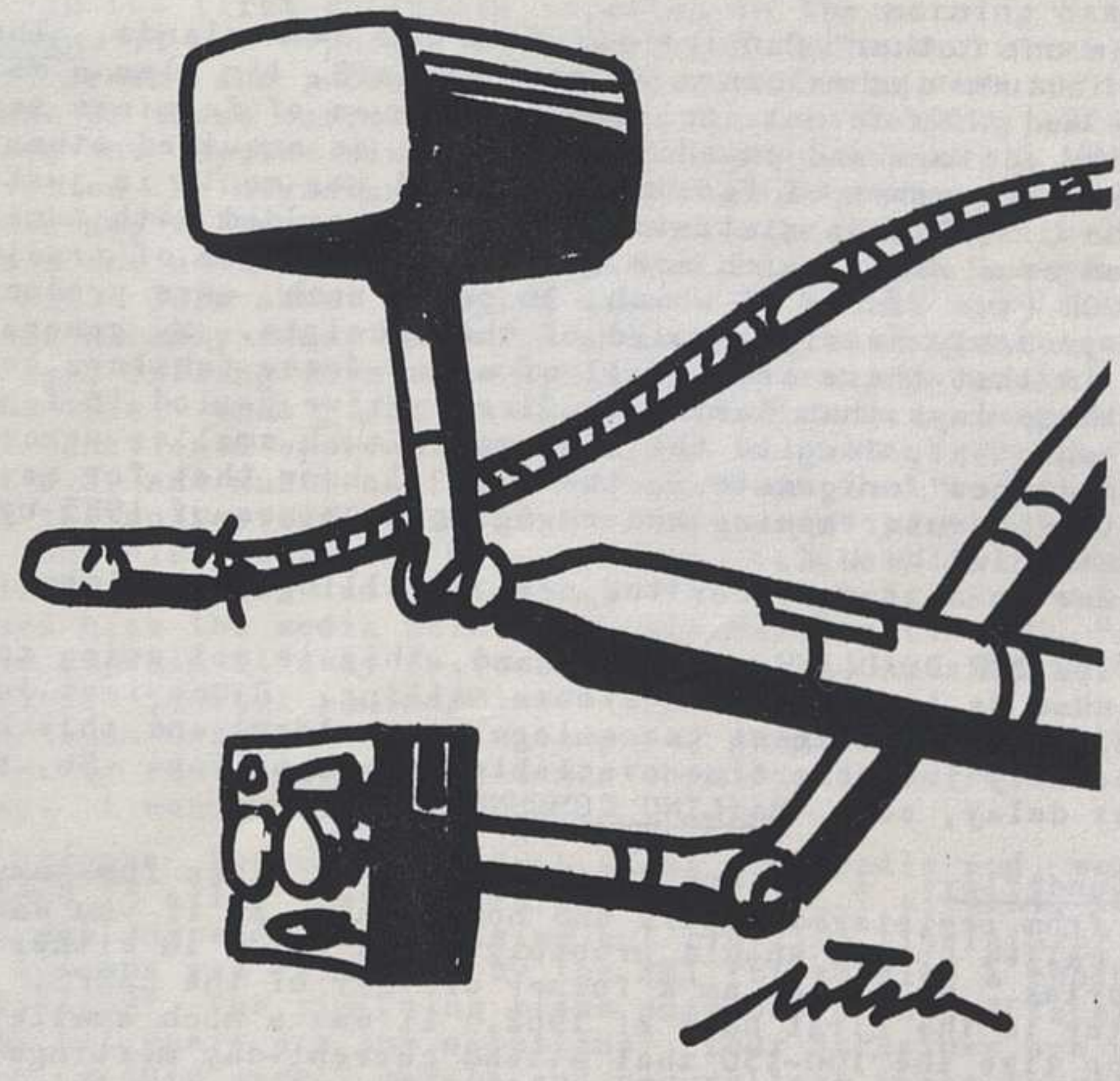
DOOR KNOB

January 1986



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nominated for Director as a joke of some sort, and Jack Harness was nominated as well. I gave some sort of speech that I hoped would reveal my proper Insurgent attitude, but it didn't work; I got elected. True to my promise, I barely served. I would call the meetings to order and more or less officiate, but when the subject matter would drift to topics in which I had no interest, I would gravitate away from the gavel and into the kitchen where I would hold forth with more fannish types until called back to officiate some more. A strange arrangement, but it worked, despite annoying some with my irreverance. The more conservative element of the club was much relieved when my term expired.

G.M. Carr: Do I recognize your cover? Well, of course. That's a fanzine cover based on your modeling from a very early fanzine, say around 1930. Am I right? §§ Re your "pet peeve": If you really think "there is a lot to be said for a good stiff Censorship of what can, and what can NOT, be published as 'news'," perhaps you ought to go spend some time in a Communist bloc country, perhaps even the USSR, so you could experience firsthand what that would be like. I find the press repetitive, too, but I see a wide range of media, from print to visual, and I believe that nearly every point of view is expressed. And should be, and must be allowed to be, or else we can kiss away our First Amendment rights. Actually, though, lots of stuff is censored from our national news by high-handed government "security" jockeying. I remember one time when there was a major spill of barrels of nuclear waste on the Interstate in eastern Tennessee. In the first published reports, in the morning Nashville Tennessean, it was reported by reliable local authorities (the local law enforcement and public safety officials) who were on the scene that some of these barrels had broken open in falling off the truck they were on. By the time the late morning edition of that paper showed up on the newsstands, no barrels had broken open. By the afternoon Nashville Banner edition, not only had no barrels broken open, but the numbers reported that had fallen off had gone down to almost nil. Talk about "playing down" the truth! §§ "...This hemisphere is already under invasion and attack in Central America..." So you say, falling into the typical right wing paranoia. Please document this. What I see in Central America is an ongoing series of U.S.-sanctioned oppressions designed to protect the business interests of U.S. and multi-national corporations that do business off the skin of the collective asses of the indigenous peoples who were there first. Why else would the U.S. give military aid to regimes like those in El Salvador and Guatemala? When reports of reaction by the oppressed hits the media here, the only way for the U.S. "official line" to explain it away is to attribute it to outside forces and ideologies. §§ Your postmailing was entertaining. I have never heard of such "worms" being in computer programs, but if they are we're in for some interesting times when business records start going away. I wonder if the IRS....?

Robert Briggs: You read too much right wing media and, worse, seem to believe it all. What California high school student, in what school, was suspended for passing out pro-life literature? What man in Arizona was called on by the EBI for sending a check to the Aryan Nations? The rightwing press puts out a lot of faceless allegations, but where are the citations? Your SAPSzines are unreadable inasmuch as they merely parrot and regurgitate these baseless reports. And double-spaced at that!

Harry Warner Jr.: It would be very easy to keep things prosperous if defense spending stopped. There are plenty of things besides mass transit--the one item in my little essay you picked up on--that need or could use an infusion of funding to better things not only in this country but worldwide. Much human inconvenience and in many cases outright suffering could be alleviated if the funding that now goes into nuclear missiles and the like--which as you say are only "good" for a while and then have to be scrapped and replaced--were freed up for the purpose of raising the level of education, housing, feeding, and the like for mankind as a whole. As it is now, we throw away more than $500 billion a year worldwide producing weapons. If the U.S. "needs" more nuclear missiles to keep things "prosperous," then we are at a sorry pass. Granted all this sounds wholly idealistic, but if the money spent on munitions were spent on fixing up mankind as a whole, the level of wealth and comfort worldwide would be such that petty hassles would tend to disappear. §§ My own theory as to why fanzine publishing has declined while convention attending has increased is that our new generation of fans comes more out of nonprint s-f than previously. Even with gophers (only a few people can be gophers out of the thousands who attend large cons), crashing to minimize room costs, and the proximity of cons, it is still a costly past time. With some recent price increases, it still costs me somewhat less than $200 an issue to put out 250 copies of TRAP DOOR. Doing it twice a year still costs considerably less than rooms, food and travel--not to mention patronizing any hucksters, which is hard to avoid--for more than a handful of conventions, and reaches more people and has more of an impact on the international web of fandom.

"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children... This is not a way of life at all in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron."

--Dwight David Eisenhower, from a speech 4/16/53

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from my youngest son, who turned nine Christmas day 1985:

I Helped Santa
by Gabe

One day I was told to help Santa. I found him with Rudolph.
He said, "Ho! Ho! Ho! Merry Christmas." And then he said, "Tonight is the night that you can ride with me and Rudolph."
Santa also said, "Happy birthday to you, funny elf."
And he left.

Gabe has not asked to get on the SAPS waiting list yet. Although conscious of fanzines, he has not expressed interest in anything beyond the pictures. Cut out crud sheet copies of illustrations from TRAP DOOR decorate the walls in my kids' rooms. They are all confirmed Trekkies, and the older ones have gone through their D&D phase; and none of them would turn down a ride on the Millenium Falcon.
Well, would you? Until next time, best wishes for the new year.

--Robert Lichtman