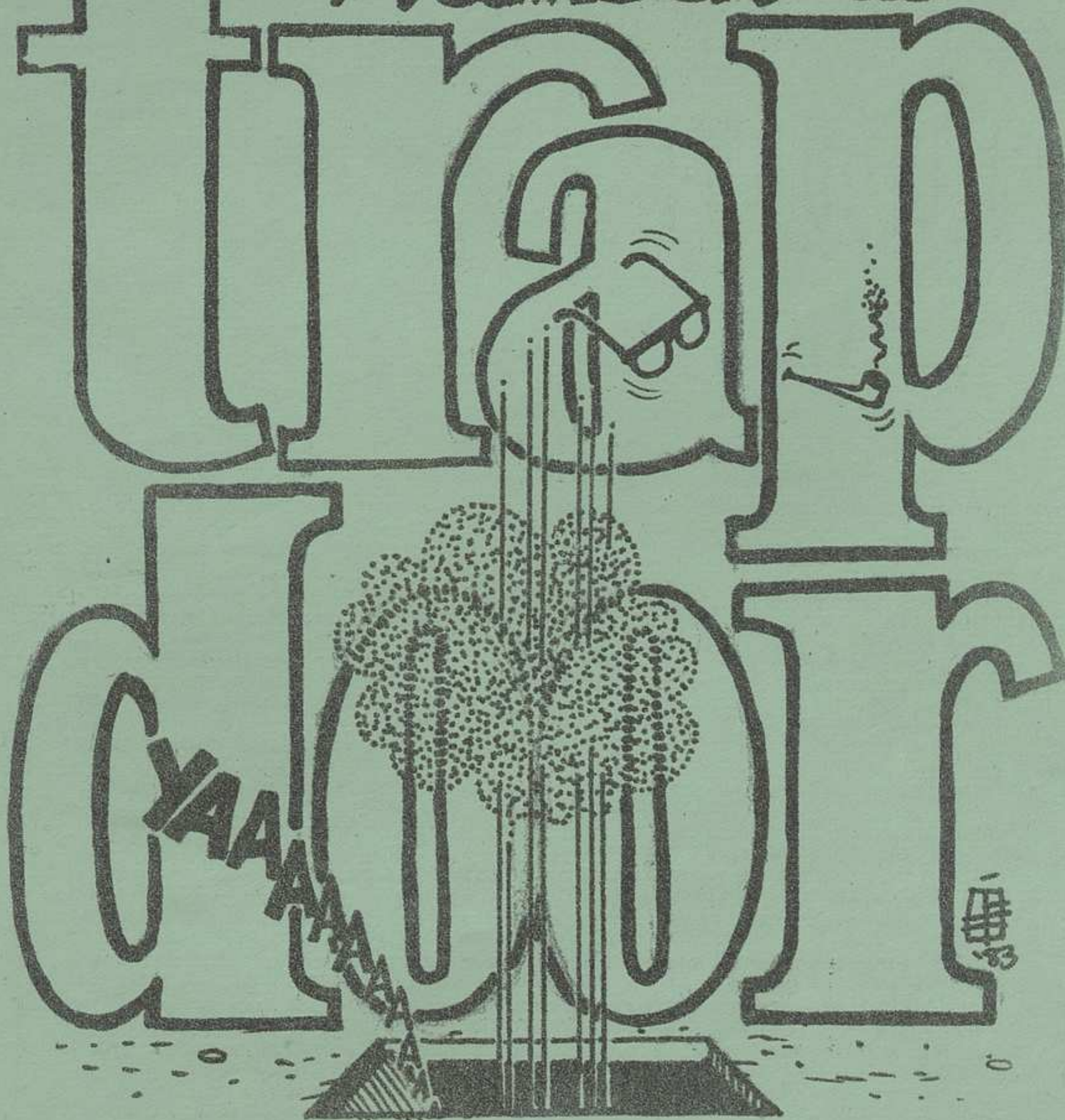


NUMBER ONE



TRAP

DOOR



balloon fandom lives!

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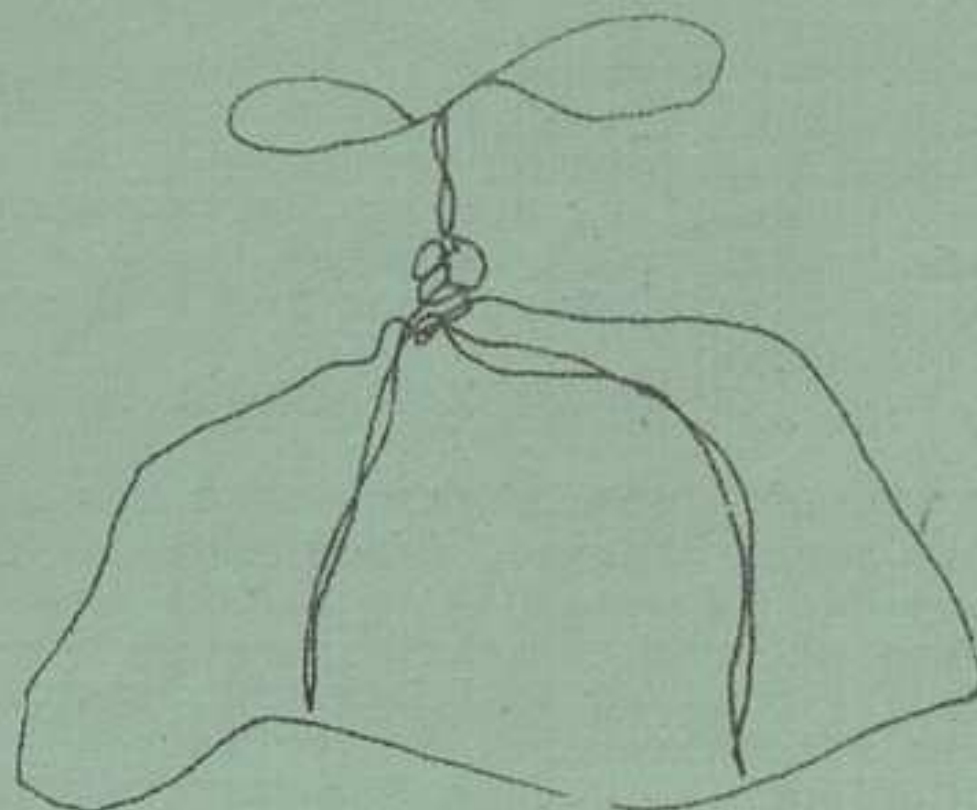
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You are getting this magazine because we sent it to you. Our mailing list is rather large and will in time become more intimate. If you want to be a mailing list survivor, please respond in some fashion. We would all like to see more fanzines than currently find their way to Glen Ellen; please put us on your trade list, preferably all-for-all. To further this publication we need letters and contributions. We also enjoy receiving quantities of 20¢ stamps along with the above, where possible. As a final resort, we are available for \$2.00 in cash or 20¢ stamps per issue. No subscriptions. Angels welcome.

RETURN
FROM THE
GLADES

by ROBERT LICHTMAN



TRY AS I MAY, I haven't ungafiated enough to become Truly Involved in the day to day petty hassles of modern-day fannish fandom. To me, a minor-league opinionater the likes of D. West pales in comparison to the truly great hasslers of fandom's past.

Along with this I have an incredible case of writing block that I developed while living down on the Farm in Tennessee during the 70's. Those of you who remember me as a fairly prolific publisher and correspondent in the 50's and 60's will croggle to learn that after some years of life in the large communal houses that came for a time to be favored on the Farm (though no longer) and along with the pressures of Farm life in general, my powers of composition dwindled until at last even writing my parents became a Major Event.

My fanac has truly suffered. I've had a great deal of difficulty in writing letters of comment to fanzines, and brevity has been the order of the day in most cases. To my lament, the kind of letter I used to prefer least to receive when publishing myself is the kind of letter I've tended to write since poking around in fandom again this decade. ("I liked this, I didn't like that.")

Yet I want to have more of a voice, for my own satisfaction if for no other reason, and this fanzine is part of the answer. If I have to fill in the empty spaces left by the other contributors, then I will Come Up With It. The way to get beyond blockage in writing is to write, I always believed. Time to get started.

Moving from Tennessee to Glen Ellen in 1980 and become involved with Paul Williams again as co-conspirator in a small publishing company and next-door neighbor got me reacquainted with fandom. Fanzines kept arriving in the mail. Still, the reentry was tentative and incomplete until the appearance of PONG. That cinched it. Before that, I had been of the opinion that perhaps the fandom I knew in the 50's and 60's had died out altogether and we were in a New, Uninteresting Era.

Then, later on, in late Winter 1982/3, when PONG had died and IZZARD was "late," a small voice in my head began saying, "Pub an ish, pub an ish." A few evenings later, picking up Paul and his boys at the airport, them fresh in from New York, we pulled out of the airport and onto the freeway. Cruising, Paul started telling me his most recent brainstorm. A few go by and then: "Robert, I've been thinking about publishing a fanzine." Thus TRAP DOOR was born.

We're calling me the editor, and while it's true that I'll be doing the physical work of getting each issue together, Paul Williams and Jeanne Bowman are strong associates and co-inspirators of this publication. The format owes its origins to Richard Bergerson, who demonstrated with WIZ #5 that five legalength sheets could be mailed for 20¢.

We hope that we will be able to publish this fanzine on a fairly frequent basis, though we're not going to pin ourselves down with a schedule. A strong determining factor will be how much response we generate in the form of articles, stories, artwork and letters to fill up these 20-page issues. TRAP DOOR is going to be a "general fanzine," with a proclivity towards fannishness, good humor and the offbeat (so please no fiction unless it's fannish).

The next moves are as much up to you as to us.

PUBLICATION OF THIS ISSUE has been substantially delayed by the birth of my newest friend, Jason Allen. Jason was born at 12:41 am the morning of September 22nd with a very full moon blazing in the sky outside the window of the alternative birthing room at the hospital in Santa Rosa. Attending this birth along with Jason's mother and father were--all upon invitation of Jason's mother--Ann, a nice lady and birth attendant from further up north in California, Jeanne Bowman, erstwhile associate of TRAP DOOR, and yours truly.

I first met Donna, Jason's mother, when I originally moved to Glen Ellen. She was living in the little cottage next to Paul's house where I later moved in (and still remain). Over the years we have developed a close friendship and when, earlier this year, she became pregnant I gave her a copy of the Farm's book on childbirth, SPIRITUAL MIDWIFERY, and found myself from time to time dispensing information and advice about the changes she found herself experiencing in her pregnancy. It was, however, with some considerable surprise (and great honor) that I found myself receiving and accepting her invitation to attend her birthing.

I'm the father of four boys all of whom were born at home on the Farm and all of whose birthings I was present at. While living on the Farm I also attended a large portion of another birthing at which my then-wife was assisting. My role was largely confined to starting and keeping a fire going that full-moon night in March after a half-inch of fresh snow had just dumped itself on Tennessee. After leaving the Farm I kind of assumed my birthing-attending days were over, but last year I found myself attending two births with Jeanne. And now Jason's.

Birthings are a time of very high energy. On the physical plane, one has to be able to accept the frequent and often-copious presence of blood, piss, shit, and other assorted bodily fluids. On the mental plane, the whole accent is on keeping the vibes high and clean enough so that the mother is not inhibited or made uptight in any way, yet while keeping her on line as to what's going on and what's good for her to be doing with her body and mind during and between birth contractions. The climax is, of course, the emergence of the baby.

The portion of a birthing before the birth can often seem to take a very long time, even if it proceeds rapidly, because of the uncertainty of when the final outcome is to actually occur (though there are transitional signs along the way). Afterwards, just as with good high sex, there is a period of timelessness where the new person opens up and checks out the immediate new environment and where all those in attendance--freed from the process of building to the birth itself--are equally rapt with attention at the new arrival on the scene.

Before Jason's birth was a period of several weeks where we were expecting birthing to commence at any time. A lot of my time and attention was with Donna during this period which caused the delay in publication which I mentioned above. All told, well worth the delay...

If anyone reading this magazine has any Amazing Fannish Birthing Tales to relate, we'd like to hear them.

SO WHO IS Jeanne Bowman? some are asking. Jeanne Bowman first discovered fandom reading PONG over my shoulder. Shortly thereafter, she graduated to grabbing PONG (and other zines) out of my grasp and attempting to cast the first eyetracks on them. Typical neoish enthusiasm. Still, the habit stuck and now that she's attended her first convention and become a

(continued to page 18)

DISCLAVE '83

A SPECIAL
TRAP DOOR
CONREPORT



BY WALLY "THE SNAKE" MIND¹

with footnotes by Dan Steffan

DISCLAVE 1983 -- Or, Fandom and Taxes: Springtime in D.C. always means two things to me: Cherry blossoms and a lot of rain. It is that rain that always alerts me to spring's arrival, as it rushes full force into my bedroom and wakes me from my post-worldcon hybernation. As the water and mud rush into my boudoir, I rush out of my humble hole-in-the-ground² to begin another season of convention fun and frolic.³

Soon after emerging from my palatial estate and getting my baby blues used to what passes for sunlight in this part of the country, we were off to the '83 Disclave which was being held at the Twin Bridges Marriott. Since acquiring their car, the Steffans--particularly Lynn--have refused to let me travel to cons between Lynn's breasts, as I have in the past. Instead Dan and I fashioned a special place in the front of the car, just for me. Resembling a hood ornament, my special seat is truthfully a lot more like that of a tail-gunner in a B-29. Like a giant ballbearing, my turret swivels and spins allowing me the best possible vantage point from which to use the two tiny cannons that Dan gave me. With them came the instructions to use them to keep the other drivers in line and to teach them, when necessary, the true meaning of phrases like, "Stay Alive at 55!" Unfortunately for this narrative, the trip to the con on Friday night was uneventful, with my only having to blow out the tires on one car as an object lesson.

The convention hotel was an amazing piece of work. It was obviously once a small motel that had, over the years, kept adding wings and levels until it sprawled all over the place. That alone wouldn't be such a bad thing, but when combined with the fact that they had numbered each of those wings and levels differently, you begin to get the feeling that this should have been a Confusion instead of a Disclave. Nonetheless, some people considered the motel's close proximity to historic landmarks and the airport a plus that could more than balance out whatever problems one might have finding one's room. Personally, the only historical landmark I could see from the place was the 14th Street Bridge, made famous a couple years ago when a Florida-bound airliner hit it while taking off in a snowstorm; which is also a good example of just how close we were to the airport.

1 It should be stated here, up front, so to speak, that this Mister Wallace Mind is of no relation to the comic book villain Mister Mind, who was his father.

2 Also known as "Versailles Under The Potomac."

3 Wally says he enjoys the beginning of another convention season, but that he wishes it weren't so tough on his carpeting...

If a plane happened to go over the motel--which happened a lot--the noise was deafening. Every time one went over we just plugged our ears and prayed that it missed the TV antennae. Once, while I was outside by the pool, working on my tan, a plane came roaring overhead and blocked out the sun momentarily and sent hordes of costumed bozos into the building screaming about the end of the world. Another time a jet liner came down so low over the motel that I thought it was actually going to land on the roof--it was enough to make any god-fearing snake⁴ shed his skin out of season.

After meeting up with Ted White at the con, the Steffans and Mr. White (as he insists upon being called--at least by me, anyway) departed the motel in order to see a rock band at a local club. Though invited to accompany them I decided to stay behind and do some in-depth investigative reporting about the con, and made plans to regroup with them when they returned. I was at this convention to observe and report and I was anxious to get started. I wanted to know who was who, what was what, and when who was where with what--and why! I was a snake possessed. Naturally the NYC Contingent was there, and as usual were host to several parties during the con. This year Moshe and Lise had brought an ice cream machine with them--which really livened things up, even if Larry Carmody did try to use me as a spoon. (Naturally, like any deadly snake, I bit him and injected my poisonous venom into his system. He should be deader than a doornail in about 50 years.)

Also in attendance was Toronto fanartist, Taral. I had heard many people speak about him at different cons and had even spotted him occasionally myself from whosever cleavage I happened to be riding in. I always thought he looked like he was wearing hand-me-downs from the wardrobe of SPACE: 1999, but this year's Disclave was different. Not once did he wear a little green miniskirt--not to mention a silver lame one--and the effect was not missed by the other attendees. Fans were holding conversations with him and enjoying his insights and humor in a fashion that showed considerable relief from all involved. Being a wise-guy, though, I did attempt to stir things up by asking him just how many other personalities he had, but he didn't seem to hear me; which was a shame because we both could have become rich off the movie rights alone.

By the time Dan, Ted and Lynn returned from their nightclubbing I could tell, by their zomboid expressions, that they were in desperate need of a place to get sercon. Being smarter than the average snake, I had taken the liberty of scouting several locations while they were gone and took them immediately to Mark Kernes, famous tax-specialist, and his portable Den of the Sercon. He offered everyone some truly righteous tax-tips from the Middle East, along with some good, common, household deductions from California, which everyone agreed would be a big help in the current fiscal year. At one point your snake reporter nearly got burned to death when one of the humans forgot where he was and tried to light me. Luckily I put the ember out before it did any serious damage, but the humans were so sercon that they still continued to pass me half-way around the room before noticing what they were doing.

Soon after leaving Mark, the group of humans--now consisting of Dan, Ted, Lynn, Matthew Moore, Mary Mueller, and Jeff Schalles--began to encounter hordes of screaming adolescent boys and girls running around the hotel. They were everywhere. They were in the halls of the various wings, they were outside between the various wings, they were hanging from the balconies of the various wings. I mean they were everywhere! It was a good thing I was riding on Dan's shoulder when we left Mark's, otherwise I'm sure I would have been stepped upon and left to die with the word "Adidas" stamped into my little body.

⁴ Remember, no matter what Wally may say, he is not a snake. He is a worm, a common, everyday worm. (Well, perhaps not common...)

They were running in packs of six or eight, and seemed preoccupied with adolescent flirting. By asking a few questions in the right places I found out that they were in Washington for a Class Trip and were sharing the con hotel by coincidence--though I thought they were nearly indistinguishable from the rest of the fans. This weekend in a motel was something of a Rite of Passage for these kids, struggling as they were to control their hormones.⁵ They weren't sure what to do with each other, but damn it, they weren't going to let that stop them. By Saturday night they had slowed down a bit and were actually standing still from time to time. I'm convinced that had they spent another week at the motel they would have cured their acne.

In the midst of the horde, the humans ran into Steve and Elaine Stiles who, having just arrived from "Charm City" Baltimore, desperately needed to catch up on all the tax information that had been passed around earlier. Needless to say, by the time our party left that evening for the World Pong HQ, the Stiles family had so many fine deductions that they couldn't walk. Fortunately they were staying at the motel.

Saturday's conventioning started about 3:30 in the afternoon, in the hotel bar. While Dan and Ted and Avedon were supposedly preparing for their panel later in the afternoon, I overheard this conversation concerning the true sex of the waitress that had taken their order:

"Do you think that's really a woman?" Dan asked Lynn.

"Gee, I don't know--naw, it has to be a transvestite," she answered.

"I don't think they hire transvestites to wait on tables in snazzy bars," Dan said. "I think it must be female, even though she doesn't have much shape..."

"Oh come on!" Lynn chided Dan. "Did you see those eyelashes? They were as phony as her tits--and the way she walks..."

"But she's wearing hot pants, Lynn. It is really difficult to wear hot pants like that when you have balls," Dan said, as he watched Lynn check her out again.

"You're probably right," she finally agreed. "It may have been male once, but it isn't anymore. Which would account for the way she walks." At which point Avedon, who had been talking to someone else entirely, leaned over to Lynn and asked, "Do you think our waitress is really a woman?"

As the time for the panel approached, the group of humans had increased in size to include rich brown and his daughter, alicia, Doug Fratz, Alina Chu, Larry Carmody, Terry Hughes, Jeff and Mary from the previous night, and surprise guest, Boyd Raeburn. (Boyd had come to town to visit Terry that weekend by coincidence, he said. I just looked at him and hissed, "Death Will Not Release You!"--though he pretended not to hear me.) Together this group of shabby males and zippy females made their way to the function room for "our" panel (the shabbily zippy shemale waitress did not come⁶).

The previous panel was still running when we arrived, and continued to do so for 15 of "our" minutes, causing our mass to swell to at least 15 people. The panel, once it had begun, was boring and dull. The participants weren't prepared and had nothing much to say, and it quickly degenerated into a couple of conversations between persons on the platform and members of the audience, like Stu Shiffman. At one point Stu asked the panel's opinion of the recent issue of CHOCOLATES OF LUST, which stirred the panel to their peak of the day. Avedon: "It was okay." Ted: "It was pretty neat." Dan: "I liked it." It was pathetic. If Phil Palmer had been there he'd have blown his brains out. It was painfully obvious to this snake reporter that the panel participants hadn't spent nearly enough time in the bar...

5. It was reported that the hormone count was higher that weekend in Washington than the pollen count.

6. Though I'm sure she could have if her operation was done properly.

The human ate dinner that night at "the best steakhouse in Washington, D.C.," according to Ted. The weather had actually let up long enough that night for them to eat in the restaurant's sidewalk cafe. I ordered a Bloody Mary and drank it from the bottom of the glass, pausing only when the stick of celery got stuck in my throat, which required me to chew.

Saturday night's partying included going to the consuite for free drinks and ice cream--where your humble reporter almost snuffed it. Fatso Stuffan had set me down on a table so he could grab an even dozen ice creams in his fingers, when some moron dressed like something out of a Steve Reeves movie sets his battleaxe down on top of me. It was horrible. I could feel that cold, cold steel against my flattening, flattening body and I was sure that I was gonne bite the big one this time. Fortunately for me, some other moron--this one dressed like a mutation of Tinkerbell and the Hulk--ran into the room and shouted, "Wenches! The halls are full of wenches!" At the sound of these magic words, Moron #1 grabbed his axe and ran out of the consuite yelling, "Wenches? Arrrrr, Attila like wenches!" Steffan, of course, had missed the entire episode because he was distracted by the re-valuation that he could carry an extra half-dozen ice creams if he used his armpits.

After putting in a short appearance at Moshe's party we retired to the other end of the motel to discuss taxes at greater length with Steve and Elaine Stiles. Along the way we picked up the cream of fandom⁷ and turned Steve and Elaine's room into Sercon Central, where we held another tax seminar until the wee hours of the morning. We had arranged for Mark Kernes to join us and bring his Lebanese Tax Records in case there were any specific questions concerning Friday night's session.

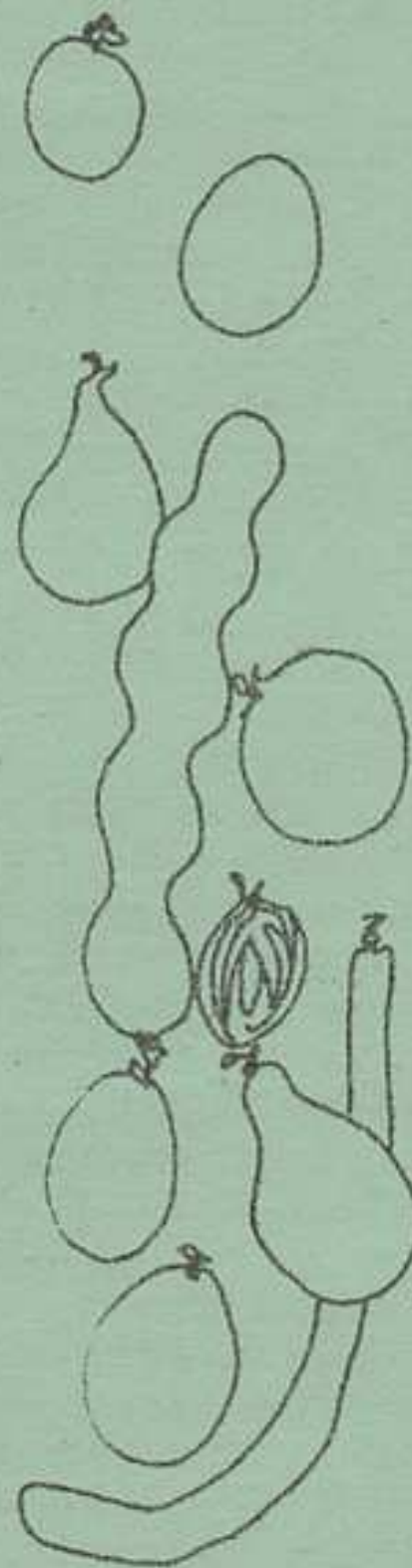
Somewhere in the midst of all this the call went out for something to drink--as sercon tax talk can really dry out your mouth. Lynn and Elaine volunteered to go around the corner to the soft drink machine, and collected a couple of quarters. A short time later, Elaine returned with her arms full of Coke cans and a glazed look in her eyes. Dropping the cold cans on the bed, she finally spoke, "Somebody better go out there. The machine is giving us Unlimited Cokes!" Several of the males ran to assist Lynn in the task of carrying Unlimited Amounts of Cokes. In the end, the machine did not give Unlimited Amounts of Cokes--but for our purposes it was close. For the fifty cents that had been deposited by Elaine, the machine gave her fifteen cans of Coke. It kept the party fueled with liquid for the rest of the evening.

"Fifteen for one," said Steve Stiles. "That's my kind of Coke machine."

"Too bad it isn't Pepsi," said Ted White.

Sunday's activity started much later than Saturday's. Lynn woke me from my sleep--in the soil of a potted plant in the dining room--about 4:00 and we finally made it to the con about 5:15. We found much the same group of people in the bar as the previous afternoon and quickly joined in the consumption of fluids.

"After four-shirty," slurred rich brown, "the drinksh are only a buck an' a quarter, sho order sheveral..." The previous afternoon's waitress was nowhere in sight on Sunday, much to the group's disappointment. "Itsh jusht not the shame when you're shure of yer waitresh's shex..." said rich brown from under the table.



⁷ Available soon from Campbell's. M-m-m-m good!

There was going to be yet another party in Moshe's room that night and it was agreed that it was the place for everyone to meet and talk--especially since Larry and Alina's room was only two doors down and convenient for the spontaneous tax discussions.

The humans finally decided where to go for dinner and set out in two cars for Chicago-style deep-dish pizza which, like the previous night's steak, was The Best In Town. It must have been, because the fools actually stood out in the rain while waiting to get into the place. Of course, rain doesn't bother snakes, so I just hung around looking like a section of old hose on the sidewalk and watched the humans dodge raindrops. Finally I couldn't take their bitching any longer and slithered up to the front of the line, determined to scare away those who were ahead of Dan, Ted and Company. Usually the sight of a fierce snake like me would send a group of humans scattering, but not the humans I encountered in that line. Instead of running away they just looked at me and laughed; a couple of them even reached down and stroked me. I didn't succeed in getting the humans out of the rain, but I did end up with the phone number of one of the women in line (she wrote it on my belly in lipstick).

After dinner, Dan, Ted and Lynn gave the rest of their party, Larry Carmody, Alina Chu and Mary Mueller, the thrill of their lives and took them to visit World Pong Headquarters, where they witnessed the secret, ritualistic Feeding Of The Cats. After leaving, it was apparent that they had been touched by their special visit, and I could tell by the look in their eyes that they were glad to have come, and happy to have bought several expensive items from the beautiful gift shop. Later, at Moshe's party, it was obvious that they had seen a lot that night and were feeling pretty tired. But, you know, I'm sure they'd be the first to tell you that while they were tired, it was a good kind of tired.⁸

The party wound down with several hours of jabbering and smofing on the balcony outside Moshe's room. There was talk about fanzines, and fandom, and fanzine fandom, and fanzine fandom fans, and the fanzine fandom fan room, etc., until I thought I was going to puke. Out of desperation I slithered out to the car in the parking lot, and into the seat of my artillery-hood ornament. I swivelled the barrels of my cannons toward the balcony and zeroed in on the heaviest concentration of fans, and nearly blew them all away. But I reconsidered after I realized that with two rounds I'd be ending the publishing lives of BOONFARK, MOTA, GAMBIT, BLATANT, RAFFLES, BEARDMUTTERINGS, NOTHING LEFT TO THE IMAGINATION, CLASS ACT, and LE MOINDRE. Not to mention the fact that we'd never see the last issue of DNO from Taral and Victoria... It would have been a lot of bad karma to carry around on my shoulders--especially since I don't have any! Instead, I fired the two rounds over the motel and attracted the attention of the people on the balcony. As they all stared in my direction, I turned on the high-intensity beams that are mounted on either side my turret and flicked on the Public Address System: "Okay Dan and Lynn," I said. "I know you're in there. Come out with your car keys in the air. It is time to go home. I repeat, it is time to go home!"

It was amazing how quickly that got them away from the party and out to the car. It was 2:30 in the morning and by 3:00 I had finally convinced Dan not to kill me. "I have a deadline to meet," I told him. Finally, after the police had come to pull him off the front of the car, and he had an opportunity to calm down, we headed back to World Pong HQ. As we left the parking lot I swivelled my turret one last time in the direction of the Twin Bridges Marriott, and as we got farther and farther away from the convention, I marvelled at how much of a thrill it still is for me to see fans recede into the distance, and then, finally, disappear.⁹

It felt good, after all those years, to know that I hadn't become jaded.

--Wally "The Snake" Mind, 1983

8 Wally stays up much too late watching David Letterman.

9 The feeling is often mutual, Wally.



WAITING FOR THE BLEEP

by CHESTER ANDERSON

WHILE I was away from Mendocino, most of my friends seem to have acquired telephone answering machines. Thus I don't get to talk to them much anymore, only when we meet by chance at Alphonso's. My social life is becoming a patchwork of recorded messages.

My first inkling of this came when I was in Santa Cruz. I tried to call a friend up here from a pay phone. What I got was, "Hi! I'm not here right now, but if you'd care to leave a message....!" What I lost was a dollar and twenty-five cents.

My last dollar and twenty-five cents.

These machines are a multiple menace. To begin with, the bleep itself -- which I now spend most of my time waiting for -- is generally so loud and shrill that it knocks my glasses off, and by the time I find them and put them on again, the telephone has nothing to offer but a dial tone.

Furthermore, in an age when it's imperative that we come closer together, these machines put us another few pounds of transistors and tape further apart. After you've been bleeped four times in as many calls, a definite sense of alienation begins to sink in, and you start talking to yourself in self-defense.

And there's the overall inconvenience, both to bleeper and to bleepee. It's easy to return one call, but when you get home and find a dozen taped calls to return, it's easier yet to return none of them, and that's what usually happens.

And there's the overall indignity of the thing. How many times can you tell people to wait for the bleep -- friends and strangers alike -- before you start talking baby talk? Full returns aren't in yet, but some of my machine-owning friends are beginning to act very oddly.

But worst of all is the boredom. There's a pre-set length of time the user's message has to take before the infernal bleep sounds. You can't just say, "Hi! I'm not home. Please leave a message." No way. You have to talk interminably, and since you don't know to whom you're talking, there's not really a lot you can say that's worth listening to. And then the caller has to listen to it. Argh. And then the bleep.

My nephew tried to deal with this problem once when his mother was out of town. He prepared a small-scale radio spot -- music, announcement and all -- neatly timed to fit the mandatory space. It was a brave try, but it didn't work. The telephone earpiece is not a high-fidelity instrument, and

what the caller got -- one inch from his eardrum -- was an enormously loud blare of indistinguishable noise -- no discernable announcement -- followed by that damnable bleep.

At the very least, answering machine addicts (you'd think) could fill the pre-bleep moments with something interesting. Today's weather forecast, perhaps, or some snappy jokes, or at least a few trendy slogans.

"Hi! I'm not home right now. Please leave a message when you hear the bleep. Meanwhile, don't forget: No Nukes! Save the Whales! Ban the Bomb! Bleep!"

We were all worried about computers taking us over, and here it turns out that answering machines have done it instead.

Often, toward the end of a busy day being bleeped, I soar into a rage. Thoughts of revenge gavotte in my head. Not of destroying the machine -- if I could have done that, I wouldn't've needed to phone in the first place, just go over and visit -- but of inflicting the machine on its owner. Generating feedback, as it were.

I've only succumbed to this temptation once, so far. I was calling a friend from another friend's house, and got bleeped twice in a row. The friend I was with had an elaborate stereo installation, and an amazing collection of sound effects records. (He used to be in radio, as so many of us have been.) So I jacked in the earphones, put on a railroad record, cued it up neatly, and phoned my bleeping friend.

"Hi! I'm not home right now..." and so on down to the bleep. At that point I turned the stereo volume to full, jammed an earphone to the mouthpiece, and let old Pacific 209 come howling down the tracks, out of the darkness and into the answering machine.

The cut lasted about five minutes. When it ended I picked up the phone and listened. Nothing but a hum. So I loudly said "Bleep!" and hung up.

I've never heard anything about that, so I guess it didn't work.

There seems to be no way we can protect ourselves from the essential rudeness of answering machines. The technological glimmer is still too bright around them. We're going to have to learn to write letters again. The age of the telephone is dead.

Now, I know some of you out there are devotees of these devices, and that you're going to want to argue with me about this essay. Feel free, but don't bother to write. Just phone. If I'm not there, my answering machine will take your message. But remember, wait for the bleep.

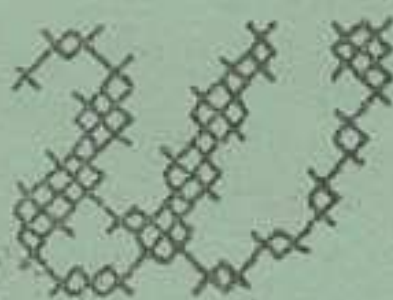


CONFESSIONS

(& CONFUSIONS)

OF A TEEN-AGE

NEOFAN



HEN I was a lass, I went off to New York to seek my fortune. I didn't find it. Instead I found a basement filled with mimeography, and unlikely but likeable people named Ted and Terry, Carol and Calvin, Bob and Barbara.

I was intrigued by this subterranean subculture. Here were people as daring as any I'd met in hippie/beatnik circles -- who dared not to be totally raunchy. People involved in the most imaginative writing, who had gone beyond the scribbled narcissistic journal, and sometimes even got published.

I decided to sign up, and was absorbed into an international network that stretched from Belfast to Tokyo. I joined secret APAs that seriously discussed "goal orientation and the functions of the clitoris." I attended exhausting four-day party/cons that exhaustively explored the medical (and veterinary) pharmacopia.

People were welcomed for their offbeat sexual orientation. People were banned for their offbeat sexual orientation. People were banned for banning those of offbeat etc. People bitched and bailed like an inbred, incestuous family. Some people gafiated and were never seen again.

Community traditions developed. Viva Xmas Eve at Ellingtons!

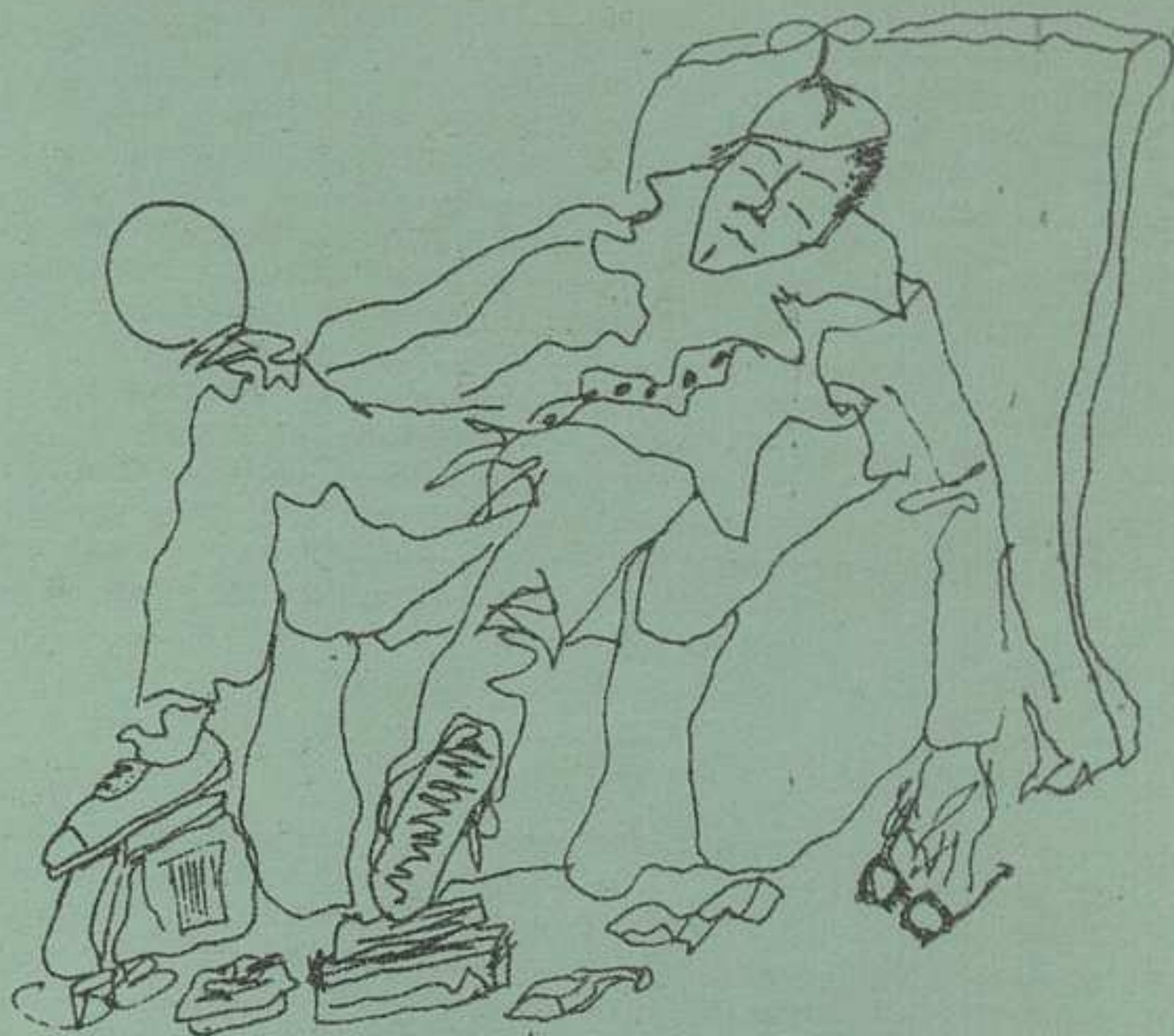
I reenlisted, and even had a few things published. Outsiders wondered how I always found friends so easily. In Japan, in London, in remote parts of Canada, people and parties mushroomed. "What is your social secret?" asked the outsiders. "Science fiction," I replied. "You mean you talk about science fiction?" asked the incredulous outsiders. "Oh no, we almost never talk about science fiction," I reassured them.

We grew up. We grew gray hairs and wrinkles. Some of us gafiated permanently, and wakes grew popular.

As the years passed, some of us even read a little science fiction.

by Grania Davis

WE NEVER
SLEEP



by Paul Williams

March 1983:

Uh, Robert, you haven't told me yet how small you want the type to be in this fanzine. You want I should put the Selectric on 10-pitch or 12? Oh well... Hello everybody. This is Paul Williams, speaking to you from the editorial columns of TRAP DOOR #1, if we haven't changed the title or something. I have been reading the ruminations of West, White, and Bergeron in WARHOON 30, and my head swims. Actually I'm just writing this to clear my head of fannishness so I can get back to my book in progress.

I have absolutely no opinions (stet that typo!) whatsoever on any current fannish controversy, least of all on the discussion of the above-mentioned on the subject of the relative merits of one Willis, who I think was a cute, intelligent fuzzball in an early Heinlein juvenile. It must be terrible to have one's name bantered about constantly like an overused trademark on its way to public domain (small "w" status & accompanying loss of corporate revenues, has anyone noticed that Parker Brothers recently lost its monopoly?). Imagine how I would feel if there was some squealing little guy on TV taking all of the dignity out of my name and causing telephone operators constantly to ask me if I'm him? On the other hand, consider how such a hypothetical being might feel if people kept coming up to him and telling him how much they loved his book Das Energi. If I was Willis, I don't doubt I'd have dreams of murdering Bergeron in a number of imaginative ways (or preferably going back & murdering his grandfather so none of this'd 've happened in the first place), waking of course in a cold sweat and feeling terribly guilty about it. Well D. West in "Performance" acknowledges how sour the achievement of fame can be and also how that doesn't seem to dull our desire for it, the idea of it being attractive even after we've known and been repulsed by the reality. B. Dylan said, "You'll find out when you reach the top, you're on the bottom." I also notice how physical speci-

mens of the male or female fitting certain specifications continue to be attractive even after one has been intimate with them and been sadly disappointed. So the reality doesn't dispel the illusion. That shows you what a strong thing desire is.

Have I failed to lose anybody so far? Look, having been inspired to jump back into the fannish fray by D. West's marvelous essay "Performance," which tickled me more than all but a very few things I've read in any context in too many years, I have no intention (we the collective editors have no intention, right gang?) of allowing TRAP DOOR to be yet another example of the pervasive blandness of American fanzines etc etc. Even tho it seems clear that what UK fandom has going for it is small scope and personal contact (even body contact) and I acknowledge the merits of such (based on results) and the unlikelihood of even such stalwarts as us overcoming the geographical and demographic limitations implicit in the bulkiness of the USA. But I mean, we'll find another way. We'll kick ass. We'll get weird. We'll think of something.

May 1983:

Well, I'm back from my two thousand mile (roundtrip) driving excursion to the Seattle Zoo to see the two-headed izzard (a nocturnal animal) and I can report it was well worth the effort. Especially since said creature is about to be shipped to the hinterlands to undergo scientific research into some of its more unusual properties (like you stick a nocturnal animal into the light of day surrounded by daytime beings performing day activities and it nods out; this is unusual?), and this turns out to have been perhaps about the last chance to see it in the habitat where it first achieved international fame and attention.

A noteworthy effect of my contact with the izzard is the extreme contagiousness of its nocturnal nature, causing me rapidly and spontaneously to fall into the most prolonged stretch of staying-up-late (half a dozen nights in a row till 5 ayem, including nights when the izzard(s) weren't even around to stimulate or distract me) I can remember since Manhattan days. In fact in this same nocturnal fanimal house in the Woodland Park Zoo there is a creature called the slow loris, which after several days of fannish sleeplessness (I was travelling with two boys under the age of 11 who wake a father up by 9 am regardless) I distinctly began to resemble. In fact, at the annual (or is it weekly?) gathering of Seattle fandom at Gary and Anna's, various persons regaled me with stories of the nocturnal animal house & so brought me to a moment of great personal awakening, viz., instead of secretly wishing to be D. West, as I'd been doing for the past six weeks or so, I kicked that over and decided that what I really want to be (when I grow up) is a slow loris. Some people said that whenever they go to see the slow lorises they're always fucking, and others said they never do that at all, and I think I can identify with both conditions.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. The izzard was not actually drinking coffee when I first encountered it, but I believe that's because it was driving a vehicle at the time. This was entertaining, because the beast had got itself turned around, so that the head that usually stares into the distance at the receding landscape was now in charge of directing the vehicle (for the first time). This it did rather well, considering its inexperience, and since people drive slow in Seattle anyway it wasn't any too terrifying. Both heads of the izzard had called in sick to their respective places of employment with a Bad Attitude that Monday, so we sought out a restaurant away from the potential haunts of their co-workers and launched into a breakfast that ended up lasting 12 or 13 hours.

The iz in person is every bit as charming as its fanzine NEIL'S HAY (2-time winner of the Arbee Award for Best Bath tub Companion) might lead you to believe. It occurs to me (this is hardly profound, so don't hold your breath) that one of the attractions of fandom is the illusion that it is a

place where one will encounter smart, well-read, articulate persons, preferably attractive in an offbeat way and with a sense of humor and a zest for life. This is as untrue as a perfume commercial, but still if one is doomed to a life of fannish interconnectedness, how pleasant to occasionally encounter something akin to the fannish conversation one dreamed of as an impressionable adolescent (back in the days before Roscoe invented nitrous oxide).

August 1983:

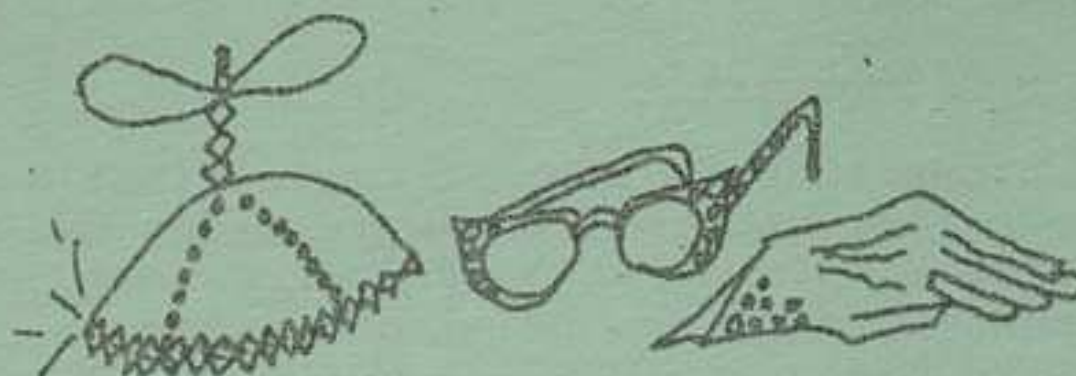
Deadline is upon me again (that's what I hate about working for a yearly fanzine; you're always under deadline pressure) and I'm in a foul fannish mood, having only in the last couple of days cancelled my long-planned trip to the Baltimore worldcon, which was to be my first worldcon in five years and where I was gonna have A Lot of Fun. Oh well. That's all right. I'll just stay here and smoke some dope and imagine the conversations I would have been having with Sid Coleman at 3 ayem in the hotel corridors. I'll draw pictures of what I think Malcolm Edwards would have looked like. I'll fantasize about my liaisons with the beautiful daughters of famous science fiction writers. And I'll chuckle about what a fool I would have made of myself on the Philip K. Dick panel. I'm sure I'll have a much better time than the folks who actually have to suffer through six days in Baltimore at the end of a hot summer. Phooey.

The title of this column, "We Never Sleep," derives from a party hosted by Cheryl Cline and Lynn Kuehl at the Westerchron in San Jose last July 4th. I actually found this party by reading the bulletin board near the elevators, which just goes to show how open-armed (desperate for new blood) the secret masters of fandom really are, as D. West futilely tried to explain and demonstrate to the young squirt neofan somewhere in the early pages of "Performance." I had as my goal for the convention "meet Lucy Huntzinger," and since the open con-bid parties on the second floor had filled me up with unusually fine and diverse food offerings but did nothing to address the social needs of my higher, fannish self ("who are all these people?"), I was reduced to scanning the bulletin board and writing down the room numbers of parties that seemed to have nothing to do with the L-5 Society or Darkover. Thus armed, I made it to the fourth floor and received my "We Never Sleep" sticker (I later snatched several more and they can still be found attached to my typewriter, telephone etc; I am trying to teach myself to answer the phone with those words, if only it would ring at four in the morning on a night when I happen to be bright-eyed and bushy-tailed) and a stiff drink, and soon was hobnobbing with the sort of low-life high minds (Lucy H, Rich Coad et al) that make congoing a Meaningful Experience. This led directly to driving in circles across the grids of Santa Clara at dawn searching for food and coffee while Terry Floyd leaned his head out the window and did strange things to the outside of my Datsun station wagon.

I had intended to fill this space with some brilliant observations on Dungeons and Dragons as a socially educational experience in which young persons, such as my ten-year-old and Robert's boys, learn to create agreement out of disagreement over and over in a mostly unstructured situation, in order that the game can go on. But don't hold your breath. The same bunch of boys are at present back in the standard human bind of treating each other miserably because they want to play together but feel frustrated because they can't because they're treating each other miserably (say what?), a game I often play with my peers, I think it's called "you treat me nice first." Sigh. I should clarify that I have an eight-year-old (Taiyo) as well as a ten-year-old (Kenta), but Taiyo disdains D&D, and devotes his attention to Star Wars Action Figures instead. Star Wars toys are very well made and have more impact on the lives of my kids and their friends than

{continued to page 18}

SOCIETY COLUMN



by Wanda Nightcrawler

THE FIRST Annual Beanie Brigade picnic, held on the former grounds of a dynamite production facility, was a blast. Ray Nelson told yours truly about Philip K. Dick, how he used him in his novels. He says he was the model for Roy Batty in DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP? because of his robot-like demeanor. It really doesn't make me want to see BLADE RUNNER again, even though Grania Davis says whoever did the movie was really into Phil's work, what with all that Asian influence on the West Coast, so much like THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE.

It was on a tour of the grounds provided by Terry Carr that we discovered a cousin of another of our correspondents. Now this serpent was pursuing something down in the ground, plunging and snuffling into a hole obviously meant for a worm. Pat Ellington, desiring to see what's what (and seeing no rattles on its tail), nudged the critter with her toe. The snake attacked.

Redd Boggs was present at the event. I heard him speak. I was so stunned I forgot what he said. Dave Rike wondered if Robert Lichtman still pissed out of a tree--not around me he don't! Speaking of which, no one calls him "Bob" unless "you slept with me before 1962." Ask me what his mother calls him for a real quandry. It fits and only she can use it.

Leaving Point Pinole now for San Jose and the Westerchron. Yummy food parties. Ah, 16-inch wheels of brie, blueberries, walls of Pepsi Cola, sheets of cheesecake, cases of beer, gardens of salad, industrial strength supplies of strawberries with dips: four kinds of sugars, raisins, currants, sour cream, and folks willing to fingerlick...New York style cream sodas (not actually delivered at midnight as promised). Daytime estivation produces such a hearty appetite!!

Shortly after midnight it was the party in Room 477. All fandom was there. Lucy Huntzinger reports that Ted White was the only person there who never blinked or paused for thought when contemplating balloon art. Others had deeply moving experiences of same (or was it simple hyperventilation?), still others were rendered immobile, horizontal and much diffused. Jerry Kaufman did a nice hand jive to musical entertainment provided by Paul Williams--German rock and roll "Liebe ist Gesund" etc. We had more mellow tunes in French while Paul dried off following a charming fan aerobics demonstration.

TO THE SPIRIT

OF

PHILIP K. DICK

by SACHIKO

SINCE Philip K. Dick's death he is always with me when I need help. I start calling him in my mind and I feel he is with me and giving me help and support somehow. He became my "charm angel" for my music. He is the person who gave me energy to start and continue my music in 1976. That's when I started playing music in the USA with my broken English. I still remember he came to visit me with a friend after a Santa Rosa SF convention. I was surprised when he really came to visit me without my husband being home. Because usually Paul's friends never come to visit me when he is not home. Anyway he talked for a while and found out we had had a lot of the same experiences in the past. Like we both had experienced separation from the body, or what we heard from beyond the world.

I remember my blind sister Taeko told me that about 18 years ago, when my father's older sister died, she became my blind sister's charm helper. My sister told me, "When I lose my wallet or forget something important, I call 'Obasan' (Aunt) in my mind, and say, 'Obasan Obasan, help me to find my wallet,' and there it is at my feet where I just stepped on it. Anyway it is very mysterious but it works." I was very interested to hear this and I wished to have someone like that, even if I couldn't believe that it's true. And when I looked at my sister's face I thought everybody will believe her.

When Phil died we felt so sad and our feelings went very down for a couple of weeks. We burned candles for his spirit.

When I first dreamed about Phil his body was not there. I just heard his voice coming from the ceiling. And when I made my song called "L.A. Blues" I heard his voice behind my song words on a funky little cassette tape. Right away I believed it was Phil's voice. A couple of months later I listened with my friend but his voice was not there any more.

In 1980 Phil had supported me in making my first single record in America, and later he told me he was interested in producing my LP record. He was very excited. His book was becoming a movie and he was going to France and he believed the second Christ will appear soon. His dreams were coming true and everything was coming to him. Then Paul and I heard about his death.

I love you, Phil, you're always my great support, and still you're with me, with my music.

--Sachiko

RETURN FROM THE GLADES (continued from page 4)

Certified Lounge Lizard, there's no stopping her. She even gets Her Own Fanzines, now.

ALL OF US associated with TRAP DOOR would like to recommend R.A. McAvoy's TEA WITH THE BLACK DRAGON, recently out from Bantam, as a must-read. Without wanting to get into a review, let's say we all thoroughly enjoyed it.

TRAP DOOR contributor and local songstress, Sachiko, who recently was the surprise hit of a fannish party at Allyn Cadogan's, has a record available. "Tokyo Song"/"Fork in the Road" is \$2.50 postpaid from Sachiko, PO Box 176, Glen Ellen CA 95442. (Checks payable to Sachiko Williams, please.)

UNTIL next issue...

--Robert Lichtman

WE NEVER SLEEP (continued from page 15)

the movies do, actually; these toys are and will continue to be a primary force in contemporary pop culture, but I'm not going to talk about that either.

Twenty-one years after I pubbed my first neozine, I'm starting to realize that what I need is a snappy fannish image. I mean, I know what it takes, and I'm ready to buckle down and start creating my own fannish persona, but the truth is I'm clean out of ideas. Please help! Send your suggestions and entries to the Paul Williams Fannish Persona contest, c/o this fanzine, and help me decide what unique fannish personality I should set out to project. No retreads, please. I'm not willing to settle for being the Dean A. Grennell or G.M. Carr of the 1980s. Nor even the Gregg Pickersgill or Avedon Carol. I'm looking for something totally new under the fannish sun! Prizes to be announced later.

Our fanzine title is from a song by T-Bone Burnett, so watch out.

--Paul Williams

SOCIETY COLUMN (continued from page 16)

Now in San Francisco at Patty and Gary's home for a get together, Stacy Scott got a good run of conversation on eating live squid tentacle by tentacle. We look forward to Stacy's contribution at Corflu's erotic food fest. Paul Williams assures me the reason sushi is eaten with hot mustard sauce (I just can't do it, ruins my mucosa) is to arrest development of a toxin which will cause severe dyslexia in adults manifesting in an inability to sleep and hallucinating catatonia within hours. Later in the evening there was an attempt to evacuate the testicles out of some man's scrotum with the aid of ice cubes (Stacy had a hand in this). I was practicing my fan aerobics at that time and cannot, unfortunately, give an eyewitness account.

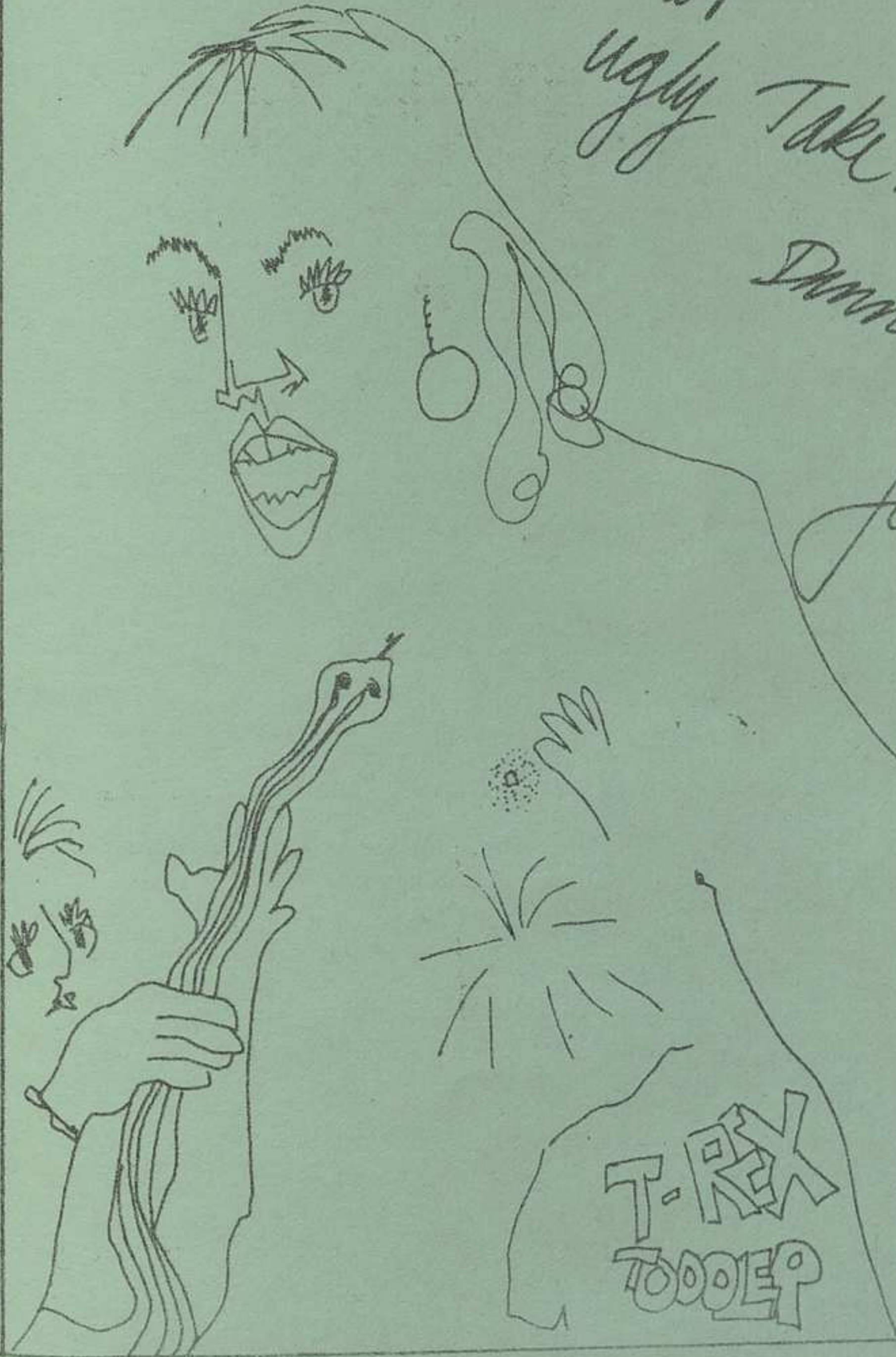
Do continue to send those invites to me, Wanda Nightcrawler*, at PO Box 30, Glen Ellen CA USA 95442.

--Wanda

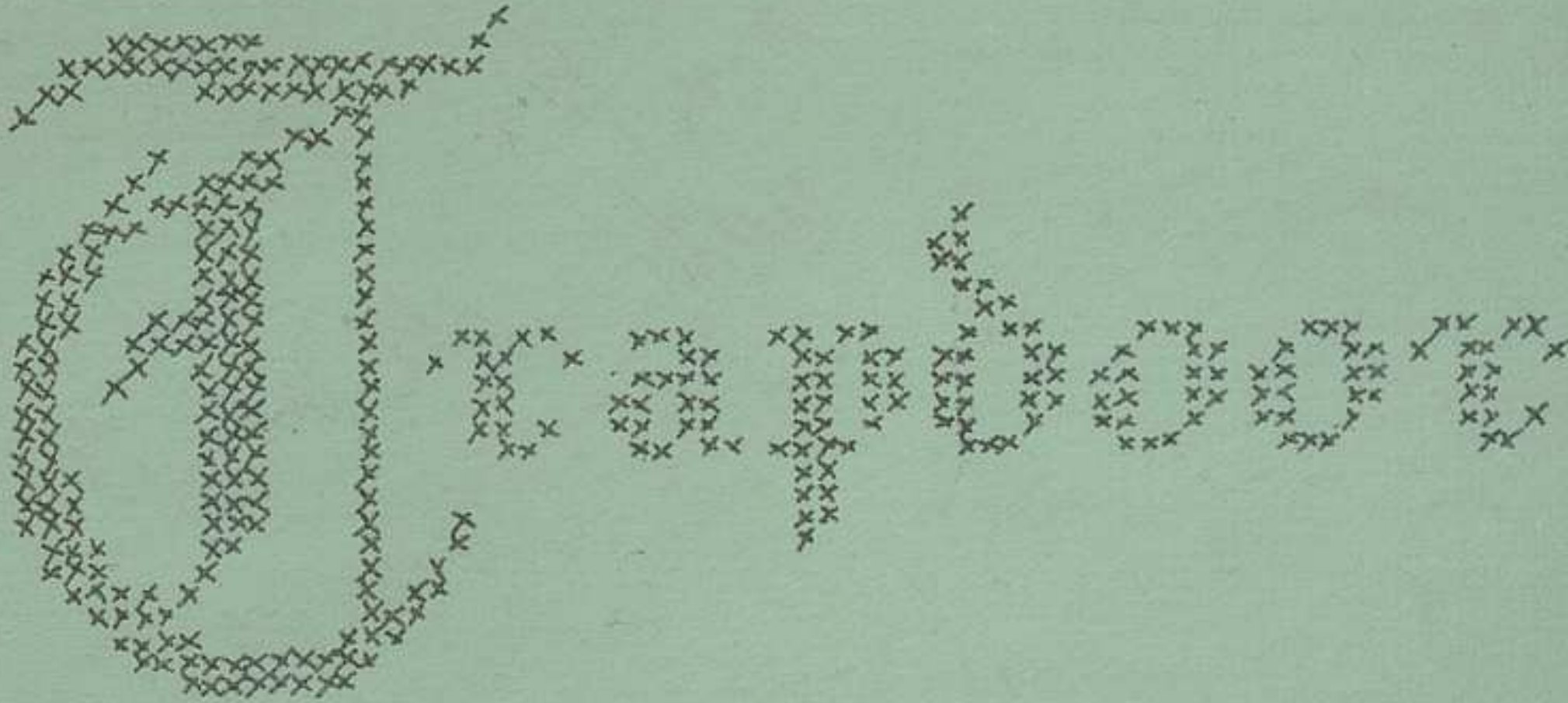
* Editor's Note: Wanda Nightcrawler thinks she is an Australian Gippsland nightcrawler, but she is actually a Northern California banana slug.

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