DOOR KNOB

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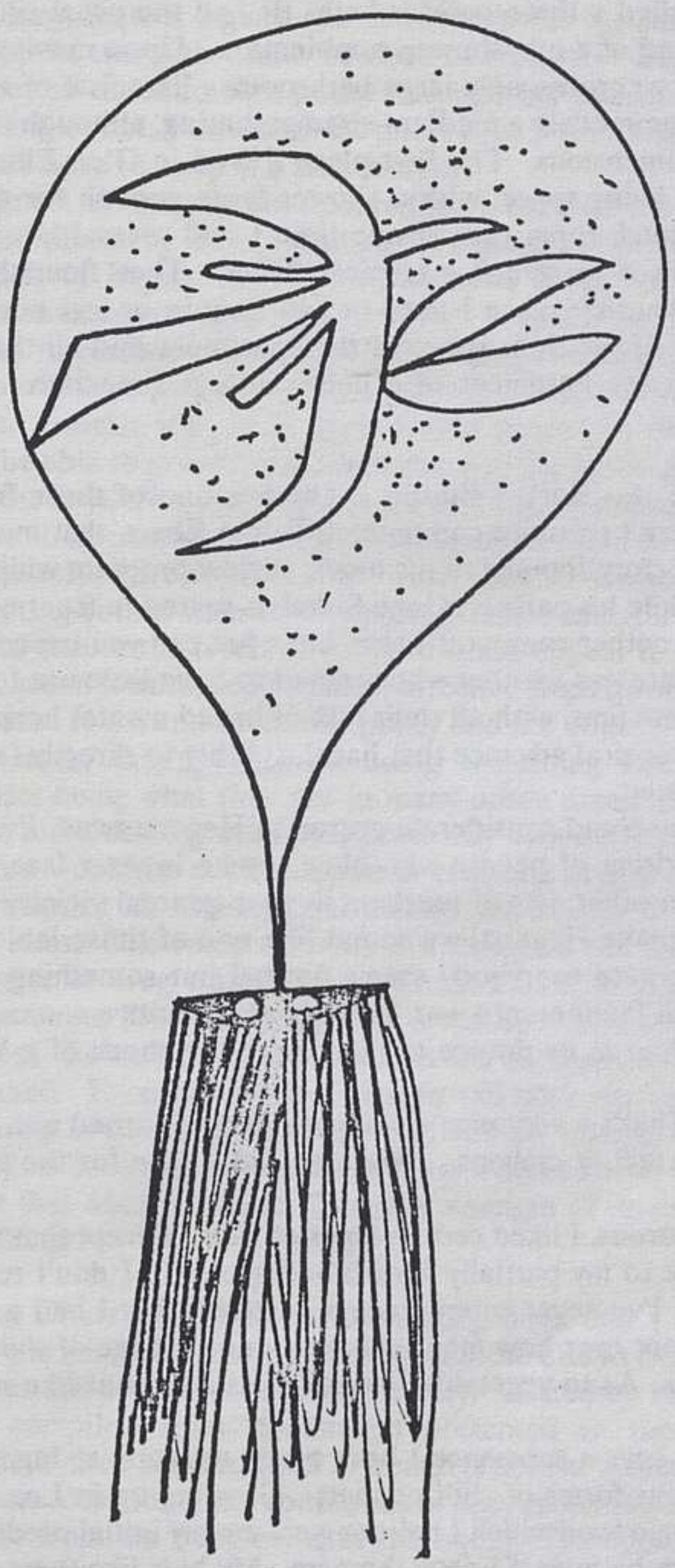

DOOR KNOB Issue No. 24. Published by Robert Lichtman, P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442, for the 169th mailing of the Spectator Amateur Press Society, October 1989. Cover artwork courtesy of William Rotsler. Another all mailing comments issue.

Jim Crawford: I missed Nancy's original comment about the bathroom being the most dangerous room in the house, but in the case of a "mercury-capsule-type" bathroom as you describe in your apartment, I would have to believe it. I've never been so unfortunate as to have such a small bathroom since leaving my parents', where my brother and I shared what was euphemistically called a three-quarter bath. It had the usual sink and commode, but a tight stall shower instead of a tub/shower combination. Upon moving out, I lived in a series of apartments with often grotesquely large bathrooms. The first of these had a shower (no tub) big enough to accommodate a medium-sized gathering, although the rest of the bathroom was of fairly normal dimensions. The first place I lived in Glen Ellen had a bathroom that was a full 25% of the living space, with a shower large enough for at least three people at once. There was so much room that at one time I had several large potted plants in five-gallon buckets living in it to give it a tropical flavor. They flourished in the occasionally steamy atmosphere. Another place I lived in had a more or less normal bathroom, but the kitchen was a full half of the floor space in the apartment and all the other rooms were off the kitchen. It was in the basement of a house in San Francisco. I called it my "central kitchen plan" apartment.

Harry Warner Jr.: So Harlan Ellison is another one of those forward looking science fiction fan types who can't relate to computers! Roger Ebert, that much vaunted former fan, is shown in the introductory footage to his movie review program whipping his column out of a manual typewriter while his partner, Gene Siskel, is seated in front of a computer. I believe that Ray Bradbury is another computer-hater, but what can you expect from a guy who won't drive, either? Terry Carr was another who seemed to have little use for computers. It strikes me as peculiar that some fans, with all their talk of broad mental horizons and cosmic minds, can't relate to a technological advance that has the ability to directly (and I believe positively) affect their writing output.

Are you the only sane and considerate person in Hagerstown? I've never been there, but over the years your writing of people who blow smoke in your face, bump into you on the sidewalk and engage in other acts of mayhem in your general vicinity has led me to consider this conclusion. You make Hagerstown sound like one of those fabled towns of old science fiction stories, towns where everybody seems normal but something is actually quite amiss. If it wouldn't plunge all fandom into war, I'd suggest you move somewhere more friendly but I'm not sure that fandom in its dotage could survive the shock of a Warner CoA.

Burnett Toskey: That's a very nice cover your printer turned out. The color printing has the look and even the feel of crayons. How long did it take for the printer to turn out each individual cover?

When I was carnivorous, I liked certain types of liver. Except that my favorite was chicken liver (which I attribute to my partially Jewish background), I don't recall which types except not the tougher ones. I've never eaten kidneys or brains, but I had a brief fling with chicken hearts until I grossed out over how many chickens one package of the things represented and abruptly gave them up. As to vegetables I disliked as a kid but like now, I would list squash as the primary one.

While horseradish isn't a substance I have much occasion to ingest, I probably eat more than my share of various forms of chili peppers. Growing up in Los Angeles, I was exposed fairly early on to Mexican food which I believe gave me my initial predilection for hot peppers. My diet would be much blander if I gave them up. My kids like them, too. Back in the Farm days, when my boys were all under ten, we used to like to go out to where the jalapenos and the tomatoes were growing. We'd pick a few peppers, a few tomatoes, then take alternate bites. A perfect combination!

It's a wonder that you have any stomach lining (or teeth) left at all if your main way of drinking water is in the form of Coke. I will agree with you, though, that Seattle water is quite tasty. Our local water is neither good nor bad, but Seattle water was terrific stuff, a joy to drink when I visited last year for Corflu.

The SAPS members I know I haven't met are Baugh, Crawford, Edmonds, Gunderloy, O'Connor, both Rapps, Stefl and Stull. I'm not sure about Devore and Perry; if I've met either of them, it was a long time ago. That adds up to eleven, just like your reckoning. These are the people who weren't at the huge SAPS party in Seattle last year. Of course, I met quite a few SAPS for the first time at that party.

Nancy Rapp: Yes, Kent State is a good counter balance for the June events in China and since. The US keeps up its ties with China because of Business. Business has a lot to say about the conduct of our so called foreign policy and whether the Mafia has secretly gained control of the government, or not, Business Is Business even if it means looking the other way and having to hold one's nose to keep the stench away.

Flag burning has almost completely disappeared from the national agenda at this writing in mid-September to be replaced by George Bush's third grade lecture on drugs and latest talk of compromising the Bill of Rights. Now that the news is also out that state and local government is expected to come up with huge amounts of matching funds, it's a pretty safe bet that by the time you're reading this to do your mailing comments for the January 1990 bundle, this subject too will have passed from the national consciousness to be replaced with the current week's rave. I mean, it's pretty unlikely that financially strapped cities, counties and states are going to be able to provide the lion's share of the funding for this "war," as they are being requested by the feds, Not after eight years of Reagan hacking away at their sources of federal funding. I can't agree with lumping a substance as relatively benign as marijuana and as vile as "ice" and crack. Pure cocaine itself is certainly somewhere in between; it can't be too seriously debilitating (other than to one's nasal membranes) if yuppies do it. I feel steps need to be taken to reduce the levels of violence which appear to be related to (mostly) crack dealing in certain urban locales, but the most effective steps involve massive changes of public attitude and national social and economic policy and are unlikely to occur. If the crack dealers weren't doing crack, they'd likely be doing something else outside of the law, employment opportunities being what they are in many urban areas. Why work at Big Mac when you can make lots more dealing even part-time. My own bottom line feeling about all of this is that much more would be accomplished in reducing drug addiction in the United States by immediately banning all tobacco and alcohol advertising in all media, but doing nothing to further limit sales. One could also talk of tacking on additional taxes, but price is hardly a deterrent to sales in drug transactions. For instance, in 1968 exceptionally good marijuana was selling for about $300 a kilo; by 1971 it was $300 a pound; and nowadays $300 an ounce is hardly unusual. Consumption of marijuana has not slumped statistically as sharply as its price has skyrocketed. Even government figures will bear this out.

Hope you're continuing to do well. If you haven't already read it, by all means obtain a copy of Gilda Radner's final book, *It's Always Something*. As you know, Gilda died just before the book came out, but that doesn't detract from the strength of its writing and the way in which she approached things.

Nicki Lynch: *Indian Givers* sounds like a fascinating book and I hope you manage to obtain your own copy. Another book you might enjoy is *Basic Call to Consciousness*, a Native American look at the last 500-600 years of world history. Edited by the staff of *Akwesasne Notes*, the volume is compiled from documents presented to the Non-Governmental Organizations wing of the United Nations in 1977 hearings held in Geneva, Switzerland. This entity had asked for papers "describing the conditions of oppression suffered by Native people in the Americas." (quote from the back cover of the book) The book is quite thorough in performing the requested function and it contains impressive historic analysis quite outside of the "revisionist American and British" version of history (again quoting from the book). According to their Spring 1988 catalog, it's available by mail from Book Publishing Co., P.O. Box 99, Summertown, TN 38483, at $7.95 postpaid.

Art Rapp: Interesting to note that Bill Mallardi also used the title THE BEM & I for a SAPSzine. That was the title I used way back when as a brand new SAPS member, but I changed it after my first SAPSzine when I learned that Terry Carr had also used it in the early '50s for a FAPAzine.

Gordon Eklund: Good to see you here at last, and thank you for the autobiographical notes. I have to confess that although I've known for years that you write stf and have seen numerous of your titles on display at both first- and second-hand bookstores, I've never read a word of your fiction. Of course, you aren't the only SAPS member whose professional work has eluded me (hi, Buz). I see that first SAPS memberships have a couple of years of overlap (1962 - 1964) but I have little memory of your apal cohabitation with me during those years. By that time I was much less involved with fandom in general and SAPS in particular than I was in, say, 1960. Well, hope you find this reasonably enjoyable and stick around.

Suzi Stefl: Thank you for including the SFOHA newsletter in this mailing. Looking at the state of its finances, I wonder if the group has ever researched sources of and sought funding for a paid staff to go out and field record old fans and pros, especially the ones of most advanced age, who might not be with us much longer. The newsletter is vague about the nature of the catalog that is mentioned as well as information on the cost of membership. Can you elaborate?

Elinor Busby: I don't believe I was "willfully misreading" Gertrude in my reaction to her writing, "Liberals want the government to 'do-good' for everybody, especially poor, handicapped and underprivileged. Conservatives want the government to stop people from being BAD, so there won't be so many poor, handicapped and underprivileged." In a letter G.M. wrote to me in response to my April DOOR KNOB, she explains: "All right, I will take back the word BAD (which appears to be a semantic 'trigger word' for you) and substitute nine syllables instead of the one. Let my rephrase my statement to which you take exception: 'Liberals want the government to "do-good" for everybody, especially poor, handicapped and underprivileged. Conservatives want the government to stop people from being *socially counter-productive*, so there won't be so many poor, handicapped and underprivileged, i.e., no drunks, drugs, deserted families, etc.'" Here she seems to be equating counter-productive with BAD; she doesn't particularly belabor it, but instead goes on to write, "I do not think that even you can argue that the stratum of society which is dependent on public assistance is unfairly labeled 'socially counter-productive.'" And yes, I would totally agree with that. I agree with your interpretations of what you think she meant, as well. An evil person *can* make other people poor, handicapped and underprivileged, as in your example of an unenlightened factory owner underpaying his workers, ruining their health and endangering their lives. If you use government as another example, the major crime of the Reagan years is not so much that open season was declared on greed as good, but that along with it came a systematic dismantling of the "safety net" (Reagan's term, not mine) to assist those who fall through the cracks, a nightmare of tragic proportions. The Reagan years were aptly summed up in a recent "Sylvia" cartoon strip, in which Sylvia dreams that she is the *only* Republican who *didn't* make a bundle as a HUD housing contract "advisor."

Russian and Spanish influences in the New World overlapped right here in Sonoma County, California. The main river in the county is the Russian River. There's one of Junipero Serra's missions in the town of Sonoma while on the other end of the county there's Fort Ross established by the Russians during the same century. If you're ever in the Bay Area and want to take an interesting day trip, consider going up the coast to Fort Ross, about a dozen miles north of where the Russian River empties into the Pacific.

F.M. Busby: I also was in fandom during much of the time as Roger Ebert. He wrote an excellent book review column that appeared regularly my first genzine, PSI-PHI, and in one issue he wrote a delightful short article, "Soliloquy on a Second-Run House," which I may reprint sometime in TRAP DOOR. We corresponded, but I don't much recall the substance of it. Probably just about the column.

Oops, out of room - happy holidays! - RL