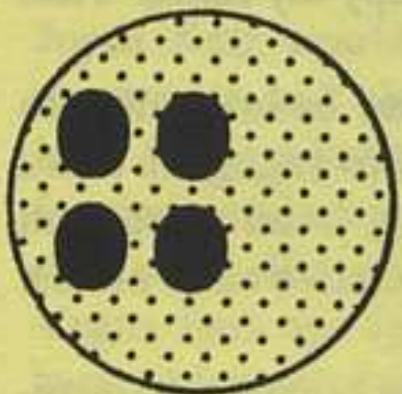
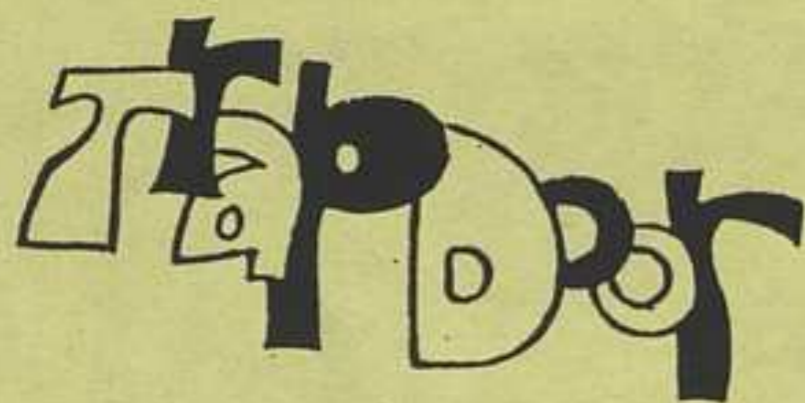


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Closing out my editorial in the previous issue ten months ago, I burbled that the next issue "could appear sooner than you think, so don't put off writing for too long." Was I ever wrong!

And back in the giant tenth annish eight months earlier, I wrote that one reason I was making an effort to return *Trap Door* to a more frequent schedule was that the last of my four sons had moved out and "the

head space opened up by the absence of offspring is enormous." Wrong again! Just because they move away doesn't mean your life suddenly disconnects from them and becomes unencumbered. In some ways, more time and energy are expended keeping in contact with them. (Two are still here in the Sonoma Valley, one is in Berkeley, and the other is in far-oof exotic New Mexico.) No complaints, but it does take time.

Also, over the past year *everything* has changed regarding my parents' situation. Now both over eighty, they've gone in rapid steps from living independently to being in nursing homes. These changes have at times required a lot of my attention—and even when I wasn't actively involved they tended to occupy my mind. And of course it's not over.

I guess my recent experience has been similar to those among us who retire with plans to engage in more fanac: the rest of life keeps intruding. And more than ever fandom seems like an oasis of relative calm amidst the other turmoils of life.

Anyway, I'm surrendering to the apparently inevitable. I no longer have illusions of coming out twice a year. I'm going to be as frequent as I can manage but

not sweat it. By way of lagniappe, I'm returning to the 48-page size I did during the once-a-year period. It feels more roomy and comfortable, allows me to consider longer articles, and makes each issue less dominated by the lettercol. (But I may do an occasional smaller issue to keep up the frequency.)

In *Trap Door* No. 9 (January 1990) when fanzine production was hitting a recent low point (see table), I wished for "... a flowering of perzine and small genzines ... instead of the creation of ever more apas ... if even a couple dozen people dropped out of a few apas and used that extra time to publish a fanzine, it would energize fandom so much that we would soon be calling it a Golden Age."

My vision seems to have mostly come to pass. A fair number of fans did what I suggested—pubbed their respective ishes—which has been welcome and enjoyable. (And, please, keep it up.) We're far removed from the dire days of the middle and late '80s when fanzine fandom was on the mend from wounds suffered during the Bergeron wars and I felt that even an annual *Trap Door* was (ahem) a beacon of light in the wilderness and ruin. When I wrote several issues ago that "*Trap Door* was increasingly in danger of becoming an anthology affair, anticipated with enthusiasm by its readers but isolated and marginalized due to lack of adequate momentum," more than anything I was acknowledging the impact of all the new blood. We're blessed currently with a number of small, frequent fanzines (Andy Hooper's *Apparatchik*, Langford's *Ansible*, Dale Speirs' *Opuntia*, and Arnie Katz's latest entry, *Swerve*, to name a few) as well as several new, large, more-frequent-than-me genzines (Ted and Dan's *Blat*—my own current favorite, *Attitude* from Pam Wells and others in the U.K., and Bill Donaho's revived *Habakkuk*). Given my present circumstances, I'm more than happy to cede the mantle of frequency to these worthies, and wish them continued inspiration and success—and this also extends to the rest of you who publish good fanzines I haven't specifically mentioned.

But of course, events haven't unfolded exactly as I anticipated. Completely unexpected things happened. For instance, who among us would have foreseen that shortly after I wrote those words in 1990, Arnie and Joyce Katz would not only resume fanactivity with a vengeance but also help create and inspire a vibrant local fandom in their wake—a group heavily involved in fanzine production, to boot. (And they throw a good con, too!) However, the fact that the new crop of Las Vegas fans are far from the only participants in this current fannish fanzine renaissance demonstrates that a certain head of steam has built up. This makes me feel that I can relax a little bit—not rest on my so-called

laurels, mind you, but be grateful that I'm in such good company. I leave it to hindsight whether or not this actually *is* a Golden Age, but I know that most of the time now it feels pretty good to me.

	'94	'93	'92	'91	'90	'89	'88	'87
Australia	13	16	18	16	16	12	15	32
Canada	14	12	17	1	2	2	1	4
U. K.	60	51	50	44	30	61	51	33
U. S.	109	91	104	85	66	55	67	58
Others	2	2	2	1	5	0	4	3
Totals:	199	171	191	147	115	130	138	130

Both 1994's Others were from Romas Buivydas in Lithuania.

Fanzines Received by Me, 1987-1994

By way of counterpoint, there's the ongoing discussion about The Future of Fanzine Fandom and its corollary topic, The Future of Fannish Fanzine Fandom. I suppose this soul-searching is an inevitable byproduct of an energized fandom. If fanzine fandom truly was fading, we'd all be too lethargic to even notice, much less write about it.

Well, in this regard I've always liked what D. West wrote in his 1977 essay, "The State of the Art": "Fandom is like a giant sprawling novel with certain recurring themes. Characters appear—disappear—seem to be developing leading roles then suddenly drop from view—rise abruptly from obscurity to a brief moment of fame—Warhol's 'in the future everyone will be famous for just fifteen minutes'—all against a shifting background of plot, counter-plot, interaction of personality and temperament—abundance of prima donnas—change and development of ideas and characters. It's a great spectacle for those who relish convoluted absurdities—the longest-running soap opera on earth—and has the added attraction that the spectators can get in there and pep up the action if they feel so inclined."

And of course, some do—not always positively. It's the nature of the beast—a case of fandom imitating life. (Try substitute "life" for "fandom" at the beginning of Don's comments if you have difficulty grasping this concept.)

West notes the cyclical nature of fandom. But he doesn't talk about where all this new blood—all these fen who will "rise abruptly from obscurity"—is going to come from. Of course, he can't be faulted for this. After all, it wasn't perceived to be as much a problem in 1977 as it is now. But gloom and doom has always been popular in some quarters of fandom (though I'm not accusing Don of this either). Even back in the '40s—in some of the fanzines I've been reading in Burbee's collection—there were naysayers predicting and pre-

lamenting the end of fanzines and fandom.

Fandom began originally not only thanks to Hugo Gernsback but because there existed earlier in this century a particular conjunction of socioeconomic and cultural conditions that allowed such an entity to spring into being and for fanzines to be its earliest and most sustained manifestation (with clubs and conventions next). Fandom remained small and mostly fanzine-centered its first thirty years – fanzines were the main means of communication among its few and far-flung participants – and this engendered a closeness, a strong sense of we-are-all-one. There were really no barriers between fanzine fans, club fans and convention fans – and many were active simultaneously in all these areas. These conditions – small numbers and close communication mainly in print – allowed the folklore and byways of fandom to develop and grow strong. Remember “It is a proud and lonely thing to be a fan”? No more. Fandom is a victim of its own success. Our once underground literature has gone mainstream – and as we all know, while some science fiction and fantasy books hit the best-seller lists, the dominant form of stf/fsy is now the visual one: movies and TV. This has created a different sort of pathway into fandom, one that doesn’t necessarily involve a love of reading and writing, and it’s changed forever the conditions under which people become fans and the expectations they have from fandom. Fandom as a whole will go on, but it is and will continue to be irretrievably changed.

So, where is our next generation of fanzine fans to come from? Some have suggested that the greater “zinedom” might be a fertile recruiting ground for future fen, but observation suggests that relatively few participants Over There are able to relate to our curious concept of The Usual. Others mention the possibility of attracting people from specific Other Fandoms. Well, we’ve always had cross-over people, even back in the days when there were fanzine review columns in the prozines to attract a steady stream of recruits. Early on, a certain number of people found fandom by way of the printers’ apas. Later, others crossed over from rock music fandom, a subculture which in its present form was largely founded by science fiction fans (e.g., Paul Williams and Greg Shaw). And of course there have also been inflows from the various sub-fandoms that are represented at the average Worldcon: Trekkers and Trekkies, comics fans, gamers, etc. Some who’ve arrived via these routes have mentioned the difficulty of finding fanzine fandom, but their eventually doing so proves it’s not impossible.

Looking at the long term, my own feelings about fanzine fandom’s future are mixed, depending to some extent on how many fanzines are showing up at any

given time. (Since I don’t go to many conventions, that’s not much of a factor.) When the count is high, I’m thinking Golden Age, but when it declines I think, “Fandom is finite.” That is, I see a definite graying of our ranks and, no matter how hard it is to accept, we all know that more and more of our most beloved participants – many who date back to the very beginnings of fandom as we know it – will pass away over the next decade. With this occurring and the unlikeliness that as many people will come in to replace them, I suspect our numbers will continue to thin.

The larger, more general fanzine fandom will probably go on much as it always has, with zines devoted to reviews and commentary about the mother literature (and, these days, its media adjuncts). We’ve even seen an increase in and renewed acceptance of publications devoted to amateur fiction. I expect that the concept of “fannishness” will survive, but its nature will probably evolve over time as Fannish Fanzine Fandom, where it was conceived, dwindles in size and significance.

Fannish Fanzine Fandom has always been a small part of the overall fanzine scene. It’s existed *within* the larger fanzine fandom ever since its invention by Tucker back in the ’30s. More serious and constructive types have always considered it a diversion from the Great Cosmic Purpose of fandom – the neverending discussion of science fiction – but it’s inevitable in most hobby fields that some focus will eventually center on the *people* involved in the hobby and that mythologies will arise.

Even at its peak (I’m thinking of the ’50s through 1964 here), Fannish Fanzine Fandom was always something limited to a relatively small enclave within the larger Fanzine Fandom. As noted above, the sort of highly personal fannish legendry that’s its essence was most possible when fandom was smaller. As those of us who were and are part of it and feel an affection for it pass on, it’s going to become increasingly difficult to hold that center.

It’s sort of a Catch 22. When the history of early fandom – with all its myth making and fabulous fannish characters – becomes accessible only through the accounts left behind in Sam’s, Harry’s and Rob’s books and there are no more first-hand witnesses, something irretrievable will have passed in fandom.

But of course that’s a moot point, since there’d be no one around to mourn.

A little note about “Terry Carr’s TAFF Report” by Arthur Thomson, which appears in this issue: These drawings were found in Terry’s fan art files, which I inherited. I’ve been meaning to publish them for years,

but something more topical always came up to fill the space until now.

This represents as much of a TAFF report as Terry is ever going to produce, and therefore a "complete" one. By copy of this issue to Bruce Pelz, I'm petitioning SCIFI to consider this a full report and send \$500 to the TAFF fund.

Somehow this reminds me of that old LASFS saying, "Death does not release you, even if you die."

There's been some discussion lately about the interplay or lack thereof between traditional paper fandom and the electronic fandom that exists on the Internet. I'm not taking an active part in the latter at present, mainly because my nearly eight-year-old computer is too primitive. However, before the next issue I hope to move up to something substantially newer—and I expect that I will probably, with a certain amount of kicking and screaming, go on-line. If nothing else, it appears to be a good way to keep up with correspondence.

But let it quickly be added there's *no way* I'm going to abandon print fandom to roam the vast virtual hallways of electronic fandom—corridors I'm given to understand are crowded and not without their own perils—and there will not be an electronic *Trap Door* posted on the World Wide or any other Web. But in its own small way *Trap Door* is moving inevitably towards embracing the new on-line fandom. In this issue, for instance, all of Calvin's column and most of Carol's are excerpted from their e-mail.

These two columns—which will appear periodically (and in this issue, the work of Redd Boggs, Cora Burbee and Len Moffatt)—represent one of *Trap Door's* objectives since the beginning: publishing for a wider audience work too good to be seen only by a lucky few.

"I can't believe it's over," said Dan Steffan. "It seems like I just got here."

"I feel the same way, Meyer," I replied.

We were on our way down the hall towards the door to the parking garage. It was the very last sidebar of the convention for me, late Sunday night. We were discussing how, over this long weekend, time had passed by without regard to our desire to slow it down and savor more fully every minute as it unfolded. Corflu Vegas was as fast-paced as the town that was its venue.

I was the first to arrive, driving in on Wednesday afternoon so as not to repeat my mistake of the last two Silvercons of going right into the traditional Huge Thursday Night Party at the Katzes—and slumping badly by mid-evening! This year I'd have a whole

night's sleep before the convention began to begin.

I knew I was beginning to be a Vegas regular when the guard at the entry kiosk to Bill Kunkel and Laurie Yates' gated community remembered me. This was my third stay chez Kunkel/Yates—I also accepted their gracious hospitality for two Silvercons. I always look forward to hanging out with Laurie and Bill, but this time it was barely to be. Bill fell ill and was seldom at the convention. Fortunately we'll be able to try it again this fall for Silvercon 4. (Y'all come!)

What better place than a Corflu for the continued creation of new fanspeak, our own special language for communicating among ourselves? At Corflu Vegas the sidebar was born, a cross-pollination from the world of the O.J. trial. In fannish parlance, a sidebar is the name for an occasion for engaging in sercon activities of the fannish kind. I participated in so many that weekend they've largely blended into a soft, fuzzy, pleasurable blur.

I've been to three of the last four Corflus, and there's been a building of critical mass for me. I know practically everyone in attendance to at least some extent, and it's become impossible to spend as much time with everyone as the flow will generally permit. Though I often go to conventions with a desire to write a detailed conreport, once there I find that taking notes interrupts the flow and becomes an event in itself that takes me away from experiencing the convention firsthand. I marvel at Arnie Katz's ability to both experience events *and* jot down endless notes that miraculously turn into (most recently) *Silvercon Memories*, a most enjoyable read.

Every Corflu I've attended has been memorable for the extended one-on-one conversations—Lucy Huntzinger, Rob and Avedon last year; Michelle Lyons this year; and Geri Sullivan both this year and at the Los Angeles Corflu. (If I had one with *you* and failed to name you above, please forgive me; I wasn't taking good notes.) For me, Corflu is a family reunion, an opportunity to see the many members of our far-flung community who manage to make the trek. I come for that sense of communion that's possible only among kindred spirits with many shared assumptions.

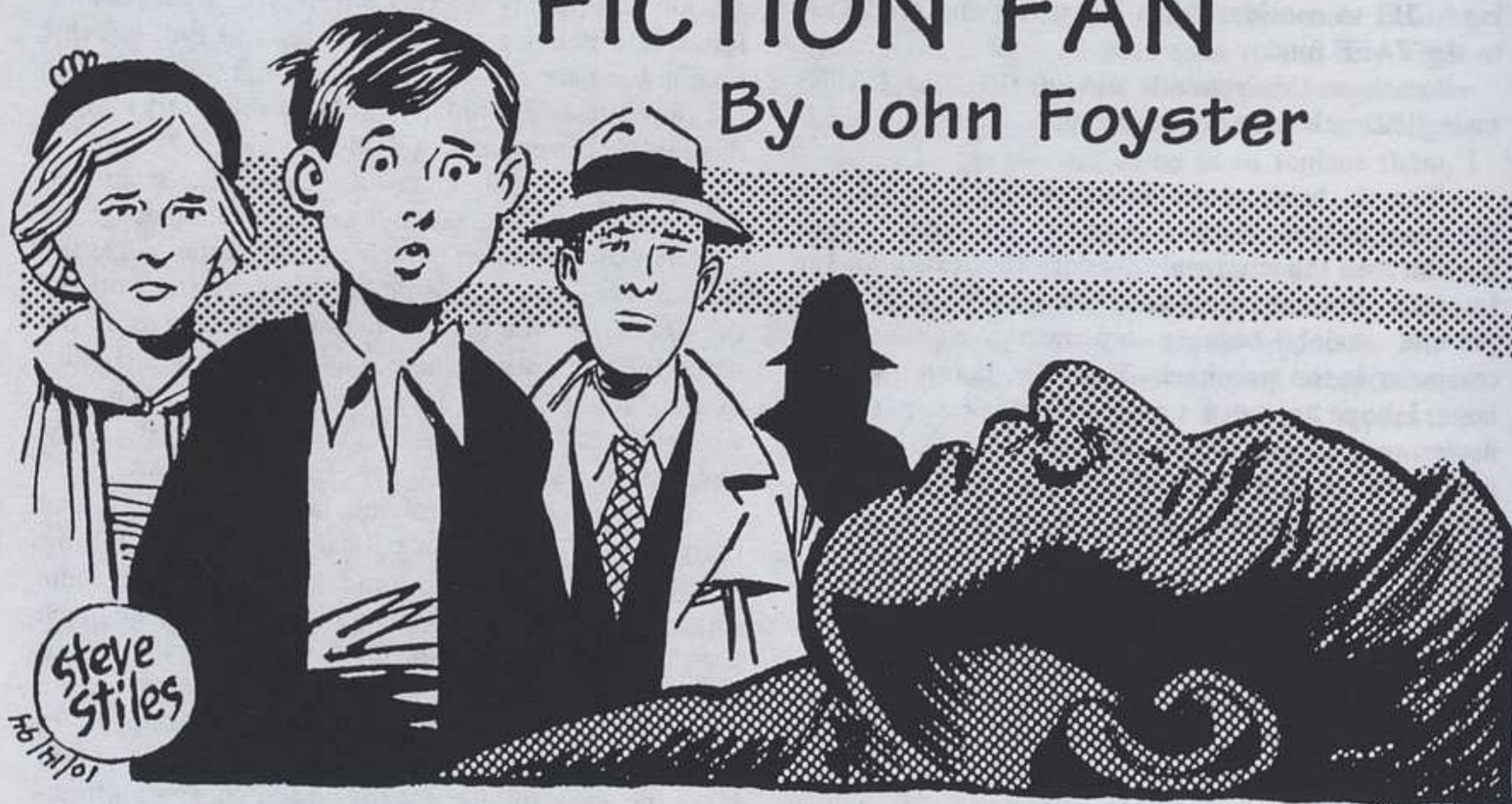
In closing, I'm reminded of Janice Eisen's comments in a recent *Apparatchik*, which sum up this year's Corflu in a few words: "I enjoyed Corflu beyond all reason (get sercon for four straight days and you too can have a religious experience)." Amen, sister! Amen, y'all!

—Robert Lichtman



WHEN I WAS A SCIENCE-FICTION FAN

By John Foyster



I was fourteen years old when I first saw someone die. I travelled to school by tram, and one morning I noticed that one of the regular adult travelers had not taken the tram he usually caught but had, instead, remained standing as he usually did, florid-faced but impassive. The tram line had two destinations, only a short distance apart, and I thought that perhaps he was going to take the other route, the one I followed.

But I was wrong; he was going to have a heart attack within two minutes and die, messily, in front of me and half a dozen other commuters. I was the one who went for a local doctor, but there was nothing to be done, and so I went to school and sat for one of my end-of-year examinations. At least I had learned what dying was like.

I didn't know it then, but this was only practice for the next six months of my life, and in a way practice for several years thereafter.

That summer, my parents took our family to the guest house by the sea at which we vacationed every second year or so. On the previous holiday there, we had been convinced by friends that I should sit a scholarship examination for my father's old school and, because I had been successful, I now went to a different

school and was exposed to the event described in the first two paragraphs. Whereas before I had had friends only from near the suburb in which we lived, my friends — or perhaps acquaintances — now lived in various suburbs scattered throughout Melbourne.

Before, my friends were from the working-class suburb in which we lived and they grew up only to become petty thieves or disk-jockeys; now, at my new school, many of my fellows were destined for rewarding lives as white-collar criminals, through fraud of one kind or another, perhaps, or through entering politics. For many of them, the lawyering trade was the first step up the ladder to criminality, and only the dullest or least ambitious remained in that trade. (It is quite amazing how many very stupid boys of the 1950s grew up to be respected lawyers and judges — perhaps it was an unacknowledged prerequisite.) On this holiday, at Queenscliff, I remember meeting one of these dullards, little suspecting that he might evolve from being scarcely capable of carrying on a conversation to being my parents' lawyer (though on the one occasion I met him in that exalted state he was still incapable of carrying on a conversation).

Also on this holiday, and without knowing it, my life

was changed by a slight infection (which in turn was to lead to another infection).

Late on my fourth day back at school, I developed a severe headache. Because it did not respond to any home remedy, my parents called our doctor and he, though uncertain between two possible diagnoses, arranged for me to be committed to the Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital. Eventually it became clear that I had poliomyelitis, rather than meningitis, and Fairfield was to be my home for the next two months.

Nowadays, almost forty years later, Fairfield is mainly used for those with AIDS who need some particular treatment. My brother is occasionally admitted there whenever one infection or another seems to be overcoming the protection offered by the handfuls of pills he must take each day, and when I visit him I try to recall which room I was admitted to. The rooms are all the same shape, with strange small balconies, and I can't fix which room was mine for the first week or so; but the rooms, in any case, serve the same isolatory purpose.

On reflection, I would suggest that poliomyelitis patients in 1956 were handled with more circumspection than AIDS patients are now. For the first days, while I was in this isolated room, everything I touched was burned immediately afterwards. When my parents visited they were, like all the doctors and nurses, firmly masked. As a patient, one didn't need to be a rocket scientist to work out that you had more than a bad case of flu.

But here was another resonance with the way AIDS is managed in the 1990s – during my entire stay in hospital no one felt able to tell me that I had poliomyelitis. It's only an echo because nowadays the people with AIDS are the ones who don't feel they can do the telling.

The period in the isolation ward lasted about ten days. Apart from the headache and the fever, my only discomfort in that early period was when I had the spinal tap which established that it was not meningitis but poliomyelitis which was the problem.

But by mid-February 1956 the worst was past, and I was wheeled down to the men's ward for the remainder of my stay. There were about ten of us in the main ward, and another three or four of the healthier young men were established on the veranda outside. (In my visits to see my brother, I think I have now worked out just which building used to house us, but I cannot be completely sure.)

Days in a polio ward were not, strictly speaking, exciting for a fourteen-year-old.

First activity of the day was checking whether

anyone had died overnight. In the seven weeks or so I was in the ward, only three or four patients died; there were no respirator patients in this ward, which led to a general "good" average level of health. But it still took some getting used to: waking up to discover that your neighbor was no longer in his bed, and not because he was having his bath, or had gone home. After a while you could tell who was marginal (as we might have said at later times), but I still remember being surprised when Frank died. He had always been rather weak, but seemed much stronger than many others who didn't survive.

Next step was the bath. You were put into a loose diaper, rolled onto a trolley, and wheeled down to the bathroom, which contained just one sink large enough to hold four men. You were then rolled into the water and propped in a corner, often with your arms hanging over the sides for support. The stronger ones – like me – could wash themselves, but I suspect that this would have included only about half of us.

Then it was back to bed for breakfast. (Obviously these two steps were sometimes reversed in order.) Breakfasts usually were served burnt – which I could never understand because the other meals were not burnt.

After that the routine depended upon your state of health. The steady elements would have been the two other meals, a methylated-spirits back massage to combat bed-sores, and matron's four p.m. visit with the bottle of cascara.

Such activities would not completely fill in a pre-television day. Most days there was a doctor's visit, and every day, for patients like me, there was physiotherapy. Otherwise it was reading, visitors and games, relieved once a week by a movie in the evening, for which patients from the women's and children's wards were wheeled down to ours.

I could never get interested in chess or checkers, which the men in the ward favored, nor much in cards. But I had always been an avid reader. Unfortunately the ward library was not an extensive one. I would very quickly need my parents' assistance in getting books to keep up with my reading speed.

Some of my old school friends rallied around as well. They sent cards, letters, and one was thoughtful enough to send something for me to read. He sent three magazines and a paperback book: *Nebula Science Fiction* 13, the British reprint edition of the January 1955 *Galaxy*, and a copy of *Authentic Science Fiction* – and I have no recollection whatsoever of the name of the paperback. Thus was the second infection thrust upon me.

I have no idea now what was in that copy of

Authentic – and my general feeling about the magazine is that the editor and the authors had no idea either – but that issue of *Nebula* had a Ted Tubb story which struck me, while in the *Galaxy* were stories by Robert Sheckley and Theodore Sturgeon which I remember even more clearly. I was hooked.

Of these, the issue of *Galaxy* had the greater influence. While in the near future I was to buy *Nebula* almost as soon as I could afford to do so, this purchase was, I think, driven by sentiment rather than sense, for poor *Nebula*, dismally underfunded as it was, published uninspiring stories whenever possible. *Galaxy*, by contrast, I didn't really buy seriously until somewhat later – indeed, in terms of my thesis, not until I ceased to be a science fiction fan – but the effect of *Galaxy* has been much longer-lasting, both in terms of the extent to which that first issue I read shaped my perceptions of what science fiction was and in terms of the effect of the first few years of *Galaxy* on my longer-term appreciation of what science fiction meant.

What was it about *Galaxy* which so affected me?

It was not as though I had never read any “science fiction.” I had definitely read *The Time Machine* and *The First Man In the Moon* (and glanced at *The War of the Worlds*) as well as all of Wells' short stories. I had read some Jules Verne. I had read Doyle's Professor Challenger stories. I had read *Kemlo and the Crazy Planet*. I had seen *Rocket Ship X-M*, *Red Planet Mars*, and *When Worlds Collide*. But none of these works defined themselves in terms of genre. As a science fiction reader I still inhabited a pre-Gernsbackian Eden.

Rereading that edition of *Galaxy* offers a few clues, but they are scarcely satisfactory and certainly not complete. The British reprint included only 128 of the magazine's original 160 pages – a cut which only shows directly in Groff Conklin's book reviews, which are obviously truncated partway through his piece on *Star Science Fiction Short Novels*. I may not have noticed this at first reading, but I do remember shortly thereafter thinking that I would like to have known Conklin's views on the rest of the collection.

Another characteristic of science fiction of the time – though I'm quite sure I didn't notice it then – was that the resolution of Richard Stockham's “Perfect Control” is given away, three pages ahead of the action, by a Mel Hunter illustration. This kind of editorial blooper happened remarkably often (and probably still does), although such a thing is only important if there's a surprise ending (which “Perfect Control” certainly didn't have); I'm sure that there's the same problem in today's magazines.

An advantage of hindsight is that one now sees both “Perfect Control” and Pohl's “The Tunnel Under the

World” as appealing to Gold's agoraphobia, something we in Australia didn't know about in those days.

“The Tunnel Under the World” might have impressed me when I first read it (although it would have meant more to anyone seeing it in the general context of the Pohl-Kornbluth collaborations of those days), but I have no strong recollection of it. It's partly driven by the paranoid devices of the period and partly by the anti-advertising theme which Pohl and Kornbluth took up from time to time. But it is on rereading the Sheckley and Sturgeon stories that I can see a little of what might have led me to be fascinated by them.

Sheckley's “Squirrel Cage” is one of the frothy AAA Ace Interplanetary Decontamination Service series which must have been a reasonable money-spinner in terms of dollars per minute for the author. A single-idea story which starts by accepting all the tropes of science fiction without even paying them decent attention, “Squirrel Cage” also had the immense advantage of appearing in the same issue as Evelyn L. Smith's “The Vilbar Party,” a story which fails even to be pedestrian, so slumberous is it. “Squirrel Cage” was ordinary fiction set in another universe, a universe which in itself was acceptable as ordinary but obviously wasn't. Robert Sheckley had hit upon a near-perfect theme for a series – all you needed for a new story was to confront your heroes with a new pest problem, and the universe is full of these.

Theodore Sturgeon's “When You're Smiling” would clearly have had an impact on me because the story is set in what seems to be an ordinary world but for the resolution. Everything makes sense only because one character is telepathic. (“When You're Smiling” also seems to be set in the ordinary world except for the paranoid resolution [“you mean, I'm not a human but just a robot?”], perhaps setting me up for Sturgeon's story.) The only flaw I can see from this distance is the lack of appeal of the protagonist – yet it is exactly this upon which the plot depends, that the protagonist is not likeable – which could only be resolved by using a different point of view, and such a change would destroy the story's point.

Since I remembered this edition of *Galaxy* for these two stories I suppose it is not surprising that they still stand out when I reread the issue. But I would now add a further observation – that reading Sturgeon's *More Than Human* early in my days as a science fiction fan probably began to move me away from being a dedicated magazine reader, for “When You're Smiling” is so similar in atmosphere to that marvelous novel (which nowadays might almost be relegated to the class of fix-up, had the second and third novellas been prepublished anywhere). *More Than Human* and, only

a little later, Ray Bradbury's *Dandelion Wine* showed me the way back out of science fiction pulps. But I am a little ahead of myself.

Back in the Fairfield Hospital, I needed three or four books a day to fill in time, so my parents visited the city library every day or two. When this "science fiction" stuff turned up among my friend's gifts, I was able to suggest that some of it be included in what was borrowed from the library, simplifying the question of choice for my parents.

After some weeks, I began to be slightly mobile around the ward, and the need for reading matter declined slightly. But even then "science fiction" could be uncovered in new places.

Some of the men had been in the ward for years, and most of them would have many more years there – for the rest of their lives. Only about half of us could even sit up. My own relative mobility – which was initially medically unacceptable and even frowned upon, of course – was valuable to the less-mobile patients. I was soon an eager errand boy, restrained only by the need to keep a watchful eye out for nurses, physiotherapists, and anyone else who knew I was not supposed to be out of bed. Once in this mobile condition, I even found more science fiction in the ward library.

But all good things had to come to an end, if lying around in bed reading all day can be thought of as a good thing – given the additional condition that you mightn't ever be able to do anything else. My weekly assessments showed that while I had been significantly weakened in legs, back, arms and neck I had continued to respond to physiotherapy, and this improvement could be expected to continue for some time. As for my final condition – well, the doctors were more than a little skeptical about the possibility of any sporting activity. But I would be able to get back to school (slowly).

I had been determined to walk out of the hospital. But although I was able to leave after eight weeks, it was on crutches. I needed to use those crutches, with decreasing frequency, for another five months. It was four months after leaving hospital that I was able to go to school five days a week.

So there was more time to fill – school to try to catch up on, physiotherapy several times a week, more books to read (including a great deal more science fiction). But by the end of 1956 life was back to normal, with a few small changes.

The most important of these was the major focus of my thinking. Probably fifteen-year-old males think much about death and its meaning only if they have had some unusual experience such as had been my lot: I was at just the age when young males think of themselves as

immortal, and I knew for sure and certain that this was not true. I now think that this only meant growing up a little faster, but what it did mean then was that sex and schooling suddenly meant a lot less to me.

Previously I had never really worried much about physical health or strength, but now I gave much more attention to my physical development, though the final goal might only be a very average physique. In 1957 I was able to resume rugby union and at the end of that season made the school's first team. I also joined the local athletic club, and for a couple of seasons ran inept half-miles for a junior team, a performance which would probably have been better had I been willing to train regularly. The running continued spasmodically for another decade, but the rugby ended in 1961, not long after I published my first fanzine when, having been promoted to a new position in a higher-grade university side, I took my first-ever solid tackle on my right leg and the right ankle gave way. I never played rugby again, although in 1967 I did begin training with another club until, in a practice match, I again took a solid tackle and the ankle collapsed again.

And I read a lot of science fiction. Beginning in around August 1956, I could walk a reasonable distance and I began to borrow my own books from the local library, as well as any science fiction in the school library (not much). And then there were those science fiction magazines: the fact that they appeared in a series meant that here was a natural way to build up your own library. I was hooked on the magazines, especially second-hand ones.

Fortunately I had a piecemeal job (one which could be done sitting or lying down) which gave me money to feed my habit. Each week I would buy what science fiction I could from the various small libraries and second-hand stores in the area. I can well remember my dilemma when I had bought so much science fiction that it would not fit into a single stack on the shelf at the head of my bed – perhaps a Whole Foot of the stuff!

[Cross-cultural interpolation: Robert Lichtman's ever-alert eye identified a problem in the foregoing paragraph: "Perhaps 'obtain' would be a better verb choice than 'buy' since one doesn't buy books from libraries," he wrote, although I have omitted his saving parenthetical suggestion that perhaps Australia and the U.S. differ in this regard.

Whether or not the two countries differ I do not know, but in Australia it has been possible, and still is possible, to buy books from libraries. The more exciting version of this occurred up to the early 1960s, for until that time small commercial libraries existed in many suburbs of Melbourne, renting out the better class

of book to some clients, and trading in less reputable second-hand books and magazines to other customers. Writing this paragraph has brought back joyful memories of some of these hole-in-the-wall shops, their impoverished owners, and the treasures sometimes to be found there. I'm pleased to add that sometimes it wasn't easy to tell what was for sale and what was part of the library.

But most important of all, for Australian science fiction fandom, was Franklin's Library in the center of the city of Melbourne, which during the 1950s slowly changed from a library to a second-hand 'Book Exchange' by getting rid of its library stock: hundreds of pulp magazines, including most science fiction magazines, which found their way into the hands of fans like me, and earlier those of Race Mathews, Lee Harding and other like-minded fans. Once the pulps were all gone, the building housing Franklin's was demolished and the Southern Cross Hotel was erected there in order that Race Mathews would have somewhere to open the World Science Fiction Convention in 1975.]

I also developed (or so I liked to think) some taste. *Astounding Science Fiction* was obviously the magazine to read, although *Galaxy* was also quite fine. Both of these were available to me only in abbreviated British editions, whereas *F&SF's* British/Australian edition was so infrequent that it was impossible to form an opinion.

And then there were fanzines! Melbourne must then have been one of the few places in the world where some fanzines could be bought at a shop counter, if you were in the right shop (McGills). *Etherline*, the Melbourne SF Club fanzine, was almost terminally boring, but it included reviews of other fanzines, which definitely did not sound boring. *Etherline* also carried news of a science fiction convention to be held in Melbourne in October 1956, which I would very much have liked to attend. Not knowing what such things were like, I hesitated and then decided it would be too difficult (which it might well have been — when I went to Olympic Games events later in the year, I finished up more than slightly exhausted).

Etherline also carried news of SF magazines I had never seen. Perhaps these were just as good as *Astounding*! But how could they be obtained? Fortunately there was an advertisement for Fantast (Medway) Ltd., Ken Slater's outfit. It was through Fantast that I learned much more about what was available, and also that I bought copies of *If*, *Imagination*, *Amazing*, and so on, only to discover that they weren't as good as *Astounding*. Indeed, nothing was as good as *Astounding*, especially the wretched paperbacks which appeared in such numbers. My habit of reading every word of

Astounding each and every month, as soon as it appeared, was well-established by the end of 1956.

The next year, obviously, had to be a good year by comparison with the previous one.

I had discovered a whole new world of reading and, almost it seemed in exchange for having thrust upon me my own mortality, this form of reading was infinite, not merely in its internal themes but in its mode of presentation, existing in a form of continuous present stretching hundreds of issues into the past (all waiting to be seized upon and read) and (I had no doubt) indefinitely into the future. Here was immortality, though not my own. I had begun to recover physically, and by the middle of the year I was, in a general way, a normal healthy sixteen-year-old.

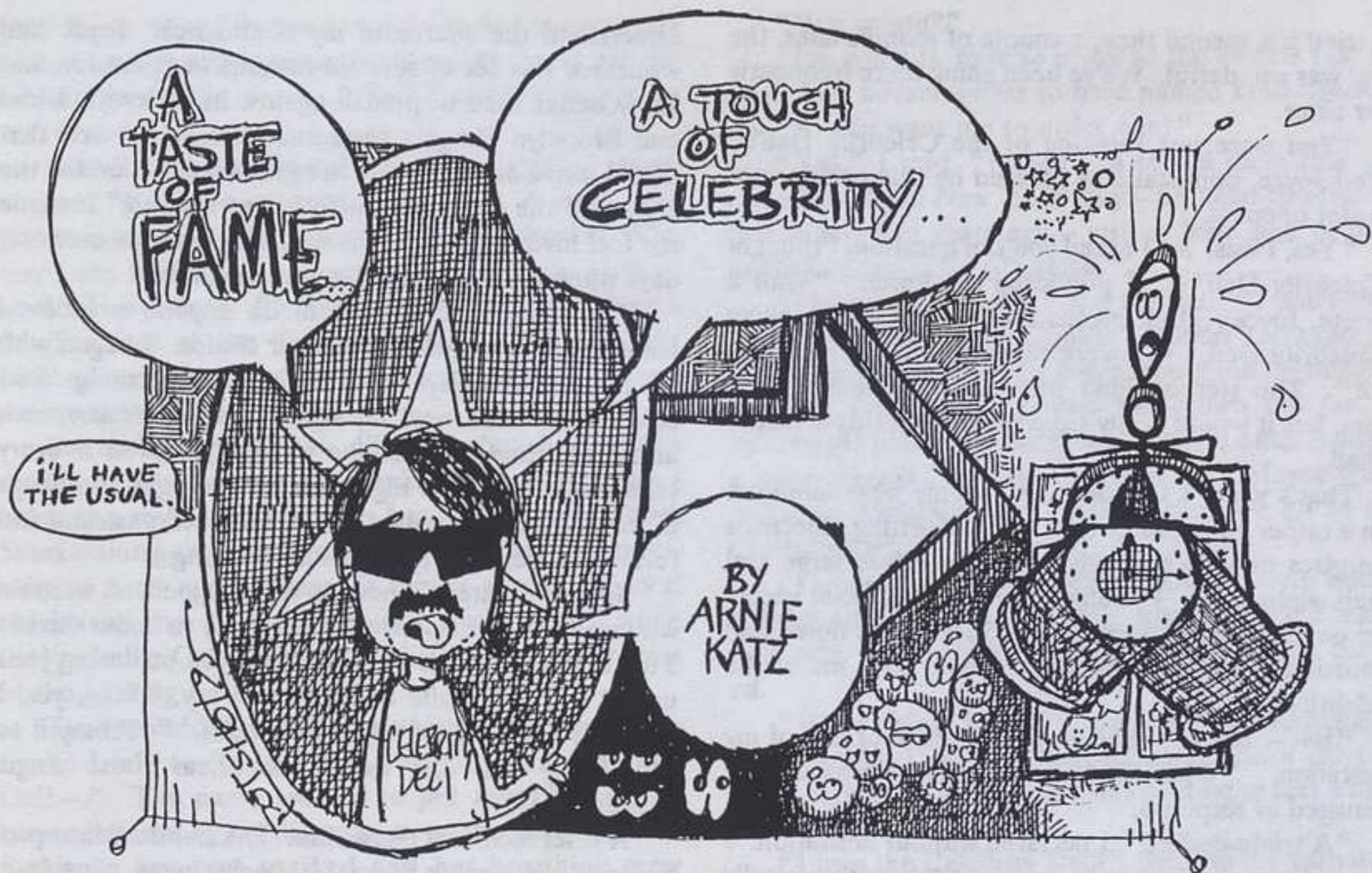
But then it all fell apart. The July 1957 *Astounding*, it seemed to me, just was not up to scratch. Oh, there was fine stuff in it, but I did not feel a pressing need to read every word, and I didn't. Thus the rot set in: soon I was skipping whole issues, and in 1958 I began not even buying every edition of *Astounding* as it appeared. I thought more often of the merits of Ray Bradbury's writings, probably as unfashionable now as it was then. In retrospect my life as a serious science fiction fan was over. Science fiction no longer meant everything to me (in the limited sense outlined above!); it was, let's face it, imperfect.

And so, having abandoned life as a science fiction fan, I turned to other things. In 1958 I went to a science fiction convention, talked to fans, and soon began publishing fanzines. My life, I now realize, would have been much different had I stayed a science fiction fan, devoting my spare hours to reading every word of science fiction I could lay my hands on, and not wasting hours on other voices in other rooms.

But the past haunts us forever. Although I can never return to the pre-Gernsbackian Eden, I have had palpable reminders of that earlier time. In the early 1990s I began to hear about "post-polio syndrome," an echo of one's first infection which returns thirty to forty years later, and late in 1993 some physical problems which could no longer be entirely attributed to aging began to emerge. In general, the late effects of polio advance only very slowly, and at the present rate I shouldn't experience any severe after-effects until around 2030. By then science fiction may have evolved sufficiently to recapture my undivided attention, in which case I shall have to be doubly grateful to old Hugo.

— John Foyster





It was a perfectly fannish Saturday morning at our house, the Subway Station. A fresh Diet Coke sat on the end table at my elbow. Joyce clutched one of her precious Tabs as she lolled back against the love seat's other huge, padded arm. Slugger huddled between us, a furry yellow puddle of contentment. I'd just fixed the stereo wiring so that the new Crash Test Dummies album sounded right. Well, as right as anything sounds on our fast-decaying system.

We were sitting there, Joyce and I, when it suddenly popped into my head to suggest that we go out for breakfast. It was about 10 a.m., so it wasn't a particularly surprising idea. As I turned to her and began to ask the question, two words — a single short phrase — flashed through my head: Celebrity Deli.

Joyce looked at me, a strange light in her eyes. "Celebrity Deli!" she shrieked. "Celebrity Deli! Celebrity Deli!"

"Why, that's remarkable," I said. "I was just thinking that."

The simultaneity of the thought was the noteworthy aspect, not its content. The Celebrity Deli had lately become one of our regular restaurants, overcoming a bad first impression in the process.

When the New York Deli, our previous favorite, closed it left us without a decent pastrami connection. This may not sound important to you, but this New

York boy would hate to face life without the healing balm of properly prepared delicatessen food.

Last Vegas is not a pastrami kind of town. That the modern city was founded by a Jewish mobster did not create allegiance to kosher-style cuisine. Maybe it's because there are no basements. Authorities agree that the only good kosher pastrami is produced by underpaid orthodox Jews toiling in a half-lit and unheated basement. The New York Deli flew in provisions from New York every day until a series of bizarre utilities problems caused the previously successful restaurant to shut down.

For months we pestered friends to recommend a possible replacement. None of the candidates measured up to the high standards we'd developed at the Stage, Carnegie and Junior's in New York. We felt the loss all the more keenly after Robert Lichtman conducted us to Canter's during the 1992 L.A. Corflu. The food was sublime, so we were willing to overlook the fact that Canter's did not have its full quota of surly old waiters snapping and snarling their way around the room. Acid-tongued old bastards are an integral part of the delicatessen experience. Even without them, though, Canter's made me homesick for the delicacies I'd left behind in our cross-country move.

We'd sampled the Celebrity Deli and found it guilty of bad cuisine. This proved a hasty judgment. When

we tried it a second time, a couple of months later, the meal was wonderful. We've been going there frequently ever since.

"You were just thinking of the Celebrity Deli?" asked Joyce, unmistakably pleased by this evidence of marital oneness.

"Yes, I was. As I asked you the question, I thought 'Celebrity Deli'." I pondered my words. "Wait a minute, Joyce... that means that when I was thinking 'Celebrity Deli,' you were thinking 'Celebrity Deli' too!" The stereo didn't play the "Twilight Zone" them, but it would really have pepped up this article if it had.

That's when I told Joyce about my new ambition. I'm a rather goal-directed person, and setting objectives energizes me. I've usually got quite a few, large and small, simmering. I hadn't pursued any special objective on a local level, I explained to Joyce, but now I had a mission: "I want a sandwich named after me at the Celebrity Deli."

"But— But— ." She gasped at the enormity of my aspiration. "What kind of sandwich?" was all she managed in response.

"A triple-decker!" I declared without hesitation. I was a little shocked that Joyce hadn't automatically known that. Triple-deckers are the only sandwiches which truly honor their namesakes. Lesser sandwiches are pallid praise in comparison. "It's corned beef, pastrami and turkey on rye, hold the Russian dressing." It was unnecessary to add that this edible edifice involves three full slices of bread instead of the customary two, and a side order of creamy cole slaw. I eat mine with french fries and a diet Coke, but I didn't think those should be official parts of an "Arnie's Special." You can get too doctrinaire about lunch meat.

"I'm sure that's a tasty sandwich," she allowed, apparently returning to herself now that she'd digested my announcement. "But the Celebrity doesn't even name sandwiches, you know." Despite its name, the Celebrity didn't go in much for autographed photos of famous patrons or named menu items.

"They have two with names," I corrected.

"But those are the owners," she persisted. "You're not going to buy the Celebrity Deli, are you?"

"No, I just want them to name a sandwich after me," I reiterated stubbornly. "I'm already making progress."

"How do you figure that?"

"I've already begun applying the Katz Method," I replied.

She nodded, her doubts vanishing as quickly as the monthly Socials' hot and cold buffets. All at once, she

understood the source of my confidence. Joyce had witnessed this set of surefire maxims in operation and knew better than to preach against its efficacy. I had one Brooklyn Heights restaurant trained so well that they'd throw my burger on the grill when I rounded the corner of the block on which it was located. It made me feel loved and appreciated, though not as much on days when I really wanted a club sandwich.

The Katz Method can make anyone a beloved habitue of the restaurant of their choice. I began with the first tenet: always order the exact same thing. So I selected the same meal, my signature triple-decker, each and every time I ate at the Celebrity. Even if every other table was piled high with lox and eggs and heaps of toasted bagels, I called for corned beef, pastrami and turkey on rye, hold the Russian dressing.

Sooner or later, I knew, It Will Happen. A waitress who wants the prospective tipper (me) to know she has That Personal Touch will say, "Will you be having your usual?" I will smile benignly and say, "Why, yes, I believe I will have an 'Arnie's Special.'" I'll say it so confidently that she won't even hear those single quotemarks.

A brief technical digression: The standard interpretation of the Arnie's Special is, beginning at plate level and working upwards towards gastronomic heaven: bread, corned beef, pastrami, bread, turkey and bread. The Celebrity has devised an alternative which I've incorporated into the Arnie's Special: bread, corned beef, turkey, bread, pastrami and bread. The placement of the relatively passive turkey between the more aggressive pastrami and corned beef is both tasty and richly symbolic.

The second tenet, "always chat up the waitresses," was even easier to follow than the first. I greeted every Celebrity Deli servitor like a long-lost friend, perhaps even someone with whom I had shared a stolen night of passion (to which, of course, I was too gentlemanly to refer) on some forgotten wild night. I beamed my incandescently irresistible smile and tried to act lovable. Well, at least non-threatening.

I had also invoked the third, and final, tenet: overtip. A larger-than-expected gratuity creates a pleasant mental association. An extra half-buck may spell the difference between a waitress who remembers you the next time and one who won't even get you a glass of water. Like a bar-rail hugger at a topless bar, I'm not spending all my money too quickly on tips. You've got to give them a goal, an objective. The waitress who asks if I want the usual will not forget the occasion after she collects her gratuity.

I haven't yet become a recognized Celebrity Deli regular, but it is only a matter of time. At our last

meal there, when I ordered a triple-decker, the waitress picked up the menu, presumably so she could get the ID number for the check. "No," I said, "I don't want one of those."

"Oh," said this charming (and perceptive) young woman, "you have your own sandwich." A small step, granted, but isn't that how every journey begins. The way I see it, it won't be long before the Katz Method works its wonders. I'll be a beloved regular. I'll be a familiar face at the Celebrity Deli. But the Katz Method can't do the whole job needed to put my name on the menu.

I'm taking care of that. I'll hire a bunch of fans to mob me, autograph books waving high, every time I enter the restaurant. Maybe I could get some Steve Stiles action going, too: get everyone to clap enthusiastically at each appearance. It would also be good if they'd call me "The Celebrated Arnie Katz" when they're in the Celebrity Deli or the three adjacent rows of the parking lot.

That reminded me of something else I wanted to try, so I said to Joyce, "When we go to the Celebrity Deli -" The name seemed to jolt Joyce out of the torpor induced by my dissertation on the Katz Method. Suddenly, her eyes sparked and her breathing grew staccato.

"We must go to the Celebrity Deli more often," Joyce suddenly announced with unnerving fervor. "I can wear my big ring!" She saw my look of non-comprehension. "It's a Jewish American Princess thing," she said. "Don't feel guilty."

"When we go to the Celebrity Deli," I commenced again, "I'd like you to order an Arnie's Special."

"You would?"

"I'm going to have to prove to the owners that it's financially advantageous to have named sandwiches."

"So you want me to order one?"

"Yes," I said, "I want you to tell them that you came here from New York City - no need to mention that it was five years ago - just to have one of their world-famous Arnie's Specials."

"You're asking a lot," she replied. "I don't even like that combination. Couldn't Robert Lichtman do this for you?" Perhaps Robert's reputation for obliging manners and easygoing ways has grown too far. I shelved the idea temporarily until I could catch Joyce in a more agreeable mood. I temporized: "Maybe you'll order an Arnie's Special another time we go to the Celebrity Deli."

"I want to go to the Celebrity Deli," Joyce said, a strange note in her voice. The statement itself was a little odd, too, since that issue had already been decided.

"We're going, Joyce," I soothed. "We're going to the Celebrity Deli!" Again the name had a galvanic effect on her. Truth to tell, I was starting to feel a little dislocated myself.

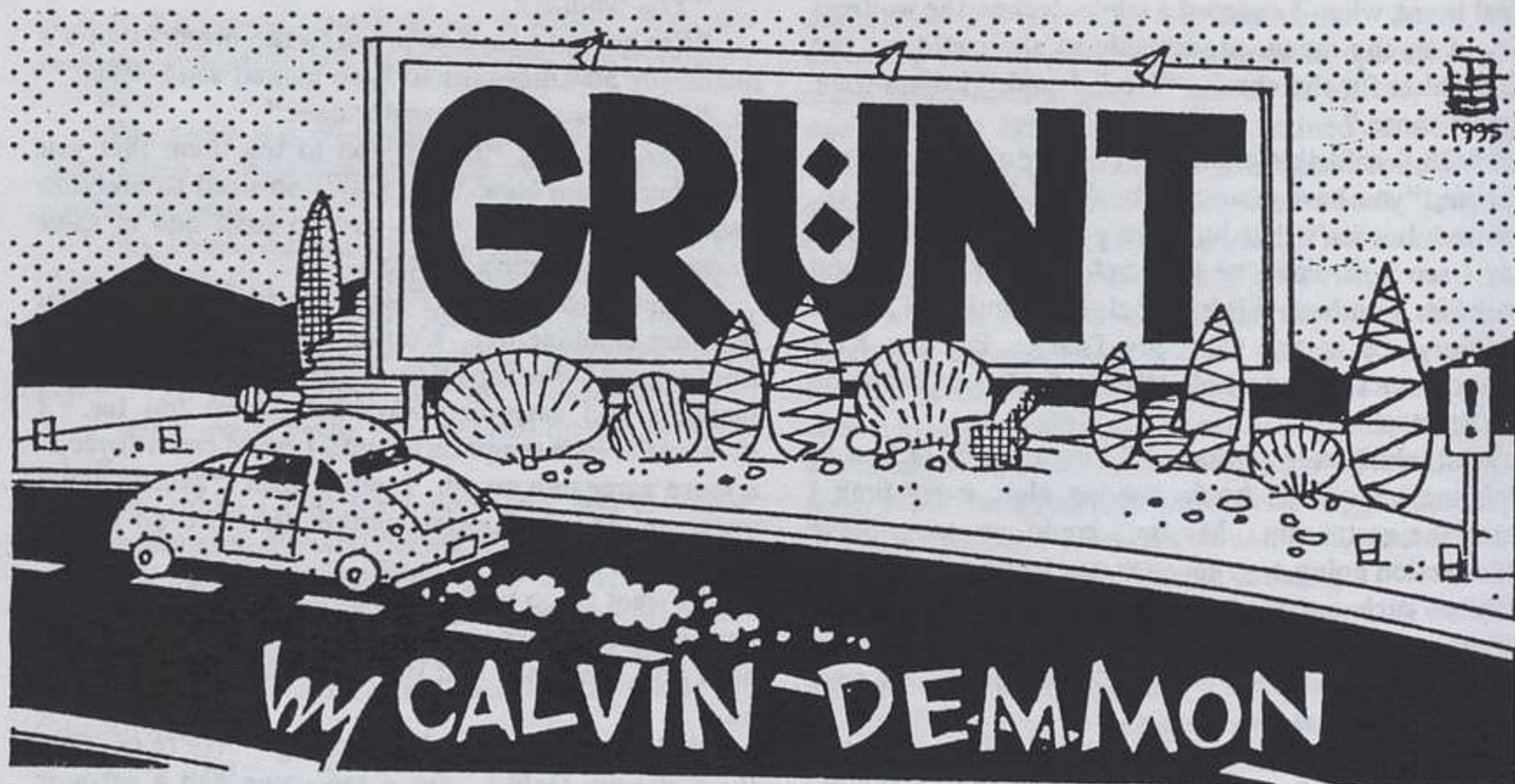
"I love the Celebrity Deli!" she told me earnestly.

A compulsion gripped me. Words formed themselves in my throat. "I must will everything I own to the Celebrity Deli," I heard myself say.

That's what I'll do. And after I write this up, we're going to the Celebrity Deli, where they will make me the Arnie's Special of my waking dreams....

- Arnie Katz





I guess my head is still okay. The doc says it looks fine in my latest CT scan. Once again he shook his own head and told me how "lucky" I was—in his whole practice, he said, he'd never seen anyone with a subarachnoidal hemorrhage that healed up by itself, and while I was in the hospital he called up his old med school prof in Florida and talked to him and that guy said he'd only seen one or two such incidents himself. Mostly, people who get what are also called basular tip aneurysms just die, quickly. I've told him before that I didn't think it was luck—that I really do think it had to do with all the people who were praying for me. But he likes the more formal, medical explanation: lucky.

Anyway, I do spend quite a bit of time spaced out, though I'm still able to function; being clearheaded is not a requisite for journalism, but actually sort of a handicap. I don't think I'm quite the writer that I used to be—my stuff for the paper seems pretty flat, but it could be that I've just been doing it for too long. And every once in a while, when I'm driving along in the car, my peripheral vision expands and I feel like I'm in a huge tunnel, especially when I'm on this certain road lined with fields coming up to a particular house with a pigpen out in front. But I don't think I'll crash into anything. These are the kinds of "symptoms" that make doctors, or at least my doctors, crazy—what they're waiting for is for one foot to go limp or something really obvious that they can see and measure. They have no concept of consciousness just becoming a little flimsy now and then, a little bit dreamlike, slippery and vaporous.

-14-

Isn't home ownership something? We "own" our house, though what that really means is that we're entitled to send nearly half of my take-home pay off to our lender every month, and also to get notices from the county tax collector, who just can't seem to take a joke. We own five large cypress trees, one of which fell partly over in 1993, obliterating not only a fence and the edge of our roof, but also my tomatoes. But I love homeowners insurance: we only had to pay \$500 and they fixed everything, gave us a brand-new fence (the old one was rotten), repainted the entire back of the house, and put a new rain gutter over our back door. And we wound up with enough firewood (from the fallen tree) to last at least two winters, all chopped and neatly stacked in the yard. Hardly a disaster.

We own a water heater. We own a driveway. We own rain gutters that need to be cleaned out—and I'm too clumsy to get up there and clean them out myself. We own, I guess, the ants that live under our front walk and tunnel up between the cracks and leave mounds of sand—maybe not, maybe ants count as mineral rights, which I think were sold off previously. We own some sprinklers that the neighborhood kids broke off. We own the mildew that is spreading under the northern eaves, where the sun never hits. It's all ours—no landlord can come through and inspect.

When people find out that we're homeowners instead of renters, you can just see that respect in their eyes; they know we're substantial. They don't know that we came up with the down payment by producing and selling software for the Commodore Plus/4 compu-

ter, now long defunct, nor that all our kids and us sat in the living room of our former rented house feeding floppy disks into disk drives for hours and watching rented videos so we could make enough copies of the software to fill the big order we got from Minnesota for, literally, thousands of disks. It's true. And now we are ant owners, mildew proprietors, and probably own termites too. It's okay; we're not renters any more; we're owners and we can handle it. When the neighbors drive by, they don't know who we are, but they do know that we own this place, and they give us credit for that.

Our latest home ownership adventure is that we may have a skunk living under our house. Our dog has come in stinking a few times lately (happy, but stinking), and so did one of our cats. It also visited our neighbor in the middle of the night. He has a cat door in his garage, and he was up, reading, when he heard noises in the garage that didn't sound like one of his cats. He looked in and there was the skunk. He shooed it away very calmly and the next day his wife put ammonia-soaked rags outside the cat door, following the SPCA's advice that skunks don't like the smell of ammonia. And the skunk hasn't been back to his house, just ours.

This morning when I was taking the dog for a walk I noticed a hole in one of the vent-screens in the foundation. So what am I supposed to do now? If I seal it up, what if the skunk can't get out? Or what if it's in there watching me and it gets mad and sprays? I don't know. I think I'll apply the only rule of home ownership that has ever worked for me: just forget about it, and a week or two will slip by before you know it, and things will be different. My lettuce is coming up, our apricot tree is breaking its limbs in abundance, and the sunflowers I planted have now grown tall enough to outreach the snails. Life is still good in California, it really is.

India and I took the walking tour of Steinbeck's Salinas yesterday. We were in a group of about twenty, some from foreign countries. (Foreigners who are Steinbeck fans often visit Salinas, especially during the annual Steinbeck Festival, which is going on as I write.) I work in downtown Salinas, and have done so for more than five years, so it is very familiar to me. But what a pleasure to walk down streets I know as well as any anywhere and learn that a two-story shingled house that I've always admired (and once stepped inside) was the rectory of the Episcopal church where Steinbeck was an altar boy, that a beautiful Victorian just half a block from my office was built for the doctor who delivered Steinbeck into the world, that the little park where

India and I sometimes eat lunch was the site of the "Baby School" where JS went to first and second grade, and that the camera shop to which I sometimes take film was once the location of a feed store run by Steinbeck's pop.

Last June we went down to Santa Barbara for our daughter Laura's graduation from high school. You met her when you came to see us; she's a person with disabilities. None of her teachers ever expected her to graduate – in fact, they told India she was wasting everybody's time trying to make sure Laura took all the required courses. But she passed her one remaining competency test (the tests all high schoolers have to take if they want to graduate). So instead of getting a "certificate of completion," she actually got a diploma. Were we proud? Yep. Laura took it all in her stride. She was much more excited about the senior trip to Disneyland, which she also got to go on.

I just got back from a three-day conference in San Jose, where I was one of five hundred reporters and editors attending panel discussions and hearing important speeches. Actually, I loved it. I came in today all fired up and ready to commit Investigative Journalism. The paper paid for my attendance at the conference, and also for my required membership for one year in the IRE – Investigative Reporters and Editors. I can hardly wait to show it to the next cop who stops me for speeding. I'll bet it will really change his attitude.

I had another one of my regular CT scans of my head the other day and I almost went to sleep while they were doing it, I'm getting so used to this stuff. The docs keep checking my brain because they can't believe I got away so easily. Of course there are small symptoms, like the feeling that the entire time since the day I went into the hospital is just a dream; like the knowledge that it is all very thin and transparent – evanescent is a nice word – and that I'm watching it from far away. But they don't have a pill for that one.

Is there any kind of fandom (the kind we know) going on in cyberspace? This is easier than cutting ditto masters, and less expensive, and you could send the same message to a whole bunch of folks, just like a fanzine. It wouldn't *smell* like a fanzine, and it wouldn't *feel* like a fanzine, but it would be the *essence* of a fanzine. And then people could keep their entire fanzine collections on two or three floppy disks, and the purple ink would never fade. Do you suppose somebody else is doing this – some other fandom that we haven't even heard about?

I met Paul Krassner once. It was in Los Angeles, during a peace march in about 1968 (well, exactly 1968, since India was pregnant with our first child, Peter). Krassner was a friend of a friend of mine. I met Phil Ochs the same day, the same way. About fifteen minutes later we were all running for cover because the cops were beating everybody in the front of the march over the head. LBJ was in town.

We went home and watched it on TV and I realized then that the news was controlled by the forces of darkness. Because the TV story wasn't anything at all like what actually happened. Now that I work for those same forces myself I understand it a bit better—there's no way you can accurately report anything; it's all an abstraction; it's all a matter of choosing from an infinite set of facts a few that when strung together make some kind of sense.

We had quite an adventure over the weekend. We set out Saturday morning for Santa Barbara to see our kids. In San Luis Obispo the rear main seal on our Volvo blew, spraying oil and smoke all over the freeway. We prayed. A mechanic in a pickup truck stopped, diagnosed the problem, and told us we could safely drive to a garage—he led us there in his truck. Two other mechanics looked at the car and came to the same conclusion: they couldn't fix it. None of them charged us anything. A tow truck took us to a Volvo agency, which was closed—but about ten minutes after

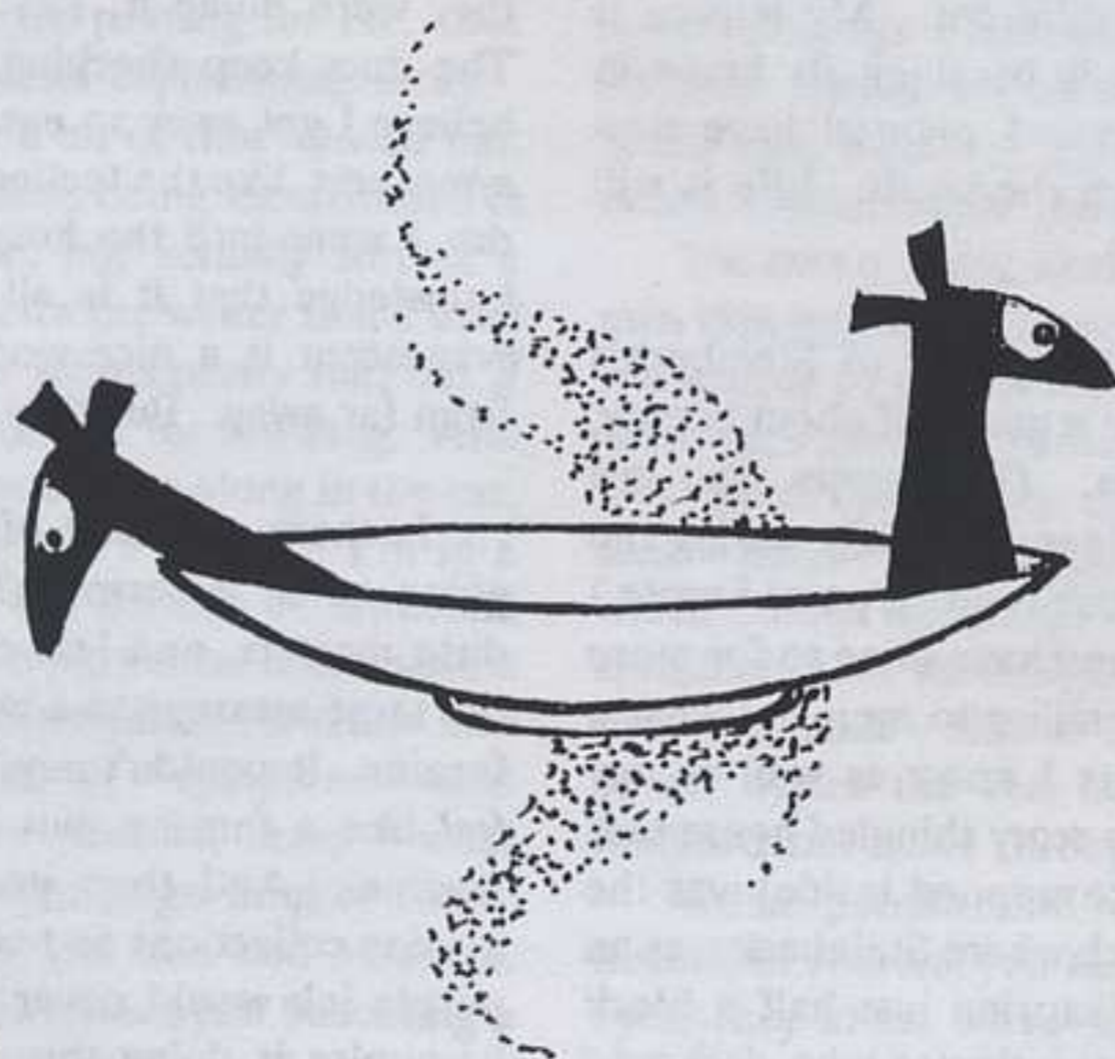
we got here, the service manager showed up. He could see that we were stranded. He rented a car for us on his personal credit card—I don't have one.

We made it to Santa Barbara a couple of hours late and had a great time with the kids, getting only about four hours of sleep. Next day we drove back to the Peninsula in the rented car. It had a nice radio, but FM only, so we didn't hear the news that the entire Monterey area was cut off by flood. We got to Salinas and found our regular route home blocked, checked the other two routes and found them closed as well. We went to the Herald Salinas bureau, thinking to use the hone and the bathroom—thinking that the place would be closed, as it usually is on Saturday. Instead, it was jumping—a bunch of reporters and editors who couldn't get to the Monterey office had set up camp there. One of them said we could stay overnight at her house. Next day one road opened and we went home just long enough to check on our pets, found a back way out of the area (through Moss Landing, on another road that was open only briefly), and headed back to San Luis Obispo to pick up our car and turn in the rental.

When we got to Marina again we were high as kites—we'd had an impossible adventure up and down the coast, met some very nice strangers, worked out some important stuff with the kids, and made it home safely. What good's a river trip without the occasional rapids?

—Calvin Demmon

Whatever became of the Hundredth Monkey?



Atom .

MY BABY, THE SUPERMODEL



—OR, THIS YEAR'S
MODEL

PSST...
NICOLA!
LOOK OVER
HERE!

by CANDI STRECKER

I carry a beeper.

I'm not a plumber who snakes out drains any hour of the day, I'm not a surgeon waiting for a transplant kidney to become available, and I'm not your friendly neighborhood crack dealer. No, I carry a beeper because I'm a *baby-model's mommy*.

I'm not sure who's more surprised by my taking on this role: my friends or myself. It doesn't fit the unfeminine image I've tried to cultivate all my comic-book-reading, cussing-and-spitting, non-makeup-wearing life. Sure, I have my moments as a Snappy Dresser, and can get darn worked up over a wicked shoe. But overall, the phrase "politically incorrect" scarcely begins to express my contempt for the whole world of fashion/beauty/cosmetics. "Delusionary belief system for the weak-minded" comes closer to it.

So what are my rationalizations? Well, for one thing, the money's good for the small amount of time it takes (seldom more than a single block of a few hours per week). I devoutly believe a child should have a full-time at-home parent for its first year or two, and I'm happy that our household finances have let me take on that role, but I feel bad sometimes about not pulling my weight. Bringing in a few hundred dollars this way (all of it tucked away for her college costs) lets me feel I'm making a contribution without taking time and attention from her, since I'm right there with her every moment when we go to an audition or booking. In a way, modelling work has enhanced life for both of us, by nudging us out of the household routines it's so easy to slouch into. With each sudden summons from the

beeper, we find ourselves exploring unfamiliar neighborhoods, having new experiences, and meeting other babies and their mothers. It reminds me that there's a busy working world out there, a world I'll be returning to someday. And I'll have to admit that part of the appeal of baby modelling is the sheer perversity of it. How could I resist when given the opportunity to do something this unlikely?

The biggest argument against kids' modelling, from my point of view, is that it fosters a corrosive kind of self-consciousness about one's appearance. I'm in no hurry for Nicola to learn to preen, posture and monitor onlookers' reactions in order to project the image they want. Even more importantly, I don't want her to think that my approval and love hinge on how well she does these things. But as I see it, a baby under the age of two doesn't even know she's modelling. As far as she's concerned, these are just special play-sessions I arrange for her with some wacky, but cooperative, grown-ups. If somebody wants to pay her for just sitting on her little diapered rump and being herself—looking openly and expectantly out towards the camera because that is how she greets the world—I've got no problem with that at all. But I have firm plans to ease her out of modelling around age two, as she becomes aware of its competitive aspects and the need to "turn on" expressions or project certain attitudes. In this, I seem to be in the minority; I have yet to meet any parents who have qualms about modelling's negative effects on older kids. For them, the bread-and-butter work of baby modelling—those print ads for depart-

ment stores that come in the Sunday newspapers — is just a first step towards high-paying roles in TV commercials, or the ultimate booking: being cast as a member of a sitcom family.

Everybody asks “how did you get into this business?” and you may be wondering that yourself. One impetus was simply the reactions of people we met. During the first few months of pushing the stroller around, I was stunned to find that folks constantly stopped us to gush, “Look at that face! What a Gerber Baby! She should be a model!” Living in a mostly Hispanic neighborhood, I was puzzled at first when so many people greeted her as Kay Linda; after a few weeks it dawned on me that “que linda” is Spanish for “how pretty.” For thirty-seven years I hadn’t paid the slightest attention to the infants of the world. Now I started to check them out, and found that there are a lot of ugly babies out there. Monkey babies! Homunculus babies! Dreadful wizened sour-souled babies with squinched-up faces! There seemed to be some truth in peoples’ raves over the alert and symmetrical Nicola, with her large blue eyes, mile-long eyelashes and blonde hair.

But looks alone don’t make a successful baby model. An open, fearless personality is vital. When plopped down in a circle of unfamiliar people, surrounded by towering cameras and glaring lights, most babies would scream, but Nicola seems to thrive on the strangeness and excitement of these situations. And there are other, less obvious prerequisites. To make modelling worthwhile, you’ve got to live in a major metropolitan area (not many ads get shot in Davenport, Iowa) and have reliable transportation. An adult must be available full-time on weekdays to take baby to bookings; if you can’t uncomplainingly rearrange your life to fit the demands of baby’s career, the agency doesn’t want to bother representing her. Although baby gets the pay, it’s Mom who does much of the work: changing the plans she’s made for the day, giving up time she could spend doing other things, driving all over town, keeping a bag full of modelling supplies ready (packed with cloth and paper diapers, generic white shirts and shoes, toys and snacks, and make-up for covering minor everyday scratches and bruises), filling out work vouchers, and making sure each one gets paid.

Despite meeting all these requirements, I probably wouldn’t have tried getting her into modelling if I hadn’t had the good luck to run across an article on baby models in a parenting magazine. It clearly and accurately outlined the amount of work involved, the payments one might expect, and what steps to take to get a child signed with an agency. The most useful part of the article was its warnings against bogus middlemen

who try to sell parents unnecessary photographs, training, grooming, critiques and “introductions to the right people.” The procedure was simpler than I would ever have guessed: I mailed a local modelling agency a half-dozen candid snapshots of Nicola that I’d taken with my own camera. (The reasoning seems to be that if baby looks good in the hands of an amateur, she’ll probably look great when photographed by a pro!) We soon had an audience with the agency’s owner, who instantly signed her up.

So at age six months, Nicola had a career and I strapped on the beeper. That’s an agency requirement, because in the frantic advertising business everything gets done at the last minute and a model may be needed at an hour’s notice, though most times the booking is made the day before the shoot. As a would-be writer, I have to swallow my pride when I realize that *she has an agent and I don’t*. Worse yet, when Matt found himself suddenly “between jobs” for a few weeks this year, little Nicola was temporarily the only person in the house with a job!

Now that I’m a model’s mommy, I look at advertisements in a whole new light. I’d never noticed before how many ads and TV commercials have babies in them. Not just the professional-looking babies all gussied up for maximum cuteness to push disposable diapers, but the “natural”-looking babes who are essentially props in those warm-and-cozy family-values vignettes that are used to sell almost everything: mortgages, ice cream, health insurance, the Republican Party. Now I realize that every baby I see in an ad is a baby model — and that each one of them has nabbed some work that could have gone to *my* baby!

One thing I’ve enjoyed about accompanying Nicola on her modelling gigs is getting an inside look at the commercial photography world. The studios are invariably in old converted warehouses located in the most run-down, post-industrial, wino-sprawled-in-the-doorway parts of San Francisco. We live in the city and we’re used to that, but it must be quite an eye opener to the other model-mommies, who are almost always from the outermost ring of the Bay Area’s suburbs.

Inside the studios, I’m always fascinated by how many people are scampering or lounging around, and I make a game of trying to figure out what each is supposed to be doing. Besides the photographer, there’s always the gal who does nothing but change the film in his camera; the guy who adjusts the lights and turns on the fan; the makeup person; the clothing stylist, her hand forever sneaking in to tuck and turn under shirt-tails and diaper-edges as they slip out into view; the studio manager, lugging around a cordless phone and large schedule book; maybe a casting agent

or a representative of the ad agency or advertised product. Any or all of these may be drafted into the crucial role of baby-amuser: standing just out of camera range and waving rattles, blowing soap bubbles, playing peek-a-boo, or shrieking koochie-koos to keep baby focused and giddily grinning. The mommy's duties are to keep the baby awake and out from underfoot until summoned, to not ask questions, and to *never* ask for a bite to eat from the crew's opulent spread of pastries, fresh fruit and coffee.

A recent gig was typical: a baby was needed strictly as a "prop" held by a male model posing as a daddy, for a brochure for a Colorado department store. Nicola was booked at the last minute, so I knew she wasn't even second choice but third choice at best; well, even if she wasn't photographed, she'd still get half-rate pay as "back-up baby." (Babies are always booked two deep, in hopes that at least one will be ready and able to smile when needed.) Nicola and her rival, with their respective mommies, arrive as requested at 9 a.m., clean and perky. But the male model is late, and we are soon asked to wait out in the chilly concrete corridors, because the photographer's studio/loft is full of break-

able artworks (a breathtaking collection of religious statuary and African sculpture) and the presence of toddlers is "making him nervous." While we jog our babies up and down the halls, scattering raisins and Cheerios in our wake, the photographer goes ahead with a shoot of another adult model.

Finally "Daddy" arrives and the photographer is ready for us. We mommies are annoyed yet secretly glad about the long delay, because the babies get paid from the time they're scheduled, not from the time the actual shooting begins; the meter has been running for two hours now. The rival baby dons a cloth diaper and white t-shirt, and her mommy hands her to the male model. The baby, who has been nothing but a jolly trouper during the long wait, instantly breaks into tearful screams. Bring on baby number two! Although inside I'm cheering like a baseball fan whose team has just won the World Series, I try not to gloat as I hand Nicola over to model-Dad.

She chews adorably on his necktie, bats her eyes at the camera, and begins a game of patty cake.

— Candi Strecker

We are science fiction fans
We never say sci-fi
And if you call us trekkies
We'll punch you in the eye!

We publish tons of fanzines
(Collectors need a derrick)
You may call our writings gibberish
But they're really esoteric!

We have conventions every week
And if attendance's iffy
To find out how to do them right
Just get in touch with SCIFI!

We like to dress for masquerades
And ham it up and pose
But if you call us costume freaks
We'll punch you in the nose!

We like to joke among ourselves
And call each other nuts
But if *you* doubt our sanity
We'll kick you in the guts!

We are science fiction fans
In wonder's sense we join
But if you call us saucer nuts
We'll knee you in the groin!

We are science fiction fans
And will be 'til we die
And if you try to censor us
We'll kick your butt skyhigh!

— Len Moffatt

The Things We Fan By (1)

Bjo looked surprised, even offended, when I took the scissors out of her hands the instant she was done and stowed them securely in my pocket. This was at a LASFS meeting, or rather just before one, more than thirty years ago, back in the days when the club met at the Silverlake Playground. She and John had stopped at my apartment at 270 South Bonnie Brae to drive me to the meeting, and as an afterthought to borrow my scissors and take them along with us. Bjo had forgotten to bring scissors in order to complete a task she was intent upon: wrapping a birthday gift for Phyllis, the LASFS' favorite waitress at Kal's, the restaurant where we went, post-meetings, in those long ago days.

Bjo said to me quizzically, "Those old scissors must be very valuable to you!" I replied, with some embarrassment at my abruptness, "Well, I don't want to lose them. I've had them for a long time, a very long time."

I'm sure those scissors – which I have even yet, close to hand – are older than I am. They must have belonged to my mother long before I was born, even before she was married. They are, or were, an ordinary pair of sewing scissors, and must have been in her sewing basket, or perhaps even my grandmother's, for years before they went through a phoenix-like rebirth into my possession. They were manufactured by Hubbard-Spencer-Bartlett, and were their "OVB" ("Our Very Best") model – both these identifications are stamped, on opposite sides, into the instrument. At some time in the remote past the scissors were thrust by accident, amid a heap of remnants and scraps of cloth, into the stove after some sewing job was completed. The stove was an old coal-burning kitchen range, such as were common in the days of my childhood, and the scissors, so mistakenly stuffed into the flames, were not found again till the cold ashes were removed from below, a day or two later.

The prolonged heat of the coals had removed the temper of the steel and left the scissors blackened and woebegone. They were therefore banished from the sewing basket, but since they were still more or less useful, they were kept around the house. They were often given to me to use in childish pursuits where paper or string had to be cut.

About the time I was ten years old, my father, who was a skilled amateur cabinet maker, built me a beautiful desk. The desk was my pride and pleasure for more than twenty years, and upon it I wrote my first fan articles and published my first fanzines. But that's another story. Among the small drawerful of supplies I accumulated for use at my desk was the old pair of scissors. There were other things. One was a small wooden ruler upon which my brother Jerry had tried

PENSEROSO



A Column by REDD BOGGS

the blade of his jackknife, leaving the marked edge uneven and hard to read. Whenever I used the ruler to draw a straight line I usually forgot and tried to trace along the whittled edge, always to my annoyance. I had a few pencils and even an ancient early-model fountain pen that had belonged to my mother in her school days. It would be a real antique if I still had it. But everything else has disappeared except the scissors.

I've got other scissors, too, but I still use the old pair almost daily to cut paper, string, paper tape, and other things. Sometimes, when I can't find my staple remover, I pry open the closing staples of a newly arrived fanzine with the blade of the scissors. Almost everything I use at my desk is an old and familiar object, but the scissors are the oldest of all. If measured, the total length of the cuts I have made with it over fifty years would reach farther than the moon. I hope it's good for a few more miles before one of us calls it quits. Rust and corrosion are settling upon us both.

A Book from the Library

On page 23, there's a paragraph neatly bracketed in pencil by an unknown hand; on page 68, a heavily underlined word in black ink that blotches the pages and soaks through to the other side. On page 310, there are brackets and underlines *and* a double exclamation point in the margin. After that, there's no further evidence of the reader's scrutiny a long time ago, nothing at all – 304 pages unsullied and perhaps unopened, great barren steppes of page-long paragraphs in small type between narrow margins. The unknown

reader must have died right there on page 310, of fury, scorn, or laughter too painful to endure. The marvel is that he crawled so far.

At the Center of Gravity

"Remember that in only a little more than ten months from now it will be forty years since you sent me that very first postcard," I said to Marion Zimmer Bradley solemnly. I had bumped into her by chance at the Berkeley post office, as I occasionally do, and we were standing alongside one of those high tables in the lobby. "You know, Fate must have used a lot of imagination and cleverness to bring us together here, face to face, at the far end of the continent, each with different reasons for coming here. As Toby Lumpkin said, it was 'A dam'd long, dark, boggy, dirty, dangerous way' that each of us traveled!"

I shifted the weight under my arm of the July 1986 SAPS mailing, which had just arrived in the mail that day, and continued. "Back then, after all, when we first started corresponding, we lived a long way apart, and a long way from here. I was in Minneapolis, 2,000 long miles away, and you were at least 3,000 miles from here, at RFD 1 in the 'loveliest village of the plain,' namely—"

"East Greenbush, New York," she said with a sad, reminiscent smile. "Yes, that *was* a long long time back. I sometimes think of those times, far away and long ago. But really, Redd, I have to run. I've got lots to do."

"Here you are now, in the place Where It's At, in the capital city of the galaxy of ten million suns," I added hastily, not willing to let the subject drop till I had milked it of all the drama and pathos it possessed, "and forty years ago, when we first started corresponding, you were living—not at the center of things—but in one of the most obscure little hamlets in America. Whoever heard of East Greenbush, New York?"

She shook her head, smiling, bade me goodbye, and quickly took her leave. Lugging the SAPS bundle I wended my way home. Over a cup of coffee I opened the mailing. Tearing off the tape, prying out the staples, and sliding the fanzines out of the plastic shipping bag, I riffled through the sheaf curiously. The first thing I noticed, even before I discovered my own contribution to the mailing, was a full-page change of address notice from Mike Gunderloy, who announced that he had just moved to East Greenbush, New York.

Blue Flash

Just as I was falling asleep, I sat up with a cry. Gretchen, reading abed beside me for a few minutes before turning out the light, rolled over and putting her arms around me asked sympathetically what was the

matter. I explained that a blue flash had zapped my mind for a moment, scaring me suddenly awake. She looked worried. "Maybe you suffered a small stroke. Are you OK? Is your mind clear? Is your memory intact?"

"Well, I don't know," I mumbled sleepily. "Let me see. I remember that Columbus discovered America in 1776. The capital of Kansas is Omaha. The first three presidents were Washington, Adams, and Rutherford B. Hayes. Superman's alter ego is Kent Clark. And 17 plus 17 equals 44. My mind seems perfectly clear. But wait, what's my name? Harry War—no, Arthur H.... My god, *I've forgotten my name!*"

With a sigh Gretchen turned back to her book. "You're all right," she said disgustedly. "Nobody else in the world, except you in full possession of your senses, can torment his wife like you can."

Women: Their Faults

On Shattuck avenue one day I was sauntering past a couple of young men—students are nearby Berkeley High, out for their lunch hour—when I heard one of them say to the other, "There are two things I don't like about girls—" Instantly I paused in midstride and loitered beside them, my blood pringling. I supposed that I was about to hear a great revelation, something about women as sobering as Professor Higgins' "Why can't a woman be more like a man?" Perhaps, I thought, women, the high school girls who are just in the midst of becoming women, are developing terrible flaws that are not apparent to the distant eye. One should be aware of this, and on his guard. Unfortunately an AC Transit bus rumbled past just then, and I didn't hear what came next. I paced on, disappointed and worried.

If women are lesser creatures than they once were, I am still unaware of it. From my vantage point, they appear as glorious and wonderful as something by Beethoven (I mean Ludwig van, not Misty). Women are the most fascinating things in the world, but of course they don't really have much competition: only mountains, trees, flowers, sunrise, sunset, the ocean, the moon and the stars.

Women: Their Virtues

Had anyone asked me, when I was a small boy, about my feelings toward the female sex, and had I been able to articulate them properly—and in confidence, for what manly boy could preserve his reputation after confessing such things?—I would have talked of theology and metaphysics. Even as a child, I remember, I was turned off by those prettified, sweetly sappy pictures, often found on Sunday School walls and in

certain editions of the Bible, of an enhaloed and bewhiskered Jesus Christ lovingly embracing a group of angelic-looking children. The cutline beneath usually reads, "Suffer the little children to come unto me" (Mark x:14). Suffer I did, although I knew nothing of the possible pederastic implications of such things. It is a sobering thought, however, sufficient to transfix multitudes for a thousand miles in every direction, that if ol' Jesus Christ had been portrayed as a charming and beguiling woman I might be a Christian today!

The Things We Fan By (2)

I was born in Staples, a country town in north central Minnesota. Like Lake Wobegon, which must be nearby, it is much too small to be listed in the "U.S. Places of 5,000 or More Population" section of the *World Almanac*. Despite the small gain it achieved when I was born, Staples is always losing population, and last I heard, had less than half enough people to qualify for the listing. I left my birthplace so long ago — when I was six years old — that it seldom crosses my mind, and till Robert Lichtman remarked, a few years ago, that Staples was an appropriate name for a town in which a future fan was born, I had never thought of the connection: Staples and staples! I suppose I had never before considered the importance of staples, either. Though very small, they are just as important to fanzine fandom as typewriters, paper, ink, and printing machines. A few fanzines have been held together with brass brads, thread, and other means, but nearly all have been stapled.

Since 1947, when Gafia press was founded, there has been a revolution — still going on — in the process of printing and publishing fanzines, but staples and staplers haven't changed too much. There are electric staplers and heavy duty staplers that came three different sizes of staples, and there are crinkly staples (and, by the way, what is the theoretical advantage of these?), but — for all I know — these items may have been around when I began fan publishing. My earliest fanzines were stuck together by a very small and only marginally useful stapler that we had around the house at the moment. I soon replaced it, circa 1948, with a Swingline 4 stapler I have used ever since. It is battleship grey, with dull blue smudges from being used while I was handling pages Gestetnered in Sure-Rite blue ink. The machine is slightly idiosyncratic, and Dave Rike is one of the few people who have used it successfully without practice. But it is a very reliable stapler.

Otherwise, till very recently, I have used only two other staplers in all these years. One was a little Tot Swingline, more of a toy than an honest-to-god stapler, that after a while choked on a jammed staple and gave

up the ghost. The other was an old and decrepit Arrow stapler Gretchen found hidden away in the back of a file drawer in her Dwinelle hall office on the UC Berkeley campus. She brought it home and offered it to me, but I used it only a few times before it burst apart and had to be discarded. Neither of these staplers was ever used on a fanzine.

The only stapler with an innovative design I have seen in all these years was one that Dave Rike discovered recently in a mail order catalog and acquired for me. It's not a Swingline, but more of a Swing-Out-Of-Line machine. The body of it is arranged to swivel 90° sideways in order to accommodate pages of a half-legal-size fanzine that otherwise would require the use of a long-reach stapler like the Swingline 44-12. In its ordinary mode it looks and works like an ordinary stapler. The gadget was made in Japan by the N&S Company, Ltd. They call it an Arm Swing stapler, model NS-3A. Besides doubling as both a regular and a long-reach stapler it had the advantage of costing about half the price of a long-reacher and less than a quarter of the price of a saddle stapler. The trouble with so many of the ingenious new devices of use to fanzine publishers — copiers, word processors, and so on — is that they cost many times the price of the machines they replace.

Adlesburg

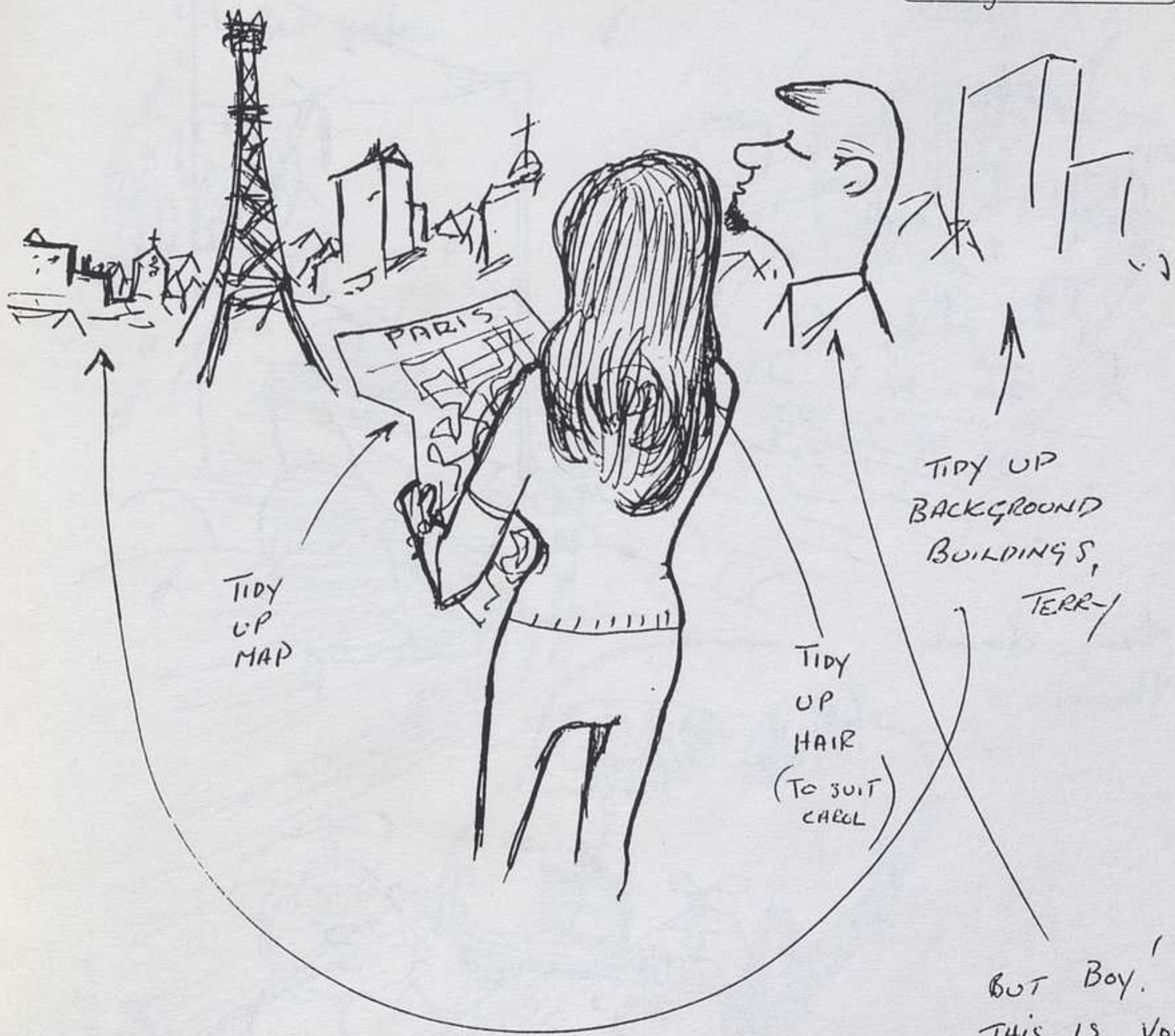
Yes, I remember Adlesburg. We had spent the cold hours of a February night charging after our dazzling headlights like riders astride white geese winging the dark miles of Highway 152. The dashed centerline of the road flashed by on our left like tracer bullets.

When we stopped once to drink coffee from a thermos to keep awake till we got home to Berkeley, we drew at last into a tunnel carved of light, where our beams waned to glimmers, in a strange town we had never seen before. Under the arch of darkness and fog, the white light washed over an orderly street where nothing moved. One traffic light at the intersection in the middle of town cautioned ghosts with its steady amber beam. Nobody came or went on the bare sidewalk.

Just beyond the glare of light, the houses of Adlesburg floated gloomily under their mooring masts of TV antennas, but no one seemed awake, not even a black-bird or an owl. Perhaps only the mice were wakeful at the moment, or only nothing at all.

— Redd Boggs



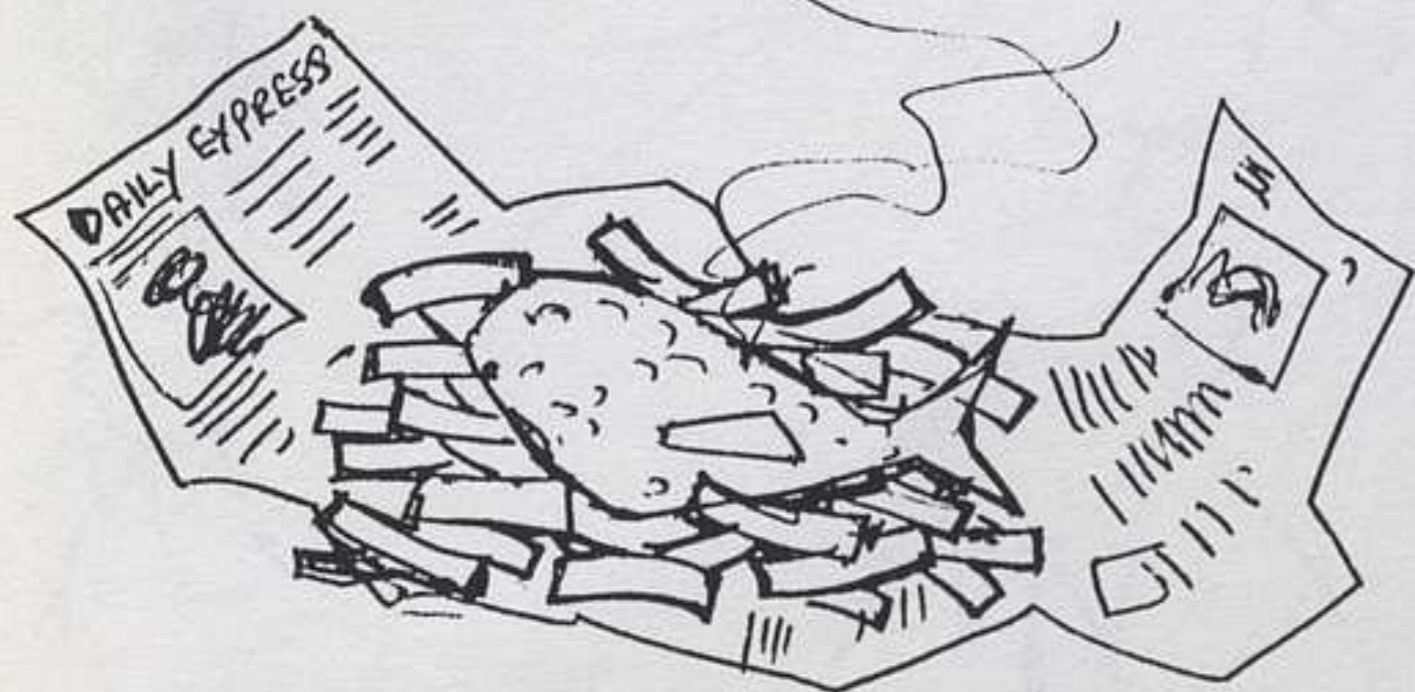


TIDY UP
MAP

TIDY UP
HAIR
(TO SUIT
CAROL)

TIDY UP
BACKGROUND
BUILDINGS,
TERRY

BUT BOY!
THIS IS YOU.
Atom



fish n' chips



trip down
Thames.

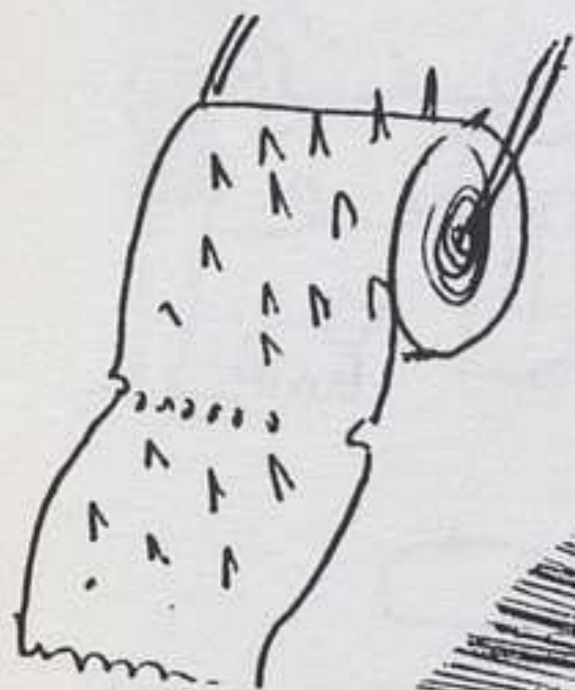
English
fans.



tea + or +
coffee



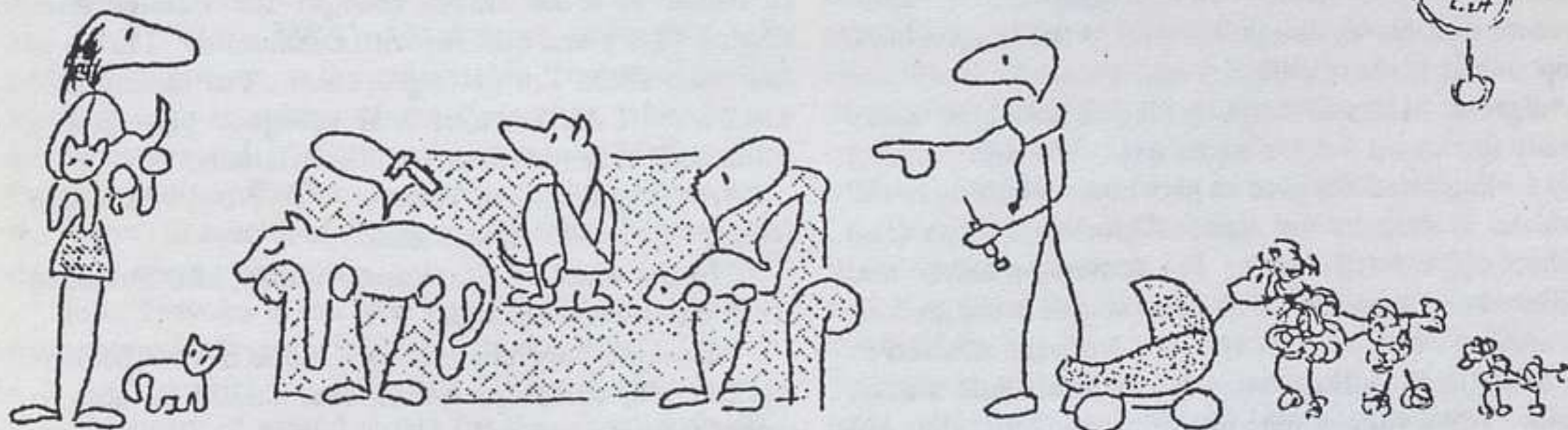
British
toilet paper



Charles
Platt
← tyhe

TAKING BOYD
HOME TO HIS
HOTEL THROUGH
THREE RED LIGHTS.
(TRAFFIC!)





STUFF

BY CAROL CARR

A bunch of us were talking about when doctors made house calls, and I had this vision, this little revenge fantasy for the '90s. They ring your doorbell. You greet them warmly, show them to a chair and hand them a 1956 issue of *House and Garden*. You let them sit a while. When you notice they're getting restless, you say, "Sorry, we're running a little late; but why don't you come with me." This is called "staging," the purpose of which is to make them think they're coming closer to the goal. You sit them down on the toilet in your "dressing room" and tell them to strip while you hand them an oversized paper napkin with a big hole and strings to figure out how to wear. You don't give them anything to read, but they're facing a full-length mirror. Give them a lot of time to get to know their bodies. Every twenty minutes or so, peek in and tell them to please be patient; their call is very important to you.

So there I was, about to flip insouciantly through a fat *Blat!* when, before I could even wet my finger, I came across some stuff by Ted that took me by my memory and shook it hard—and gave me an excuse to shamelessly reminisce.

He talked about the Lupoffs; and about Chip Delany and Judy Merrill, and his perception of a Milford Mafia composed of knee-jerk liberals—a bit of a mixed metaphor, but forgivable since they were on different pages.

I certainly don't mean to impugn Ted's recollections, and if I impinge on them a little it's only because mine are so different. This may be because I spent large amounts of time at Milford trying to balance a flat-bottomed glass filled with one inch of bourbon on a perfectly flat living room floor. Or so I was told the next morning.

But allow me to quote:

"Judy [Merril] used to stay in the Carrs' guest room whenever she was in NYC." While I don't remember the moments of her leaving to go home, I certainly don't remember the nights of her staying over. I think I would have remembered seeing her the next morning. I don't know. Maybe *I* left. But where would I have gone? I was already *there*. I do remember Lee Hoffman and Bob Toomey staying over (not in the prurient sense), and Grania Davidson, on her way to and from her travels in Europe on fifty cents a day. But try as I may, I can't remember Judy Merrill even *asking* to stay over. Remember those old sofa-bed mattresses, made of flat rocks with sharp points and covered with an eighth-inch of cotton batting? Surely a card-carrying member of the MM could do better than that.

On Milford: "... the Milford Mafia were also nasty snobs (I was treated as Terry's chauffeur and excluded from conferences on the grounds that I was only a *collaborator* . . . for years after I'd been publishing books on my own)."

That's really sad, especially since our butler and handmaid were invited. As I remember, the Milford conferences were invitational. I think Damon and Kate invited whoever they felt like inviting, and I think decisions were based on who they felt an affinity with and would fit in the house. I'm sure there were young writers in attendance who were even less well published than Ted. I think there are times when instead of taking things politically we must take them personally. Maybe what they wrote was more important than how much they wrote. This is a sensibility that is neither Mafia-like nor knee-jerk liberal. But yes, it can sting.

As far as Chip is concerned, I don't remember his

being "lionized." Chip was very likable and he was liked. I don't really know what lionized means. Does it mean, like, fêted, like being offered the biggest lamb chop or the kindest critiques of his work? Not. But I'll digress. I do remember Chip offering to make dinner for us on maid's night out. We said yes, not only feeling fêted but glad to give him something to fall back on in case he got writer's block. He was (and probably is) a terrific cook. For dessert he halved and hollowed out an orange and filled it with some incredible creamy concoction of the sort we were allowed to eat back then. A little while later I wrote him a note. I said, "I had your orange halves bronzed and they are hanging on a rear-view mirror." He said he was touched.

Tom Disch was another guest. Tom is gay. Was he invited to fill the quota? I don't think so. I'm Jewish. Damon knew it and called me Schwartz to differentiate me from Carol Emshwiller. After a while they got another Jew to attend, maybe Jack Dann, but they let me stay. And Ted says they were cruel.

If there's anything I remember about these cruel knee-jerk liberal snubbers is that they were a lot of fun. I don't remember talking politics much, knee-jerk or any other kind (maybe because some of the attendees were so *un*liberal it might have dimmed down the fun). We sat up late and told chicken, cow and pig jokes. Mine was (after all these years it's only fitting that I remember only my own): "Who is the Pig Poet of the People?" (Carl Sandhog.)

Away from Milford and into the opulence of the Lupoffs' apartment: Terry and I were also aware that the Lupoffs lived on a fashionable Manhattan street in a building with a better exterminator than the rest of us had. But I don't think we were "painfully" aware. And we didn't know that it was a penthouse apartment. I always thought a penthouse was a huge, glass-encased, two-story wonderland inhabited by Lauren Bacall and two other secretaries wearing designer negligees on forty dollars a week.

Well, maybe Judy Merrill did stay with us a lot and she was very quiet during the night and crept away wordlessly in the morning, but I ask you, audience: does that sound like Judy Merrill? Maybe Chip Delany really was lauded and lionized and groomed for stardom. And maybe I was just having too good a time to see the liberal knee-jerkery that raised up people of color and other sundry status symbols while snubbing the poor white guy who lived in a shoe. But I don't remember it that way.

Everybody's misheard stuff, especially song lyrics. The classic example is the line from the Creedence

Clearwater song: "There's a bathroom on the right." A friend of mine always thought the Beatles were singing "Lucy and the Guy with Diamonds." I listen to the radio while I'm getting dressed. I'm talking 5:00 a.m., when I can't see or hear too good yet. Here's some stuff that's made me blink, belatedly:

"A rocky President Hussein." ("Wow," I thought feebly; "he's sick. That's nice.")

"In the wake of Hurricane Andrew, two thousand tense cities were erected."

"Changes have already been made in the (brokerage house's) computer system that should be able to detect false prophets."

Women complain about what men *do* want, but some men are still complaining about not being able to figure out what women want. You'd think, after all this time . . . It's sort of Freud Part II: the angry white *sensitive and very confused* male thing: "What do these women want, anyway? They actually want us to be able to cry and at the same time not slap them in the face with the door?" What can I say but yes.

Anyway, my own response is, if it's so hard for these men to integrate assertiveness, common politeness and the ability to cry, just listen to any woman who has kids, works outside the home, and just lost her babysitter. And if that doesn't work, how about some integration exercises, like a hobby, like outdoor needlework?

A quote from somewhere on the net:

"Many, many years ago, before the discovery of volcanic eruptions, molten lava had to be carried down the mountainside, bucket by bucket, and poured over the sleeping villagers. This took time."

And somebody's logout message: "When I die I want to go peacefully and serenely, like my grandfather did — not kicking and screaming, like the passengers in his car."

A lovely little story I heard, from Betty Comden (of Betty Comden & Adolph Green of showbiz fame). Comden's little girl was in love with "Peter and the Wolf," would listen to it over and over again on her Victrola. One day her mother was passing her door as the narrator was saying, "And, just then, some hunters came out of the forest." The little girl said, "And some didn't."

In response to Jon Carroll's (columnist for the S.F. *Chronicle*) column on the just-published book, *Tom Clancy Presents Steven Spielberg*: Yes, we are Product. As soon as success hits we become the alligator on some company's polo shirt. Or we incorporate and

become that company, whose logo is ourselves (Zen and the Art of the MBA). No matter: As Product, we proceed to gobble up the marketable "creative" skills of the hungry monkeys at the typewriter, who, for a steady stream of McBananas, churn out Marketable Product (notice: Product is now both the subject and the object) in ever-diminishing quality to an increasingly dumbed-down population.

John Travolta in the *New Yorker's* 70th Anniversary issue refers (only partly joking) to "Look Who's Talking 4," . . . "in which the chairs talk." I see the future and it is a country of armed moats for the alligators being supported by a service industry of monkeys who never forget to tell you to have a nice day. Huxley and his prophetic soul.

When Terry died, I got suddenly aware of the fact that my house might be following in the footsteps of my life. And indeed, the roof had to be replaced, the carport was about to fall into the living room, drainage was very good but in all the wrong places. Money was zooming in from the royalties that were owed to Terry

and which Bob Silverberg was calling New York publishers for like the Godfather with outstanding favors. And money was zooming out to the contractor, who was discovering lots of fun things like asbestos in the ceiling – whoops! a week more's work and a thousand more bucks – and old wasp hives in the office wall.

Our apartment in Brooklyn was on a slant, and so is my house. Because I'm on a hill, drainage needs updating every few days. I was just about to have this done when my plumbing backed up. Roto Rooter showed me samples of my sewer pipes, and they were solid with roots lo unto the nineteenth foot. One particularly delicious specimen was, I swear, growing bark. A bark-bearing root, probably from one of the ubiquitous cherry plum trees that hang around the house. (A little more time and leaves would have grown, then plums; given more time I could have had cherry plum wine come out of my faucet.) Such are the joys. But I love my house and will no doubt be found someday at the foot of the canyon, with the walls wrapped around me and the roots trying to get in.

– Carol Carr

**"HOW DO YOU MAKE GOD LAUGH?"
"YOU TELL HIM YOUR PLANS."**

[for William Rotsler]

You tell Him of your trip to the Khyber Pass
And He hits you with a quadruple bypass.

A vacation in Naples?
Or a torso full of staples?
It really doesn't matter,
But if He giggles, you get the latter.

Now food tastes like cardboard,
Arms are a dartboard.
Your legs have been strafed
And stripped of all dignity.

You're much too weak to lift a book
And you're furry and funky like the big bad Woogy.
Listen, cookie, take it from me:
Bedrest is not all it's cracked up to be.

Sing it for me, recuperatin' Daddy:

Oh, I just walked in for a let's-tap-your-knee-jerk
And now I'm Victor Frankenstein's
D-minus homework.
Listen, I'm doing the best that I can,
And when I get well, then I'll learn how to scan.

"Another plan?
Well, suture self."

(How to you make God groan?
You write him a pome.)

– Carol Carr

That Little Machine Shop in Los Angeles

by Socorro Franco-Burbee



"Oh Burbee, you're so scintillating, so brilliant, so clever." Those words were spoken in a high-pitched, whiny voice by a co-worker named Al (not Ashley) who worked in a small machine shop in Los Angeles, California, along with Charles Edward Burbee Jr. (aka Burb), Francis Towner Laney – the man with slicked-down hair and fanatic's eyes – and me – in early 1951.

Charlie and Laney looked like ordinary working blokes. I had no idea that I was in the presence of legends.

Al was an adversary to Charlie and Laney from Day One. He was always trying to best that pair – to be funnier or wittier – and he was never successful. It must have been extremely frustrating for him. But how could a mere mortal best these inseparable fannish Ghods?

Of the many little incidents that I was witness to at that machine shop, some really stand out in my memory. I remember when Laney started coming in ten to fifteen minutes late to work each and every day

of the week. It was interesting to hear some of the excuses he told the shop foreman, Lawrence McGivern, better known as Mac. Laney would be out chasing women every night, but he would say things like: "I had a flat tire," "I had two flat tires," "My battery went dead," "I couldn't start my car" and "My car got rained out." Can you imagine? He finally ran out of silly excuses and he simply told Mac, "Why was I late? Oh fuck it." The company kept him on, I suppose because they considered him a valuable employee. Most companies would not have tolerated Laney's caustic behavior.

In those days, Charlie would holler, big, BIG, BIG, when Laney came in late. Pretty soon, everyone picked it up; it was something to hear. I was one of the hollerers, too.

Laney had, in the past, done some night shift work. Mac came to him one day and asked him to go on nights. I can hear his voice even now. Laney refused,

stating three reasons why he couldn't go on nights, as follows: (1) Because of my health; (2) because of my sex life; and (3) Fuck it!

He did not have to go on nights. How did he get away with it?

Let's get back to Al. Everyone in the shop called him "Big Al" except Charlie and Laney, who called him "Long Tall Sally." He hated that nickname. You see, he was seven feet four inches tall and gay.

Al Wolf was his real name. Al was a member of the poker club. We played daily in the lunch room for half an hour and we met once a month at one of our homes for an all-nighter.

One noon, while we were having our half-hour game, Al said, "I was walking down Pico and Vermont the other day and I happened to spot a second-hand store."

"Well," said Charlie, "What's so unusual about that?"

"But you see, I saw this beautiful arrangement of crystal balls in the store window and I went in to price them."

"Okay, so what?"

Al said, "The salesman came out to take care of me dressed in slippers and very tight white pants. That's when I found out he was not interested in making a sale; he was interested in *meee!*"

Without a moment's hesitation, Charlie said to him, "Al, never trust a man who has crystal balls." We all broke up.

The poker club had six regulars and one or two alternates. (They played when a regular was on vacation or ill.) Al was a regular but he held the game at his house only once. He preferred to play somewhere else. His place was quite different from the norm. There were eight-foot doors and ten-foot ceilings. He lived there until he died. He didn't have to bend down to enter a room like he had to do in most conventional homes. It suited his tall stature.

The "drills" foreman, Lohman Chow, once made a statement that stands out in my mind. (This is the same Chow that Charlie wrote an article about, "The Mind of Chow.") He said, "Al, he so polite, he always bowing in oriental manner." He of course had to bow or conk his head. He had no choice.

Another regular was Doris Vigars, ex-WAC Sergeant. She didn't walk, she marched. I call her a lady with a great deal of reservation. You see, she was

extremely mannish. She was a shrewd poker player, a good bluffer too. Sometimes she drank a bit too much whiskey and got careless with her game. But she was a lot of fun in a game — a fun player.

I forgot to mention that Al was kind of a nuisance at the poker games. He used to bet illogically. He also did a postmortem after each hand. "If I'd of," it got rather tiresome. He would get angry at a particular card, for instance. One time he said, "I'm mad at these cards and I won't draw to queens even if I have three of them. They failed me once; that's enough." That was Al. He lost most of the time. We needed him.

Then there was Larry Velasquez. A single, middle-aged man who still lived with his mother. He was the opposite of Ms. Vigars. He was a good, quiet poker player. He was not a show-off or a bore. He was Mr. Cool. He did have a tendency to squirrel away all the dimes that came across the table. Pretty soon, all the dimes would be gone.

Another player was my deceased husband, Blen Hodson. He was a whiskey drinking, card-playing, Jack Mormon fool. He loved his cards. He was a good bluffer, too. He didn't think that I could play very good poker until I took them all to the cleaners the last three times the poker club got together

Charlie liked to play cards, too. Some of the games were held at his Whittier home. Most of them were at my house in La Mirada because I had two small children and they got to sleep in their own bed that way.

Charlie added wit and good conversation, sometimes rather controversial. He was always himself, faking it for no one.

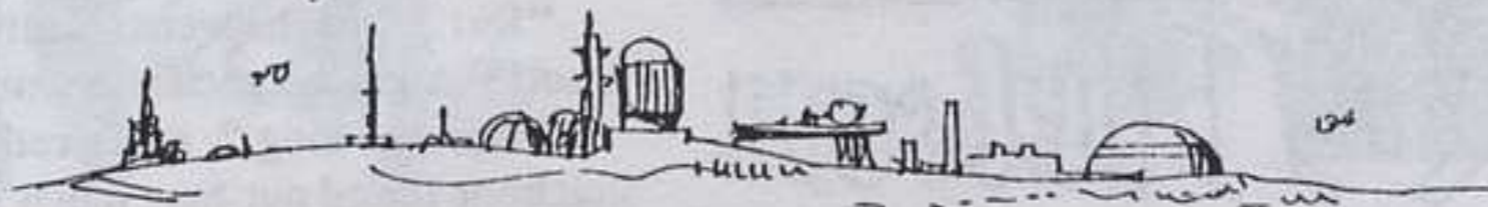
I was the sixth player. I found myself in good company. Many good, unique times came out of this unusual group though some were more unusual than others.

Laney left the company before the poker club got started. I was laid off in September 1960 and got out of machine shop work. I went into electronics, and finally went to work for the UAW as an employment counselor.

Charlie stayed on and left the company in about 1968, going on to bigger and better things with ITT.

And that's the way it was in a little machine shop in Los Angeles, California. What fun, what great years those were. You never miss the water until the well runs dry. An old axiom, but still true today.

— Socorro Franco-Burbee



A CHILD'S GARDEN OF



By Ray Nelson

Gung Ho, the pride of his Zen monastery, was walking in the woods with another monk from a Christian monastery, talking quietly of the sins of the world, when all at once they came in sight of a beautiful young girl who had lifted her skirts to a rather indecent height in an effort to keep them dry as she tried to wade across a stream. Without a word, the Buddhist monk swept her up in his arms, carried her across the stream, and set her down on the other side with a chuckle and a kiss. The Christian monk followed, mouth agape, as Gung Ho continued on his way. They had walked for several miles in silence before the Christian monk could contain himself no longer and burst out, "After all your talk of Detachment from Worldly Things, how could you pick up that brazen young tramp in your arms...and even kiss her?"

The Buddhist looked at the Christian in surprise and answered, "What? Are you still carrying that girl around? Why, I set her down on the riverbank long ago!"

"One place I've never been," roared the sailor, leaning over the bar table and breathing in the face of Gung Ho, the faithful follower of Zen, "and that's in jail! I've sailed the whole world round, seen every inch of sea from here to Australia and back so many times I can tell my position by the color of the seagulls that come after the ship's garbage, but I've never been in jail! I'm not saying I'm an angel, mind you, but if I ever done anything, at least I wasn't caught at it! I've been everywhere that's worth being at, seen everything that's worth seeing, but there's one place I've never been and never will be, and that's jail!"

"Some jails," observed the Zen monk, "float."

"How did you ever become a Zen monk?" asked the rich society woman at the cocktail party.

Gung Ho, the old Zen master, replied with a smile.

"One day," he said, "my wife started telling me about what a fine, religious man one of the neighbors was. She told me how he fasted and prayed and went to the temple all the time and ended up by informing me that if he kept on like that, he might end up a saint. Then she started to criticize me for my worldly ways and say that I could never hope to be anything like a holy man. Finally, I had enough. I signed over everything to my wife, tied a dirty cloth around my loins, and walked barefoot about 200 miles to the nearest Zen monastery and I've been a faithful monk ever since."

"But good heavens, your wife must have been upset!" cried the society woman.

"Not for long," answered Mr. Ho. "When that neighbor found out how much money I had left her, he

left his own wife and ran off with mine.”

“You must hate that neighbor!” said the society woman.

“No. Not at all. You see, he felt so guilty about it that he gave all the money to my monastery. Men like that are the life-blood of all religions,” said Gung Ho.

A prostitute was trying to convince Gung Ho, the ardent student of Zen, that he should try her wares.

“Buddha won’t mind if you have a little fun,” she said.

“True,” answered the Pride of Kyoto sadly. “No pleasure is forbidden me so long as I maintain myself in a state of complete spiritual detachment.”

“Let’s go then!”

“But,” continued the Black Sheep of Kyoto, “unfortunately I have discovered that in a state of complete spiritual detachment I can’t get a hard on.”

Gung Ho, the Jerry Lewis of Zen Buddhism, was playing chess with Father O’Malley one night, carrying on a bit of religious discussion on the side. When at last the game ended in a draw, Father O’Malley sat back with a smile and lit his pipe.

“You don’t believe in a Heaven or Hell, do ye, m’boy?” asked the Irish priest.

“No,” answered the Buddhist.

“Then answer me this, m’boy,” snorted Father

O’Malley in triumph. “If there be no Heaven or Hell, where do ye go when ye die?”

“Where does my fist go,” answered Mr. Ho, clenching his fist and smiling ever-so-slightly, “when I open my hand?”

“Congratulations, Mr. Ho,” said the college president, shaking the hand of the old Zen monk from Kyoto. “I hear you have been giving private lessons to some of the students in this university, and that your pupils are leading all the rest in their studies.”

“That is correct,” said the little Japanese.

“But is it true that you are teaching *all* subjects, even in advanced courses?”

“Oh yes, is true.”

“But good heavens, man,” gasped the college president, “what an education you must have! What breadth of learning!”

“Oh no,” answered Mr. Ho, “I have no education and no learning.”

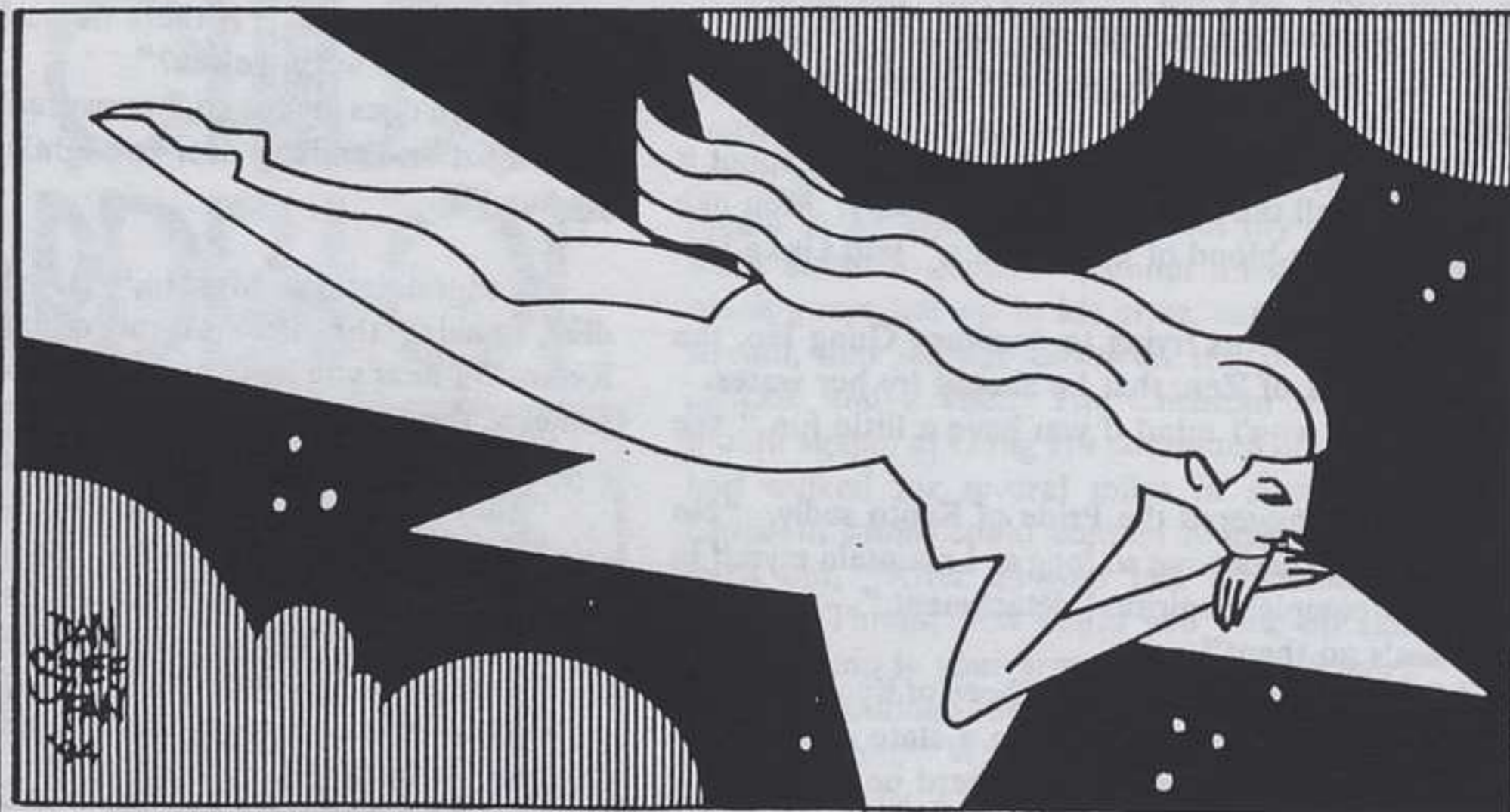
“But then how do you teach all those subjects?”

“I have no knowledge or understanding but great interest in everything. It is the students who teach me. When they have repeated what they must learn enough times and simplified it enough so that my stupid head can grasp it, then a miracle happens and they understand it themselves,” said Gung Ho.

— Ray Nelson



the. **ETHEREAL**



STILL VIBRATES.

MIKE GLICKSOHN

The Ross Chamberlain covers for No. 14 were wonderful. Ross is a superb artist and probably deserves to be better known to current fandom than he is. What an attention-grabbing start to the issue!

In the old days I'd have picked up on your idea about the Fandom Hall of Fame and run with it for a few paragraphs, but that was then and this isn't. (Hmmm, I'll have to polish that phrase a bit.) It was a deft bit of drollery and should inspire musing from many of our better wordsmiths so I'll leave it to them.

The articles by Schalles, Eklund and Hartwell share little in common (beyond being interesting to read) yet they somehow combined to depress me with the realization of what a quiet, uneventful and positively dull life I've lived. Thanks, I needed that, I guess.

Ted's piece was the sort of fascinating detailed examination of the minutiae of fanhistory he excels at and which few other current fans have the ability or the memory to write. Since it dealt with fandom before my time and with a part of that fandom I don't remember reading about before, I found it extremely interesting. Also mildly depressing since it forced me to confront the fact that I couldn't possibly recreate such a detailed picture of my life thirty years ago even if there was a reason for doing so. (*Trap Door, the Fanzine That Suicidally Depresses You With Its Excellence.*)

In terms of sheer gut-wrenching fascination, though, Greg's personal view of the fire was clearly the written highlight of the issue (perfectly placed by an astute editor, too, as no other article could have followed it). And for once I was very glad indeed that I *didn't* have a similar experience in my dull and uneventful life!

As eloquent as Colin Hinz is in explaining his feelings for the various places he's lived in and matured in, he doesn't manage to swing me from Shelby's side of the matter to his own. I guess it's strictly a matter of personal make-up. I can certainly tell you where I was living when the key moments/decisions in my life occurred, but I have practically no feeling at all for the actual buildings themselves. The house I was living in when I first discovered science fiction fandom is no longer there. Oh, the building is. But all the things that made that particular place special to me at that time have long since vanished. So I've long since let it go. (I suppose my mindset is fairly clearly established by the fact that whenever I'm on vacation I tend to say, "Well, let's go home," whether I'm staying at a friend's house, a motel, a campground or a convention hotel.)

Since I wasn't at the San Francisco Worldcon (not being able to afford a honeymoon and a worldcon in two consecutive months; otherwise I'd have been there since the city is a favorite of mine too long unvisited), I can't know if its reputation as a disaster is deserved or

not but I *do* know that its reputation as a disaster would have nothing whatsoever to do with whether or not I had a good time there, even if I'd been working on the con as Andy Hooper did. I've been to a great many good cons and a few bad cons, but even at the bad ones I enjoyed myself. You're going to have to let history have its say on this one, Andrew. (I *am* going to Winnipeg and it may turn out to be a fiasco too, although I certainly hope not; but I expect to enjoy myself thoroughly regardless of how well thought out and run the actual convention is. But I don't expect to see *you* there, unfortunately.) {*No, I wasn't at Winnipeg – but I was at the San Francisco Worldcon, and my personal experience doesn't at all match up to the trashing it's received.*}

It's an odd coincidence that Bob Shaw wrote about George Flynn buying Bob a beer because when I finally finish writing this letter and go out to mail it, Bob Shaw is going to buy *me* a beer. Indirectly, I'm sad to say. In today's mail I received a letter from Greg Pickersgill, who enclosed five one-dollar Canadian bills which apparently Bob had sent to him. "I find this as peculiar as you no doubt do," writes Greg, adding, "Have a drink on me!" Never one to refuse a direct order from a fan of Greg's stature, I'll head over to the Irish pub a couple of miles from here and enjoy, from Bob Shaw via Greg, a pint of Guinness. Is this all part of that "fandom as family" thing everyone in the lettercol was writing about? {*Yes, and one of the best.*}

My mother-in-law lives in what they call an "Adult Guest Home" which sounds much like the one Kate Schaefer describes in her letter, and several of the people there have Alzheimer's. I've told my wife that if I should ever be reduced to that state it had better be *after* they legalize euthanasia. Otherwise my passing will cause her a lot more grief than it otherwise would because I have no desire to spend my last days or months or years in such a state.

Chuch's impassioned elegy to his beloved winkle may have been heartfelt but it didn't convince me. I'll take garlic-y and rubbery over iodine-y and rubbery any day. Besides, the escargot are merely an excuse for sopping up all that wondrous garlic butter on fresh French bread afterwards: all of us *real* gourmets know that. (As for salt, melons are not the proper appetizer to use it with. *Draft beer* is the proper appetizer for salt to be added to.)

If Pam Boal finds Calvin Demmon's brush with death a "comfortable" event "one can relate to," she must have lived a strange life indeed. It's a good thing she has such a supportive family.

If I felt the need to explain to a newcomer the multi-leveled delights and attractions of fanzine fandom,

I think the easiest way to do it would be to hand them this issue of *Trap Door* and tell them to read it from cover to cover. If that didn't give them a pretty good inkling as to what is good about my idea of fandom, I'd send them back to "Bevis & Buttwise" and try a more likely prospect, someone with a three-digit IQ who could actually read. (508 Windermere Avenue, Toronto, Ont. M6S 3L6, Canada)

GARY DEINDORFER

Hurrah and handclasps and tears of joy to Ross Chamberlain for his concept front cover and payoff punchline bacover. Sez it all, like Alpha and Omega.

The idea of a hall of fame and museum for sf, fantasy and fandom is one whose time has clearly come. I am willing, for one, to contribute, perhaps rather generously if I can be so persuaded. This would really be a timebinding thing and then some. The great thing about it is that it is at least feasible; that is, it's within the realm of possibility of realizing.

Jeff Schalles writes well as always, especially about the outdoors and about places. I did not realize that Jeff was a fellow Pennsylvanian; us Penn dudes have got to stick together. As for Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, that's not too far from Pottstown, where I grew up before my family moved to Yardley (same state) in 1954.

Amusing article that Gordon Eklund offers here, with many original ideas and clever turns of phrase. Am I being conceited, or is it possible that this article was inspired to some extent by the beatnik cappuccino house bit I did two issues before? I will say that Charlie Parker, aka Bird, was my prime inspiration when I was an aspiring jazz musician long ago. I am not black, but I'm pleased when listeners, especially "brothers," tell me that I "play black." I do not understand how this works, but it does. Now that I am middle-aged, it is clear that my teenage dream of making it big as a jazz musician is a thing of the past. Yet I enjoy a certain pleasure playing alto sax for my own ears, plus recorders, harmonicas and electronic keyboard. I long ago gave up trying to sound like Bird, though. But my music these days *does* sound considerably like Gary Dawson, my jazzbo name. But don't expect me to make any records. I'm too old and uncommercial for that. Anyway, intriguing offering from Gordon.

Ted White's reminiscence immortalizes two really wonderful people. Many were the times I enjoyed Esther and Henry's hospitality. Too bad about Esther's cruel teasing of Henry's sex-starved condition. I seem to remember some of that talk, too. Well, ghod bless the both of them in whatever magical realm they are

now, on the Other Side.

Colin Hinz is a new name to me. But, boy, he sure can write. Hell, he's better than that dude on TV—the one who can't fix anything right, but who has his own home repair show. I agree, also, with Colin that there are certain LPs that will never make it onto CD.

Rightly said, Harry Warner Jr.: I used to hear such Pennsylvania Dutch terms as "The coffee is all" when I was growing up (like Topsy) in Pottstown, which is in the heart of that country. But bho, could those folks put on a spread to eat. Makes my mouth water now just thinking about those country goodies.

I agree with Calvin Demmon: "God works through other people." I see it happen around me all the time. If that is "going religious," well, then, tough titty to Walt Willis.

We shall all miss Robert Bloch, God rest his immortal soul. (447 Bellevue Ave. #9-B, Trenton, NJ 08618)

SID BIRCHBY

Please give my compliments to Ross Chamberlain for the ingenious front and back cover illustrations. All his own inspiration, or do I detect an editorial involvement? *{Only to the extent that I ask artists for covers using a trap door in their imagery. This was not the first literal "trap" door in TD's history. If you still have them, see covers to issues 4 and 5, by Brad Foster and Steve Stiles, for two previous traps in door form.}* (40 Pars Wood Ave., Didsbury, Manchester M20 5ND, U.K.)

GERI SULLIVAN

Loved your editorial, especially the flight of fancy concerning the creation of the Science Fiction, Fantasy and Fandom Hall of Fame and Museum. You left out the interactive multimedia computer exhibits that are part of every modern museum today, or the future development of fannish holosuites. (I'd head first for the party in Room 770, and the '52 and '57 Worldcons.) *{I'd go back to South Gate in '58, which I missed the first time around due to neoish shyness, and then on to the '68 Baycon and those outside laundry chutes.}*

There's a certain unique satisfaction to seeing Jeff writing about the "focus that comes from being interested in nearly everything while accepting that there is only time to do a few things well." It's so much the story of our life together. It's also strangely familiar and comforting to read the stories he's told me a time or two over the last five years, like the story of his and Lou's first visit to Frank and Catherine's home. He recently picked up another Swans cassette on close-out. I looked at the band name with curiosity until he reminded me that Swans was the band he'd shot

pictures of, then driven with Lou across Pennsylvania to get the article in to *Reflex* by the absolute, last-ditch deadline. *Click* It all fell into place. "Oh, yeah. Right."

I'll never meet Esther Davis, or Henry, but Ted's article makes them real, bringing back to life attitudes and behaviors I'd long forgotten observing during my own youth in women and men of Esther and Henry's presumed generation. Ted's article was satisfying on a number of levels, sharing as it did fannish history, his own history and attitudes towards it, and sociological reflections of an era, some of which still hold true today.

Greg Benford's comment, "Slowly I realized that I had been running on automatic, and all this was quite foolish," reminded me how often humans risk their lives for foolish things. Useful as they are, emotions can also get you killed. So can the need to "do something." I'm very glad Greg wrote about this, and about how the aftermath affected his thinking.

I just realized that in avoiding expressing my lack of appreciation for Ross's covers, I also neglected to mention any of the interior art, which I loved. I like the concept of Ross's covers, but really want hi-res output (presuming he did the computer art, especially the graduated fills, in EPS format). I loved all the interior headers, Bill Kunkel's closing illo of Jeff's piece and, of course, the reprint from *Snarf* No. 9, which reminded me of other fans who made their way into Steve's trips during that era. (3444 Blaisdell Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55408-4315)

DEREK PICKLES

I loved the idea of the SFFFHall of Fame, although you'd need an extra gallery for the Vinç Clarke Fanzine Collection, and what about the Tucker Hotel? (I have the plans in the filing cabinet should you need them.) A natural adjunct for the SFFFHoF would be The Old Fans Home proposed by Nigel Lindsay in *Phantasmagoria*. Of course it would have to be moved, brick by brick, from Torquay, Devon, England, but that would be no great problem in these hi-tec days. When Nigel sought nominations for suitable residents, the first names proposed were Wally Gillings, Tom White, Ted Tubb, Sam Youd, Bill Temple, Vinç Clarke—and John Brunner "on the grounds of having sold a story to *Astounding* at the age of nineteen, the youngest *old fan* in existence." The second wave of nominations included Walt Willis and me. We're ready for an Old Fans Home right now; time you youngsters got off (or rid of) your butts and got cracking.

I don't think you'll have enough room to print a full update to Rob Hansen's article on the antics of Tory

MPs but, briefly, one Minister was found to wear a Chelsea Football Club shirt when he performed with his mistress and the tabloids also headlined his alleged toe-sucking foreplay. He didn't resign because of this but appeared with his wife, their children and his wife's parents in photo-opportunities showing their togetherness. The Minister resigned when during a libel action the daughter of a leading member of the Palestine Liberation Organization let it slip that she had treated the Minister and his family to a free holiday. The ex-Minister is now in the headlines because he and his wife are divorcing because he's entangled with a Lady Cobham whom he met when he was the Heritage Minister. When he was a Minister he got about \$85,000 salary and perks. Now he has a classical radio program, columns in various newspapers, multi-appearances on TV and radio, and is estimated to be earning about \$500,000 a year. Who was it said something about the wages of sin?

Greg Benford's account of the destruction and trauma caused by the fire makes it seem so ironic that such a generally beautiful place to live, with a fine climate, landscape and nearby ocean, should suffer such horrors as forest fires when it's dry and destructive flash floods when it rains, all topped by earthquakes.

I think the experiences of Harry Warner Jr. and yourself—the expansion of urban areas—is matched by almost everyone over the age of forty. The place in Bradford where I grew up had housing mostly built in the nineteenth century. I crossed a main road and on the other side was open country with farms, woods, streams, animals, mysteries and adventures. In the 1960s a municipal housing estate was built with an eventual population of 15,000 to 20,000. The entire open country was covered by roads and houses. Instead of the countryside to play in, the children of the estate have a field with some playground equipment, and because they have “nothing to do” they burgle houses, vandalize amenities and steal cars. (44 Rooley Lane, Bankfoot, Bradford, W. Yorks BD5 8LX, U.K.)

MILT STEVENS

Since the larger field of science fiction hasn't got a museum for itself yet, it doesn't seem likely that fanzines are going to get a museum anytime soon. However, that doesn't mean that posterity will deny us entirely. Considering it should be possible someday to get the entire Library of Congress on a disk for home use, it ought to be possible to get all the fanzines in the world on a disk a lot sooner than that. Of course, having access to all the fanzines ever published might be a mixed blessing—even when the size of the collection wouldn't force you to sleep on the back lawn.

Frankly, the thought of trying to read every fanzine ever published makes my toenails curl. I like fanzines, but there's a limit to everything.

Jeff Schalles apparently doesn't understand about midlife crisis. You're never too young for midlife crisis. Midlife crisis is that phase of your life between toilet training and the time they finally throw dirt in your face. It is almost the perfect psychological scapegoat condition. When you combine midlife crisis with the fact your parents forced you to eat junk food as a child, you can justify almost any form of conduct no matter how rude, crude or socially unacceptable.

Rob Hansen makes British political scandals sound a lot more interesting than the ones we have here in California. Our last election here managed to be utterly dirty without being the slightest bit interesting. Throwing accusations that your nanny is more illegal than my nanny is quite a bit less than inspiring. Couldn't one of the candidates have been introduced to Donna Rice or something?

There seems to be a definite trend to more and more obscure political scandals. I recall the revelation that Henry Kissinger threw out some issues of the *New York Times* unopened. I wonder what it would be worth to find out some politician didn't even subscribe to the *New York Times* at all. Today there was the revelation that Robert Bork had been renting Alfred Hitchcock films at his local video store. Momentarily, I'm expecting an expose on how many overdue library books Newt Gingrich has had in his lifetime. After all this, I'd almost like to see Madonna run for public office just so the press would have to try finding some episodes of secret virtue. (5384 Rainwood St. #90, Simi Valley, CA 93063)

HENRY L. WELCH

The Science Fiction Hall of Fame sounds like an interesting idea, but I just can't quite see it getting off the ground. Given the fannish trend towards organizing and operating using amateur volunteers, I can't see this being properly and professionally run using real staff. Operating revenues would seem to be another problem because I can't see the SF Hall of Fame as the kind of museum/attraction that is going to bring in the tourists like other similar attractions. {If it were professionally run—as I think it would have to be—it would succeed by having flashy displays to attract the numerous media sf fanatics. The literary and fannish stuff would be tucked here and there for the rest of us.}

Harry Warner's theory about crime rates and easier get-aways seems to have some merit. I would tend to look at it from a different perspective in that it gives easier access. In Milwaukee the higher crime areas

(outside of the central city) are all on the major bus lines. I don't know how the thieves manage to carry the stereos and TVs onto the buses without raising undue suspicion or notice, but it must be happening. When our car was stolen in Chicago, it was taken by residents from over twenty miles away. I cannot believe that they walked across town to break into our car and others in the area. *{Perhaps they took the bus?}*

A very small amount of salt on a honeydew melon doesn't sound all that bad. I might try it some day. I recently found out that lemon juice on honeydew and cantaloupe is very good. It's much better with fresh squeezed than with reconstituted, of course. The tart of the lemon offsets the sweetness of the melon nicely. Perhaps Chuch Harris might find this a better alternative. *(1525 - 16th Ave., Grafton, WI 53024)*

JIM CAUGHRAN

Your SFFFHFM seems like something that could easily be delegated to the 1950s NFFF. Delightful Sercon Fuggheadness. I've always liked the idea of fandom as a cooperative anarchy: just give us freedom of the press and freedom of assembly, and let it happen. Those who delight in Organizing Things can have their N3F and the like, so long as they don't get in my way. The success of the Internet suggests that cooperative anarchy is a good way to do things. But now that the Information Highway is a Governmentally Approved Big Deal, they're working out ways to spoil it all.

Regarding Steve Stiles' cartoon on page 15 *{the 3-panel "Esther" strip where, in a trashed-out looking future, a half-full bottle of Thunderbird is found, making the finder's day}*: What is true happiness in an age of virtual reality? When we retire, virtual old-age homes will be the rule. We'll be convinced we're in a luxurious manor, cared for by loving attendants, when in fact we'll be sleeping on a ventilation grate, huddling together for warmth. Will it matter?

For the poor, virtual reality will remain what it always was, I suppose: a bottle.

As when Willis quoted his great truth, "The obvious is not necessarily untrue," from a dream, I remember waking up thirty years ago with a startling and revolutionary mathematical fact, reaching for a pencil, and coming up with sheer nonsense. The proof was "obvious." I wish Willis' great truth applied.

Lately I've been trying to remember dreams. This often turns into a battle between left and right hemispheres. Dreaming is a right-brain function and, for me at least, my right brain clings to its insights and doesn't want to share with the left hemisphere. I woke recently with a dream in mind, and lay in bed trying to fix the dream more solidly in my mind. There were three

significant parts to it, and I outlined them mentally. Fine, it seemed secure, so I went to the office to write it down. When I got there, the brain was nearly bare — the three parts had shrunk to one, and I couldn't even remember the relationships to the other two parts. *(24 Prestwick Crescent, Willowdale, Ont. M2H 1M9, Canada)*

MURRAY MOORE

The side-stapling allows the viewer to look at the front and back covers side-by-side. I needed a few seconds to realize that the door is a mouse trap. Is it my imagination, or are these Chamberlain covers drawn with a mouse? A mouse as drawing tool would be appropriate, given the subject.

In your editorial you write, "Fandom is all in your mind." I am thinking at this moment of fanzine fandom as a constantly changing paper jigsaw puzzle. Each fanzine editor makes his own puzzle and distributes it. Each fanzine reader chooses his fanzine and creates a unique puzzle, each piece of which is a fanzine.

You realize, don't you, that the Science Fiction, Fantasy and Fandom Hall of Fame and Museum is a no go, simply on the basis that SFFFHFM is a hopeless acronym? *{No, I disagree. After the SPWSSTFM back during the Staple Wars of '34 and its counter-organization, the IAOPUMUMFSFPUSAU — thank Wollheim for the latter mouthful — the SFFFHFM is hardly a mouthful at all. In the spirit of one of the famous fannish expletives of the '60s and '70s, I suggest "shiffuh-fum" as the Accepted Pronunciation.}* Entering into the spirit of the game, I suggest that if a less clumsily named institution were to come into existence, the majority of money would come from sf and fantasy readers, and since fanzine fans would compose a negligible percentage of the pool of supporters, the fannish component of a hall of fame and museum would be relegated, at best, to a back room adjacent to the wash rooms. *{There's something to be said for being in a back room by the loos. It would be emblematic of the fate of fanzine rooms at most Worldcons until recently.}* Why are there no rich fans? Why couldn't Bill Gates be a fan?

Jeff Schalles wonders, "How did our industrialized ancestors, working twelve hours a day, six days a week, get anything done at all?" No television, is my short answer. Also no movies, radio or sound recordings. But I can't sit here and criticize mass communication. All of us here are the children and beneficiaries of mass communication, as readers of the fiction which is the common element that we share.

Greg Benford describes the fire and other wild forces which the Benford home has escaped, astonishingly, as the random nature of the world. The natural

world is not the only one in which existence is unpredictable. As I type this paragraph, the residents of fought-over Chechnya are going through the same experience as the Benfords and their neighbors, the difference being that all the destruction there is man-made, yet still as bewilderingly random, destructive and senseless. We North Americans are lucky in that we have only nature as our potential destroyer. (377 Manly Street, Midland, Ont. L4R 3E2, Canada)

JEAN YOUNG

Thank you for sending *Trap Door* No. 14, a strange and interesting issue. The tone of it, however, seemed very "down." Perhaps feeling "down" myself {*Jean wrote this three days before going in for a (successful) triple bypass*} I just noticed it more. Perhaps it just reflected a time when there were a lot of losses in the fannish community, and other hard times.

I do love Jeff Schalles' description of his writings as "transcendent travelogues" – marvelous phrase. Witty and accurate and a bit biting, like themselves as it were. It's a fine piece. I didn't know that he grew up in Pennsylvania (as did I) nor that he lives in Minnesota (I live about ten miles from the Minnesota border).

Gordon Eklund's piece is strange and wondrous – funny, but leaves me feeling, I dunno, slightly unhinged or something. (There are those who say I'm slightly unhinged anyway....) I suppose I do take things too seriously, but it made me feel like everything was November, forever.

Even Dave Hartwell's piece has sad overtones—just the sadness of modern life, I suppose, with its multiple separations and holiday struggles. Maybe it's just *me* who's lonely and disoriented, and I read it into other people's writing.

Ted's "exposé" of Esther Davis has the same downward cast. It's interesting, for sure, but... well, grim is not the word. Negative, I suppose, and sad to see meanness behind something that seems sprightly and open.

I agree with Rob Hansen. A politician's personal life should be his or her own, unless he or she is making a big "personal morality" fuss. Still, a person who's a sleazeball in one area of life *may* be a sleazeball in all of them. I think the Kennedys, though, are ones who had scuzzy lives but were on the ball socio-politically. Clinton's a charming sleazebag, but I think it affects his capacity to act effectively as president. I also think it's true the press has never given him a chance. I'm sorry he was the best the Democrats could come up with. Tell us, Rob – is there any British politician you have real faith in? One who's on Our Side?

Greg Benford's story of the fire is truly chilling,

hair-raising, fascinating, scary, moving. The emotional journey through fear, the beginnings of acceptance of loss, and the "miracle" of finding his house intact amid the wreckage – what a tale! Incredibly powerful. His accounts of the devastation to wildlife brought tears to my eyes. (Why do I weep for animals when I don't for humans? I suppose because humans are "supposed" to be equipped to cope with disasters... or maybe because humans *start* so many of them?) It is oddly reassuring that a rational, respected scientist and well-known author like Greg can get his thinking disoriented by a natural (quasi-natural?) disaster – that it isn't just ordinary dolts like me who can't keep their minds on their work when disaster threatens.

I enjoyed Colin Hinz's letter about "Home." I am strongly, *strongly* tied to place – this area, even this house and two-thirds acre.

Harry Warner Jr. mentions the disappearing "Pennsylvania Dutch" idiom – phrases that were common in my family (a "Philadelphia German" grandmother, not Amish) and region when I was growing up, too. There is a sizable Amish community in these parts (around Canton-Preston-Harmony, Minnesota), but it's not from them that these phrases come, but from the Norwegian heritage of this area. Here they don't say, "The coffee is all" (which they did at "home" in Pennsylvania), but they *do* say, "Come here once." Well, the rural midwest is still rural. Madison and the Twin Cities are ever spreading out, but change is slower here in the Driftless Area. (RR 4, Box 47, Decorah, IA 52101-9412)

JANICE EISEN

You'd better watch out for these Modest Proposals. Somebody might take your idea for the SFFFHFM seriously and, before you know it, you'd have a Daughterty Project of unprecedented scale. Actually, I fear that someday someone will in fact put together an SF Hall of Fame, and it will focus on *Star Wars* and *Star Trek*. Maybe we should start up your version, if only as a preemptive measure.

Ted White's article is highly intriguing. While I certainly would never say that I wish I had known Esther Davis, I am left extraordinarily curious about what would impel a person to act that way, and what less than apparent good qualities she must have had for Henry to stay with her despite her ill-treatment. Of course, I know the world is full of couples with unhealthy (or worse) relationships, but it remains intellectual – emotionally, I can't fathom it. How is it possible to love someone else so much more than yourself that you're willing to be treated like shit? For years?

Why are British sex scandals so much more fun than

American ones? Why can't Newt Gingrich be found dead in a garter belt and stockings with a plastic bag over his head? On the other hand, I can think of few images more horrifying than Robert Dole in a French maid's outfit. Maybe some things *should* be left on the other side of the Atlantic.

I've had a hard time over the past year or so with places I thought of as "home." I never felt terribly attached to either of the apartments Ken and I lived in, but when we bought a house I felt it was "home" almost immediately. We had to leave less than a year later when Ken got laid off, and we've been in the house we're now renting longer than that, but it's still not home. The house in Schenectady is, though we'll never be back there. The only other place I've thought of as home is the house I grew up in, which my mother sold this month. This absence of attachment is disturbing. I want desperately to settle somewhere (preferably not Johnstown, where we are now, but that's a whole other issue), to buy another house, to make a *home*.

I'm glad that such fans as you and Andy Hooper enjoy Worldcons; sometimes I've gotten the impression that it's untrufannish to do so. Of course I love smaller cons, but I always have a good time at Worldcons despite their many flaws. Some, obviously, are better than others—and I don't think the ConFiasco label was entirely undeserved—but it's not the con organization that makes it fun. Hell, one of the best times I ever had at a Worldcon was at the notoriously fubar Nolacon II. (123B Laurretta Lane, Johnstown, PA 15904)

LLOYD PENNEY

Afal sounds like a great idea. It seems that for the longest time, fans were loathe to recognize the good works of their peers. Sure, afal may be like fwa, but any measure of recognition is worthwhile. Besides, egoboo is unique: the more you give, the more you tend to get. If afal recognizes the efforts of members of fanzine fandom, "efforts" should mean writings, artistic endeavors, deeds, projects, etc. Could the old Faan Awards be married to afal? Just a thought....

Your figures for fanzines received in 1992 and 1993 are interesting, especially for the number of Canadian fanzines received. Just a few each year right up to 1992, with suddenly 17 that year and 12 in 1993. These zines are probably mostly from Dale Spiers (*Opuntia*) and Benoit Girard (*Frozen Frog*), I'd hazard a guess. *{A safe surmise if you throw in a few issues of Astromancer Quarterly. I've enjoyed much of the recent ratcheting up of output from Canadian fanzine fandom.}*

I know what Colin Hinz means when he says that home, wherever and whenever it's been, becomes a part of you. Colin has recently moved from Orillia to

Toronto, and I lived in Orillia for about thirteen years. The town has not grown up at all since my family moved there in 1964 and it remains a small place, in more ways than one. Yet, there are some good memories and I've been up there a couple of times since I left to show Yvonne where I grew up, what house I grew up in, what places I remember well, etc.

Seeing that Andy Hooper mentions his ConFrancisco fanzine lounge, I might as well make mention of ours. Instead of the pipe and drape arrangement we were originally promised on the main convention floor, we wound up with an abandoned cocktail lounge on the main floor of the convention center itself. This worked out fabulously well. Our sales were tremendous, the bar was a highlight of the room and of the con, and I got to meet plenty of wonderful folks like Geri Sullivan, Jeff Schalles, Dale Spiers and many more. (412-4 Lisa St., Brampton, Ont. L6T 4B6, Canada)

DON FITCH

Did Ted White maybe glance quickly in your direction when he suggested that an afal Golden Stencil Award might be presented in the category of "Adequate Margins"? Personally, I'm much in favor of utilitarianism in fanzine (greatest number of words practical per ounce), but by the canons of contemporary typographical and layout design.... Come to think of it, if there's an Award for Best Design Within Extremely Stringent Limitations, you probably should get it. *{And would display it proudly, for that's exactly what I attempt to do here.}*

In our more uninhibited moments at FanHistoricon, when we weren't constructing elaborate plans to all descend upon Harry Warner Jr. and take him out to dinner at a nice Japanese restaurant where he could sit on the floor and eat raw fish, we did sketch out some elaborate plans for the Tucker Library, Hotel and Convention Center—plans almost as grand as yours, though I don't recall anyone ever suggesting that it ought to include all the science fiction and fantasy books ever published. *{Nor did I suggest that.}* You don't seem to have considered, though, the Portrait Gallery, the Hugo Room (the TimeBinders would settle for just a clear photograph of each of the forms of this award) or the Costume Salon.

For years—at least a generation, perhaps two or three—it was widely considered vulgar (or at least undesirable) to grow to adulthood in the same house where one was born. The head of the family, the wage-earner, was expected to get a promotion, a better job, and move the family into a larger, newer house in a more prosperous neighborhood, moving up in the world and giving the children opportunities and benefits the

parents had lacked. This was part of the Great American Dream, and for decades most people (I think) in this country were able to follow it. Not taking such steps at least once or twice while the children were growing up was considered a sign of failure, for people in the great Middle Class. It seemed like a good idea at the time.

The dream seems to have been shattered, by now, for various reasons: one generation (in the '60s and '70s) raised some serious questions about the wisdom and goodness of this materialistic upward mobility (of which they had been the product and beneficiaries); we ran out of new and free land we could occupy and use to produce wealth; we've used up most of the more readily-exploited natural resources; we've multiplied to the point that the available per-capita wealth is becoming smaller; we are (as a nation) controlled and manipulated by a relatively small group of extremely wealthy people whose only (or overwhelming) interest appears to be the (short-term) increase in their own wealth and power. Hardly any of the thoughtful people I know who are between the ages of 20 and 35 either believe or hope that their lives will be "better" than the lives of their parents. Hardly any of their children (if they have any) are likely to live in the same place from birth to adulthood, but now the change will more likely be downward than upward.

That picture is, of course, much too black and white (with too much emphasis on the black, perhaps); there are all sorts of eddies and swirls and counter-currents, but I do believe it's an accurate reflection of the general trend which we're probably powerless to divert significantly, though the human spirit dictates that we try.

Presumably Colin Hinz is being rhetorical with "But a feeling of indebtedness isn't really a relationship, is it?" — by now, he should know better than to use this device around fans. It sure seems like one to me — one-sided, and probably not very potent, but definitely a relationship. It's also one of the most important aspects of family and of many other societal frameworks. Past and future indebtednesses have long been strong bonds in the family and in other social relationships, and continue to be so with people who are not so egocentric as to think they're Entitled to Everything.

Fandom as Family is an interesting but perhaps misleading concept. The saying (from Lenny Bruce?) that "Family is the people who, when you need help, have to take you in" seems accurate, and doesn't apply in fandom. We may elect to help those of "ours" who need it, but there's not enough internal or external pressure to make this an Obligation, something that can be Expected. "Fandom (as a whole)" sometimes makes

a rather big show of providing (often trivial or brief) help to some member of the group who needs it, but usually this seems to simmer down to just a few relatively close friends pitching in and helping the person, in the longer run. It doesn't seem reasonable or practical to say, ask or expect much more than that.

What we have done, I think, has been to split off, and adopt, the aspect of Fandom as Intellectual Family. For decades (maybe almost half a century) most fans appear to have had little in common, intellectually or ideologically, with their genetic families, and in this sphere they found in fandom a Home they did not and could not have elsewhere. Probably this is now largely a thing of the past — something that will fade away as the fans from that era do. Such an intellectual relationship is, necessarily, based on communication — which, for all practical purposes, has meant fanzines. Seeing one another at conventions, two or three times a year, might maintain some semblance of this relationship but is not, I think, adequate to establish it, and the number of young newcomers to the fanzine microcosm seems to be too small to provide the critical mass necessary to perpetuate the reaction.

Anyway, it sure doesn't look to me as if we're sufficiently close-knit to be called "Family" in any but a very general and vague sense. It's not, mind you, that I don't *want* fandom to be like family. I share the desire with many other fans, and delight in the presence of Geri Sullivan and others who do things to encourage that spirit and (ultimately) bring the ideal closer to reality. In a way, I suppose, Geri might be thought of (as Andrew Hooper says) as "everybody's mom in fanzine fandom" — but she's also (almost) everyone's comrade, making us aware that we're all companions in this part of our life we call fanzine fandom, sometimes suggesting new and exciting things to do, sometimes cautioning with questions about what would happen if we got caught doing this, or if we were successful (or weren't). She's also everyone's small child, giving us flashes of insight, as a child does, into the wonders of the world in which we find ourselves, and continually causing us to recharge our store of enthusiasm. I must admit, though, that Geri has one quality that isn't generally considered fannish: she's (almost incredibly) practical — ready to come up on an instant's notice with Wild and Silly fannish ideas, but if she ever embarks on something (or if her friends do) she knows precisely what talents and how much work will be needed to carry it out successfully. Fanzine fandom is fortunate to have her around. (3908 Frijo, Covina, CA 91722)

BOYD RAE BURN

I noted with amazement that your cover price is \$4.

How far we have come from the days of the Sticky Quarter. Today a quarter would pay only a small portion of the postage on a fanzine the size of *Trap Door*. It makes me feel a bit old.

I enjoyed Jeff Schalles' reminiscences – a look into another world.

On to Gordon Eklund, and his character's reaction to the Doors: "Hello I Love You was the worst ..." I was in my car when I first heard that number, and I remember precisely where I was when it came on the radio, so surprised was I. This was *the Doors*, considered at the time to be a heavy, menacing sort of group, and here is Morrison coming on in a light, bouncy voice with "Hello, I love you ... won't you tell me your name?" It didn't go with the Doors image. {But the "Doors image" was different for you than it was for me. From my lofty vantage point deep in the heart of late '60s San Francisco, to me they were "too LA."}

Ted White's article on Esther Davis was very interesting. I think I met her only a couple of times. I wondered at the time why she bothered with a bunch of fans who were much younger than her, and I think Ted is probably right in saying that she enjoyed being a "den mother" and also that she fancied her apartment as a "salon." I seem to recall that she dropped her connection with fans and fandom rather abruptly, but if so I know not why.

Harry Warner Jr.'s comment, "... there's a good chance Calvin would be dead if he'd suffered this problem in the '30s," reminds one of the immense advances which have been made in medicine in the last 40-50 years. Makes one wonder what will come along in the next 50-100 years. I doubt the Star Trek tricorder will be one of them. {Too bad – they seem incredibly useful.}

I too lived on a street which was literally on one edge of town, and played in an "expansive area of woods and field" and a creek and blackberry patches on an abandoned farm. Our "woods" was more jungly, with vines on which we did Tarzan-like swinging. But it was a pretty stagnant town and when I went back visiting 22 years later, the fields and woods were still there.

Kate Schaefer's relaying of her grandmother's account – "Then while she was confused with grieving, Margie's cruel younger sister Marie came down from New York and put Margie in a Home" – gives one a mental picture of Margaret Hamilton swooping down from New York on her broomstick, cackling, "Aha, into a Home with you, my pretty," when of course the proper image is of Billie Burke doing the best for her older sister.

Chuch Harris is laboring under a terrible misappre-

hension regarding snails. Chuch, Chuch, that "horrible, stomach-churning revolting bubbling green goo they are served in" is just melted butter with a little garlic and some finely chopped parsley. (189 Maxome Avenue, Willowdale, Ont. M2M 3L1, Canada)

MIKE McINERNEY

Jeff Schalles is an interesting writer. I used to live on East 4th Street between Avenues B and C in New York. The area doesn't seem to have changed much since 1964 or '65. It was run down then, a mixture of old and new, rough and scary especially at night. We jokingly called it "the Low Reside," not the Lower East Side, because rents were so cheap and so was life. There wasn't any crack or AIDS, just junkies, drunks, bums and lots of hard-working poor honest people who ate at Katz's Deli or Nedick's Orange Drink Stand. You could get three or four hot dogs or burgers for a dollar at Nedick's, and at Katz's Deli the corned beef sandwiches were as thick as the belly of the man behind the counter who sliced the meat off huge hunks with a large, well-used carving knife and a gruff disposition.

Gordon Eklund hits a lot of my buttons: Elvis, Clifford D. Simak, SF Book Club, Terry Carr, Jerry Lee Lewis, Rolling Stones. I saw Elvis perform in Reno, published a story by Simak in my fanzine, belonged to the SF Book Club, knew and liked Terry Carr and am saddened by his death, loved Jerry Lee's music and saw him perform many times in the '50s and '60s when he still had vitality. And the Stones just keep rollin' on....

Ted White's story about Esther and Henry occurs just before I moved to NYC. I was just a neofan living in Connecticut and occasionally visited Ted and Sylvia in the Village to get my first issue of *Hklplod* pubbed by him. I may have met Esther at a Lunacon but never knew her or Henry. But they were still quite the talk of N.Y. fandom in 1963 and 1964 when I moved there.

A lot of original art was donated by the publishers to various charities (such as sf clubs or worldcons) to be auctioned off to raise money. I still have the Emsh cover to *Castle of Iron* that I bought at the Chicon in 1962. Also have Jack Gaughn's cover to *Pain God* by Harlan Ellison that Jack gave me as a birthday present even though Harlan wanted it (and still does). I paid \$28 for the Emsh cover. The publishers owned the artwork and could do anything they wanted with it. I wish I had a Bok original or an Edd Cartier! Now places like Sotheby's and Butterfield & Butterfield occasionally get some originals, but the prices are out of this world. I imagine that a lot of fans from the '40s, '50s and '60s own a few pieces each, scattering this stuff widely. SaM and Forry have quite a bit, I'm sure. Maybe some fannish art fanatic would like to compile

a register of existing sf art and where it is located, but some people would want to keep this secret to improve the security of their collections. (83 Shakespeare St., Daly City, CA 94014)

LUCY HUNTZINGER

I loved Jeff Schalles' contribution because he does such a good job of talking about how his travel affects him, what the landscape means to him when he heads out for the open road. In between the social commentary and tidbits of personal history, there's such a wonderful sense of communion with the land itself. I've tried unsuccessfully to explain to some people why I find Tennessee so oppressive and constricting. It's because the nature of the landscape around me affects my sense of well-being profoundly. Being raised on the dramatic vistas of the Pacific Northwest and the theatrical loveliness of San Francisco, I just can't appreciate the low rolling hills. Anyway, I always relish Jeff's "transcendent travelogues" as an opportunity to experience his world view, literally.

I also appreciated Ted's contribution to fan history. "Esther and Henry" is the kind of reminiscence he excels at, especially when he's trying to set the record straight on why certain people have certain reputations. I used to soak that anecdotal stuff right up when I lived at his house in 1983. It was so much fun to hear his version of fandom that I really regretted not being around in the '50s in New York. And my own tiny participation in fandom has already been revised while I'm still here to dispute it; not many people seem to remember me as a Seattle fan, especially the current crop of Seattle fans. So I'm interested in keeping the memories flowing in print.

Which of course leads me to congratulate you on your inspired desire to create a Science Fiction, Fantasy and Fandom Hall of Fame and Museum. A brilliant idea and one which merits serious discussion in terms of fundraising and staffing. A panel, at the very least, should be devoted to it at the next Corflu. I'll tell Arnie and Joyce. How I would love to visit the SFFFHFM! But maybe not a Fugghead Room. Too many conditions to set on who qualifies and so on. Could turn out to be as goofy as who wins fan Hugos these days. Best not to start. {As I mention elsewhere in this lettercol, the SFFFHFM would in my opinion only be viable if it focused heavily of media sf and fantasy, with big splashy displays, and the more literary and fannish sides of things would be supported by this. And I agree about dropping the Fugghead Room; I should have dropped it before putting it in print.}

Joe Wesson said of Corflu 11 that it was entirely too much like a normal convention and I'm sorry to say

I agreed with him. You too, obviously. The best time I had was at Dan and Lynn's Dead Dog party, staying up until sunrise being fannish as hell and wondering why the convention couldn't have been that good. (2305 Bernard Ave., Nashville, TN 37212)

GEORGE FLYNN

Gordon Eklund's article sent me to the reference books: what was that Sturgeon story? Nope, Simak's "Desertion" wasn't in *A Treasury of Science Fiction*, which had no Sturgeon story either. Checked other Conklin anthologies. Aha, *The Big Book of Science Fiction* did have "Desertion," plus Sturgeon's "Mewhu's Jet." Mystery solved.

Colin Hinz's review of the places he's lived was interesting. I've been in the same apartment since 1980, but before that I had three in four years—driven out of two by fire, the third by a flood from broken pipes upstairs. (But most of what I own is still at my mother's house.) Then there's your mention that "Interstate 90 ran just past the end of the block on which [you'd] lived." That didn't happen to me personally, but when I was a kid we often visited my uncle in Providence, and the entire opposite side of the street has now been replaced by Interstate 95. Riding down it gives me an eerie feeling (though my uncle's house isn't there anymore either).

Memo to self: Watch out for Bob Shaw when in the vicinity of bars at cons. Do you suppose this is the first fanzine to contain the words *crustacea*, *ostrea* and *gastropods* in the same issue. Well, all knowledge, etc.

We do seem to be on a collective nostalgia kick. There must be dozens of accounts here (including my own) of events that took place decades ago. What ever became of the future? (P. O. Box 1069, Kendall Sq. Stn., Cambridge, MA 02142)

DAVE LANGFORD

Enjoyed *Trap Door* as always. Ted White's article was particularly envy-inducing—I've never been able to work up the sheer confidence to judge how any real-life couple's relationship actually functions, or doesn't, and then to write about it. Maybe this is because clues which ought to be blatant fall on deaf ears: whenever someone correctly says, "Looks as though X and Y won't stay together much longer," I'm invariably (well, call it 90%) taken by surprise.

Andy Hooper strikes a shrewd blow with his "The past few years fanzine fandom has felt as if the best lacked all conviction, while the worst published monthly." Oh dear, the fanzine I best know that's appeared monthly for the past few years is *Ansible*. If you prick me, do I not bleed? And what rough Hooper, his hour

come round at last, Slouches towards the Hugo ceremony stage ... ?

Evidently Phil Farmer's 1968 Worldcon speech occupies the same revered niche in fannish legend as Larry Niven's at the 1972 UK Eastercon – from which Brian Aldiss famously escaped by simulating a nose-bleed (“Oh God! the blood!”) and running down the aisle with a handkerchief pressed to his face while more cowardly authors gave sidelong glances of envy. (94 *London Road, Reading, Berks. RG1 5AU, U.K.*)

KEN RUDOLPH

Ted White's article about Esther and Henry was notable for me because of his extensive remembrance of his first wife, Sylvia, who, later in the continuum of her life, was my best friend. It brings up the interesting matter of how our lives interweave and intersect through the years. A recent movie recounted the theory that we're all within six degrees of separation from anybody on earth – and having known somebody like Sylvia, who lived in so many circles in her lifetime, I'm probably only four or five degrees of separation from everybody else. Also, it reminds me that no matter how insular I feel here in the vast maw of LA fandom and perpetual gafia, how connected I am with the continuity of fandom as a whole.

I feel a real bond with Greg Benford (as I had with the Oakland fire victims a couple of years ago) when he described his miraculous escape from the Laguna fire storm. I lived for a decade in Topanga Canyon, in a decidedly heavy brush area, and there wasn't a moment when I wasn't worried about fire (except for the brief winter respites when floods and mud slides were more appropriate to worry about). In fact, even though I had long since sold that Topanga property, it was interesting that in the same group of fires of October '93 that Greg suffered through, my old house was literally at the epicenter of the beginning of the Old Topanga/Malibu branch of the fire. It, too, survived against all odds. (1424 N. Wilcox Ave., Hollywood, CA 90028)

RICHARD NEWSOME

Ted White's article was fascinating. I hope he collects all his fannish memories into a book (a sort of *Ah, Sweet Idiocy* of the '50s and '60s) some day. I wonder if people who remember events that happened thirty years ago well enough to write about them are a different personality type than those of us who can barely recall what we had for breakfast this morning, and if this difference might not be introducing a subtle bias into the historical record of events. {*Now there's something for the TimeBinders to ponder.*} (281 Flatbush Ave. #1-B, Brooklyn, NY 11217)

HARRY WARNER JR.

“The Fire This Time” is easily the finest thing in this issue. I seemed to remember having read elsewhere that Greg's house escaped the big inferno so I couldn't feel suspense as he tried to determine what had happened to it. But that didn't spoil at all my admiration for the way he described what it's like to be in the midst of such a catastrophe.

His narrative caused me to think again about what I'd do if I found myself in a similar predicament and what life would be after it. I've always tried to keep in mind that I should grab two things if I had a minute or two before the need to leave the house: the supply of cash I keep on hand for some sort of emergency and the collection of old family photographs. Of course, my fate might be the other way around: an undamaged house which I can no longer use because some infirmity forces me to stop living here. I'm quite aware that at any time I could become incapacitated by a stroke or declining intellectual abilities or other cause. Just the other day, I took one action that might be foresight: I bought myself one of those little Walkman radio and cassette players, rechargeable batteries and a charger. It can pick up one classical music station on FM and several AM stations that carry baseball play by play. It might come in useful if I become unable to manipulate larger electronics or find myself permanently in care facilities where audible radio reception would bother others.

A great deal of the music originally issued on LP is now available on CDs. But there are a couple of problems with trust in a future when the contents of every LP will be buyable in the CD format. In the forty years of the LP reign, I would guess that only about half of the worthwhile 78 rpm recordings of classical music were reissued in the LP format. The 78 era had lasted fifty years. The output of LP recordings of classical music was enormously greater than the number of 78 recordings. So I think it's logical to assume that it will take at least fifty or sixty years to have access to all the valued LP recordings of classical music reissued as CDs. Worse, the life of a CD in a recording company's catalog is often incredibly short, often just a matter of months. Once a CD is no longer available from its manufacturer, it takes a lot of hunting and usually a very large payment to get it from a specialist in second-hand recordings. So I think it would be wise to hang on to treasured LP records and pick up more of them when and where they're available cheap. I don't know enough about pop music recordings to be sure, but I suspect that only the big names will have their recordings permanently available in CD format; the more obscure soloists and groups may appear on

CD temporarily and then become unbuyable at record stores or mail order firms.

Milt Stevens' letter led me to wonder how many other fans have had Milton as a first name. Offhand, I can think only of Milton A. Rothman, who was very active in the late 1930s and early 1940s. He commemorated his given name in the title of his FAPAazine, *Milty's Mag*. (It contained lots of good stuff and might make a good anthology today, but Milton is so far removed today from his old fannish self that it might be hard to persuade him to permit reprints.)

You gave me an awful scare in your editorial for the new *Trap Door* when you began speculating about the creation of a museum of fandom. I thought you might have gone off the deep end until you referred to fans setting up trust funds to benefit the institution after their death. At that point I realized you were jesting because the average fan who dies leaves an estate in the neighborhood of \$9.59 in either assets or debts.

One small complaint: you list on the contents page the numbers of pages on which each contribution is to be found, but you have no numbers on most of the pages that follow. I know there is professional precedent for this. When I was reading the newsstand photography magazines, I never ceased to wonder at the fact that they included an index to advertisers in each issue but omitted page numbers from most of the pages on which advertising appears. And I admit I never had page numbers on my FAPAazine until the Coulsons started to do the mimeography. They complained it was difficult to get the pages in correct order without page numbers and refused to believe my explanation that nobody in FAPA would notice the difference if they collated the copies in the wrong order. *{No professional precedent here—just foolin' around. At least I (almost) always put a page number on the pages beginning each article, thus providing a raisin d'etre to the ToC. Other than that, I rely on y'all's cosmic minds.}* (423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, MD 21740)

SHERYL BIRKHEAD

Greg Benford's story of the fire gives a good impression of how it feels to be threatened by flames. My home has burned once (there have been field fires from kids smoking in mature standing hay, and a barn fire from a lightning strike, as well) and it is terrifying in that you have no control over it. One should realize that the forces of nature will win out and we have absolutely no say over matters—but it comes as a shock when faced with that realization. *{Well, yes, but one can take preventive measures, as Greg describes, to at least delay if not foil nature's designs.}* (23629 Woodfield Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20882)

JOHN FOYSTER

Maybe it was because of strong resonance with one article, but the rest of *Trap Door* No. 14 seemed rather pale by comparison. In a way it was partly Greg Benford's cool and almost dispassionate description of coping with yet another natural disaster which trapped me into trying to relate it to my own experience. Although Australia now rarely has such large fires (though they come too often for those who have to deal with them) we tend to remember such things for a long time.

Perhaps it was Greg's phrase, "the sheer raw power of nature," that triggered my memory, but something took me back to 1966. That April, the house which Elizabeth and I were renting was burnt to the ground (a faulty heating system) and we arrived in time to see the last of the roof falling in, having been called by the local fire brigade. There was nothing we could do then. (Later, when we had to recall the contents for our insurers, I discovered just how much can be remembered when it really counts: all those copies of *Weird Tales* destroyed....)

But it was later—about four months later—when it really hit. Elizabeth and I had resettled into another house, on a farm at the edge of town looking out over a depression and then to rolling hills, with the first ridge about a kilometer away. One night Elizabeth called me to the back door. A bush fire was raging just on the other side of the ridge, and the flames roared high up into the sky. It was a large fire, though not so large as the one Greg writes about. But because we knew that no one lived in that area it seemed to me that we were almost unmoved by it (although next day Elizabeth did one or two water-colors of the event). So much of Australia is uninhabited that fires much greater than the one we watched can roar for days without any humans being hurt. Perhaps this unbalances our attitudes towards natural disasters.

I was surprised to learn from the letter column that you and Ted White are squeamish about medical stuff. How will you both cope with your declining years? Perhaps you had both better have a quick spell in hospital to be acclimated. *{I had one in 1960 to remove part of my thyroid, which had a lump—a benign one, it turned out. It was neither an awful nor a wonderful experience, though it had elements of both.}* (P. O. Box 3086, Rundle Mall, Adelaide, SA 5000, Australia)

CHUCH HARRIS

For me the best thing in this issue was Greg Benford's "The Fire This Time." Not just for the evocative style—Christ! you really live through it with him—but for all the little glimpses of incidentals: the way the

civilized veneer drops and the man yells "Get out of my driveway" and waves a pistol for emphasis; how the men fight for gasoline; and how the opportunistic looter who, finding nothing in the safe, ignores everything else lying around and goes to look for richer pickings elsewhere. (32 Lake Crescent, Daventry, Northants NN11 5EB, U.K.)

PASCAL THOMAS

Last weekend we had over two good friends and their wives. Both husbands are excellent up-and-coming French SF writers, and fen of sorts; still, uppermost in my mind was not conversation but the barbecue I was tending, using dry vine-shoots and a couple of rosemary branches the better to flavor the lamb chops. Not to mention the chocolate sauce on the Viennese dessert we were experimenting with, and the pan of slowly sauteed Basque bell peppers. All of which takes time, detracts from the writing of LoCs (or perhaps merely from trying harder in the matter thereof), and goes some way toward explaining why my first and heartfelt comments will center on food.

All ethnic cuisines blending together? Pshaw! Only to the taste buds of the inattentive beholder. You might claim, too, that all folk music sounds the same. Sure, much of it uses definite dance rhythms and melodic lines adapted to rustic instruments, but mostly it deviates from the music *you're* used to. Likewise, one may make vague generalizations about cooking from "Southern" countries using more spices than we're used to and, if vague enough, they can be seen as true; but the heart of the matter is, we tend to forget about fine (or not so fine) distinctions when we're away from our home turf. And of course we only ever get the Westernized version of whatever "ethnic" food we eat at home.

But don't forget that I live in the land of the three hundred cheeses and that I, personally, do pay a lot of attention to whether they're from last week or from last month, from this valley, or that valley ten miles over. All of which being said, I must confess that the ad coupons that come to our mailbox weekly testify to the growing Americanness of pizza – I mean of the perception of pizza outside the USA, even here, a stone's throw from Italy. You get businesses with names like Pizza Mania or Zap Pizza, and not only do they promise to deliver within the half hour (using scooters, no pick-up trucks here), they hawk products such as "La Napoli" alongside "La Buffalo," "La New York" or "La Mega," and let's not forget the "Pizza Twin," with ingredients going from the commonplace (eggs, mushrooms, olives) to the sadly American (pineapple), the Frenchly African (Merquez, a kind of hot Algerian

sausage) and the weirdly spelled "Canadian Saucisse" – can't they decide between *Canadian Sausage* and *Saucisse Canadienne* because it's supposed to come from that notoriously bilingual country? Well, at least you get a choice of ordering Coca Cola or Chianti to wash the concoction down.

Now Harry Warner Jr. can't be serious about the connection between crime and the interstates. Obviously the statistical correlation he claims to see, if it exists, is due to a common cause: interstates are built to connect large cities, and crime flourishes in large cities, would be my guess. As for the "faster getaway" explanation, let's not forget that all this set up makes the *police* faster as well. Not to mention the progress in telecommunications equipment which can allow said police to wait for the escapees wherever they run.

No, crime may be easier in large communities because what you do is, you don't run, you hide, and you hide easier in a place where nobody really knows anybody – which is the kind of condition that breeds crime in the first place, as Milt Stevens aptly observed in his own letter. See also Jeff Schalles' remarks about life in New York. There are instances of crime against one's own micro-community and even within families. As an example of the latter, the French media these days is full of this story of a guy who used a meat cleaver to kill his brother – he owed him money he couldn't pay back, it seems – along with the brother's wife and two kids. It happened in a rural village in northwestern France where, I should add, most of the adult population is employed by a large slaughterhouse (hence the choice of weapon). But these incidents, it seems, have been with us from time immemorial, and they're not the ones we tend to see as a worrisome trend of the modern world.

Now, of course, all those interstates and all the mass media turn us into a global, not village, but city, and increase the total amount of contact with strangers, and thereby the occasions for crime – so Harry's not so far off the mark, perhaps.

Greg Benford's piece reminds me of how much I value my material home. Awful as it may sound, for me home has always (well, for a long time at least) been where my books are. And LPs, of course. So, for the several years I spent in Paris, home was *really* my folks' flat in Bordeaux. When my wife and I came back from LA and firmly settled in Toulouse in 1987, my parents got rid (with a sigh of relief) of the three tall bookshelves of SF that were cluttering their home, and home for me is definitely this house where I'm sitting now. Fire we don't fear – the place is rather wet, and quite urban – but burglaries happen all too often. We regularly hear about friends whose place was ransacked.

And flooding is also a possibility – the river is quite close, and we're terribly low. Worse yet, the books are stored on the ground floor.

William Gibson's *Neuromancer* has made hardboiled SF into a new subgenre, quite thoroughly exploited by Effinger since. Gordon Eklund's piece in this issue was enjoyable, but I hope it doesn't start a new subgenre of fan fiction. (7 rue des Saules, 31400 Toulouse, France)

WALT WILLIS

Many thanks for *Trap Door* No. 14. It couldn't have been more suitable to illustrate the concept of fandom as family. From your editorial to the readers' letters it conveys the impression of the reminiscences of a group of people who have grown up together, know each other well, and are bound by ties of affection. Jeff Schalles' piece is evocative and Gordon Eklund's link between Elvis Presley is fascinating, as is David Hartwell's little vignette.

But Ted White was something else again. His account of Esther Davis illustrates the fact that all knowledge is eventually contained in fanzines, though you may have to wait until it comes out. Here, for instance, I learn a great deal about Esther Davis, whom I met in 1962 and who put on a wonderful dinner for Madeleine and me. I didn't know anything of her background that Ted White describes so graphically, and it's good to have the missing pieces of the jigsaw inserted so deftly.

Greg Benford's piece is the best thing in the issue. Completely enthralling and very moving, right down to the acknowledgement of the threatening universe.

I was interested in Kate Schaefer's information about the power of prayer. Hitherto my only data on this subject had been a survey by the physicist Galton, who reasoned that the people most prayed for must be the royal families of Europe, and carried out an analysis of their mortality rates. He found that in fact they died earlier than unprayed for people, "but not sufficiently so to indicate that prayer had actually a harmful effect."

It's nice to see Geri Sullivan being appreciated in the letter section. It couldn't happen to a nicer person. (32 Warren Road, Donaghadee, N. Ireland BT21 0PD)

ETHEL LINDSAY

I remember that party for the Willis' that Ted White mentions in his article. I was not there but instead at one held by the Lupoffs. I can recall Walt confiding to me that they felt their GoH status a bit embarrassing. Something about special armchairs. {Special armchairs!? Walt?}

Rob Hansen's article reminded me that I was able to silence a group of conservative ladies recently. They

were getting ready to tut tut over a union leader having a mistress. I pointed out that if Tory ministers have them, why not a trade unionist. Silenced the lot.

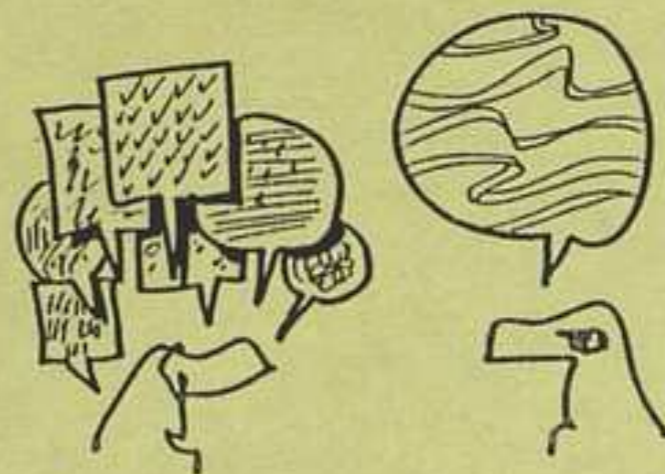
Greg Benford's report on the fire was impressive. I felt as if I went up that hill with him – the sign of good writing.

There are so many names in the letter section that are familiar that I wax nostalgic. Nowadays I am surprised when somebody remembers me. I only attend the Novacons and confess to sticking with the fans I have always known. The huge intake of new fans over the years intimidates me. When I look at them I feel like a new fan all over again. For the last few years the highlight of Novacon for me is the Sunday walk led by Peter Weston. He takes us through the heart of Birmingham along by the canal, through a large street market to a pub where you hear real jazz played. It is on that walk that I get the family feel of fandom. It makes up a little for the loss of dear friends like Don, Arthur and Rick.

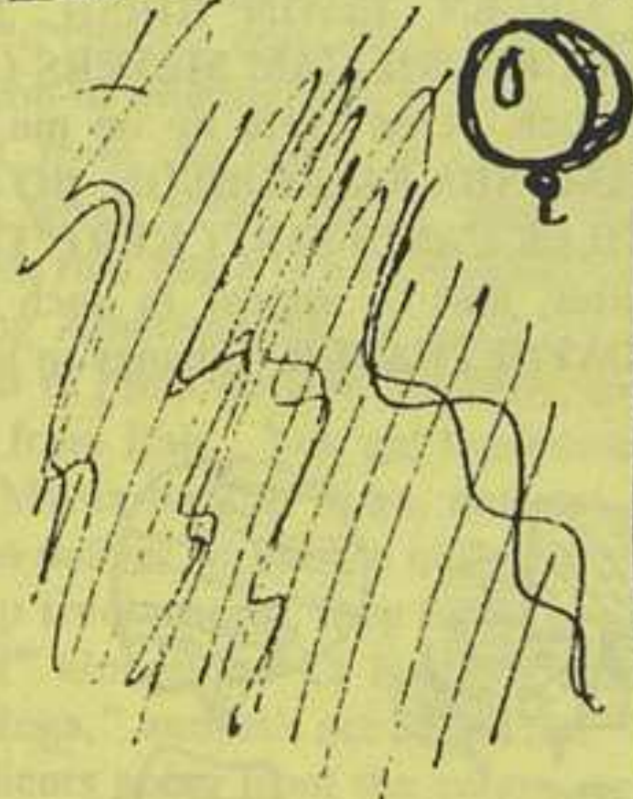
Still, I will be at the Glasgow Worldcon. Anyone who wants to see me will find me at the *SF Chronicle* table. I aim to stay there and let friends find me. I am too old to go traipsing about looking for a room party! I hope to see some of your readers there. {I hope some of them will find you and occasionally spirit you off to a congenial room party.} (69 Barry Road, Camoustie, Angus DD7 7QQ, Scotland)

AND WE ALSO HEARD FROM

HARRY BELL (who sent more artwork which will show up soon), PAMELA BOAL, SANDRA BOND, RICH BROWN, MIKE DECKINGER, CALVIN DEMMON, LILIAN EDWARDS, GARY FARBER ("I've read Eklund's piece numerous times...to me, it's one of the best fictional pieces about a faan ever done"), STEVE GREEN, IRWIN HIRSH, JOYCE KATZ, LUKE MCGUFF, WILLIAM MEYERS ("Sorry to be so out of touch. Don't give up on me." No way!), JESSICA AMANDA SALMONSON, BO STENFORS, STEVE STILES, CANDI STRECKER ("Delighted to see my letter, and to appear in such august company") and DAVID THAYER. Thanks to all!



TRAP DOOR



MY, WHAT A HANDSOME DOOR YOU ARE -- WHY DON'T YOU STEP OVER HERE WHERE I CAN, ER, ADMIRE YOUR TOOLING?

RUN!

GRAB!

IT'S A TRAP!

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TRANS-DIMENSIONAL PORTAL XL9

THE DOORJACK GANG FROM BOLIX

OR: TRAPPED DOORS!