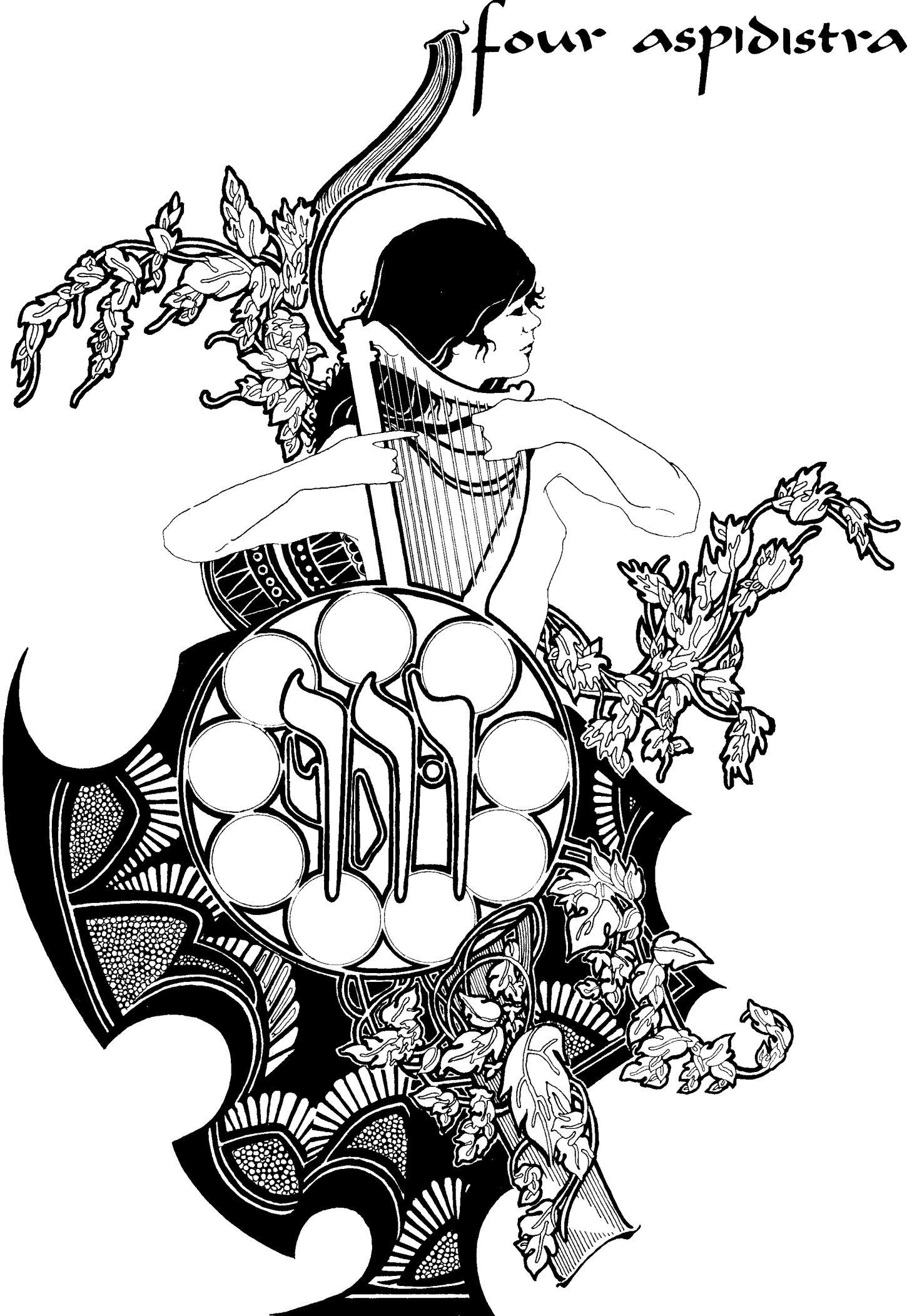


four aspidistra





ASPIDISTRA 4 is edited by Susan Glicksohn and printed with the invaluable assistance of Mike Glicksohn at SUAMI Press, 32 Maynard Ave., Apt. 205, Toronto 156. It is available in exchange for contributions, letters of comment, or 50¢--no US stamps or cheques, please. Issue #3 is still available for 50¢; so are copies of the Tim Kirk anti-pollution poster--proceeds go to the Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust, which has already received £9.50. Back covers are 2 for 25¢

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JODIE OFFUTT  
 FUNNY FARM  
 HALDEMAN, KY. 40329

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Pollution is  
just so much  
Wasted  
Effort!

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## ASP IRATIONS:

Ah, April in Toronto! Beyond the \$100 worth of Canadiana reference books on my window-sill, I can see the sky, trying hard to be blue; a maple tree frothed all over with greenish buds and decorated with two quarreling black squirrels, several dozen squabbling starlings and the odd English sparrow (all of which drive the cat wild); and several front gardens containing shivering crocuses. Oh yes, and piles and piles of glossy green garbage bags, spilling their contents over the ground-- the garbagemen have been on strike for almost three weeks.

Meanwhile, the paper pollution is worsening in my ASPIDISTRA drawer. I've been ignoring that drawer since mailing ASP 3 last fall, thanks to a bad case of grad-school comprehensive exams, an experience fraught with all the charm of a 10-month bout of stomach flu. (Passed them all, though, to my great relief since the usual failure rate is around 50%) The letters and contributions have proliferated until I think I've discovered a new life-form: permanently pregnant paper. I apologize most sincerely to all those people whose work seems to have vanished forever into gafia-limbo (my own contributions seem to produce that effect on other people, so I sympathize.) I apologize, too, to all the writers of letters I didn't answer. I'm trying to find out how to stretch time.

Since I haven't yet learned that trick, I regret to announce that this will be the second last ASPIDISTRA until after TORCON 2, and perhaps forever. The last ASP will be an egoboo issue, containing letters on this issue just to wrap things up neatly. It will be sent to contributors, persons mentioned, and anybody else who requests it (in advance, please.) You see, I still have a thesis to write; and since the Canadian government is supporting me on the poverty line in this endeavour, I'd better get on with it. Being a member of a worldcon committee is also a responsibility. I'd like to write for some of you people to whom I've made vague promises. Of course, in the interests of Scholarly Employment (though publish-or-perish is not quite such a threat in Canada) I should be expounding on "The Erotic Symbolism of Massey-Harris Tractors in The Prairie Wife and Grain." (Note to Canadiana freaks: I know they're Massey-Ferguson machines now, but in the novels mentioned--and they exist--they were Massey-Harris. Makes a great identification question on exams. "Massey Harris was the author of some poems we had to read this term." I should also be washing the windows.

Cy Chauvin told me that: "The reason we write to you instead of to our congressman or governor or whatever is that from you we get some sort of feedback-- whether negative or positive, it's better than banging your head against a brick wall, which is what writing to officials in your govt. seems like. Perhaps it's better than nothing-- at least we'll straighten out in our own minds what pollution, overpopulation, etc. really mean." Unfortunately, I'm not going to be able to provide that feedback; and ASP won't have much of a *raison d'etre*.

More important, is that feedback really valuable? After four issues, ASP must have Raised Your Consciousness as much as any one bit of printed matter can; after four issues, you and I don't really need to hear that there is filth in the air and the water. Nor is there much point in hearing that, for example, the ecology of the Amazon Basin is being destroyed and the native population slaughtered by 'developers' when our sources are fifth-hand reports from newspaper accounts. I should be helping to set up recycling centres here in centretown, so that when Mike indulges his craving for bright-red cream soda, which only comes in non-returnable bottles, I can do something more constructive than throw the container out because the nearest collection depot is ten miles away in the suburbs and I can't reach it by bus. Petty, sure, but a garbage strike makes you very, very aware of waste.

In fact, I hereby award the first Aspidistra Awards for Seemingly Petty but Personally Meaningful Constructive Antipollution action to: Jody Bailey, a 12-year-old Torontonian who started a campaign to raise money to fix up a nearby city incinerator, ordered closed (but not til 1975) because it pollutes the air; and Chris Martzokas, a recent immigrant who was so impressed by Toronto's cleanliness that when he saw a Cadillac driver dumping her car's ashtrays out on the street, he took her to court on a littering charge, the first in Toronto, and, I hope, the first of many.

I'm going off now to cultivate my garden (real as well as symbolic-- some tubs on the balcony and a bowl of beansprouts in the kitchen.) If you want more relevant reading or ideas for action, you might investigate:

CANADA: Pollution Probe, c/o University of Toronto, Toronto 5, Ont. literature, reports including a controversial paper on the development of the Arctic, ideas for action, names of local anti-pollution groups you can join  
-Federation of Ontario Naturalists, 1262 Don Mills Rd., Don Mills, Ont.  
-Hon. Jack Davis, Minister of the Environment, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ont.  
Ask him what he's doing about enforcing the environmental-protection laws we do have.

GREAT BRITAIN: The Ecologist, ed.  
Edward Goldsmith, 73  
Kew Green, Richmond, Surrey. \$10/yr  
-Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust,  
Les Augres Manor, Jersey, Channel  
Islands, UK. The Trust is, of  
course, the beneficiary of all monies earned by the sale of the Kirk posters advertised on the enclosed flier. Sandra Miesel reports that, far from being extinct, brown pelicans are hatching out nicely, thank you. Great; now wouldn't it be a pity if they really vanished? At least the Trust will preserve other threatened species.

Of course I'm involved! I even took the bus to work once last week!



USA: The Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, D.C. 20460. Its publication Towards a New Environmental Ethic costs 75¢ from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402

-The Council on Economic Priorities, 1127 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 The Economic Priorities Report on "Corporate Advertising and the Environment" contrasts corporations' advertised promises with their achievements-- such as oil spills.

-World Wildlife Fund, 910 17th St. N.W., Washington 20006. Regular newsletter.

-Ecotage, ed. Sam Love and David Obst. Pocket Books, \$1.25. Called "an underground guide to zapping the polluters" it suggests many (probably illegal) things to do with junk mail, junk yards, false advertising, and polluting factories.

-Rodale's Environmental Action Bulletin, 33E. Minor St., Emmaus, Pa. 18049. \$5/6 mo. \$10/yr. This is a weekly report on environmental issues, relevant books, new action groups and their projects, and so on-- a complete and informative guide to anyone concerned with 'the ecology movement.' Not a 'nut publication', it espouses no one set of beliefs, other than the desire for a cleaner, saner environment.

-The same press produces the famous Organic Gardening and Farming magazine- 60¢ a copy from some large-city newstands, \$5.85/yr. I pay \$3/yr. from Publishers' Clearing House, P.O. Box 1140, Adelaide St. P.O., Toronto 1, Ont. This is a US firm; though I don't have the parent company's address, I'm sure the Canadian version will forward orders from US customers.

CANADA: COUNTERCULTURE I neglected to mention The B.C. Access Catalogue, an absolutely fascinating synthesis of Whole Earth Catalogue, underground newspaper (it's tabloid size), good thoughts, graphics and information on all sorts of things-- natural childbirth, making rose petal ice cream, building a kiln. \$2/issue from 1729 McSpadden Ave., Vancouver 12, B.C. Fanzinelike. Highly recommended.



## UFFISH THOTS: ON ABORTION

TED WHITE

There seems to be an ongoing public debate these days about the legal and moral rights and wrongs of abortion. I have no desire to add to it; each evening I turn to the letters in my local newspaper and read quite enough in the way of arguments over "mothers' rights" vs. "legal murder," etc. Rather, I'd like to talk about something which happened to Robin and me, and perhaps, in the process, shed a little of the light of reality upon the topic.

In fact, of course, I have been pro-abortion for a long time. In the same way I have been pro-birth-control, and pro-Zero (or, better, Negative) Population Growth. To a large extent my biases have been selfish ones: I didn't want fatherhood at an inconvenient moment in my life-- and on a larger scale, I don't enjoy seeing the countryside cluttered up with masses of people, each of whom may be perfectly wonderful individuals, but whose numbers make me long for my days as a farm boy when the most populous item about was cow-pies.

Backtrack: I've been married twice, and enjoyed liasons of some length between my marriages. One of these involved a woman with three daughters, all of whom lived with me for a period of a year and a half. I've encountered any number of different combinations of situations which (to me) demanded population control. One strongly influencing factor was, for much of this time (call it a decade or so), my relative poverty. Never really broke, but unable to afford sudden increases in my budget either.

During the whole of my first marriage (about four years) I never wanted the added burden (as I then viewed it) of a child. Well, after all: we were scuffling. I was beginning my career as a writer, and money was chancy to say the least. I lived on considerably less than I have at any point since and sometimes I wonder how we did it. At one point (about two years into the marriage) my first wife missed her period. Her period wasn't that regular anyway, but this time she'd gone at least an extra month beyond the reasonable due-date. "Mighod," we'd say to each other. "What if -- you are/ I am pregnant?" We told each other that this was unthinkable. I took her to a doctor over on the east side (not yet the "fashionable East Village") for a pregnancy test, and called up Paul Krassner to get the name of an abortionist. I was 22, she 21, and both of us had not the vaugest idea of what we'd do if the test were positive. At that time you could get an abortion in New York City without a lot of difficulty, but it cost. It would cost more money than I had any reasonable expectation of raising. For several days we both went about our daily affairs in a state of constant fear.

Then the test came back. (Why did it take several days? This was the "rabbit test," and maybe that's how long it took; I don't know. I was frightfully naive and ignorant then and never asked.) She wasn't pregnant after all.

I came home to find her sitting on the bed, tears streaming down her face. "What's happened?" I asked, feeling something twist in my gut. Feeling scared.

"I'm not pregnant," she said, sobbing.

"Hey," I said, feeling the load lift off my shoulders. "That's great!"

"No," she snuffled. "No, it's not. I feel awful."

"But-- why?"

"Because I guess I'd finally made up my mind I was going to have a baby-- and now I'm not."

It took me a long time to figure that one out.

I lived with a short time with a girl I'd met on the west coast who had a son by a brief teen-aged marriage and who never used birth control because she was convinced she couldn't get pregnant unless she wanted to. It had something to do with a tipped uterus. ("I've seen more pregnant women who had tipped uteruses than I have any other kind," a gynecologist told Robin a few years ago...) But she must have been right; she didn't conceive again until she wanted to, another year or two after I'd known her.

XXXX

When Robin and I had been married for a couple of years, she was required to stop using the pill. It appears that the pill has some unusual side effects for some women. For these women (and Robin was one) there is a danger that if the pill is used too long it will cause a retrogression in the uterus. The organ becomes less mature, shrinking into a pre-adolescent state, and if the process isn't halted soon enough, sterility can result. We both wanted children-- eventually--and the notion of her becoming unable to bear a child was an unpleasant one. She went off the pill.

"The best thing to do," her doctor told her, "is to get pregnant. That will cure your condition and afterwards you can go back on the pill if you want to." (I sometimes wonder how many teenaged girls who use the pill may encounter the same situation--or, worse, find out what has happened to them too late. As far as I know this risk has never been published-- not even during the Congressional investigations and the scare period that followed.)

But right then was not a particularly good time for a child in our lives. We'd originally agreed that we'd have a child after we'd been married five years--because five years seemed like a good period to shake down our marriage, and much longer than that might accustom us to a childless state that we'd be loathe to relinquish.

So we made do with a variety of inferior birth-control devices and hoped for the best. On the one hand were the stories we'd heard about people who'd gone off the pill and immediately gotten pregnant (the pill was developed, after all, in an original attempt to increase fertility-- and the wife of an acquaintance had gone from the pill to the IUD and immediately become pregnant)-- and on the other was our fear that Robin might already be so infertile that a pregnancy would be difficult to achieve. We didn't know which to hope for-- or which to believe.

Then she missed her period.

A girlfriend of hers told her about another lower-east-side doctor (why do they always seem to practice there?) who gave shots which "bring on your period". These were supposedly hormonal shots which would induce a spontaneous abortion if you did it early enough in your pregnancy. I took Robin to him. It cost \$25.00, required a series of several shots, each of which left Robin very sore and gave her weird hot flashes (menopausal in nature, I suspect), and castor oil was prescribed in addition. (I suspect that the sudden cramp from castor oil is as efficacious as the shot.) It was a foul experience for Robin and it seems unlikely she was ever pregnant anyway. However, it did bring on her period--if that's what it was--and it was relatively cheap. ("If this doesn't bring on your period," the good doctor told her, "it's because you're pregnant." I thought that was marvellous of him.)

XXXX

Another year or two passed, we decided it was time to conceive a child, and we did.



Roughly nine months later our daughter was born. That was nice. As I've described elsewhere (in EGOBOO), we used the Lamaze method of so-called "natural childbirth" and it worked well. Robin has described the birth experience as the high point of her life, and later remarked to me, "You know, I'm not awfully keen on another pregnancy, and I don't really need another baby around afterwards, but I'd really like to give birth like that again." We recommend it.

But babies are awfully demanding, and ours more than some. (She never slept more than an hour or two in a row at night for the first six months or more and still sleeps fitfully and demands nursing several times a night.) The thought of a second was not particularly cheering, even though every so often we'd remark to each other, "Well, maybe a second baby would be entirely different--they always are, you know." And most particularly neither of us wanted a second baby immediately after the first.

But this spring, after her periods had finally resumed, they stopped again and we began to wonder if Robin was pregnant again. And this is the crux of what I want to talk about. This is where it hit us square between the eyes.

"You were never very regular," I said, "and you know how getting sick can throw you off."

"But the way I feel sick is exactly the way I felt sick the first month of my last pregnancy--before we knew I was pregnant," Robin pointed out. "My back aches that way and I have these pains in my gut..."

"Gas pains," I said, unconvincingly.

"I think I'd better have a test," she said.

"Okay," I said, and we arranged for the test. We did it through the public health service here, because it was free and the public health nurse, who is a nice lady and whose son reads sf, said that if the test was positive she could discuss with us possible means of dealing with the situation. "Virginia has fairly liberal laws," was about the way she put it then.

I remember the afternoon we got the test results very well. It was a Friday, and earlier that day we'd taken Kitten to the clinic for her shots, and that afternoon I was up on a ladder cleaning the house gutters and trimming the ivy. Grant Carrington, whose story I'd bought and published in AMAZING, had called to ask if he could drop over, since he was passing through the area, and I'd answered the phone thinking it was the nurse with the test results.

The phone rang a second time and I came in and answered it and it was the nurse. "The test was positive," she said.

"Oh," I said. I'd been braving myself for it, even though I didn't think it would happen. "I guess you'd better talk to Robin," and I went out to the garden and called Robin and she came into the house with a white face and a pinched expression and went to the phone like a zombie.

She was pregnant again: that's what the test said. Less than nine months after giving birth to Kitten, with a small baby already on her hands all the time.

Looking at it logically, dispassionately, the answers all came up the same: she shouldn't have another baby this soon. The nurse was sympathetic; she knew our situation. What she didn't know was that within what had to be the first few weeks of this pregnancy Robin and I had tripped on mescaline--a gorgeous trip, one of the nicest either of us had ever had--and although no causative link between psychedelics and birth defects has ever been proven the risk was a real one. It just added an additional reason to the roster of reasons why she should not have this bab -- perhaps the decisive reason, in fact.

Our other reasons were primarily selfish. For Robin the added strain of another pregnancy while nursing Kitten would be hard on her health--she's had a B-vitamin deficiency problem for some time and her first pregnancy had made it a lot worse. She would not be able to fully correct it until she stopped nursing Kitten. Nursing and a second pregnancy would make it that much worse. Not impossible, just hellish.

For me it was much more a question of added responsibilities. Kitten was then a huge responsibility for us both. We had so much less time for each other that at times we felt like strangers to each other, and even strangers to ourselves. Our child was the focus of our energies--physical and emotional. Could I handle a second child too? Could I handle the added time of what amounted to an estrangement from my wife?

I certainly didn't want another child. Not right then--and maybe not ever. I wanted more of my wife, not less. And the thought of going through a new set of problems finding a hospitable hospital for a Lamaze delivery in this area, making the financial arrangements, and all the rest weighed heavily on me. I wanted no part of it if it could be avoided.

But the drug thing was the crux. I've heard that chromosome-damaged fetuses usually won't carry to full term--a spontaneous abortion or miscarriage will occur, usually between the fourth and sixth month. But that doesn't seem to be the sort of thing one should count upon. And the thought of giving birth to a defective baby, of having that baby to care for, deal with, live with, for the rest of its natural life, however long that might be-- I can only regard it as a potential nightmare. Certainly a tragedy for all concerned.

How much chance is there of such an occurrence? We honestly didn't know. We'd both dropped acid before Kitten was conceived, but Robin had been careful not to after she became pregnant. It seemed only prudent. And if there was any possible danger to the fetus, it would be--the experts all agreed--during those earliest weeks of the fetus' existence. Exactly when we'd tripped on the mescaline.

It seemed an enormous risk. But maybe it was only our rationalization for the fact that we didn't want another baby so soon. Who could be sure? Naturally, we talked about it a good deal, arguing circularly most of the time, ending up roughly where we'd begun: Robin would have to have an abortion.

And soon. The sooner the better. She was, by our reckoning no less than four weeks pregnant, going on five. Bureaucratic machinery moves slowly. The best time for an abortion is at or before six weeks.

The public health nurse put the wheels in motion for us.

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Have you any idea of what can be involved in getting an abortion? We knew that if we had to we could go to New York--or even into Washington. But the expense would wipe us out. That very same week (one hell of a week) we'd had a four-hundred-dollar surprise dropped on us by a former friend of ours which had wiped out the scanty surplus we'd been accumulating (one reason we didn't get to any conventions this summer)-- a van load of our household goods shipped to us COD. So we had to go through the public health channels if we possibly could.

Northern Virginia is a very rich area. It enjoys the highest mean standard of living in the United States. And it supplies the most niggardly public services for the poor. I don't suppose there are enough poor people to swing any political clout. In New York City we qualified for medicaid. In Virginia we did not--and would not unless I deserted my family (fat chance!).

So there were endless rounds of interviews, and I had to show my income tax papers and dozens of other documents indicating my relative poverty, and in general we had to

undergo a continuing series of demeaning experiences, because around here if you expect help from the state you must get down on your knees and crawl for it. And we had to explain why we wanted an abortion without going into detail about the drug part of that, since that would constitute the confession of a crime. Maybe they wouldn't care--maybe they would. We held it as an ace in the hole, a last-resort to be used if all else had failed in our appeal.

We cleared the state-assistance hurdles.

Next was the hospital.

Fairfax hospital (which serves Falls Church) is one of the most modern in the country, and, in fact, made news headlines only a month later by using the first automated hospital orderlies (robot carts) in the country. The hospital resident physician was the man who would have to authorize an abortion. What was required was (in order):

1. A brief essay by Robin White titled "Why I Want an Abortion," written in her own hand while waiting in a crowded waiting area of the gyn. clinic
2. A dossier on her personal and medical history
3. A preliminary examination
4. An examination by the Resident
- 5... there may be more but that's as far as it turned out we had to go.

The Resident said he didn't think she was pregnant.

He didn't think she was pregnant! We'd gone through a galling amount of red tape, we'd agonized to each other about the rightness of our decision for an abortion, and he didn't think she was pregnant!

XXXX

We'd gone through the state-assistance interviews at the beginning of that week; the appointment at the hospital was for a Friday.

That Wednesday we'd decided to take some acid. It was in the nature of putting a few more nails in the coffin, if she was pregnant; by then we knew we had to go through with the abortion and it didn't matter. Tripping for us, when we're together, has always been an intensely personal, together thing. And we'd needed it then.

Somewhere along in the middle part of the trip, Robin felt a flutter in her belly. "I feel it moving," she said.

"Should you be able to feel it moving this soon?" I asked.

"I don't know, but that's what it feels like. I think I didn't recognize it as early when I was carrying Kitten; you know, I thought it was gas or something."

I thought about what I knew about fetal development. At five or six weeks (which it was by then), the fetus has already formed tiny arms and legs, hands and feet, fingers and toes. It isn't just a blob of cells any more--it's an incredibly tiny but formed creature. My creature--our creature--the product of our joint creation.

I put my hand on Robin's bare belly. I couldn't feel the movement; it wasn't likely I could. But I could imagine the tiny body that might lie inside, already identifiable by sex, already alive, in a fetal, dependant sort of way. Listen, I was involved in Robin's first pregnancy, I was there, a crucial part of Kitten's delivery, her birth. This thing, this life-process was no longer an abstraction for me. I knew it for what it was. I cared.

I cried, because I knew that we'd made the wrong decision. I knew that we'd made it for the wrong reasons. That this was the flesh of our flesh and we owed it life, birth, existence, meaning and the opportunity to become someone. And yet--and yet--should it be defective, what then?

At that moment, my mind made crystalline by the acid (which is a drug against which I can say nothing--it has never been anything but good to me), I knew the depths and the enormity of our dilemma, and the decision we had made, had forced ourselves into making. And I cried.

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This then was what we had gone through--the pummeling of our emotions which we had endured-- when a man told Robin he didn't think she was pregnant.

I couldn't believe it. It was as if I had asked God for a miracle to deliver me from the consequences of my sins--and one had actually occurred! Suddenly it was possible that the awful, agonizing decision we had made would be unnecessary. That the slate might be wiped clean, fresh, the stain of an abortion negated, the ugliness of what we had girded ourselves to do anyway--gone! As if it had never been.

Put precisely, he said that Robin's cervix showed none of the changes a cervix should be undergoing during pregnancy. He ordered another test, this time in the hospital lab.

We went home shaking from the emotional changes we'd been put through, wondering, hoping, almost unwilling to believe in such providential deliverence. Robin refused to believe it just yet. She'd gone through too much to simply accept such an abrupt about-face.

I called the hospital lab that afternoon. The test was negative. Robin was not--if indeed she ever had been--pregnant. It was all over.

When you go through something like that it strips away the layers of callousness you build up. It was all too real, too immediate, too important. We'd been put through a roller-coaster ride of the emotions. It took weeks to unwind, to say, well, that was just a false alarm, wasn't it.

For that reason I can appreciate what a woman contemplating an abortion must go through--in her own mind. The last vestiges of my male chauvinism were taken from me. Because, basically, despite everything, Robin never wanted that abortion. Deep down inside, she wanted the baby. Not a baby--the baby she was convinced she already carried inside her. Like my first wife, she suffered disappointment when she found herself not pregnant after all. Relief, but disappointment too.

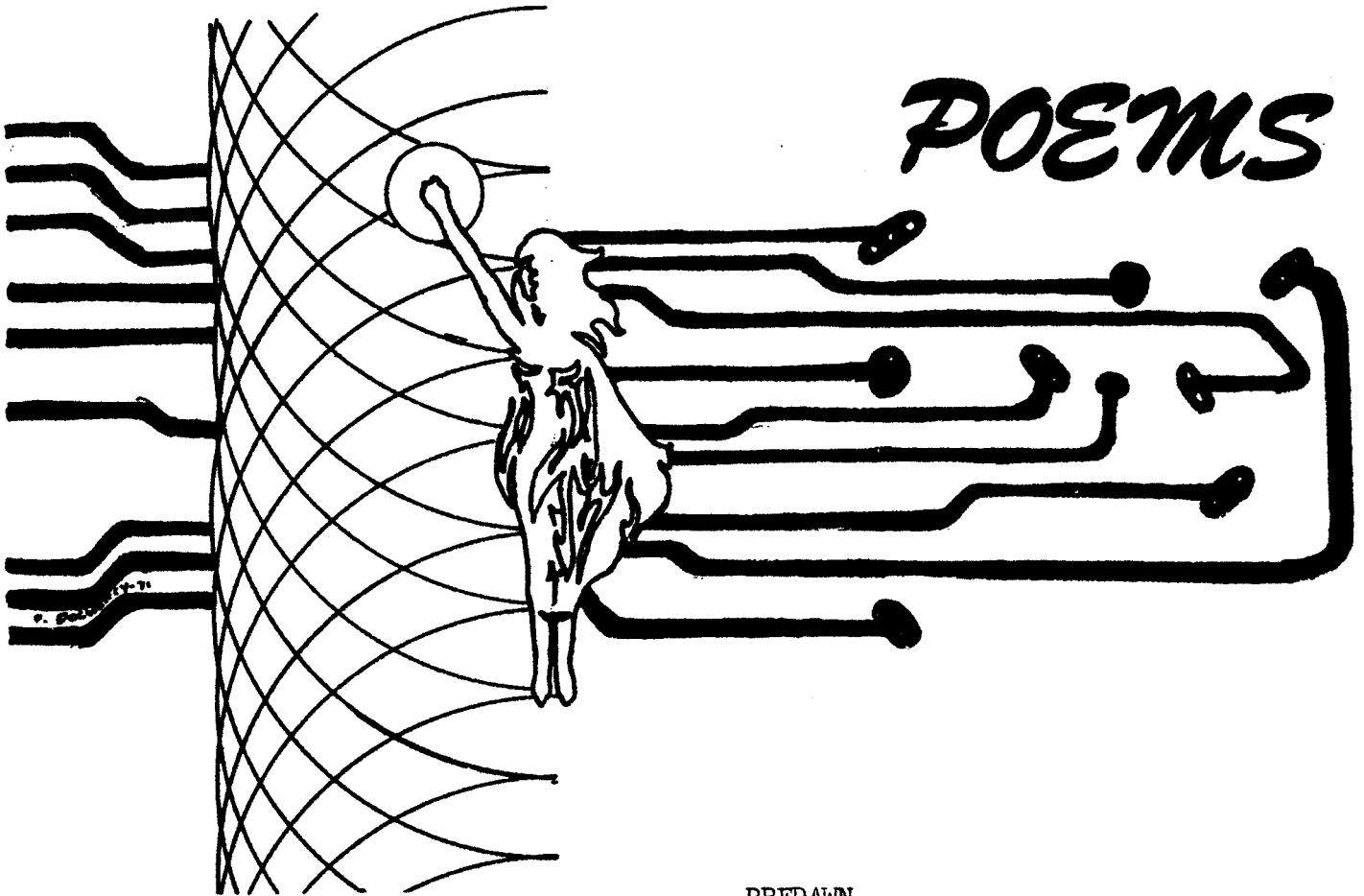
Because--not to wax too mystical about it--a woman's biological heritage, perating deep in her unconscious, operating through the hormones that intermingle with her emotions, tell her that a baby is right. No matter how "wrong" in the given circumstance--and surely there are wrong circumstances, circumstances in which to bear a baby is almost criminal--conceiving, carrying and delivering a baby is what being a woman is archetypically all about. It is what defines her womanness, as opposed to her humanness (which is more a function of her mind and intellect.)



Abortion, then constitutes a terrible dilemma for any aware woman. It is a problem she must face according to her circumstances, and I believe strongly it is not the right of the state to dictate to her whether or not she can have an abortion.

But, in the end, it is a dilemma better avoided by prior means.

# POEMS



## PREDAWN

I think clouds and moments ring like bells  
Just too far away to be heard, because  
Of sunlight, eager shaping into swells  
Of fog. No, really, remove your claws  
From my thigh; I jest, I admit.  
Tears forgotten? There's time left and I prefer  
This mood to another. Right; lay back a bit  
And use the pillow, there. Like a purr  
That you can never know or sense or feel;  
But I know it, quaking quick when I'm inside  
You. Now if it were only real...  
But we can, if you wish, pretend you're not my bride.

Gregory Benford

## JEWEL

The fossil insect sleeps  
locked in an amber prism  
dreaming of rainbows.

Hold it to your ear  
hear the clockwork convict  
whir in his bright coffin

Angus Taylor

ENEMIES' WAY

Future-tense society fled midnight glow-dread

Along atomic avenues' smashed slums of day,

Orwell world drip-masks wore dead

Whose raped reason was those obeyed;

Cries wanted time-cages of clay,

Calm-minded men brew fireblood,

Mothers' word written silence graved

Sons brave apple pie parade for hometown mud;

War-sex so strained, so pale at last,

An artless easel splashed ruby red,

Breath of burnt bodies, dung dawn's bomb blast;

Only maggots march, searching fresh man-bread:

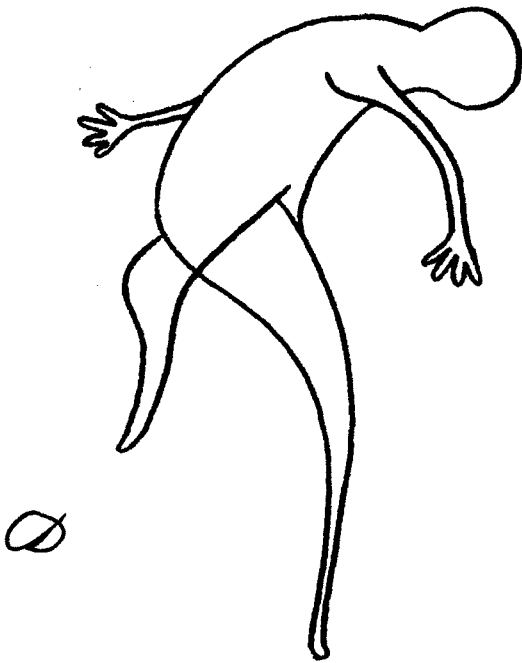
"Well done, men, just my style;

Another defeat of the Enemies' Way.

And I'd like to talk awhile,

But the priest must pray you all away."

David Hulvey



THE FUTURE IS OURS

The future is ours to be,

An eternal serpent slain

Again and again

To feed reality's starved refugees

With nightmare reign phantom pain;

A too-soon true illusion.



The present is ours to see,

An ephemeral film-flashed mist;

Pale pillbox painted charade,

Shadow-show facade apologist

Mouthing Krusader Babbitt tirades

To make the world safe for war.

The past is ours to foresee,

History's crewcut case for chaos

Lurching across always-yesterdays

Ever-hung with albatross

Lies lifted from popinjay negligees.

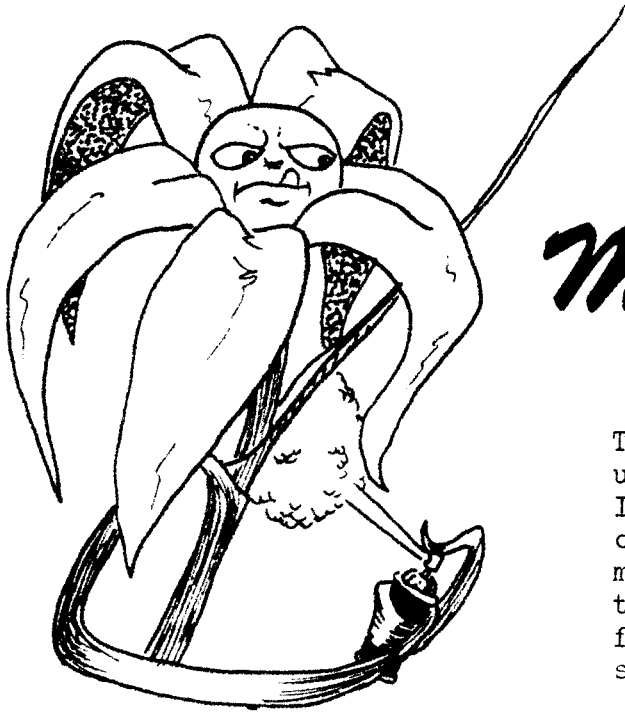
Yet... the future is ours to be.

David Hulvey

HERE IS A LATE BULLETIN

Associated Press reports stars fell on Alabama last night. By the time the National Guard arrived on the scene the first heat ray had already incinerated 27 local residents and alien fighting machines were half-way to Birmingham.

Angus Taylor



## Mae Strelkou us

The nights are the worst. Obnoxious stinks waft up from our former dining room. In my dreams, I attempt self-deceit... reassure myself it's only the smell of ammonia; I'm "probably dyeing my hair again!" There's a flavour of coffee to it also, however, which reminds me of breakfast time. I risk opening my eyes, just a slit. No, it's still dark.

The skunk is at it, frolicking!

My husband Vadim also wakes up, and I tell him: "We'll have to do something about that skunk!"

A noise of bottles clashing has now begun. The skunk appropriated several bottles long ago and rides them, as though they were bucking broncos. We have respectfully left them on the dining-room floor ever since, for him. (Or should I have phrased it again, 'the former dining-room'? It's the skunk's stamping-grounds, by now!)

"Really, that skunk must go!" we try to steel each other. "We could leave it where we swim, summers, by the river. That's a nice place!"

But when we come down the next morning and find the little dear curled trustingly in some favourite corner, comfortably cushioned in something or other (perhaps someone's pullover it's stolen), our resolve melts. It sleeps so sweetly, like babies do, with tiny whimpers and tremors. Our youngest son, ten-year-old Tony, watches us with tears in his eyes, for he calls the skunk "Stinky, my little brother!" Naturally, we can't throw little brothers away, but we still try to consider the situation dispassionately.

I make a joke. "We'll have to tie Stinky's belongings in a bundle and send him forth into the cold cruel world, carrying the bundle from a stick over his shoulder." That breaks poor Tony up, and I realize that this is no time for levity.

Our two teenage daughters, who want us to get a real puma cub next (will it take over the livingroom from us?) usually join Tony in the pro-skunk faction of our household. Son Ed abstains from the vote; he's seldom at home, away studying geology at the University of Cordoba, far from these hills. It's son Danny who heads the minor anti-skunk political party. He's home, recovering from a severe case of nephritis, and I don't blame him for finding skunk-odors and messes unappetizing.

Whenever the stinks are particularly awful--especially on weekends when the whole family has come visiting--even the girls temporarily agree with poor Danny, and I secretly do.

Poor Tony then (insisting he can't smell anything extraordinary) finds himself all alone, the only remaining child in a family of grownups against him. Heartbroken, he



# The Wild - again

seals himself away in his upstairs bedroom, a one-boy Resistance Movement, till his Daddy Vadim runs up to join him, whereupon the two march downstairs to announce: "The skunk stays!"

We could, of course, get little Stinky spayed but wouldn't he feel humiliated? Anyway, we haven't tried it. Besides, the vet lives more than an hour's drive from here directly downhill along a ruddy, rocky road. Can you imagine what the trip by lurching jeep would be like, with Stinky in a box expressing his emotions, using gas warfare? It's bad enough smelling skunks from afar in this countryside, but carrying such a smell along with you through the pueblo? Thank you, but no!

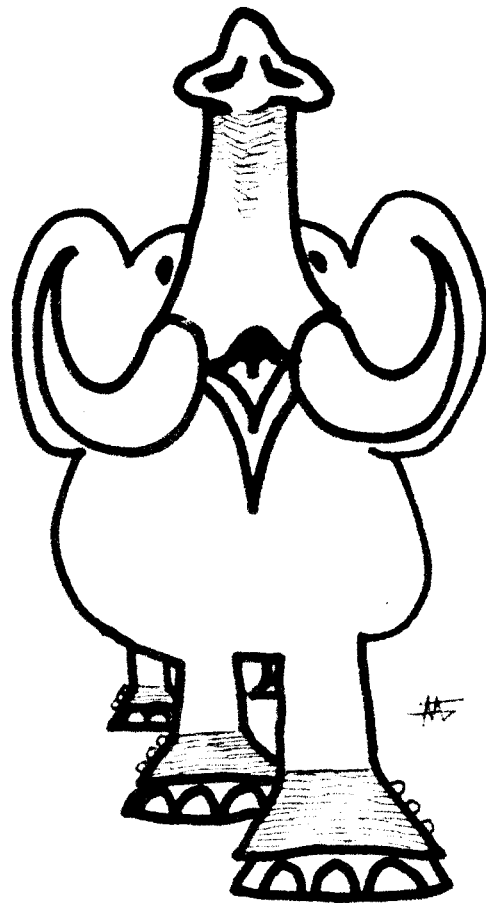
Therefore we continue to hope that a change of heart will occur in our Stinky. For months, he behaved beautifully, no stinks to speak of, and we thought we'd taught him our civilized ways.

Came mid-winter when we'd had to forcibly neglect his education while poor Danny was in the hospital, and he retrogressed deplorably. It could also be due to the cold; midwinter for us here is June. Perhaps Stinky is simply protesting the cold at his first experience with it. It may be he was upset at having no snug burrow deep in the earth, and found his nests of various items, from wood-shavings to old Readers' Digests, beautifully shredded, which he filched, and the pullovers, inadequate.

Our floors are tiled and our walls are of stone. He tried to pull out the bricks from the dining-room fireplace, but beyond them came up against yet another stone wall and had to give up, so he nowadays merely sleeps in the ashes there, blissfully buried, afternoons once the coals are no longer fiery but still warm.

We think we should give Stinky back to the wilds. Tony has reminded us, though, that skunk-mortality is very high in these mountains. Human hunters seek skunks for their fur (it is lovely fur!) and there are also dogs, foxes and pumas that no doubt find skunk-meat enticing, if the skunk can be caught before it fires back and sends them away.

I must confess, too, we are all guiltily afraid that we've badly educated young Stinky with our pampering. He even has the quaint idea we're afraid of him! (Well, we are! Annoy him and he just might let out a new stink.) Whenever the weather warms again, forth he comes to chase us all over the house, playfully. Yet he's no



bigger than one of Vadim's shoes, which he recognizes as a "friend" and attacks, each morning before it's "bedtime" again.)

But what if Stinky should try the same leaping feints on a fox? Would the fox run politely away?

You do see our problem?

I once had a huge, sky-loving chajá, the size of a big turkey. We had the bird when we lived in the Argentine delta of the Rio Paraná. Our two daughters were mere toddlers then, and the chajá wouldn't let them go anywhere near the river, playing "nurse" to them. It followed us around devotedly, sleeping with its head in my lap, but when night fell it flew up to the roof-peak to roost, for it hated the indoor quarters we tried to provide for it. Soon, our roof changed its hue, no longer red but white like an island heaped with guano. In no time a rallying cry was heard--a much younger Danny leading it: "That bird must go!"

I fell ill back then and was absent for two months in hospital. The bird waited and waited until it either forgot me or decided I was dead. Then it spread its great wings and returned homewards, a mere speck in the blue. It used to be the symbol of a sky deity, and no wonder!

There is little hope now that our Stinky will spread wings and fly skywards. We're really stuck with him.

He has not met the rest of our animals. We keep them outdoors when he's leaping around throughout the house. We don't dare risk an encounter! What would Stinky do?

It all began on a day when Vadim told me beguilingly: "The chicken-yard people have the cutest skunk. They rescued it as a baby from the dogs and gave it to their mother cat to raise. Now it thinks it's just another kitten."

"Doesn't it stink?" I asked.

"Never! Only when the dogs frighten it."

He paused...hesitated...and then blurted: "Er...I've asked them to catch a skunk for us too. You don't mind, do you, darling?"

What could I say? Vadim always gives me such lovely gifts. It was he who gave me that chajá too (best non-human friend I ever had.) He rescued it, half-drowned and frozen, from the river one wintry dawn. We warmed and cuddled it back to life in our kitchen.



Unfortunately, the skunk that the chicken-yard people duly caught for us was already full-grown, though not yet completely an adult. Still, Stinky soon grew quite tame...in the beginning! Robert, our twenty-eight year old son, and Ed remain proud of us, their enterprising parents, who don't flinch when children foist on them even puma-cubs. (Let's hope that never happens!) They boast all over the place, at long-distance, not having to get acclimatized daily to smell-of-skunk here at home. The girls spend their holidays here with us while attending high school in town, and when home here they sit up with Tony till two or three in the morning, simply to play with Stinky, his way. (For he has his own ways of playing, believe me!) But daytimes, he's so sleepy, he doesn't even hear us if we happen to bend to pick him up and

take him outdoors to be photographed. Only at the last minute does he stretch and peer, blinking nearsightedly around.

It was a bit of a shock to me, that first day when Vadim announced: "Oh, They've caught that skunk I wanted! You don't mind if Tony and I go to fetch it now?"

"Now?" I stammered, blanching.

"Or would you like me to postpone it?" he politely asked.

Tony watched me, very distressed. "By all means, bring it now!" was my swift reply.

So they brought it, and it didn't even bite or stink, having exhausted its repertoire when first captured.

"You" said Vadim to me, "will tame it by holding it on your lap every evening."

I am regarded as the head animal lover of the family, able to teach (maybe?) even pumas the Golden Rule, should the opportunity occur. "The Lion shall lie down with the Lamb" was my favourite text when I was small, and there was a picture in our Child's Bible titled "A Little Child Shall Lead Them." How could I say "no"? I obediently sat down with a big apron, and the skunk was duly deposited there by Vadim while I flinched.

It immediately directed its beautiful hindquarters upwards towards my smiling features. The hind-view looked to me like this:



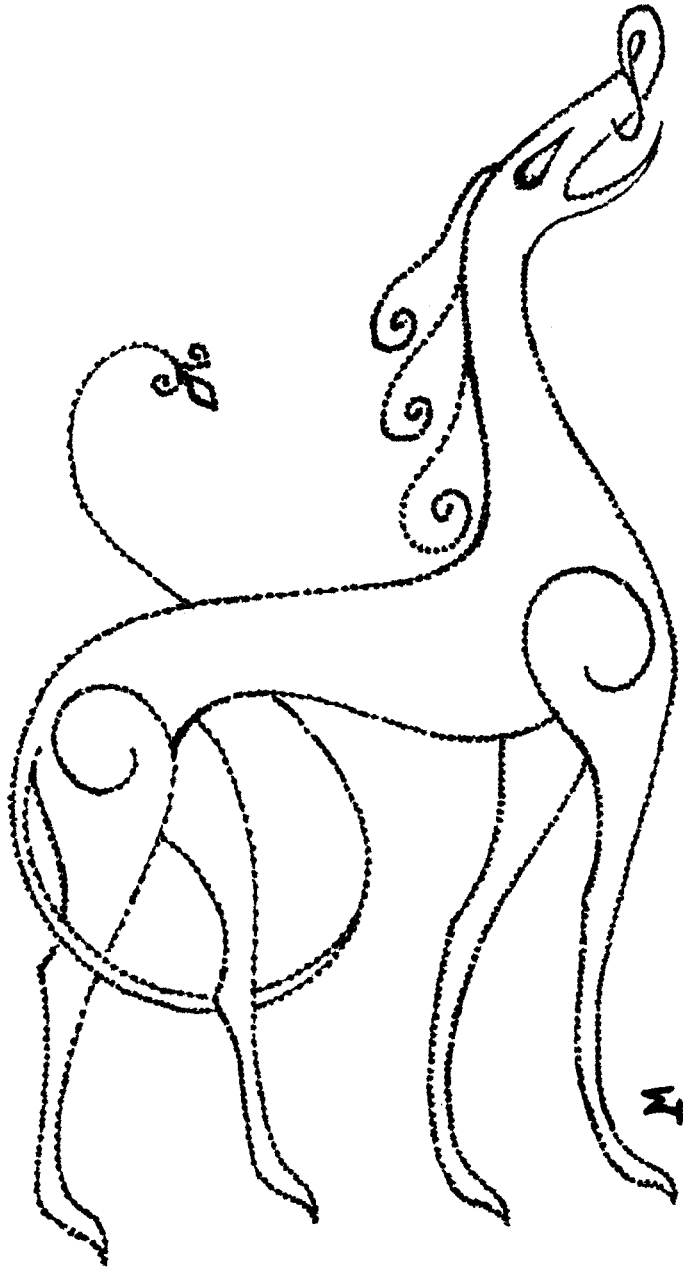
Perhaps I exaggerated in that sketch, but it does have a peacock-like tail-- or better say, the tail is like a radar-fan focussing on its target. I froze respectfully and didn't dare to breathe. Stinky cautiously tried to reach the floor, but my apron slipped and I tried to catch the poor creature to save him a tumble.

Well, he had a bad fright, and the resulting stink was horrible. The children shrieked and left the dining-room swiftly, slamming the door. Stinky ran to his hiding-place, and I rushed to the kitchen to deodorize myself, retching as I went. On another occasion, Stinky fired down my throat an oily liquid which I swear stays in one's innards for a week!

Vadim would not give up. "He'll learn!" he insisted. The very next evening, I was commandeered to seat myself fearfully in the former dining-room and allow Vadim to place Stinky once again on my lap. I'd covered the apron with a big, green flannel polishing-rag. How the skunk loved it. He stole it the very next day, and only threw it out weeks later, when "cleaning house." (He's forever tidying his various "nests" and dumping dirtied cloths and old bones back into the middle of the room, to be laundered and returned clean, or thrown away as the case may be.)

On this occasion, he sat on my lap for quite a while, curled into a tiny ball and letting me stroke him, while he whimpered with a shamed sort of bliss. It's an ecstatic little sound such as some human sinner might make when about to commence an orgy. Stinky loves being cuddled, but his skunk-instinct warns him it's very wrong!

Stinky's downfall arises (if downfalls can arise) from his tendency to be incurably: acquisitive as a magpie or local viscacha-rodent; curious as a fox; playful as a squirrel; and brave as a full-sized bear, which we do feel he resembles!



This combination made him venture forth from his hiding-places almost immediately to explore the house, hissing us out of his way. He was looking for more suitable sites for new summer homes. One place that suited him was inside the sideboard. He tried to throw out all our best dishes, breaking quite a few. Even Vadim turned briefly anti-skunk, while Stinky slept on, in all innocence. He was particularly fascinated by our rather steep tiled stairway. Each step took some climbing, he found, but he learned to slide upwards almost miraculously. He discovered that the greatest treasures were to be found in Tony's bedroom-- toy plastic cars and animals. There's a crocodile he mistakes for a lizard, and it never runs away! Also a polar bear that accepts bitings and beatings. Stinky played with it all as though he were a little human child. Tony, watching, absolutely cooed!

It was awful, though, one night when Stinky got loose in the pantry where my "office" is. My desk is located strategically three leaps from the kitchen stove, where things keep boiling over. Never had Stinky had more fun! He unscrewed the tops from several ink bottles (really!) and found it lovely fun to leave inky tracks all over my papers. Luckily he didn't chew up my priceless library of research material. (I'm a fanatic about archaic languages and symbols, and study them comparatively.)

Barricades failed to keep Stinky out, once he learned how educational the pantry seemed to be. Using his own little body as a fulcrum, he moved every barricade away. We had to put a hook on the swinging door between dining-room and kitchen, hooked from the kitchen side, of course. He now peeps through the crack to check if the hook is on. If not, he pushes right through. Otherwise, he doesn't even bother, for believe me, he's super-intelligent.

Each evening, Vadim carries Stinky around like a baby. No more "taming" him on my lap, thank you! Vadim encourages him to sniff at everything, high and low, throughout the house.

Then, released, Stinky plors to reach all those objects he's already smelled. If a chair is forgotten, with its back up against the sideboard, Stinky inevitably scales it, and what a night he has, wrecking everything on top there, like a poltergeist, until the noises wake us up.

Mind you, the breakages are not deliberate. Whatever survives the crash-landings, he duly pulls deep under the sideboard where his personal stock of treasures can be found. All he's doing is learning to be acquisitive, as humans are!

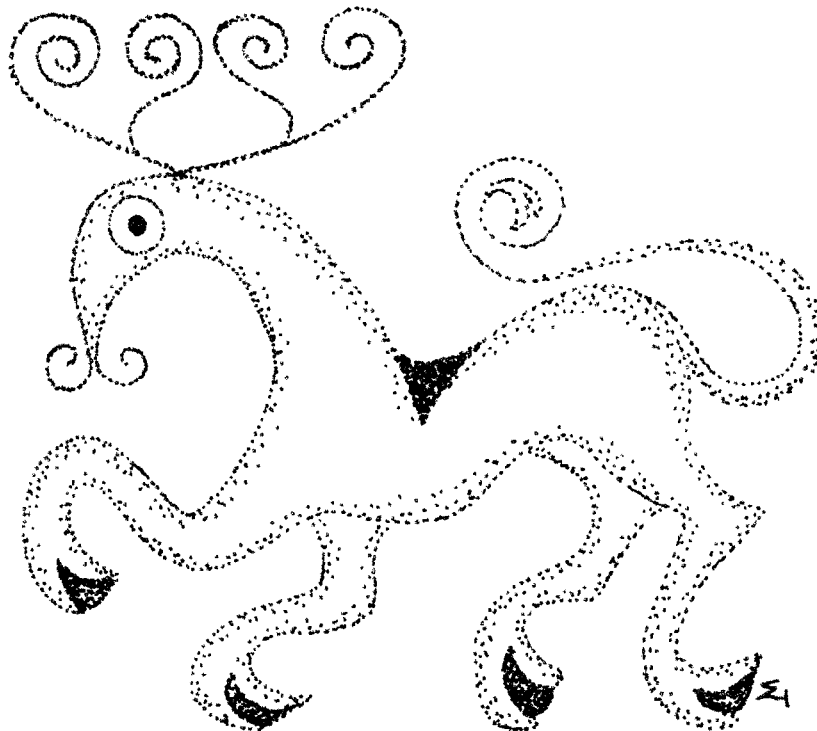
He will likewise climb up onto any table, and saucily steal from our very plates. But if we so much as move a finger, he vanishes like a ball of fluff, blown by the wind, scampering with feathery tail held high, and fluffed out like Skunkdom's own banner.

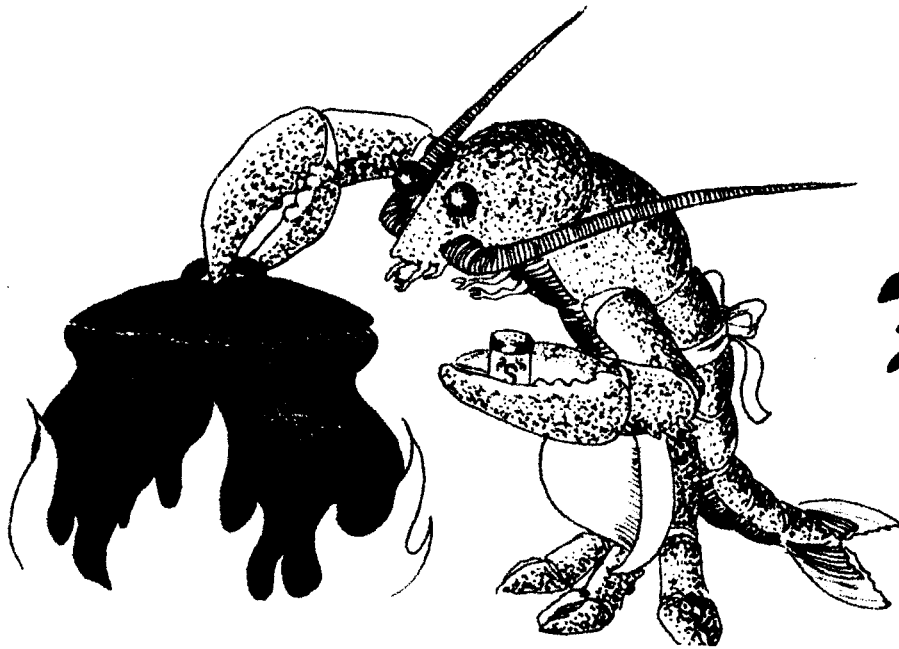
He is lovely, beautiful and magical. He wrenches our hearts, and makes us retch. We cannot keep him outdoors, alas. Lamngen, our dog, has too many suitors, and while she sleeps in her doghouse like a mediaeval Spanish virgin, behind lattice-bars, peering out upon her visitors in vain, those other dogs would certainly eat Stinky, if we left him outside.

As for Stinky's future? We recognize that he surely needs a mate. Once happily married, he won't have to signal his existence to the skunks still freely prowling, who of course signal right back!

Tony is begging us to get a female skunk, and Vadim even asked the chicken-yard folk to find one for us. Won't that be horrible?

But if all goes well (?) I hope to have soon many high I.Q. skunklets available for instant giving-away. If Tony lets me... which he will not.





# FOOD

## Part 1: Banana Bread with Bananas, by Elizabeth Buchan Kimmerly

You know and I know that Wonder Bread doesn't build strong bodies twelve ways, because we read all about those starving rats in CONSUMER REPORTS (or in the Ottawa CITIZEN's resume of the GLOBE AND MAIL's resume of the New York TIMES' resume of the CONSUMER REPORTS article, 'cause that's how things work up here in the Frozen North.)

But the average kid just wants a peeny butter and jam sammich. And to hell with the rats. If it's sweet at the first bite, the kid loves it.

For some reason, kids ignore aftertastes. You'd think they'd be put off by the horrible sensation that their tongues had been wrapped in Saran Wrap after drinking presweetened Kool-Aid, but they aren't. Weird. Or indoctrinated.

While railing about plastic food at coffee break the other day, one of the mothers (the kind who have children) said: "Yes, but--The Kids See It On TV So What Can You Do About It??" Well, in that one instance I gave her some Crunchy Granola to feed her child, who found instant breakfast too filling, and the kid loved it. But other than helping one person find Beauty and Truth in a cereal bowl, that kind of crusading is pretty smalltime--and we're fighting Swift's and Kraft (remind me to tell you about the Kraft boycott some time.) But ASPIDISTRA is pretty smalltime too, and Pollution Probe, and even at one time the White Knight himself, Ralph Nader.

What I'm bending over a hot typewriter to tell you about is food. Do you know that many of those interesting packages on the ~~chemist's~~ grocer's shelf can be duplicated in your very own unsanitary, home-made kitchen without the aid of even one Certified Dietician? These recipes are based on popular products on the market. You may follow either my recipe or the list of ingredients I got off the packages.

### BISCUIT MIX

8 cups sifted all-purpose flour  
5 tbsp. baking powder  
4 tsp. salt  
1 c. skim milk powder  
1½ c. shortening

wheat flour, shortening, sugar, leavening,  
dry buttermilk solids, salt

Mix up all the dry ingredients well. You can add more milk powder if you want extra protein, or leave it out. Rub in the shortening until the mixture resembles dry bread crumbs. Go ahead, use your fingers. Store in a covered container in a cool place or the refrigerator. Then when you need biscuits, take:

3c. biscuit mix

2/3 c. water, or milk if you left out the milk powder.

Stir in liquid to make a soft dough. Dump out on a floured surface, knead (pat) lightly to work in some of that flour so that the dough isn't sticky, and is about 3/4" thick. Cut into biscuits or just transfer the whole piece onto an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 10 min. at 450°

#### CAKE WITH LEMON SAUCE

1 c. sugar

3 tbsp. butter

3 tbsp. flour

2 eggs, separated

juice and grated rind of one lemon

1 c. milk

sugar, soft wheat flour, shortening, skim milk powder, salt, cornstarch, artificial flavour, artificial colour, sodium benzoate added

Cream sugar and butter. In another bowl beat egg whites until stiff. Add everything else including the beaten yolks to the creamed sugar and butter. Fold in the whites. Pour into a 1-quart casserole, or save dishes by mixing in a 1-qt. casserole. Set in a pan of hot water and bake in a PREHEATED oven at 350° for one hour. Serve warm. If you plan to double this, better use two one-quart casseroles.

#### BANANA BREAD

1 c. sugar (any granular kind)

3 tsp. baking powder

2 c. flour

1/2 c. butter

3 mashed bananas

a little tiny bit of salt

2 beaten eggs

3 tbsp. cream or canned milk

soft wheat cake flour, sugar, shortening, skim milk powder, baking powder, salt, dextrose, wheat starch, artificial flavour, cellulose gum, and colour

Cream shortening, sugar and eggs. Mix bananas and cream. Alternate mixing dry ingredients (mixed together of course) and bananas with the creamed stuff. Use a wooden spoon if you have one. Get out a loaf pan, grease it well and dust a tiny bit of flour on the grease, or just line it with waxed paper. Pour the banana bread into the pan, and bake at 325° one hour. Let it cool for a minute or five before serving or it will crumble on you.

#### LEMONADE

for each cup of water add:

1 1/2 tbsp. lemon juice

3 to 4 tbsp. sugar

1/8 tsp. salt

lemon-flavour Kool-aid: add 1 c. sugar, 8 c. water to: citric acid, sugar, corn starch, natural lemon flavour, lemon solids, food colour

You could just mix this up in a great big pitcher, but if you boil the sugar and water together for two minutes then chill it before adding the lemon juice, it's improved. Or if you substitute boiling water and 2 tbsp. honey, you have a Sovereign Remedy for a cold.

Part 2: The Popcorn Popper Cooking Guide, or What to Do When the Munchies Strike, by Jeff Schalles

This is mostly meant for college students and other hardy but destitute souls, although



some of these can be adapted to home use. The first and most important requirement is to possess an electric popcorn popper. Nothing else will do, and you Philistines out there with your microwave ovens and Waring blenders can now turn to the letter column and search for mentions of your illustrious name. For the rest of you, a second important requirement is to have a nearby college cafeteria. No other food source will do.

Now, then, to the recipes:

**POPCORN:** This is the simplest and most basic food in a college environment. First, acquire a quantity of popping corn (un-popped) and hide it from your room mate. Second, rip off a salt shaker full of salt and as much butter as you can get your hands on from the cafeteria. This is a simple procedure, and can be done at the normal meal times. Now, pour about enough cooking oil (where you get that is your problem. Sometimes we have been forced into using butter, but it smokes and burns like hell) to cover the popcorn, plug in the popper, **COVER IT** (this is very important) and sit back. When the popping corn has about half-filled the container, unplug it to prevent burning of the popped corn. Pour it into an empty coffee can or clean paper bag and begin melting a sufficient quantity of butter in the cooling popper. You shouldn't need to plug it

back in as there will be plenty of heat left. Pour the melted butter over the popped corn, shake, salt, shake and eat. Guaranteed to relieve the munchies and thoroughly burn the roof of your mouth!

**SOUP:** Rip off a couple of cans of soup from your room mate. (It helps to have one who goes home every weekend and brings back a box of food that he never touches all week and which you devour every weekend while he's at home with his girl friend.) Don't worry about what kind they are, that only adds to the fun. Open one and pour it into the popper. (There's no need ever to clean your popper to any great extent. It's an interesting game to find out how many meals you can get between each washing.) Open another and pour it in. Two cans are usually enough, unless you are faced with a particularly large, hungry crowd. Pour in enough water to bring the level to about two-thirds of the way up the sides, and plug it in. Keep heating it as you stir it with a drum stick or other suitable utensil. When it feels hot enough (test by inserting your finger, making sure you wipe it on your jeans between tests) pour it into each person's outstretched beer mug. In a pinch, an old army surplus canteen cup will do. Serve with crackers and stale bread from the cafeteria.

**HOTDOGS:** Wait until the night before your cafeteria is serving hotdogs for lunch (around here, about every other day...), sneak in through an open window (thoughtfully opened as you ate your evening meal) and acquire a suitable quantity. Also try to get buns and mustard, ketchup, pickles and relish, though one load of these should last you all year as they come in huge glass jars the size of waste paper cans. It is best to refrigerate them after opening. This should be done late at night, preferably



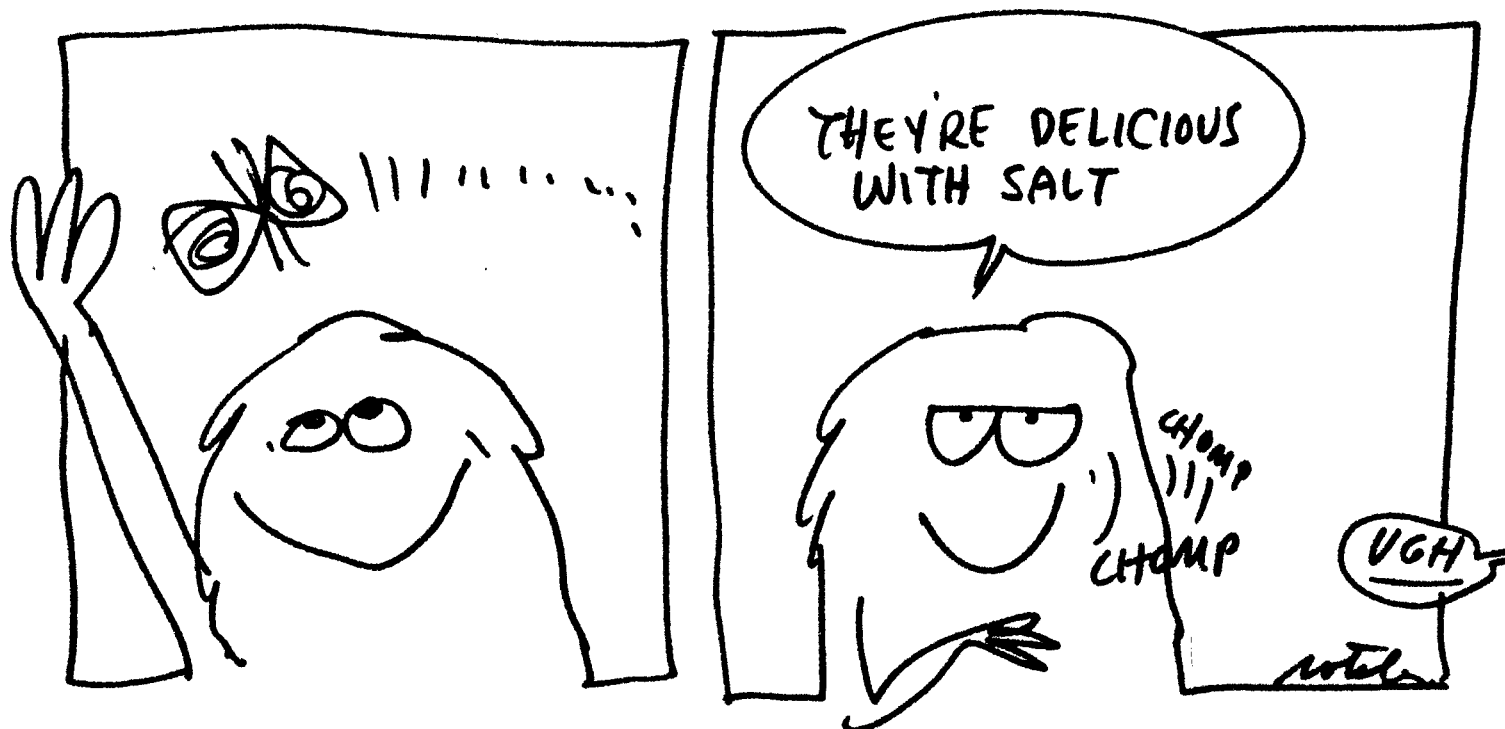
during a panty raid or SDS riot so as to lure the campus cops away from the area. If caught, stick to the story that you left your books in the cafeteria and had to have them to study for a test the next day. Then run like hell.

Now, there are two methods of cooking your hotdogs. The first one is the cop-out way, called Boiling Them in Water. It is easy and clean, but the end result is a blah, soggy, less-than-edible product. The second way is to cook the hotdogs directly on the bottom of the popper (you may have to bend them a bit to make them fit.) Take your Boy Scout knife and carefully cut a line of small, shallow slits down the length of the hotdog. Plug in the popper and let it warm up a bit. Then drop as many hotdogs into the bottom of the cooker as you can fit in. Turn them every now and then with some suitable utensil (if you are stoned enough you can use your fingers, but you will regret it in the morning.) When they look done, they are. Somehow manage to get them out of the popper and into the buns (if they aren't pre-sliced, rip them open with your hands.) Season to taste.

These three recipes are merely meant to start you off on the road to gastronomical fulfillment. They are simple and cheap, and shouldn't tax your capabilities too much. We have accomplished such amazing feats as french fries, spaghetti, beef stroganoff, steaks, cheese fondue, grilled venison (for this one you need someone on your floor who is into hunting) and much, much more.

There are only two rules to follow in creating your own recipes: one, use your imagination! and two, Rip off anything you can get your hands on that looks the least bit edible!

((Editor's note: Uh, yes, Jeff, but will it be edible when you finish (she said, dubiously.) Having eaten residence food, though, even soup in hotdog grease with floating burned popcorn is better than. An electric frying pan is even more useful, though; you can bake cakes in it, even.))



# THE RED MAN'S TOBACCO WAR

RICHARD BENYO



In a way it is poetic justice.

You know, the sort of stuff where you get your just deserts, and all that Very Proper Vengeance stuff.

And you've got to hand it to them, it was all done so subtly and with such profound understanding of human nature.

Tou do know what I'm talking about, of course. No? About the Red Man's revenge. The war where there is legislation passed but no treaty signed, and no reservations to put people on. Oh yes, and maybe the Negro was involved in it, too.

And it was our own fault. And they earned their revenge.

After all, we pulled it on them from the start. What kind of pride can a people have when, the first time we meet them, we don't even remember their names? And then, to complicate matters, we are so greedy we steal the name we didn't even have the couth to remember they were called by?

Chris Columbus (or Eric the Red, or some Jewish sailors, or whoever is currently being credited with 'finding' North America, when it hadn't even been lost) landed here, met the Red Man, called him "Indian" instead of American (which he really was) and then began to steal things from him.

First we stole his name. Then we cheated him into a classically shady deal with Manhattan Island, and now couldn't give it back to him if we tried. Stole his land, his animals; polluted and destroyed the land and killed the animals.

And after we were done stealing from him, we sealed the deal by killing him and putting a few of his number on reservations because it is the American Way to preserve species from extinction by keeping a few specimens of whatever it is we're saving alive and almost well.

The Red Man knew he was outnumbered, because we had an arsenal behind us that he couldn't begin to comprehend. Plagues, Christianity, fire water, guns. And a cunning that could never be put to use stalking game, but that could sure sock it to human beings. But the Red Man wasn't about to be taken without a fight. Red Man give-um White Man very effective curse. Even let White Man keep-um near-enough name to call it.

"Indians" were smoking something, drawing it through their nostrils with the aid of a Y-shaped pipe called a "tabaca" when Columbus (or whoever it was) landed here. Naturally, the White Man stole it.

Jean Nicot, a French ambassador to Portugal, introduced smoking to France. Sir Walter Raleigh did the same for England. John Rolfe began shipping tobacco from America to Europe, using Jamestown, Virginia, as his base. He stole the tobacco seeds from the Red Man; he also stole Pocahontas, "Indian" princess, making her his wife-- we can only hope she nagged him to death.

Smoking moved from the pipe to the paper during the Crimean War, probably the most solid accomplishment of that conflict. The Turks rolled tobacco (imported from America) in paper and smoked it. The soldiers naturally picked it up, as they've picked up so many things in foreign countries.

America is always ready to mechanize anything it can think of, so the automatic

cigarette-making machine was developed in Durham, North Carolina, in 1883. You can buy a portable version of it today in a round package and make your own.

Tobacco became a big product of the Colonies. Smoking became fashionable in Europe. There were a few rulers who opposed the practice and thought it a Bad Thing, but the popular opinion that it was the "In Thing" prevailed. Those few farseeing rulers were laughed down, or didn't get their graft from tobacco importers during the next election campaign or something, because they sank into oblivion while the tobacco plants kept right on growing.

All this timethe Red Man waited and watched and smiled his knowing little smile; all this time the Black Man, cooperating in the tobacco venture, said "Yessa" and tended the tobacco leaves and let things run around his head that said that maybe the Red Man's plot might work, but would sure need some help from other quarters to get back at the White Man and his Evil Ways.

The habit caught on so well that production reached a point where there were 500 billion cigarettes smoked in America per year. White Men spent \$20 million a day on cigarettes.

And there were a lot of people getting rich on tobacco. And none of them were Red Men. A few Red Men were busy with their own plots, drilling oil wells on their property, making it look worthwhile, and getting White Men to do it until they had lots of oil with nothing to use it for, so that they had to build motor cars to use it in, and the cars polluted the air, and then they drilled for more and more oil for more and more cars and began to pollute the oceans with it, too. Another subtle revenge plot from the Red Man, but another story entirely.

Americans began to use tobacco to exercise their imaginations. They got together at a health club on Madison Avenue and began thinking up slogans and advertising things to sell more and more cigarettes to make more and more money. And some old Red Men sat by their teepees following the rise of tobacco in their week-old copies of the WALL STREET JOURNAL. And they still had smiles on their faces. After all, something isn't classified as tragedy unless it falls a long way, and tobacco was climbing toward the top. The further up it went, the further down it could fall, and the more poetic justive could be derived.

Then the Surgeon General got wind of the plot and had some fellows check into what tobacco smoke was doing to people. It was apparently giving them cancer and a list of other real bad diseases. It was doing its thing to the White Man and it was doing it to many of the Black Men who had given up hope in the Red Man's plan, and had come all the way up, and were dying of cancer of the lungs just like White Men, thereby giving them their own brand of equality.

And the very aged chief at his teepee on the reservation, the one who was too old and too weak to lift the fire water to his lips any more, cracked a final smile, breathing a few lungfuls of pollution, and expired, going to the Happy Hunting Grounds, where outdoorsie men rise horses and cook over campfires and are forever rugged, just like they are on TV before they have a coughing fit. But there ain't no coughing fits in Marlboro Country in the Sky, so the old Red Man's smile was painted in his face for infinity, in recognition of his very subtle, but very telling move against the White Man.

Meanwhile, back on the nitty-gritty, not so terra firma Earth (and that's all there was left to it now), there was a great incidence of lung cancer. People were falling like flies, coughing, wheezing, having a very hard time catching their breaths, getting old before their time, having one lung removed so they could begin on the other.

Women wanted their equal rights, and began smoking tobacco, too, pulling it into their lungs like champs, really trying to outdo the White Man for all the years they'd been living a second class citizen's life. And women died just as well, and just as easily, and just as painfully as the men did: they had achieved ultimate equality too.

And an old Red Man looked down on it all. And he smiled, knowing the glow of snatching a final victory for his people, thinking about broken treaties, stolen land, sicknesses, humiliation to his proud people. "You want-um smoke peace pipe?" he said to no-one in particular. Smiling.



## PAUL WALKER: A LETTER

128 Montgomery St.  
Bloomfield, N.J. 07003

Dear Aspidistra,

Ever since pollution and its threat to the survival of man hit the front page of the *TIMES*, I have been astounded at the number of science-types who claim they have been aware of the situation for years and years. Now, there is nothing surprising about science-types being aware of scientific goings-on, but it is curious that none of them thought to mention it to anyone else before it became a public issue; especially since science-types rarely forgo an opportunity to lecture us interminably on how much they know.

Of course, no-one tells me anything, anyway, but I do recall that these same science-types, who knew about pollution and its threat to the survival of men all along, are the same ones who have been predicting Utopia in their science-fiction, all along. Today they denounce us as Johnny-Come-Latelies, implying that as our knowledge of pollution and its menace is more recent than theirs, ours is, ipso facto, inferior.

Such thinking boggles the mind. Perhaps, henceforth, recent scientific finds shall be labeled according to their year and stored away in damp cellars to acquire validity with age. I can picture future researchers in pursuit of a solution phoning MIT for "One Manila of Einstein--Relativity '29" and the librarian replying: "Oh, yes, that was a very good year."

Or:

Paris (AP) June 19: Researchers at the International Cancer Clinic today reported that they have concluded tests on the new Bonsai Cancer Vaccine, and the results have been one hundred percent successful in all cases. Dr. Howard Scythe, in charge of the project, says that once the vaccine has been well known for many years it will be put into immediate mass production.

Granted, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, but ignorance is no fun at all. I think the least the science-types could have done was to let us in on what they knew for years and years. Their irritation at our recent awareness of pollution and its menace suggests they resent us usurping knowledge they would have preferred to keep to themselves. It causes one to wonder how they learned of pollution and its threat

in the first place. Perhaps there are secret conventions held at confidential locations about the globe in which specially selected science-types gather behind closed doors to read scientific papers written in invisible ink, or to whisper the latest "for-eyes-only" statistics on the population explosion in one another's privileged ears.

For all we know, there may be whole sciences, like ecology--whole new menaces to the survival of man--that we are completely unaware of because the science-types are keeping them to themselves. Suppose we wake up one morning to find Ralph Nader has exposed that Czoiologists working at the Institute for Vciqualian Research have uncovered traces of schmucle in peanut butter? Why, the implications are staggering!

Yaws,

*Paul*

P.S. In my opinion, based on years of painstaking consideration of several previously accepted assumptions, this whole environmental crisis issue is nothing more than an insidious planned-obsolescence conspiracy by leaders of multi-national industries. According to my convictions, as substantiated by my prejudices, General Motors and I.T.T. are attempting to have the globe declared "obsolete" by 1991 and have already laid plans to reconstruct it in the Florida Everglades, thereby violating the world's last natural paradise.





# R A P P I N G

## THE LETTERS

Grant Canfield  
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I grew up and spent most of my life in the Great American Midwest, surrounded by cornfields and wheatfields, not to mention other Canfields. Now, of course, I live in a city, and I love it. San Francisco is one of the most beautiful cities in the country, maybe the world, or so I'm told. Certainly it is cleaner than most comparably sized American cities, but even so it is beginning to succumb to the onslaught of the automobile, which is unfortunately raised to some exponential power.

Discussion of ecology always seems to focus on rural ecology. Ecologically oriented folk always seem to want to return to nature, and natural ways of eating, living, disposing of waste, etc. Which is fine, wonderful. I think, though, that cities are here to stay, at least until future technology produces some decentralizing artifact like a Teleportation Module. The phenomenon of urban centralization, and the concomitant migration from and depopulation of rural areas, is one of the most evident results of a post-industrial technocracy. In other words, we get the vast majority of people living in the cities, and most of them hating and bitching about it. This is understandable, because for the most part cities are foul and dirty, and often physically unsafe: unfit for human habitation.

I'll buy that. The most commonly proposed solution to the plight of the cities, however, seems to be abandonment: "As soon as I can afford to, I'm going to get the hell out of the City and get back to the Land." As an individual solution, I'll even buy that--the more people that get out, the better for the rest, or something like that. What I don't buy at all is the concept of the City as being somehow anti-ecology, which is absurd. How can you be either for or against ecology; ecology just is. I'm just a dumb college drop-out, but it seems to me that "ecology" is just a word for all the systems, and subsystems, and systems of systems, which have to do with the continuing presence of life on the earth. Is that more or less right? Buckminster Fuller refers to the whole ecological system as Spaceship Earth, implying a closed system; moreover, his World games operations and theory deal with the whole earth in just this manner. If ecology is life-systems, how can cities be anti-ecological? Rather, the City, to me, is one of the most fascinating life-systems, or ecological laboratories, or whatever you want to call it that there is.

((I think the confusion exists between "ecology" which is, and "balanced ecology" which is generally regarded as a Good Thing, a system in which each element functions in harmony to support life, as for example in a forest. What people mean by saying the City is anti-ecological is, I think, a) cities considered as part of Spaceship Earth destroy the balance between human life and resources such as plant and animal life, water, air and so on by destroying the first two and polluting the others; and b) cities as systems within themselves are not balanced, and work against the continuing presence of sane, healthy human life within them (at the very least) if not on earth as a whole. In the sense that cities as they exist now tend to destroy rather than maintain the balance and functioning of the ecological system which is our earth, they may be called 'anti-ecological.' Does that help, at all?))

The systems approach to solving engineering and technological problems is rather new, probably dating from the foundations of cybernology. Prominent architectural journals (which now treat City Planning rightfully as one of the foundations of eco-architecture or maybe the other way around) such as England's ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN, are beginning to explore systems as an approach to urban architecture. AD has been interested for several years in cybernetics and cybernology, and their potential impact on urban life-systems. Recently AD has been presenting blue-sky proposals for urban architectures based on systems thinking; interestingly enough, many of these quasi-fantasy proposals point in the direction which could lead to urban systems very similar to Robert Silverberg's Urban Monads. It is true that the concept of the City is changing, which I think is probably for the best: after all, cities can't get much worse than they are now. Maybe that's naive.

City-systems are currently inefficient in many respects, for which they deserve all the criticism they've been getting. There is no reason to believe, however, that such inefficiency will always be the case. If you believe in cybernetic technology (as I happen to), it's easy to have faith that things will get better, though maybe not in our lifetimes. After all, efficiency is what cybernetics as a tool is all about, what technology is supposedly all about. So I'm not going to give up on the City as a viable life-system. Not yet at least.

Aljo Svoboda  
1203 Buoy Ave.  
Orange, CA. 92665

The obvious solution to the problem of individual "destroyers" is to take them out of the positions of power they're in now, where they have the chance (and usually use that power) to become mass destroyers. Even so, every dead eagle still hurts... the only thing that can be done is to raise the penalties for destroying to a point where the majority of them will give up and become (at least) passive. Of course, there are some who would destroy in order to escape the law, trying to see how far they can get.

((Actually, enforcing wildlife-protection and anti-pollution laws on the books would be a start.))

You know, Paul Doerr was making plans for a "hobbit village" as a practical venture, though he couldn't find anyone to pool in with him to buy land for it. Besides being a 'fortress' against the outside world and completely self-sufficient, it might be one of the few communities that could survive the Bomb, as hobbit-holes are practically built-in bomb shelters, while being completely accessible to the outside at the same time. If I recall correctly, he had even narrowed down his possible locations to the West Coast, mainly the Northwest. I wish it hadn't fizzled out because of apathy... not on Paul's part, to be sure, but of the people he wrote about it.

((Grant, what do you think of living in a "honbit village"? I think it sounds like fun for six months, then claustrophobic, but it would depend, I suppose, whether the village opted for outside communication or fortress all the way.))

Sandra Miesel  
8744 N. Pennsylvania St.  
Indianapolis, Ind. 46240

I hate to spoil your noble gesture of using the soap flakes, but research seems to indicate that the rate-limiting step in eutropication is uptake of carbon, not phosphate. Algae can't grow without a carbon source, even as you and I. The clouding of Lake Tahoe is due to sewage, and would occur even if no phosphates were used by people along the watershed. Your soap flakes are organic compounds that feed buggies. The first generation of synthetic detergents were based on branch chain sulphonates which weren't biodegradable. Thus they had no effect on eutropication but were banned because they were getting into ground water, spoiling the taste and making foam. Two companies have announced leads on new syndet builders, but these will be scrutinized very carefully before production, lest something worse than phosphates and NTA befall us. I fail to see why vinegar (or ammonia) solution is nobler for cleaning glass than good old Windex either.

I don't want to argue on the issue of abortion because it would be fruitless to do so. I just want to state my own position: I'm against it. To strike at innocent life at one part of the scale ultimately undermines the dignity of life at any other part of the scale. I think the state does have a responsibility to protect the rights of the unborn. (However one marshalls biological and philosophical arguments, the unborn have always enjoyed 'personality before the law.') Women's exercise of "absolute mastery over their bodies" would be bought at too high a cost if it means abortion at whim. If exogeny were available this would be a non-issue. But until it is, by all means let's work to prevent unwanted circumstances from ever occurring. Simple thing: immediate hospital treatment forstalls pregnancy as a result of rape. German measles can be eliminated.

((Perhaps I am naive, having never been in the unfortunate dilemma of having an unwanted pregnancy, but I hardly think the decision is made 'at whim.' I agree entirely that the situation should be avoided, but meanwhile, since the drug companies seem in no hurry to help those of us unable to take the Pill--which is not always reliable; since German measles is still with us, not to mention other causes of fetal deformity and pregnancy-related conditions which threaten the life of the mother; since rape victims are interrogated in intimate detail by police, rather than given d-and-cs at the hospital (and why do courts always seem to assume that the victim did something to incite the crime?); since school boards and individuals consistently oppose sex education in the schools as 'filth' and 'a Communist conspiracy' (see, for example, the letters in the latest issue of Lynn Hickman's BADMOUTH and reflect that a Toronto survey of unwed teenage mothers showed that most of them simply did not know how one became pregnant); since there are few daycare centres and few psychiatric clinics for women unable economically or mentally to raise another child-- since all these conditions still exist are we in the meantime going to outlaw abortions on the grounds of danger to the mental or physical health of the mother? By all means, let us eliminate abortions; but all the people who oppose them don't seem to be working very hard to make them unnecessary.)

Mae Strelkov was hilarious! She's lucky their ex-pet goat was a female, though, a billy would not only have been meaner, he might have tried to rape her. (This isn't a joke!)

According to a piece in the business section of the Sunday paper, large corporations which have tried to solve their pollution problems have been more profitable than those that haven't. Theory is because cleanliness is more efficient, indicates smarter management, better morale, etc.

Signs of the times: Sears is now offering a complete line of natural and health foods in a special catalogue. A model up-to-the-minute kitchen in the latest WOMAN'S DAY included a cubby to store glasses and cans before taking them in for recycling.



Harry Warner Jr.  
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Hagerstown, Md. 21740

ASPIDISTRA has begun to interest me more with each issue. I don't think I'll ever become a wild-eyed crusader for anything, because it's agin my nater, so I don't shout hallalujia after every paragraph about ecology. But I find myself in agreement with most of the contents that deal with something which I imagine I know something about. And I can feel the utmost sympathy for the whole polluting match as personified in those two covers. They would make excellent posters.

I have a bit of local environmental information to impart. The old C&O Canal bed runs through this county, coming within six miles of my home. This was built from Washington to Cumberland long ago in the thought of eventually going far enough to provide a direct water link with the midwest's major rivers. A half-century ago, railroad and highway competition and floods caused it to close down, it fell into the hands of first the B&O Railroad and then the federal government, and about fifteen years ago William Douglas of the Supreme Court began efforts to have it permanently preserved and kept in suitable condition for hiking and bicycling as something unique, 150 miles or so of unbroken towpath, unspoiled by serious commercial or residential encroachment. The National Park Service has finally begun some improvements, then suddenly begun to pave some sections of the towpath, reportedly so its jeeps could travel more easily. Conservationists have gone to federal court to stop it, successfully so far. It's embarrassing to local people, because simultaneously there has been an effort to get more of the battlefield where Antietam was fought, fifteen miles south of Hagerstown, into federal ownership so it won't be changed by commercial interests from its pastoral appearance. So, if with one breath you ask the federal government to protect a historic area and with another breath you ask federal district court to protect another historic area from the federal government, you're in trouble.

If this were a mainstream fanzine, I would include Mae Strelkov's article in the mental anthology that I publish in my imagination each winter to honour the best fanzine items of the past dozen months. Mae has caught beautifully the relationship that I always sense in any animal confronted with my particular sample of humanity: always at least a trace of amorality, indifference toward me, even when the animal is quiet or displaying affection.

Maybe the old fannish dream of a beer can tower to the moon could be revised to serve a function. David Emerson worries about the pollution which results from the production of energy required for recycling operations. So why not encourage or even require people to throw their empty beer cans and bottles and all such things at carefully-chosen spots in rivers where power plants are located? In only a few weeks the piled-up litter would first dam the rivers, then create waterfalls of Niagara proportions. Immediately all that new energy is available to the power plants. The best thing about this scheme is its permanency. Niagara is gradually vanishing as the rock is eroded, but who ever heard of a beer can or Pepsi bottle suffering any alteration once it has been thrown away?

Those are wonderful Rotsler drawings that conclude the issue. I keep wondering about the recent change in his output, the new emphasis on full-page, non-funny drawings. Does it reflect a change in Rotsler himself, or does he simply feel that he wants to change his image?

((The first, I gather, with a bit of the second. I hope that the end result will be that fans and faneditors--including the Glicksohns--cease to take him for granted as a source of funny cartoons to fill up gaps, and nothing more. When I first became involved with fanzines, it was tremendously encouraging to learn that the mimeoed meanderings of a lot of unknown Canfans could bring intelligent, interesting comments from Harry Warner, and amazing demonstrations of what one talented man

could do with a line from Bill Rotsler. How do you thank such people for their generosity and encouragement? All too often, by taking their efforts as a matter of course. Rotsler has deserved a fan-art Hugo for years--and for years has been eclipsed by the many other talented people in the field. Is it because he draws 'just cartoons'--and so many of them that they're held cheap--in which the humour hides the skill? If so, I hope his experiments with "serious" art, as well as his serious experiments with cartoons, exploring the limits of the cartoon box, for example, will be remembered at voting time.))

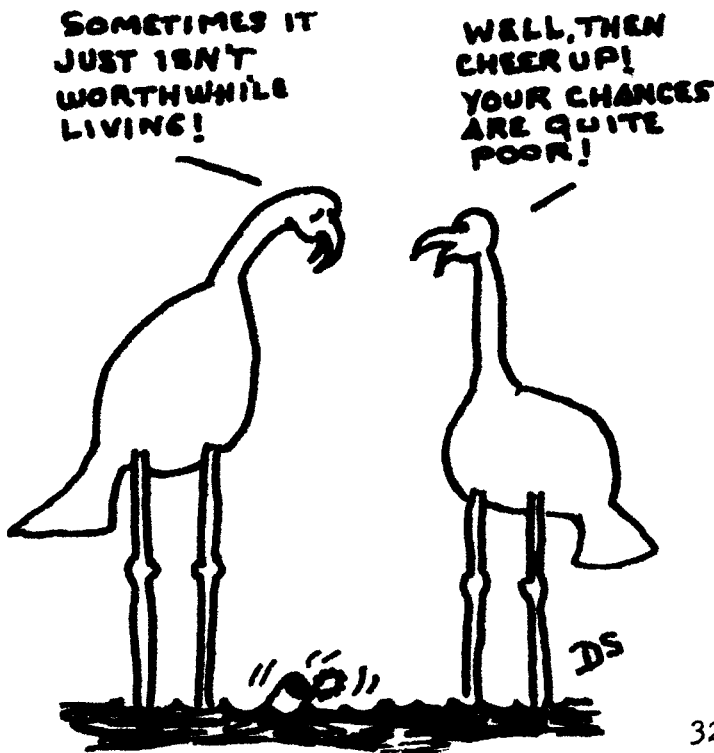
Linda Bushyager  
111 MacDade Blvd., Apt. B-211  
Folsom, Penna. 19033

Since I've been editing air pollution article abstracts at the Franklin Institute, I've had a chance to get all the gruesome statistics and studies which conclusively show that the earth is becoming uninhabitable. Do you remember laughing at Tom Lehrer's "Pollution" in 1965? "If you visit American city, you will find it very pretty, just two things of which you must be aware, don't drink the water and don't breathe the air."

But air and water pollution is no laughing matter nowadays. Did you know that lead levels in the air have now reached one-fourth of the amount considered lethal? Or that meteorological studies have shown that the earth's temperature is dropping as increased haze blocks the sun's rays? Or that studies in Japan have shown a slowdown in growth in Japanese children living in polluted cities?

Japan has had to face a more massive pollution problem than the US because of its rapid industrialization and greater population density. After all sorts of air pollution episodes, increased mortality rates, increased respiratory disease rates, and the development of new diseases, such as the "Ouch-Ouch disease" caused by cadmium poisoning, Japan has instituted strict laws and many health studies. The US should follow Japan's example before major disasters strike.

Small episodes such as the death of about 25 persons in Donora, Pa., have been largely ignored. Most states rely on ineffectual laws giving out meager \$25 fines to such polluters as US Steel. From what I've seen, it looks like we will wait for a major disaster like the one that hit London, killing several hundred people.



The automobile is responsible for at least 60% of the air pollution in the United States. In some cities, it causes up to 90% of the air pollution. There is now federal legislation in effect to force car manufacturers to eliminate 90% of the emissions by 1975. But as usual, the automobile manufacturers are trying to delay, claiming they don't have the technology to eliminate the pollutants.

Actually, there is plenty of technology available. Add-on devices such as afterburners to reburn hydrocarbons, improved spark timing, improved carburation, and other devices are now available.

A more drastic solution, but one which will probably occur eventually, is the complete redesign of the automobile engine. A simple conversion would allow the engine to be run by a new fuel, such as less-polluting natural gas, or hydrogen which would emit only water vapour. An American named Morris Klein has perfected a hydrogen system which can be installed in present engines for about \$300. But the US auto industry refused to develop this engine. The Japanese firm, Mitsubishi, however, is very interested in Klein's machine and is working on their own version.

Up until the 1950's, steam cars were manufactured in the US. Several firms are now trying to start production on them. Other types of engines include the flywheel, gas turbines, freon-powered, electric and fuel cells. But the US car industry's reluctance to change may prevent the development of a pollution-free car until too late.

Scientists Lester B. Lave and Eugene P. Seskin feel that with a 50% reduction in air pollution, 25% of the mortality from lung cancer would be eliminated. Also, 25% of all sickness and death due to respiratory disease would be stopped. Over 20% of cardiovascular disease and 20% of cardiovascular mortality would be stopped. And \$2080 million would be saved annually in terms of decreased morbidity and mortality.

But the frightening part is that despite increased public attention to air pollution, increased scientific studies (and some of them are really eye-openers and mouth-closers), and new legislation, air pollution is increasing. Water pollution is also increasing.

So take a deep breath, stock your freezer with fish, and invest in companies making breathing apparatus and gas masks, and in remote desert (and deserted) islands. That is, while you still can.

"Pollution, pollution. You can use the latest toothpaste, and then rinse your mouth with industrial waste. Just go out for a breath of air, and you'll be ready for medicare. The city streets are really quite a thrill--if the hoods don't get you, the monoxide will."

Mae Strelkov  
Casilla de Correo 55  
Jesus Maria, Cordoba, Argentina

Taki's still with us on various excuses invented only, solely, by Vadim. However, now that our bosses have announced we're to change the jeep for a 1972 model really-nice-small-car, we will really have to pack her off. What if Taki horned the new car and left it full of holes, on the trip?

As for 'lucky I escaped a fate worse than death because Taki's a female'--yes, we planned it that way when we bought her. I said to the goat-woman, "We will only buy a female, thank you." Why? Because I know folks are evil-minded, and I'm the type people think bad things about anyway, I don't know why. And besides, what if it really (I mean the billy-goat) had gotten ideas about our innocent daughters? It would have been very embarrassing, what with peones laughing and all Cordoba hearing the news. Jesus Mary is a very big cattle town with folks who are crudely humorous, and we are 'images of perfection' and thus we must remain.

As for the skunk, it never came back save for whiffs from the hillside. But a funny thing happened a week ago Sunday. The girls heard a frantic miaowing and brought in a little grey kitten... tiny as can be, just bones and fur, it cuddled and purred immediately. It now rules our home, and Tony (finding it 'identical to Stinky') has so named it. It is an awful lot similar, fluffy, playful, light as air in its leaps. It is supposedly a female, however. Can male skunks reincarnate as female kittens? Fadim growls when I even hint I'm wondering.

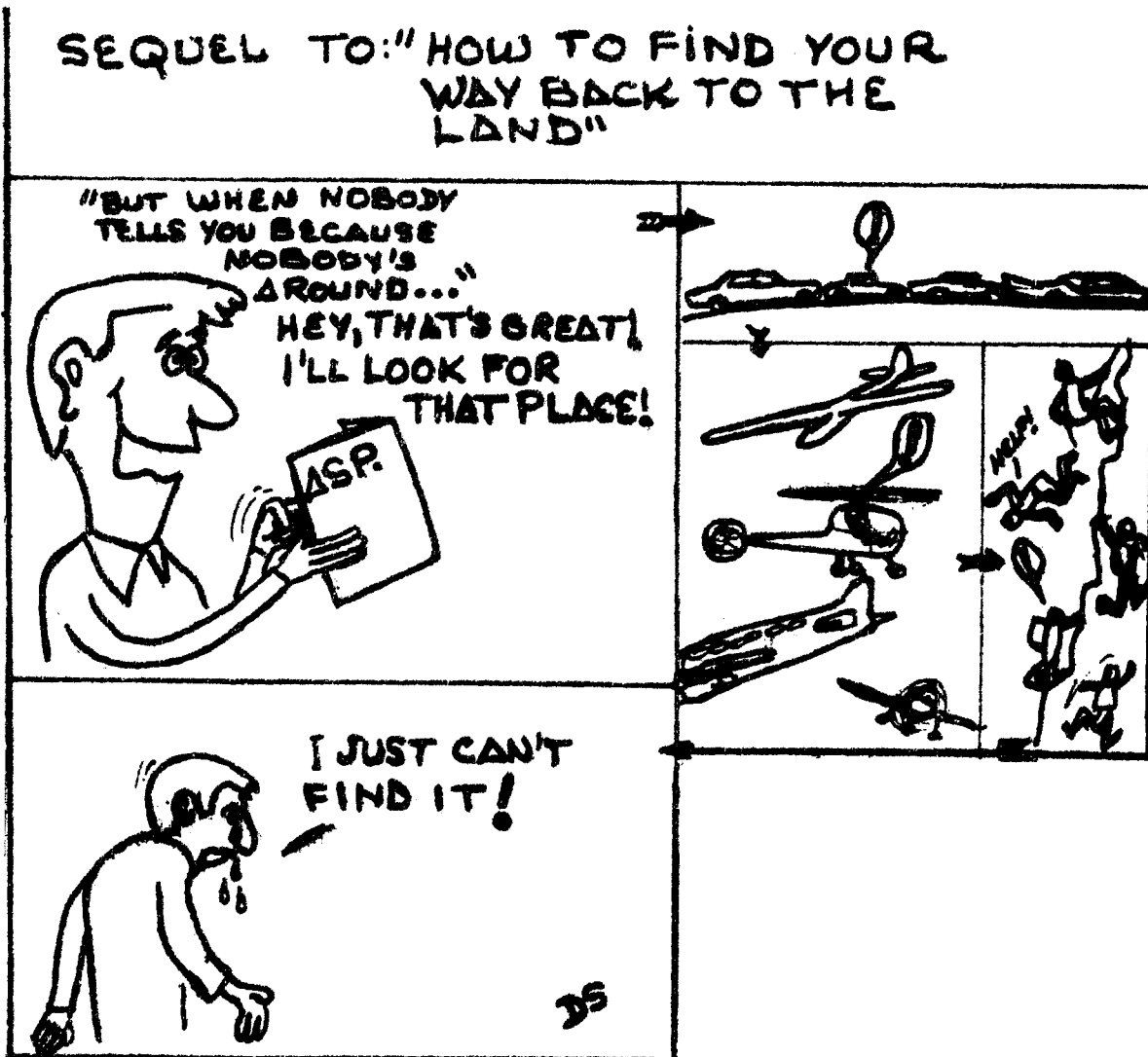
Taki goes for walks with us again and is as good as gold, as if suspecting we have evil plans concerning her. I shall miss her like heck, too. Goats, skunks, chaja (birds), cats, dogs, pigs, whatever, you get to love their goatiness, skunkiness, or whatever and find that henceforth you can't be "complete" without them.

Danny Strelkov  
address as above

You state things very well when you say that men are pigs, or with a smile on one's face, without ecological ethic. And probably as long as there's still 'far places to go' the problem won't be faced squarely.

Unfortunately, even down here, we'll soon have to be crossed out from the list of 'far places' and added to the list of 'Developed Countries, Civilized, Progressive, Advanced.' The whole outfit that produces pollution is not through yet. Homo sapiens is still around.

At least I'm happy to be able to report one pollution problem that's licked! The skunk is gone. Now one can have a square meal without it looking at you and debating whether you rate a squirt or not. The oversized spinster of a goat is as good as gone, the cockroaches are gone, thanks to DDT (there's really nothing wrong with using, but not abusing it.) So our house isn't polluted any more with wildlife & co. But as--thankfully-- Nature still exists right at our doorstep I have to add: FOR THE MOMENT! You know my parents!



Alexis Gilliland  
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Washington, D.C. 20037

Ed Connor's article is a wealth of facts subjected to misinterpretation. Thus, in the ocean, more intensive fishing each year increased the yield until 1970...the obvious inference is that we are overfishing, and in 1969 took more than the optimum yield of fish.

Again, 5,000 tons of mercury a year is dumped into the ocean. Where it comprises something less than 0.001% of the total mercury already in the ocean. The mercury in swordfish, a delicacy I enjoy four or five times a year, was discovered to be somewhat above a World Health Organization guideline. And swordfish is promptly pronounced poisonous if not inedible. There was, of course, no baseline, no data on mercury in swordfish over the past century or even the past decade. Recent attempts to determine this baseline indicate that swordfish have always enjoyed a high mercury content.

((Surely, though, you don't mean to imply that it is perfectly all right to continue dumping mercury, and everything else, indiscriminantly into the oceans?))

Moving on to recycled paper, which the man at the next desk in my office is working on, I offer the following: (1) a recycled paper mill produces effluent with four times as much solids--filler, ink, unusable fibre, etc--as a virgin pulp mill. Recycling paper pollutes. (2) Using recycled paper badly degrades the quality of the paper thus produced. (3) GSA got no responsive bids on an invitation to bid on a contract to produce quite a lot of recycled paper. One reason given was that all the ecology talk had driven up the price of good quality scrap (envelope cuttings, IBM cards, etc.) to the point where it was cheaper to use virgin pulp, so a number of recycling plants closed.

((But, she whimpered, what are we to DO with all our waste paper?))

Now with detergents, specifically Tide, I have done something on my own. The chemist who headed the research team that developed Tide reported somewhere that 1/8 cup would clean a normal washer load. On the box it says 1 1/4 cups, or ten times that. Well, I tried 1/8 cup, and by damn, it works. No suds on top, though, and the clothes don't smell 'clean' ie, like detergent. So you can save money and fight pollution at the same time.

Good news on the strip-mining scene. Chicago produces millions of tons of human sewage--essentially deodorized human manure--every year. The farmers didn't want it, for all that it was free and they used animal manure. The city was desperate for a place to put all the stuff. Finally they bought, cheap, some land in Tennessee that had been stripmined.. Well, Chicago now has a dumping ground that will last into the next century, and the sludge does a great deal to condition the acid sub-soil that was ploughed up by the mining operation. In short, stuff will grow again. Don't fight pollution, use it!

Gloria Lee Ptacek  
3588 Connecticut St.  
Gary, Ind. 46408

As you probably know, Northwest Indiana is a prime offender in the pollution field. There are US, Inland and Bethlehem Steel; Youngstown Sheet and Tube, Standard Oil refineries in Whiting, and so on ad nauseum. There was a mayoral election in East Chicago ("steel producing capital of the world" the signs say) last spring. One of the candidates owns a company (on the sly) which hauls and dumps industrial waste. This upstanding gentleman made an offer to Standard Oil in Whiting that couldn't be

beat. Standard Oil had a problem, you see. They had 20,000 gal. of a chemical waste sooo caustic that they could find no legal place to dump it, and the cost of breaking it down was breaking them. So, our nice old councilman said to Standard that he would take the chemical off their hands, no questions asked, for \$1 per gal. Is that a deal or isn't it? Now the chemical was our councilman's problem.

The problem was no problem to him. He took his chemical and late at night (I wondered why somebody parked his truck by our sewers at 2 A.M.) he dumped the vile mess into our sewers in East Chicago. Full strength, mind you. Of course then all the sewers on two different streets had to be replaced; they were vaporized. You'll never guess who made money replacing them and took credit for improving the E. Chicago sanitary system.

The lack of awareness is incredible! The caustic gook backed up in some basements on Carey St. and was eating up people's cement floors. Well, they didn't think it was worth looking into (I must confess that those of us who knew weren't shouting it from the roof tops, since the councilman is backed by the mafia.) I can just picture two

E. Chicago residents talking about it:

"Hey, Stosh, what's new?"

"Well, Pete, some crap came out of the sewers last night and ate up my basement floor. Weird, ain't it?"

"Yeah. Is your insurance gonna cover it?"

"I dunno. Never happened before. Let's go have a beer."



Sometimes I think the only thing worse than the pollution we've got is the lack of indignation and survival instinct of the natives. Whiting, Ind., nearly blew itself off the map--mighod, it was awful--in 1956, and two weeks later the survivors were rebuilding on the same spots. I fear that someday E. Chicago, Gary and Whiting will disappear and never be heard from again. But for the record, a few of us knew and cared.

P.S. The federal gov't. tried to test E. Chicago's air last year with some 24 hour exposure meshes; they were covered in five minutes. Our pollution is so bad, it can't be measured accurately. Breathing E. Chicago air is equal to smoking 2½ packs of cigarettes a day, I've heard.

David Grigg  
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Research, Victoria 3095, Australia

Apart from discovering the joys of an ecologyzine, I found out one other thing: ASP is just about the only fanzine that I can read at the office. Usually things go like this:

"Hey, what are you reading?"

"This..er...well, it's an amateur magazine."

"Huh? What kind of amateur magazine?"

"Um...well, it's put out by science fiction fans, and sometimes they talk about science fiction and then sometimes..."

You know. But with ASP:

"Hey, what are you reading?"

"This? Oh, this is an ecology magazine."

"Gee, let's have a look."

There is a more serious note that came to me while reading Ed Connor's article in #3,

to do with recycling of things like containers. A short while ago, I was doing research into the local COMALCO aluminium company's ads, promoting the collection of aluminium soft drink cans for recycling. They were plugging the environmental clean-up aspect, and like many others I thought, gee, this is really good, COMALCO is really interested in pollution problems. In my research, however, I followed the method of collection of the cans. People or charities brought sacks of collected cans to scrap dealers, and were paid a small amount per pound. The crushed cans were then delivered to a plant on the north side of Melbourne for re-smelting. The firm that operated the plant (a differently-named subsidiary of COMALCO) it turned out, had been booked nearly a dozen times in the past five years for drastic air pollution (and believe me, that is something here, where no-one seems to care very much about pollution.) So much for the environmentally-concious COMALCO: it was all a front, and worse and more immediate danger to the environment was being caused through recycling of the cans.

Another point that arises in connection with Australia is population. It is widely believed, here and elsewhere, that Australia is an underpopulated country with lots of room to grow. But most of the people in this country are crammed into two big cities, and three smaller ones. Rising costs of housing, overcrowded schools, a horrifyingly large unemployment level for a country supposedly this wealthy, tell of too much growth in too small an area. Much of Australia's wide open space is desert, barely able to support the few people living out there. Australia has as much need to worry as America, and this in a country the size of the USA with a population just bigger than that of New York City.

((Canada has much the same problem, with a vast area of northland which sounds impressive but will only support a small population, little agriculture and so on. Meanwhile it fools us into thinking we have lots of space, so we put factories and acres of parking lots on our tiny belt of good farmland. I never could see much sense in that. Apparently my next correspondent can do so. And of course, lots of overcrowded Third World nations are eyeing your deserts and our tundra.))

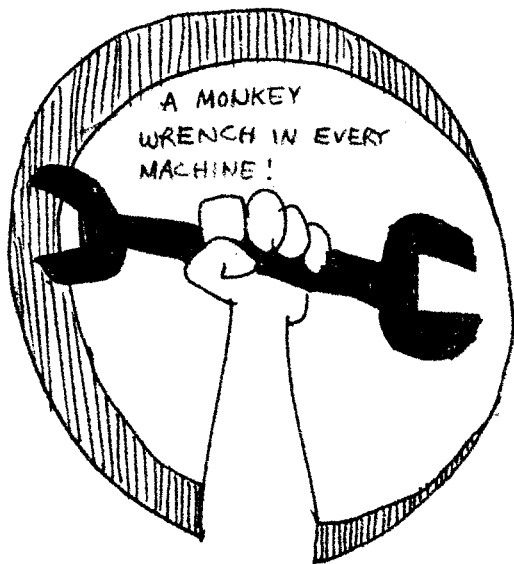


Robert Wilson  
210 Markland Dr. Apt. 1001  
Etobicoke, Ont.

Ah, the ecocrisis! I wish someone would tell me what the crisis is--it would make things so much easier. If you mean poisonous poisson and acidic air, yes, we're all against that; I want to live as long as the next man. Maybe longer. But for some reason the premises are always switched-- the discussion goes from "Your lungs are being eaten away!" to "There are beer cans by the side of the highway!"

Destruction of life and property are the only standards by which we can judge pollution problems.

((Part of the confusion, I think, is that people concerned with the quality of life in the present, as well as its continuation in the future, have to keep trying to find an issue through which they can bring home thier concern. People simply don't believe their lungs are rotting, while they can at least see the cans. Moreover,



POWER TO THE  
SLOGAN-MAKERS!

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cans and glass littering parks will only slash childrens' feet, while smoke will choke them, both seem to me to be symptoms of a total lack of concern with the environment--the human environment of which the natural world is an important part. This is the 'ecocrisis': that on a personal and corporate level we are acting without regard for the consequences, that our greed for material goods is disrupting the ecological balance of our planet, with potentially deadly results.))

The 'ecology' movement has associated itself too deeply with things like conservation-for-the-sake-of-conservation. A tree's esthetic value is variable; if I make a living in a lumber plant, no-one is going to convince me that Forest X should be preserved because "it looks nice" or "nature must not be disturbed." Human values cannot be sacrificed to 'natural' values, nor can men be sacrificed to public parks.

Man, unfortunately, is not a natural animal.

((Certainly a lot of bring-back-the-past people jumped on the environmental bandwagon. It's too simplistic, however, to denounce all conservationists as enemies of progress or 'human values.' To conserve means to keep from decay and destruction,

not just from change. Human values include the desire for a pleasant and meaningful, as well as a healthy world; and what is wrong with wishing to conserve clean air, water for swimming as well as drinking, even a bird or one of your valueless trees for one's children? You say men should not be sacrificed for parks; I say they should not be sacrificed to an unthinking worship of inefficient technology. Of course we need technology, but why can't we improve it, make it less wasteful--the automobile is a good place to start-- and improve our chances of survival at the same time?))

All other forms of life survive by grubbing from the environment per se, and they're equipped for that. Yes, man can grub--that seems to be what many environmentalists are advocating--but grubbing is, historically, an anti-survival lifestyle. Human life succeeds through a use of nature; mankind approaches nature as a raw material and moulds something better out of it.... And so we come to the premise that industry and the industrial system are good. Positive values.

Susan, industry isn't the villain you think it to be. I won't try to justify smog. I can't. But consider what even the most frivolous industry has given us: a standard of living far in excess of anything produced over the course of Mankind's 'natural' agrarian misery. After all, the electric toaster, toothbrush, blender, canopener, ad infinitum, almost, have given us something we've never had: a very simple commodity called time. We are the beneficiaries of technology's liberation... and I for one am not about to aim any blows at industry.

((I can thank industry for freeing me from --gasp!--actually opening a can, if I choose --and I don't, we don't need useless gadgets--so I can trek to the doctor because Toronto's air pollution has given me a chronic eye infection. I'm afraid I'm not so in love with industry I'll barter a blender for smog, or so complacent I'll ignore pollution because because asking for an efficient technology, one responsive to 'human values' means 'aiming blows at industry.' Technology, fine, wonderful--technology developed to fullest potential, so we don't have to trade air conditioners for foul air.))



A final note: Trees convert nutrients, sunlight, etc. into carbohydrates, give off oxygen and all that. But so do multi-acre industrially-tended food farms. We can have oxygen and coffee tables too.

((Ooh, goodie! Of course, thanks to unplanned 'progress' we in Toronto are building factories where we cut down trees-- but to carp at that means to 'aim blows at industry' and be 'anti-survival', right?))

The recipes were cute, but the A&P is all out of wheat germ. At least, here in the suburbs.

((Luckily, only one recipe required it, of course. You can still whip up some cutesy-poo scones, with the aid of the electric canopener, blender, carving knife, coffee-spoon...))

Jerry Kaufman  
417 W. 118th St., Apt. 63  
New York, N.Y. 10027

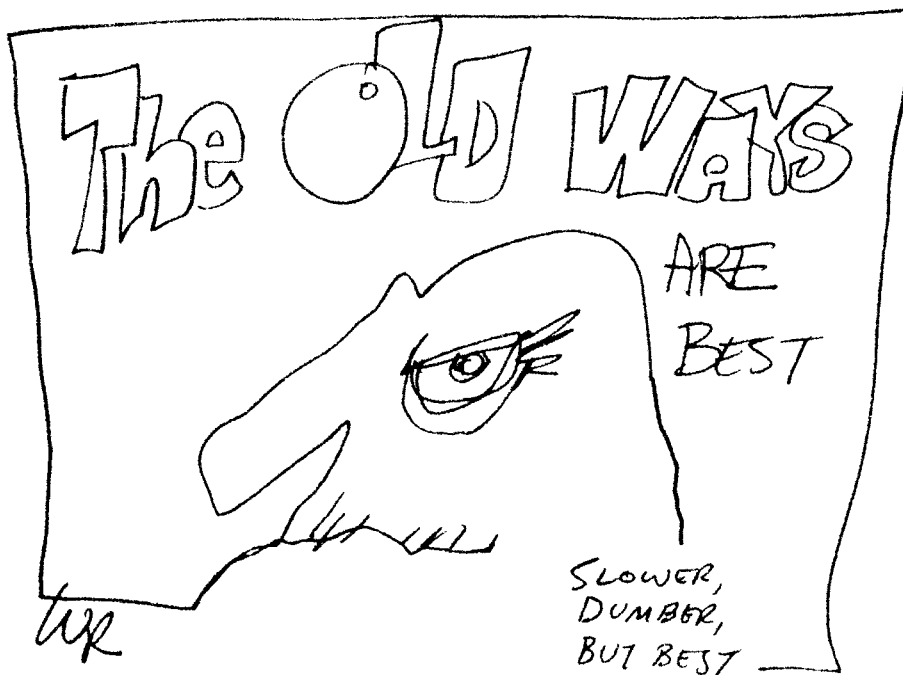
Eli asked me to say some pro-technology things for him; with his Qualifiers coming up in four weeks he hasn't time. He mentioned a batch of things technology has given us--records, the Jefferson Airplane, Beethoven's Ninth and inexpensive musical instruments. He also threw in mass-produced books and science fiction. He then suggested that it would be impossible to ignore the effects of technology until now, and the only way to correct these effects would be to develop better, more efficient technology. ((Yes.))

I'm not sure Eli is reading you that clearly. You don't hate typewriters and mimeographs, do you? Ill-used, ill-considered technology, that's what I dislike. Selfish fools who ignore known dangers, that's what bothers me. I presume that's what bothers you. After all, farming is no less technological than industry. It isn't natural to farm, organically or not; it's an invention of man, all done with tools. And you're not opposed to that. ((Farming is usually fairly efficient, not destructive-- and we need milk and wheat. Do we need 3 tvs, or even more Jefferson Airplane?))

I myself am mainly a city boy, and I move through the canyons like a panther. Or a very bouncy Tigger. Sometimes I have little mental games of living on a farm; and I keep thinking about ordering books and reading them around the fire. I need to go to the country to do that? I am a very unnatural animal.

Cy Chauvin  
17829 Peters Ave.  
Roseville, Mich. 48066

I think the problem David Emmerson points out isn't worth worrying about. Now I hate to sound like a heretic, but a little pollution is good! It fertilizes the soil, and even old cars and trains dumped off the Florida coast, I



understand, turned into nice havens for various fish and sea creatures, sort of artificial coral reefs. And they soon were camouflaged with undersea growth. By the time something gets so diluted in the water (or air, etc.) that it isn't feasible to recycle it, it wouldn't matter. 'Cause whatever pollution it causes will probably be negligible. ((But what about cumulative effects, or conditions under which concentration occurs-- like DDT in human milk?))

Still, I agree with David's basic premise-- with recycling you aren't really curing the disease, only treating its symptoms. An awful lot of stuff you are really tricked into wanting; it's where you place your values. In Europe, people value their time off more than the material things they could gain by working overtime. Here, people flock to the overtime...and never have time to use all the stuff they buy! (I should talk--you should see the stack of unread books and magazines around here!)

Mark Mumper  
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Santa Cruz, CA 95060

I've always wondered what effects tobacco smoke has on the air pollution index-- it is definitely high indoors, but I think it's on the same order as the adverse affects of alcohol on one's system when one desires to get plastered. You pays yo' money an' yo' takes yo' chance. Now, I don't think anyone, such as yourself, who does not want to get smoke polluted should be forced to bear the oppression (yes, I feel it too!) of a hot, sticky smoke-filled room. People should have the courtesy not to smoke if someone doesn't like it, if the smokers are the guests. But if you've got a friend who is an opium addict and you were going to visit him, I don't think his friends in the den would appreciate your asking them to put out their dope. The same applies to some smoking situations.

I think the syndrome of the American smoker is quite ridiculous. Most Americans overestimate their problems, and turn to smoking as a crutch. People really like the image of the cigarette-stubbing, high-strung neurotic soapopera character, possibly because this character is portrayed with so much sympathy. Those people who smoke (remember, this is my own personal opinion) believe that by following this stereotype they are becoming something greater than they are, some sort of super-neurotic. People like to think they're courting danger, even lung cancer from cigarettes. This has led me to think that perhaps this attitude is one of the reasons behind our apathy toward environmental destruction-- we like to think we're destroying ourselves, because it's an easy substitute for real drama, real living. Many of us are merely living the flat lives we see portrayed on our television screens, and thinking it's real. Americans have always been fatalistic-- the image of the hero fighting impossible odds appeals to us greatly.

Smoking for anything but the pure pleasure of it is a false ego trip. If I ever find myself in the company of anyone reading this who doesn't like cig smoke, I'll invite them to pour their drink over my cigarette.

Vonda McIntyre  
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Bellevue, WA 98005

I'm glad you're not a food faddist, nor a member of a lunatic fringe. I'm frequently caught at home between my father, the Pro-Establishment Fanatic, and my sister, the Anti-Establishment Fanatic. I've usually been on my sister's side, but recently it's gotten harder to be so. She's essentially an intelligent person, but has always been rather gullible. The worst of it is that she proselytizes, and doesn't do what she says. She came home a few weeks ago and immediately proclaimed "There's no food worth eating in this house," and treated us all to a lecture on organic food. A few minutes later she was eating a sandwich made on a hamburger bun, when she had the choice of

whole-wheat bread. Last week she came home: "Here, try a piece of my Organic Fudge." "Well, no, Carolyn, not right now..." (As usual I'm trying to lose weight.) "Oh, it's all right! It's made with honey. It's non-caloric!" (Not less caloric, mind you, noncaloric.) And yesterday came a letter to my mother with directions for putting in a garden (my mother has been gardening for years; my sister has never so much as grown a weed) among which was the exhortation: "Don't buy hybrid seeds!"

That really got to me, I'm afraid (not only because I was a graduate student in genetics.) The implication was, hybrid seeds are a product of modern science and therefore must be bad (or even Evil.) It doesn't seem to count that the same kind of hybrid seeds allow India to grow enough food for all its people, or that hybrids can be bred to resist insects, etc., that would otherwise have to be chemically controlled.

I immediately went out and bought a whole lot of hybrid corn seeds.

Anyway, its that kind of blind and ignorant perversion of legitimate goals that pisses me off. Along with planned perversion of legitimate goals, like self-congratulatory oil company ads: Look how much we're doing for Ecology!!! and things like shampoos with "organic brighteners."

Yet I guess I'm rather inconsistent on the subject of lunatic fringes. Having condemned one (or maybe not: it's the preaching and insincerity I object to, not the philosophies, to which they have a perfect right), I'm going to stick up for another. I expect that your and my philosophies on equal rights are at least within shouting distance, though everyone who hasn't met me, and who has read Robin Wilson's introduction to my story in CLARION expects me to be six feet tall and ready to use my --very limited--judo on anyone who disagrees with me. I'm really not; I'm hardly what reasonable people would even call radical. That's in my opinion, of course; some people seem to consider radical any woman who so much as remains rational during her menstrual period. I used to be very annoyed with what is generally referred to as the "lunatic fringe" of women's liberation. It eventually occurred to me, though, that I didn't really have any right to condemn them for their opinions, any more than anyone else has the right to class me as a "bull dyke" because I happen to believe that any role or occupation assigned to one particular group of people will invariably exclude some people (no matter how few) who are eminently suited for that occupation. Besides, for every "lunatic" on one side, ten pop out of their PLAYBOYS on the other.

((I have a sneaking affection for lunatic fringes, even the longhaired-teachers-are-a-communist-plot-like-sex-education type; they make life interesting! Besides, its so easy to label 'lunatic' that which you fear or can't be bothered to understand; in any movement for change, frustration will drive the most rational person slightly crazy; and finally, the fringeers distract the inevitable scoffers, so the quiet semi-radicals can get on with their work. The problem is, the cries of "health food addict" (yes, 'addict'--from a responsible Canadian mag. to describe anyone who eats whole-wheat bread), "braburner" and "tree-worshipper" may distract us into attempting patient answers: "Well, actually, the newspapers invented the idea of bra-burning, what actually happened was some women threw padded foundation garments and cosmetics and stuff into a trash can to symbolically protest the Miss America Pageant; and I've never offered up a factory-owner to an elm tree, though it sounds like a fun idea..."

Larry Propp  
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Peoria, Ill. 61604

My major problem with pollution, as with all our problems, is getting started. I'm caught up in a sort of creative apathy caused by the fact that I don't know where to begin. Not with pollution--with the bigger problem of problems. A couple of months ago I was accosted on the street, in front of the Courthouse, by a crusty old

gentleman in a worn grey coat, baggy pants, etc. His age was about 68-72--very thin, he hadn't shaved in a couple of days, and was obviously poverty-stricken. He asked me (he was asking everybody) if I were a lawyer. I replied that I had been the last time I looked. He then thrust upon me a mimeographed broadside, curtly told me to "read it and do something" and went on to the next person. The sheet was a reprint of an "airitorial" from three months previous; a local radio station had been complaining about the low scale of social security in the face of inflation, and what could we do about the problem of our aged. I dutifully read it, said "Gee, that's too bad" and deposited it in the nearest waste receptical.

It is a fact that I could devote myself to 365 problems a year and not even scratch the surface. Sure, there's the problem of the aged. In fact, they have several problems--in addition to social security, there's the hassle Medicare is causing. There's the youth problem, which gets you into providing them activities, trying to understand drugs, changing the juvenile laws, and many others. And what about crime in the streets-- there's police corruption, bad laws, court congestion, rehabilitation v. punishment, radicalization among blacks in prison, should political acts be crimes. Pick up any newspaper and you're confronted with a dozen national problems and several dozen local ones. They're all crying out for someone to pick up their banner and do some work. Then there are the starving millions of wherever -- it used to be Biafra; now I suppose it's Pakistan. Health? Well, cancer isn't cured yet. Sickle cell anemia? Which brings up the black problem. Which brings up the bigger problem of prejudice against groups not (yet) radicalized. Women's lib. Pollution. Zero population.

I'm not trying to be funny. I haven't even scratched the surface yet; give me time and I'll come up with some really neat crusade material; stuff not even touched yet and just crying for a campaign. In fact, choosing which of these problems to devote one's energies to is in itself a major problem. And that creates a special sort of apathy which has me fast in its grip. I'm not very proud of that fact. But it is, it seems, a fact of life.

Greg Burton  
3209 SE Stark St.  
Portland, Oregon 97214

ASP is a nice idea--people sound halfway intelligent and serious and quietly reasonable about the state of the spaceship. About all that we have out here that make any noise are the Nader-freaks, who are incompetent and dictatorial (their research group is funded the way football is, mandatory fees) and something called the Western Environmental Trade Association, which is the industries' spokesman for why they shouldn't clean up, now or ever.

A round-table discussion at Portland State got no-where fast, though it did give me a chance to talk with one of the vice-presidents of Georgia Pacific (the one in charge of environmental quality, natch.) He pointed out that in Oregon, the G.P. pulp mill isn't set up to handle anything but sawdust and loose ends, therefore utilizing the waste products from the lumber industry. They are having troubles selling as much as they make, and the idea of recycled paper causes them no end of laughter.

Two pulp mills closed down in Washington, and blamed it on the environmental controls. Untrue, claimed this candid gentleman--they couldn't make a profit on their paper because the market is glutted, and thought it would be nice to discredit somebody else on their way down. When I asked him if there were possibly other, cheaper methods of producing cellulose fibre, his eyes began flashing dollar signs and he told me that if anybody could come up with a cheaper method that wouldn't involve wood pulp they'd be more than happy to see it.

As far as the continuing battle of the cockroaches goes, we lived in New York City for two years, and our kitchen was singularly free of the little beasties, as was the

theatre where I worked. Answer: BORIC ACID, sprinkled around the baseboards and hidey-holes. ((It's available around here as Borax, and works wonders with ants.)) It isn't even particularly harmful to humans--you can dilute it and use it as an eyewash when the smog is bothering them, and it cleared up our cats' eye infections.

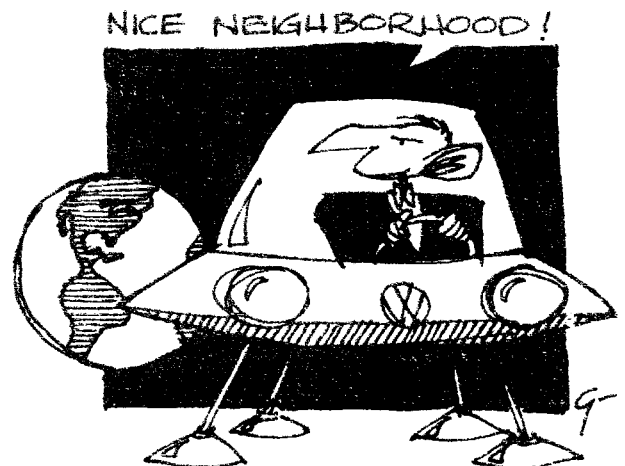
On to the living on the land comments. I can't reall argue with most of the points; there are other ways of raising your own food than that, though. Garlic planted in a vegetable garden will keep out a lot of insects, white geraniums drug Japanese Beetles, a trail of sand around it will keep out most of the slugs. ((ORGANIC GARDENING had an article, in the April, 1972 issue on this same point--for next year's planting!)) It doesn't hurt to overplant on the assumption that the insects will get something, and if you're out far enough the deer certainly will. (But if you have a little fence around it and the deer get in anyway, why not claim them, or one of them, as destructive and get a little meat? It's cheaper, and the idea of responsibility for the death of an animal as a personal experience makes you a lot more aware of what's going on.) If you are growing food, get your soil tested and then add what you need--most of it will be available in 'natural' form, though there is nothing intrinsically wrong with chemicals if used properly. You can also recycle your own waste products and get methane, which pollutes a whole lot less than gasoline. (Can you imagine running a car on chickenshit? It's been done.) Bucky Fuller claims a family of four will produce enough methane to run a farm large enough to support them.

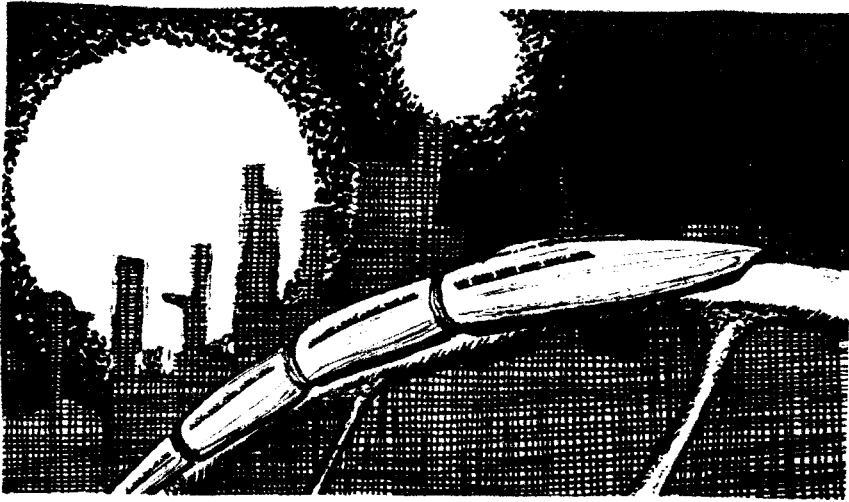
George Proctor  
406 N.E. 19th St.  
Grand Prairie, Texas 75050

I wish I had some bright cheerful news to report from the Dallas-Ft. Worth scene, but I don't. City councilmen are all too willing to vote in anti-pollution ordinances, but unwilling to see that they are enforced. Of course, Texas, especially the cities here, is a far cry from the northern states. We don't have all that dirty, smelly industry, and the industry we do have tends to be relatively clean--at least when you glance at it. Thus people can't get excited over the problems that are really facing us. Our major source of pollution is King Kar.

Let me briefly explain the Texan's background in relation to cars. Texas is a big state (yeah, I know everyone has heard that before.) But really, the size and distance one must travel from one city to another, places a great dependancy on cars, especially if a person's background is rural. Most Texans still come from rural backgrounds, where the car was needed to get one back and forth to town which was 100 miles away. When the cities grew in Texas, no-one thought much about mass transportation since everyone had a car (when you reach 16 a car is a MUST.) So what developed is probably one of the finest highway and freeway systems in the world, but no mass transportation--not even a decent bus system.

Now, however, King Kar is our main pol-  
luter-- that yellow mist that hangs over Dallas every morning wasn't made in heaven. Still, people can't get away from their dependency on automobiles. The best example that I can think of is that there is no mass transportation whatever between Dallas and Ft. Worth, which is one hell of a big metro area with large suburbs filling the 27 miles between the two cities. Now instead of spending money to build that system, the two cities are thinking of





constructing a second tollway to handle the growing number of cars coming into the area. Oh well (cough) we'll live (gag) through it.

Roger Bryant  
647 Thoreau Ave.  
Akron, Ohio 44306

I confess to being a city kid, insofar as Akron can be called a big city, and going back to the land leaves me with the sense of haveing missed something so thoroughly I didn't even sense any lack until someone mentioned it.

I see suggestions that we might write Ford and GM and say that we bought Toyotas instead, 'cause they pollute less. Well, yes, but:

1) While lack of sales might make a good pressure point, it also puts a lot of people out of work, this buying stuff from Japan and wherever. This is admittedly the old selfish motive, but getting these five million people with their wives and kids back to where they can afford food and clothes and medicine is important. ((What I suggested was more along the lines of threatening sales loss to remind GM and the boys of the consumers' interest in the problem. Toyota factories pollute Japan, of course-- and employ Japanese.))

2)I read that the superfast industrialization has made air pollution in Japan even worse than here. Toyotas may pollute less themselves, but the steel mills and refineries and auto plants evidently do not. Why should we contribute to that?

3)A local news show had an item about two headon collisions that happened here on the same day. Both were passenger cars hitting semis, at about the same combined speed. The guy in the Olds Cutlass got out of the hospital a few days later; the guy in the Toyota was buried a few days later. It's hard, isn't it, to find the right (or should I say the least wrong) thing to do.

Yeah, Alexis Gilliland is right about how easy it would be to order re-use of whisky bottles, but he shouldn't use more jobs as one of his arguments in favor. Do you really think, Alex, that the jobs provided for "sorters and stackers" would outweigh (or even equal) the number lost among bottle-makers? What about the bottles the ketchup comes in, and the pickles, and the aspirin, and the listerine, and... Far better we should concentrate on recycling than re-using. Either one, if it could be done, would benefit the environment. So when one would be infinitely better for the economy too, why not use that one?

Speaking of pollution: as you know doubt know, there are rural churches here and there who usher new converts into the fold by dunking them in the nearest stream. These sessions are great crowd-pleasers, especially if the newcomers include anyone famous, or infamous. I'm told this is most common in the south, but since Akron is full of West Virginians, it's practiced around here. Last time the weather was decent, the church on the outskirts of Barberton held a baptizin'. Among the new adherants was an old gent who was known near and far as the biggest old reprobate in the county. On-lookers regaled one another with tales of the prodigious amounts of whiskey he'd made and drunk, the chickens he'd stolen, and the generally unsociable way he'd carried on.

But now the old boy had got religion, and when the preacher ducked him under, he saw

fit to hold him a few seconds longer, and then brought him spluttering to the surface with these sonorous words: "And now your sins have been washed away in this water."

And from the rear of the assembly came the rejoinder: "God help the fish!"

I have a newspaper clipping here that I've been saving for you. Says the U.S. Department of Agriculture has ended a long feud with the conservationists over the use of DDT by coming up with an ecologically-acceptable way to deal with the gypsy moth: "Knock them out of the trees and stomp on them."

I'm looking forward to your essay titled "The Care and Feeding of Boy Wonders." Or should that be Boys Wonder? You'd best hurry, for one of these days you'll turn round and find that Mike as moulted, or whatever it is Boys Wonder do, and become a Man Wonder. If Bowers is any guide, he probably can't stay in the Boy-stage more than 35 or 40 years.

And I suppose if you and the B.W. ever have any male offspring, we'll all go around saying the Glicksohns have finally got some Sons o' Wonder...

Gary Hubbard  
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Westland, Michigan 48185

The brown pelican is extinct? Gosh! It was just last summer, I remember. I was visiting him up by the lake. We were sitting on the back porch drinking RC Cola and talking about the good old days. He said he was thinking of moving himself and the old lady down to Florida to retire.

"The kids are all growed up," he said, "and moved away. They got families of their own, and don't got time for the old folks anymore."

Like most old folks, he was pretty resentful of the younger generation.

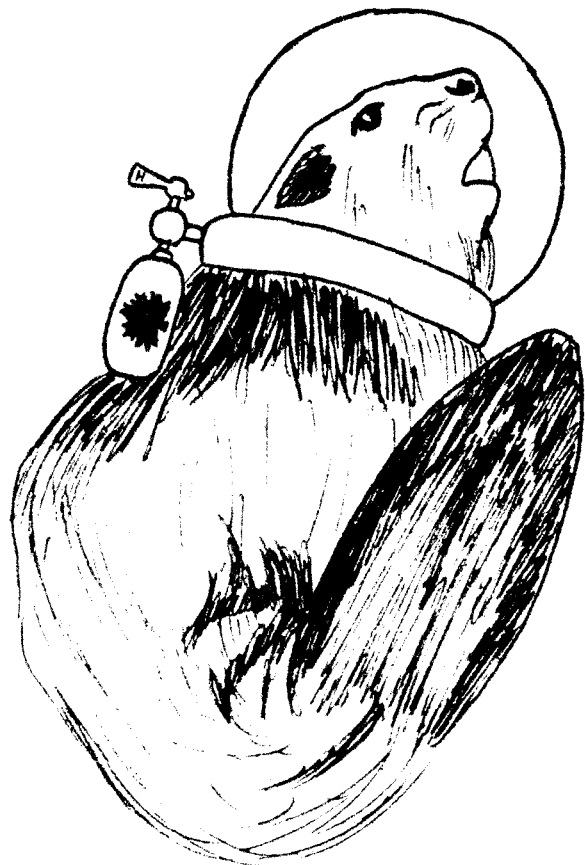
I liked him, though. He was pretty colorful in his own way. I remember he always had people call him 'Pel' rather than 'Mr. Pelican' or 'brown'. He hated 'brown'! Said it made him sound like "one o' them colored birds." Not that he was a bigot or anything; just old-fashioned. Actually, he showed a great deal of kindness toward minority birds, and, in his youth, he was buddies with a crow from Selma, Alabama.

Didn't like peacocks, though.

Gee, I'll sure miss him, I tell ya.

Randy Bathurst  
8239 Atha Dr.  
Union Lake, Mich. 48085

I almost burst a gut over the gorilla incident: disaster! Talk about funny... And loved Arnie Katz's dialogue. It prompted me to draw a fannish Canadian beaver...



Daniel Say  
Box 5583, Station F  
Vancouver 12, B.C.

Your fanzine needs a good discussion of ecology and its meaning and the concepts of ecology. Too many of your readers use "ecology" where they mean "conservation" or "political action for conservation."

How do you like Toronto being on the air stream that carries particles and chemical aerosols from Chicago, Detroit and Hamilton? ((Not much.)) And "the garbage you throw in the lake by the ton/ They drink tomorrow in Hamilton"--Travellers' version of Lehrer's "Pollution."

Ursula LeGuin had a good comment in COLLOQUY (May 1971) when asked the future of science fiction: "What is the future of mankind? If we go on cutting down the forests to make grocery bags with and print THE NEW YORK TIMES on, what are we going to print science fiction on? Indeed, what are we going to print Shakespeare on? Among ten billion people all fighting either starvation or one another, who will have time to read? I think we have a few years left in which to get our priorities straight. If we do not, there will, I think, be a future; but there will not be much of a civilization in it." Her novella, "Word for the World is Forest" which was in the AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS file for some years, expresses her concern with the ecology/conservation problem.

To Juergens: it's Vancouver which is the paradise. We have the sea on one side and mountains on the other. If one walks over the 6,000 ft. mountains--and that's not hard at all--one can be completely away. The mountains are only three miles from the city, so in an hour you're in a clean area. And our Prime Minister Bennett is so close ("plugged in to") God that we are as pure as the snow which never falls. He is only building big, ugly smelters for the Japanese so they can strip mine and process ore cheaply. Isn't that wonderful? We can buy blinders to hide the bloody great hole left.

AND WE ALSO HEARD FROM: Ruth Berman: Have you seen the Society for Creative Anachronism's handbooks? Some of them deal with similar-to-ASP topics, e.g., directions which look almost simple enough for a thumb-hand like me to follow for making soap (guaranteed free of enzymes, brighteners, etc. because you didn't put any in.)

Mike Lewis: I would love to live on a farm. Better yet, live in a log cabin and go searching for one's own repas. But where?

The recipes were great. I've had granola recipes before that came out horrible. Strange, seeing how simple it all is. I've learned that the trick to making it cheaply is to avoid foods that have "HEALTH FOOD" smattered all over the can/bottle/carton. ((Also avoid health food stores promising miracle cures through food, and the health food sections of supermarkets!)) Also experimented with yogurt, which I confess I thought was a great deal more difficult to make. It's so easy and it works!

Concerning electric mimeos, I have these plans drawn up for a steam-powered mimeo that runs on crudzines and I was wondering if perhaps... ((No! You can't have my back issues of ~~ASP~~ OUTWORLDS! Oh, thank you for that other letter--the one you clipped from an old copy of the HULK, with one Michael Glicksohn raving about "ol' Green Skin"!))

Ted White: I enjoyed most of ASP 3, though too much of it reads like replowed grounds, if you know what I mean. I think personal reportage is better than the best marshalling of true (but tired) facts.

Loved Devra Langsam's piece, which I read aloud to Robin as she was folding diapers... I think she's put her finger on my delight in Heyer--the characters are old friends.

Stephen Fritter: ASP 3 was mainly concerned with problems, rather than solutions, but



since many people are unaware of how complicated the situation is, problems will probably have to be defined for an exasperatingly long time.

And many thanks to: David Hulvey for his fascinating 1943-stange-movie-fantasy; Jerry Lapidus for his graphic commentaries; George Senda for his comments; Paul Anderson for his clippings that show "we too have idiots around Parliament in Australia"; Hal Davis for his constant stream of clippings showing we have lots of idiots, and some concerned people, in the world; Richard Labonte for telling me about farm life in Northern Quebec; and Bob Wood for taking me around the farm he was babysitting, showing me the dozen or so horses (most of which bit and kicked), the hundreds of sheep, the dogs who'd had a run-in with the porcupine, the cows, calves, chickens, ducks, and neat stuff--and who didn't ask me to help clean out the barn!



The editor returns: It is now June 15. I have been typing ASP stencils for over two months. It isn't that I didn't want to, you understand, but Things Kept Coming Up... you see why I've decided to kill ASP, rather than let it wither away?

One of the things that came up (or I hope will come up is my mother's garden. While Mum was in England, I travelled down (up?) to Ottawa to read 19th c. French Canadian novels in the National Library, wash my brother's shirts, and put in the garden. Mother has a BIG garden; I'd forgotten just how much work it needs. I got blisters from the pitchforking, mosquito bites, a bit of sunburn, a mysterious rash, hay fever, and aches in all sorts of muscles-- but it was fun. Planted tomatoes, peas, beans, cucumbers, lettuce, spinach, radishes, beets, onions, gourds, gladiolas, cosmos daisies, scented stock, petunias, pansies, portulaca, snapdragons, lobelia-- and still had lots of seeds left. Then two tom cats picked a fight in the tomato patch, with disasterous results, and a heavy rain washed out some seeds. Still, it reaffirmed my faith in agrarianism, or something.

Speaking of agrarian, so many people have gone back-to-the-land in Ontario, it is impossible to find a reasonably-priced farm for sale within 75 miles of Toronto; the government's free plant-a-woodlot programme (all you pay is \$10 a thousand for the trees, Lands and Forests men do the work) is booked solid for a year; and the University of Guelph is giving a special course for part-time farmers.

And before I go away-- what do you out there think of either a Pan-American Fan Fund, similar to TAFF and DUFF, to transport fans from Central and South America (like, Argentina) to conventions in North America, and, lacking these, to transport impoverished (and I mean impoverished, not people who could afford to make the trip anyway) fans from the east coast to a west coast worldcon, and vice versa, considering that, for example, it costs almost as much to fly Toronto-LA excursion as Toronto-London excursion (and charters are even cheaper)?

Or if the idea of a permanent fund lacks appeal, how about a nice, simple bring-Mae-Strelkov-to-TORCON-2 Fund? In any case, write and tell me what you think of the idea, and of ASP. And let me know if you want #5, the lettercolumn round-up.



THE END



