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It is produced and distributed bi-monthly through efanzines.com by Bill Burns in an e-edition only.



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Things are going to get unimaginably worse, and they will never get better again. --Kurt Vonnegut, 1970

THIS ISSUE OF *eI* is in memory of sterling fan David Wood, because he deserved it, and I'm sorry he won't know it. It is also in memory of my dear old friend Robert Bloch.

In the exclusively science fiction world, it is also in memory of David Honigsberg.

#

As always, everything in this issue of *eI* beneath my byline is part of my in-progress rough-draft memoirs. As such, I would appreciate any corrections, revisions, extensions,

anecdotes, photographs, jpegs, or what have you sent to me at earlkemp@citlink.net and thank you in advance for all your help.

Bill Burns is *jefe* around here. If it wasn't for him, nothing would get done. He inspires activity. He deserves some really great rewards. It is a privilege and a pleasure to have him working with me to make *eI* whatever it is.

Other than Bill Burns, Dave Locke, and Robert Lichtman, these are the people who made this issue of *eI* possible: Karen Anderson, Victor Banis, Robert Bloch, Graham Charnock, Melissa Conway, Juanita Coulson, Ed Gorman, Earl Terry Kemp, Michael Moorcock, James O'Meara, Curt Phillips, Martin Tays, Bob Tucker, and Peter Weston.

ARTWORK: This issue of *eI* features artwork by Ray Nelson, Steve Stiles, and recycled artwork by Poul Anderson, Harry Bell, Dean Grennell, and William Rotsler.

In this era of big brains, anything that can be done will be done—so hunker down.
--Kilgore Trout

...Return to sender, address unknown.... 22

The Official *eI* Letters to the Editor Column

Artwork recycled William Rotsler

By Earl Kemp

We get letters. Some parts of some of them are printable. Your letter of comment is most wanted via email to earlkemp@citlink.net or by snail mail to P.O. Box 6642, Kingman, AZ 86402-6642 and thank you.

Also, please note, I observe DNQs and make arbitrary and capricious deletions from these letters in order to remain on topic.

This is the official Letter Column of *eI*, and following are a few quotes from a few of those letters concerning the last issue of *eI*. All this in an effort to get you to write letters of comment to *eI* so you can look for them when they appear here.

Sunday April 22, 2007:

All Science Fiction! Gosh-wow! Boy-Oh-Boy! That's for me! It's about time we got rid of all that icky fannish stuff and hunkered down to BEMs and rayguns and brass bras and stuff. And a quick scan of *eI31* shows a bountiful plenty of great articles and lavish illos that are sure to please. Those scans of EMSH originals look great. A good-looking eI, Earl. You may even coax an actual loc out of me this time.

--Curt Phillips, Trufen

#

Barristers, it's the best bit of con reporting I've read in years...though how could I not warm to a piece that reminded me of "We Met On The Steps...?" Well done to Earl for snagging it, and to Mike Moorcock for an instant classic in fannish writing!

--Mary Reed, Inthebar

Monday April 23, 2007:

It was really wonderful to discover in *eI30* the article "Through Emshwiller's Eyes" written by Luis Ortiz about the great artist Emsh. I am an absolute fan of Emsh who is my favorite SF illustrator and that I consider as being the best among all the others. Maybe you remember a whole page is dedicated to him on the Showcase site.

Who is Luis Ortiz? I can see in the middle of the article the picture of a book titled *Emshwiller Infinity X Two The Art and Life of Ed and Carol Emshwiller*. I am very interested by this book because it is the first time I hear of a book dedicated to Ed Emshwiller. Do you think this edition is still available in the US and where it is possible to buy a copy? [*This was handled directly by Jacques and Luis. -EK*]

Thank you to have mentioned among some other names, Patrice Dubic in memory of him.

--Jacques Hamon <http://www.noosfere.org/showcase/>

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You know, I know almost nothing about Ed Emshwiller's life as an artist. I know a fair bit about his time as a filmmaker, but the article about his SF art was so fantastic. From the outside, it's hard to see how interconnected some people, particularly artists, are with individual publications. I've seen almost every issue of *Galaxy*, and I didn't realize half the stuff that was mentioned. I guess it comes from being far too young to have known the early days. I have a few images from him burned in my brain. When we were trying to come up with an iconic image for our chess exhibit, I instantly recommended the image from *Astounding* of the guy sitting bored in front of the computer. To me, that's the perfect image of the early computer era and the piece of Emsh's that sticks hardest in my mind.

His filmmaking career was incredible and Anthology Film Archives has copies of most of his stuff, and they've been kind enough in the past to show several of them and to loan out copies to be viewed at places like the MFA and the Institute for Contemporary Art in Boston and at SFMOMA. There's an amazing beauty to his pieces, and I've recommended a few of his pieces for the National Film Registry, including Sunstone from 1979 that is

one of the most important films of the last 30 years. Working with Alvy Ray Smith, he created what has to be considered the most important step forward for computer graphics of the 1970s. It's worth noting that the film is sadly not in the collection of the Computer History Museum, but a snippet of it appears on an SIGGRAPH tape that we have.



His other important film is "George Dumpson's Place." It's another one that should be on the National Film Registry. The cinematography is strange and actually foretells the methods that filmmakers would be using in the 1970s and '80s. It's a textural piece that flows with the kind of visual sensitivity that only an artist used to creating with his hands could provide. There's an amazing sense of oblivion in the film and it's one of the best examples of avant-garde documentary filmmaking from that period. It's available on the Treasures of American Film Archives DVD set. I'm hoping that more Emshwiller pieces make their way onto DVD because they are an important part of the story of the artist and of American Experimental Film, especially his early work documenting dance that is seldom seen any

more. I know that there was a Dance centered film festival that showed several of his pieces in the 1990s, but I did not attend.

The Rog Phillips stuff from Terry is just wonderful. It's exactly the kind of writing I love; personal and attached while informative. I've read a lot of those "Club House" articles over the years and I have to say they were good stuff. I had little idea about the guy behind them.

Great issues as always, Earl.

--Chris Garcia

#

That mammoth Roger Phillips article deserves to be a book in its own right, and that is probably the only way I could read it in its entirety. Hey, Earl, edit it and put it up on Lulu as a paperback. I'd buy a copy. (Loved the shot of you as a proud father, by the way. You haven't changed a bit--he chortled unconvincingly.) Mike is wrong on several counts: I never had a Fender Precision Bass, and I forget what the other count is. Oh yes, "Star Cruiser" was never that great a song—but I think Mike was being ironic if not post-ironic. And, oh yes, you might have photoshopped and cropped that picture of me at Corflu so that it cut out Ted, and perhaps enhanced it so that I was remotely visible.

--Graham Charnock, Inthebar

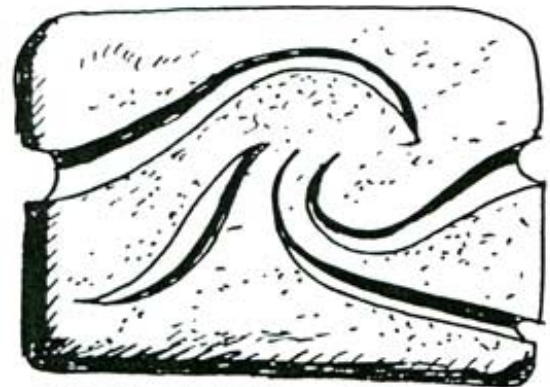
#

I need to send a note if only to mention how much I enjoyed the brilliant bit by Mike Moorcock. I'd almost say it inspired me to try some faanish writing, but on second thought it convinces me to never, ever even think about wasting my time on something that would pale in comparison. And I wasn't at the convention and am only vaguely familiar with a lot of his references. I guess this is the sort of writing that played a big part in attracting me to fanzines -- stuff that was just fun.

Rog Phillips' article is even more remarkable. It isn't new, but I appreciate the chance to read it. Richard Shaver, who gets a mention, was pretty much before my time but I do recall him popping up for a while in the seventies in Don Brazier's *Title*. I wonder if any of the amazing stories related in the article turned into sf?

Rog Phillips is someone I knew little about and the material was fascinating both for what it told me about him and about Fandom in the late forties and early fifties. Mike Deckinger's article about the original Club House column had some special personal interest to me. I was just being born around the time when Rog was writing the column (He didn't have a column the month I was born). However it was the revived Club House, decades later, which revealed to me the existence of fandom. I was living outside Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania so I probably never would've realized fandom existed if I hadn't read about fanzines in that coverless magazine I found in the used bookstore.

I admire the encouraging attitude Rog apparently took in his fanzine reviews. It's always seemed to me that publications (or other creative efforts) that are done for the love of it and with good intentions (not to mention given away free) should not be subjected to harsh criticism. Those who don't like such amateur offerings should maybe just avoid them and direct their righteous indignation at stuff people are getting paid to do. The enthusiasm of a fanzine editor can be practically palpable and can be enjoyable in itself, even though the zine might feature sloppy writing and bad repro.



ALIEN MONEY - ROSLERIZ

All the old covers add a lot. There are some really impressively designed fanzine covers there and I was amused to see that the cover of the first *Science Fiction Five Yearly* was a dittoed (I guess) copy of an *Amazing*. Did Mike Deckinger or you or someone else simply notice that when putting the article together, or was the connection mentioned in the *SF Five Yearly* itself, or alluded too at some earlier time? Is there some sort of a story there, in other words?

I haven't even mentioned the article about Ed Emshwiller that was enough in itself for an entire issue. The insights into the manner in which sf zines operated were fascinating. I recall my parents once took away some issues of *Galaxy*. I seem to remember they

thought the magazines contained inappropriate material, maybe due to the covers, but looking at the covers from back then I can't imagine what they would have objected to so maybe it had to do with interior illos, or subject matter. It was ironic in that the issues were given to me by a friend of my dad's, George Schelling, who did artwork for *Galaxy* and other sf mags, before moving on to do wildlife illustration.

--Eric Mayer

#

I meant to mention how pleased I was to get the piece on Ed Emshwiller. I knew him originally more as a filmmaker than a magazine illustrator and it was that aspect of his work I mentioned in *New Worlds*. He was a genuinely original master filmmaker. I came to admire his extraordinary diversity. I didn't know him well, but we hung out a few times and I liked him a great deal, as I liked Carol whose work I was also privileged to publish. She, of course, has gone from strength to strength as a writer.

I meant to add that I've also done stories to fit existing cover paintings. I liked a Quinn painting so much one day when I was in Ted's office that he suggested I write a story for it. I did a story called "The Greater Conqueror" for the painting. The story appeared in *Science Fantasy* -- but without the painting! The painting appeared on a different issue. I was eventually given the painting by Ted Carnell as a wedding present! Quinn didn't seem to mind. Our policy at *New Worlds* was always to return artwork to the artist. I also wrote two thrillers to covers complete with titles—"Something in the Night" and "Printer's Devil" (originally done for a proposed US pirate edition of *The Devil Rides Out* which Wheatley's lawyers stopped Compact from doing!). My first novel had nothing to do with 'somewhere in the night' but every so often I'd put in the phrase 'somewhere in the night -- a dog barked...' or whatever. "Printer's Devil" inspired a story about a murder in a comic book publishers, closely based on my time with Amalgamated Press (Fleetway). The first novel appeared in hardback with some names changed, published by Hutchinson, as *The Chinese Agent* -- the best-selling book I had ever written to date. The second came from NEL/Savoy as *The Russian Intelligence...*

I sometimes think I'm one of the last of the pulp hacks. I came in pretty early, as did Silverberg and Ellison. I always love reading about *Galaxy*, by the way. It remains my favourite magazine. I envied Ballard his Emshwiller cover for one of the rare stories he sent to the US. I got a Finlay for one of mine, so I guess it balances out...

I used Moorcock of the Yard in the pseudonymous comic thrillers I mentioned ("Somewhere in the Night," etc). When I came to republish them under my own name I had to change the name to "Crapper of the Yard."

--Mike Moorcock

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So is it just me, or does the cover for the March 1951 issue of *Amazing* look to have been the basis for the cover of the first issue of *Science-Fiction Five-Yearly*? It's almost a direct copy. (Both are reproduced in Mike Deckinger's article on "The Club House.")

--Randy Byers

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Sure looks like it. Here they are side by side: <http://efanzines.com/EK/eI31/sffyamz.htm>

--Bill Burns

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Thanks, Bill. Randy, looks like you win this round. I'll do the rolling....

--Earl Kemp

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I didn't realize there was a prize. Sweet! (I was actually afraid that this was common knowledge and that I was pointing out the obvious.)

--Randy Byers

Tuesday April 24, 2007:

I have downloaded the PDF and am reading away. Just finished Michael Moorcock's piece: completely blew me away. Exceptionally good issue, Earl.

--Jack Calvert

#

Can I be sure Jack Calvert (JC) isn't one of my pseudonyms? Can I be sure of anything? Who is this? Where am I?

--Jike Coorcock

Wednesday April 25, 2007:

I've had a look at the latest *eI*, and must say just how much I enjoyed it—for Emsh and Rog Phillips. I remember very plainly seeing the June 1951 *Galaxy* cover (alien archaeologists), being entranced by the colours and hiding the issue under the cover of a desk while I read it at school.

Emsh's style was what I aspired to, but always without hope (it was only when software packages such as Eon's Vue Infinite arrived that I was able to create graphics with which I was not too unhappy). He, along with Hannes Bok and Ed Cartier and Virgil Finlay (especially Virgil Finlay) were my adolescent heroes of SF art.

I also read—with considerable interest—the articles on Roger Phillips Graham. While he never made it into my pantheon of 'canonical SF authors', his story "The Yellow Pill" has remained with me since I first read it almost fifty years ago.

However there was one piece of information which I think is in error, and that is the attribution to him of the word "actifan".

Page 81 of *eI31* states: "According to the Oxford English Dictionary it appears that Rog Phillips invented the word "actifan" (active fan), as he is cited by them with the earliest known usage of the word (*Startling Stories*, January 1947)"

I have the complete OED—Second Edition (1989) together with the three 'Additions Series' Volume 1 and 2 (1993) and Volume 3 (1997). "Actifan" is not an entry in any of these (my version is the OED on CD-ROM) nor is it in any definition or quotation, and Rog Phillips is not a quotation author. (*Startling Stories* only has two quotation entries).

BUT the OED has a 'Science Fiction Citations Project' which has been collecting SF citations since 2001, so 'actifan' may be listed there (at www.jessesword.com/sf)

I have just acquired "Brave New Words: The Oxford Dictionary of Science Fiction" ed. by Jeff Prucher (from, obviously, Oxford University Press [2007]) in which the entry "actifan" DOES appear. Here, the earliest quotation comes from 1944 (three years prior to the date given in the *eI* article) where it is attributed to 'J.B. Speer "Fancylopedia"'. There is another quote given—THIS TIME FROM *STARTLING STORIES* 1947 (January), but anonymously. "If there are any fans in North Carolina, would you please get in touch with me [...]. If you even read StF, you'll do. You don't have to be an actifan, just so as you read StF". COULD the author be Rog?

Prucher's book, by the way states that "[t]he majority of citations in this dictionary come from the [OED SF] Citations Project". Regardless of when actifan was first coined, it seems, sadly, that Rog was not its creator...

The site <http://www.jessesword.com/sf> does NOT list the 'actifan' citation attributed to 'J. B. Speer "Fancylopedia"' of 1944 as given by Jeff Prucher in "Brave New Words". The other quotes he gives ARE at the site. But the earliest 'jessesword' R. Phillips quote is 1950 —'Club House' in *Amazing Stories* November.

--Dick Jenssen (aka Ditmar, Martin)

Monday April 30, 2007:

I found my way to your *eI* fanzine today. I was searching for information about Hal Dresner and found your article "Futting With the F.B.I. Futter" in Vol. 1 No. 4.

I was just in the process of re-reading *The Man Who Wrote Dirty Books* and I took a shot at google-ing Hal Dresner again to see if anything came up. The first time I read the book was several years ago, prior to the appearance of your piece (I know this because I searched back then and found only the television and film writing credits and little else).



I want to thank you for writing this, both for providing background on Hal Dresner and for sharing your appreciation. I put *The Man Who Wrote Dirty Books* right up there with *A Confederacy of Dunces* as a book that I will go back to again and again. It means even more to me now to see that the book can resonate for you in the way you describe. The time and place of the book are actually before my time, and I am not a producer or a self-avowed devotee of pulp publishing (although your fanzine is impressive in its depth and treats the topic in quite a seductive way), so I think I am most struck by just the wise-assed nature of Mr. Dresner's writing. It's the type of writing that says to me "that's how I'd like to write."

I have skimmed some of your other *eI* issues and I am certainly looking forward to reading some more. The artwork alone is quite arresting.

That's really about all I wanted to say. Thanks again.

--Doug Waltonbaugh

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Thanks for passing this along, Earl. And for the e-zine articles. Keeps me young(er).

Best, Hal Dresner

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Wednesday May 2, 2007:

Better fans than I have probably already noted the following small nod and smaller omission in Earl T. Kemp's contributions to your excellent fanzines' most recent issues.

ETK mistakes George Scithers for the editor of *Analog*, presumably referring to Stanley Schmidt, while recounting his memory of a conversation with Dick Lupoff. GS, of course, has edited *IASF*M (as they used to call *ASIMOV'S*, and its short-lived offshoots), *AMAZING* and *WEIRD TALES* (and perhaps less iconically is apparently helming the nascent *CAT TALES*), along with the legendary *AMRA* and such. Blame him as you should for publishing all those dire Barry Longyear (and others, but mostly Barry Longyear's) imitations of Jack Vance, but Scithers can't reasonably be called to task for *Analog* (my hard-sf-loving retired-engineer father: "*Analog* has gotten very dull.")

Left out of the *eI* bibliography for Rog Phillips was the reprint of "Good Sound Therapy" in *Best Detective Stories of the Year 16th Annual Collection*. Edited by Brett Halliday, E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1961.

--Todd Mason

#

Great catch!

As I recollect the incident, I had just begun to talk with Dick Lupoff about *Analog*, when he mentioned George Scithers as being responsible for their editorial policy. We had no time to continue our conversation, and clear up any details. I did not try to pin Lupoff down about his statement in the brief time available. I'm certain that on closer communication that Dick actually meant *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, where George held the position of editor from its inception in 1977 until 1982.

As a correction to my brief article (thanks for reading it, hope you enjoyed it), I should replace *Analog* with *Asimov's*.

However, I feel certain that some debate about *Analog* is merited and that a similar reason would be found for their current editorial policy.

Thank you for the addition to Rog's Bibliography. Are you in a position to verify that the other entries are all correct?

--Earl Terry Kemp

Friday May 4, 2007:

Loved the Emshiana, Moorcock con report, and other wonders in *eI* (see, I do look sometimes)....

--David Langford

Wednesday May 16, 2007:

Sacre merde, Earl. An entire issue of *eI* about science fiction! Not only is that in itself impressive, but what a wonderful issue.

See, I really don't have much to say here except that I loved it all, especially all of the Emshwiller art. Grand stuff that brought back memories of all of those digest-sized magazines of the '50s through the '70s. Good stuff all around here.

All I can say is thank you for producing such a wonderful zine. This is great work, and I sit in awe of what you do. That, and the fact that you have the time to do it. Oh, well. Someday I'll get to that point.

--John Purcell

Friday June 1, 2007:

I've been through *eI*. All of it (quickly scanning in some places, soaking in others...).

The work in *eI* in general is both prodigious and, on many levels, brave. Your life (or those portions brought forth therein) is that fusion of epic and commonplace that most often identifies distinctly American lives, and in the telling, you capture exceptionally well what our country was for many upwardly mobile folks for the better part of 3+ decades.

Again, thank you for pointing me at *eI*; it underscores the significance of the quarter-century of extra contact with fandom you have on me, and gives me some sense of all that I have missed....

--Gilbert Head

Tuesday June 5, 2007:

The local, first of all... I met Bob Tucker once, and that wasn't enough. I never met LeeH, and that's my loss, as it was with so many fannish elders I wanted to meet, and not enough money and too much geography always got in the way.

My loc...I have a few Rotsler jpegs, dating back to when I did the badges for the second Toronto Ditto. That may be my fourth stash. I gather Jerry Kaufman gave Chris Garcia a stash of Rotslers the same way I gave some of my stash to John Purcell. Chris and John are two happy guys...

Just for the record...many of the entries for Horace L. Gold have him born in Canada. Well, that's as vague as saying that most of you folks were born in America! Some digging showed me that Gold was born in Montréal. There's another reason to support the Montréal in 2009 Worldcon bid! I hope the committee is aware of their SFnal heritage,

and will celebrate it in style.

Zoomies? Oooh, I've never been called that... Lots of other names over the years, though. Yvonne's family still thinks our heads are in the clouds, and that we'd do better if we'd just stop reading that sci-fi garbage, and even my mother, who got me reading SF in the first place, admits she no longer reads that silly stuff.

I am pleased to say that I have a copy of the Chicon III programme book, and I am finding the references within it. And Earl, I still think doing a modern-day WKSF? would be of great benefit to the industry today. I directed Robert J. Sawyer to the pdfed version on eFanzines; I'm not sure if he did read it, but if he did, I am certain there'd be some benefit to him.

Greetings to Michael Moorcock, someone I never thought I'd find within the pages of the myriad fanzines I receive. Ah, if only I'd been able to somehow transport myself to Austin to see that august crowd Pat Virzi was able to assemble. Such horror, such trauma, and if only I'd been there to witness it and cackle in glee....

I wish there was once again a fannish column in the prozines...not only would it be an initial contact for readers who might wonder if there's a network out there of similarly interested people, but it would also provide another way of fans and pros connecting. Isn't that how this whole thing started? Could it restart it? Or, are we flogging a dead horse with the low circulation of most modern SF magazines? The list of involvements between fans and pros in the Phillips columns would be a godsend today, as would his insights into the future of pollution. What encouragement. And, what a history of the contents of early fanzines. Perhaps Rog never really got the recognition he deserved, but from what I read here, he might not have accepted it.

W. Paul Ganley is still involved in some areas of fandom in Buffalo, New York. He was the publisher of *Weirdbook*, he is still involved with the Buffalo Fantasy League, and is usually involved to some degree with Joe Fillinger with the staging of Eeriecon in Niagara Falls, NY.

--Lloyd Penney

Sunday June 10, 2007:

I finally finished reading the April *eI* last night and had some comments. I'll pass on saying anything about the extensive excerpt you included by Luis Ortiz from his Emsch book since, after all, I bought and have read (and needless to say, enjoyed) the book itself. Moorcock's breezy piece on his time at the Austin Corflu made for an entertaining read, but it's the stuff about Rog Phillips and "The Club House" that was by far the highlight of this issue for me.

As I've written before a number of times, I discovered fandom before I discovered fandom thanks to Rog's columns in *Amazing*. When I was twelve going on thirteen my parents

sent me to learn judo at the Hollywood dojo operated by Bruce Tegnér. If you Google for him you'll find a lot of information about his interesting personal history, including that he operated that school from 1952 to 1967. I was there every Saturday for six months in 1955 during my personal golden age for reading science fiction, and afterward I would walk up from Sunset Blvd. (near Western Avenue) to Hollywood Blvd., where there was a huge used bookstore, Larsen's, whose mustiness overpowered you but in a good way once you opened the door and went inside.

Larsen's had a wall of pulp magazines running from ceiling to floor and extending maybe 15-20 feet, and that was my paradise on those Saturday afternoons. It was where I discovered the Shaver mystery and read some of the stories. But before long, what most caught my attention in the hundreds of magazines neatly arranged by title and date was the various fan columns and the letter sections. I read Sarge Saturn. I read what to me were incredible letters from various individuals—the same ones kept cropping up from issue to issue—raving positively and/or negatively about stories in the magazines and taking issue with other letter writers' comments on the same stories. And of course I read "The Club House." I learned of someone complaining that FAPA (or was it SAPS) shouldn't be sending mailings to Phillips because *Amazing* carried Shaver's writing. I read about conventions happening in far off places. And I read reviews of magazines with names like *Dream Quest* and *Fandom Speaks*.

How interesting, I thought, but at the age of thirteen I never made the leap that although what I was reading about had taken place back in the '40s—an incredibly long time ago for someone so young—it might still be happening. I wasn't reading most of the current science fiction magazines (all digests by then) except for the leading ones like *F&SF* and *Galaxy*, so it wasn't until the summer of 1958 that—attracted by the cover blurb, "Special Science Feature: What We Will Find On Venus"—I picked up the October 1958 issue of *Imagination* and was dumbfounded to find Robert Bloch's "Fandora's Box" column in which *fanzines* were being reviewed. (It also didn't hurt that Bloch preceded his reviews in that column by a long polemic about how amateur magazines were a bastion of individual expression in an ever more corporatized media landscape.) I bought the magazine and promptly sent away for a few of the fanzines.

As I later learned, that was the final issue of *Imagination* and the final installment of Bloch's column. If not for my curiosity about Venus, I might not be writing these words today.

So much of what Mike Deckinger quotes from Rog's columns is completely familiar to me because I didn't just read them once—I made many visits to Larsen's and read them many times. I don't think I read them all, though, and it occurs to me that a wonderful book could be made by reprinting the entire run. Some stuff would be dated, to be sure, but they're so full of Phillips' enthusiastic and knowledgeable comments and insights about fandom that I believe such a compilation would be a joy to read (and, I suspect, not just for those of us who either got into fandom through them or saw them in old pulps long ago). A possible Advent project?

Since one of my sons lives outside Taos, New Mexico, I was quite taken with Rog's writing after his visit with Mack Reynolds and Fredric Brown—who were living there when he saw them in 1951—that it's an inexpensive place to live because you can pick up an acre of ground and a two-room adobe house for \$600." That's no longer the case, of course, but it's still true that "There were places where the landscape might have been a Bonestell painting of a scene from the surface of the moon."

This quote from one of Phillips's columns caught my attention: "Also reported is the formation of the SFWA (Science Fiction Writers of America) at the fifth annual SouWestercon in San Diego late in June 1952. About five hundred writers will be asked to consider joining the organization. The three aims of the SFWA are (1) to improve the financial status of sf writers by bettering the conditions of rights and rates (2) to enable sf writers to know each other and to compare their work and experience in the field, and (3) by publicity, awards, and other methods of promotion, to improve the prestige and standing in the eyes of the general public.' Inquiries go to Forrest J Ackerman." Since according to its own Web page and all references I can find, the SFWA we know (now SFFWA) was founded by Damon Knight in 1965, apparently this was an earlier effort that not only failed but of which all knowledge other than this paragraph has been lost.

I enjoyed your and Earl Terry's homages to Rog Phillips as well—excellent accompaniments to Deckinger's long survey of the "Club House" columns. And of course "Christ: An Autobiography" *had* to be included here to complete the picture. About his work published in book form, Terry writes that "these three paperbacks represent a very short list of his better-known works. The paperbacks are difficult to find, and expensive to collect. His one and only hardbound also goes quickly to collectors." However, because this issue got me interested in reading his science fiction, I found inexpensive copies of all the books via Bookfinder and have sent for them. I look forward to checking them out.

--Robert Lichtman

If you can do a half-assed job of anything, you're a one-eyed man in a kingdom of the blind.

--Kurt Vonnegut

Picnic Time in Wabash, Indiana

Artwork by Ray Nelson

By Juanita Coulson

21st Century fans who use the Interstate system sometimes complain that those multi-laned ribbons are alternately boring or nerve-wracking. But us old farts and fartesses tend to mutter “ghod bless Ike” for dreaming up the idea of high-speed links between fannish locales. Remembering trips to fan parties in the region (at Martha Beck’s) and the Chicago area (Kemp’s, Hickey’s, etc.) and Wilmot, WI (the Stopas) tends to make me shudder in retrospect. Once you’ve gone from central Indiana north via good ole 12 and 20, the Tri-State and Dan Ryan expressways actually seem relaxing.

Back in the 1960’s we—Buck and I and (small child, then) Bruce—were thoroughly isolated from the rest of midwestern fandom. 80+ miles from Indy, with its on-again off-again fan club shenanigans and, depending on traffic and weather, at least four or five hours from Chicago. We had enjoyed the company and hospitality of many fan friends throughout the area for years. And at some point we decided we’d like to return the favor. But what could we offer? City fan clubs had lots of members available to host parties, and plenty of venues for entertaining out of towners. There we were, totally out in the middle of nowhere, five miles south of Wabash, IN.



Well, we had a small rented farmhouse, a BIG kitchen garden, and our landlord’s barn lot full of cows and pigs and chickens—entertainment for big city fan kids. We also had open spaces and smog-free air. So we invited our friends to a weekend “picnic”. We certainly couldn’t compete with the kind of feed the Stopas could offer up at their ski lodge, but what the heck. Y’all come and chow down on fresh-out-of-the-garden sweet corn, equally fresh pots of green beans, LOTS of spaghetti, LOTS of yard and grassy fields for playing games, and plenty of space to exercise the kids till they run out of energy. And just generally have fun.

We figured maybe ten or so fans might be able to make it, and prayed for good weather. As it turned out, the weather was fine, the garden

was in full production—and LOTS more than ten fans showed up. They did not luck: people brought hot dogs and hamburger and buns and chips and beer and more pop to add to our supply, and we all stuffed ourselves silly. Everybody seemed to have a great time and insisted we do it again next year (come fresh corn season). So we did. For several years running. Until the tally reached 40 fans. (And believe me, cooking enough spaghetti to feed 40 fans amounts to a LOT of spaghetti.)

Unfortunately, by that stage, some fringers in the Midwestern fan community—people we barely knew or didn't know at all—began showing up, under the assumption we were staging a con, not simply throwing a private party for our friends. And eventually, possibly inevitably, items began “disappearing” from our bookshelves, never to be seen again after the crowds went home. (We had strong suspicions who might have lifted said items, but had no proof. The probable perp definitely was NOT one of our trusted, invited friends.) That was the end of the Coulson “picnics”. It was fun while it lasted, and it was with regrets we closed down the shop.



At the time, we took a few—very few—pictures. Including one of a hand-drawn sign of a rocket ship (substituting for an arrow) pointing out the final destination to fans trying to find our place.

Other fans, it seems, were taking LOTS of photos. Earl Kemp and Jim O'Meara relayed a batch of these to me, using fancy modern technology and a CD, asking me to help identify some of the gaps in their collection of images. A challenge, because I was usually so busy in the kitchen that sometimes I barely got to see people arriving or leaving. And a few of the Chicago fans I'm not sure I had ever met before—or since.



However, in an attempt to play fannish historian, I'll call your attention first to the photo on the left. This is the rented farmhouse, and yes, it really is as small as it appears. The

photo on the right is the “parking lot” —a grassy small field stretching alongside our meandering driveway, in this scene jammed with a variety of fans’ vehicles.



One of the special delights of this particular picnic was the Grennell family. DAG and brood came all the way down from Fond du Lac, WI a few days before the weekend. Dean, of course, came armed with his own camera. The ultimate shutterbug is on display in the photo to the left. And in the right hand photo, he’s presumably comparing photogs’ notes with Jim O’Meara.



The Grennell gang was already practically part of the family when the Chicago crowd started arriving on Saturday. Fan friends like Rosemary Hickey and Earl Kemp, seen in this photo. More fans kept pulling in at a steady pace. Some had received one of our invitations and maps without too much expectation on our part that they’d be able to make the drive ’way out to our boondocks. But a surprising number did. They rolled in from North, South, East, and West.

This photo offers a good sampling of assorted picnickers lounging around inside the tiny farmhouse. The grinning blond at the far left of the picture is Joe Lee Sanders, now a retired English prof. Shirt with narrow stripes is Ann Dinkleman, next to Earl Kemp, with Dean Grennell holding up the door. (One of the Grennell sprouts is lurking down there in the shadows beside Daddy.) Barely visible in the left foreground is Rosemary Hickey, the back of the head in the center is Rick Prairie, and the guy with the sunglasses was one of those fans I didn't know (then, or now).



Shift to the kitchen for the next photo (below left). Jon Stopa, Earl (again), an assortment of Grennell and Kemp kids around the table, Buck draining a pop can, and Jean Grennell keeping an eye on everything, per normal.



(Above right) Up front—in the “parlor” (with the cornfield across the road waving in the breeze), a serious guy fan get-together: Ted Johnstone (aka Dave McDaniels) in the foreground, reading something, Les Gerber of upstate NY half hidden behind him, Joe Lee Sanders and Buck (again) interestedly trying to see what’s under discussion. And the shy type—in reality as well as in this photo—hiding behind Buck is Dale Brandon of Union City, IN, fringe fan and amateur magician.

There are a bunch of photos showing people sitting on the porch, spreading blankets on the lawn (watch out for chiggers) and generally soaking up fresh air and sunshine. At one of the picnics, there was a solar eclipse, and we had made a safe viewing box with the peephole arrangement which amused a lot of the kids—and quite a few of the adults, come to that. Gawking over the fences at the landlord’s livestock seemed to be another esoteric

entertainment. And of course there was the usual collection of freshly hatched barn kittens that kept the girl kids particularly enthralled.



One of the completely unexpected perks of this picnic for me was the number of musically oriented fans who showed up. This was before the time that “filk” was in general usage, but “filk”—under whatever guise—was indeed happening. Les Gerber I knew from previous Midwestcon outings. Ted Johnstone I knew was musical, but I never anticipated his attending the picnic. (On a cross-country trip from CA, I gather, and tagged along for the ride down to the Indiana boonies.) Plus Ray Nelson, who dabbled in all sorts of arts, from writing to cartooning to...yes, playing the guitar. *[As well as drawing*

the three cartoons included with this article. –EK]

As you can tell from several of the photos, we had our own version of SF and F hootenannies that weekend, and I trust a good time was enjoyed by all but those who hate music in whatever form. (At the time, I was stuck with a wretched little Sears-Roebuck “student” guitar, model Kay. Not ideal for men—with much larger hands than mine—but somehow Ray actually managed to cope with it, as shown in the photo above. Fortunately, Les and, I believe, Ted brought along decent instruments, so they weren’t forced to cramp their fingers around my little monster’s fretboard too often.)

All in all, it was not a Chinese curse, though it WAS an interesting time. (For one thing, the little farm house was due east of a SAC base, and every so often those enormous birds, no doubt loaded to the gills with nukes, would be lumbering toward us, climbing ever so Sloooowly and banking. I tended to stand out in the same front yard where picnickers enjoyed themselves and make golfer’s “English” “up, up, up, and take it over thataway” motions, chivvying them toward Fort Wayne—if they decided to crash.) But fannishly, all of us—even the traditional family types fans—were in a sort of extended adolescence, making it up as we went, sharing a love for the same game, following one of my favorite axioms: We may, eventually, have had to grow old, but very few of us were going to allow ourselves to grow up. I haven’t, and I hope those in these photos who are



still with us feel the same way.



Finally I take a break and join in for a little music.

Exit: Enjoying ourselves.

My memory piece of Buck and Juanita Coulson's Wabash, Indiana picnics was covered in "Tiptoe Through the Twilltone With Me" that appeared in [eI13](#).

--Earl Kemp

All photos in this article courtesy James O'Meara Collection.

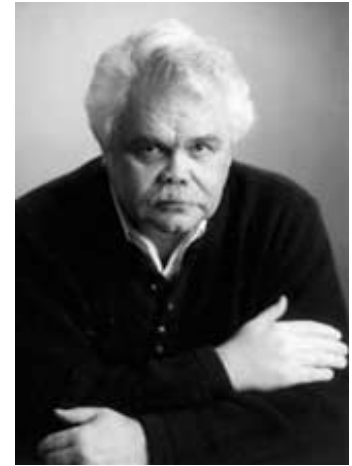
Thanks to TV and for the convenience of TV, you can only be one of two kinds of human beings, either a liberal or a conservative.

--Kurt Vonnegut, "Cold Turkey," *In These Times*, May 10, 2004

Ted White *Still* Scares Me

By Ed Gorman

The first science fiction fanzine I ever saw was edited by a man named Guy Terwilliger, and I believe it was called *Twig*. It was extremely spiffy. Guy (I may not be spelling his last name correctly) took enormous pride in his work. And that included the articles that were so nicely laid out. I was hooked. The year was 1956 or 1957. These people were actually writing about SCIENCE FICTION.

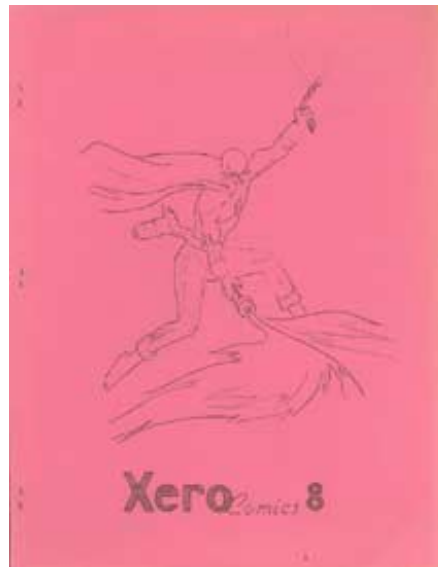


Ed Gorman

For the next four years I was an active fan. My favorite fanzine was *Yandro*. Juanita Coulson was not only talented but also nice. Husband Buck was gruff but nice. Hell, that kind of relationship played beautifully on screen (Katherine Hepburn, Spencer Tracy). Why not in real life?

Yandro was a gathering place for two or three generations of fans and writers. My peer group, if that's the proper characterization, was Roger Ebert, Vic Ryan, Mike Deckinger, and—And I can't remember any other names forty-six or forty-seven years later.

I suppose there were more prestigious fanzines. But for reasons I don't recall I never quite took to them. Maybe I was intimidated by them. I knew how stupid I was. But did other folks have to know?



When Richard and Pat Lupoff began publishing *Xero* I had two favorite fanzines. The

Lupoffs were like the Coulsons, helpful and welcoming, even to Iowa hayseeds like myself.

I had two writing heroes in the sf field. Robert Silverberg and Harlan Ellison. I was stunned by the level of craft Silverberg had achieved by age eighteen. And early on you saw in Ellison's work the darkness he would mine in the masterpieces that would start appearing from him just a few years later. And Silverberg's masterpieces would follow soon after.

Toward the end of my tenure in fandom I published a fanzine called *Ciln*. I had no idea what *Ciln* meant. But the other people on the violent ward thought it sounded pretty cool, so I went with it.

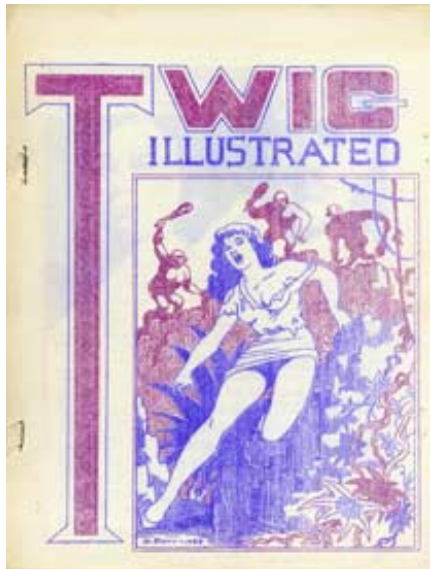
The three [*There are **four** issues, numbers 1, 2, 3, and 5, in the Bruce Pelz Collection, University of California, Riverside. –Robert Lichtman*] issues were sort of spiffy (not as spiffy as *Twig*) because they came enclosed in two-color George Barr covers. Knockouts. Among the contributors were Greg Benford, Marion Zimmer Bradley, and Robert Bloch.



I was then and am now political. I introduced politics every chance I got, especially in the letter column. Around this time *Habakkuk* was getting ready to appear. In case you never saw it, it was a thunderous exciting amalgam of mainstream politics, left-wing politics, fringe politics, beat writing, confessional writing, and a letter column that was probably read carefully by those FBI agents not busy following Dalton Trumbo and Rock Hudson around. It was where outcasts of all stripes hung out and I was right at home. All these remarks about *Ciln* and *Habakkuk* are from memory. Twenty-five years ago, in our second move, my wife Carol and I both lost boxes of the material we'd written in earlier times. I haven't seen *Ciln* or *Habakkuk* for probably thirty years.

During my time as a fan there was one thing I dreaded and that was getting into a fanzine argument with Ted White. Even when he was wrong, he was persuasive. And when he was

right, God help you. In memory anyway, he got into more fights than Ali had in his entire career. Most of them were minor battles but a few were epics.



The thing was, I thought Ted was an excellent writer. And an *interesting* writer. He was one of those people who could take a dull subject such as magazine circulation and turn it into a spellbinder, at least for those of us who cared about magazine sf. I probably read a hundred columns, essays, and long letters by Ted, and never found even one of them boring.

Later, when he began writing professionally, I enjoyed his books and stories too. And when he began editing *Amazing* and *Fantastic*...I don't think he's ever gotten his due for the astonishingly good job he did with them. They were among the few sf magazines I kept when I unloaded about a thousand or so of everything else when I was diagnosed with incurable but treatable cancer five years ago (doing pretty well, thanks).

And one of the reasons they were so damned readable was because of Ted's presence in them. Stories, editorials, essays, responses to letters, even a few reviews, as I recall. And some fine stories from writers who would soon be major, not least Dean Koontz, George R. R. Martin, and Lisa Tuttle.



And best of all, I never got into an argument with him. He disagreed with me enough to ding me once in *Yandro*, but after I hid in my basement bomb shelter for six days, I was doing just fine.

I can still smell the mimeo ink, still rub my fingers together and feel the texture of Twilltone paper, still feel the pride in seeing that first George Barr cover as I stapled it to the rest of the fanzine.

I met an awful lot of very decent people back then and if there's a heaven I hope that at least part of it is a vast newsstand where we can find all those sf magazines from our era sitting right next to the Ace Doubles and the Ballantines and the Bantams and the Signets that were the lifeblood of our vampiric obsessions.

Miscellaneous quotes from *Ciln 5*:

Comments on the Magazine Field, October 1961

Donald Wollheim, editor, ACE Books:

“The slump in SF periodicals has not affected ACE Books in any way.

“We will continue to publish on a monthly basis, keeping up our doubles and occasionally adding a second title per month in way of a good single novel or anthology.

“There has been no change in our print orders or pattern of publishing unless it's been for the better.”

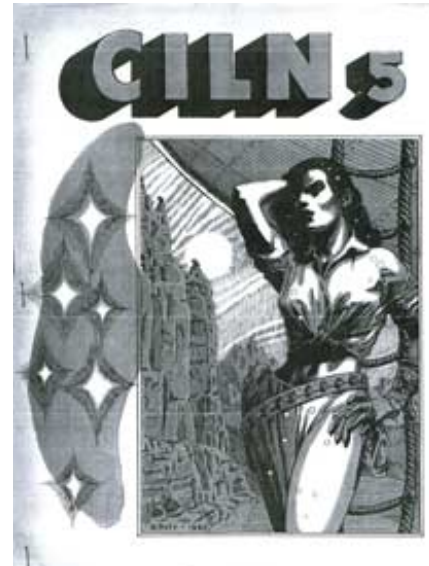
Richard Ballantine, publicity, Ballantine Books

“The SF slump is, I believe, largely confined to magazine publications in that field. Book sales are lower only in terms of number of titles available; the volume remains the same. This is to say that ‘trashy’ SF material is not selling—its elimination from newsstand distribution would eliminate the so-called ‘slump.’ Immediate Ballantine publishing plans include three forthcoming originals: *30-Day Wonder* (Richard Wilson), *Drunkard's Walk* (F. Pohl), and *Trouble With Lichen* (John Wyndham).”

I also asked why Ballantine found English SF more to their liking (besides the fact that it is better written).

His reply:

“In conclusion, the fact that British authors seem, in general, to have a better grasp on English usage than do their American counterparts is by no means trivial. Imagination, to be sure, is the keystone of SF. But it must be translated into the terms of the printed word.”



This is a photocopy of the cover of *Ciln 5* (n.d. 1961) with gorgeous artwork by George Barr. Courtesy Bruce Pelz Collection, The Eaton Collection, University of California, Riverside.

All fanzine cover scans in this article courtesy Robert Lichtman Collection.

It has been my experience with literary critics and academics in this country that clarity looks a lot like laziness and ignorance and childishness and cheapness to them. Any idea which can be grasped immediately is for them, by definition, something they knew all the time.

--Kurt Vonnegut, *Palm Sunday*

Corflu Quire Confidential

or

The Sordid Truth About Lord Hawkwind

By Graham Charnock

The phone rang and I woke up. It was Earl calling me at 2.00 in the morning. He often does that, not realizing he is nine hours behind me, in terms of time and several inches behind me in terms of length. I extricated myself from beneath my whore to answer the phone.



Michael Moorcock and Graham Charnock. Photo by Earl Kemp, Corflu Quire, Austin, TX, February 2007.

“Mike Moorcock is coming to Corflu,” Earl gibbered in his characteristic unnatural high-pitched tones. “I’ve brokered a deal whereby I pay all his expenses and then pay him a lot more to write a report on it in my famous fanzine *eI* or possibly *iE* if you are looking at it in a mirror whilst reading it, which frankly only a narcissist would do. So get your ass over here, and bring the rest of your body if you feel so inclined, although frankly the rest of your body is a waste of space as far as I’m concerned.”

I put the phone down and licked the rest of the butter off my whore. I paid her fifty quid and kicked her out. “Next time bring Lurpak,” I shouted after her.

“Okay, but it’ll cost extra,” she shouted back.

In later conversation with Earl, I learned the truth. Mike was going through a crisis of conscience. He had burned down Charles Platt’s flat, mainly as I understand it, by trying to connect his toy train set directly to the mains with a soldering iron, using 3 amp wire. He had also sold his wife’s underwear, and was looking for a suitable patsy on whom he could off-lay the guilt. He knew I had lived there several years earlier and had left the residue of highly flammable turps substitute soaked into the carpet during one of my experiments with a crack smoking device. He only knew this because I had been foolish enough to disclose it in a speech I gave at Yorcon in Leeds in 1979 when Pat and I were Fan GOHs.

It was part of the infamous “Charles Platt’s 9-foot-long turd” speech. Many years earlier I had been conscripted by the charming, handsome, and charismatic Platt (I quote of course verbatim from Nancy Weber’s book about her ex-husband *Lily Where’s Your Daddy*) to accompany him on a journey to Scotland with his then girlfriend Diane Lambert and her then pet cat. This involved driving across miles of moors or whatever

they call them in Scotland, while the cat and I slept in the car, and Charles tried to screw Diane in a tent two feet away.

On one occasion Charles called for a rest stop, not whilst he was in the tent with Diane, although that happened often enough, but when he was in the car, and since he was driving, we were unable to stop him. He disappeared behind a dry stone wall for what seemed like several hours, then emerged sweating and palpitating. Whilst he strode off somewhere to recover from his exertions, I peeped nervously over the wall. There was the hugest turd I have ever seen in my life. A perfectly formed No. 4 lying there gleaming like an anaconda in the late afternoon sunlight.

I knew the only chance I had to clear my character was to go to Corflu and confront Mike with the sad truth that among other things, he had never been able to tune his own guitar, let alone play it, and the video we shot clearly showed him miming whilst Hugh Lloyd-Langton played behind a curtain. I realized this might be tempting the wrath of the furies, but what else could I do? Justice had to be done and the record of history (or Wickipaedia as it is known these days) rewritten properly, obviously favouring me. Besides I was still pissed off with him for spending all of our advance to buy Pete Pavli a new Cello after he had fallen downstairs with his old one.

I flew in to Austin on Sunday, the day of the banquet, and got a stretch limousine to the Doubletree Hotel, tipping the driver \$100 dollars to say nothing of what he had seen.

“My lips are closed, Gov,” he lied, “but I might suggest you zip up right now.”

Mike was already there, and frankly a little worse the wear for a couple of dozen Camparis. He was obviously nervous about the confrontation since he had bought Linda with him, dressed in a cowgirl outfit and packing a pair of six-guns strapped across her chest, at least that is what I took them for. He was wearing his usual foppish faux-suede jacket, but had forgotten to don his characteristic silk cravat, the one we all used to laugh at.

Duet When the time came for Michael and Linda Moorcock to leave Corflu Quire, Mike whispered to me that he had one last-minute duty to attend to. It was my duty/honor to be escorting them through the ordeal. He and Linda had been there in the Doubletree Hotel with the Corflu crowd for hours already. They arrived in time to attend the banquet and to follow the crowd of eager fans, quite a number of them fellow Brits, upstairs to where the partying was going on. There was an obligatory stop in my room, to unload some things they were carrying and let down a bit from their drive all the way across Austin. After that, it was on to the con suite and the swelling babble of gossip about friends young and old. I'm pleased to report that Michael and Linda both did an excellent job of making themselves available to all those who needed them. They even went so far as to actually converse with unworthy newbies like John Purcell and the continuing presence of Chris Garcia, hogging all the rooms of the con suite simultaneously. But, inevitably, the time to depart, at least from the con, was at hand, and Michael had this one last duty.... He moved with difficulty through the crowd of fans who parted automatically for him, and right up to Graham Charnock who was, as usual, boring Peter Weston with one of his endlessly repeated tales of how he and Mike, instruments in

Mike blanched when he saw me, obviously taken aback by the fact that the passage of time had hardly touched me, whilst it had reduced him to a giggling, shock-haired, grizzled, pot-bellied dwarf. He fell to his knees, or at least his one remaining knee.

“Jesus, Graham,” he wheezed, “I’m sorry for everything I’ve ever said about you, and I am especially sorry for never reading any of your stories before I published them, but that is after all, what I employed you for, and, who was that other person, yes, Charles. Please don’t take revenge by forcing me to eat Jalapeño peppers and rub capsicums over my sensitive flesh, especially the nipples. I suppose I could just about bear being smeared with the refried beans, since I could ask Linda to lick them off, but please, please, don’t force me to eat Threadgill’s tinned vegetables, or, worse, listen to Colin Hinz recite the best bits from his own fanzines. I would rather suffer the dribbling wrath of a thousand Cthulus than that. Too late, I said, for Colin had already taken the stand, oblivious to the ranks of storm troopers who stood with their laser weapons trained upon him, just waiting for a command from their leader, Murray Moore, to open fire and cut the infidel down, should he make any disparaging comment about anyone who was actually listening to him, rather than concentrating on eating.”

I turned aside. It was not good to see one of my heroes (that’s Mike rather than Colin, of course) reduced to a groveling specter of the groveling person he once used to be.

“Please, Graham,” he pleaded, “sing ‘Star Cruiser’ for me one more time, although this time preferably in tune.”

“Egoboo, Mike,” I responded, making the appropriate finger-salute gesture. Then I strode off into the distance where I had an appointment in Samara to humiliate someone called Chris Garcia.

#

Later that night as we lay in a queen-size bed, Earl fondled my googaws, and whispered in my ear: “Forget Mike, Graham. You’re the only one. The only one.”

hand, used to....Michael grabbed Graham in a huge, comforting bear hug, and the two of them stood there for moments frozen in time, their eyes locked solidly somewhere in the distant past and their ears hearing the sounds of their own music only somehow very much better than they had ever played it decades earlier. And they said good-bye just like that, as if they meant it for real. And all the while, momentous as it was, Linda and I stood aside and waited until they had quite finished, and I didn’t take a single photo of the incident. I had my camera in my pocket. I had been using it all afternoon, but not then, when it was really needed, the photo of the spirit of fans past, the photo of the essence of Corflu...old fart fanzine fans who had transcended all that except the memory of the reality, expressing sameness in the only way they know how. And then we left the con suite and made our way back to my room and another let down session before reclaiming their possessions, phoning the valet for their car, and leaving the Doubletree for home.

--Earl Kemp

“Mike who?” I said.

Just then Pat Virzi burst in. “There’ll be none of this kind of stuff at *my* con,” she said, discharging her fire extinguisher.

I woke up because my whore was pinching my nipples. “You’re sweating and palpating,” she said. “What kind of bad dream was that you’ve just been having, honey?” she said, strapping on her dildo.

Override

Briefly, if you get your correction function to change ‘whore’ to ‘hog’ you’ll get a clearer idea of what was actually going on there....

While of course I have every sympathy for the old pig-sticker, I had no idea his mind had become as hairy as his palms. He has a serious problem of what we these days call self-esteem. He is, of course, still as godlike as ever, with a profile worthy of Michelangelo and a body worthy of Garibaldi.

I still remember the days when Jimi Hendrix fell to the ground and called him master. This was, of course, in the days when Jimi himself was having a bit of a problem, too (I think he might have been dead). Forgive me if this is brief, since, of course, the substance of Graham’s piece is absolutely true and there’s not a lot I can add. He’s a very lucky man to have Pat and his special room.

I often wondered about the smell of turps and must admit I had completely misunderstood the purpose. I really had thought he was thinning out his Corflu and selling the adulterated mixture to young, innocent fans, many of whom called at the door when I was using the apartment. Their visits did not go unacknowledged, even if they left somewhat disappointed.

As ever, Mike

Maturity is a bitter disappointment for which no remedy exists, unless laughter can be said to remedy anything.

-- Kurt Vonnegut, *Cat’s Cradle*

Frankenpussy*

By Victor J. Banis

Every trace of Alley Thing had been destroyed: records, samples, slides, compact discs, even the hard drive from the computer. The laboratory counters and the floors were littered with broken glass and shredded paper. The sinks were filled with the ashes of burnt documents and journals. Blood samples, sera, everything liquid, had gone down the drains. The room positively reeked with the acrid stench of chemicals and smoke and electrical short circuits.

Janet did not know exactly what it was that Caleb had done that had so angered Melissa. The telephone connection had been broken before Melissa could tell her that. She did know, however, that it had been Melissa's intention to destroy the project. That much Melissa had managed to tell her on the phone. "I'm going to destroy everything, every trace of Alley Thing," she had said. "There must be nothing left of our research for Caleb to find. The formula will exist nowhere but in my mind, where he'll never find it."

Janet had vowed to an unconscious Melissa that she would carry out her wish. She had done so with a vengeance. Two years of diligent, seemingly endless work, all those nights working late here in the lab, had been erased, destroyed completely. But it was worth it to Janet just to imagine when the loathsome Caleb Wald came here later, as she had no doubt he would do, and discovered what she had done.

"Take that, you bastard," she muttered aloud. "You'll reap no profits from my Melissa's misery."

Only two things were left for her to deal with: She Cat, watching with intense interest from her cage, and the vial with the last of their B test serum, the serum that had caused such startling changes in the creature.

She found a syringe in a drawer and carefully filled it with the remains of the serum. For just a moment she hesitated. She knew that she was taking an enormous risk, without any clue as to what the final consequences might be. The serum had never been tried on a human subject, and certainly, the results with She Cat were enough to give one pause. How a human would react to it was anyone's guess.

To her way of thinking, however, she had no alternative. She had a job to do, and that job



Victor "Frankenstein" Banis, between cruises, pauses long enough to smell the roses.

was going to require something more than her ordinary woman's strength. She had made the unconscious Melissa another promise as well.

"I swear to you, I will get him," she had vowed while she wept silently, holding her beloved's hand. "I will find this Drag Thing, and I will make him pay for what he has done to you."

Just thinking of her darling, lying helpless and unconscious in a hospital bed, made her heart ache with anguish. Was she in pain? Was she aware of her surroundings? *Did she hear my vows?*

"I must go to her," she said aloud. "I must tell her that her wishes have been carried out." As soon as she had finished here.

But first...she put the tip of the syringe against her arm. Her hand shook. She paused, contemplating in dread what she was about to do. There was no telling what would happen, no way of knowing what the serum might do to her, and no way of undoing her actions once they were done. They had never yet even thought of an antidote to the serum. She knew that Melissa would tell her she was being rash, reckless even, courting unknown danger.

I must, she swore silently. It's the only way. I must do this.

She gritted her teeth with determination and resolutely plunged the syringe into her arm. There was an immediate sensation of heat, starting at the injection site and spreading swiftly up her arm. It felt as if her veins were on fire, a blaze that shot up her arm and her shoulder in quick succession, and through her entire body.

Oddly, she welcomed the burn even as it flamed through her. Whatever happened to her, she was confident of one thing: she would be far stronger afterward than she had ever been before, stronger and more aggressive, and she would need that strength, and that disposition, to do what she had to do. Even as she thought that, she seemed to feel stronger already, physically more confident, as if she could tackle anything, anyone.

"Now then, Miss Drag Thing," she said aloud, grinning fiercely, "Let me tell you something, bitch: you can swap your frocks and you can trim your tresses, but you can not hide from me. You are out there somewhere and I will find you, I swear it. I will make you pay for what you have done."

There was one last thing still that she must do. She had put it off for as long as she could, but she could avoid it no longer. Tears welled up in her eyes as she turned to She Cat's cage.

From within the cage, She Cat watched her warily. Oddly, for the first time in all these months, Janet regarded the animal with a sense of affection. The cat had been Melissa's. In a sense, She Cat was the child of Melissa's brilliant research. Destroying her seemed

almost like a betrayal, and so cruel.

She could not leave the cat here, however, for Caleb Wald to find. Whatever he was up to, and she had no doubt he was up to something nefarious, his schemes must be thwarted.

Looking at the cat, a vague memory stirred in her mind. What was that poem she had always liked as a child? She thought a moment, dredging her memory. A cat...a pussycat... pussy....

It came to her in a flash, and she recited in a loud voice, “The owl looked up to the stars above, and sang to a small guitar, O lovely pussy, O pussy my love, what a beautiful pussy you are, you are, what a beautiful pussy you are.”

Sudden inspiration struck her. No, she would not destroy the cat. She Cat *had* been Melissa’s child, her brilliant creation. Now she would be her creator’s avenger.

“You are going to help me find him,” she told the watching beast. She opened the door of the cage. Instead of attacking the way she usually did, She Cat sat unmoving, as if she had understood Janet’s words and was waiting to see what would happen next.

Janet reached inside with the vial and upturned it, and sprinkled the last few drops of the serum over the cat’s head.

“I christen thee Missy,” she intoned in a somber voice. “That was my darling’s suggestion, do you remember, Missy? From this moment forward, you will be Missy Hyde.”

Far from being annoyed by the drops that fell upon her, the newly named Missy Hyde seemed to understand and approve of what Janet was saying. She licked a droplet from one whisker and made a sound that might have been a purr or the distant rumble of a subway train.



On an impulse, Janet seized the cage from the counter and, hugging it to her bosom, spun around lightly. “What a beautiful pussy you are, you are, what a beautiful pussy you are,” she sang. Missy Hyde added an enthusiastic yowl to the chorus.

Janet paused to crush the now empty serum vial under her foot with a pop and took one final glance around. It felt to her like she had already grown taller. She seemed to be looking down on things from a different perspective, and the cage that had been heavy a moment before now felt as light as paper. Overflowing with newfound confidence, she strode briskly to the door.

“Ready or not, Drag Thing,” she said, flinging the door open with a violence that sent it

crashing against the wall, “Here come Dr. Jackle and Missy Hyde.”

But first, she must tell Melissa what she had done, and introduce her to Missy Hyde. She must go to Melissa—to the hospital.

#

Gladys Kravitz—Nurse Kravitz here in her domain—came along the hospital corridor with a full bedpan in her hands and saw that the light was on in room 812, a faint sliver of yellow showing under the door.

That’s odd, she thought. *That patient’s in a coma, why would she have a light on in the wee small hours of the morning?* Besides, she was sure the light had not been on when she had gone by just a few minutes earlier. The door had not been closed then, either, as it was now. As it should not be. A violation of hospital regulations, regulations it was her sworn duty to uphold.

She pushed the door open and stepped cautiously into the room. It was only the bedside light that was on, and its pale yellow glow left most of the room in shadow. At first, she did not see anyone. Then with a start she realized that there was a man in bed with the patient, cradling her in his arms. As she gaped in astonishment, he sobbed softly and whispered something to the unconscious woman.

“What are you doing?” Nurse Kravitz demanded angrily. She brooked no hanky-panky on her shift and it was well past visiting hours.

He half sat up. It was not a man after all, she realized belatedly, but a woman, an enormous woman—indeed, a devilish parody of womanhood in huge baggy overalls and a voluminous sweatshirt that for all their considerable size both nevertheless managed to look too small for her immense body. Her hair was a wiry tangle of copper, her angry eyes flashed in the dim light with green fire. Nurse Kravitz’ flesh crawled as those eyes fell upon her, and the bedpan sloshed in her hands.

“Get out,” the woman said. “Leave us alone.”

“I will not,” Nurse Kravitz replied stoutly, summoning her resolve. Years of nursing often-irascible patients had made her steadfast in the performance of her duty. She had weathered every possible type of crisis and she was not about to be intimidated, not even by this ferocious gargoyle.

“Don’t make me show you my pussy,” the woman on the bed said, her voice a raspy snarl.

Nurse Kravitz’s cheeks flamed. “Don’t be crude,” she snapped, but even as she said this, something stirred in the darkness by the bed. “What’s that?” she demanded. She sniffed the air. “Have you brought an animal into this room? Hospital regulations forbid....”

A chain clinked noisily and a shadow separated itself from the other shadows on the floor and slunk toward her. A *cat*, Nurse Kravitz thought—or *some kind of feline*, but it was far too large, she realized at a second glance, to be an ordinary house cat. It was the size of a small collie, its unkempt fur orange and white and black. And it smelled, it positively reeked, the ugly scent of wet, dirty hair and something else. *The smell of blood*—the unsettling thought jumped into her mind.



The animal advanced a step or two further in her direction. The chain that tethered the monstrous beast to the bed clinked again as it reached its full length. Nurse Kravitz stared, frozen in horror as the monster cat regarded her with eyes a malevolent yellow-green.

The woman on the bed sat up and grinned wickedly at her. “I warned you, you pestiferous old bitch,” she cried. “Here you are, Missy, go show the nurse lady what a beautiful pussy you are, you are, what a beautiful pussy you are.”

She laughed and reached down to unclasp the chain. In happy anticipation, the cat curled her lips back to reveal teeth that would have done a shark proud and crouched, ready to leap.

With a shriek of terror, Nurse Kravitz dropped the bedpan she was holding and ran for her life. A mocking laugh and a beastly howl pursued her along the corridor.

#

It had been a first for EMT Luis Cordero, losing his ambulance.

“Thirty years, and we’ve never lost one,” his dispatcher said with an angry shake of his head.

“Listen, it wasn’t just us,” Luis had pointed out. “Don’t forget, Saint Maria Alfonso lost a patient.”

“Well, that’s too bad for them, but they lose patients by the carload, every day of the week at that joint. The difference is, they don’t get their paychecks docked, like we probably will. Do you have any idea how much an ambulance costs? You’ll be paying forever. We both will. Till we’re old, old ladies.”

Nevertheless, the emergency workload in San Francisco was too heavy to have a driver just sitting on the bench. An hour later, Luis was on the streets again, in another vehicle—and none too soon, either. He was barely behind the wheel when he got a call on an emergency appendectomy.

He made it to the scene in no time flat. He had his record to think of. If he got no more demerits, the company might give him a break and write off the missing ambulance. More than that, there was his reputation to consider. Plus there were the wounded and the sick to consider as well. You couldn't altogether ignore them.

They had barely shoved the patient into the rear of the ambulance before Luis was behind the wheel and they were moving, headed once again for Saint Maria Alfonso.

"Hey, wait a sec," his paramedic shouted. "I haven't even got this guy strapped down yet."

"No time," Luis called back. "You said yourself this one was critical. Just hold on to him, why don't you? It's only a couple of miles. We'll be there before I could stop and help you get him fastened down. Okay?"

"Well, okay, I guess so," was the somewhat reluctant answer. "But step on it, okay?"

"Trust me," Luis said. "You won't know what hit you."

"Please," the patient moaned in a feeble voice. "I'm really..."

"Don't you worry now, sir," Luis called to him, "You're going to get a ride you will never forget."

They had gone no more than a couple of blocks, however, when Luis saw flashing red lights in his mirror and heard the wail of a siren. A *police car*—his immediate thought was that they must have caught the call on the emergency, and were here to give him an escort.

"All right," he said aloud, grinning broadly, and speeded up. With a squad car clearing the way for him, he'd be at the hospital quicker than ever. A couple of record-time trips and he might even make Employee of the Month. Let them try to fire him then. More than likely, he'd get a raise. For sure a commendation. Everyone would forget all about that missing ambulance. It was just a woman in a coma, after all. Who was she going to complain to?

The police car caught up with him and pulled alongside on the left and the officer on the passenger side waved out the window. Luis waved back, encouraged, and shot ahead. The ambulance rocketed around a gaggle of cars. The black and white fell behind, then came alongside again, the officer waving all the more frantically.

"Go to the side," he shouted.

To Luis, with the wind noise and both sirens screaming, it sounded like, "Go for the ride." He laughed with delight and gave the man a thumbs up. "I'm with you, man," he shouted in reply. It was times like this that made it all worthwhile.

“What’s happening, bro?” the paramedic asked from the rear. The vehicle was bouncing and tilting frenziedly as it whipped around traffic. “You’re going awfully fast, aren’t you? I’m having a helluva time trying to hang on to this guy.”

“Hold on to your jockstrap. We’re going to set a new land speed record,” Luis called back.

“Uh oh. We’d better. I think we just lost him.”

They jounced violently over a railroad crossing, the ambulance airborne for a few seconds before it crashed to the pavement again with a mighty groan.

“Urgh,” the patient cried, regaining semi-consciousness.

“That brought him back,” the paramedic shouted, “but it’s touch and go. Maybe a minute, two, even, but I think that’s the max.”

“We’re almost there,” Luis cried. “Hold on to him.”

Shots rang out. Holes suddenly appeared in the vehicle’s rear doors.

“What’s that?” The paramedic, a black man, grew visibly paler. “What’s happening, man?” he yelled in a panicked voice.

“I...I think...” Luis said, disbelieving. The black and white pulled alongside once more. This time, the officer on the passenger side had his gun in his hand. He fired again.

“Jeez, they’re shooting at us,” Luis said.

“Shooting at us?! We’ve got a dying man back here. This is no time for cowboys and Indians. Wait, I’ll bet they’re white asses, aren’t they, both of them? Man, I hate when those honkie bitches start playing that macho shit on us. Can’t you explain things to them?”

“How can I explain anything to them at eighty miles an hour?” Luis asked, careening around an old lady in a Ford Taurus. The driver of the car, startled out of her wits, lost control and crashed into a pair of parked vehicles, metal shrieking in agony and sparks flying.

“Stay where you are, ma’am. We’ll be back for you in a couple of minutes,” Luis shouted out the window at her. That would be another quick trip. That commendation was beginning to look more and more like a sure thing. Except for the pesky guys in the black and white....

The cop started shooting again. It crossed Luis’ mind in a flash that maybe these weren’t even real cops. In San Francisco people dressed up all the time. And tomorrow night was Halloween. The fact that they were in uniform proved nothing. He knew half a dozen

queens who, when they got in uniform, looked more like cops than the real thing. If there was anything gay men understood, it was dressing up.

The fact that they were in a black and white proved nothing either. If they could steal ambulances, who was to say they couldn't steal cop cars, too. Besides, he'd already had one ambulance stolen out from under him this evening. Maybe this was another attempt at a theft, an elaborate scheme to hijack him. Maybe ambulances had become the hot new commodity on the stolen vehicle market. Sure, that was it. Had to be.

"I'll bet those punks think they're taking this baby to their chop shop in the Mission," he muttered to himself. Or it was on its way to Tijuana. And he'd have two of these busses to pay for. *Caramba!* He'd be eating canned frijoles for the rest of his life.

"Well, they can just think again, they won't get another one off me," he declared sternly. He wasn't falling for their ruse, however cleverly they had planned it. Faux uniforms and stolen black and whites? What did they think he was, some kind of a Rican dummy?

"No way, José." He gripped the wheel ferociously and leaned over it with a determined set to his chin, his eyes fixed on the street ahead. He'd been driving ambulances for fifteen years. The cop had not been born yet who could out-drive him.

The black and white tried to get in front of him, to cut him off. "Hah!" Luis scoffed. "You'll have to do better than that, Jack Off."

He jerked the wheel violently to the left, and his front bumper caught the squad car, sending it skidding with a squeal of tires on the pavement. Watching in the mirror, Luis chortled. Probably they thought he was some kind of sissy. That would show them.

In the lead again, he goosed it, pedal to the metal. Checking the mirror, he saw another set of flashing lights in the distance. They must have called in back up. Man, this was some elaborate set up. Two stolen squads. These guys must want ambulances really bad. Maybe there was some kind of crisis in Mexico. Drugs, he'd bet. Or hookers. Think about it, hookers operating out of ambulances, a portable bordello—it was diabolical. His thoughts drifted. He wondered briefly how that might work in the Castro. Say you had a line up of hotties...it would definitely cut down on commute time...

He made a corner on two wheels, the rear of the ambulance catching a utility pole with a loud crunch of metal and bringing his attention back to the moment. More shots rang out. A crack like a giant spider web appeared in the windshield. They bounced over some more tracks.

"Awk," the patient cried from the rear. "Aieeee!"

"Fuck! I'm hit," the paramedic yelled. "They got me, man."

"Hang on," Luis said. "We're almost there."

Another black and white appeared in front of them, sliding into position to block the street. Luis veered to the right, onto the sidewalk by the Safeway market. An Indian woman in a bright green sari stepped in front of him, pushing a grocery cart. She saw the ambulance roaring toward her and leaped out of its path with a terrified cry, but he caught the cart. Eggs and milk and something else he couldn't identify splattered across the windshield, practically blinding him. He hit a fence and roared across someone's yard, the ambulance's rear end yawing on wet grass, hit a culvert and went aloft, sailing across a drainage ditch. A snippet of green fabric trailed behind, flapping like a pennant in their wake.

The patient screamed from the rear. "Help! Help! Someone, help!"

"Be quiet back there," Luis snapped. "Like, I've got my hands full up here. Try thinking about somebody beside yourself for a second, why don't you, fella? Can't you see I need to concentrate?"

He turned on the windshield wipers. The eggs and milk became an omelet. He was flying totally blind now. Something crunched beneath the front wheels—a *bicycle*, he thought. He hoped there was no one on it.

"*Gran Dios*, save me, save me," the patient cried.

"Shit, save your own ass, damnit," the medic answered. "I'm gone, bro." He threw open the rear door and as the vehicle slowed for a moment to make a tight right turn, he dived through it. The stretcher had only been half fastened, however, and the violent bouncing and swaying had broken it loose altogether. With one last agonized shriek, the patient flew out the flailing door after the paramedic.

#

Rose Taylor and Estelle Marmachuck were strolling home from grocery shopping, arms linked, chatting about grandchildren and vacation plans, when an ambulance roared past them at breakneck speed.

"What on earth?" Rose cried, but before Estelle could reply, a black man flew out the rear door of the vehicle, arms waving, and landed atop them, knocking all three to the ground—luckily for them, as Rose pointed out subsequently: only seconds later, an airborne stretcher sailed over their heads and landed beyond them in some bushes with a crunch and a horrible wail of anguish.

"We might have been decapitated by that man in the bed," Rose said.

"It was like that movie, *The Night of the Flying Dead*," Estelle told the police later. "Bodies sailing through the air. It was so exciting."

“Only, I lost my milk,” Rose said.

*Excerpted from the novel *Drag Thing*, available from Amazon.com fall of 2007, or go to <http://www.vjbanis.com> or contact the author at vjbanis@verizon.net . Special thanks to the Frankenpussy photo posse: Ned Brooks, Ditmar, Bruce Gillespie, Colin Hinz, Joyce Katz, Jim Linwood, Dave Locke, and Alan White.

A purpose of human life, no matter who is controlling it, is to love whoever is around to be loved.

--Kurt Vonnegut, *Sirens of Titan*

‘The Things I do for that Earl Kemp’

Photograph and recycled artwork by Harry Bell

By Peter Weston

On our secret e-list a year or so ago, Jim Linwood told a few stories about old-time British fandom which I enjoyed so much that I suggested he should write it all down. Jim replied semi-seriously that all would be revealed in his ‘Britfan Babylon’ and—WHAM!—faster than a striking cobra, Earl Kemp was in there, begging the piece for some sort of fanzine he was working on.

It didn’t matter at the time because I was resting and Jim showed no sign of writing anything, anyway. But in November I started my own fanzine, *Prolapse*, which is entirely about British fan-history, and suddenly, it **did** matter, very much. Obviously it would make much better sense for Jim to place his hypothetical piece in its natural home with me, rather than with some American rag from out in the sticks, and I gently suggested as much to him. But no, Earl had foisted an ob onto poor old Jim and we were both stuck with it.



But I had a stroke of luck. In January I received four boxes of papers from 1950s fan Derek Pickles, who was having a clear-out before moving into smaller premises. Amongst the old letters was a certain manuscript. *Aha!* I didn’t want to run it, but I knew someone who would!

“Earl,” I wrote in an e-mail headed ‘The Things I do for you’, “I may have something you’ll really like. Among the various materials recently sent to me by Derek Pickles was the carbon copy of an 11-page manuscript by Robert Bloch, titled, ‘San Francisco Confidential’. This must be the 1954 worldcon he’s writing about. I don’t know the origins of the MS, and Derek hasn’t replied to my query. But he and Bloch were correspondents, and I suppose it was sent for Derek’s *Phantasmagoria*, though it was never published there (much too long—most of Derek’s articles were very short). So I don’t know if this report has ever seen the light of day, but it may do so now, perhaps, in your capable hands!

“I’d have kept it for myself, of course, but *Prolapse* is exclusively concerned with British fan-history, so this would be outside my remit. It’s quite a funny, well-written piece (as you’d expect), with lots of nostalgia for you in particular. Want it? Shall I bring it along to *Corflu*? Will you buy me beer?”

Well, you can guess what Earl said. So now, the bait taken, I reeled in the line a little. In a

follow-up titled 'Smoke-Filled Rooms' I wrote:-

“I was asking Jim Linwood recently about doing a fan-historical piece for *Prolapse*, and he reminded me that you have first refusal on his 'Britfan Babylon', if he ever gets round to writing it, that is. Now, in the best traditions of American politics and doing deals in smoke-filled rooms, I'm wondering if we can do a trade... an unwritten hypothetical article about a faraway country of which you know little, for a red-hot ready-to-go piece by superstar Robert Bloch about all your friends in your own era? Let's talk about it at *Corflu*. You won't even have to buy me beer!”



SMoFs Bill Burns, Earl Kemp, Michael Moorcock, and Peter Weston. Photo by Harry Bell, Corflu Quire, Austin, TX, February 2007.

And of course, faced with such an overwhelmingly logical argument, Earl capitulated and graciously agreed to my trade. Although he carped that the article ended rather abruptly—was there a page missing? I spent an evening going through Derek Pickles' meticulously-kept correspondence files; he had kept the lot, even though the last issue of *Phantasmagoria* appeared sometime in mid-1955. There was no more, and Derek himself didn't even remember the Bloch article. It had lain there, forgotten, for over fifty years, until Earl and I did our deal.

I hope Jim Linwood is reading this story.

There is nothing intelligent to say about a massacre.
-- Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five*

'The Things Peter Weston does to me'

Recycled artwork by Harry Bell

By Earl Kemp

It's all true of course, everything Peter Weston ever says. Anyone with so many stars in their eyes they can't even squat in comfort only has time enough to speak the literal truth.



When he approached me with this absurd offer of a trade-off of real quality material in exchange for a ratty old manuscript that had probably never seen the light of day, I was initially quite excited. So much so that, without even thinking, and before I received the manuscript, I contacted the Bloch literary executor and asked permission to use this article written by my dear old friend from suburban Milwaukee, ghod to one and all, "Psycho" Robert Bloch. Only to be resoundingly shot down. No way! The decision would rest only with the Bloch family.

And, coincidentally, the lovely Elly Bloch, who single-handedly changed Robert's life from gloom to brightness, was desperately ill at the time, so much so that she couldn't even be asked the question.

Simultaneously, Robert Lichtman, who does a large amount of research for me, discovered that the original, unused article for "San Francisco Confidential" had appeared in Bloch's best friend Bob Tucker's *Le Zombie* in January 1955. To prove it, he sent me a photocopy of the entire thing.

Much to my surprise, Tucker had done a great job of cleaning up Bloch's act, not that there was anything terribly wrong with it, strikeovers, pencil corrections, typos...all the usual. By all contemporary standards, it was word perfect...but not to an old fart like Tucker, or to me.... I found myself in complete agreement with all of those minor edits, and would have done the same thing myself.

What I wouldn't have done was to compact the piece by squeezing the space out of it by eliminating paragraphs, etc., and trying to use less space in *Le Zombie*. In 1954, an 11-page article was rare in fanzine publishing.

And, the biggest problem for me, initially, was the ending of the piece. By 1954 I was intimately acquainted with Bloch's writings, his fan writings (after all, he and I did edit *The Eighth Stage of Fandom* together), and especially his brilliantly witty personal correspondence. The last line on page 11 of the single-spaced manuscript literally ran off

the bottom of the sheet of paper. It was serious guesswork clarifying the missing portions of words.

And, the ending was abrupt and characteristically non-Bloch. It was missing that customary flippant twist at the very ending, and Bloch's private signoff line of "hoping you are the same." For those reasons, I felt sure there was at least one missing page containing that send off I so loved to receive, to hold, to cherish, to....

Then, my word-by-word comparison of the printed version and the manuscript version indicated that Tucker had also had the same problem when he edited the copy for *Le Zombie*, and his version ended almost exactly as mine did, running off the final page as if Bob had somehow simply run out of words to say and anyone who knew him at all knew that was a complete impossibility.

I no longer feel that there is a missing page. Peter Weston comes out on top again.
Damnit!

#

And then Elly gave up the struggle and found her permanent peace in her quiet corner of Canada, not even having received my letter to her (and Robert's daughter Sally) telling her that I was proceeding in my best fashion to republish Bob's San Francisco 1954 convention report, and I had hopes that Bloch would approve of whatever end result appeared in *eI*.

It's like that sometimes, just never enough time to do it all right.

Bob, I still have the heart of a small boy, and about as many capabilities, and I'm still all yours....

George Bush is so dumb, it wouldn't surprise me if he thought Peter Pan was a washbasin in a whore house.

-- Kurt Vonnegut, 9/17/05

San Francisco Confidential*

Recycled artwork by Dean A. Grennell from *LeZombie* 64

By Robert Bloch

It started badly.

I left for Chicago on Sunday night, and the train was late. Staying with my sister on Monday and Tuesday, I tried to contact various Chicagoans with poor success.

Were Earl and Nancy Kemp going to San Francisco? I didn't know, because I couldn't reach them by phone. Judy May Dikty said sadly that she and Ted would be babysitting. Mel Korshak and Irene were already in Los Angeles and might or might not make the convention. Bill Hamling and Frances weren't going.

I had lunch with Fritz Leiber on Tuesday and he was regretful over the fact that he couldn't make the trip. Henry Kuttner, C.L. Moore, and Ray Bradbury weren't expected, either. And of course, many of the "regulars" from the East and Midwest had already sent regrets.

By the time I boarded the plane Tuesday night, I was beginning to wonder what kind of a setup I was letting myself in for. To my way of thinking, a convention without Tucker, Mahaffey, Vick, Rothman, Phil and Bette Farmer, Isaac Asimov, etc., was unthinkable. I couldn't imagine a full-scale gathering without the Ohio gang and the Canadian contingent—without Ted Sturgeon and his guitar, Jerry Bixby and the piano, George O. Smith and his jug. I ran through a list of about 100 people who definitely wouldn't be there, and improvised a whole new separate convention where the Anglofans foregathered with Grennell and Boggs and Garrett and Riddle and Silverberg, McCain, *et. al.*

Now *that* would be a convention worth attending! I started to wish I was going to it instead of this watered-down weekend in Califurshlugginifornia.

The flight was murder.

My legs were too long for the seat and the night was too long for sanity. Besides, we were late, late, late—and when the plane finally landed in Oakland on Wednesday morning around 10:30, I was in a far from grunted mood.

I'd *had* it. This, I decided, was just going to be an endurance contest from now on in. I'd



Program Book cover scan
courtesy Curt Phillips
Collection.

make the best of it, do my little banquet M.C. chore, and go home early to get some rest. This was going to be a bust.

Confidentially....

I was wrong.

That's why I can't write a "convention report." I can't give facts and figures, or even adhere to chronology. I can't be bright or cleverly humorous about what happened to me in San Francisco. Because it's all too personal. I had the time of my life.

As I staggered off the plane—unshaven, unkempt, unfed, unnerved—a diminutive figure, 3 feet high, dashed toward me. It wore a beanie and a science-fiction slack suit. Behind it was its creator—Es Cole.

She and the eldest Cole briquette had come to greet me, bless their little hearts. They scooped me into the car and drove me through Oakland...through beautiful Berkeley and the U. of C. hillside campus...over to their home in Richmond, overlooking the city and the sea.

Es prepared me seven egg-salad sandwiches, all of which I ate. I talked to Les on the phone, and to Ben Stark (who did yeoman work on the committee and program) when he came over that afternoon. I learned that, as usual, they were worried about the expenses; about the probable attendance; about the program. It was, in effect, the same old familiar song—the music was different but the words were the same.



Bob Bloch and Bob Tucker. Fanac.org photo, Margaret Ford Kiefer Collection.

Yet somehow, when they reached the stirring refrain—"My Gawd, now what will we do?"—I felt a wave of reassurance. Perhaps because I'd heard this little ditty so many times before, and it was always followed by a pleasant interlude.

So I endeavored to communicate some of my reassurance and then went to bed.

Coming soon to an eI near you
"Hitting the Fan," by Robert Bloch

During the afternoon, Martin Greenberg and Evelyn Paige Gold arrived from Los Angeles where they had been intimidating authors and made arrangements to foregather with us in the evening.

I dined on Mexican food with the Coles. Les went to work on convention chores and Es drove me to the Palace Hotel, where I was to appear on the “Red Blanchard Show” as a publicity stunt for the Con.

We paused en route at 2643 Dana Street, Berkeley 4, California, where we were joined by Ben Stark and Reginald Bretnor, who crept out of the woodwork and exhibited a charming interest in the aesthetic aspects of science fiction and fantasy. Two bright young boys also attached themselves to the party.

In addition, we were forced to bear the company of the official proprietor of the 2643 Dana Street address—a character who looks like a depraved leprechaun. I never did catch his name: Butcher, Botcher, something like that. The boys were his sons. He seemed to be a phonograph record collector and I noticed some books around: he had the typical attitude of the neo-fan.

Our group drove to the hotel and the radio station and some time was spent with Blanchard’s alternate—Blanchard himself having wisely decided to go on vacation. It was a studio audience interview show, and we were all introduced to yock it up. During the yocks, in walked Greenberg and Gold, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Peeples.

Following the program, we adjourned to the hotel grille for a bit of refreshment. Thereafter the party split up: I joined Marty and Evelyn and the Peeples and went out to their home. Sam Peeples is Police Commissioner of a local community. He is also a western story writer of distinction, and a considerable fan.

More to the point, he is one hell of a nice guy: big, portly, bland, quiet—he exudes strength and confidence and inner humor.

Holding a glassful of his hospitality in my hand and staring around at the book-lined walls, I was immediately struck by his resemblance to Doc Barrett.

The hour was late and everyone was tired. Sam and his wife promised to attend the convention and spend some time with us there. They drove me back down to my hotel and dropped Marty and Evelyn off at theirs. I wasn’t staying at the Sir Francis Drake, but at the Stratford, a block and a half away—a cheaper and (I hoped) quieter residence.



When I climbed into bed I lay there for a long time and suddenly something oozed into me: something I'd been too busy to pay attention to all during the day.

It was San Francisco itself: San Francisco at night, with the lights streaming like silver serpents over the hills. I remembered the 8-plus-mile drive over the Bridge, the magnificent vistas of sea and mountain and harbor set against the sky.



The ever-popular William Anthony Parker White ["H.H. Holmes," "Anthony Boucher," "Tony"] surrounded by his admiring fans. Photographer unknown, courtesy Karen Anderson Collection.

I'd been too busy discussing Lovecraft with Sam, listening to Evelyn and Marty talk about all the Los Angeles fans and writers they'd met, visiting with the Coles, and exchanging mots with this man Bougger (?) Voucher (?)—no, Boucher, that's it, Anthony Boucher; runs a magazine or some such thing—to concentrate on the essential San Franciscognition. Now it was beginning to come to me, and I was beginning to realize that this was indeed my kind of city.

It was the kind of a city where you don't want to sleep: you want to get up early and go out and see and touch and taste and hear and smell and, above all, assimilate. I had breakfast and wandered around, watching San Francisco going to work for the day. I listened to the bells of the cable cars—each car has its own distinctive bell and (incredible as it may seem!) the conductors and motormen are happy people. They *enjoy* the ride. The clerks in Magnin's and City of Paris and the Emporium actually smile. And in Gump's, that fabulous treasure-house of *objects d'art*, there is a loving relationship between merchant and merchandise, which is indescribable. These things I discovered gradually during the next few days.

More immediately, on Thursday morning, I visited the Drake and began to greet early birds. At noon, the Coles had invited me to accompany Marty and Evelyn to luncheon at the Cliff House, on the ocean's edge overlooking the famous Seal Rocks. We drove along the Presidio, saw Alcatraz and said the usual things about it, then drifted back to Convention Suite 1707. During the afternoon James Gunn showed up, along with Charles Beaumont, Forry Ackerman, and a number of other Californians including Richard Matheson and Ruth.

It was quite a large party that gathered for dinner at Omar Khayyam's and the shish kabob got a workout. Then it was back to 1707 for the evening with the abovementioned, plus Poul and Karen Anderson and an augmentation of others. Gary Nelson, Mari Wolf, Dave Dryfoos, Tom Quinn, George Faraco were in evidence.

Friday morning, after postcarding and shopping, I registered and then attended the Westercon. The convention hall was adequate in size, with a big room on one side for displays and a bar in back. I learned the route quickly, and by the time I found myself in the middle, I'd missed the opening addresses and was listening to Miriam Allen deFord.

Then I sat around the bar exchanging conversation with Malcolm Willits, Donald Day, Jean Carrol, Dave Kyle, Peter Vorzimer, and a dozen more who will probably be mad because I don't mention all their names—but if I started, there would be no end, because I probably managed to exchange at least a word or so with upward of three hundred people before the affair was over.

Among the arrivals were Walt Daugherty and Lulu, E.E. Evans and his wife, and Harriet Fellas, the little gal from Chicago who plays such wonderful piano. When the afternoon session was over, another large crowd prepared to visit The Top of the Mark for cocktails—but as usual, there was much stalling and preparation. Finally Es Cole and I slipped away and sneaked up ahead of time, meeting the gang there when they arrived. The view *is* superb, and tourist-trap or no, the Top of the Mark is worth the trip. Then we were off for Tao-Tao's in Chinatown for dinner.

A large fan-party was present when we got there, including shy little Harlan Ellison (who had convulsed us all the night before in 1707 with some wonderful dialect stories—really fine) and a lovely gal name of McCarthy who does sketches and cartoons the likes of which. During the convention she produced scads of them, and I am lucky enough to own a green cat.



Harlan Ellison as an unregistered trademark, huckstering. Photo by Karen Anderson, courtesy Karen Anderson Collection.

We returned for the evening session, already underway, and listened to a panel discussion on Science Fiction and the Detective Novel, which had

some very amusing moments. Doc Smith was on hand to liven things up, and I was happy to note that Sam Moskowitz (slim, handsome, duded-up, but just as decibel-happy as ever) was among those very much present.



A scene from the podium with Forrest Ackerman presiding. Note Morris Scott Dollens paintings on backdrop. Fanac.org photo by Ben Jason from the Howard DeVore Collection.

Meanwhile; during the afternoon, and early in the evening, eyeballs had been ruptured gazing at a statuesque redhead and her handsome escort. This dish, in a black dress, was really one of the most flawlessly beautiful women I've ever seen: slim, cool, model-type perfection incarnate.

Greenberg and Gold (those gregarious types) somehow ventured in where angels fear to tread—for this unapproachable vision seemed to have caused even the most lupine of the conventioners to quail at the mere thought of approaching her.

While I was trying to locate Kris Neville (who had joined us briefly on one of the first evenings) and talking to Jim Webbert (who showed up with a new lighter, new pills, and fresh cigarettes to take up where he'd left off in Chicago), Marty and Evelyn were talking to the newcomers. John and Jessica Cramer, of Oakland. She was a fan; he was in the record-distributing business.

Together with James Gunn and Harriet Fellas and Jim Webbert, I joined the foursome for a tour of the opera bars near Chinatown.

The opera bars (Visni-Visni and the rest) are wonderful. They feature operatic singers, are jammed full, and in addition to fine music offer another unique phenomenon—an audience that *listens*. No talking, no raucous background murmurs. These people like what they hear, and what they hear is fine music. John Cramer seemed to know everyone, and he showed us a wonderful evening.



On the right, Evelyn Gold and Anthony Boucher. Fanac.org photo by Ben Jason.

Although I complained loudly at having to ride in his beat-up cream-colored 1954 Lincoln Capri, and moaned my head off at having to put up with the presence of an ugly duckling like Jessie, he did not seem too offended.

We ended the evening back at the hotel and promised to meet again on the morrow. I finished the night with Boucher and a bottle, but was *too* tired to exhaust either!

As I left the hotel around 2 a.m., there was some kind of involved mix-up about juvenile fans and some suspected pickpockets that I never did get straight in my mind. Apparently some of the younger fen were already dropping beer bottles out of windows and the management took a dim view. The convention committee organized a vigilante squad, and some of the other natives (Hans Rusch and George Finigan) also were deputized. I went home to bed, being a bit beat. Besides, the official convention was starting tomorrow and I needed that precious five hours of sleep to freshen up.



Jeannie and Doc Smith are seen in the left background in this masquerade scene photograph. Other fans unidentified.
Photo by Karen Anderson, courtesy Karen Anderson Collection.



Doc Smith is seen signing autographs at the Fantasy Press table in the huckster's room.
Fanac.org photo by Ben Jason.

Saturday morning was the usual madhouse. Among the inmates I vaguely remember were Mark Clifton (very humorous guy), A.E. van Vogt, Sylvia Jacobs, Mildred Clingerman, Rory Faulkner (a living doll at 64, who exchanges *double entendres* with Walt Willis and who won my black heart immediately with a few indecorous remarks): John and Peg Campbell, Willy and Olga Ley and their two little gals [Sandra and Xenia], Margaret St. Clair, Phyllis Scott from Boston, Mel and Irene Korshak (who had shown up, after all), Alan Nourse, Doc Smith's relatives, Ben Kiefer, Evan Appleman, Sidney Coleman, and—but this can go on forever!

I didn't actually see too much of the opening session: I know registration was 900-odd and actual attendance 600-odd when last I inquired.

But during the late afternoon I was busy preparing for the banquet. I'd been scheduled to introduce John W. Campbell and Jack Williamson. However, as I told Les Cole, this hardly gave me a sporting chance to insult people—so I drafted some additional speakers: namely, Anthony Boucher, Evelyn Gold, Forry Ackerman, Richard Matheson, and Doc Smith. Then I went back to my hotel and finished up my introductions for the coming onslaught.

The banquet was buffet-style, and a capacity crowd jammed the room. I don't know how it went with the audience, but to me it seemed like a very nice affair—thanks largely to the speakers of the evening, and especially to those I so ruthlessly dragged in by the heels.

Les Cole kicked off by introducing me and presenting me with a large tin HERO badge. I wore it with pride as I warmed up the house for Jack Williamson—and it was as fine audience to work with; got all the gags and never threw a thing at me. Jack gave a straight talk with a lot of meat in it. Then I cut loose on Boucher, and was delighted when he cut loose on me. I can't remember all the funnies, but among other things he said something to the effect that, "It has often been said that Bob Bloch makes a convention. The big question is, just what percentage of a convention does he manage to make? With four days, he may be able to set a world's record." He was wonderfully scurrilous: ended by reading a poem written for *MF&SF* by L. Sprague deCamp.

I must interpolate here to say that program-wise, Boucher was a champion of champions—he spoke, panelized, narrated, filled in, and generally took on all comers; yet still managed to have a good time and to squire his charming wife Phyllis. This was a real Bouchercon.

Where was I? Oh yes, the banquet: Evelyn Paige Gold was gracious on behalf of *Galaxy* and then Forry Ackerman was disgracious, ribbing me in another wonderful bit of unexpected dead-pan underplaying. A far cry from the nervous, taut Ackerman of the 1946 Los Angeles convention. He did a marvelous job of pleasing the crowd. Doc Smith spoke briefly and well, and Richard Matheson put in a fine plea for maturity and self-respect.

Then I introduced John Campbell. I'd been a little hesitant about this. Frankly, I had worked up a lot of stuff that I thought would amuse the audience but might not please him too well. After all, one does not dishonor the Guest of Honor. Taking a deep breath, I went to work, and it ended up with a standing ovation for him; followed by his introductory remarks, which relieved me greatly. He said that for a time he'd been afraid I *wouldn't* tear into him, and he was happy now to be one of the gang. Then he went on with his impromptu talk and it was just right—in length, style, and spirit. After that I called on the committee to take a bow, threw out a couple of gags left over from a 1933 Minstrel Show, and sneaked out before anybody could kill me.

John Cramer had gathered Tony Boucher, Marty Greenberg, Sam Peeples, and Jim Gunn for a fast half-hour "male only" sneak away—very mysterious. I simply *had* to come, he said. So, wringing wet in my banquet shirt, I allowed myself to be dragged away to what we all thought was some kind of stag exhibition. It turned out to be the *Balalaika*, a smart

Russian restaurant featuring a cymbolone performer. I won't vouch for the spelling, but it's a remarkable instrument—a sort of combination piano and xylophone—and there are only about ten of them in the country. We visited the gorgeous back bar, then returned to the convention hall for more merriment and another session in 1707. More people, of course—Ralph Rayburn Phillips the artist, the Falascas, Jack Williamson's charming wife, Bob Briggs, Philip K. Dick and wife, George Young, Jean Bogert, Eva Firestone. It was very late when Boucher and I ran out of ice.



On the podium an assortment of the most powerful Secret Masters of Prodom ever assembled. Photo by Karen Anderson, courtesy Karen Anderson Collection.

They may have had a convention going on Sunday, but I didn't see much of it. I ate two or three breakfasts with two or three sets of people, but by early afternoon I was sitting in the Lincoln Capri with the Cramers, Marty, Evelyn, and Harriett. Jim Gunn and another writer (my memory is going fast!) were to have joined us but couldn't—and they really missed a day. (CORRECTION PLEASE: Name of author who was to go but didn't Raymond Banks. Substitution—Jim Webbert, with fresh supply of lighter fluid.)

The Cramers showed us Oakland. First, the big hotel atop the hill, for cocktails. Then, by way of contrast, Jack London Square and the *Showboat*.

Then we went to the *Villa de la Paix* for dinner. With champagne, if you please, and a marvelous gypsy violinist (who is actually a gypsy and actually a violinist) who did command performances at the table *ala* MGM movies. To a country boy like myself, this is real living.

We returned to the convention just in time to see one of the two performances of the Hamm-Bradbury opera, *A Scent of Sarsaparilla*. I thought the chorus was marvelous, Boucher's narration terrific, the female singer's voice superb; but I do not like atonality and the male singer struck me as inadequate. Still, considering the experimental nature of

the whole, I was much impressed.

Incidentally, Sunday afternoon, come to think of it, was officially designated for visiting the Science Fiction Art Exhibition at the Palace of the Legion of Honor. This exhibit, together with the opera, required the purchase of a Special Events Card for an additional dollar (CORRECTION: opera and masquerade required this—I'm woozier by the minute).

Following the opera, Harriet Fellas took over the piano in the hall and did Khatchaturian's "Toccatà" for me. Very fine.

Then out of the night, out of the past, out of the dim dark legends of the Elder Gods, shambled a lanky figure, surmounted by a Tuckerian crewcut. It wore a button reading REMEMBER THE ROOSTER THAT WORE RED PANTS?

Walt Liebscher, by all that's unholy, was taking over. He took over the piano. He took over the hearts of the females. He played variations on "September Song" for me that practically had me crying. He did the "Pafifconcerto." And then the gah damned hotel management closed the joint up at 11 o'clock!

Incidentally, the gah damned hotel management managed to win themselves an all-time prize for discourtesy, lack of cooperation, incivility, and duplicity. The house-dick was worse than Toronto, the assistant manager more vicious than Chicago; the whole setup crookeder than anywhere else. The hotel did *not* group convention guests on 4 or 5 floors as promised and they did *not* give the promised special rates. Many were stuck for \$9 or \$10 a day and many moved out and over to places like the one I stayed at.

All of this was something neither the Coles nor any members of the committee could control. Hotel complaints about noise and guests were constant and childish. One did not feel easy while in the Sir Francis Drake: I was particularly disturbed because this situation disturbed the committee. They were going out of their way continuously to make everyone feel happy and welcome, and the hotel management meanwhile was trying to make everyone feel unwanted. Tucker may yet have to build a convention hotel of his own.

The evening ended with a poker game in the Cramer's room—John, Marty, Evelyn, Hans Rusch, and Ben Stark playing with about 20 kibitzers on the bed, chairs, and floor. I left for bed and all night reviewed the 8½-mile expanse of the Bay Bridge, the view from the Oakland hills, the swirl and sweep of the city coruscating and kaleidoscoping through my dreams.

All this, you see, is counterpoint. This was the first convention with actual counterpoint, for me. The first convention where every session seemed sandwiched between scenery: where the city was as glamorous and as gay as the microcosmic convention-world itself.

Monday morning I got up, walked through the lobby, and shook hands with Sam Ganasheroff.

Sam Gansheroff has nothing to do with my story. He happens to be a Milwaukee artist who worked with the advertising agency where I was employed for 11 years. He didn't know I was in San Francisco. I didn't know he was in San Francisco. Neither of us had ever been here before. But there he was in the lobby. Lucky for me that I am actually better-behaved at conventions than Boucher asserts, and came downstairs as usual, alone. We took pictures of this historic meeting and went our separate ways.

I ate my usual three breakfasts with three groups, ignoring the second morning session of the auction (which, I understand, did right well) and then said good-bye to a number of early departers. In the afternoon I sat around in the two rooms—bar and lobby—meeting and greeting. Greenberg went on the radio, Willy Ley and Campbell and somebody else went on radio, and somebody went on TV. I sat and talked with Vampira.



Vampira. Fanac.org
photo by Ben Jason.

Vampira is a product of Southern California—the same Southern California that spawned Madman Muntz, Sister Aimee, and all the rest.

She is a tall blonde with a husky voice who has been promoted into an act. The act is this—she has a local TV show that is fabulously publicized. On it she appears in a black wig and a tattered gown, in marvelous imitation of the female in the Charles Addams cartoons. Ghoulish humor is the keynote. I immediately asked her if she knew Theodore, and (of course) she had worked with him. She came up from Los Angeles for the convention and the masquerade ball. I found her most interesting—she has show-biz shrewdness combined with some rather exotic tastes in phrenology, astrology, palmistry, and graphology; of which more later.



A group of us ate at an Italian restaurant with the Cramers and a new couple, Laura and Clyde somebody (I'm ashamed I forgot the last name, but then I was introduced next to a juke-box in heat). Then we rushed back for the masquerade ball, featuring Turk Murphy and his Ear-Splitters. Good, but loud.

For some unexplained reason I found myself one of the judges, along with John, Evelyn, Tony, and Vampira. Sidney Coleman had presented me with a 2-foot-long cigarette holder (oh, there were so many nice people bearing gifts: an ashtray, pictures, 'zines) and it quite

dwarfed Vampira's puny little 1-foot holder. She did a double-take when I produced it, and then topped me neatly by stowing *her* holder, between smokes, in her décolletage. She wore this low-cut black dress and the effect was quite startling, particularly when she bent over (which was frequently, because I kept dropping stuff for her to pick up). When Tony Boucher noted the method by which she sheathed the cigarette holder, he gallantly remarked that this was the first time in his life he ever wished that *he* could be a cigarette holder.

Vampira also had a 17-inch waist, and the spectacle of her doing the Charleston with a youthful fan is something quite memorable.

But—the costumes and judging.

This was a toughie. It was a toughie because the costumes (while not quite as numerous as Chicago) were so *good*. And when the masqueraders paraded through, many of them had clever gags and “acts” which surprised all of us who were judging and made it doubly difficult to decide. If prizes had been awarded on the basis of *performance* as well as appearance, we'd have gone crazy trying to be fair.



The photo to the left shows Olga Ley as Deep Space. Fanac.org photo by Ben Jason. The photo to the right shows Willy Ley (seated) with Olga's hand on his shoulder. Background fans unidentified. Photo by Karen Anderson, courtesy Karen Anderson Collection.

As it was, we judges had to retire for a half-hour of solid debate and elimination. During this time Vampira watched John Campbell and Evelyn Gold writing down the names of eligible prizewinners and immediately informed John that Evelyn was ever so much more intelligent than he, on the basis of graphology. In fact, as she expressed it, “Why even I'm smarter than you are, dearie!” For some reason or other, this particular remark fit to kill Tony and myself.



Karen Anderson as a
Planet Stories cover.
Courtesy Karen Anderson
Collection.

We finally were able to award four prizes and four honorable mentions: prizewinners—Olga Ley in striking black, as Deep Space: Jessica Cramer in silver, with silver hair and skin, as Miss Galaxy: Phyllis Scott in shroud, noose, dagger-pierced body as D.O.A., and a gentleman whose name I never *did* get as a Mad Scientist. Incidentally, he had both a clever outfit *and* a clever act, strictly from Colonna. The honorable mentions—Karen Anderson as a Valkyrie, Laura ____? as an Amphibian in green (she blew bubbles out of the top of her head): another un-introduced character who came as a green man and whose head-shape fascinated Vampiria, and George Faraco, who wore a gruesome carnivorous mask which dominated his costume. But there were more fine getups, many more: it was a picnic for color photographers.

It was a picnic for non-dancers like myself, too. To watch Walt Liebscher cutting a rug with Evelyn Gold was indeed something—Marty Greenberg twisting and twirling Harriet Fellas around adagio-fashion in a sort of Lindy Hop-head routine—and (hold it now!) Mrs. Peg Campbell

jitterbugging with Harlan Ellison.

Finally Tony Boucher delivered the valedictory and the convention was over.

It wasn't over, however, for the 40 or 50 guests who attended the Cole-Committee-After-Con party upstairs. Chicago penthouse on a small scale, and an all-night affair. It was somewhat marred midway by the management. It seems Jim Webbert had been dispatched for cigarettes and was halted downstairs by the house detective and the assistant manager. He was not registered as a guest, so they immediately accused him of moperly, necrophilia, and simony, and refused to let him come back up.

He never did get back up—but ten dirty pros, all of those present who were registered at the hotel, went downstairs and gave hell to the management in a body. Seismographs trembled all along the coast.



Lucky double exposure of the masqueraders. Photo by Karen Anderson, courtesy Karen Anderson Collection.

The party continued all night, but I couldn't. I left to rest up for the following day—Tuesday. I'd been trying to find drivers heading east, but no dice; made plane arrangements therefore, for Wednesday. Tuesday the Peebles had promised a trip to Muir Woods to see the Redwood Forest and I decided to stay over the extra day.

It was worth it. We lunched at Cliff House, took the Golden Gate Bridge, breezed away to Oakland and beyond, and found this wonderful Redwood Forest.

I'm not going to try and describe it. I can't hope to. Standing in one of those glades and looking straight up, listening to the wind whisper, is just something one must experience. There's more awe, more true religious feeling there, than I've ever known. More beauty, and more peace, and more harmony.

As someone in the group remarked, feelingly, "Ain't it a sonofabitch?" Nobody objected, because it was spoken in true reverence.

Japanese tea-gardens, then Fisherman's Wharf for dinner, then back to the hotel. No strength to go out with the Cramers, no strength to go out to visit the Coles. Just enough strength to pack and head for bed.

Came Wednesday. Late afternoon flight for me, and also for Harriet Fellas. Having three or four hours at our disposal, I suggested the zoo, which is justly famous. Out we went, and it was worth the trip. Then the plane, just before sunset. Harriet and I sat there and reminisced, trying to sort impressions. Finally I fell asleep. When she nudged me it must have been about 5 AM. We were flying about 20,000 feet above the clouds, and the sun was just rising. The clouds below us were flaming red, and the plane seemed to be hurtling through a sea of fire toward the crimson eye of the rising sun.

Then everything suddenly turned to gold. And I had difficulty in swallowing. It was just too much—the final touch to a week filled with an incredible accumulation and intensification of sensation.



Evelyn Paige Gold, the public face of *Galaxy*. Photo by Karen Anderson, courtesy Karen Anderson Collection.



Vampira and Poul Anderson dancing together. Photo by Karen Anderson, courtesy Karen Anderson Collection.

I was very quiet the rest of the trip and in Chicago. We landed and went our separate ways—I climbed on the afternoon train and headed home. I met Milton Polland, of Milwaukee, and he immediately told me three long jokes in a row. I nodded and laughed, but not at the jokes. It so happens I'd already heard all three of them—at the convention. There was nothing more to expect. I'd gone there merely to distribute Dean Grennell's little blue cards for him, but the way it turned out, I managed to have a pretty good time into the bargain.

There's no way of telling the general reaction. I've always maintained that conventions are "failures" or "successes" only on the basis of individual reactions. As far as I'm concerned, San Francisco was the most.

I wish you all could have been there....

Because, as I said, there's just no way of conveying the general impression. It had to be experienced.

There are times, at parties or social gatherings, when a mood is created, captured, and held for several hours. Such occasions are memorable. But I've never known such a continuity of mood before—and this convention had it.

I've already filled pages, but could fill yet an equal number just citing little flashes that contributed to the general effect.

Lewis J. Grant of Chicago, handling out his "Candidate for Public Stranger" cards... Vampira insisting she must dance with Poul Anderson because of the shape of his head... the bar crowds, dropping interlineations faster than the fans could fill their notebooks... the deep delight of Sam Moskowitz during a panel when the others used the microphone and he sounded louder without it...Kris Neville offering five quarts of tequila on the altar of hospitality...Marty Greenberg literally giving me the shirt off his back after mine was soaked at the banquet...the Coles running themselves ragged and still managing to look as if they were enjoying the riot...the cable car rollercoasting down the hills...and the million-and-one things I'll remember after I've sent this out and wish I'd included.

Like the voting on the next convention site, for example; a trivial detail I just happened to leave out. The competition was between Detroit (Ellison), Cleveland (Falasca), and Buffalo (somebody I didn't hear because I left for the washroom and when I came back it was all over and Cleveland had won).

Fancy II: "Cards, usually of index-card size or a bit less, with some motto with Hidden Meaning ("Basingstoke"). First used by the London Circle at the SuperManCon in 1954, where a batch that Vinç Clarke had run off were passed from hand to hand among fans or, more fabulously, passed out to pedestrians on the street by an intrepid and respectable-looking fan while his confederates lingered in the middle distance to watch the civilian react. This fine fannish recreation was continued at the SFCon with a flock of Huckle-blue quote-cards manufactured for the occasion by Redd Boggs and DAG.
--Robert Lichtman



Karen Anderson holding baby Astrid. Courtesy Karen Anderson Collection.

Then there was a girl who called herself “Gin” and lived up to it (and past it), and the woman who ran around rubbing her green makeup off on everybody, including JWC and yours truly, and John Cramer playing hot piano in the bar, and van Vogt’s iridescent suit everyone admired, and Willy Ley gravely explaining to me that the way to keep looking fresh at a convention was to bring two children along and go to bed when they did. And Karen Anderson nursing her baby [Astrid] in the middle of a party...the BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU signs...Walt Liebscher’s death-mask the morning after he stayed up all night...Irene Baron actually thanking me for ribbing her at the banquet...Korshak discussing business in the midst of pleasure...the tape-recording for Doc Barrett which I managed to mumble on, and the one for Walt Willis which I just couldn’t get to in time...Finigan’s marvelous collection of stereos from Chicago and New Orleans...Howard Browne’s brief 2-hour appearance during the time I was out in Oakland...the Ito dummies

near Cliff House, with every hair individually set in the heads...the Mexican, Italian, Chinese, French, Armenian, German food...Peter Graham in the flesh...Ruth Stage’s creations...Bretnor’s little wire abstractions which I helped him christen for the auction...the tiger-cubs at the zoo...sunset at Fisherman’s Wharf...Terry Carr, and a whole horde of local face-critters who never did actually introduce themselves to me so that I could name ’em...Carole McKinney, who looks exactly as I imagined she would look, which is very nice indeed...the Cole’s smallest child, which I haven’t mentioned so far, but appears to be extremely edible...the profound debate on thermonuclear warfare going on in the Men’s Washroom after a panel was finished...and the Editor’s Panel, which only lasted one hour but which could have lasted three, judging from audience interest...plus—but I’ve got to stop somewhere, and this is it.

One final treasured moment came when I lighted Jim Webbert’s cigar. This is livin’....

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Travis Bland". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

*Reprinted from *Le Zombie* No. 64, January 1955. Special thanks to Peter Weston for the original manuscript carbon and the obsession, and to Earl Terry Kemp for keyboarding the text. The pictures in this article are courtesy fanac.org and Karen Anderson: the Karen Anderson Collection. Special thanks to Robert Lichtman for locating the original publication and providing scans of the cover and interior and copy of the original

publication text. Special thanks also, for help rendered, to Chris Lotts and Michael Pfefferkorn.

Just because some of us can read and write and do a little math, that doesn't mean we deserve to conquer the Universe.

--Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *Hocus Pocus*

No Holds Barred

By Poul and Karen Anderson

Introduction:

In the early 1950s, Poul and Karen Anderson were still youngsters themselves (he was in his mid 20s and she her late teens) and very active science fiction fans in the Bay Area. They were regulars at The Elves, Gnomes, and Little Men's Science Fiction, Chowder, and Marching Society, as well as local area parties and related gatherings. They were also becoming well known, nationwide, as Big Name Fans.

(In later years, after Karen relocated to the Los Angeles area, she continued this fannish practice with local and national conventions, fan gatherings, book events, and attending the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society.)

Poul's fiction had begun selling regularly in the '50s and his future, not as a physicist but as a writer, apparent. And, by 1954, things were going rather well for both of them as they roamed Earle Bergey landscapes with their heads lost out there somewhere in infinite space.

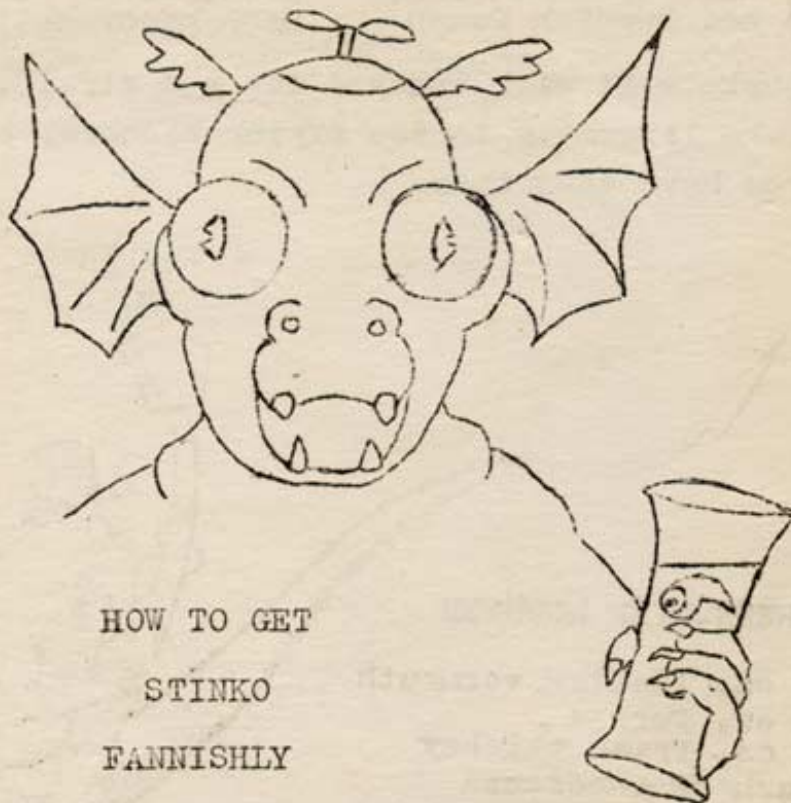
And, they had their beloved daughter Astrid just a few weeks before the science fiction Worldcon was to be held right where they were, in San Francisco. To celebrate the occasion, they decided to produce a one-shot fanzine to distribute to their fellow fans at that convention. It was an eight-page, 5¹/₂ x 8¹/₂ mimeoed zine named *No Holds Barred*. It received fond acceptance at the convention.

In an unique twist of fate, Karen wrote the text for the zine and Poul, the writer, didn't. Instead, he drew the artwork for it.

With Karen Anderson's permission, Bill Burns and I are reproducing the entire 1954 issue of *No Holds Barred* here for your continuing enjoyment.

–Earl Kemp

THE
No Holds BARRED
GUIDE



HOW TO GET
STINKO
FANNISHLY

Compiled by.
Die Zeitschrift für vollständigen Unsinn
A Still House Publication



FLYING SAUCER

$\frac{1}{4}$ oz. French vermouth 1 oz. Cuban rum
 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. Swedish Punch Dash of Grenadine

Shake well with cracked ice and strain.

Take liberally to see flying saucers, or if you have seen them.

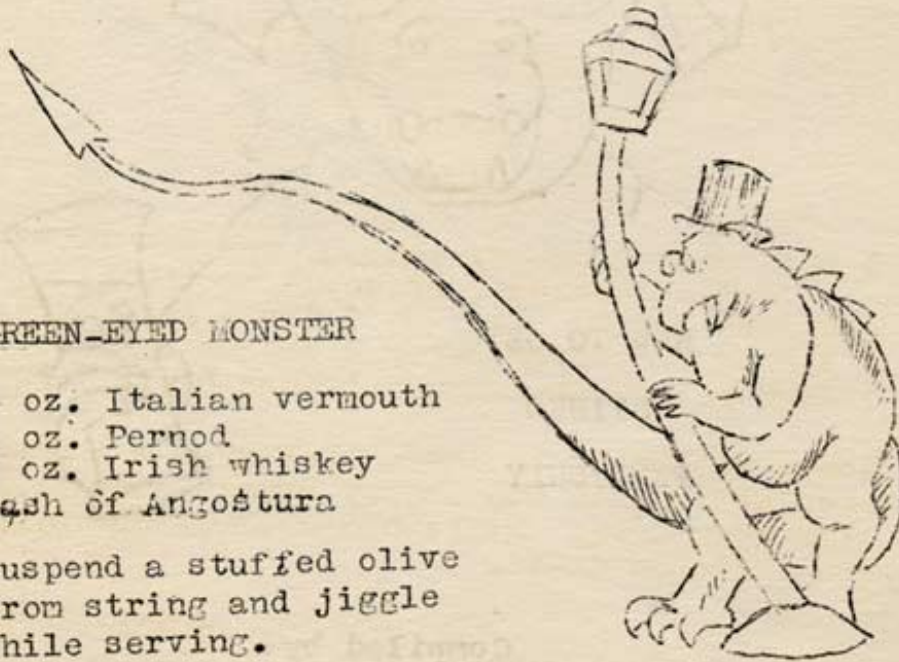
Ted Shane

GREEN-EYED MONSTER

$\frac{1}{2}$ oz. Italian vermouth
 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. Pernod
 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. Irish whiskey
Dash of Angostura

Suspend a stuffed olive from string and jiggle while serving.

Ted Shane



GOLDEN GRULZAK

1 oz. gin
1 oz. frozen pineapple juice concentrate

Mix in tall glass and fill with ice and
soda, or (preferably) chilled soda. Silp.

K.K.A.



H-BOI

1 part each bourbon, scotch, gin, apple
jack, brandy, creme de menthe
4 dashes Pernod 4 drops Angostura
2 dashes raspberry syrup 2 dashes Curacao
1 dash yellow chartreuse 1 dash Devil Water

Shake violently in large shaker, add 1 glass
each Goldwasser and cherry brandy, and fill
with champagne. Stir, add cherry, and pour
down kitchen drain.

Ted Shane

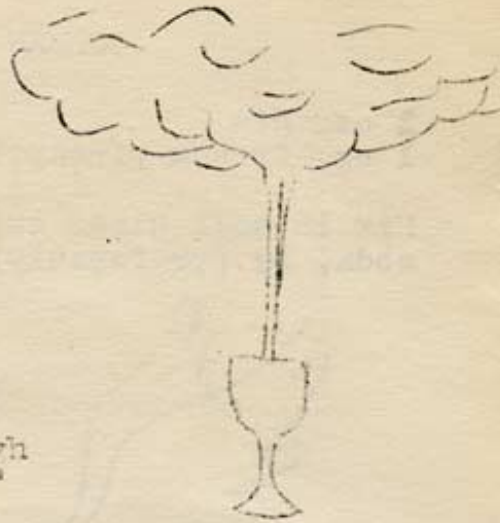
3

NUCLEAR FIZZ

1½ oz. gin
1 oz. cointreau
1 oz. lemon juice
Dash of angostura
Ice and soda to fill
or (preferably)
chilled soda. Silp.

"Silping is the technique of drinking an iceless drink as though there were ice in it."

Washington S-F Ass'n.

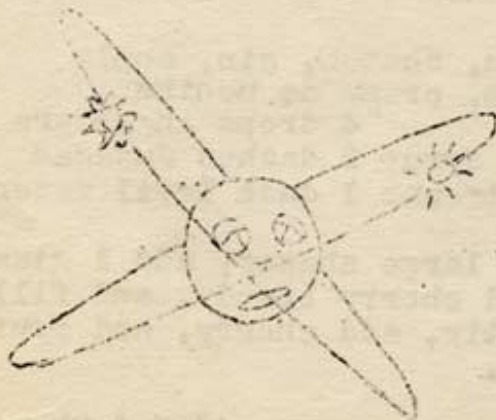


OPPENHEIMER'S U-235

2 parts bourbon 1 part Grenadine
1 part Italian vermouth
Stir with cracked ice and strain.

Watch for splitting headaches.

Ted Shane

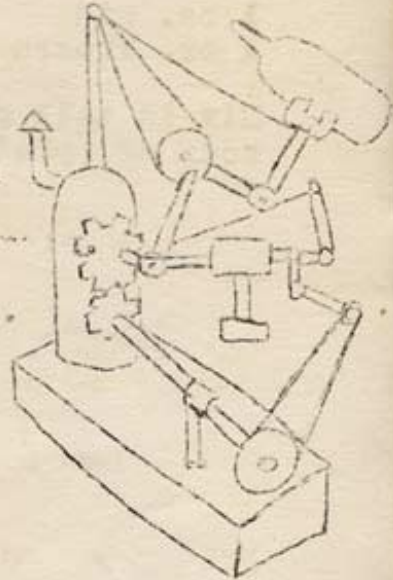


PERPETUAL MOTION

2 dashes Creme Yvette
2 dashes Creme de Cacao
 $\frac{1}{2}$ jigger French vermouth
 $\frac{1}{2}$ jigger Italian vermouth

Stir with cracked ice
and strain.
Creates perpetual
emotion.

Ted Shane



POO

1 oz. brandy
Iced coffee to fill.

"The Poo is mightier than the Yobber."

K.K.A.



VIRGIL FINLAY

1 oz. brandy
Champagne to fill.

R. Bretner

YOBBER

1 oz. gin

1 oz. frozen grape juice concentrate

Mix in tall glass; fill with ice and
soda or (preferably) chilled soda. Silp.

K.K.A.



The No Holds Barred Guide is presented more or less seriously as a public disservice for the drinking pleasure of attendees of the SFCon. Recipes come from a variety of sources: some were lifted direct from Ted Shans's classic, BAR GUIDE; some were donated by friends; some I made up myself. The source of the Nuclear Fizz recipe is given as "Washington Science Fiction Association;" I have forgotten which member of WSFA actually invented it.

Don't blame me if some of these are a little too rough for even the most bottle-hardened stomach. Some of them I wouldn't touch, myself.

Karen Krusen Anderson





A STILL HOUSE PUBLICATION