

ASPIDISTRA

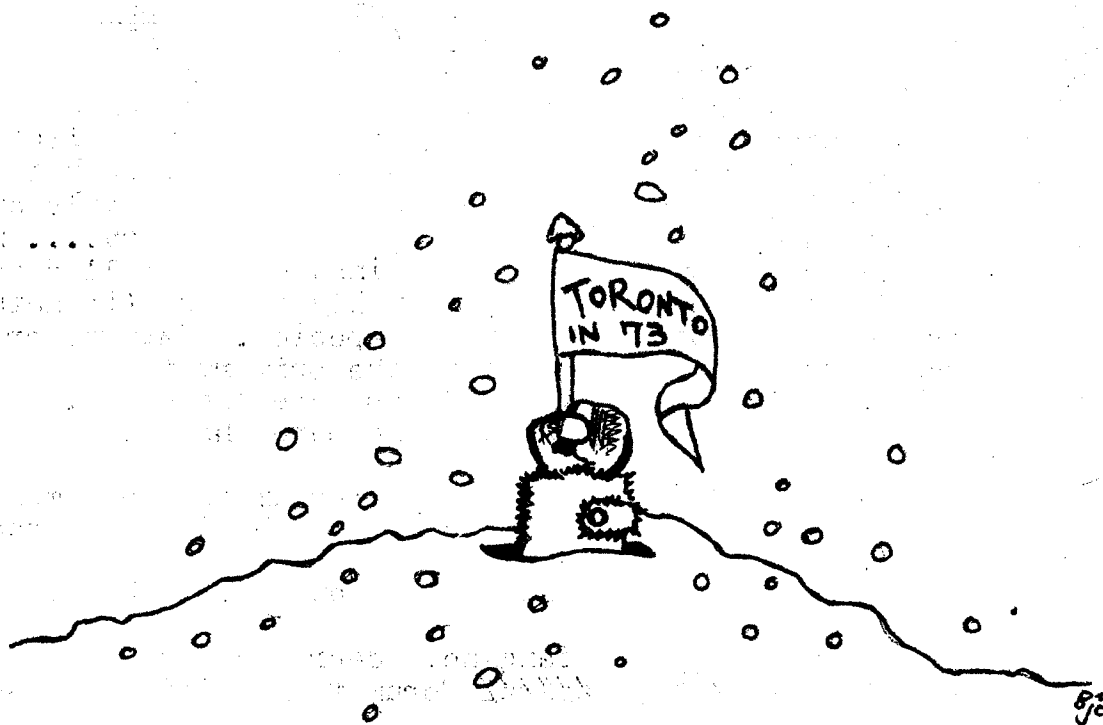
ASPIDISTRA is a collation of heavy raps and light natters on science fiction and other topics, edited by Susan Glicksohn, with the invaluable technical assistance of Michael Glicksohn. It is produced in the editorial living-room of ENERGUMEN PUBLICATIONS, 267 St. George St., Apt. 807, Toronto 180, Ontario, and published on Pressed Ham Press. ASPIDISTRA is available for substantial LoC or contribution, or 25¢ if you prefer; no cheques, and no trades, thanks, since I can read Mike's trades, can't I?

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AN OVERGROWN EDITORIAL



Almost three years ago, when the world was young, I was a dewy-eyed neo-fan, and Richard Labonte still locec fanzines, I was over at his house, planning Lowdown. Whilst we nattered, I picked up a smallish zine from the pile littering his desk (and floor and dresser; to think, with all this warning, I still married a fan!) It was a Revelation. An Epiphany. An opening of fannish horizons. I had discovered a personalzine-- one of those "And Mitzi and I dropped over to see John and Mary Smith and their kitten, Gestetner (because it's cranky, ha, ha!) which the Silverbergs had just mailed to them, and we had dinner, and I said the following witty sayings..." It all seemed terribly, terribly Important. But...

"Richard," I said, seeking further revelation, "it's not about science fiction."

"It doesn't have to be. Fanzines can be about anything of interest to you, or sf fans, or even both."

"Oh. You mean I could put one out?"

"Sure."

Aspidistra was born. Slowly.

Originally, I had thought of a femmefanzine-- before Women's Lib. and even What About Us Grils?-- to counteract, in some small measure, the overwhelming domination of sf and fandom by males. Witness, for example, the distinction between the sexes: a man is a fan, a woman, that decorative nonentity, a femmefan! Tsk! Then the late (huh, Joyce?) lamented Grils appeared. Finally, too, I decided that creating distinctions, even in jest, does nothing but create distinctions, and, besides, that both sides need liberating from a lot of sex-role hangups. (Who says "manly" men can't cry, or show affection? And don't you feel sorry for those men who are so unsure of themselves as individuals that they must bolster their egos by assuring us, as a Toronto newspaper columnist did, that women do not elect women to public offices because "women want to be governed by men, both in public life and at home. It is natural for women to think more highly of men than of women, to respect them, to find them wise, cute or groovy.... nature has made women antipathetic to women in order to insure they will devote their full attention to men and thus fulfil the equally obvious (to nature) grand design of procreation and propagation of the species. Nature, or God, clearly believes, even if some of us don't, that the primary function of all creatures, man included, is to be fruitful and populate the earth." Of which, more later. Which is more than enough for one parenthesis.)

Aspidistra brooded somewhere north of my cerebrum for many months, while I wrote essays, graded essays, immersed myself in the Canadian pastoral myth and married Michael.

Then I wrote an editorial for ENERGUMEN 4 about me, Michael, and Toronto air.

"Energumen is a science fiction fanzine," decreed my sweetie. "My child is not going to be a ~~dinky hippy radical~~ forum for political or social commentary. No heavy raps!"

Most letters agreed with Michael. However, he, our loc-writers and other fen all cried out: "Let the discussion continue! Separate, but equal, of course."

Here, then, is Son of ENERGUMEN. Enjoy.

Only Devra Langsam, a talented and well-read young gentlewoman, recognized the source of the title: neither Gracie Field's Biggest Aspidistra, nor Orwell's symbol of respectability in Keep the Aspidistra Flying, but Simon Templar's song in The Saint vs Scotland Yard.

Aspidistra, little herb,
Do you think it silly
When the botanizer's blurb
Links you with the lily?

Up above your window ledge
Streatham stars are gleaming;
Aspidistra, little veg,
Does your soul go dreaming?

A group of us discovered the Saint in Grade 9, and somehow the name "Aspidistra" got tacked onto me: maybe because "Susan" means "lily", maybe because I fancied myself as having a dreaming soul. I was only thirteen, after all!

Is Asp. a personalzine? It has covers. It has other contributors. As a collation of heavy raps and light natters on science fiction and life in general (mostly the latter, this issue) it is meant to complement ENERGUMEN, handling material which may be of interest to you Out There, and which is of interest to me. Which, I guess, makes it a personalzine.

Asp. will come out at least twice a year, more if I get contributions (please?) No, I am not making any foolish promises about keeping it small. Even if no-one responds, I can still fill twenty pages, can't I, Michael? ("Keep it down to three pages," he wailed, despairingly.) If you don't want me to write, do it yourself!

I make no promises that I will publish your fiction or poetry, but I may; as of issue 6, ENERGUMEN will not. I think we need a term without the derogatory connotations of "fanfic." Any ideas for "fiction which happens to be written by fans for fanzines but which is good and not a refugee from the IF slushpile?" Sandra Miesel's story is a good example of what I mean by the above circumlocution. It deals with an old theme, sure, but with some interesting human observations; and in fact the theme is not the obvious one.

Poetry? I am notoriously fussy about poetry. See ENERGUMEN 2. I think most "fan poetry" deserves all the derogatory connotations it can get. It is not poetry-- it is sloppy doggerel or even sloppier prose, sloppy in construction, in choice of language, in imagery, in syntax, and above all in thought. It needs rewriting, even rethinking, many, many times. I don't really care if Byron wrote his lyrics on the spur of the moment on bits of envelopes, or if Irving Layton says his poems come in some mystic vision; the latter, at least, is a tiresomely self-indulgent writer. You, out there writing "poetry" in biology class -- until you learn creative self-discipline you are only a bore. Almost anyone can turn out flamboyant cliches:

Grey
this box imprisons
me
life coloured like rainbows

escapes

-- Aspidistra 1 --

Or as Shelley said in "Ode to the West Wind,"

I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

It may be forgiven him, perhaps, given the rest of the poem.

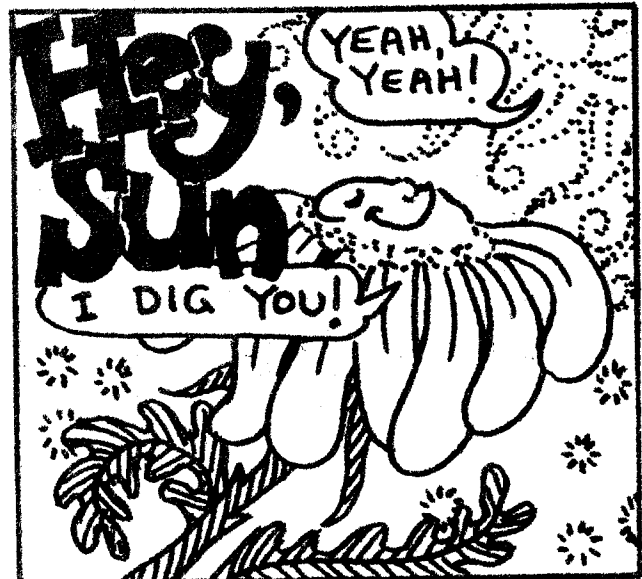
If you want to write, read -- "the classics;" Charles Olson, Ginsberg (or are they passe?) or best of all, your own work, critically. Read Shakespeare's sonnets. Yes, those. From within a rigid formal framework, a fairly rigid set of conventions affecting imagery, language, even subject matter, some truly enduring poems arose. Watch how Shakespeare takes a theme, such as "You will die, but live in my poetry," and works it over, changing the point of view, the tone, and the metaphors. Out of a group of, say, ten thematically-related poems, four or five may be average Elizabethan sonnets. You may find them dull, hard to understand, repetitious. Aw, Shakespeare, who needs him? One, though, at least, will still be alive despite everything time, stifling conventions, and all the efforts of your Grade 11 teacher who made you memorize the poem with punctuation, could do to kill it.

One out of ten. If you write that well, send it in.

Now, the art. The visual, as well as verbal, art in Aspidistra, like that in ENERGUMEN, is not just ornamentation. It is, I hope, part of a total package-- valuable for its own sake as well as for the part it plays in enhancing the text. Some of it I begged from Michael, because it complemented work in Asp. rather than E. Some was sent specially for this issue. I am/we are grateful for all of it. Naturally, I would appreciate contributions of art; ideally our fannish household would have such a large supply of beautiful art that we could match the visual and textual material perfectly. Ah, well, we all need ideals to reach for. Meanwhile, fanartists may rest assured that their art is a valued and necessary part of our visually conscious zines, and that it will be treated with all respect. Please, do specify whether or not you wish the art to be returned, and, for large

pieces, especially, whether you would like extra copies of the page for your portfolio.

And, artists and critics: with the new concern for art criticism, which coincides with my interests, I would be delighted if anyone were to write extensively on art, or on the (better yet, their)

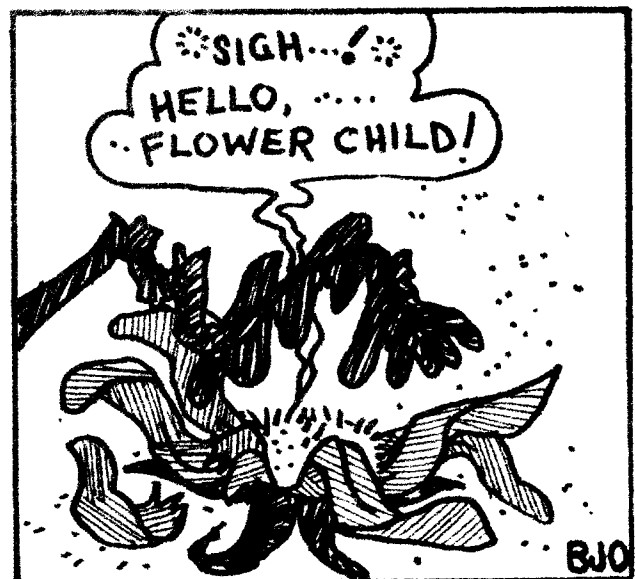


artistic process. Please? Or a series of drawings, perhaps, showing the first roughs of an idea, the elaboration of detail, the finished product... it might help us all to understand each other.

I hope you enjoy Elizabeth's column. Men too. Michael makes a good "poulet au rotgut" and a fabulous pot of rice! (Part of understanding each other is to share tasks.) A cooking column in a fanzine? Why not? In fact, if the response is favourable, next issue will feature (drumroll, fanfare) Michael Glicksohn's tuna fish sandwich recipe!!!

I agree intellectually, but disagree emotionally, with Alexis Gilliland. Or maybe it's the other way around. I agree that much individual action, like agitation to ban phosphates in detergents, is probably a wasted effort. I agree that the real action must come from industries, to clean up their wastes, and from governments, to force them to do so. Yet I still believe in the value, even the necessity, of the personal gesture. We all know that going out of the way to buy milk, beer and soft drinks in returnable bottles (and telling store managers to stock them); or not buying an electric toothbrush, knife, or other energy-consuming gadget; or turning the stereo down (an anti-noise-pollution measure I wish our neighbours would learn); or buying a small, convenient car with a high-compression engine instead of a wasteful status-monster; or yes, Alexis, using soap flakes and washing soda instead of detergent for that advertised-on-TV whiteness, will not save our world. But it is better than doing nothing. It is an indication (as long as we realize that it is only an indication, not an end in itself, that our concern over environmental pollution is not, as Prime Minister Trudeau called it, "the latest kick" replacing civil rights as the "in" concern. It shows that you, me, and our neighbour who finally turned down the stereo are so concerned about our future that we are willing to adapt our lifestyles to ensure that we get that future. It is a sign that constructive change is possible on the individual level. It is, if you want to get romantic about it, one small step for mankind. I, for one, believe in the necessity and value of that step.

I know. You've heard this all before; and you don't believe it, or you think nothing can be done, and you're tired of fans who think they can Save the World. You are, however, supposed to be intelligent, articulate, future-oriented people (or so the fannish myth goes.) Perhaps the repeti-



tion will do some good. Within maybe 50 years, we will do one of three things.

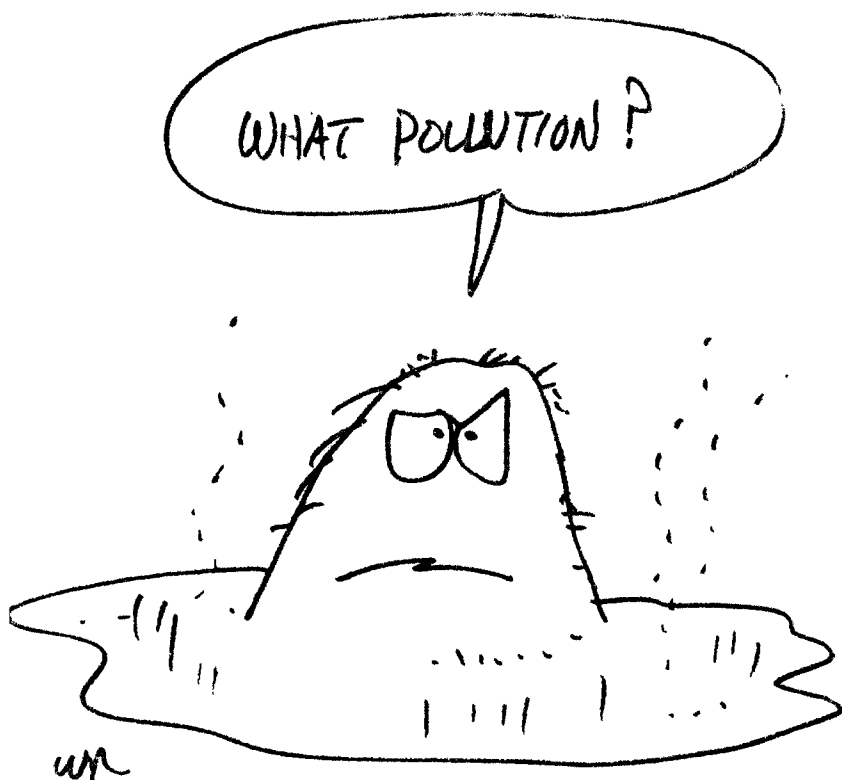
We will die. I have been called a pessimist; I hope I am. I can see us going "not with a bang but a whimper"-- too many chemicals in the air and the water, too much radiation, too many mouths. There's a farm near San Francisco where the horses started to fall over dead. Just like that, dead. You may not care about the fish belly-up in your local river, or the disappearing polar bears or the plight of the Texas Gulf pelicans who eat mercury-tainted fish, then lay thin-shelled eggs which break before they can hatch. But it will be us, next.

We will adapt. Do you really want to? To merely survive? Look at all the futures laid out for us-- not the galactic empires, or even 1984, but Jagged Orbit or Robert Silverberg's urban stories. Synthetic glop made from yeasts, asphalt ocean to ocean, concrete and people inescapably around, everything only-just-endurably grey. I suppose we deserve it.

We will change creatively. The people in Pollution Probe here at the University of Toronto call it an "ecological ethic": a way of living which puts concern for the human environment and for all life before profits and material self-interest. Sounds scientific, you know: governments and industry acting for the good of the people, instead of serving each other and the almighty profit; the air clean again; every child not only fed but given a chance to live decently, co-existing with wildlife, enjoying trees and flowers and such unprofitable but pleasant things. All our problems solved, because you can only be truly concerned about the death of Lake Erie or of the whooping crane if you are also concerned about the deaths of American teenagers, Vietnamese children, Arabs, Israelis, Ibos, and every other human being engaged in our futile and senseless wars. No more problems?

Sure. And who has an alternative for violence? A remedy for the economic disasters which will come if industries are forced to use their profits to clean up their wastes--or shut down? I don't mean just Interprovincial

Co-operative Ltd. in Saskatoon which had to close down because of a \$2. million mercury-pollution lawsuit, but, say, Bethlehem Steel or General Motors. Do you have an alternative for the life force which makes women still insist on bearing six, eight, ten children, and makes male legislators and churchmen insist on their doing so, whether they want to or not? (There have been minor tempests in the Canadian media recently over the demand for further reform of the abortion laws. A young, female, single newspaper columnist had the temerity to write advocating abortion on demand. She was called a "murderess"



by people who insisted that Canada needs all the babies its women can bear because it's underpopulated. All we need is India's population density, beggars crawling in the Yukon snowdrifts.)

How much are you prepared to pay to find the peaceable kingdom?

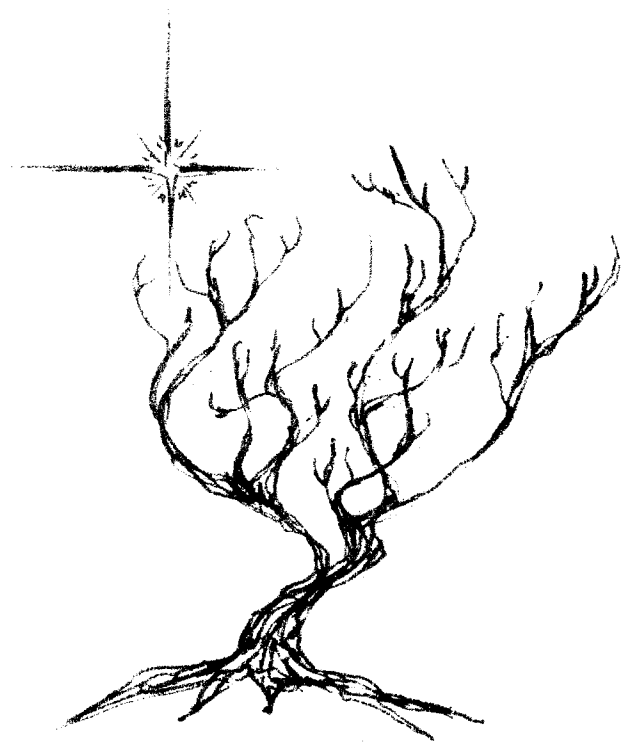
Appearances aside, neither Rosemary nor I are fanatics, eco-freaks or nasty commies subverting society. Really. Of course, Rosemary does tend to amaze people by declaring in the middle of large, crowded assemblies: "I, singlehandedly, am going to save the Rocky Mountain goat!" She is really less concerned with the goat than with the California sea otter, though. You see, she decided that if she weren't a people, she'd like to be a sea otter. They're cute, have beautiful fur coats, and spend all day playing. They are also dying. Sea otters are a protected species, working their way back from near-extinction as fur coats early in the century; but the shellfish they eat are in demand by gourmets and are being destroyed as their beds are polluted, and, in any case, the west coast waters are not the most healthy environment at the moment.

I, on the other hand, am still busy being allergic to Toronto's air. Did you know that Jacques Plante, the Toronto Maple Leafs' goalie, says he is allergic to Toronto? I sympathize.

I think that my real concern with the environment began because I grew up in such a pleasant one. From the time I was seven I lived in a suburb, which began as more rural than urban or even sub. There were cows in our corn patch, rabbits and groundhogs for the cat to chase. I grew up knowing how to plant trees and tomatoes, watching robins hatch, and learning the names of flowers. Idyllic, yes? The point is, the ideal idyll is available to precious few children, and is getting harder to find all the time. The suburb where I lived is now a cityful of asphalt, liquor stores and hot-dog stands, filled with muffler-less Hondas. Even if you cleaned the rusty beer cans and broken glass off the Ottawa River beaches, I still wouldn't swim there, thanks to the raw sewage and industrial waste. Meanwhile, there's downtown Toronto. I used to know my environment. I could name the elements, Now I'm eight stories up in a concrete tower, and most emphatically do not understand my environment or its elements, though I can smell, taste and even see them. Nor, beyond my watering eyes, do I really know what they are doing to me. It's rather frightening.

I just read a report on pollution in Japan. For the sake of economic growth, the Japanese have sacrificed clean air and water, and turned Mt. Fuji into a mountain of litter. Sound like home? Last summer, 8,000 people came down with ear and eye infections on especially "bad days." Yet no-one is curtailing heavy industry's pollution; and one observer said that "People need to start dropping dead all over the place" before any constructive action will be taken.

I'd rather have a world in which Rosemary could be reincarnated as a sea otter.



WHAT A WASTE!

SOME THOUGHTS ON POLLUTION BY ALEXIS GILLILAND

The question of environmental pollution is a real one, and not likely to yield to silly solutions.

Let us consider, for instance, the question of phosphates in detergents, a subject which happens to be work-related in my case. The case against phosphates is based on the fact that the natural aging of lakes, eutrophication, is accelerated by the injudicious addition of various elements which are normally in short supply. We consider, in fact, that of all the elements, phosphorous, in the form of phosphates, is the key: the element in most short supply, whose presence or absence determines the rate of algae growth. That is, in the absence of phosphates, growth stops, or slows to the tempo permitted by recirculation of the trace of phosphates in the environment.

This is quite true, as far as the world goes, but it is also true that about 40% of the phosphates in our effluent derive from detergents. Does it therefore follow that reducing or eliminating phosphates in detergents will improve our environment?

The answer, unfortunately, is no. Even if phosphates were completely eliminated from detergents, our effluent-- which we seek to purify-- would contain about 60% of its present load of phosphates. Since this is perhaps 10 to 20 times the required minimum ration of phosphates, no improvement whatsoever will be noted in the environment. In most lakes, the growth-limiting elements have become oxygen and carbon dioxide, gases absorbed from the air, rather than the fertilizing nutrients so abundantly furnished by our sewage.

Why, then, is it likely that Federal specifications will shortly contain maximum limits for phosphates? The answer is that the problem is political as well as scientific. All you out there in TV land are yelling to get the pollution out. When Congress turns to the Federal Supply Service and says "What have you done?" we point to the revised specs. and say "We have eliminated 50% (or whatever) of the phosphates we use in the system." What we mean is, we have reduced the phosphate maximum in detergents which the Federal Government buys. To clean clothes or floors as well as previously, it is likely that more-reduced-phosphate detergent will be used, so that the effluent's net phosphate load will not be much affected. However, when the voter points the finger and says "What have you done?" we will have something to tell him: "50% reduction!"

Equally important,--what we have done does not require the outlay of billions of tax dollars. We have, in fact, faked an answer on the cheap.

What would be useful is the construction of adequate sewage treatment plants. Of course, this would require a good many billion dollars to do properly, and this is money that we do not, at present, contemplate spending. Highways, yes. SSTs, yes. Wars, missiles and public housing, yes. Sewage treatment plants? No.

What's more, bond issues to finance these sewage plants would almost

certainly be rejected by the voters. You, the voters. Are you personally prepared to spend \$2-300 a year for the foreseeable future on cleaning up your personal effluent? Shit!

Meanwhile, we have the illusion that we are helping to save the environment. The Great Lakes, most notably. Here in Washington, our sewage pours into the Potomac, which flows into Chesapeake Bay, and arm of the Atlantic. Phosphates are one of our more benign pollutants. Industrial wastes, including cyanides and heavy metals, also pour into the Potomac, and it isn't the phosphates that are killing the shellfish out in the bay.

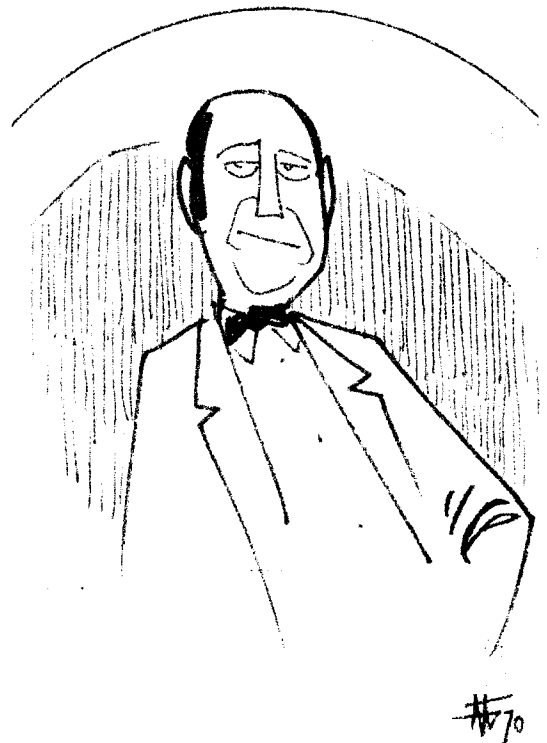
A real environmental hazard is mercury. It lodges in the biosphere as methyl mercury and just won't quit. In humans, ingested mercury is partially eliminated by deposition. in the hair and nails, in proportion to the quantity ingested. The onset of acute mercury poisoning is marked by the incidence of 150 parts per million of mercury in the hair. In the area around Lake St. Clair, individuals have been found with hair containing 50 to 100 ppm mercury. A control group of people not "exposed to mercury" ranged from 0.2 to 15 ppm.

Actually, mercury is nearly universal, ranging from 0.02 to 0.25 ppm in wheat, up to 0.4 ppm in Asian rice, and often concentrating in the liver of food animals beyond "safe limits." The World Health Organization suggests the safe limit is 0.05.

Stopping pollution by mercury is good, but make no mistake-- there is a large reservoir of mercury lodged in the biosphere. And a condition that took a century to develop will not vanish at the wave of a hand... which we have only started to think about waving.

There are other hazards. The driving force behind pollution is basically the combined effect of the population explosion, and the increased per capita use of power. The US, in an oft-cited statistic, consumes 50% of the world's resources, for a meagre 6% of the world's population. It is hardly surprising that we have 50% of the world's pollution, as a kind of fringe benefit.

It is more likely that the response to this situation will be a series of hasty improvisations to present or imminent crises, rather than any effective long-range plan. (In the whole history of government, one cannot find any effective long-range plans, for any purpose. In some cases, plans have been made, but they have come to naught.) The long-range result is most likely to be an added stress factor in the situation preceding the collapse of Western civilization and our vaunted Faustian culture. More important than any physical effects-- mass smog deaths or the like-- is the morale factor. Living in a polluted environment saps



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the will to make any improvement. One's morale, public and private, suffers the feeling-- probably correct-- that nothing can be done leads to inaction, and the negative feedback enhances all problems.

Who, for instance, is going to generate a lot of rah-rah enthusiasm to fight a lost cause? Even if it isn't really?

This is true throughout the whole range of political problems. Tax reform, land reform (for other countries, never, never for the US), institutional electoral and social reforms all hang together. If, for example, our tax structure were reformed, we would have the money to deal with the social reforms, if only the unreformed institutions (Standard Oil is alive and well under the Rockefeller Foundation) weren't dead set against meaningful tax reforms.

So raise the banner against unholy phosphates! Crush the evil oligopoly of detergent companies who pollute our streams and eutrophy our lakes! Show your concern for the environment by wearing an unclean shirt!

The real problem has been misdefined, and the heroic efforts of (temporarily) aroused citizens like yourself have been diverted to low comedy.

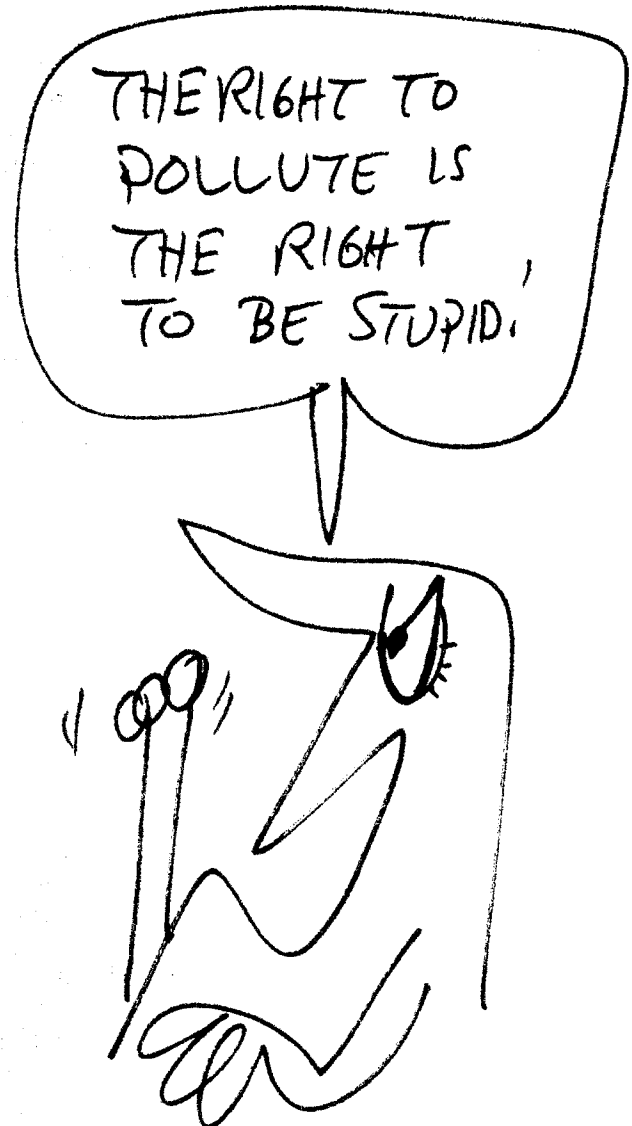
The irony of the anti-phosphate battle was brought home forcibly by a recent US government report that NTA, nitrilotriacetic acid, can aggravate rather than relieve water pollution. The nitrogen compound had been used by Proctor and Gamble, Lever Detergents Ltd., and Colgate-Palmolive Ltd. to replace phosphates in their detergents. Studies indicated, however, that it combines with heavy metals such as mercury and cadmium to contaminate drinking water; and that such compounds can cause birth defects in rats and mice.

The companies have announced that they will phase out the use of NTA and continue research to develop phosphate-free detergents.

In Canada, recent legislation reduced the phosphate content in detergents to 25%, with an absolute ban on their use planned for 1971.

But what I would really like to know is: what do all those hungry little enzymes do when they've finished chewing the egg off the shirts in your washer?

SJG





ANOTHER COLUMN
BY ROSEMARY

"All right, Rosemary, go in there and tell him."

"But Susan," I whined.

"No ifs, ands or buts. Go, woman," Susan ordered, pointing authoritatively to the Dominion store. "Have the courage of your convictions!" she called as the door swung shut behind me.

The supermarket wasn't busy. I waved and smiled at the express cashier. We've become rather friendly as I'm in and out of the store every day. I thought I might go over and chat with her until I looked out the window and saw Susan jumping up and down and gesticulating madly.

"Oh well," I thought as I trudged to the soft drink section, "I can always shop at the A&P."

All of the soft drinks in my Dominion store are sold in cans or no-deposit no-return bottles. Coca-Cola, Pepsi and Canada Dry will provide the retailer with returnable bottles if he requests them. Armed with this information I was supposed to confront the store manager and strike a blow for cleaner parks and the great Canadian dream... or something.

I had arrived at the soft drink section. "They don't look so awful," I thought, perusing them carefully.

"Hi Miss Ulliyot, can I do anything for you?" The store is small enough that most of the stock boys know me. They usually find me pawing through the tomatoes, looking for one that isn't green.

"Uh... yes, you could get me the manager," I muttered. He-trew me a puzzled look and went to fetch him.

"What seems to be the trouble?" the manager asked.

"Uh, I want to talk to you about your soft drink bottles," I began.

"Yes," he said encouragingly.

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"Uh, well, you see they all seem to be no deposit-no return and as glass can't be recycled and because returnable bottles are available from the manufacturer I really think you should stock returnable bottles for consumers like me who worry about the state of the ecosystem and don't like our garbage littered with heavy expensive no deposit-no return bottles," I finished breathlessly.

"People don't like returnable bottles; they won't buy them."

"Only because they've been brainwashed by a lot of nonsensical advertising. And they would buy them if nothing else were available. You're not giving the customer a choice. All you have on the shelf is non-returnable bottles!"

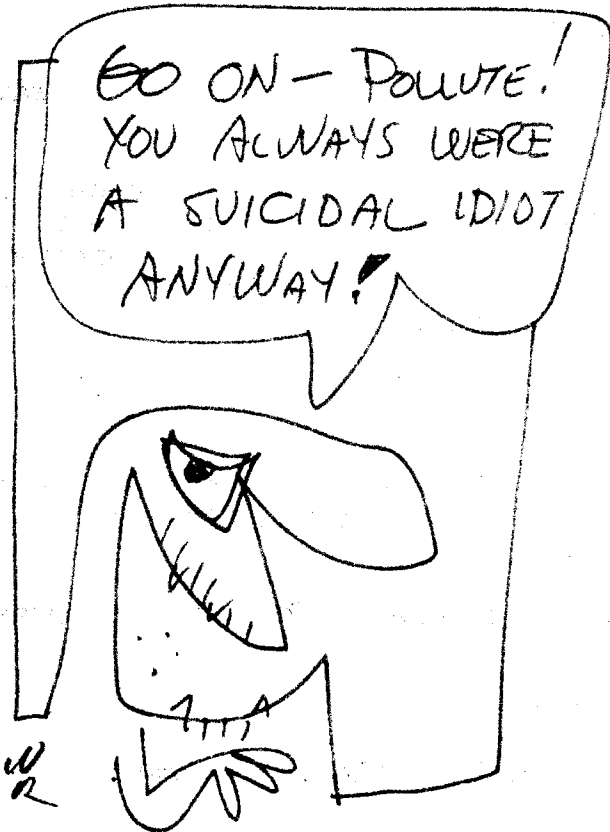
"I'm sorry, madam; we stock what the customer demands." He was beginning to look uncomfortable and started to edge away.

"How do you know its what the customer wants when you won't stock both kinds?" I demanded. "That's the dumbest thing I..."

"Unless there's something else madam, I'm very busy." And he started to leave.

"Hey, I'm not finished," I called to his retreating back. But he apparently was. He went up to his little glass-enclosed office and madly began to paw at some papers.

"Oh well, I did try," I thought as I stomped furiously to the dairy bar to buy a pound of yogurt. While I was waiting to pay for it, I noticed a lady in front of me unloading a million no deposit- no return Cokes from her shopping cart. "There you go Rosemary. A second chance. Strike a blow for the ecosystem."



"Pardon me, but do you know those are no deposit-no return bottles?"

"Yes," she answered.

"Don't you wonder what happens to the bottles after you throw them out?"

"No."

"Don't you care?"

"No, as a matter of fact, I don't. Do you always allow crazy people in your store?" she asked Nadia, the cashier.

"No, but in Rosemary's case we make an exception because we like her. Forty-seven cents, Rose, and stop bothering the customers."

I paid the 47¢ and went to tell Susan my tale of woe.

Later that evening I found it necessary to go to Susan and Michael's apartment. This involves a twenty-minute subway ride. I hate subways. They're dirty, noisy, and invariably crowded. I have a very large territorial imperative, and crowds of any size tend to rattle me. Being smashed like a sardine in a subway car is not one of my all-time favourite things. So when I dragged my tired bod onto the eastbound train I was delighted to see that the car was almost empty.

"Oh goodie goodie" I thought, and started grubbing in my Honest Ed's shopping bag for a book. Two stops later, I found it.

Thud! Someone sat down heavily beside me. I looked around. The whole car was virtually empty. "The whole damn car is empty and he's gotta sit by me," I thought, petulantly.

Then he pulled out a pack of Bensen and Hedges cigarretes and began to transfer them to a case that said Souvenir of Portage la Prairie. When he was finished he very carefully crumpled the cellophane, tin foil and the cardboard carton and dropped them on the floor.

The little old lady opposite him threw him a murderous glance.

I fingered my Pollution Probe button conspicuously and threw him a murderous glance.

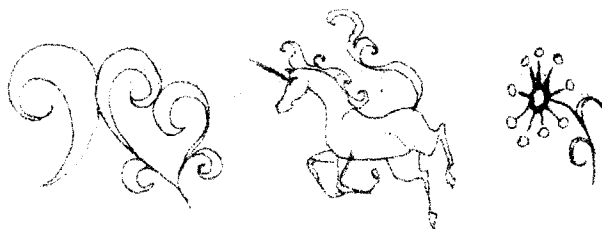
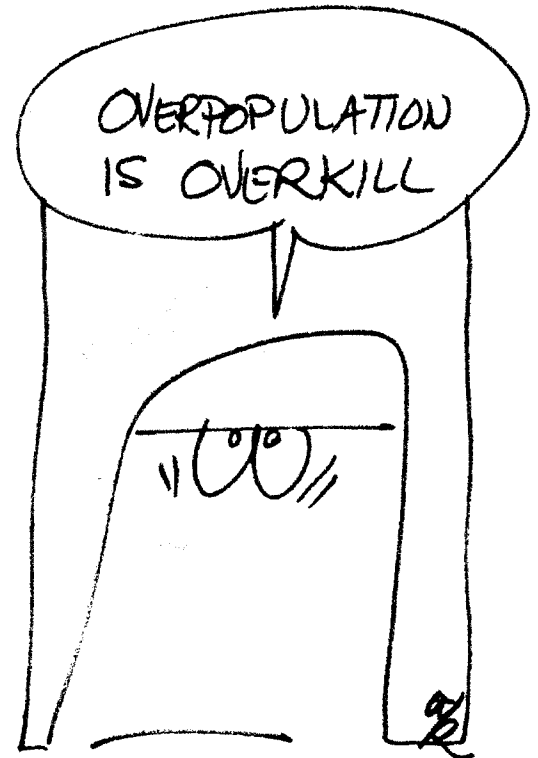
He grinned at her and then at me.

My stop was coming up, so I reached down, picked up the litter, and stood beside the door beside which the moron was sitting.

I smiled at him and dropped the stuff in his lap.

"I work for the Toronto Department of Sanitation," I announced. "If you persist in dropping your garbage in my subway, I'll arrange to have my garbage dropped on your property; and sweetie, I've got a hell of a lot more garbage than you do." And I stepped off the train.

Before the doors closed, the little old lady gave me the clenched fist and called "Right on, kid, right on!" Little old ladies sure have changed a lot since I was a kid...





GARBAGE SOUP

AND OTHER HITS: BY ELIZABETH BUCHAN KIMMERLEY

The vast majority of fen seem to be foodfen. Yet despite Great Wall of China expeditions or foraging missions searching for Baskin and Robbins ice-cream or Ballentine's IPA, how many can afford to be true foodfen? Now, however, you can eat well and still save for a mimeo, or hit the regional cons without coming home to macaroni and cheese five nights out of seven. The Arise Ye Prisoners of Starvation Cookbook: A Tribal Feeding Manual is designed for large families, co-operatives and communes, fannish gatherings, and any other scene where low-cost good cookery is required. Almost all the following dishes were created for an eating group of 6-8 people, but the quantities are exceptionally flexible and the leftovers freeze well!

Cooking for a horde cheaply demands a certain amount of individual and group responsibility. Watch your shopping-- buy in bulk whenever possible, preferably at a wholesaler. If you can collect, say, \$50. in advance, you can lay in large quantities of Basic Supplies: tinned tomatoes, kidney beans, soups and peanut butter by the half-case, and pasta, rice, yellow onions and potatoes by the bag. Set up a food budget, and stick to it; avoid out-of-season or out-of-region delicacies ((for instance, if you live in Ontario, convince yourself you hate shrimp and avocado)) and keep track of every penny!

Above all, do more work yourself. Canned food may be convenient; but cutting up your own blade roast orr chicken for a slowly-simmered stew is more rewarding, It tastes better; and if you're still not really enjoying your creativity after a couple of weeks, start putting the money you save into a special fannish piggybank.

All the excerpts from the AYPoS cookbook have been developed under fire in the test kitchens of the Wat Tyler, William Blake and Ernest Hemingway People's Memorial Revolutionary Collectives. Sometimes really under fire. Wat Tyler House had a crazy oven with no heat control; the temperature would climb to 500° and stay there, and the oven could only be turned off by pulling out the fuses. William Blake's stove had a habit, when all four burners were turned on, of blowing up. This usually happened when Susan, who is deathly afraid of electricity, was cooking. There would be a loud bang, some sparks, two burners would blow their fuses, and the cook would run wailing from the room. Which proves these recipes work under any conditions. It is a good idea, by the way, to invest in a small kitchen fire extinguisher to cope with grease or electrical fires.

The esthetic and nutritional values of these recipies has been acknowledged by the collective stomach of half Canadian fandom.

The first recipe employs the chicken, a tasty, nourishing and cheap little beast, approved of by most religious and ethnic groups. Unless you're a cattle rancher, who could ask for more? It was developed by John Sutton Baglow, poet and Tolkein scholar, and ranks with his immortal Separate But Equal Lamb Stew.

CHICKEN KERENSKY

a chicken part per person	chicken stock (or water and boullion
3 onions	cube)
2 stalks celery	flour for thickening
leftover cranberry sauce	salt, pepper, maybe some rosemary

Brown the chicken parts in hot fat. Chop the vegetables and add. When the chicken is brown and the onions transparent, put the lot including spices and cranberry sauce into a stew pot with water or stock to cover (but just barely.) Now simmer this for about 45 minutes. Remove the chicken parts and mix flour and water to make a thin paste which you add to the sauce in the pot. Stir this until it thickens into a sort of gravy. Serve over the chicken, with noodles or rice.

-- Aspidistra 1 --

GARBAGE SOUP

The original of this soup called for real garbage. This one only uses leftovers.

some bones (preferably beef or ham) to make stock
some chopped vegetables like peas, beans, cabbage, turnip, carrots, celery, onions, zucchini, red or green peppers
some starches like barley, rice, or potato
salt, pepper, Angostura bitters, bay leaf
Put all of these in a kettle. Add water to cover and then some. Boil.

CHILI SANS CARNE

The ultimate cheap, if unauthentic, meal

2 large cans tomatoes	2 onions, chopped
2 medium cans chili beans	red or green peppers, chopped
1 cup corn (fresh, canned, frozen)	appropriate spices: pepper, cayenne,
5 or so stalks celery, chopped	tabasco, chili powder to taste

Combine all ingredients in a large kettle. Simmer until thick, about 2 hours. If some people like bearable chili while some prefer the kind that makes you sweat when you just smell it-- make two pots. Serve with

CORN BREAD

2 eggs	1 cup shortening or oil
4 cups flour	1 cup sugar
4 cups cornmeal	$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
6 teaspoons baking powder	3 cups milk

Mix fat, sugar and eggs. Mix dry ingredients. Alternate dry ingredients and milk adding them to the egg stuff.

Pour into pans lined with waxed paper.

Leave in 350° oven for 20 minutes or until it's golden brown and a knife comes out clean. Makes about 3 dozen pieces.

STEW OR BOEUF ROTGUT

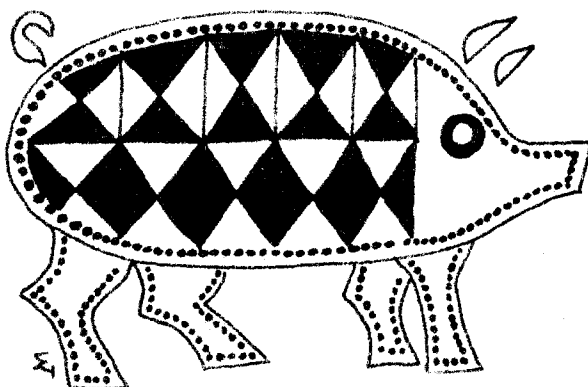
1½ pound stewing beef (cutup blade roast)	3 onions, quartered
water and boullion cubes or stock	4 carrots, chopped
mushrooms and red wine (optional)	4 stalks celery, chopped
salt, pepper, etc.	

Brown the meat in a heavy pan. Add the vegetables. Add the liquids. If you have mushrooms and/or any kind of cheap (domestic, homemade) red wine, add them.

Simmer while you make rice or noodles and set the table. If this runs low on liquid add water or wine.

Before serving, shove the solid stuff to one side and thicken the gravy.

(An earlier version of this article, with Cathy King's cartoon, appeared in The Carleton and is reprinted with permission.)



HOW I RAN A MEN'S BAKE SALE FOR WOMEN'S LIB

A TRUE CONFESSION BY
RICHARD LABONTE

The lounges are for card players, classrooms are full of talk that runs in just one direction, and the open spaces on Carleton University campus are filled with cold and snow for too many months.

And so it is that the newspaper office is one of the places at Carleton for campus freaks to gather.

Over the last five years-- going back to when they were wierdos, not freaks-- this included the Communist Club, the Young Socialists, the science fiction club ACUSFOOS, rock freaks, people into dope, and campus politicians more radical than the people in power.

This year, the freaks are Women's Lib members.

A lot of talk goes down in The Carleton office, a lot of problems come looking for solutions.

The Women's Lib group at Carleton had a problem.

University Student Councils, like most bureaucracies, operate without the constraints of relevance. Carleton's council functions in a limbo, legislating from one end and creating problems requiring legislation at the other. It does a pretty admirable job of ignoring realities, real or imagined.

One of the tenets of Carleton's student council is that all clubs on campus must accept all applications for membership before receiving operating grants and permission to use university meeting rooms.

One of the tenets of Women's Liberation is a very personal breast-baring during cell meetings, and so in line with most other Women's Lib groups, Carleton's decided early in the year to exclude men from membership.

The exclusion of men is seen as a very necessary act in the process of women learning from each other how to be free; it's an imagined reality of the movement.

But council ignores realities, even when they exist. Because the women refused to admit men, council refused to sanction the Women's Liberation group.

The Women's Lib group had a problem: it had no money and no place to meet.

-- Aspidistra 1 --

"Those bastards" said Deirdre.

"Want to buy an ad and complain about it?" I asked. I'm advertising manager of the newspaper this year, and I start most conversations that way. It hasn't worked yet.

"Fuck off, Richard," said Deirdre. But not in anger.

And out came the problem, looking for a solution.

"We need money and meeting space to set up a Birth Control Clinic," said Deirdre. "But those bastards on council have screwed us," she said. In anger.

"What you need is a fund-raising project, then. Have a car wash or something" said Wayne. Wayne does the coming events column of The Carleton and is always looking for a happening to list.

"Why don't you have a raffle?" asked Cathy. Cathy is effervescent. There was a catching enthusiasm in her voice and we all laughed.

"Don't be ridiculous," said Deirdre, laughing.

"You could sell Girl Guide cookies door-to-door," said Rowan. "Girl Guide cookies for Women's Lib!" Rowan has a fine sense of the absurd.

"Don't be stupid. Where would we get Girl Guide cookies?" said Deirdre.

"Well, bake your own, then," said Rowan. "You're women, and women are supposed to know how to bake."

"Male chauvanist pig," said Cathy.

"Get all the Women's Lib members together and have a bake-sale..." said Wayne.

"That's it!" I shouted. "A bake sale. Wow. That's it. We'll have... a Guys' Bake Sale For Women's Lib!"

"Don't be ridiculous," said Deirdre.

"We can get all the guys who work on The Carleton and the yearbook and Radio Carleton, and all the guys on council and in the science fiction club and on Pollution Probe, and they can all bake things," I said. "We can put out a press release and get a story in The Carleton. I'll even run an ad for it and donate my commission."

"Fuck off," said Deirdre. But not in anger.

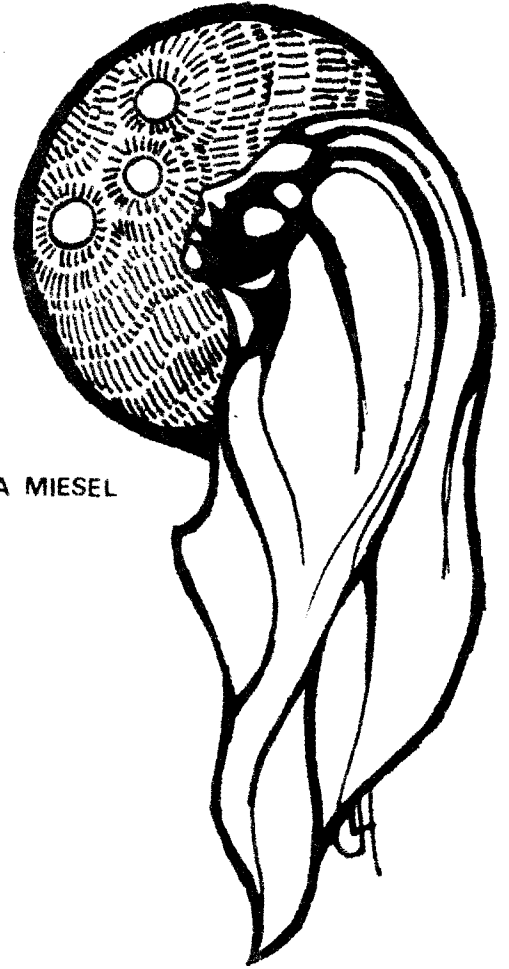
The bake sale turned a profit of \$40.85. Several cakes, dozens of cookies, abortion treacle, apple turn-ons, continental drift fudge, incredible chocolate almond cointreau cake, and home-made bread and scones all sold.

Local media coverage was heavy. English CBC TV carried a feature on both evening news shows, and both English and French CBC radio did interviews, concentrating on the politics of the action rather than the novelty of it. At least two other city radio stations carried the story, but put down Women's Lib. The proceeds of the sale went to fund the Birth Control Centre. That's why the sale's slogan was "Make Cakes, Not Babies."

AN EXPERIMENT
IN
MODERN LIVING

As the Voice of the Age, Dear Abby, would have put it, "There were rocks in the bed." Nasty, sharp rocks, too. In whose bed, you ask? His and Hers.

SANDRA MIESEL



To introduce the protagonists, He and She: aged twenty-nine and twenty-eight respectively; married five years; childless (of course); prudent, prosperous, and (it was to be admitted) a trifle pedantic; crammed taut with education like a pair of well-stuffed sausages. (If dropped into boiling water, their skins might well have burst, oozing erudition, esoterica, and tag ends of New York Times columns.) They dwelt quietly with their spayed Abyssinian cat, Bast, in a smart high-rise apartment (an Address of Distinction, adults only.) She fed computers. He harvested sociological data at an Institute for the Study of Human Behavior. (In plain language he was a sexologist.)

Now their professions lay at the root of their Problem.

After a hard day chattering in machine language, She was amorous to a fault. But after a hard day groin-deep in the vagaries of copulation, one glimpse of an unclad wife sufficed to send Him cocooning up in the blankets for the entire night.

On the weekends, the situation reversed. Made petulant by rebuffs, She judiciously exhausted Herself in housewifely pursuits. Thus pounces (and rather pallid pounces at that) were virtually confined to vacations and uncommonly festive holidays.

Alas, such tragic disharmony in a couple otherwise so exactly compatible they almost looked like twins.

She brooded on their plight each morning as She took Her Pill (hollow gesture, that.) The futility of the ritual piqued Her. Occasionally She contemplated skipping it, but possible repercussions would have to be faced, and, after all, what would their peers say? Then one day as Her twenty-ninth birthday loomed, She said "What the hell" and dropped the Pill back in its bottle. "Today I will be imprudent, irresponsible, mad!"

-- Aspidistra 1 --

The maddest act She could conceive at work was to snip computer print-out into paper dolls and lacy snowflakes. But there was not a flicker of reaction from Her co-workers in their individual glass-walled cubicles. This is not surprising, since they were paid to think, not to observe.

Later that evening She struggled to snuggle up to Him on their Neo-Minoan divan and nibbled at His delectably downy right ear. He winced at Her frivolous assault.

H: "Please, try and control yourself. You can't imagine what a day I've had. Uncovered a bizzare case-- possibly unique-- necrophilia with the family dog. Then there was that woman with a featherduster fetish...."

(nauseated sigh;
fresh approach)

S: "Have you ever thought--"

H: "Thought? About what?"

S: "About our Difficulty-- and you know very well what Difficulty I mean. Have you ever thought that we might be someone's experimental subjects?"

H: "Nonsense. You're imagining things. No one on the Institute team would dare."

(resolute patience)

S: "I didn't mean human experimenters. Maybe we're being manipulated by devious extraterrestrials.



They're short-circuiting our amorous response for some arcane purpose."

H: "And just how are they doing that?"

S: "Oh, they manage. Pheromones. Subtle electronic devices. Who knows?"

(derisive snort)

H: "How an otherwise rational woman can entertain such an absurd notion.... Next you'll be telling me chastity is a Communist plot."

S: "Care to suggest a remedy, O renown Interpersonal Relations Expert?"

(Perfect assurance)

H: "Lay aside these Fortean fantasies. Immerse yourself in reality. Do some sensible reading."

S: "Sensible reading? Like your military histories?"

H: "Precisely. I find them a refreshing contrast to my professional interests."

S: "But what will you do when you run out of wars?"

H: "No danger of that. New ones are fought daily."

(martyred resignation.)

H: "Now if you'll just try this latest volume from the Battle-of-the-Month Club...."



FADE OUT

MEMO (TRANSCRIBED): THESIS RESEARCH PROCEEDING AT OPTIMAL RATE. CAUTION: FEMALE HUMAN SUBJECT 35467921-A (FRUSTRATION SYNDROME, SERIES F) SUSPECTS EXISTENCE OF EXPERIMENT. IN THE EVENT SUBJECT'S GROUNDLESS FEARS OF MANIPULATION JEOPARDIZE DATA VALIDITY, PREPARE TO REPLACE WITH SIMULACRUM. MATE AND ASSOCIATES UNLIKELY TO PERCEIVE ANY DIFFERENCE.

-- Aspidistra 1 --

when we came down from hyperion
the winds were very old

it was strange setting
foot on lands grown
blue with the glow

i was not alone
though i could not see
beyond his mirror face

the word was scared us was between
 (our wired voices
 reported atmospheres, the pressure
 on our lungs

 fixed no axes or poles)
and we could not locate

it was easier up there
our gyred
ship hung
in void deeper than any night

 there time was

 nowhere

 but where it was

here--
there is water,
 land,
enviable green

i want to undress
let my feet
into the pool, drink
the lemon air
know grass on my skin

but we must be cautious
your mirror unfogs
 is it already too late?

 the stones glimmer
 and to my hands
 familiar
 warm, coming
 alive

what did they
meet, what was it?

going through, going
to spaced loci
they were forever
lost to us.

though we cry
in our most sensitive
tones, who would know
that gaze for a reply?

they are clearer than snow, as
clear as space

they have come,
as translucent as the day
we began

and we cannot quite
rid ourselves
of the echo on the rims
all around our sight
that some sun escaped.

POEMS: DEBBY MUNRO



A LETTERCOL?

Mike O'Brien,
511 E. Hoover, #11,
Ann Arbor, Mich. 48104

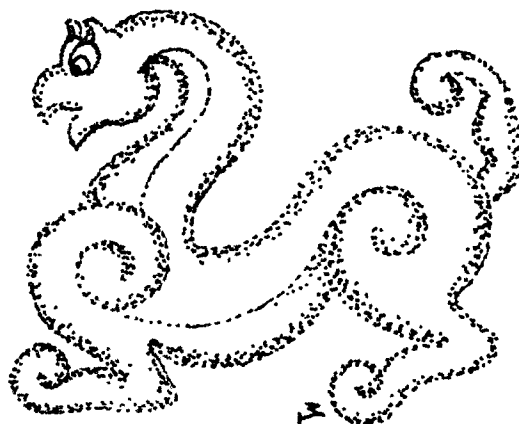
I'm a physics major. I recently attended a physics colloquium given by a fellow from Boulder, Colorado, who was working there with an anti-pollution bunch of physicists and such there. They were the ones who said of the Army's practise of storing an arsenal of nerve gas at the end of the north-south runway of the Denver airport, "We questioned the wisdom of this." Anyway, he said that the really terrible thing about pollution is that we have no time-dependent data. It may be too late already. It may be that Nature has corrective factors built in which will eventually reverse the trend. It may lie anywhere in between. But any prognostication of the year 2050 is an extrapolation ten times beyond the existing data.... Very simply, we don't know enough. Sooner or later, this is going to come out, and the people who follow the current "Movement" will move on, and so will the media, and so will everyone else, and that'll be it. They won't be willing to wait for more information. You ought to check into the Boulder organization. They're where it's at.

Jerry Lapidus,
54 Clearview Dr.,
Pittsford, N.Y. 14534

I think you're talking /in E 4/ more about the symptoms than the disease. If we hope to really do anything about the environment, we'll have to do much more than stop using throw-away cans and organizing garbage pick-ups. This may make us feel good personally, but it doesn't really solve the problems in any significant way. As Earl Evers discussed in the latest zEEen, it is necessary to force industry, probably through the government, to cooperate actively in the overall effort if any real results are to be seen. Maybe you can do that in Canada, but with Dick, Spiro and John running this country, you KNOW how much we're gonna get done. Some days, I can do nothing except hope for 1990 and the day we hijack the starship (Blows Against the Empire, Paul Kantner and Jefferson Starship-- a fantastic new album.)

Roger Bryant,
647 Thoreau Ave.,
Akron, Ohio 44306

Of course, there's a sort of local tunnel-vision that prevails wherever you happen to be. To me things seem bad here. I live in the midst of the largest rubber industry in the world, and whenever the weather's right (or wrong, I guess) the whole world smells like burning rubber and boiling sulfide. Bowers lives near a chemical plant; he can unerringly predict the weather by which way the wind's blowing the pollution. But Canada has its blessings. Mike's not fighting deportation to the orient like I am....Yet if we do something really stupid Canada will surely be destroyed right along with dear Amerika.



ASPIDISTRA