up. The bartender wanted to know why Tony didn't have a beer. The girls were yelling at everybody. Tony was getting mad but, seeing that the odds were against us, we started a strategic retreat. We separated and filtered through the milling girls.

While I was feeling my way out, a big husky woman of about 35 grabbed me in an appropriate place and said, "Want to go, baby?" In the interest of scientific inquiry, I priced her and bid her down from seven dollars to three dollars. Then I moved on because Tony and Joe had probably made it out by then. But other girls kept getting in my way and naturally I had to inquire. Towards the edge of the crowd I was stopped by "Want to go, baby?" Anything you want, anything you want. What you want? Just name it! Fuckee? Suckee? What you want?" I thought I'd put her on so I said, "Would you...? No, you wouldn't..." and trailed off. She leaned forward, demanding to know what I wanted, so I leered and, glancing cautiously off to both sides, said with sadistic glee, "How much would you charge to beat me with a black belt with a brass buckle?" She looked at me with a stupid expression and said "Huh?!" I laughed like hell and walked out onto the street.

JUST LIKE A FABULOUS COMIC BOOK CHARACTER The last time Lichtman was here, we dropped by the Nexus Book Store to browse. I

glanced through a copy of J.T. Farrell's Danny O'Neal. There was a short sequence where a salesman is bragging in a diner about his knowledge of philosophy. A college student next to him leads him on, then asks him what he thinks of 'Humphrey Roberts, the noted English philosopher.' The salesman falls for it and goes on about how he 'read his book last time I was in Philly.' Of course, Roberts doesn't exist.

A few days later I was over at Steve Sears' apartment, working problems. I noticed a pile of books on philosophy and drama. They were all old and sort of off-beat. That is, there weren't any standard or well-known works, just the ones that didn't make it. I asked Steve about them and he launched into the same sort of self-consciously casual remarks about his great familiarity with philosophy. It was but the work of a moment to make up a false name and ask him about it.

"Who?" he replied.

"Priestly Bakeawitz, the eminent logical positivist from Hungary," I elaborated.

"Oh, sure. Yes, I've read some of his stuff."

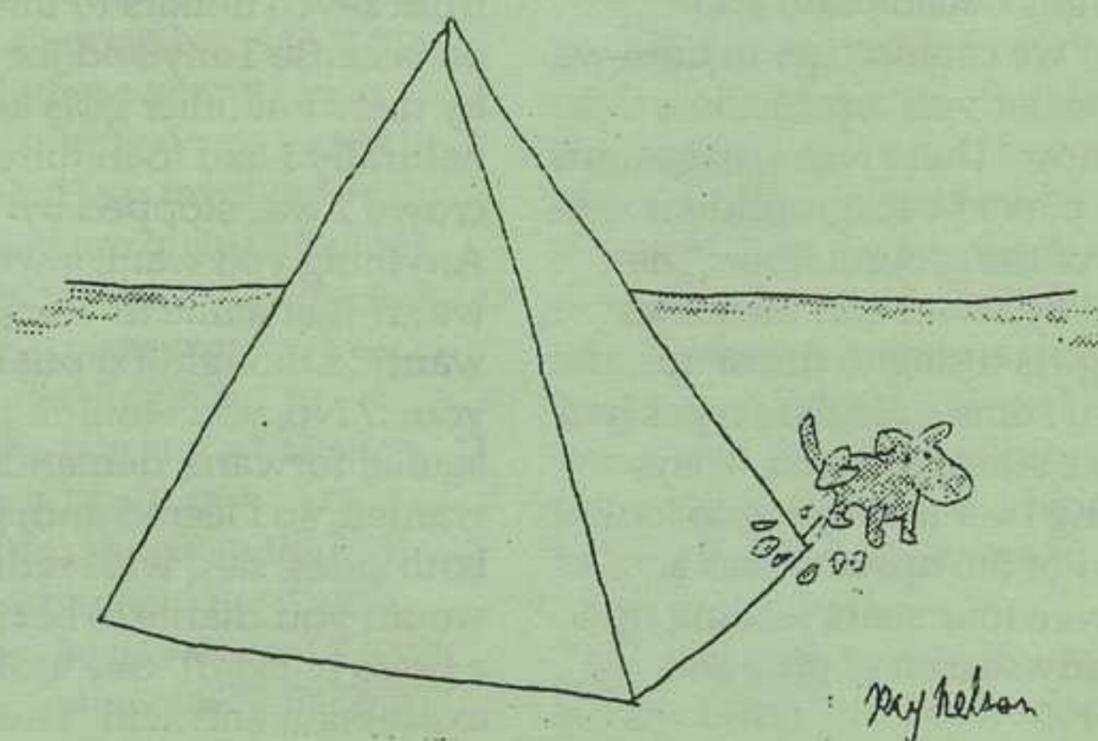
"What do you think of him?"

"Well, I really haven't had time to think it out. It's been a few years since I read him and I went

on to other things immediately afterwards." Next time I'm over there I'm going to bring up the drama books. Then I'm going to ask him if he's read any plays by Socrates.

MEYER, MEYER, EVERYWHERE After we moved out to the west coast, Greg and Lichtman started calling everybody "Meyer", in the tradition of Burbee. The name came from an old dirty joke that's been largely forgotten by everybody. When we moved later to La Jolla, Greg and I continued calling each other Meyer on occasion. It's hard to explain why, but after it's been used a couple of times, it sort of sticks.

Pretty soon, the other students started calling each other Meyer, too. Especially an ultra-Jewish New Yorker, Herb Bernstein. One day, after "Meyer" had been assimilated by several people, we had a seminar. None of us had remembered that one of the professors sitting at the back of the room was named Meir Weger. At the end of the talk, one of the profs turned around and said in a loud voice, "What do you think of that Meir?" and all the students started laughing. All except Greg and I. Fast thinking fans that we are, we figured it out fast enough not to laugh. But I don't think the faculty is going to figure that one out.



The Judgment of Posterity

ZEN and the Art of Cooking

By Ray Nelson

In answer to clamoring requests and not a few veiled threats, I have finally consented to illustrate how I manage to combine the highest philosophical development of the West, 'Pataphysics, to produce a new outlook and way of life that is equally useful in psychology and religion, game playing and politics, science and art, in the highest pursuits and the lowest. Listen and learn, my little one, because this is a message that can bring you peace and joy and high spiritual development, and also this message is the "in" thing this season.

I have decided that in these peaceful times the simple elements of Zen 'Pataphysics are best illustrated with examples from the kitchen rather than the battlefield, and besides, someone has already beaten me to it in writing a "Zen and the Art of Archery" and "Zen and the Art of Swordplay", not to mention numerous manuals on judo, karate, and other forms of honorable Holy Dirty Fighting.

Ah so. Let us enter the kitchen. Let us look about us with satisfaction, rubbing our hands together. All is clean and neat, ready for us to begin.

No? It is not? Then I should perhaps have begun with Zen and the Art of House-cleaning. By beginning with cooking I have assumed you have at least the desire to elevate your spiritual development.

Let us, however, say it is clean.

First, we select a frying pan and some slices of bacon. Our first exercise will be in frying this bacon in the Honorable Frying Pan. We examine the pan. Is it clean? Is it in good repair? Is it handsome in appearance but not gaudy? When all

these conditions are satisfied, we examine the bacon. Is it of good quality, thin slices, fresh and not too fatty? If so, we are ready to turn on the heat. Gas or electric...it does not matter. Both are "kosher", as we say in Israel.

We place a few slices in the pan. They must lie flat, not all scrambled up, and not be crowded in the pan. They must not overlap, though it is not regarded as vulgar if they gently touch each other. We then set the pan over the heating unit and stand watching, our every sense alert.

In ordinary bacon frying, it is customary to flop the bacon slices around any old way in the pan and after awhile take them all out at the same time. Not so Zen bacon frying. Each slice of bacon must receive individual attention. When you observe that a slice of bacon has ballooned up in the middle, it is time to turn it over. Care must be taken so that after turning, the slice lies as nearly flat as possible. It should not be permitted to curl up into a ball, even if you have to hold it down with a fork. When a portion of bacon is done it will, usually abruptly, cease being translucent and become opaque. A slice of bacon may be considered done when all portions of it are done, when it is opaque in all areas, not before. At this instant it must be whisked from the pan and placed on a few layers of paper towel to drain. If some portions stubbornly refuse to turn opaque by themselves, you may have to force them to fry by pressing them against the pan with a fork. If some slices fry faster than others, move the slow ones into the fast ones' places when the fast ones are taken out. No frying pan is ever uniformly heated.

When the last slice is done, you deftly fork it from the pan, then wait a minute for it to cool, then taste

it. At this moment you will be blessed with the Great Awakening, what the wise men of the East call Sartori.

No?

Never mind. Perhaps hamburgers will succeed where bacon failed. Hamburgers are practically glowing with spiritual power, crammed full of the indwelling Spirit of the Buddha, not to mention many valuable vitamins and minerals.

It is no ordinary hamburger I speak of, no vulgar drive-in product, but the holy 'Pataburger, triangular and delicious. To make this delicacy, this exclusive creation of Nelson of El Cerrito, you first cut up a small onion into very small bits and place them in the bottom of a large bowl.

(I assume you have inspected these onions and all the other ingredients I will name with the same care you used while frying Zen bacon.) Next, you place on top of the onions one pound of top quality hamburger meat, fresh and firm. You flatten out the meat somewhat, using your fingers (you did wash your hands, I hope), then salt it lightly and pepper it lighter still, hardly at all, in fact. You then make a little hollow in the center and into this hollow break two small eggs. Chicken's eggs will do if eagle's eggs are unavailable. You then add oatmeal slowly, mixing it with the eggs until it makes a fairly firm mash. This mixing is best done daintily, with just the tips of the fingers. Your feet, with or without shoes, should not be introduced into the bowl.

When this mash is mixed, you transform yourself from a dainty piddler into a ferocious masher, plunging your fingers ruthlessly into the meat, crushing it, rending it, capturing it in your hands and squeezing it so that it oozes out between your fingers like toothpaste from a tube. By this means you mix all the ingredients into a shapeless pink mass with about the consistency of warm modeling clay.

When this has all been done, grease the frying pan liberally with fat from Zen bacon; nothing else is kosher. This greasing is fast and easy in a hot frying pan. When the fat is liquid but before it starts to smoke, you place the hamburger mix in the pan and, with your fingers, tamp it down in the pan until it forms a disc that just touches the walls of the pan on all sides, a disc about the size and shape of a pancake, though perhaps a bit thicker.

Perhaps you fear burning your fingers, handling

the contents of a hot frying pan, but if you are alert, deft, and careful, you have nothing to worry about. I have been doing this for many, many years and have yet to receive my first burn.

You then wait a moment, letting it fry, then cut it into triangular pieces with a dull knife, like the pieces of a pie. This cutting should be done with a sort of vibratory movement of the knife, so that little channels are left between the individual 'pataburgers.

You then fry them with loving care, turning them often with a fork, being very careful not to burn them. When they are done they will be dark brown on both sides and grey (not pink) on the inside. If there is any doubt in your mind they are done, cut one open and have a look at the inside. If one is done before the others, take it from the pan and leave the others in. You must use the same policy of individual attention on the 'Pataburger as you used on the Zen Bacon.

When each lovely little triangle is done, take it out of the pan and place it on a slice of dark bread, the darker the better. (No buns, please. Ech.) Add salt to taste, as well as lettuce, catsup, mustard, and whatever you like (but don't overdo it). Then, when all is in readiness, eat it.

At this point, you most certainly should experience Sartori.

No?

Well, let's try just one more thing, the most awesomely powerful force for spiritual awakening known to man.

The peanut butter sandwich.

To prepare an Open Face Peanut Butter Sandwich of the Awakening, you need fresh, 100% whole wheat bread, and pure, top quality peanut butter...the gooey kind. You spread the peanut butter on a slice of this bread, then place thin slices of cold butter on top of the peanut butter.

(I should mention that it is only decent to precede the eating of this kind of peanut butter sandwich by reverent fasting and meditation which lasts 24 hours.) You then open a capsule of mescaline and sprinkle the mescaline crystals like an autumn snow over the barren rocky ground of the peanut butter and the occasional boulders of butter. Then, sit crosslegged at a low table and eat it in a dim light.

At this point....Ah, but now I see that you have become as the old wise men, those who know and do not speak.

The FRAP

Interview: GOD

Conducted by Calvin Demmon

INTRODUCTION: God's popularity is not undeserved. Best-selling author ("The Old Testament," "The New Testament"), philosopher, inventor (water), God shares with such men as Hugh Hefner and Ray Nelson the universal appeal of the savant. He is our most popular modern deity.

Arranging an interview with God was not easy. He has modestly left his telephone number out of the book and when we visited some of his favorite old haunts...churches, pavillions, temples... we were unable to connect with him. We finally ran into him quite by accident one day in downtown Los Angeles; he was running nervously away from a group of elderly ladies who were calling him a "beatnik" and a "nigger lover" and who were swatting at him with umbrellas.

Aged, bearded God seemed quite willing to visit our offices, if only for a rest, and sat down in our plush guest chair with obvious weary relief. We started the tape recorder.....

FRAP: It is an honor to have you here today, sir. Would you tell us a little about yourself?

GOD: I am the greatest! I am the prettiest! I....

FRAP: Well, what I meant was, how does it feel to be the Entity Responsible, the most powerful awareness in the universe?

GOD: It feels great, man. Just great.

FRAP: Certain of your detractors have claimed

that you would win great popular support if you would only reveal yourself openly to humanity. Can you tell us why you have refrained from this sort of thing for so long?

GOD: Well, you know, I've been meaning to do something about that for quite awhile, but there's a lot more to this Deity business than just sitting around on a cloud bossing a few angels. No, I've got work to do. For instance, I've got to keep all those stars lit up...with gas, or whatever that stuff is. And then just when I think I've got everything all shaped up, some mountain falls down, or a meteor wipes out an entire planet, or something. It's not as easy as it looks, and I'm not as young as I used to be.

FRAP: How old are you, anyway?

GOD: Older than dirt, man. Older than dirt.

FRAP: You know, I suppose most of us had discarded a long time ago the image of you with a long grey beard and white robe, and yet there you are, bearded and robed. Is there any reason for this particular costume?

GOD: Well, no, just that I feel more comfortable this way. Actually, when I'm just potting around the office, I usually strip down to my underwear. Just underwear and sunglasses. It's hot up there. All the up-drafts, I guess.

FRAP: How do you feel about critics who have said that you really aren't interested in humanity at all,

that you have forgotten us, and that if you really cared, there wouldn't be so many wars, plagues, floods, accidents...all the horrors of human existence?

GOD: Hey, that makes me real mad! That's blasphemy! Who's been saying that? Let me catch anybody saying that, I'll change him into a frog.

FRAP: You mean you haven't heard all the protests? Don't you listen to prayers?

GOD: Man, I told you, I got a lot of work to do. I listen in once in awhile...just a few weeks ago, I got a rich one from a little girl who wanted me to stop a railroad strike, or something... but right now I've got some important things cooking. There's this new "hot" line to Hell, for instance. The staff figures it's a good idea. You know, sort of nip trouble in the bud by talking things over sensible like. But I don't know. It seems like more of a nuisance than it's worth. The other day some old lady got ahold of it and called up and caused a panic. Turned out all she wanted was to complain about being in Hell. Claimed there was some kind of mistake!

FRAP: A lot of people wonder about that. Do you ever make mistakes routing souls?

GOD: Well, you know, we got a lot of traffic nowadays, with the population explosion, and all. Put in a new bank of computers a couple of years ago to take care of all that, but sometimes a card jams or something and then, blammy! Limbo!

FRAP: Oh, is that what Limbo is?

GOD: Yeah, well, just until we can punch a new card.

FRAP: There has been considerable debate, historically, over the methods which you employ to decide who will be sent to Heaven, who will be sent to Hell. Could you clarify your procedures on this for us?

GOD: Well, you know, we just kind of talk things over. I get on the telephone and I say, 'I got two

lawyers and a dentist, whatta you got?' and he says maybe he's got a doctor and an actress. So maybe we swap, or maybe we argue a little more, but it usually works out. He's got most of the lawyers. As a matter of fact, he's got most of the dentists and doctors.

FRAP: Well, what sort of person do you usually get, Sir?

GOD: Goldwater republicans, mostly.

FRAP: I see. Would you care, then, to comment on the current political situation in the United States?

GOD: Well, I don't have time to keep up with all that stuff, but I can say this for your Goldwater. He's got a fine-looking little daughter there. Thinking about slipping her a little old heart-attack or something. Gets lonesome sometimes up there with all those damn angels. Oh, it's lonely at the top, young man!

FRAP: It must be. Does it ever make you wish you hadn't started the whole thing? Don't you sometimes wish you were right back at the beginning, being a Creator again, instead of just an Administrator. Or am I assuming too much?

GOD: Yeah, well, I still Create now and then, just to keep my hand in; a few new viruses, maybe a couple of unusual insect pests. But you're right. I do feel sort of like starting all over again now and then...tried that once, though. Flood. Didn't work.

You people propagate, man! But I'm working on something that will take care of all that. It ought to be out of the labs in a few months.

FRAP: Could you tell us a little more about that? What is it?

GOD: Well, to put it in simple terms, it's a new kind of rubber tree.

FRAP: Sir, I think we have space for about one more question. Could you give us any sort of hint about what kind of future you have in store for us? Do you think you might be able to organize yourself a little and help us out now and then?

GOD: Well, yes, of course. But I don't want you to

get the wrong impression or anything. I mean, the Universe is important, sure... don't get me wrong, and I'm building it up into a nice little business, too... but the Boss is an old codger, and sometimes I have a little trouble getting his okay on things.

FRAP: The Boss?

GOD: Yeah.

FRAP: I'm afraid to pursue this any further. But I feel compelled to ask you how you got into this...

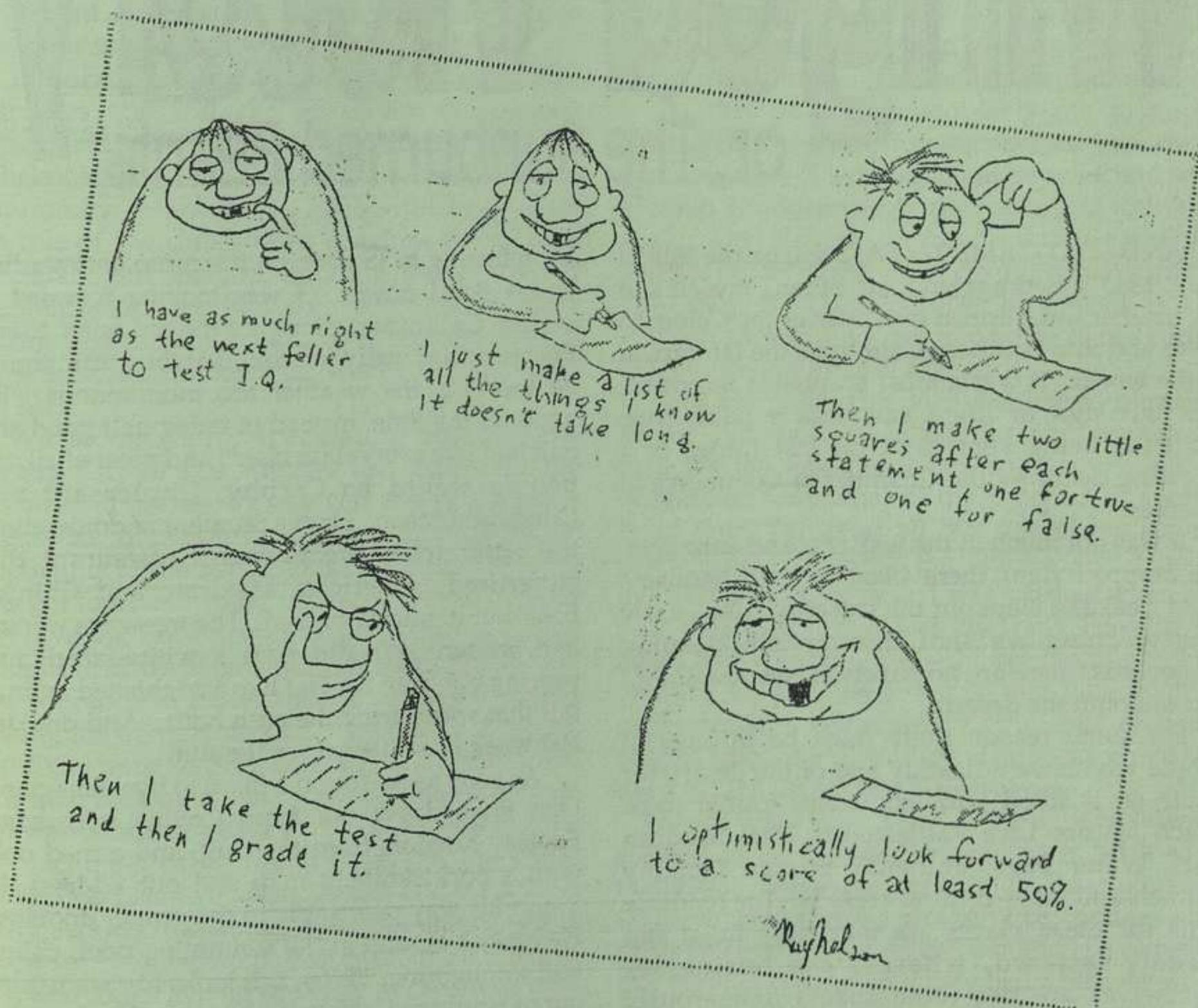
line of work.

GOD: I married into the family.

FRAP: I see. Sir, it has been a pleasure talking to you. I won't keep you any longer. Do you have a final word for our readers?

GOD: Well, just to keep praying, go to the Church or Sunday School of your choice, and dress warm!

FRAP: Thank you, Mr. Deity.



By Greg Benford

Winged Victory

or, The Sunburned Beanie

AND SO IT CAME TO PASS that on the 28th of May, 1963, a bedraggled crew of two, myself and my brother Jim, slipped quietly over the Colorado River and into Southern California, the fan capital of the world. It was a most hospitable reception; the first sign of life I saw was a palm tree, evidently being kept from the last throes of a lingering death by the Chamber of Commerce of Needles.

It was not much in the way of grand entrances. We stopped right there (next to the Chamber's palm tree) and slept out the rest of the day. Early next morning we shot through the sleeping boulevards (there are no streets in Needles, Calif.) and out onto the desert.

For some reason there must be throngs of people who have a deathly fear of the desert, for Route 66 is filled with obnoxious tourist traps which feature Live Rattlesnakes, Real Mexican Hats, Water Bags, authentic Stuffed Dummy Animals and other cultural artifacts. The roadside signs for these places are inevitably huge and crudely lettered, whereas the businesses themselves are two-room shacks dangerously close to collapse.

But these were all dark and lifeless as we sped

by, listening to JS Bach on the radio and reading James Bond novels. I was looking forward to seeing California, since I'd never been there. Everyone had sadly foretold that the traffic would be too fast, the weather too monotonous ("It's good all the time, instead of being half good and half bad like everyplace else.") and most of all, the people would be Crabby, Unpleasant and Downright Mean. I had a moment of doubt about the latter when we passed a restaurant that advertised "American, Mexican, and Chinese Foo," but it quickly passed. The freeways weren't bad, either. We did pass a white-faced man peering out from his Fiat like a frightened animal, but that was during the rush hour. And one day last week I could even see the sun.

As soon as we found a place to live, fans came. Don Fitch drove out from Covina with some Fantasy Rotators from the Cult, and armed only with a pocketknife, a map and our address, he found his way unerringly to the proper doorstep. He looked around at the swimming pool, palms, and soft lighting. "Why, this looks like something out of Southern California," he said. "I've been out here seven years and I've never seen anything like this." "If you were Redd Boggs," I said, flashing

my California smile and newly acquired suntan, "we'd throw you in the pool."

Next week we went to LASFS, stopping by at Don Fitch's to pick him up. We didn't get there on time, of course. I have never gotten to any fan gathering remotely close to the appointed hour, so I expected nothing else. The meeting place of LASFS is the general-purpose building of a public park, mostly because said location is free. Jim, Don and I stood around the building looking at people play games and run in and out. It all reminded me of those travelogue films one sees of children rather mindlessly throwing balls about and milling around together, with background music indicating that this is a happy, carefree life. For some reason the gambit is also used in deodorant advertisements, but fans have beaten that poor subject to death so I won't go into it.

I looked around at the typical suburban activities and thought about the mysterious organization which weekly met within, unbeknownst to the mundane protectors of the community. How did the LASFS officers explain the role of the club and its activities to the park officials? But then, considering the Temple of Mentalphysics we had seen some days before sitting nonchalantly next to a supermarket, I suppose science fiction must seem pretty dull stuff out here.

We stood there, speculating on why the Greater City of Los Angeles had cultivated the area around the nearby reservoir and then made it impossible for people to use any of it, and how the inhabitants of the apartments on the surrounding hills got food and water up the 80 degree inclines they live on, until people began to arrive. They brought in boxes of fanzines and stf for the auction that was to take place, and I rummaged around looking for things I needed. Eventually someone said, "You must be Greg Benford," and I found Bob Lichtman looking at me. The only reason I knew him was because he said so; he didn't look like the Bob Lichtman of my mind's eye. In the paper world, Bob L. is 5'10", thin, glasses and black hair, with a serious, intellectual look. But unfortunately for one's preconceptions, Bob is about 6'2", brown hair, and looks like an ordinary midwestern type who will soon Find The Right Girl and Settle Down, never troubling with the grave issues which concern Bob L. I was discouraged by this

turn of events, and was about to suggest that he either change his name or shrink in order to avoid further strain to my peace of mind, when a number of people came in, among them Lee Jacobs and Phil Castora.

"Gee," I thought, "Lee Jacobs in the flesh." (I did not verify this last statement, incidentally.) Here was a legendary figure, almost, standing right alongside me in a multicolored shirt, talking about selling old fanzines. What could I say to him? Come to think of it, did he know who I was? Probably not. So I passed up my opportunity to meet the legendary Lee Jacobs.

Phil Castora was wearing a leather jacket, which made him look somewhat forboding and mysterious to me, for some reason lodged in my subconscious. We talked for a while about the good ol' Cult of yesteryear, when people actually wrote interesting letters and published thick FRs.

At this point the people began to get all scrambled up, since they all seemed to arrive at the same time (I hate punctual people), and some of them I unfortunately met once and didn't see again. Don Franson blended into the scenery so quickly I didn't even get to do more than glance at him, though as I remember he looked as Don Franson should, and restored some of my faith in the underlying logic of the world.

Jack Harness came in (I recognised him from an old Cult photo.) I asked him if he happened to read the Ian Fleming James Bond series, and he brightened somewhat at the prospect of another Bond fan. I've read all but one of the series (Goldfinger), including the one serialized in the more recent Playboys, so I was crushed when Jack said that Goldfinger was the only book in the series that was bad. Now I have nothing to look forward to, and the lethargy that falls upon all series-readers when they've run out of books weighs upon my shoulders. I suppose now I will have to take up science fiction again.

Bruce Pelz and Dian Girard, who always seemed to be together, staggered in with some materials. Someone mentioned that Johnstone (Ted Johnstone lives!) wouldn't be coming, since finals were on, so the ARBM wouldn't be complete that night. I wondered if they had a little song and dance, complete with vaudeville tricks like the VOID boys, but didn't have the courage to ask them. Bruce Pelz, who seems to like tight-fitting

clothes, does not look like The Real Bruce Pelz at all. He seemed to be looking out at people and examining them rather than watching what they're doing. Someone remarked in the Cult that Pelz was -"the most self assured person"- he knew, but this quality comes through in a group more as arrogance, perhaps because it is more difficult to remain calm and even mannered in a LASFS meeting (except for Don Fitch, who has nerves so steady he should have been an Englishman.)

And Dian Girard. For some reason all female fans seem the same to me, so I will withdraw my vote from the Sex Queen of the LASFS competition, and simply say that Dian reminds me of MZBradley. Since Bruce is standing for TAFF, I don't know if this will be construed as a compliment or not.

I introduced myself to Ed Baker, who told me Esperanto was a truly International language and that millions of people spoke it. Bjo Trimble came in. I weaved my way through those folding metal chairs that always seem to have enough legs to trip you but not enough to sit on comfortably, and said hello. Again, this was about the last I saw of her, for the poor girl was recovering from the shock of an easy final examination when she had expected a difficult one, and I didn't see much of her the rest of the evening.

I milled about for a while, looking at the huge numbers of books and magazines up for auction and catching fragments of conversations (I heard my brother Jim say to Bjo, "I'm not a fan, I'm a zealot," but that may have been later) until I was

told that Ron Ellick had arrived. Jim and I went over to meet him about the time the LASFS convened and I wound up sitting between Ron and Lichtman while the formalities of the meeting took place. For all the good wishes behind the fans are slans movement, I would hate to see a community run by we devotees of the literature, for I fear we would all starve. The normal noise level at the LASFS is high, as one would expect, for fans are an unruly lot and are unaccustomed to sitting primly in their seats while someone drones on. But most of the noise comes from fans shouting at the person speaking, various officers debating procedure, and general wrangling. I would hate to arrange the lowering of a lifeboat from a sinking ship by utilizing the devious routes of LASFS power, but still they do get things done, as I discovered later.

The meeting itself was short (no puns from Harness), and broke up a few minutes before the auction. Thereupon a group formed in the back of the room and began talking. Bruce Pelz called for order, looking back at us. Bob Lichtman was telling us about some incident in the history of fabulous LA fandom. Bruce said, "Lichtman, either shut up or leave." We all looked at Lichtman and left. Which was just as well, for I suspect none of us had collections that needed embellishment.

We went to a typical coffeeshop and restaurant affair which I gather is the traditional gathering place for LASFS. Don Fitch ordered a full meal, an unusual thing among fanzine fans, except in extreme emergency. On the way over

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Ron Ellik told me about one day back in 1959 when he'd been walking along a street in LA and met Peter Kranold, a strange character who'd frequented LASFS some years before, sued Forry Ackerman, and corresponded with me (in that order). Kranold looked at Ellik, said, "Greg Benford told me you said I was crazy," and walked on. That was all. A cryptic sign, perhaps.

Not too long after we got there some more people arrived and the conversation became so complicated I had trouble keeping track of the double meanings and multi-leveled minds. I remember someone was telling Walter Breen stories ("There is speculation as to whether there is intelligent life in Walter Breen's beard."--Ellik), and then there were Dave Rike stories. I wonder whether Rike realises what a lot of Boswells he has in the LA area. Lichtman, I believe, told about last year when Rike was cooking something, needed milk to complete the dish, and went out to buy it from a grocery nearby. On his way back someone on their way to the '62 Westercon in LA passed by and asked Dave if he'd like to go. He thought about it for a minute and climbed into the back seat with the milk. Off for the weekend in LA with nothing but a carton of milk, which he was observed to drink throughout the convention.

A waitress came in and announced that a car was blocking a driveway. "A red Ford," she said. "Are you sure?" someone asked. "Well..." she paused. "It may be a Volkswagen."

John Trimble came in (he is a Nice Guy). He told me about the trials of working and going to college simultaneously and the biology course he and Bjo would have to take next Fall. I suggested they just present their marriage license and ask for a waiver, but this provoked no reaction. I suppose they are thinking about it.

Ron Ellik was cornered between me and a wall, so I told him about the theory I had evolved concerning fanzine-oriented fans. I thought that perhaps the transient nature of both fan marriages and fan communities could be explained by the fact that although fandom is a place in which one can achieve rather easily, it is also transient in its scope. One doesn't remain well known in fandom unless he stays active and keeps at least some quality in his production. (This excludes the people who become legendary, or infamous, or both.) Because so much of fandom can be dealt with on the surface of the emotions -- dyed-in-the-wool FIAWOL types excluded -- one doesn't really take up anything which involves him emotionally unless he goes outside fandom. And in fanzine fandom, to achieve some sort of prominence you must spend a good deal of time on it. So it seems to me a fanzine fan could get

into intimate, emotional relationships without realising the extent of the commitment (in fmz fandom, one can go gafia anytime), and he would be in for some shocks later on. If two or more people in the same relationship have this background, it may be too much. By "relationships" I mean marriage, close partnerships, intensive professional concentration, etc. (This also ties in with the fact that fmz fans are usually noted for lack of ambition, since this is usually a pretty intensive emotional commitment.) Without stretching things too much, this might explain the failure of the Church of the Brotherhood of the Way.

I told Ron all about this, since it is still a half-formed theory, and asked what he thought. "Well," he said. Those were the comments of Ron Ellik.

At this point Bjo turned around from the next table and pointed Ron out. "That's Ron Ellik," she said. "I cannot be held responsible for that," he said quickly, probably a result of being a TAFF-man.

Speaking of TAFF, the auction yielded \$51.00 for this noble cause, so I suppose LASFS can get something done, after all. Ron looked at the money Bruce Pelz had given him, and someone came over to get change for a dollar. "Why, I can change anything," he said. Jim gave him a napkin and said, "Change this to a \$100 bill."

Ron and I mused for a while about why more fans aren't science-oriented and I told him that Murray Gell-Mann's "eight-fold way" solution for the elementary particles seemed to have encountered quite a bit of success. "Drinks for everybody!" he cried expansively. Somehow I don't think Ron has the proper attitude toward science.

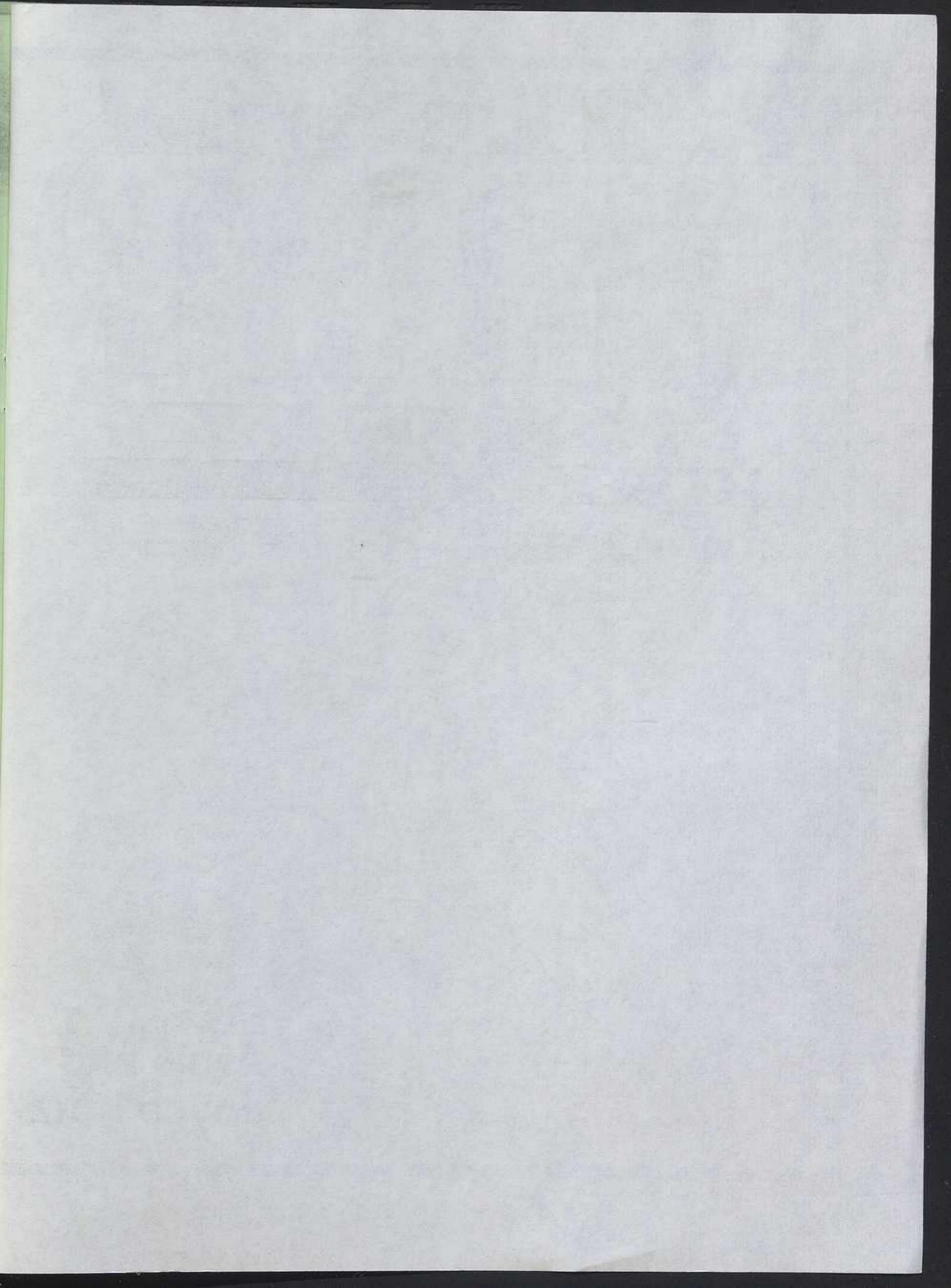
Dian Girard came by and Ron related how she had given out a "Who are you not speaking to?" questionnaire when she entered LASFS so she could find her way around in the maze of feuds. I don't mind feuds so long as they produce lines like "I ran down all of LA fandom in one night--barefoot," and mythical organizations like the LA Fan Tong. About this time everybody began to trickle out and it seemed to me like the evening had hardly begun. Sure it was midnight, but... I knew I was going to write something about the trip, so I told them I needed more material. "I've got to get 10,000 words out of this, so you people can't leave."

But they did, though, and I wound up outside talking to Bob Lichtman about the IWW and radicalism in general. Jim tried to tell Bob how to get to our apartment, but things just got more confused. Have you ever noticed how people are always saying "you can't miss it"? "There's a rock near the corner that sort of looks like a dog's head, you can't miss it." Jim gave Lichtman a couple of sets of instructions laced with this phrase, so of course I never expect to see him again.

About that time Don Fitch and Jon Shaw came by and we drove off into the lights of Los Angeles. The 1235th meeting of LASFS faded into history.



IT'S NOT THAT BAD, MEYER. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS GIVE UP COMIC BOOKS AND YOUR WIFE'LL COME BACK TO YOU.



A Taste of FRAP

Selections from
Robert Lichtman's
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