DOOR KNOB

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"IDEA"

DOOR KNOB Volume 2, Number 15, July 1987. Published by Robert Lichtman, P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen CA 95442, for the 160th SAPS mailing. Forty years, that's not too many. Still a founding member: fwa. Artwork herein by William Rotsler.

At first I had Plans for a larger than usual issue to celebrate the 40th anniversary of SAPS. I looked through all my old SAPSzines and thought I might reprint some choice pieces from here and there. Not my own work, for modesty would forbid, but some of the poetry and fiction by others that appeared in the earlier incarnation of this magazine. But then I had to come to grips with how much that would cost to produce and how basically broke I was, and let it go.

Then I went the other route. Hey, I don't even need to be in this mailing. I don't owe any pages. I could break this 3½ year string and Miss A Mailing. That got me kind of worked up, even excited a little, but not for long. Fannish Guilt struck hard. "What if I was the only one who missed the mailing?"

So here I am, one week until the deadline, cranking out my usual four pages. Such is life.

As I mentioned above, I now have copies of many of my old SAPSzines, the ones I produced during my first membership here. According to Art, I joined SAPS with the 48th mailing, after having been two mailings on the waiting list. I stayed in through the 69th mailing, then was dropped for inactivity with the 70th. All those zines left my possession when I cut loose of everything to move to Tennessee, but through the kindness of several donors I now have most of them.

There are a few I'm still missing, and I'm going to list them here with an earnest request that should anyone be willing to part with their copies of them I'd appreciate it:

THE BEM & I #1	Mailing 48
HERE THERE BE SAPS #4	Mailing 51
INVERSION LAYER	Mailing 53
UNUSED COVERS #1	Mailing 54
WATLING STREET #9	Mailing 56

In the last mailing I was lamenting my unemployment. So as to bring you up to date, I want to report that as of three weeks ago I became a Senior Clerk Typist for the City of Santa Rosa's Public Works Department. The starting pay is a little less than I would like to be making, but will improve as I go through a series of five "steps" over the next year or so. But the benefits more than make up for it: health, dental and vision insurance for me and all four of my children, life insurance for me, and a retirement program in which one is fully vested after ten years. While I hope not to be a Senior Clerk Typist for ten years, it's somewhat less boring than it sounds and I'm getting to learn WordPerfect which seems to be perhaps the Ultimate Word Processing Program.

Meanwhile, there's always the state lottery. I have still not, despite the fact that I'm Doing It For Fandom, struck the big one in Lotto, but have hit a few $5 winners. And then there was the heady day I won $20 on a scratch off ticket! Onward!

Herewith the return of our ever-popular Letter Column, with the likes of (and may he forgive us for going to even smaller type):

HARRY WARNER, JR. I forgot to tell Tosk in my own mailing comments that a whole haunted house got debunked in Hagerstown a year or two ago in much the same way as you explain away the toilet-flushing ghost. The local newspaper had published a big feature article about all the strange phenomena that occupants of a house only about three blocks from my home had reported. Someone who had lived in it years ago wrote a letter to the editor, telling how he'd moved out because inadequate wiring was causing the ghostly behavior of electric lights, vermin on the attic resulted in strange noises in the night, cold drafts with no apparent source resulted from warped window frames, and so on.

We have the same motor vehicle phenomena in Hagerstown that you describe. Some motorists lean their front license plate against the windshield instead of improvising a method of attaching it to the front bumper, while others don't use it at all and only rarely do police complain. I haven't paid much attention to outdated registration stickers, but when I got ready to attach my new tags in February (new tags are issued every five years, with stickers attached in the other four years) I discovered that I was displaying a sticker that was out of date by a year; the current one had either been stolen or fallen off. I have no idea how long that situation had existed but nobody had mentioned it to me. (←No one notices such things except for police officers desperate to meet their quotas.→)

REDD BOGGS So far as I can recall your remarks are the first I have read anywhere that point out that the cops pick on "old beat-up cars" to pull over and give tickets to. I did drive my VW (which looks fairly presentable) for a year or two after buying it without a front plate, and never got hassled. It had no "ready-made mount" on which to place a plate. But when I was driving our old Ford up to Davis regularly I twice got tickets for no good reason except that it was an old car. Once it was for having a slightly cracked windshield, which did not interfere with vision, and the other time it was for a defective muffler. A CHP car was lying in wait on the north side of the Carquinez bridge and as I passed through the turnstile he pulled out behind me and followed me for several miles across the bridge and up the hill before pulling me over. I think he was trying to figure out what to ticket me for. The muffler shop later told me that the muffler was not really in bad shape at all--but of course they were happy to replace it, and I had to replace it anyway.

My parents brewed bathtub gin, once, in the bathtub really and truly, but I believe only once. It wasn't for sale, and I suspect that it was done as a lark mostly. Since I was a little kid, I didn't get a chance to sample it, but probably it was awful stuff. A year or two later, after repeal, my father had a small supply of liquors, and one cold winter day I came home so chilled that I quaffed a small tipple of--I think--cherry brandy to warm up. My parents weren't at home, and I probably could've gotten away with it, but for some reason I mentioned what I had done. My mother was properly horrified, but my father only laughed.

PATRICK NEILSEN HAYDEN I'd be most gratified if you could print the following in your next SAPSzine. Yeah, I'm embarrassed.

AN APOLOGY TO SAPS

Well, yeah, I remember when I was a young apahack, watching from inside a given organization as even younger fans with Big Plans floated up the waitlist, got to the top, and then dickered around demanding extensions and generally wasting everyone's time while they made their wavering ..

way to a decision not to join after all. What a joke! A fit topic for outrage, indeed (pounds cane on floor). Now I'm a prematurely senescent fan and find myself doing the same thing. Self-abasing apologies to Otto Pfeifer and everyone else, and I'm returning my copy of the May mailing so some more energetic waitlister can have it. (Beats hasty retreat) In another, better universe I have more time for fanac.

Well, maybe by the 200th mailing you will...

Besides working again and still trying to win the big bucks and also figure out a way to earn them, too, summer of 1987 finds me tending a medium sized vegetable garden which is just beginning to bear. This year I planted five tomato plants (three Better Boys and two Grabbers), five cucumber plants (three "burpless" and two "hybrid"), five hot pepper plants (four New Mexico chili peppers and one "Anaheim," a slightly milder type), and two eggplant (one each Black Beauty and Japanese Long). Parsley that wintered over is dormant right now, but I expect it to come back when it cools off later this summer. This is all in an area around ten feet square. Tonight (this is July 7th) I had the first hot pepper and within the next two or three days I will have eaten the first cucumbers. There are two inch long eggplants on the Japanese Long, tinier ones on the other. And there are an incresing number of green tomatoes. I'll let you know to what lengths of desperation I was forced to submit to unload the surplus come October.

As the only current SAPS member, to my knowledge, to attend the 40th Westercon this past weekend, I suppose I owe it to the membership to report that, for a Westercon, it was a pretty good convention. By that I mean it was not too enormous (1,800 is the attendance figure I heard) and there were sufficient quantities of fanzine fans and other Good People on hand to keep me on a good conversational roll nearly all weekend. Mostly I partied, but I did go to several panels and other events. On Friday, I attended the FAPA 50th anniversary panel. Seth Goldberg, Art Widner, Dave Rike and David Bratman conducted a pretty spacy hour which touched on FAPA from time to time, mostly in the form of PR type announcements that it existed. The rest of it was about stuff like history of apas, hektographs, talk about apas in general. It was very lightly attended, which didn't help. Saturday I went to "Beginnings of Fannish Communication," with Aubrey McDermott (who told us how he and Ray Palmer invented fanzine fandom in 1928 or maybe 9), Art Widner, Bruce Pelz and Fred Patten. The latter said almost nothing during the hour, being occupied with chain candy unwrapping and ingesting. By the end of the hour, a little pile of red wrappers had grown in front of him. Again lightly attended, nonetheless it was an interesting hour. Immediatley following that was "The Varieties of Modern Fanzines," with Seth Goldberg (again, who plugged FAPA), David Nee (editor of RHODO BULL, a 2-page meeting notice), Charles von Rospach (editor of a book review semipro), Paul Willett (editor of a filkzine) and Alan White (editor of DELINEATOR, one of the strangest fanzines I've seen in years). Rather strange and disjointed hour. That evening I was on "Fanzines as an Art Form," the first panel ever I've sat on at a con, and I felt like I fumbled around saying little but subjective ramblings. Everyone still talked to me afterwards, though. Sunday was a moving panel in memory of Terry Carr. Superb. Out of room/time. Have a good summer.

--Robert