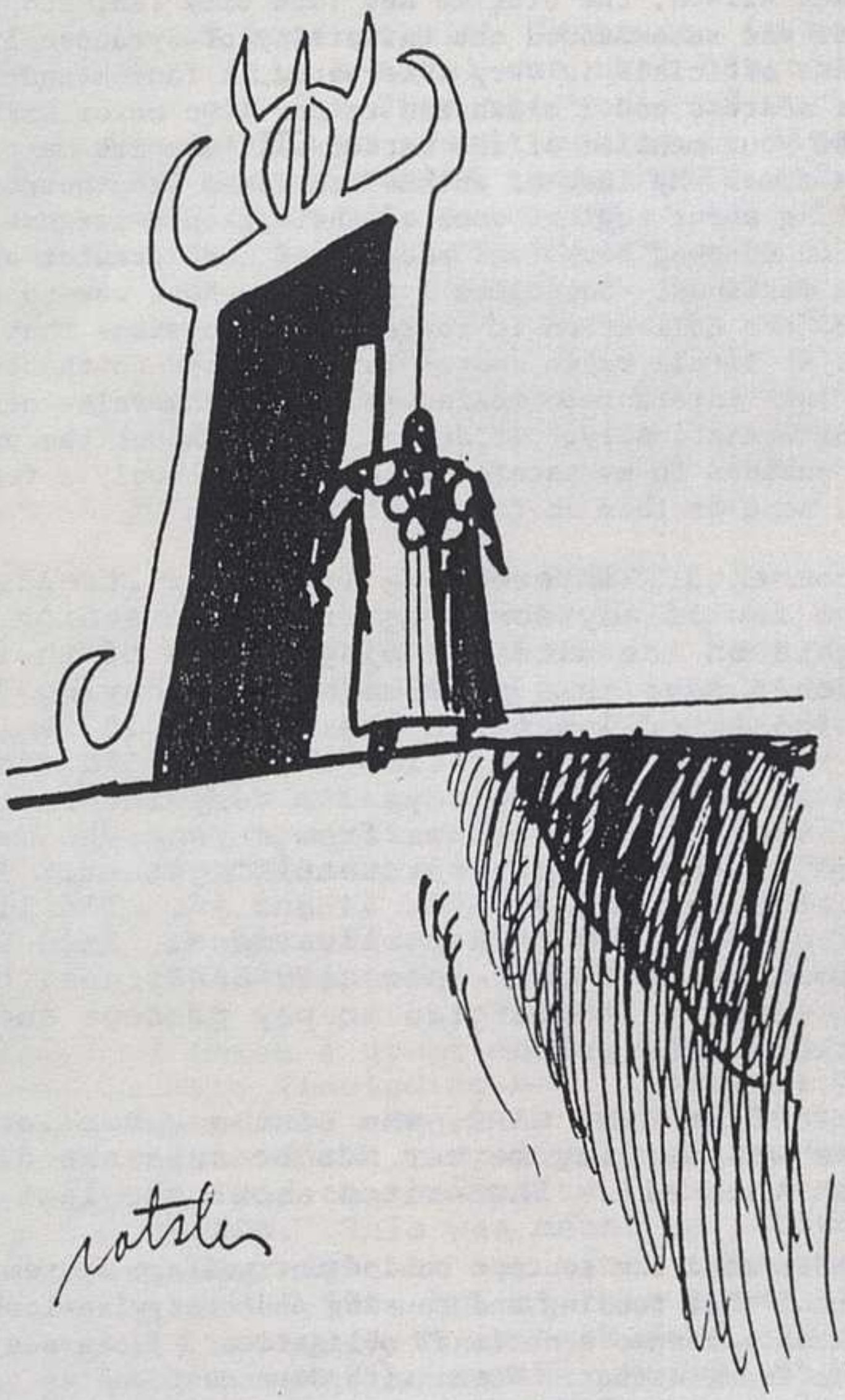
DOOR KNOB

July 1986



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thereby discouraging them from changing jobs until the official "benefits" run out. When I was a kid, we were taught that the function of government was to govern and to protect the citizens; from internal enemies like crooks and robbers, and from external enemies like war. Now it seems more money is spent for so-called "social services" than for protection from criminals, and the major expenditures for defense are more concerned with threatening gestures toward other nations (who retaliate with threatening gestures toward us). But our real enemies, drug pushers who seduce our children, thugs and molesters who assault our women and defenseless elderly, and burglars and house-breakers who rob and kill--they don't even get chased, let alone caught! The government even pays to kill its unborn citizens so it won't have to pay even more to support them if they are allowed to be born. And all the time it is encouraging more and more people to accept its "benefits" and employs more and more citizens to administer these benefits. I honestly don't know which is the more outrageous and demoralizing drain on the economy: the build-up of world-annihilating nuclear armaments or the build-up of morale-annihilating free handouts to the able-bodied poor.

Taking care of poor people, Gertrude, is not only a "national obligation," it's a moral one that has always been with us as a species. We are far from the stage of our development in which the unfortunates who aren't making it financially are simply left to be booted out of their homes and die on the streets of starvation and/or exposure to the elements. No one doubts that there will under any situation be those who will take advantage, but it's no excuse for being mean spirited to those who've taken a reverse, or never had a chance for whatever reason to get going. Hardly anyone who really has to take government handouts is really pleased with the situation, nor are those handouts sufficient enough to live much more than the most basic of lifestyles, and spartan at that. As for your last remarks, it's obviously the first drain you list.

NOW, A FEW SELECTED MAILING COMMENTS:

Toskey: "Whatever happened to Walter A. Willis?" indeed. Walter is still very much with us out in fanzine fandom, and he appears in many letter columns with postcards of comment which come generally on cards laminated to photographs of the part of Northern Ireland where Walter lives now, out on the coast. A gigantic collection of his writing appeared some years ago and it is still presumably available from Richard Bergeron, P.O. Box 5989, San Juan PR 00905 for $25 postpaid. High, but it's over 600 pages hardbound. In a recent communication, Walter said he had just gotten an Amstrad PCW8256 word processor and was thinking of writing "the great Irish novel" or maybe not.

Stull: "BAFF" is current British fan slang for "born again fifties fan," of which a great many surfaced in British fandom this decade, as here (including me). How many people lived on The Farm? It depends on when. At the outset there was 280 people in the first census. By 1975-76, the years I was doing the grocery buying for the community, I was shopping for anywhere from 750 to 900. This was meant to include at least 50 visitors staying overnight at any time. The size peaked out about 1980 at around 1,500, but at that point a great many people began leaving and nowadays it is back down around 300. The confirmation in your comment to me that worms actually exist in programs is more than a little disconcerting, it's spooky!

Stull: Your "open letter" was truly moving. How true what Mommie Roth taught you "that love was the only thing a person could give away again and again and never run out of it."

Warner: I feel like a fringefan. At 22 fanzines received in January of 1986, you received precisely twice as many fanzines as I did. I wonder which ones you get that I don't. I must agree with your simile "incredible shrinking fanzine fandom." No matter how many or few fanzines I receive in any given month, it seems like a pale shadow of what I remember getting when I was first active in fandom. It can't be just higher postal rates and costs in general and/or the increasing size of fanzine fandom now as opposed to the late '50s or early '60s. It must be, upon reflection, a symptom of the coming of age of a generation entirely in the TV era. It seems to me that there's been a gradual decline in literacy that probably can be attributed in large part to that. I'm grateful for whatever has made it that my own kids seem largely immune to this, despite watching relatively large volumes of television. Anyway, with fewer fanzines around, fandom seems like a chimera, like going out of the big city into a more rural setting with fewer objects (houses, etc.) around. (I always used to feel this a lot when I would return to The Farm from having travelled extensively. More recently I feel it when I get back to Glen Ellen from San Francisco or Berkeley, or especially Los Angeles.)

Nancy Rapp: "Poop on judges and lawyers and politicians" is just too overly broad to suit my taste. Regarding some in each category, I would heartily agree. But you can't judge the whole by looking at individual parts, and in my experience the majority of judges and lawyers, at least, are reasonable people. Politicians are probably another matter, best not disgusted here.

Real life has impinged a lot this year on my fanac. Both pleasantly and painfully so, and often both these extremes concurrently. By the time most of you will read this, I will have completed a year of employment legal secretarying. It's been interesting and has taught me a lot, including that I have much more to learn to become really good at that skill. Still, I was granted a nice inrease this month, so I must be doing enough right to get by.

Relationships have been most on my mind this year because the possibility of a Real Good One reared its lovely head before me early on, then backed off in curious and interesting ways to become Only A Possibility. A good friendship has been the result, and there's always room for another of those, but more overall intimacy on every level is what I'm wanting and that's been elusive. I hope these brief remarks will not give anyone the idea that I'm obsessive about this because I'm not. It's simply when the opportunity arises and looks good, I'll drop what I'm doing to give it my full attention and energy.

Meanwhile, it's summer and time for dancing in the streets, going to the beach, catching a few of the better summer movies (I hope you all saw "Labyrinth" for, amongst other things, its incredible scene on an M.C. Escher staircase), visiting friends, and in fact practically everything except pubbing your ish. Who can stay indoors on such great days?

Have a good summer and see you in October.

--Robert