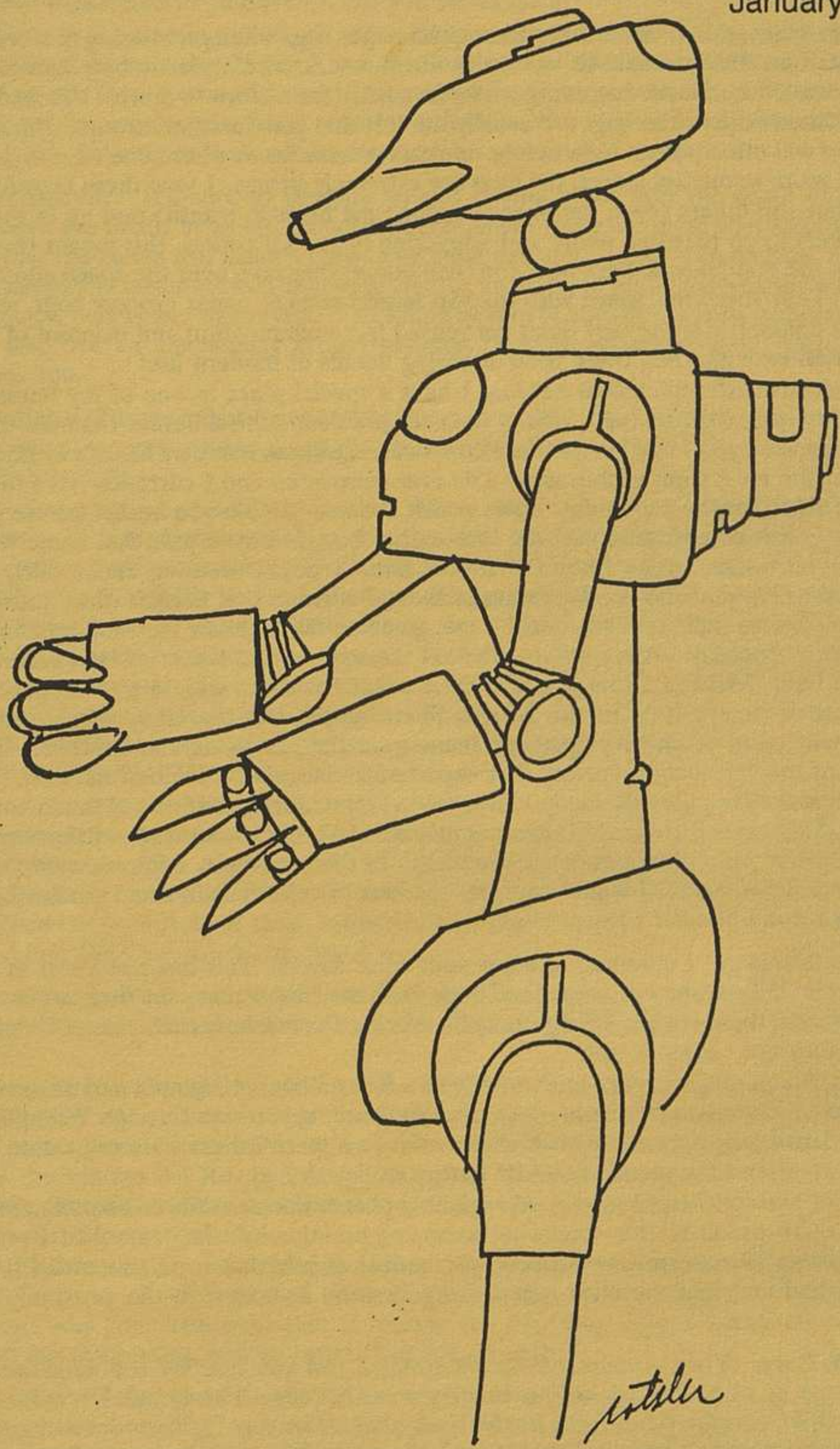
# DOOR KNOB

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**DOOR KNOB** Issue No. 25. Published by Robert Lichtman, P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442, for the 170th mailing of the Spectator Amateur Press Society, January 1990. Now in their second decade, covers continue to be supplied by William Rotsler.

As usual these days, this consists almost entirely of comments on the previous mailing...

**Harry Warner Jr.:** While I always request paper bags when purchasing groceries, in most other retail establishments one has no choice but to accept a plastic bag because that's all there is available. Plastic bags vary wildly in quality from store to store. Especially at small neighborhood outlets, the bags are usually the sort that you describe through which the goods contained will often poke a hole before one gets even as far as where one's car is parked. But at other, more upmarket stores, the bags are extremely strong. I save these bags for eventual reuse while the others (even the ones that don't get holes in transit) end up in the trash bin immediately upon reaching home and unpacking them. Of course, this means that I have to weed out the good plastic bags now and then before they take over the space allotted for bag storage. They share this space with the two largest sizes of paper grocery bags, which I also save; but unlike the latter they don't get reused (for accumulation and disposal of household trash) often enough. Ah, these little annoying details of modern life!

I don't lose extra shoelaces because I have a special place in one of my bureau drawers allocated to their storage, but I have a shoelace problem quite different than the one you describe. In recent years I've become addicted to airsole shoes made by Clark's of England; they are by far the most comfortable shoes I've ever discovered and I currently have four pairs of them. This is despite their high price, which I won't trouble you with because you would probably find it as upsetting as I do. Recently I bought a new pair that came with special leather laces which broke about a month after I began wearing them fairly regularly. Returning to the store where I purchased them, I learned that Clark's does not make extra laces available to their retail outlets. I was given an 800 number for their customer service and called it one day. After being switched through several layers of bureaucracy to their Shoelace Lady, I was told that because these particular shoes were a new model they didn't have spare laces available in the United States as yet, but that they would send me two replacement pairs when they received them from the factory in the south of England. I inquired as to what sort of delivery they expected for laces for these new models. "They send things when they're jolly well ready," I was told. I asked for the address of the factory and one of my backlog tasks is to write to them complaining about the existence of shoes with special laces for which no replacements are available. In the meantime, I found some replacement laces which are *not* what I would consider the best of color matches and am having to Make Do. But I don't like it.

**Burnett Toskey:** I continue to enjoy your color covers. This one has a sort of Mondrian quality to it. When fanzines are looked back on in the 23rd century for their redeeming social characteristics, these covers will rightfully be classified as the early examples of Computer Folk Art that they are. Keep it up!

Lucky you getting to retire in another year. Remembering Olympia and its environs as an uncrowded and verdant city from my several book selling journeys through Washington in the late '70s, I can fully appreciate your choice of it as a place for possible relocation. Will you continue to attend the quarterly SAPS parties in Seattle?

Melons are not the only family of vegetable plants which readily cross-pollinate. Peppers are also quite prone to this somewhat annoying promiscuity. In years past I've ended up growing sweet Hungarian wax peppers with a distinct bite that wasn't intended to be there. I've also had very hot varieties toned down in their heat due to the proximity of milder varieties.

**G. M. Carr:** Your account of the watermelon fest you had for the neighborhood kids reminds me of when I lived in San Francisco in the '60s. The house I rented came with several rather scrappy plum trees in the back yard. The tiny fruit produced by these trees never much interested me, so I would look the other way each summer when some of the

more adventurous neighborhood children would climb over several fences to pick and eat them. Fortunately none of them ever fell out of the trees. One summer one of this lot, a little tomgirl who was an accomplished tree climber, came up to me when I was out in front of my house and said, "You're a nice man." Much surprised, I asked her why she said that. With a wide smile, she replied, "The people who lived here before used to yell at us and chase us away when we wanted to pick plums, but you let us do it."

Good for you for stopping driving! My mother never did learn how to drivė and she's probably never going to (she's 78 now), but my father (now 75) still admittedly drives about 300 miles a month in and around Los Angeles even though he's susceptible to blacking out. Fortunately for his continued existence, so far he's done this only in low speed parking lot situations, gently bashing several parked cars with his gigantic '64 Cadillac.

**Læigh Edmonds:** It's hard to imagine people getting upset over the death of Queen Elizabeth when she finally kicks off, though I am confident there are those who will and even more sure that the media will make a Great Big Deal out of it. In my own opinion, a ruling family that allows the mean-spirited likes of Margaret Thatcher to set policy is hardly what one could consider a benevolent monarchy. The whole system of royalty ought to be booted out, if you ask me. It's an increasingly arcane remnant of more primitive times. Increasingly unaffordable, too.

**Wrai Ballard:** Toskey might be *into* vampires, but tracing my mother's side of the family tree back several generations one is led directly to Transylvania, so I might actually *be* part vampire, ahahahahaha.

My first dropping out of SAPS took place nearly two years after I joined FAPA after a three-year wait. I *do* remember thinking that the level of material in FAPA mailings of the time was somehow superior to that in SAPS, but I liked SAPS well enough, too. While noting that I actually slipped into the habit of missing mailings towards the end, I recall the dropping out being more related to changed demands on my time which made the somewhat more strenuous SAPS activity requirements no longer fit into my lifestyle. Of course, back then we didn't talk about lifestyles; this is a modern term I'm applying to the circumstances.

Rich brown not only was on the waiting list about three or so years ago, but he got in and produced one SAPSzine before dropping out again. I can't be more specific since I don't have the zine or the SPECTATORs from that time frame.

Wish y'all had come to Ditto; it was a good party. The con suites were two rooms on the northeast and northwest corners of the 26th (top) floor of the Holiday Inn and between them afforded a spectacular view of about 70% of the City and surrounding areas. The weather cooperated by being clear much of the time so that this view was fully accessible. Of course, two days hence the occupants of those suites were no doubt treated to quite a roller coaster ride as the Little Big One struck the Bay Area.

**Gordon Eklund:** I have much the same feelings and misgivings you attribute to yourself concerning the future of Woody Allen's *Sleeper* in which it's revealed that junk food is the *real* health food.

One of my earliest Favorite Movie Stars was William Boyd, who played the now forgotten Hopalong Cassidy. When I was about nine years old, there was an amusement park called Hoppyland on a piece of land that is now covered with high-rise apartment and office buildings in the Marina del Rey part of Los Angeles. I remember almost nothing about it except for the fact of its existence and that one of the times I went there I got to meet and shake hands with Hoppy himself.

Life begins at conception but personal history only commences at birth. While personally finding abortion sort of, well, gross, I am strongly pro-choice. I got quite a chuckle, in a sobering way, over your assertions that if fetuses are life, they should qualify for welfare benefits and tax exemptions, and be counted in the census.

**F. M. Busby:** "Tofu always seems like some kind of edible plastic"? Tofu is soy cheese and is usually not firm enough to resemble plastic. To me, harder dairy cheeses seem quite a lot more like plastic than tofu. Of course, I eat about three pounds of tofu a week in

various forms and might be a little prejudiced in its favor. One thing I will note definitely in its favor is that tofu is cholesterol free.

FAPA's original constitution was modelled after that of the New England Amateur Press Club; so says Harry in *All Our Yesterdays*. Wollheim learned about the mundane apas from Lovecraft and was a member of both the National and United APAs for a time. A sprinkling of mundane apans has discovered and joined FAPA over the years, especially earlier on. Looking at a list I have of the first fifty FAPA members, one sees Edwin Hadley Smith among the listees. I can recall Alvin Fick, Burton Crane, Edgar Allen Martin (yes, the very same) and of course Bill Danner. But there were others. Finally, Helen Wesson comes from mundane ajay origins, has been in FAPA since the early '40s, and is still active there today.

**Elinor Busby:** Yes, admittedly there are a lot of fans writing scads of stuff for various apas, but unless you're in those apas you don't get to see their writing. I find this an unseemly compartmentalization of fanzine fandom and much prefer an active "general" fandom like we used to have.

I've known women who were good at parallel parking. (Is this a Speerism or what?)

**Tom Perry:** You ask regarding computers, "Where will it all stop?" Of course the answer is: It won't. Buy any computer today and watch it become out of date within a year. I read last week that they've now developed an "XT-on-a-board" (about the size of a credit card but thicker) which will make for incredible miniaturization. The same article said that "AT-on-a-board" is expected later in 1990. This will make the new one-pound Poqet computers obsolete before they get off the ground. In the meantime, yes, those Toshiba T1200H laptops are *very* nice.

Dabney Coleman played the mayor of Fernwood, Ohio, on the "Mary Hartman Mary Hartman" TV series. Did you *really* miss it? Too bad, if so, since it seems to be constantly passed over for syndication. (I would love to see it again, since I didn't learn about it until late in the first season.)

Well, I'm only in three apas, now. (Another Speerism?)

**Art Widner:** While in general I disapprove of Crown Books because their buying policies tend to cut out all but the big publishers (they want too much of a discount), I have to say that on occasion I *have* found what I wanted there. Nothing even remotely obscure can be purchased at Crown Books, but (for instance) when I decided I wanted to get the Calvin & Hobbes collections and catch up all at once, two of them were 20% off and the other one, which was newly out at the time, was 35% off. So as a consumer I can see moderately good things about them, while as someone knowledgeable about the "book industry" I think bad thoughts about their effect on the whole scene.

The northernmost mission is, of course, right here in Sonoma Valley. Come check it out sometime. Let me know when you're coming and I'll play native guide.

*Tempeh Cookery* is a cookbook of recipes for preparing tempeh, which is a cultured soybean product. Indonesian in origin, tempeh is prepared by inoculating cooked soybeans with a mold, much the same way yogurt is made. The fermentation binds the beans together and alters their composition so that the resultant tempeh is considerably higher in protein than the beans themselves. It's an acquired taste, but one I definitely have.

**Heidi Pfeifer-Smith:** Enjoyed your travelogue, and I must say you're lucky to be living in such a beautiful area as Athens, Ohio. I remember it from my bookselling days in the '70s. The terrain in that part of the world is truly gorgeous.

To everyone I didn't address directly above: I read everything in the mailing, but not all of it sparks a response from me other than, possibly, a degree of pure enjoyment. SAPS is better escapist reading than science fiction. Thanks to all!

This zine is being done in a burst of energy on December 2, 1989. My car is having its clutch replaced and I'm stuck at home. I finished reading through and checkmarking the mailing a couple of weeks ago. Work on my other fannish projects is progressing nicely and isn't being seriously disturbed by this SAPS interlude. It feels good and now it's done.

Hope you all had a good holiday season and are rarin' to go headlong into the '90s....