

Weber Woman's Wrevenge

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WEBERWOMAN'S WREVENGE TWENTY-FIVE
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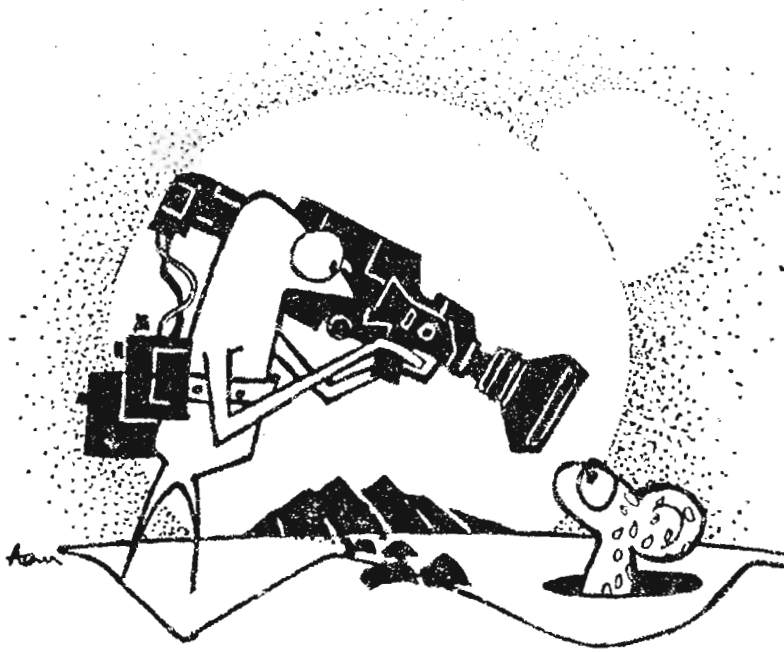
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AN APOLOGY TO JACK HERMAN

I wish to publicly apologise for reprinting in WREVENGE 23 Jack Herman's comments to me in ANZAPA on Self-Transformations without asking his permission. I thought I had asked (I did ask Gordon Lingard; he remembers) but I'm not surprised to learn I hadn't. When Jack complained, I thought the comments had been on an issue of WREVENGE I'd run through ANZAPA, and thus counted as a LoC, but eventually I looked it up and I was wrong: the comments were on the pre-WREVENGE bit I ran through ANZAPA. *Sigh* It wasn't deliberate, but that's no excuse. I'll try to pay more attention in future (but don't count on it).

— Jean Weber



EDITORIAL

FAN FUND CANDIDATES

This issue is primarily a forum to introduce two fan fund candidates for whom I hope you'll vote. At the time of writing this, I don't know the full list of candidates for either race, so I won't be commenting on any of the others. I hope to include ballots for both races, if the respective administrators get them to me in time.

First, FFANZ: the Fan Fund of Australia and New Zealand. Anyone who's been reading my zine for the past two years will be familiar with LYN McCONCHIE: Lyn draws "The Rabbit's Progress" and has been writing a steady stream of articles for me. I visited her in New Zealand last Christmas and thoroughly enjoyed myself. Her platform probably gives a summary of her fannish activities, which are many. I have no hesitation about saying she's deserving in all ways, and would make a delightful visitor to Australia.

This issue of WREVENGE includes two of Lyn's cartoons and one of her serious articles. If you haven't read any of her humorous works (which are frequently hilarious), please don't think from this sample that she's invariably Deadly Serious. In fact, for a person who's been through as much as Lyn has (especially from the medical profession), she's amazingly cheerful and full of funny stories. (Unlike yours truly, who's a grouch.)

Next, DUFF: the Down Under Fan Fund. Eric Lindsay has nominated R Lorraine Tutihasi, and I'm featuring some of her writing here, although I've never met her. We've corresponded a bit, and I enjoy reading Lorraine's fanzine, CONVENTION LOG. Her writing strikes me as a bit stiff, but Eric assures me it's not typical of her as a person. Her activities certainly make her sound interesting! I'm including here three short items by Lorraine, just to introduce her to you.

FUN & GAMES AT WORK, or I'M MAD AS HELL & NOT GOING TO TAKE IT ANY MORE

From this you may get the impression that things aren't real wonderful at the moment. The irony is that only a few weeks ago I was enthusing in print about how much I was enjoying my job. However, all that became past history on Friday 15 August.

From the time I came back from three months' leave on 2 June, I was Acting Manager of not one but two Sections, and it looked like I was going to be confirmed in the job. But when the new Manager was announced, it wasn't me.

Simply being disappointed over not getting the job wasn't the reason I got so outraged over this. First, the person appointed has, in my opinion (and in the opinion of the technical writer in our section), less relevant experience than I do. And then, to make a bad situation

worse, senior management told me what my new assignment would be: work that I consider one or two grades below my rating. It's the sort of assignment I'd give someone as a disciplinary measure, but I'm assured that's not the case: everyone's very happy with my work, I have much to offer, blah blah blah.

Sorry, guys. I'm sick and tired of being pushed around and expected to take it and like it. I almost quit last year, and decided to give them another chance. They've had their chance. I may not leave immediately (they pay me too much for that), but cooperation isn't going to be high on my list of endearing traits. I called in the union and am kicking up as much fuss as possible. I hate getting involved in that sort of office politics, but this is just too much.

Meanwhile I've been sending out still more job applications. *sigh*

MORE CHEERFUL MATTERS

Buying the house in Faulconbridge turned out to be a lesson in Murphy's Law. Instead of settlement occurring in late February, the transfer wasn't finalized until mid-May. Meanwhile there had been a bit of vandalism at the house, though nothing serious. Then Valma Brown found me a tenant: Cindy Smith, a well-known (in Australia) maker of silver jewelry. Cindy had been thinking for some time about moving out of Sydney into the mountains, but she needed an inexpensive place to live, within walking distance of a railway station. Obviously we were made for each other.

The fun began when we realised the timing was going to be tight: Cindy needed to vacate her city flat by 12 May, but things kept dragging on with settlement on the house and we weren't sure whether it would be mine by then or not. Finally we decided she'd move in anyway, and sort out any problems later. In the end, it didn't come to that: settlement occurred on the 9th, and Cindy moved in on the 10th.

I finally got the house in Canberra recarpeted, after 8 years of complaining about it. Hideously expensive, but I never let mere money stand in the way of something I really want to do. Or not for long, anyway.

Then I broke down and bought a video recorder. It's all Lyn McConchie's fault. I got quite enthused about watching movies when I want to, after spending Christmas at Lyn's place. Then Dave Stirrup installed a VCR at Eric's house, and we hired a movie to go with our pizza one night (the video-hire shop cleverly being almost next door to the pizza place, so people wander in while waiting for their takeaway order to be cooked).

So when I saw a secondhand VCR in a shop, cheap, I couldn't resist. I've just got to watch this doesn't ruin my book-and-fanzine reading, especially since I can knit while watching TV but not while reading. This could be very seductive on cold winter nights, by the fire...

It's winter here, of course, and both Canberra and Sydney have been getting a bit of weather. We had snow, which was quite fun, lasting all of 15 minutes, but providing enough for building snowmen and having snowball fights. It didn't even melt all away for over three hours!

Sydney had floods, which were quite bad. Faulconbridge got a lot of rain and some wind damage, but neither Eric's nor my houses suffered more than some trivial leaks around the doors where the seals weren't very good. Fortunately they're both on high ground, but both are also in positions where a river of runoff water coming down the hill can be a nuisance. Eric's back door is at ground level, so water tends to run in under it, across the laundry room (which isn't damaged) and down a conveniently-located drain hole. My house is on stilts, and Cindy (my tenant) said a LOT of water flowed under the house during the 3 days of rain. Doesn't seem to have caused any noticeable erosion or undermining of the piers, though.

Other news is that my partner, Eric Lindsay, now has a job, which started on the 19th of May. Those of you who also receive his zine will no doubt read all about it there. He's working half time at the NSW Institute of Technology, building and repairing electronic and computing gear. The hours are extremely flexible and the pay not bad. Eric is actually enjoying it, except for the necessity to commute into Sydney.



HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH

TAKE AN ASPIRIN AND CALL ME AT TEN

by Lyn McConchie

Patient A was middle-aged, forty-six to be exact. She had fallen down concrete steps a few weeks earlier and had knocked herself out. Since then she had had increasingly bad migraines. The doctor diagnosed concussion migraines and assured her that they would clear up in a month or two.

A was a diffident lady when it came to doctors and was hesitant to disagree. A year later when the migraines had still not cleared up, she mentioned it to her doctor again. This time he asked if she was at menopause. Oh, she was -- well then, nothing to worry about. Just take an aspirin if the pain gets too bad.

During the next year the pain got bad for longer and longer periods, at shorter and shorter intervals. At her husband's insistence she finally told the doctor just how bad the migraines had become. She was then given a lecture in which she was informed that her migraines were a neurotic attention-seeking device and that she should pull herself together.

Two years after the original accident, she woke up with a really shattering migraine. By seven o'clock she was weeping with the pain. The doctor was rung, to tell her husband brusquely that the migraine would pass and to give her aspirin.

As she was obviously unfit to be left alone, her eight-year-old daughter stayed home from school to watch over her. The husband arrived home at 5:30 to find A no better. By midnight she had become delirious, and an ambulance was called. On her arrival at the hospital, the decision was made to operate at once. She died at 3 am on the operating table.

The original fall had damaged a blood path in the brain. The migraines had been caused by the slow leakage of blood, a buildup of fluid, and the pressure resulting. She died from a cerebral haemorrhage when the artery in the brain finally gave way. Had the doctor not had the idea firmly fixed in his mind that all menopausal women are attention-seeking neurotics, he would have had x-rays or some other test done, and A need not have died.



Patient B was young, only sixteen, blonde, slender and pretty. She was also a fine and enthusiastic athlete. While hurdling, she failed to clear one of the hurdles and fell heavily. She said her ankle was broken: she had felt it break. The teacher present had her carried to her car, and drove with her to the local out-patients at the hospital. There, without x-rays, they examined her ankle cursorily and pronounced the injury a mild sprain. B objected, to be told that she was "only a girl" and doctor knew best. Her ankle was strapped up and she was sent home to rest a few days.

The doctor had said that the ankle need not be strapped too tightly, and that some usage of the foot was allowable. B found, however, that she could not bear the foot to touch the ground, and after a day or so, that she could not even stand the pain if the foot was elevated less than above her hip.

After three days, the time that the hospital doctor had said it should take before the ankle was painless again, it was more painful than ever. Still more disturbing, red streaks were creeping up the leg from it, as her parents discovered while re-bandaging on the fourth day.

Horrified, her father took her, not back to the hospital, but to his own doctor. This doctor took a look, had B smartly removed to the x-ray clinic, and half an hour after her arrival at the surgery, B was having a nasty break in her ankle set and plastered, at the same time being given medication to deal with the resulting infection from the untreated injury.

Unfortunately for B, by the time doctor number two saw her, the undiagnosed break had already begun to mend on its own, crookedly. Thus the ankle had to be rebroken and reset. B was away from school for several weeks and still limping when she returned.

Had the hospital doctor not had the idea that all young girls (and particularly pretty, blonde ones) are stupid and ignorant, he might have listened to B when she said that she had felt the ankle break. B would not have been left for the rest of her life with a very weak ankle, and she might also have gone on to become an Olympic class athlete, as another at the school did.

Patient C was an elderly woman who had suddenly developed signs of senility. She was careless, often forgetting to turn electric appliances off, and once almost set her house on fire by going out to meet her daughter and leaving the stove on. (Mind you, if THAT's a genuine sign of senility, then half the populace would qualify.)

While out shopping, C would sometimes forget where she lived and have to ask the way to her address from people passing. Concerned about this, her daughter took C to the doctor. He examined C, hummed and ha'd and agreed that C was probably senile and should be put in a home: he would arrange it. C became so upset by this idea that her daughter asked for another opinion, just in case.

The doctor was infuriated by this lack of confidence and refused. C's daughter, a strongminded lady, promptly removed her mother from his care and approached another doctor. Doctor number 2 took a look at C, had a lot of tests made, and discovered that C was not becoming senile. She was, instead, suffering from severe anemia from a slowly bleeding ulcer. With medication and treatment, C was fine in a matter of weeks.

Had C's doctor not had the idea that old people are all apt to become senile, he would have looked for another cause. As it was, C almost wound up in an old people's home, where she could have died before trained medical staff saw that she was ill.

Patient D was in her late twenties. An active athletic woman, she rode horses, played hockey, and was beginning training for the 5,000 metres with a well-known athletics coach. She worked at the local Post Office and was in line for a promotion to Postmistress at another P.O.

Slowly, she noticed her attention span was shortening, she became easily upset, and she made stupid mistakes in her work. She developed an uncontrollable desire to gorge, and put on weight rapidly. She became lethargic, having little energy, and found decision-making more and more difficult.

She consulted a doctor who listened to all she had to say and, without physical tests of any kind, diagnosed "a nervous breakdown". D felt this was unlikely, as she was the sort of person who bounced like a ball from problems, and brooding darkly over difficulties was alien to her nature.

However, the doctor spoke grimly of mental failings, and began to prescribe heavy dosages of sedatives, tranquilizers, and sleeping pills. This went on for several months while D grew steadily worse and her work and personal life suffered. After some ten months of this, D's doctor decided to take further steps. She persuaded D to have herself admitted to the nearest mental home where she could be looked over by psychiatrists.

D reluctantly agreed. However, after three weeks in the home, the medical staff returned her to the original doctor with the information that D was "quite stable" and that there might be some physical problem. D's doctor did not agree; she kept D on the regime of drugs and convinced her to take several months off work on leave without pay, and live on a sickness benefit which the doctor obtained for her.

D became steadily worse and after three months of this, returned to work so as to have something to do. By this time, however, she was almost incapable of holding down the position from which she had, only a year earlier, been recommended for promotion.

Sixteen months after the first symptoms began, D began to faint. Finally, after a morning alone when she found herself three times on the floor, she rallied a remnant of her old assertiveness and headed to the other local doctor. This doctor also listened to all she had to say and made certain tests. However, the tests, unlike her previous doctor's, were not mental games, but blood tests.

Over these, he tut-tutted, and sent her to the local hospital for other tests. These showed that D was NOT suffering from mental problems -- she had pernicious anemia, a form of vitamin deficiency which is fatal if left untreated. Furthermore, she had it more severely than the hospital had ever seen in an ambulatory patient.

D left the town she worked in and moved to a small village near friends. She was too weak and ill to work for almost five months. Her reputation had been badly damaged by her employer, who had told too many people that "D was mentally unstable, and had been put in an asylum". Finally, owing to the very long time it had taken to diagnose D's illness, she now had it permanently. (A quick diagnosis, and it can be cleared.) D must now have 4-weekly injections, and this may worsen.

The first doctor, informed of the correct diagnosis, simply shrugged: you can't win them all. How were they supposed to know that D wasn't just another woman with neuroses?

Finally we have the case of E, a happily married woman with two children, and an abundance of energy and ... a nasty case of PMS (pre menstrual syndrome). This had been ongoing since E was fifteen: each month she would gain approximately six pounds in fluid retention and develop headaches, a terrible temper and that familiar dragging feeling that indicates that one's stomach is about to fall out.

At thirty, E felt it was time all this was stopped. She had heard from a friend that these days it was possible to get medication that prevented many of the PMS symptoms. If so, E intended to have the medication prescribed for her.

She duly arrived at her doctor's surgery, explained her errand, and was verbally floored with "You're a woman, you have to expect these problems, and anyway there isn't much I can do; after all, you're not getting any younger, are

you?" E, by now madder than a wet hen, informed him that if that was his opinion she'd get another doctor, one that didn't feel he was wasting his time on the troubles of the "elderly".

E did, on the recommendation of a friend, find a nice female doctor who sympathised. E was medicated and almost all of her symptoms disappeared. E is now much happier, as are her husband and children.

The moral of this article is, if you are female, watch out for your doctors' assumptions. They can make you unhappy, or they can kill you, all in the kindest way. If you are young, you are stupid; if you are middle-aged, you are suffering from menopause; if you are old, you are senile. And if you are anywhere between sixteen and fifty, you have PMS and please don't bother me now: just take an aspirin and call me at ten.

We tend to forget that doctors are only human; we accord them a ghod-like stature: in fact some of them demand to be treated by their patients in this manner. But whatever, and whoever, they are only human. If you don't think they are right, get a second opinion. You have a better chance of health and happiness if you do. It's YOUR life.

For those who wonder who the women in this article are: A was my mother, B a friend of mine from High School, C the grandmother of a very good friend, D myself, and E the wife of my best friend's employer and a good friend of mine.



MY LIFE IN FANDOM

by R Laurraine Tutihasi

I've been reading science fiction and fantasy as long as I can remember, but my first contact with fandom wasn't until I was in graduate school. In 1970 or '71, I read a letter from Theodore Sturgeon in ANALOG urging readers to send monetary support to Forrest J Ackerman for his huge collection. I promptly sent off a small cheque and continued to send one annually for many years.

My first convention was Torcon 2. I'd returned to upstate New York after graduation, found a job and was living with my parents. That summer, I read an item (again in ANALOG) about a science fiction convention to be held in Toronto, right across Lake Ontario from me. I decided this might be worth investigating, and dragged my sister along with me. Not knowing the first things about cons, mundane or fannish, we stayed at a nearby hotel, walked to the Royal York every day and returned late at night. Of course, I knew nothing about room parties. I came home with a whole bunch of flyers, which eventually helped me establish contact with other fans.

The first fans I contacted were Star Trek fans. This was just a few years after the first broadcast of the show, and I was still an interested viewer. One of my penpals told me about a local fan, and through her I learned more about Trekdom and its fanzines and cons. A few months later, I found a local sf fan when I read her letter in Andy Porter's ALGOL. Together, we went in search of the Rochester Science Fact and Fiction Association, and attended our first meeting just after Discon.

Shortly after that, I began to receive fanzines from having had a letter published in ALGOL, and received an invitation to my first apa. The next year, 1976, I attended my second convention -- and I've been at it ever since.

During the time I lived with my parents in upstate New York, I was well-endowed with spare cash. I attended an average of five or six cons a year, including Seacon in England. I also belonged to several apas, sometimes three at a time, since upstate NY is fairly isolated from the big fan centres and I had lots of time and needed the contacts. At one time or another, I was a member of SDNY, LASFAPA, APA69, AZAPA, MINNEAPA, and STIPPLE-APA.

In late '82, I was laid off from a job I'd had for over nine years. I was shocked at first, but soon regarded it as the opportunity I'd been looking for to move to California. Unfortunately, because of a period of unemployment, the costs of moving twice, and the high cost of living on my own, I no longer have the resources to attend the conventions I used to. Since moving to LA in late '83, I've left the area only twice (with financial help from others) and have not left the state at all. My unbroken attendance of Worldcons since 1976 was interrupted in 1983; since then, the only Worldcon I've made was the local one (LACON II -- see following item).

On the other hand, I've become active in local fandom, including helping with Loscon, and have become a more active Regency dancer. At present I head the publicity committee of LASFS (Los Angeles SF Society), am in charge of publicity for Loscon 13, and in charge of the bazaar (similar to a hucksters' room) for this year's Regency Autumn Ball.

I am still somewhat active in fanzine fandom but now only belong to one apa. I receive fanzines from Australia and England as well as the USA, and I try to LoC as many as I can. I publish a personalzine, CONVENTION LOG, which I began in 1976, and correspond with a number of fans in various parts of the world.



LACON II

or, How often is there a WorldCon
in my back yard?

(Extracted from CONVENTION LOG #39)

by R Laurraine Tutihasi

I just attended my eighth worldcon. It may not stand out in my memory the way Suncon and Iguanacon do, but I had a generally great time.

So what made the con so great? Mostly seeing a lot of people, most of whom I hadn't seen in over a year. I had arranged lunch and dinner appointments with many of these... What did we talk about? Probably some inconsequential things, but the important thing is that we saw each other...

Okay, so the con was a place to see friends and acquaintances and meet new people. There were other things, really.

The highlight of this other type of activity was my debut in the masquerade. I was part of a group led by Kathy Sanders, who also made all the costumes, which were based on characters from the books of Larry Niven, who himself was in our group as an archaeologist. Our group was called "The Draco Tavern." Larry Niven wrote the script. There were twelve people.

I played the Thrint, a one-eyed froglike creature in a yellow suit. The eye was covered with plastic and got steamed up back stage. Larry Niven kindly provided me and Lex Nakashima, who was dressed as a Kzin, with ventilation using an old-fashioned fan. Kathy Sanders had brought a hair blower, but there was no place to plug it in. The dressing area also doubled as the photo area, and all the outlets were in use.

Our group was in the middle of about 115 contestants/groups. With so many entries, the masquerade took over four hours, and the judges took about one hour to make their decisions. I got really impatient and wanted to leave, but I guess the wait was worth it. We got an award for Most Humorous Group in the Master Class. Some debut, eh? Despite my more than occasional complaints during the masquerade, I'd do it all over again. Why not? It's an experience.

...There was also the Regency Dance. I wasn't able to stay for it all, but I did get to dance every dance I was there for.

Other high points include the parties, of course. The Australia one remains most vivid in my memory. Was it the New Zealand white wine or the Australian 150 proof rum? Or was it meeting Sally Beasley? They were part of it, but I think it was the overwhelming friendliness that permeated the room.

Other positive things include seeing "The Cat People", "Mad Max" and "Picnic at Hanging Rock"; buying a few very select (because of my limited budget) items in the hucksters room; and being able to help out Nancy Segar and Andy Porter.

There were a few things I would've liked to do but couldn't because of scheduling conflicts or that I just plain forgot about. For instance, I didn't mean to miss the GoH speeches. I would also like to have been at all of the LASFS 50 panels; but they, all but one, clashed with something else.

I'm also sorry I missed the meeting with the TAFF, DUFF and GUFF delegates, since I missed my chance to see Marc Ortlieb and Catherine Circosta's wedding pictures... and I was supposed to help out in the Committee Den and completely forgot. I just wasn't as organised as I'd planned to be. I also forgot to take notes, but I've never been the note-taking type, and I guess I'm not going to change...





By R Lorraine Tutihasi

I started out in library science and now find myself in computer programming -- of a sort, anyway.

My first exposure to programming was in library school, where we were required to study PL/1. I also took a couple of other computer courses in graduate school: data processing and information retrieval.

My first job was at a corporate library that tried to remain state of the art. Shortly after I started working there, we began automating everything. At first, only the searching of commercial bibliographic databases offered by companies such as Lockheed and SDC (Systems Development Corporation, later bought by Burroughs, the computer company).

By 1976 we had begun automating in earnest. At that early date, there were very few off-the-shelf products that were available for library applications. We wrote our own. The librarians got together with the programmers and the systems analysts and designed a system.

There were many bugs in it at first, and many improvements were made after the system was put in use. I gradually started making many of the small programming changes myself. I also took care of many of the database maintenance tasks. The programmers were overworked, and I was interested. The company had in-house computer courses, which I took: Basic, Fortran, Pascal, JCL.

At this first job, I also gained supervisory experience. I started out supervising a series of temporary clerical workers. This is an easy way to make the transition into supervision. It involved no performance appraisals, and it was easy to replace unsatisfactory workers.

The most interesting temp I had was a member of the Jehovah's Witnesses. We had many interesting religious discussions. She never tried to convert me. Unfortunately, between her own illnesses and her children's, she couldn't be at work enough to make it worthwhile for me; we parted company on amicable terms.

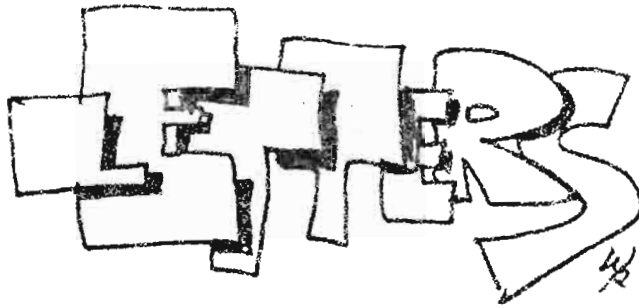
Eventually, I found myself in a position with a permanent assistant. I learned then what a sham the performance appraisal business is. She was very quick and hard-working. I gave her a very high rating one year. However, I was later asked by my supervisor to revise the rating downward as the department could not give her a commensurate raise. It doesn't seem fair to take away someone's high rating for such a reason.

Turnover in personnel provided me with experience with various types of people. I learned that not everyone responds well to the same supervisory methods. I learned to modify my techniques to suit the individual. Some people require or want very close supervision. Others need to be left alone after being given the basic instructions. I eventually became quite good at this and enjoyed it very much.

Unfortunately, I was not as mindful of corporate politics as I should have been. I worked there for over nine years, minding my own business and not paying any attention to office politics. Suddenly, I found myself out the door. I was taken completely by surprise. One colleague had been under such severe stress from fear of being laid off that she had been under medication for two years.

It turns out that I could have gotten my job back through connexions. However, I had already made up my mind to look at the layoff as an opportunity -- an opportunity to move from cold, isolated, upstate New York State to sunny California. Besides, the library budget for computing had also been cut back, and the morale at my old job site was at an all-time low. This might not have affected me previously. However, I was no longer naive about office politics. I would no longer be able to ignore it and work in my own little cocoon.

continued on page 13....



CRAIG HILTON
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Australia

E.B. Klassen's piece on having twins was so interesting that I was late for work one morning. I feel obliged by my position ((Craig is a doctor -- JHW)) to make some learned comment, but find that, quite simply, he gave an account of how he experienced what happened to Paula and him, and even had I been standing in on what seemed to be the noisiest birth for some time instead of taking it in through the printed page, I still don't think I'd have the right to defend or vilify the obstetrician or any other party without hearing all sides of the story.

What I can say is that I thank E.B. for sharing his experience with me -- it has widened my understanding. The whole deal was filled with a lot less joy than presumably there could have been, that much is evident, and a clearer appreciation of any of life's potentials and pitfalls is the best way to lift one's game, but assigning blame on the basis of a single account is often unproductive.

I would be very interested to learn Paula's view of the pregnancy, birth and aftermath, and see how the two versions tied together. And of course I wish them both (or rather all four) every success in the coming years.

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I am amazed that E.B. could let himself get so out of control when Paula needed him the most. If she was going through a difficult and dangerous birth, I could only see his attitude making it worse. I get the impression that he was angry from the moment it all began, and that nobody could do anything right.

E.B. missed a lot. Paula had a very difficult time. The doctor, no matter how

coldly, did his job. I had a friend whose doctor was a nice, friendly man. My friend's wife died in childbirth. I'm not saying that a cold doctor is better than a friendly one, but it is the results that count and E.B. has two wonderful ones.

((I can't agree with your implication that E.B. did the wrong thing. If I were in a similar situation, I would feel greatly supported by someone voicing such anger, whereas a calm husband would leave me feeling that he didn't understand the situation. I guess it all depends on personalities -- what's helpful to one person is just the wrong thing to another. And my opinion is that the EXPERIENCE of childbirth is just as important as the results, both for the children and for the parents. But that's the subject of a long, philosophical essay that I won't write just now.... JHW))

You shouldn't even have bothered to consider Jessica's LoC, let alone sending it to Charlotte. My one complaint about Charlotte's article was that she didn't give enough facts, and on that point alone Jessica didn't have enough to go on to attack Charlotte the way she did. In her own way Jessica is treating Charlotte just the way she condemns Charlotte for treating John. I enjoyed Charlotte's reply to Jessica.

((Are you suggesting I should ignore a letter just because I don't agree with it, or I think it's unpleasant? Now that IS prejudice! Besides I think the author of an article deserves to read the feedback, even if I choose not to publish the letter. -- JHW))

Don't you ever read any bad books?

((Yes, though I often don't finish reading them. And I rarely give space in my fanzine to reviews of bad books (there has been the occasional exception over the years), though I do review them for other people. --JHW))

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I've always said the having and raising of children is an important activity... the whole business calls for more compromise than I care for. Birth is traumatic, but at least it comes to an end.

As regards the Jessica/Charlotte bunfight, I understand what you mean when you ask people to stick to the issues, not the 'alleged character flaws of the writers', but to some degree the issues under discussion INCLUDE the characters (if not the flaws per se) of the women themselves, as well as fandom as a group.

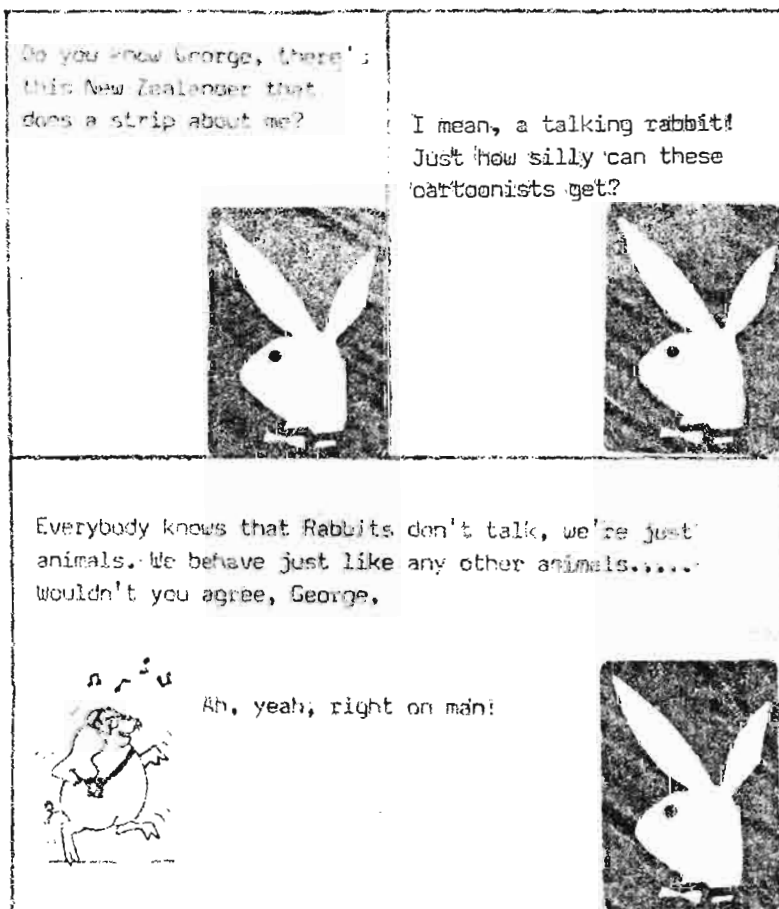
The original letter from Charlotte to me was a story about the response of some people to someone who was felt by them to be unacceptable company. I realise that it is an easy situation to recognize, and to identify with.

I have been in a number of similar situations. The demise of the 'Pizza Run' has, I imagine, its parallels in not only fannish but other groups. Let me try and define what we are really faced with here.

Fandom, while being different things to different people, attracts many types. A common thread, however, is that we tend to be folk who to some degree reject the social stereotypes provided by the civilizations we live in. This is important. These roles are often destructive, demeaning and unfair. Fine. This means that we get all types. Probably, due to this feature of the group, we attract individuals who are, shall we say, not compatible with each other. This appears to be what Charlotte's letter is about. The response of some of the principal people in the BSFC to an incompatible stranger.

Now I'm not saying I would respond the same way. It is hard to know how one would respond in someone else's shoes. I have a sneaking suspicion that I not be 'compatible' with the BSFC, and I also suspect that I feel that way because I have, way over here in OZ, absorbed some of the attitude Jessica reflects. I refer to the attitude that, well, in Alabama they're not too tolerant.

So, is this 'prejudice squared'? Jessica seems to represent one side of our collective credo. Tolerance for external appearance and general behaviour, the belief that, in a pluralistic social sub-group or society at large



THE RABBIT'S PROGRESS

by

Lyn McConchie

it is unreasonable to expect, let alone require, that other people's actions or beliefs will not conflict with our 'preferred modes'.

On the other hand, don't we all have some style of behaviour that we will not accept? There is no freedom, after all, in a world where we cannot choose how we do NOT wish to be treated.

On balance, I guess I find Jessica's out of hand trashing of the BSFC because 'we are talking about Alabama after all' more distasteful than the actions that precipitated it. It's a classic case of being as guilty as the accused. She had not been confronted by this bloke, and if she would have been better able to handle him, so what.

I too have known people like Jessica describes. It's hard to get far out of the nest and not do so. AND I know people who in some circumstances would behave like Charlotte. 'THESE are good people' in general.

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From reading all these letters about banning a certain person from the Alabama SF club, I perceive that people have a confusion over the difference between someone's 'style' and their 'behaviour'.

I prefer to associate with people with a certain 'style', eg interested in SF, my preference in politics, music etc. It can get down to more subtle things like dress sense, sexuality and so on. Because I prefer a particular 'style' and go out of my way to associate with others with a similar 'style' is no excuse to be prejudiced against other people with different 'styles' and deny their validity.

So long as a person meets the reason for the club's being, ie in this case an interest in SF, then their particular 'style' should be irrelevant to the club. In other words, it's all right for an individual to have personal preferences, but I don't believe a club should indulge in this.

A person's behaviour is another matter. If someone is rude or obnoxious, then that is unacceptable on both a personal and club basis. I question the basis on which this person was ostracised.

Having concluded that someone's behaviour is unacceptable, there is the problem of what to do about him/her. The easy, but to me least

satisfactory, way is to ban the person outright. It is a fearful thing to talk to someone about their behaviour, but on the negative side you risk losing the potential that person might contribute if they mature. Tossing them out just adds to the considerable hurt they may already feel, and it gives them little chance to improve.

I have found fans have elephantine memories about others' behaviour and are loathe to give others another chance no matter how much they change. Stigmas are very, very hard things to get rid of.

To me, a much more constructive route is to try to educate the person. Often they can't figure out what it is they are doing that's putting everyone off. Charlotte Proctor may be quite right that helping these people is not her responsibility, but it seems a quite selfish and alienating viewpoint.

It does not mean that you have to sacrifice your life in assisting them, but it does mean giving them a chance, talking to them, firmly but honestly letting them know where they stand and accepting that they are different in quite valid ways. If after being given a reasonable chance, then kicking them out can be considered as a last resort.

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It might have been safe, once upon a time, to assume that someone who wrote vaguely threatening or disturbing letters wouldn't act on them because he was too cowardly...

Considering the outcome of a few cases of similar harassment lately in Washington alone, I sure wouldn't want to bet on the writer's keeping at postal distance.

Quite aside from the personal unease of having to be around someone who makes you uncomfortable, there is the uncertainty of knowing whether this guy is one of the older sort of threatening-letter writers or the newer. If he's one of the newer ones, there's the wondering about whether or when he's going to show up at your front door with a knife.

In other words, I probably would have reacted much as Charlotte did. I probably would have considered a little consultation with the police, in fact. The way the questions Charlotte quoted were phrased sounded to me as if the writer in fact meant them personally, not simply editorially, and I imagine I would have taken them that way too.

Better safe than sorry these days, sad as it is to say. I would like to believe that people are worthy of trust, and will return yours. On the whole, I think that's true. But you also have to know when not to trust, when giving someone the benefit of the doubt may cost entirely too much.

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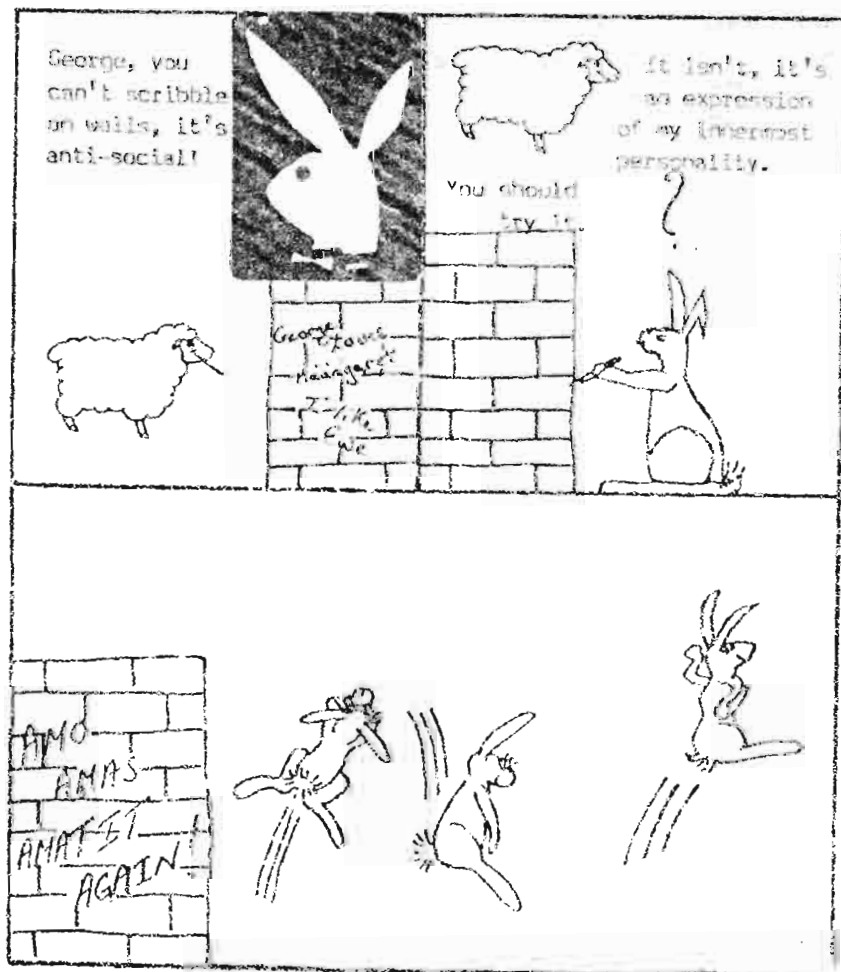
I agree with Jessica that there are certain classes of people whom, despite their obvious maladjustments, one tolerates, and the Science Fiction community (in Australia, at least) does tend to tolerate a larger range amongst them than any other group I've been involved with (and this includes 'Christian' half-way houses).

There was one guy who for years 'persecuted' my sister and I with his love for one or the other of us (it kept fluctuating between us), nor was it helped by our Mother regarding him as an excellent proposition. I won't go into a lot of detail, because this same guy is a valued friend now. Suffice to say that despite his many talents and abilities, his lack of

self-esteem was such that he had the effect of depressing and boring anyone he latched on to. But he was the sort of person that one did 'take under one's wing' precisely because neither of us, or anyone else for that matter, was in any danger from him. In fact he probably would have been less of a problem for both of us if we hadn't cared about him as much as we did.

I agree with Charlotte though, this John character is NOT the sort of person that one even tolerates. Whether she is 'responsible for the well-being of the young people' in the club or not, the mere fact that he was a member of the club meant that there were times when she would have been forced to accept him in her house; and he certainly doesn't sound like the sort of person I'd give my address to, if I were Charlotte!

Just for Jessica's peace of mind, I do number (or at various times have numbered) amongst my friends lesbians, gays, punks, occultists, christians, hippies, and of course a large number of straights. The only people I am intolerant of are the intolerant, and the dangerous... I have to wonder, has Jessica been kicked out of a 'stinking sci-fi club' by a bunch of 'sci-fi morons' herself? Those are awfully vitriolic terms from someone whom I've always assumed belonged to one of these clubs.



THE RABBIT'S PROGRESS

by
 Lyn McConchie

by Kerrie Hanlon

This illustration is the direct result of taking on a terribly taxing job which made me feel as if I was splitting in two.

On the surface I was wearing a mask of normality. I certainly didn't want to tell my new bosses that it was a handful, in case that was interpreted as meaning I couldn't cope. I also didn't want to say too much to my loved one in case he reiterated his earlier suggestion that I give it away. But I didn't want to give it away; above all else, it was challenge that held me. I might decide to leave the job, but not until I knew I could beat it. Leaving prematurely would only make me want to go back and try again at a later date. So I felt I owed it to myself to see it through.

But it did pull me apart: on one side I had a high stress, totally involving job. My life almost revolved around it (which is no way to live). Worlds and worlds away were the other imperatives in life. Things like the fact that washing must be done. Groceries must be bought. A household does not run itself, and as much as you don't feel like it, you've got to do it. I live alone, so there's no one I can fall back on. I only own so many clothes and so much crockery. One can't avoid these things forever. Trouble is, it doesn't leave any time for the self. This is the only piece of artwork done in that six month period. I didn't have the time or even the inclination to do more. I didn't read, I didn't do anything but work.

Beyond all my explanations as to why this illustration relates to me and my life, is the fact that it relates to so many women. In a very basic way, duality could be a symbol of womanhood.

How many women have pretended that all is fine, continued with our jobs or whatever, despite the fact that beneath it all, a period has caused considerable pain, weakness, and general sickness that just goes unmentioned. And right or wrong, most of us have been brought up not to mention it.

And going beyond that, how many women have found that the two things they want most out of life conflict? Motherhood or a career? (or travel, or quality in lifestyle?) Even when the choice is made, it stays with you; you can never quite forget that the other half of your personality is unfulfilled. But generally speaking, these are not things that women talk about. You wear the mask of your choice and carry on. When you see a child you think, 'That

could have been my child', but the words don't come out aloud.

We all know that you can't have your cake and eat it too, but that doesn't stop your yearning for whatever it was that you missed. Silently.

MY JOB, by R Laurraine Tutihasi

... continued from page 8

I moved to California and started looking for jobs in libraries. I finally found one, but quickly discovered that the previous library experience had spoiled me. Very few other libraries are as highly automated. I was bored. I decided to see whether I could move into computer science, which I already had half a foot in. I was lucky enough to obtain a position at the same company involving programming and documentation. I gained a little experience in Fortran, and I was exposed to microcomputers. I used IBM PCs, an H-P microcomputer, and the Apple Macintosh. I became acquainted with spreadsheets, planners, and word processors.

Unfortunately, I didn't stay there very long. I didn't care for the company and left when I got the opportunity. My new job was as a programmer of sorts. I didn't do any coding. I checked TI assembler code that was already written against the specs, which I also checked. Eventually, the funding for that project ran out, and I moved on to another area. I was to build an information retrieval system. Again unfortunately, our funding was pulled out almost before we began.

After several months of boredom relieved only by occasional interesting assignments building little databases using such languages as dBase II and Focus, I am now working with someone who is interested in automating his department. Currently, my tasks are to look at available graphics software for the IBM PC and choose one which seems to suit our purposes. We will be using this software with data which we can download from a mainframe database. Also, I am to become acquainted with and then expert at a planning system that runs on mainframes and minis. It's all new, and I love it.

Basically, I enjoy change. Once I've learned one thing, I like to go on to something else. So far, I've managed to do this in the company where I work now. I think I'll stay there for awhile.

Ideally, I would like to be in a challenging position with some connexion to software and involving or leading to supervisory and managerial responsibilities.



pleasant dream