

# Hard Science TALES

## Tenth Issue

### Hard Science Lesson

Being science fiction fans and Slannishly Smart, I guess most of my readers know that water drains counterclockwise in the Northern Hemisphere, and clockwise on the other end of the world. But I've recently come to understand that you probably don't actually know why.

At one time, all water drained straight down, the way it really should, with none of the unseemly swirling. But during the age of sail, everything got changed around.

It was because of the clocks. When boats got big enough to go further from shore, and on-board clocks crossed the International Date Line, the time pieces were so affected by the experience that the hands started to whirl around, completely out of rational control. The hour hands went counterclockwise, and the minute hands went clockwise, at a steadily increasing rate of speed, until finally the poor things spun right off the dials and into the air.



By this point, they were going at such a fierce rate of speed that they acted like metal arrows shot into the air, and when they fell back to earth, they pierced the ocean like ballistic darts. This agitated the waters. The shorter hour hands didn't fly as far, nor penetrate quite as deeply, but it was enough that the ocean began to whirl around the arrows, causing the counter-clockwise motion we on the Right Side of the Earth now enjoy. But the minute hands were longer, and flew further away, then pushed even deeper into the ocean. This caused the swirl on the Southside to echo the movement of the long darts, producing the accursed swirl now seen in such unlikely lands as Australia and South Africa.

There were increasing problems, as more and more ships crossed the Date Line, and more and more clocks exploded in this fashion, until finally the two sides of the world were entirely divided with their separate movements. And, at the spot where the two swirling ponds met, the waters going in opposite directions caused cataclysmic motion.

**Hard Science Tales Volume 2, Issue 4, Whole Number 10** comes to you from Joyce Worley Katz, 909 Eugene Cernan Street, Las Vegas, NV 89145, on February 19, 2006. This is created for SNAFFU members and other Vegas fan friends, for the tenth distribution of SNAPS (The Southern Nevada Amateur Press Society.) Hard Science Tales is also posted to [www.efanzines.com](http://www.efanzines.com) for the amusement of the rest of fandom. Thanks to Arnie Katz for production help and for this nifty template.

Many methods for abating this storm were attempted, such as pouring oil to lessen the friction between the two sides. But the rapid motion made the oil overheat, then burst into flames. This produced a streak of black grime all the way around the world, and the heat of the fires permanently changed the climate along the streak.

There were heroic efforts to erase the oil residue. Ship captains forced unlucky sailors to leap into the waters to try to swab up the burnt grease. However, the brave seamen were unsuccessful.



However, the brave seamen were unsuccessful.

It is a great feeling to know that I am able to solve your concerns about this matter. I hope in future months to enlighten you about other such serious scientific matters, and thus enhance your understanding and enjoyment of Scientifiction.

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## Personal Notes:

I've made a lot of progress since the last issue of *Hard Science Tales*. I exited the wheelchair last December, a couple weeks before Christmas, and discarded the cam-boot that took the place of the cast I'd worn since the last ankle operation. I first used a walker, but quickly graduated to using a cane. Now I'm using a cane only when I leave the house, and then only for safety. Inside, I walk freely without it, although I do have a major limp.

There was an accursed amount of pain, as I gradually learned to walk again. The muscles had weakened badly, especially in the calves of both legs. But as I write this, the pain is decreasing.

It's certainly going to take more time to strengthen, but I'm definitely on the up now, and the doctor promises that the pain will eventually become much less significant.

On January 19, I had cataract surgery on the left eye — the right eye was done 8-10 years ago and now has very good vision. So far so good. I can see a green light from a block away, and I can read the second line of the eye chart with the left eye, without glasses. This will gradually improve, I am sure.

I got my new glasses last week, and with them, I see better than I did before, without the graying-out that the cataract had caused. My night vision is still too bad to be comfortable driving after dark. But, it is getting better.

My next appointment with the ankle surgeon is March 2; I'll get new x-rays at the end of February. It is probable that I'll need one more minor surgery, to remove some of the metal in my right ankle. Most of the screws and metal plates will stay in, but a couple of them are uncomfortably near the surface.

If they do have to come out, this will be my seventh surgery since April of 2004. But this will be an in-office procedure, with local anesthesia, and requiring nothing much more than a Band-Aid afterward.

Walking and driving with a fused ankle has not been much of a problem. Obviously, I no longer bend at the right ankle, but pressing the gas and break pedals can be done flat-footed with no trouble. Walking flat-footed is a little less graceful but so much better than the alternative.

## WorleyGigs

As I return to better health, my writing ambitions, and hopefully my skills, are gradually returning to normal. I continue to do the travel pieces, which have grown quite demanding, as wider and wider territories are covered in each piece. (Last time: all of South Asia, from Japan, China, Malaysia, and the Philippines, to India.)

But I'm regaining my interest in tackling harder assignments, and hope to resume writing Native American history soon. I'll keep you posted.



## How I Found Fandom (Memoirs, #7)

After the first Ozarkon, with its hundred or so attendees and Ted White as Guest of Honor, the Members of OSFA (Ozark Science Fiction Association) were feeling strong, like nothing could stop us.

And, why not? The club was almost a year old; membership was fairly

solid, with attendance running between a dozen and twenty each meeting. We'd had a good time, mostly; and I for one was feeling really Connected to the rest of fandom.

Ozarkon I brought us more than some happy hours and good memories. We also picked up a few new members, at least some of whom were to be very important to our fandom.

Norbert Couch and a couple of the Couch kids attended the convention, and made instant friends with the local fans. The kids, in particular, were hyper-enthusiastic and promised to start attending our club meetings.

The Couch family was an enormous addition to OSFA. All five of them became regulars – Norbert and Leigh Couch were strong science fiction readers, and the three kids, Lesleigh, Christopher and Michael, were eager to be involved in fanzine publishing. Lesleigh, the oldest of the trio of youngsters, was barely a teen at this point. Chris was one year younger, and Michael was a pre-teen.

Lesleigh was a particularly welcome new member, because she was only the second female member, and she was flat-out beautiful. She had black curly hair falling beyond her waist, and looked a lot like a Vaughan Bodé heroine. Hank and Dave immediately started courting her – and this gave rise to

strong rivalry between the two.

Norbert was a bit ponderous, but still a likable chap, quick with the handshake and offers of rides to meetings for the younger members. But he was government-employed, sensitive about his own security clearance, and reluctant to get too close to the anti-establishment arm of the club. Although he was very much against the War, he didn't join us at the be-ins, sit-ins, anti-war marches and protest rallies.

Leigh Couch was a lay-teacher in a Catholic middle school. She was charming, vivacious, and (unfortunately) just a little bit too parental/teacher-like for the older fans to feel comfortable around her.

The Couch home quickly became a hotbed of fan activity. The kids made friends easily, and the parents were hospitable and (I have to admit) a benign influence on everyone who went there.

There was strong competition between Lesleigh and Chris – Lesleigh was a brilliant student, popular and talented. Chris was also a good student with a lot of personal charm, but a year behind his sister in school and in accomplishments.

It was no time 'til Lesleigh and Cris joined APA 45 and starting publishing zines of their own. And, it was no time at all after that 'til mercurial Dave

Hall lost interest in publishing the club genzine Sirruiish, and Leigh took it over.



If Leigh had one fault, beyond her over-parental approach to other fans, it was that she tended to compete with her own kids. Being older, wiser and with a lifetime accumulation of



Lesleigh & Hank Luttrell at Midwestcon in 1970, selling books from their car (before the hucksters room was started.)  
Photo by Fred Levy Haskell

“Because if he’s old fashioned enough, perhaps it will make more people rebel and leave the Church!”

She staggered backward as if I’d struck her, and didn’t speak to me again for the rest of the afternoon.

Later, as the years past, I became more sympathetic to Leigh. As I reached the age she had been when we met, I understood her better, and began to regret that I’d sometimes been cruel to her. She really didn’t deserve it.

After I’d moved to New York, I tried to make it up to her by sending Christmas and birthday cards, and friendly notes now and then.

But that conversation at the OSFA picnic still weighs on me a little. (to be continued)

accomplishments, Leigh’s fanzines immediately out-shone her kids’. Lesleigh never seemed to show too much strain over it, but Chris was in a lot of distress as he repeatedly came in second to his sister, and then was out-fanned by his own mother.

I hate to admit this, but I took an instant dislike to Leigh. I hated her teacher-like attitude; I despised her acting parental toward me. I avoided inviting her to my house, and only rarely went to hers. And, I’d seldom miss any opportunity to verbally gig her at meetings.

I remember one instance in particular at the annual OSFA picnic, the next summer after they’d joined the club. The Church had just elected a new Pope, or was getting ready to, and she made some comment about hoping he’d be liberal in his edicts and rulings. And I immediately spoke up, saying, “Gee, I hope not – I hope he is a throw-back to old-time conservative attitudes.”

“Why?” asked the startled Leigh.



Raymond Duggie Fisher—1956



# A Discussion of Language

## Or

### You learn the strangest things on list servs

John Wesley Hardin wrote about interesting words, saying “And my favorite: A ‘koshatnik’ in Russian, is a dealer of stolen cats.” He added, “I didn't even know there was a market for stolen cats.”

Roxanne Gibbs replied, to explain it to us: “Well, JoHn, it means you have never tried to knock anyone off.

“You see, the KGB would prefer to eliminate opposition and enemies without leaving any trace or evidence of their involvement. Since the mid 1950's the KGB has been utilizing cats in this endeavor since they are the perfect weapon, leaving no trace of the KGB's involvement behind.

“Though it takes a lot of man- and cat-power to accomplish this highly sophisticated operation, the KGB has found it easy to ingratiate a cat into a household, or to sneak a cat into a household and allow it to meander through, all the while spreading their death inducing dander. After introducing the toxin the cat is removed.

“Sometimes, in order to induce a life-ending anaphylactic allergic reaction, the operatives must enter the house multiple times (in order to build up toxic levels of dander and increase the targets sensitivities to the cat dander). The operatives handle this time-consuming assignment by raiding the refrigerator and rifling through the designated targets personal items.

“In the literature that I have read, this has been a very successful technique, there has been no inves-

tigation that has easily tied the KGB to the deaths of their targets. I did read one example where the occasionally bored KGB agents imbibed some of the target's Vodka, and then watered it down (one thing Russians know is when their Vodka has been touched) and this had tipped off the target to leave his home thus leaving the toxic dander behind, and subsequently initiating an investigation which lead to a link to the KGB, but not to the cats.

“But, above and beyond the KGB's agenda, I think the cats knew exactly what they were doing, or why else would they make sure to lay all over the pillow of the person they were intended to eliminate? Perhaps the cats are engaged in some sort of human breeding program and this is their method of culling the herd.

“Joyce Katz has brought up the subject of a cat's superior intelligence in Hard Science Tales and I am sure she will support the evidence that cats are engaged in a conspiracy of their own.”

JoHn appreciated receiving this information, saying, “Ah. Thanks for the explainer. It explains the acronyms, too. KGB = Kitty Grabbing Bolsheviks; CCCP = Cats Cause Certain Panic.”

Joyce Katz felt this was valuable information: “I think we all owe a great debt to Roxanne for alerting us to this danger. Certainly we have all observed the cat's ability to pick out, and subsequently display affection to, the person with the most allergy to dander.

“Clever, those Russians, to have harnessed this mighty power, surely one of the most deadly threats in the known universe.” \*\*\*



## Letter Column

**Robert Lichtman:**

**Re: November Placeholder**

I'm with you in breaking those annoying gloom and doom chain messages whenever they turn up in my mailbox, which happily is very seldom.

"I also rather admire mobile homes." I've never lived in one myself, but my youngest son and his wife bought one of those "permanently moored manufactured homes" in the Santa Cruz



Burbee at his mimeo

area and is quite pleased with it. Carol and I liked it, too, when we visited them for their housewarming. And don't forget that Burbee and Cora lived in one of them at Pechanga!.

*It seems to me the more of those doom-gloom letters I break, the more I receive. Perhaps this is the bad luck they've all been predicting.*

**Re: December Placeholder:**

Just read your December Placeholder. I had black eyed peas many times on New Year's Day when I was living in the south, and a few times after that. My parents had a bastardized version of this when I was a kid -- we had \*canned\* green peas when I was \*really\* young, and moved on to frozen same later.

Tell me more about this certification exam for paratransit. It sounds weird. I had the local equivalent after my auto accident, but never had to use it because people gave me rides -- and then I could drive again.

*Green peas for New Years? Now, that is different. I would have thought for St. Patrick's Day....*

*To certify for Paratransit, Arnie had to walk a lengthy course with numerous simulated street crossings, stop lights, etc. He failed quite handily, since he can't see the signs across the street.*

*It actually was pretty hard for me, too, since it involved steps up and down off curbs, and a bit more distance than I generally walk.*

Eric Mayer (Blog:<http://www.journalscape.com/ericmayer>)

I downloaded Hard Science Tales #9 as soon as my .rss feed to eFanzines alerted me to it. I used to look out the window and see if the flag was up on the mailbox beside the road, meaning the mailman had visited, then rush down and see what was waiting in the box. Now I check Bloglines and see if eFanzines is highlighted and then rush over and see what's been uploaded. It's a lot more science fictional today.

I daresay I'm suffering from loccers fatigue. Mary and I are getting near the end of the new novel and that has really been diverting all my energy and thought. Despite what Chris Garcia says in the loccol, I don't see myself as a threat to Harry Warner. I'm not a threat to Lloyd Penney, or Pete Sullivan

or Christ Garcia. (Oh jeez...lookit that typo... Christ Garcia...because the amount he writes is a miracle I suppose...) Anyway, last spring I grabbed some fanzines off eFanzines and enjoyed them but noticed how relatively few letters they were receiving. Right then, the few zines I looked at, it seemed like nobody but Lloyd Penney recalled that faneditors were supposed to get a little response in return for their efforts and I figured that was a little something I could contribute, seeing how all I'd



have time or energy to contribute was a little something.

Little? Well, as in little did I know...specifically that Arnie and Chris would be publishing an issue a week. And you're doing an issue a month I reckon. Dave Burton also has been putting out Catchpenny Gazette rather frequently. When Arnie and Chris come to their senses my output will be decimated.

I will say your article on mimeos was great. I walked right into it. My eye just kind of slipped over the reference to the manufacturer loading up the drum (thought - huh?) and so found myself in the nonsense quite unexpectedly. But what a neat concept, and I loved the image of the old, leftover articles rattling around in the drum. Have to think of something similar for hectography!

*I really appreciate the people who remember that they're supposed to send a little egoboo in response to a fanzine. There are all too few who do that now, and you who do are much beloved by us hard-working faneds.*

*Surely everyone knows, if you eat left-over hectograph jelly, you'll burp purple prose balloons.*

### **Jack Calvert:**

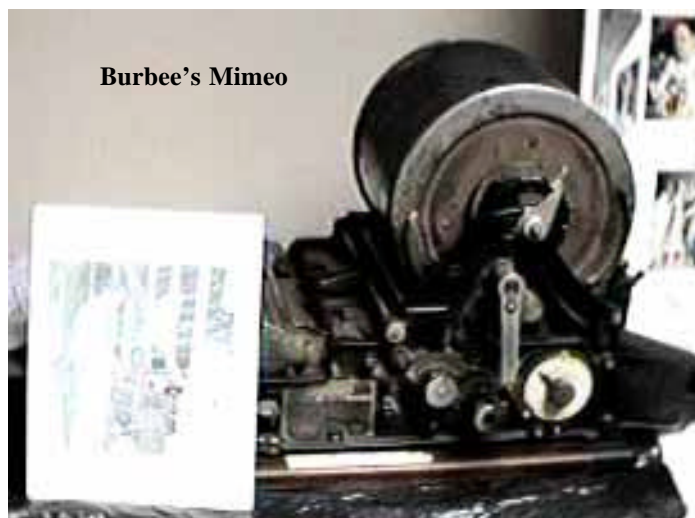
It's getting a bit late to loc Hard Science Tales 9, but I did want to thank you for your clear explanation of the workings of the mimeograph. I know that it is accurate, because I've seen words from discarded mimeo drums re-cycled into magnets to be stuck on refrigerators and used as magnetic poetry. But it seems that fannish mimeos were never discarded until they were thoroughly worn out. I never see magnetic poetry sets with words like "fanac," "scientifiction," or "fafiated." Or even the more sercon science fiction critical terms like "zap gun" and "bug-eyed monster."

*This is a great use of those left-over words. You also sometimes see them on t-shirts, or affixed to women's hats, like grammatical feathers. Just so they don't go to waste.*

*By the way, it is Never too late to write a loc.*

### **Lloyd Penney:**

I remember seeing the mimeo machine and the Gestetner at school, and not being allowed near it. It seemed to be the exclusive province of certain special people, including the teachers and a few



select students. I might have had more of a publishing career if someone had shown me how to use it, but that point is moot in this DTP era.

The folks at Exhibit City News might want to actually come up here to see the variety of convention facilities here. I am working for BBW, an agency that provides labour for conference and trade shows, and as a result, I get to see the insides of the various show facilities. There's the Toronto International Centre, actually in Mississauga, the National Trade Centre on the grounds of the Canadian National Exhibition, the Toronto East Trade Centre in Pickering, and where Torcon 3 was, the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. Montreal has the Palais de Congres, and Vancouver has some spectacular facilities, the names fail me at the moment. I have copies of the CMC (Conventions Meetings Canada) directory, 520 pages of all the function space in the entire country. Get yourself a copy of this, and you could write all the articles about Canadian function space you'd ever want. The local conventions here use them, especially if they're thinking of moving to another hotel, and

they need to see what's available. Check out [www.meetingscanada.com](http://www.meetingscanada.com) to see about getting a copy of this invaluable directory, or contact the Director of Content, Matt Nichols, at [matt.nichols@mtg.rogers.com](mailto:matt.nichols@mtg.rogers.com).

The Swedenborgian idea of heaven and hell sounds like that envisioned by Richard Matheson in his novel *What Dreams May Come*, which was made into an enjoyable movie by Robin Williams. In that movie, heaven was whatever you thought it should be, and hell was the same, although God did not send you there; you did that yourself.

*I wasn't exposed to mimeo until Ray and I bought one in the late 1960s, but used a ditto to publish a "writers digest" in highschool. Loved the fumes.. They were the best thing in the book.*

*It really gave me a pang, when I wrote the Canadian Destinations piece for Exhibit City News describing Toronto's tourist attractions, while knowing I'll not get to attend the Toronto Corflu this Spring. (If curious, this trade magazine is also available online at [www.exhibitcitynews.com](http://www.exhibitcitynews.com) )*

*Sounds like my philosophy is very similar to Swedenborgian. And I thought I invented it myself!*

#### **Peter Sullivan:**

Mimeographs: I may be a neo-fan when it comes to science fiction fandom, but my postal games hobby background means that I can still go all misty-eyed and nostalgic for that huge, inky clanking giant of a publishing machine. (No, this is \*not\* a reference to Arnie.) I still remember the thrill of recognition when, after producing an almost-illegible issue 5, I realised that it might help if I put some more ink in the thing. (Sadly, this is not a joke.) It was a rite of passage comparable to be inducted into the Secret Masters of Fandom.

I was of course one of the more vocal proponents of the ideology that Real Zeens are Mimeo when it comes to paper fanzeens. Not from any snob-bishness, but just from the point of view that a mimeo-owning editor is in control of the means of production, distribution and exchange in the way that someone using a litho service - or 'midnight requisition' on the works copier - never is. People

with their own photocopier in their garage are exempt from such strictures, of course.

Following on from Lloyd Penny, I suppose that the purpose of retailing salvation at just a buck a pop is to go down the Walmart/K-mart route of 'volume over margin.' You might well trigger a price war amongst the TV evangelists at that rate. Unless they learn the same trick as the low-cost airlines, and quote a low initial fare, but then bump it up with tithes, refuelling fees, credit card surcharges and then try selling soda at five bucks a can during the trip.

I'll keep schtum about the obvious flaw in your offer to me - one quarter of eternity is still eternity, at least as far as the mathematicians are concerned.

*I think most of us are sentimental about the instruments of fandom. And, I'll admit that I also thought Real Zines were mimeo'd, as opposed to copy-shopped.*

*Now, the whole world has changed, and I'm a lot more acceptant of other repro methods - anything is good, if a fan will just Do It!*

*By the way, Arnie is not a "huge, inky clanking giant of a publishing machine" - he doesn't clank.*

*You only qualified for one-quarter of eternity, so you won't get your full share of peanuts and soda in Heaven. You can avoid this disaster by sending me three more quarters.*





**Robert Lichtman:**

**Re: Hard Science Tales 8 & 9**

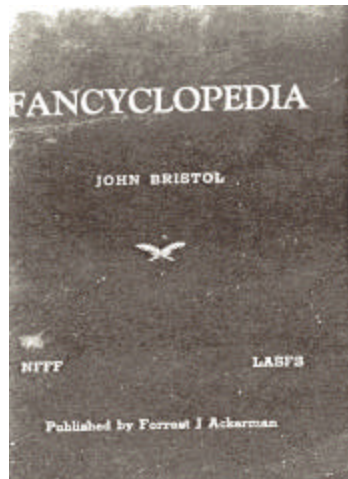
I particularly enjoyed Part 6 of your ongoing "How I Found Fandom," but wondered where you heard that G. M. Carr was involved in Russell Watkins's Crusade to Clean Up Fandom. I find no reference to her name in FANCYCLOPEDIA II nor in Harry's A WEALTH OF FA-BLE. In the latter it's reported that support for the CCF was minimal. I remember that Ray Nelson cartoon from wherever it was reprinted, but I don't have the early ODDs in which it first appeared.

Your tale of David Hall is truly a mixed bag of mostly horror mixed with a soft spot for him for visiting Avram in hospital during Avram's last months.

No, I never met Margaret Dominick. My own Hungarian ancestry is entirely on my mother's side of the family, where most of the strangeness in my family's past resides. Her mother's sister Emma was married to John, a man much older than her. The family stories have it that during Prohibition they were living in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and made their income brewing and selling "bathtub gin." I don't know if they got found out and hassled, but another story is that later they lived in Mexico where they ran a factory producing cheap enamelware -- the thin-walled kind that's finished in bright basic colors with white spots throughout.



the '60s in L.A., many of whom were slumlords.) I



**Fancylopedia #1, done by John Bristol Speer.**

only remember that because when I was young they came back to the U.S., settling in the Los Angeles area, and we were given a bunch of their left-over product, which we used for quite a few years before it got too chipped. I mainly remember John and Emma when I was very young and they were pretty old, living in a small apartment in El Monte. John would sit around behind his thick glasses and not say much (and he smelled bad, which my brother and I would comment on among ourselves later), while Emma would bustle around the kitchen feeding my brother and me her strange but delicious Hungarian-Mexican dishes. I especially remember her \*hot\* garlic dill pickles, and wish I'd gotten her recipe before she passed away.

Jason Burnett's comments about the drunken behavior of tourists in New Orleans reminded me of something I read on one of the lists the other day -- that it's interesting how this season's hurricanes have wrought their most serious destruction in areas favored by drinking low-lifes such as New Orleans and Key West.

In No. 9 I loved the way you sucked me in with your description of how mimeography worked. Did you manage to hoodwink any of the locals who are too young to remember the true story? And where did you get that photo of the ancient mimeo?

Chris Garcia's idea of an apa "where the general population could see PDFs of much of the content with mailing comments being produced strictly for the participants" sounds like too much work. In the past with paper apazines some people would produce editions to mail out to non-members with the comments pages removed, though, so I guess it's within the realm of feasibility. But since so much of an apa is the interplay in mailing comments, excising them makes the resulting zine that much less interesting for the non-member readers.

Newsbreak: I just found a copy of that Ray Nelson "Man and His God" cartoon in a very unlikely

place after your comments to Chris's letter about how it had been "widely reprinted" spurred me to more looking. But this is a very unlikely place for fans to see: the first (only?) issue of NOUMENON, a magazine edited by Ray for the "Channing Club" at the First Unitarian Church of Berkeley. Ray's brother Trevor is listed as "business manager" while Ray is "editor-in-chief" and there are two coeditors whose names are unfamiliar to me. It isn't dated, but appears from the production values (mimeographed, stenciled with manual typewriter) to be from the '50s.

*I have no personal knowledge of this. However, Ray Fisher and Max Keasler both commented about GM Carr being involved in the Crusade to Clean Up Fandom. Since they both had such negative experiences, and felt so strongly about it, I suspect they were correct. Ray republished the Nelson cartoon "Man & His God" in Odd #14, which ShelVy recently posted to [www.efanzines.com](http://www.efanzines.com)*

*I'm afraid that negative opinion of New Orleans probably contributed to the delay in getting help to the area.*

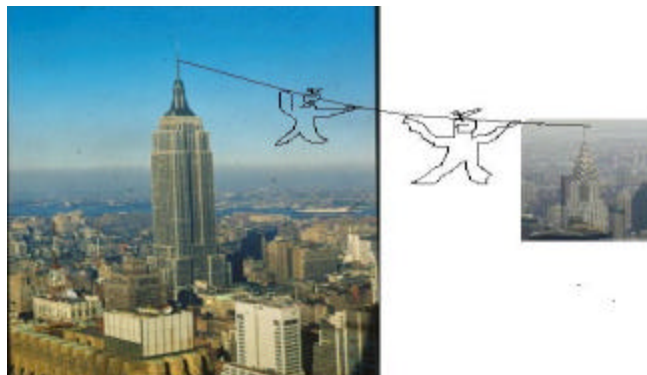
*I think well-written mailing comments are interesting to most people, as long as they are clear enough that the reader can deduce the original comments.*

*I don't think I fooled anyone about how mimeos work, (even with the illo found on the internet) but I did convince one of the locals of the existence of the bridge between the Chrysler Building and the Empire State Building towers.*  
*I'm not sure anyone bought the idea of Ted White*



**This is the Ray Nelson cartoon "Self-Centered Man & His God" as it appeared in the earlier issue of Ray Fisher's ODD, and as it was reprinted in the 1960's revival edition, Odd #14.**

*and Bill Donahoe going hand-over-hand between the two, though.*



## Mailing Comments:

**About This Mailing (by me)** It was predictable, of course.

Distribution #9 was so fabulous, so large, that it was unlikely we could match it in the next mailing. And, we didn't. In fact, apparently we were so impressed by our own accomplishments that we all decided to rest on our laurels. When time came for the January distribution, we fell down. **Charles** was the only one who bothered. After extending the deadline a few days, and still receiving nothing, I decided to bite the bullet and cancel the mailing for January.

I hope this shames everyone into coming back strong for February.

**Profane Revelations (Charles Fuller)** Since I was (sometimes) a farm girl from Missouri, I was

raised with guns, and this was reinforced by my Native American background. My brothers were Mighty Hunters – we wouldn't have eaten nearly as well were it not for the fish and game they brought to the table.

When I was 14 or 15, I was taught to shoot by my boyfriend Jim, who was a Sharpshooter in the National Guard. In fact (she sez immodestly) I took to it, and became a regular Annie Oakley, a deadeye with a twenty-two. Later I was champion of the shooting galleries at Coney Island, even winning a tournament with a

group of fans. It came down to me and Dan Stefan, shooting round after round at the animated targets, until I finally bested him by one. I'm still proud of that win.

But I only shot a handgun once, and have never owned one. I don't like them; I don't like guns except for use in target practice or hunting. And I don't like hunting except when done for need of food. I despise stealing some poor creature's life merely for sport, and personally have never shot any living thing. (I only 'kill' beer cans and glass bottles, and have ripped apart many paper targets.)

I can see no real reason to own a handgun except to shoot at another human being. If I were a rancher in grizzly country, or a cowboy riding the snaky plains, I might feel differently. But I live in a city.

I think a great many of the flaws in America come from guns. After living in New York City for almost 20 years, I firmly oppose the notion of people arming themselves and becoming vigilantes. I certainly abhor those parents who allow guns to fall into their children's hands. And, I observe that the shootings of friends, family members, or strangers at the door would seldom happen if there were no privately owned guns.

Here in the Wild Wild West, I know my belief probably rubs many people the wrong way, just as their casual use of guns rubs me wrong. But unless you can prove to me that you need guns walking around the streets of Las Vegas, or that you need to hunt to feed your family, I am firm in my opinion that you'd be better off without them.

**The Persistence of Beauty (Ayesha Ashley)** This was a rare and fascinating

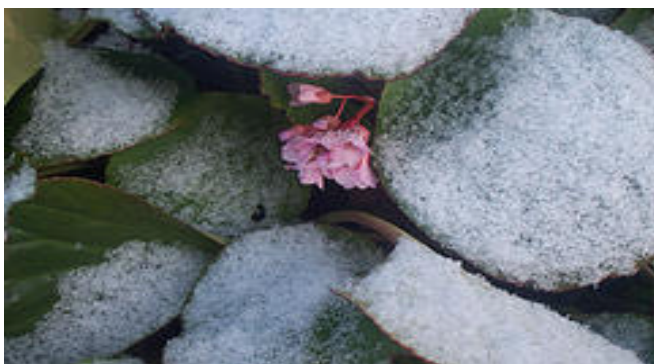
look at a world I hope never to experience. The poor, poor women whose lives are wounded, facing the sadness of prison – I think we'd all wish to help them. I think you are wonderful, for making this your work. I believe you are probably the brightest spot in their lives, and I admire you for the personal sacrifices that working in a prison must cost.



I used to always swear that, if I were ever sent to prison, I would kill myself. (I've seen altogether too many movies involving broom handles and knife fights.) Then a male friend served some time (for pot) and when he heard my plan, said, "Please don't do that – it really is not that bad." And, you have told me that the horrors I dread are extremely rare. So you and he have changed my mind and lessened my fears.

I was touched by your description of the tiny roses made of bread. How wonderful is the human heart, that even in the midst of sorrow and pain, someone would long for beauty so much that she would make such an effort.

I see now what you mean – the loveliness of humanity breaks through the concrete and steel, like a daisy growing up through stones. I admire you for nurturing these women, and helping them find some joy.



**Amity (Marcy Waldie)** We've talked about this before, and it's a fascinating phenomenon. I knew when you were seeing the apparition before, and am especially interested to hear it has returned. I would like to offer my opinion.

I believe that our minds give us what we need, and can produce visions to help us. I also believe that we can figure out what these visions mean, and why we receive them.

I can only explain by describing some visions that family members have seen. My mother, when I was three or four years old, was hit by a triple whammy. Her baby sister was in a bad marriage, and disappeared, never to be seen again. Then her mother, my grandmother, died. And, within the same year, her closest sister, Aunt Cleo, died by arsenic, presumably murdered by Uncle

Arnold.

My mother was destroyed. She had what they used to call a 'breakdown' and was in terrible mental anguish. Then she started having visions. My grandmother appeared to her and said, "Don't grieve; I am just fine." Later, she dreamed she would receive a letter that would tell her about Aunt Polly. (This came true. Years later, my mother heard from a woman in California, who told her where Polly was buried.) And then Aunt Cleo appeared to her, and said, "It was an accident; I drank some weed killer by mistake." (There was a police investigation, and my Uncle Arnold was dismissed as innocent.)

These visions, or hallucinations if you are cynical, allowed my mother to find some peace and stopped her life-destroying grief.

Many many years later, my sister Lil told me of the strange things she had seen. When her husband was terribly ill, a "poltergeist" would move paintings off the wall, and carefully stack them on the floor. This produced in her a dread of a coming calamity. Then, in the month before he died, she started seeing the ghost of her little white poodle dog. Later, each time she saw the dog, it was a signal that someone who was already terminally ill was just about to die. The visions helped her accept the inevitability of their passing.

The strangest part of it all was that other family members would also see the dog, but only when they were with Lilymae.



My brother Ed, as cynical and hardheaded man as ever lived, had a vision of young men surrounding his bed, using his things, reading his books. I believe the vision was telling him that it was time for him to retire, to step aside, and let the younger ones go on without him. When I told him this, he felt better about quitting work.

I believe the mind gives us what we need. I believe Don produced images – I didn't know him well, so don't know what his mind was trying to tell him, but you probably do. And, because you are so sensitive, you saw them too. Now, because you grieve for Don, I believe your mind is producing phenomena to help you feel better about his passing.

Isn't a mind a wonderful instrument? I offer this opinion to you, and wonder what you think of this interpretation.

#### **Midlife Crisis (Linda Bushyager)**

I am so sorry

you had shingles; I had another friend who had it, twenty years or so ago in New York, and I remember how miserable he was. His case lasted almost a year – but he was a very stressed person; perhaps that is why. Or maybe they have better drugs now. In any case, I hope that by this time your recovery is complete, and that you are never bothered by them again.

I don't believe I've ever seen a doctor immediately upon onset of any illness (I even waited a day before seeing a doctor after I broke my ankles.) For an itch, I'd probably not bother to go for a long time, since I'm prone to odd rashes now and then. So I sure hope I never get shingles, since I'd be one of the ones who is slow to get treatment. I did have chicken pox as a child – so I'll try to keep your information in mind if I ever rash up very badly.

I saw the first Potter movie and enjoyed it. Then started to watch the second and didn't, so gave it up. Also tried to read the first book, but found it too much of a kid's book for me. I know I've probably missed a lot, but Harry Potter just didn't appeal to me.

But I agree with you completely on the Star Wars sextet. The further they went, the worse they got. I really only liked the first one.

By the way, I agree with you that Elizabeth



the Virgin Queen wasn't as good as Elizabeth R, the one done by Masterpiece Theater several years back starring Glenda Jackson. But, did anyone else notice that Elizabeth the Virgin Queen looked very much like **Joelle Barnes**?

#### **Bat Signals (Teresa Cochran)**

I'm so glad you enjoyed

the Convention. I'm sure that, as you go to other conventions and know even more of the fans, you will enjoy it even more. And yes, a fanzine convention (like Corflu) is So Very Much Better, simply because all the attendees are known to you, and vice versa.

I really envy you and James, as you make plans to go to Corflu Toronto. I haven't seen most of my out-of-town fan friends since Corflu Black-jack (two years ago, here in Vegas) and miss them very much.

I think it's great that the Vegas fans tend to hang out together at conventions. It's a good sign that our club is really healthy, that we like to be together.

I used to know someone who sold prefabricated homes. In his case, they were houses where all the lumber was pre-cut to exact size, labeled 1-2-3, a-b-c, etc, then put together by a carpenter like a jigsaw puzzle. Sometimes prefabricated means

that entire walls are already put together, so the purchaser/carpenter only has to push the big pieces together. But, there's no actual connection to mobile homes, so far as I know.

**Softcore Fantasy Adventures (Arnie Katz)**

Although I knew your history in APAs, it

was interesting to see it all put together, and reinforced just how much of an active fan you have always been. VFW seems more likely, when viewed as the output of someone who once was in eleven APAs!

I never was too much for APAs. I was in FAPA, several times in fact, in the Vegas apa in the 90s, in a Secret Apa or two in the 60s and 70s, and now in SNAPS. But most of my activity has been in general-circulation zines that went to all my fan friends.

If MADCAP gets formed, I'll join, of course. And, I'm all for it. But I'll probably circulate all my original material that appears there in some genzine, so that all my friends will see it and not just the MADCAPs (MADCAPians? MADCAPites?)

It's interesting the way that rapidfire communications on the internet have changed fandom. Everything happens so fast now, compared to how it used to be. But, you know, I like it!

**BLACK CAT (Alan White)**

What a beautiful fanzine this is,

and what great use of modern technology! This zine is really inspiring, and makes me want to try some of these nifty techniques.

Most people end up being more or less forced into retirement, and at least in Arnie's and my cases, sooner than we wanted or expected. The work just ran out, and so did our physical abilities. So, the Social Security is not as much as we want or need, and we end up having to augment it with other work. I think this is probably true for most people.

The good thing about your house is that it's really money in the bank, waiting for you to cash out. Hopefully, prices will stay high so you'll cash out at a great deal more than it takes to pay off your mortgage. Then, you'll probably move to less expensive housing, or perhaps even to a less ex-

pensive area of the country. (Flippin, Arkansas, anyone?) Even if the real estate market doesn't continue to boom the way it has in the last few years in Vegas, you'll undoubtedly come out way ahead of what you bought in for.

Your medical tale was harrowing, even worse than I had imagined. I am so sorry you've had to endure this – and so glad that you are recovering. I hope your story (so well told, so entertainingly written!) is a cautionary tale to all the guys who read it. As you say, the moral of this story is Have Frequent Check Ups!

**Eutrapelia (Dave Gordon)**

I really loved this. Even though

I'm not actually a big fan of conventions, except for CORFLU, I felt a strong pang knowing so many of my good buddies were going off for the weekend, and wished I could have gone along. But this made me feel like I'd been there.....well, almost.

The photos were all great, but I particularly liked the one of John DeChancie; he looked so stern and official. Gee, I miss John since he's returned to L.A. – I hope he returns to Vegas soon. And, the photo of Luba's painting made me wish to see it in person.

Thanks for this, Dave. It really was a great photographic con report!

**Run While You Still Can (Aileen Forman)**

What a wonderful tour of your new place. And, it truly

made me homesick. The terrain and flora are so much like where I come from, Poplar Bluff Missouri, at the foothills of the Ozarks.

I guess most people in the country don't have any idea just how beautiful the Ozarks are. This is rough, rustic, hard land, but blessed with glorious colors from Spring through Autumn. I spent most of my childhood in country that matched yours exactly – rocky, spiky, severe, and absolutely lovely in its wild and craggy way.

This made me almost feel like I'd had a visit to Flippin.

*Here we are at the end, and we were just getting started....ah, well. There's always next time. Hope to hear from everyone soon! (JK)\*\*\**