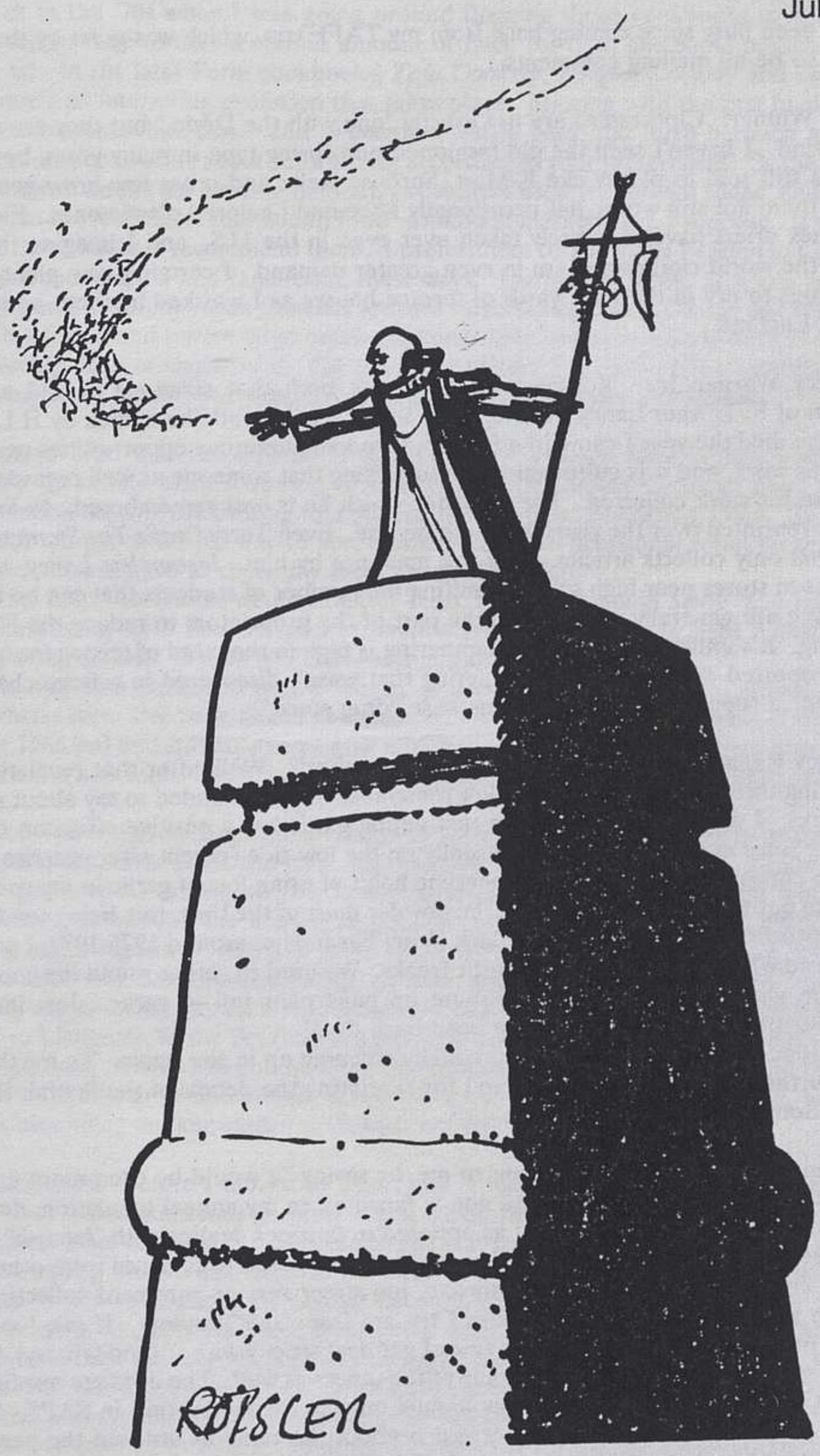
DOOR KNOB

Vol. 2 - No. 23
July 1989



DOOR KNOB Issue No. 23. Published by Robert Lichtman, P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442, for the 168th mailing of the Spectator Amateur Press Society, July 1989. Still a founding member: fwa. Cover artwork provided by William Rotsler.

It's been busy since coming back from my TAFF trip, which was great by the way. This is going to be all mailing comments...

Art Widner: Clothespins are not exactly "one with the Dodo," but they are increasingly hard to find. I haven't seen the old fashioned non-spring type in many years, but the spring variety is still sold in places like K-Mart, Sprouse Reitz and other low-brow general stores. Most of them are still wood, but occasionally I see multi-colored plastic ones. Electrical and gas clothes driers haven't entirely taken over even in the U.S., and I imagine that in other parts of the world clothespins are in even greater demand. I certainly saw plenty of clothes hanging out to dry in the back yards of terrace houses as I whisked by them on the intercity trains in England.

Harry Warner Jr.: You're quite right that both that someone should undertake a collection of F. Towner Laney's writings and that it would read like a book by H.L. Mencken. Though he died the year I came into fandom, I've had numerous opportunities over the years to read his work, and it is quite good. It's surprising that someone as well regarded as Laney hasn't had his work collected. The piece for which he is best remembered, *Ah Sweet Idiocy*, has been reprinted over the years, but nothing else. Even Terry Carr's *The Stormy Petrel* from about 1960 only collects articles *about* the man, not by him. *Incomplete Laney*, anyone?

Signs in stores near high schools limiting the number of students that can be in the store at one time are generally an effort on the part of the proprietors to reduce the likelihood of shoplifting. It's unlikely that product tampering is high in the mind of teenagers. And I can't recall a reported case of product tampering that wasn't discovered in a large chain store of some kind...a supermarket or California-style "drug store."

Nancy Rapp: "Bob Lichtman is a phallic symbol"? Well, after that revelation I found that, leafing through your zine, I couldn't remember what I intended to say about most of the checkmarks. I was interested to learn that eating garlic has a positive effect on one's blood pressure. Since my blood pressure is usually on the low side (except after exercise and eating too much chocolate), I guess it's my longtime habit of using lots of garlic in my cooking that's helped me out over the years. I use garlic powder most of the time, too, being too lazy to deal with the processing of garlic cloves. Back in my Farm days, around 1975-1977, I was living in a household where all the men were garlic freaks. We used to gather round the cookstove late at night in garlic harvest season and saute up huge pans full of garlic. Just imagine how mellow our blood pressure must have been back then!

It's good to see your SAPSzines gradually creeping up in size again. To me this is a sign of your further recovery. And thank you for reprinting the details of the Squink Blog Handy Plotter. Someday perhaps I'll give it a try.

Norm Metcalf: In your comment to me, by saying "it would be even more useful if you distinguished between sf fanzines and non-sf fanzines" in my annual tabulation, do you mean (a) between fanzines strictly about sf as opposed to fanzines dealing with "fannish" matters or (b) between fanzines from science fiction fandom as opposed to fanzines from other fandoms (whether comics, media sf, gaming, railroad, old street cars or gum card collecting). If the latter, the answer is that all the fanzines I list are from "our" fandom. If (a), I would guess that only perhaps 15-20 percent of the zines I get deal strictly with sf (and fantasy), but there's a healthy scattering of sf material in many of the others as well. The lines are not finely drawn here. It's my intention to continue my annual tallying for publication in SAPS. So far this year, the total number of fanzines received is about the same as last, but the percentage of zines published in America has continued to decline.

Mike Gunderloy: Word Perfect 5.0 does have automatic leading, but it will also allow you to set your own. I use the default because it's a little on the crowded side and I prefer that in these apazines.

Yes, it is a little eccentric of *The Farm Vegetarian Cookbook* to use white sugar and white flour. Back in the '70s when I was going around flogging those cookbooks to health food stores, I used to have to take a certain amount of flack for that, and some purists wouldn't carry it at all. In the later Farm cookbooks, *Tofu Cookery*, *Tempeh Cookery* and *Tofu Quick & Easy*, there's an interesting evolution that takes place. Starting with the first book, recipes call for "unbleached white flour" and sweeteners waffle back and forth between sugar and honey, with some comments about substituting according to your preferences. By the time you get to the newest book (the last one named), sweeteners used are "brown sugar" and "honey." A response to the realities of the "health food" cookbook marketplace, I suppose. If you don't have these three books, I recommend them. I prefer them to *The Farm Vegetarian Cookbook*.

I do both moderation and fanaticism, these days. During the week, at home and in my packed lunches, I'm strictly vegan (lunches are tofu salad sandwiches). On the weekend, I may go out with a friend and have a large omelette, home fries and even a little bacon. I refer to it as my weekly dose of cholesterol. On the sweets front, I eschew *milk* chocolate and am currently very hung up on Australian candied ginger (from Trader Joe's, Art).

Tom Perry: Now that you rave on about *The "Slap" Maxwell Story*, it makes me sorry I didn't follow up on my usual following of shows in which Dabney Coleman plays a part, a habit I got into after first discovering him playing the mayor of Fernwood, Ohio. *Buffalo Bill* was a show I *did* go out of my way to see, and still catch an occasional rerun on one of the cable stations. I will have to check my local listings for "Slap."

I think far more Americans would think of Thos. Paine's *Common Sense* than Heinlein's, or are you just being naff? A more recent *Common Sense* is a booklet by Paul Williams, Glen Ellen, California (former faned--WITHIN--and author of *Das Energi*).

As Mike may also explain to you, a "vegan" is a vegetarian who eats no animal or dairy products whatsoever. I've been one of them since 1970 (and was the other kind of vegetarian from about 1966 on) and still am except now and then, as described in my comments to Mike above. It's not a new term. There's a Vegan Society based in England that's been around for decades.

Once you learn that in England a "clearway" is one in which parking is prohibited, it becomes quite, um, clear what the term explains. In my recent trip there, I didn't find it difficult to get used to driving on the "other" side of the road and the signs weren't too difficult, either. What took the longest to get used to was the traffic circles, especially the ones linking major highways. Many of them don't have internal signing for each spoke and, on those, unless one has an opportunity to take good note of the big sign before the roundabout, one can easily make a wrong turn. I drove for only one day in England--from Bristol out to Llangorse, in the Brecon Beacons--but that was around 250-275 miles of travel. I was on everything from the M-roads to the back roads. I was also driven around by Mal & Hazel Ashworth, Chuch & Sue Harris, Christina Lake & Peter-Fred Thompson, and Walt Willis, thus expanding my knowledge of British motorways.

Leigh Edmonds: Before I moved to The Farm, I was much more on a plastic economy than I am now. I had numerous gasoline credit cards, department and clothing store cards, and of course at least one card like Mastercharge (as it was known back then). On The Farm I got used to having limited quantities of personal cash money on hand. It would have been inconvenient to have a checking or savings account, not to mention the fact that we were supposedly pooling all our funds and it would look weird to local bankers for individual Farm members to have their own accounts, or so I thought. Since working for wages again, it's been my habit to hold out a quantity of cash from each check to use for ongoing expenses of the food, gas and entertainment ilk. I tend to use my charge cards for out of the ordinary purchases, or for getting something I couldn't afford to pay for out of cash-in-pocket flow and preferred paying off over a few months. I have one card that has relatively low interest on

which I put these larger purchases and another (higher interest) card which I pay off every month. The latter also has no annual charges, which makes it nice. Though I have no specific budget, I have excellent self-control over random purchases and I tend to save gradually.

I hope you will share your "more-or-less academic paper on the heat-death of Australian fanzine fandom" with a wider audience than the convention at which you'll present it. I for one would like to read about this event.

In your comment to Suzi, is a "hoon" some sort of Australian term for a particular type of person, or is it a typo?

It's hard to imagine Mexican restaurants in Australia. When I was in England, I was widely advised to avoid any Mexican restaurants I might run across while in London, but in Cambridge my old friend, Duffy, who grew up like myself in Los Angeles, took me to an excellent Mexican restaurant. I had chimichangas filled with mushrooms sauteed in white wine. It was as good as anything one can get in California, though the salsa was a little bland.

Art Rapp: Now that the Ayatollah is dead, I wonder if Salman Rushdie will come out of hiding? I was much amused by the news coverage showing Khomeini's body being knocked out of its casket by zealots who proceeded to rip his special shroud to shreds so as to have an instant relic. (When they showed the second and successful attempt to bury him later that day, he was in a sealed coffin that resembled an Airstream house trailer.)

Re your comments to Widner: Only stodgy purists insist on mimeo or hecto/ditto these days, but that's not really an issue. What's at stake is fandom as a self-aware entity with an ongoing written history. If nonlocal fandom dies because fanzines as we've known them cease to exist, it will be a definite watershed in the history of fandom. In a sense, fandom will cease to have a history at that point, because no one can present in any permanent form *everything* that happens at a con. Without fanzines, there are no con reports. Without con reports, only scattered oral history. Fanzine fans are a smaller part of fandom than formerly, but an important one. I fully support fanzine fan cons like Ditto and Corflu (and will you and Nancy be at the New York Corflu?).

Yes, postage is a big hurdle in publishing a fanzine these days. I partially get around it by using bulk mail for my domestic copies, even if I have to send some back to myself for the shortfall in names (from the 200 required) to make up the total. Despite that, it's still less than half the cost of regular postage. The overseas copies are the postal killers and with TRAP DOOR there's a lot of them.

Nicki Lynch: I liked *Working Girl* a lot, too, and while *Dangerous Liaisons* had its slow periods it was overall enjoyable. The characterizations were truly boldly drawn. More recently I've enjoyed *High Hopes*, a quiet little movie set in London and revolving around a woman's 70th birthday, for which her various relatives have party plans and which she'd just as soon forget. One personally appealing thing about the movie was that much of the action took place in and around Victoria Station in London, and street shots were of places I'd been. Other movies I've liked recently include *Say Anything*, *Doing It Right* (intriguing performance by Lynn Redgrave) and *Earth Girls Are Easy* (an interesting chemistry between Geena Davis and Jeff Goldblum). A movie I didn't find altogether satisfying, although it had some good moments (particularly those with Robin Williams), was *Baron Munchausen*. It was somehow disjointed.

Elinor Busby: If you can still remember what it felt like to be in the thick of fanzine fandom (long ago and far away in the CRY days), then you can relate to how it feels now. Apas have their place--I'm in four of them (which puts me in touch with around 120 people after overlap is considered) and enjoy them all, each in their own unique way--but I like being able to handpick my fanzine's audience. I never hear from all 250 of them at once, but fanzines continue to show up at my door, at least some of which are worth reading, and I get an average 45-50 responses on each issue. Never from the same 45-50 people on any particular issue. There's something delightful in the anarchy of "general" fandom.

Enjoyed the **F.S.F.** oneshot as usual...

[-RL]