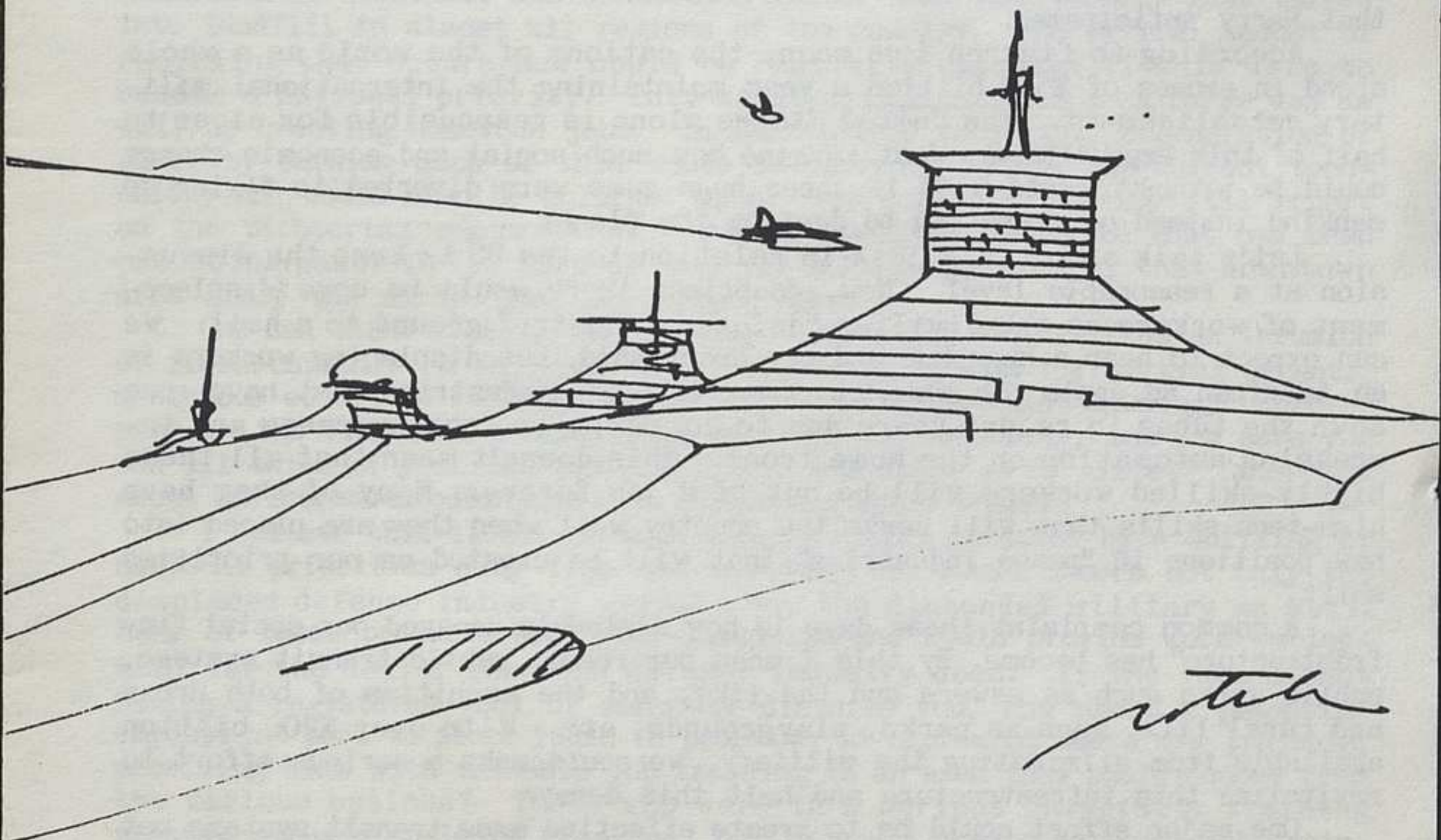


DOOR KNOB

July 1985



with

highway system. Monorails are cheaper than other forms of mass transit because the structures that need to be put in place are so minimal compared to laying track. If such a system were created linking us together nationally in much the same way interurban light rail and bus systems now connect some of our larger urban population centers, it would lighten the demand for increasingly scarce fuel to power private vehicles to ply our motorways, and perhaps even lessen the demand for more development of air travel which devours land around cities for ever larger airport facilities. In other words, I envision a national system of transit using the basic interstate highway system as its grid, with light rail or busses connecting the areas not directly served by the monorails. A number of other countries, admittedly smaller in geographical area than our own, already have their high-speed interurban rail systems. Why not us? If such a system were truly an attractive alternative to both air and private passenger vehicle travel, it could succeed.

Another area where massive infusions of capital would help strengthen the national infrastructure is that of upgrading the national waste disposal system. By this I don't mean hazardous wastes, though that too is an area which could be markedly stepped up by freeing up the military funds; I mean our urban and suburban, and even rural, sewer systems. One reads in the papers constantly about various of these systems being seriously overloaded, with uncontrolled spillage of raw sewage into our rivers, bays, and estuaries. A national program of expanding these systems to accommodate current and future needs would not at all be out of line. One should not overlook the very real possibility of processing a large portion of this sewage waste into fertilizer for use by our nation's farmers to replace the chemical-based fertilizers many of them now rely on. This sort of conversion is now done on a small scale and there's no reason it couldn't be significantly expanded.

Then there's the other kind of national garbage: our mountains and mountains of household and commercial refuse that now largely gets turned into landfill in almost all regions of the country. The pitiful amount of recycling that occurs now could be radically expanded if this were to become a national priority. This would save resources in a large way as well as creating numerous jobs. In addition to recycling, cogeneration of power by burning much of this waste is entirely within our current technology and could also be enlarged upon. (Perhaps Jim Woosley will report on the pioneering cogeneration plant in downtown Nashville that has been providing power in the form of heat for a large portion of that downtown area since the early '70s. Sure beats nukes!)

One can think of many other things that could benefit from an infusion of fresh capital: a national day-care subsidy system for working parents, a serious effort to replace inadequate and/or delapidated housing, improvement in the financial condition of our farming community, and I'm sure you can all think of your own pet projects. And since we're all stf fans, how about an increased commitment to developing space travel?

I believe that if all of this was seriously attacked by a shifting of national priorities away from the military, it would absorb not only the displaced defense industry workers but the disbanded military as well. Many of these projects are labor-intensive and would provide more employment for the dollar than the defense industry does. If the idea of not having a registered pool of manpower disturbs you, how about a peacetime employment pool to place youth in programs to implement these new projects, providing them with valuable job training in an area they could choose from the various options? Those who were in a serious university training program already could be exempted, but it would create national job training for those not so engaged.

A serious outbreak of peace? Bring it on!

A SOLID PAGE OF MAILING COMMENTS:

Mike Gunderloy: Though I found your FACTSHEET FIVE interesting and entertaining, the whole idea of making a profit from a fanzine rankles. Maybe it's just that I'm a fan from the '50s, when the whole concept of The Usual had its birth, but having the making of a profit be a goal in fanzine publishing seems to me to be missing the point. I publish a twice-yearly fannish fanzine, 250 copies, which costs around \$150 per issue to put out. Several of my fannish friends here in Glen Ellen help subsidize it partially, but I prefer to spend the money and have complete control over whom I send it to, rather than be openly available for money and thus—most likely—have to increase my print run and scutwork accordingly. (I do accept a one-issue-only sub for folks to sample it.) I view a fanzine as an ongoing party, not a small business, and I believe most of the members of SAPS would probably agree. And, therefore, I'm not interested in submitting my fannish fanzine to you for review.

Doreen Webbert: I never heard of the concept of State Corpses before, but if Sonoma County is any indication, the State Corpse of California might be the lowly skunk. In Tennessee, the State Corpse is definitely the possum. I hope others will relate the state corpses of their regions.

Nancy Rapp: I enjoyed your list of things that didn't exist when SAPS was formed back in 1947. To it I would add colored margarine. Well do I remember as a wee tad having the "privilege" of getting to be the one who squeeze the little color dot in white margarine through the margarine, thus coloring it a light yellow just like...margarine. Our younger members may not realize the extent to which the dairy lobby controlled the early introduction of margarine which it (rightfully) viewed as a threat to butter. <> I'm pleased to see that okra is one of your favorite vegetables. Mine, too, though I've had difficulty getting it to grow out here. The flowering plants are *gorgeous*. <> Loved "The Tattered Dragon Wambles Again"!

Burnett Toskey: Probably everyone will think I'm just as strange as you, but I too love to sit up close when viewing a movie, especially if it's a science-fiction or comedy film. As you say, "everyone is larger than life-size," and I love the feeling of being "inside" the action that you get when you sit up close. Watching "Blade Runner" that way, I felt like I was inside a "spinner" cruising around a futuristic Los Angeles. I do make an exception to sitting close when viewing a more "serious" movie because in that case I like to have some distance from the action so I can follow the intricacies of plot better.

G.M. Carr: Disappointing to hear I wasn't in your store after all, but maybe I'll get to meet you (and other Seattle fans and SAPS members) someday. <> You're doubtless right that Jesse Helms "would not abandon his agricultural constituents," but there is lots more grown in his area than just tobacco. In fact, tobacco is a controlled crop. Farm land in the South comes with a tobacco allocation, which is a selling point when such property changes hands. No matter who owns and farms a piece of land, this allocation limits the amount of tobacco that can be grown, so as to keep the price up. Additionally, tobacco growing, harvesting, and marketing is an Old Southron Tradition, a hallowed part of the Good Old Boy network, and that as much as its commercial value keeps it happening. And what else is grown down there in a big way? Well, soybeans and cotton, for two. <> What do I dislike about the "Star Wars" "defense" system? To be very brief: it takes terrestrial warmaking into space (a big no-no so far as I'm concerned); it would not remain purely defensive once in place (imagine Death Rays From Space aimed at our cities, etc.); and it's dreadfully expensive.

Finally: **Wrai Ballard:** Just because you don't want to farm anymore, why do you insist that your wife not grow a little garden for fresh veggies if she wants?

—Robert Lichtman