

THE FANZINE FOR WHICH YOU VOTED BEFORE IT EXISTED

# NO AWARD

NUMBER TWELVE  
in the series -  
collect them all

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A Fanzine  
by  
**Marty Cantor**  
voted Fandom's  
Resident Curmudgeon  
in a poll  
conducted in *Twink*

**NORTHERN HEMISPHERE  
FALL 2002**

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**Hoo Hah Publication No. 741**

*This fanzine is available as a download in a PDF version at < www.efanzines.com >. A black and white edition will be distributed to those who prefer to receive it in the traditional paper manner.*

This fanzine is available for the fannish usual (which I tend to translate as my own whim, but I do honour trades, locs, artwork, written articles, and other contributions). If all else fails, send me US \$5.00 and I will send you a copy. *NO AWARD* is not pubbed on any regular schedule (even though I want to get it out at least twice a year). Mostly, issues will be put out when material and money decide to get together in a meaningful way.

**LEGALESE**

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LOCCERS

- Lloyd Penney - pages 26, 27 & 30
- Jerry Kaufman - pages 26 & 30
  - Ross Chamberlain - page 26
- Darrell Schweitzer - pages 27, 28, & 30
  - Alexei Panshin - page 27
  - E.B. Frohvet - pages 27 & 30
  - Joseph Major - pages 27 & 30
    - Jeanne Mealy - page 28
    - Jukka Halme - page 28
    - Earl Kemp - page 28
    - Derek Pickles - page 28
    - Henry Welch - page 29
    - Terry Jeeves - page 29
    - Eric Lindsay - page 29
    - Dave Locke - page 29
    - Sheryl Birkhead - page 29
      - Bill Legate - page 30
      - Alexis Gilliland - page 30

ARTISTS

- Alan White - 1, 2, 15
- Kurt Erichsen - 4
- Joe Mayhew - 10, 11, 26
- Marc Schirmeister - 12
- ATom - 14, 31
- Alexis Gilliland & Bill Rotsler - 18
- Bill Rotsler - 19, 22, 25
- Ray Capella - 27
- Brad W. Foster - 30
- Taral - 32



**REGRET LETTER** (Jack Harness & Lee Gold)

My Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

**Thank you for the kind and thoughtful invitation to your:**

- \_\_\_ wedding
- \_\_\_ divorce party
- \_\_\_ fund-raising dinner
- \_\_\_ little darling's bar/t mitzvah
- \_\_\_ fugghead fondling contest
- \_\_\_ boar hunt
- \_\_\_ bash

**As always, your:**

- \_\_\_ computer-generated printout
- \_\_\_ distinguishedly calligraphed
- \_\_\_ delightfully witty
- \_\_\_ childish and illiterate
- \_\_\_ messily repro'd
- \_\_\_ sophomoric and blasphemous

**announcement and the inaccurate and confusing map (if any) was:**

- \_\_\_ eagerly waited for
- \_\_\_ received with pleasure
- \_\_\_ an unexpected honor
- \_\_\_ an expected honor
- \_\_\_ delivered by the postman

**Ordinarily, not even the:**

- \_\_\_ sinister mafia
- \_\_\_ Mexican mafia
- \_\_\_ Jewish mafia
- \_\_\_ Moral Majority
- \_\_\_ risks to my health

**could keep me away, but as you:**

- \_\_\_ may well realize
- \_\_\_ have possibly forgotten
- \_\_\_ could not be expected to know
- \_\_\_ should have remembered
- \_\_\_ sent out invites to everybody

**this raises a most unforeseen scheduling conflict with:**

- \_\_\_ my mother's funeral
- \_\_\_ the gala grand opening of my new dry cleaning establishment
- \_\_\_ other pressing matters

**and it is with:**

- \_\_\_ deep dismay
- \_\_\_ profound sadness
- \_\_\_ the agony of decision

- \_\_\_ true fannish aplomb
- \_\_\_ gut-churning, stomach-disquieting, soul-sickening despair
- \_\_\_ a sigh of relief

**that I reply that I cannot now plan to attend.**

**Rest assured that should circumstances change, and:**

- \_\_\_ the wind shift
- \_\_\_ the wine list improve drastically
- \_\_\_ the dry cleaners' local go on strike
- \_\_\_ my therapist go on vacation
- \_\_\_ you start showering more

**I may be able to make a brief appearance after all.**

**Please do not think for a moment that I give any credence to the:**

- \_\_\_ amusing
- \_\_\_ preposterous
- \_\_\_ disgusting
- \_\_\_ spine-tingling
- \_\_\_ DNQ
- \_\_\_ widely rumored
- \_\_\_ printed in *Locus*
- \_\_\_ mentioned in the newspaper radio, *Newsweek*, and TV

**reports of your inability to:**

- \_\_\_ hold
- \_\_\_ restrain
- \_\_\_ pick up after
- \_\_\_ get hold of
- \_\_\_ housebreak
- \_\_\_ make monthly payments on
- \_\_\_ stand upright without assistance from

**your:**

- \_\_\_ nosy neighbors
- \_\_\_ liquor
- \_\_\_ el cheapo munchies
- \_\_\_ garbage from previous soirees
- \_\_\_ Red Mountain
- \_\_\_ backed-up plumbing
- \_\_\_ funny-looking cigarettes
- \_\_\_ small herd of guard dogs
- \_\_\_ bootleg video cassettes
- \_\_\_ noisy card players
- \_\_\_ scratchy rock records

- \_\_\_ parakeet
- \_\_\_ religious zeal for Rev. Moon
- \_\_\_ Instant Message
- \_\_\_ support group

**My best regards to your:**

- \_\_\_ wife/husband
- \_\_\_ ex-wife/husband
- \_\_\_ new wife/husband
- \_\_\_ girlfriend/boyfriend
- \_\_\_ live-in maid
- \_\_\_ young child
- \_\_\_ inner child
- \_\_\_ pet

**and her/his unfortunate:**

- \_\_\_ fleas
- \_\_\_ fungus
- \_\_\_ small appliances
- \_\_\_ Medfly infestation
- \_\_\_ stupid puns
- \_\_\_ battle to avoid extradition
- \_\_\_ eating habits

**As always, I remain:**

- \_\_\_ Sincerely
- \_\_\_ Respectfully
- \_\_\_ Affectionately
- \_\_\_ Cordially
- \_\_\_ Truly
- \_\_\_ Devotedly
- \_\_\_ Faithfully
- \_\_\_ Putridly

**Yours,**

\_\_\_\_\_

**PS.:**

- \_\_\_ Maybe we could make it next \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ Remember me for next time.
- \_\_\_ Could you move to a more accessible location?
- \_\_\_ Could you move farther away?
- \_\_\_ How about we schedule it again, say in late 2022?
- \_\_\_ Don't you owe me \$\_\_\_\_?
- \_\_\_ Could you send some of the leftovers in a doggie bag?
- \_\_\_ Write it up in APA-L.
- \_\_\_ We gotta get together for drinks.
- \_\_\_ Fifi says hello.
- \_\_\_ Mom says hi.
- \_\_\_ Please take me off your mailing list.

# A Day in the Life of Howard DeVore

The phone rang and the young lady said "I don't suppose you've ever heard of the Crowell/Colliers organization?" I said, "as a matter of fact, I have" and went on to tell her about how it was founded by two brothers in 1908 and that they proceeded to issue a family type magazine. In 1912 they started using a rotogravure section, then in 1918 they started using color in their illustrations. I went on listing improvements down through the years, discussing how they became a factor in national politics etc and continued until the early '60's. When I started running out of facts, I invented them.

I explained that in the mid '60's their subscriptions had fallen off badly and they discontinued the magazine, instead concentrating on publishing a rather fourth rate set of encyclopedias. I wound up by saying "Can I help you with any more information?"

The young lady had learned far more than she needed, most of it fictitious info but she thanked me and hung up.

Another time the phone rang; the lady asked if I would answer a few questions for a survey she was taking. I agreed and she asked about my marital status, then did I consider myself "middle class," etc Finally she asked if I had any children?

Ah, HAH, "Children's encyclopedias," so I replied that I had three daughters and she said "Oh, that's nice, how old are they?" I replied that Suzy was the baby and she was 43 years old! This so startled her that she missed the chance to sell me a set for the grandchildren -- thanked me and hung up.

In the late fifties George Young was unemployed and had a house full of kids, they sat there with the heads up, mouths open, chirping like a nest full of baby robins, so he took a job selling the Britannica encyclopedias. No, he wasn't "selling them", he was "placing them" in households.

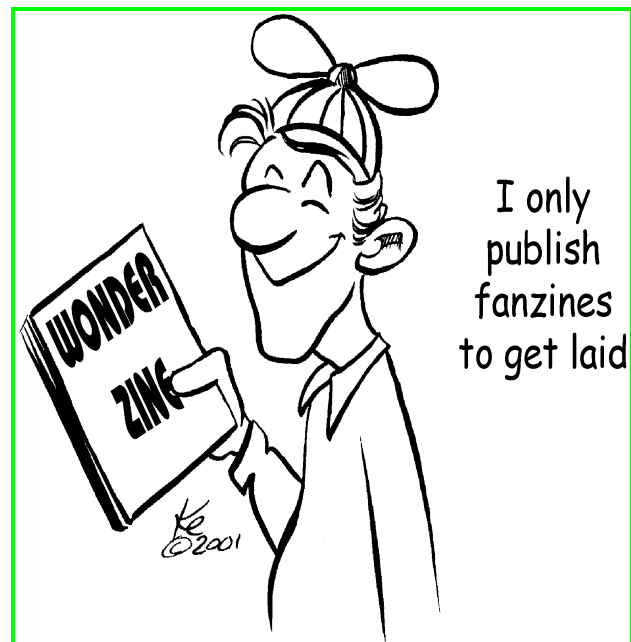
He and the route manager were out one evening; it was almost dark but they decided they'd do a couple of more blocks, then the manager would drop George off at a bus stop and they'd both go home. George went up the steps and knocked on a door, then he beat on it some more. Nobody answered it so he went on down the street. He didn't know that a teenaged baby sitter was calling the police reporting that someone was trying to break into the house.

George was down at the end of the block when a police car arrived! He explained that the route manager was on the next street. The route manager wasn't there; he'd quit and gone home, forgetting to take George to the bus stop. Anyone but George would have explained it and gone on his way. George never did have any luck! Instead, he got a free ride to 1300 Beaubien Street. The desk sergeant locked him up till Mary found someone with a car and she went down and claimed him.

He got home well after midnight.

Another time the LIFE magazine salesman came to my house, he explained what a wonderful magazine it was but I declined to subscribe. He said, "Is there some reason you don't like it?" and I explained, "Too many words, not enough pictures."

- - Big Hearted Howard



# From Silicon Soapware #89

by  
Thom Digby

It's nearing the end of Rainy Season in California, and somehow a mental cog slipped and the phrase came out as "Brainy Season".

So now I'm thinking of a world where whatever species eventually evolved intelligence had more of a need for it at certain times of year than at others. Maybe there were migratory predators around only at certain times, and maybe food was short then as well, while for much of the rest of the year there was plenty of stuff to eat and life was easy.

So Mating Season would come as the predators were migrating away, and after they had finished showing off and selecting mates for Mating Season intelligence would fade (to save wasting energy on brains) during the Easy Season, at least until the young were born. Then they would need to get smarter again to prepare their young for the next cycle.

Once they evolved sentience, they couldn't shut it down completely during Easy Season because those who maintained at least a little brainpower had an advantage over those who didn't. But their intelligence still waxed and waned to some degree. Hence, Brainy Season was when intelligence was at its maximum.

What would their culture be like? Would certain kinds of complex business deals be legal only during Brainy Season, when people would be best able to evaluate them? Would there still be enough brainpower active during the off-season to allow the schools to teach at least certain rote fundamentals then? Would different kinds of art and music arise for the different seasons? Would their medicine men eventually discover herbs and potions to turn their intellects up or down at will, overriding the seasons? During Brainy Season, would be it OK to tell jokes about how stupid they were during the off-season? Would people whose intelligence faded most during the off-season be protected by law from those who kept their intellects fairly sharp?

And if different parts of their world had Brainy Season at different times of year, how would the political systems cope with the differences of who was smart or stupid when, especially as technology began to make long journeys possible?

Finally, and perhaps of most interest to science fiction fans, what happens when they finally make contact with Earth?

ADDRESSES &/OR EDRESSES

**FOR  
PRIVACY/SECURITY  
REASONS  
THE  
ON-LINE  
VERSION  
OF  
NO AWARD #12  
WILL NOT SHOW  
ADDRESSES  
&  
EDRESSES  
OF  
CONTRIBUTORS**

**Contact the editor  
for this  
information.**

# The Author Declines to Turn the Crank

by Carrie Dougherty

London contains hundreds of fascinating museums, galleries, churches and stately homes, the vast majority of which I've never seen, and a few of which I've only seen once, briefly. So, naturally, I did what I always do in London and headed straight off to be at one with the machines in the Science Museum. The name, by the way, is somewhat of a misnomer, as the museum is principally one of historical technology and engineering. I headed straight upstairs to the difference Engine, where chatting with the two technicians elicited the information that they would be testing the Engine in the afternoon, after their lunch break. I promised to come back later.

So I spent an hour and a half or so wandering around, seeing maybe 1/100th of what's interesting in the museum, including the following:

- The Great Hall of engines (formally called East Hall), which has magnificent specimens of 18th century Newcomen engines as well as a beautiful gigantic Corliss engine which apparently runs now and then (although I don't believe I've ever seen it operating). One thing I learned this time was that the cycles of the old engines were very slow—maybe one or two revolutions per minute.
- The new Making of the Modern World gallery, which contains “iconic” artifacts from the history of science and technology, including a V2 rocket (I'd never realized how huge they were), the original Rocket locomotive, a Cooke and Wheatstone telegraph station that looks like an organ console, and a phrenology head (apparently on loan from the Phrenology Head Museum in Cornwall - -!)
- The King George III Gallery of 17th and 18th century instruments, mostly teaching tools and “parlor experiments” used for recreation during that era. It has the original orrery built for the 4th Earl of Orrery in the early 18th century (though there were actually earlier Chinese and Roman ones, apparently). The earliest orreries showed just the earth, moon, and sun—you can tell the age of more elaborate orreries by how many planets they show, unless they've been altered to show additional planets. And where else can you find anamorphic pictures (hah, spellchecker doesn't like that one, nor did it like “orrery”), sciopic balls, and cometaria?

Carrie is a civil engineer who lives in Oakland. Although, how civil can an engineer be who once

wrote, “I am a civil engineer, if it doesn't work, I hit it with a hammer.” She also wrote, “Who would have thought I'd be the proud owner of a motorcycle that thinks it's a duck.” Referring, of course, to the antique Royal Enfield J2 she bought and drove around England before she shipped it home to Oakland, California. Which has not stopped Carrie from going back to England several times and continuing her motorcycle tours of that country on a rented motorcycle, if necessary

You see, Carrie does not drive automobiles. But she is a member of LASFAPA and she very entertainingly writes of her various adventures. Her *very* inquisitive adventures as she does more than motor through the countryside. And continue to look for a job in England.

This article is excerpted from her August 2002 zine in LASFAPA #311. Carrie writes of her visit to the world's first computer, the 1832 Difference Engine invented by Charles Babbage, begun in 1822, suspended in 1842, and finally completed at the London Science Museum for Babbage's 200th birthday in 1991.”

- A model and the original mirror of the Great Rosse Telescope of Birr Castle, Ireland, I'd heard of it in conjunction with my visit to William and Catherine Herschel's house in Bath last year, but hadn't realized that this 72” telescope, the largest ever made when it was constructed in the 1840s, has been fully restored and is once again operational.
- The Phillips economic computer, a set of clear plastic sluices and adjustable valves (labeled “taxes,” “savings,” “consumer spending,” etc.) which mimics the actions of a national economy when you pour colored water through it.

When I came back the technicians had opened the glass case that the Engine is kept in, and I settled down to observe the test. I would have been perfectly content to watch this incredible collection of wood, brass, and steel go through its paces, but pretty soon I was behind the velvet rope with the technicians, looking over their shoulders, inspecting the results, and making (no doubt helpful) suggestions. Richard soon left, and Reg graciously spent another couple of hours answering my questions and pointing out interesting features of the mechanism until we finally said goodbye just before the museum closed.

Some of the many things I learned that afternoon.

The printer now works, and almost all of the tweaking is

done. That afternoon Reg and Richard were testing the way the printer makes impressions into a heavy Plaster of Paris plate, which would have been used as a positive mold to create lead type plate to print mathematical tables. The numbers were now more even than they had been, but the impressions appeared to vary in depth. Richard said that this was a flaw not in the machine but in the plate—the plaster has to be both flush to the metal frame of the plate and completely flat. They had experimented with many mixtures of plaster and degrees of hardness, having received no direction from Babbage and with no idea how he would have done it. They were still working out the appropriate medium—when I suggested some kind of metal foil they pointed out the risk of disaster if something metallic attached itself to the number faces of the printer; plaster was easy to clean off. Many people, they said, had told them what not to do but no one had yet come up with a good answer.

The printer has two typefaces, large and small, connected with flexible metal strips that allow force to be conveyed to either typeface in an arrangement that Reg called “pure Babbage.”

When they built the printer they extended the main shaft that lifts the cams that drive the columns, but also added a feature that Babbage hadn’t thought to include, the ability to disengage the printer from the shaft and an additional crank on the printer that runs the printer only. The number columns themselves can’t be disengaged from the printer mechanism, but the printer can be run without the engine, and will just print zeros.

The printer can print results either in two columns or directly across the page. Though Reg can’t figure out why anyone would want to do that because it takes so much effort to push the frame back and forth inside the printer. Reg showed me where he installed an oil-filled piston to damp the momentum of the sliding frame to keep it from being propelled right off the edge of the printer (i.e. manual line break). He also showed me how a cylindrical weight drops out of a bracket when the printer reaches the end of the frame, releasing the tension in a wire that connects to the crank (i.e. manual page break). This weight was falling off too soon the afternoon I was there, and needed some kind of adjustment to stay on until the actual end of page.

As I watched, Richard and Reg spelled each other on the crank. It apparently takes a great deal of technique to turn the crank, and in fact I saw Richard jam it at one point by inadvertently slowing down before stopping. It’s necessary to turn the crank at the exact right speed, neither too slowly nor too quickly, and not to accelerate or decelerate. This is challenging because the load on the crank varies during the engine’s four beat cycle (the load increases when the

locking blades lift out of the number wheels). Given that, it seemed to me that the machine might run better if operated by a machine—but a machine wouldn’t have the ability to continuously monitor the workings of the engine by feel. The engine can be driven by one person, though it’s tiring; Reg altered Babbage’s design by installing a 4:1 differential gear at the crank which means the operator faces in the opposite direction from what Babbage had intended. It may be possible for someone to operate the engine with four times the force, but it would be more difficult to turn the crank at a steady rate during the variation on load. It was amusing to listen to the two of them discussing the machine as if it were some kind of ordinary gadget—“give it a few more turns, will you? Try taking it up to 35”—and to watch them tune, tighten, and adjust it, using flathead screwdrivers and a small crowbar, for all the world as if it were an old British motorcycle.

The differential gear is one of the many minor modifications to the original design that Reg made in the course of building the engine and the printer. He showed me a few others, mostly on the printer.

One thing Babbage seems to have neglected was leaving time for operations to complete themselves. There originally wasn’t any time in the cycle, for example, for the thin metal strips that maintain the locations of the number wheels to move in and out of position between the teeth of the wheels. Obviously, they need to move out, along a vertically inclined plane, to allow the wheels to turn, then need to slide into place once the calculation has been made (causing a characteristic crashing/clunking sound). In order to give the wheels time to turn, Reg had to cut some sharp notches into the wheels that turn the shafts that lift and lower the columns and locking strips. Babbage also didn’t include any counterbalances for the weight of the locking strips, though he had included springs to balance the weight of the columns; Reg had to figure out a way to add these himself.

One interesting and effective design feature of the Engine is that when any given piece isn’t moving it’s locked into place; which both prevents damage to the parts and prevents the machine from making errors—“either it gives the correct answer or it jams.” The only problem with this is that the carry hammers sometimes slam into locked number wheels and break off; Reg handed me a shoebox containing half a dozen or so of these. These are the only parts of the machine that are actually subject to breakage. It apparently wasn’t always the case that the machine always gave the correct answer, though; initially they had had a problem with the carry mechanism, and it was Reg’s task to try to determine which of the 200-odd warning levers for the carry hammers wasn’t turning.

Another place Babbage didn’t leave any time for things to



# CAPTAIN FUTURE

by Milt Stevens

## At the Goal Line

James Carthew, the president of the solar system, sat at his desk. Many complex and troubling matters demanded his attention. He needed an eleven-letter word for partisan political re-districting. There was also the matter of the Jovian colonists. They were complaining again. They said the heavy gravity was squishing them into an unpleasant looking reddish goo. Carthew felt little sympathy for them. They should have imagined there was some reason they were finally able to find affordable housing.

Suddenly, a vast form appeared in the doorway of the president's office. It was a giant, hunched creature, bizarrely hideous. "Hi George" the president said as his press secretary shambled into the office. George Brian, press secretary to the president of the solar system, brought more bad news. He didn't know an eleven-letter word for partisan political re-districting.

There was also the matter of an evil space emperor threatening to make monkeys out of all of us if he wasn't given complete control over Venus. "Evil space emperors" the president snorted. Ever since they had unionized with the Teamsters, they were always making demands. The last one had practiced space piracy on a colossal scale. As a result of his mad plan to become parking lot czar of the universe, the solar system was now ten miles less in diameter than it had been. The only good thing that could be said about evil space emperors was they usually had voluptuous daughters. He certainly remembered the last space emperor's daughter, Viagra. She had made him feel like a kid of 105 again.

In response to the current menace, President Carthew had sent a signal to Captain Future at his secret base on the Moon. Actually, that wasn't the first thing he had done, but Super Chicken and Mighty Mouse didn't seem to be returning his calls anymore. Still, Captain Future was a name known throughout the solar system. This was probably because of his billboard campaign, although his TV spots couldn't have hurt either.

Suddenly, a giant figure appeared on the balcony outside the president's office. A moment later, Captain Future strode into the office. Behind Captain Future, his three eldritch assistants entered the office. Captain Future knew that time was of the essence, since his spaceship was double parked on the street outside.

The first of Captain Future's assistants was a manlike figure, but one whose body was rubbery, boneless-looking, blank white in color. His long, slitted green eyes peered brightly out of an alien white face. He also had a list of

ingredients printed on his forehead. This was Otho, the inflatable android. In deflated mode, Otho could easily fit in the glove compartment of a car or be stowed as carry-on luggage on any spaceliner.

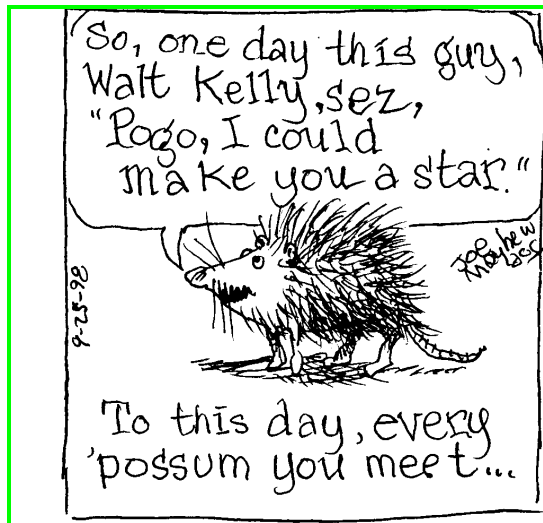
Next came a giant metal robot who strode across the balcony on padded feet. He towered seven feet tall. In his bulbous metal head gleamed a pair of photoelectric eyes. This was Grag, the robot. At the moment, Grag really needed a valve job, and his anti-smog device was considerably out of adjustment.

Last came the strangest of Captain Future's assistants. This was Simon Wright, the Brain.

The Brain had once been a great scientist and friend of Captain Future's parents. All that was left of the living Simon Wright was now housed in a metal box with two glass lens eyes mounted on flexible metal stalks at the front. The box was floating on three invisible beams of repulsive energy. This mode of propulsion was one of Captain Future's earliest inventions which he had developed when he grew tired of carrying the Brain around like a lunch bucket. The Brain had reached this unfortunate condition because of a really bad experience with an acne cream. However, on the plus side, he was no longer troubled by acne. On meeting the Brain, people were always impressed with his vast scientific knowledge and his amazing ability at doing card tricks.

Captain Future himself was one of the strangest stories in the solar system. Before their untimely deaths, his parents, Roger and Elaine Newton, had been two of the greatest scientists of the century. Unfortunately, they were both sucked into a multi-dimensional vortex created by a perverse tachyon flux resonance. This had come as a terrible shock, since they had been in the swimming pool at the time. Their will had left their secret laboratory on the Moon to baby Curt and named the Brain, Otho, and Grag as his guardians. The three had raised young Curt because they needed a fourth to enter barbershop quartet competitions, and there weren't many other prospects on the Moon.

President Carthew quickly explained the situation. An evil space emperor was creating apish atavisms on Venus. The Space Emperor had delivered an ultimatum that the government must either give him complete control of Venus or start shipping an awful lot of bananas. Captain Future's jaw tensed. He knew that alliterative menaces were always



the worst, and apish atavism was certainly alliterative. Captain Future knew that he and his Futuremen must leave for Venus at once before they got a ticket for double parking.

The trip to Venus was uneventful. In the asteroid belt, the Futuremen were attacked by ravening space pirates who chased them to Callisto where both ships crashed. On the surface of the Jovian moon, the Futuremen barely escaped from The Crawling Crystals of Callisto. The Crawling Crystals were a rock group of sorts, and they attacked all organic life in hopes of finding an agent. Unfortunately for them, most agents didn't qualify as organic life.

The attentive reader may have noticed that the asteroid belt and Callisto are not on the most direct route between Earth and Venus. Navigation had never been Captain Future's long suit. However, they did eventually make it to Venus where Captain Future landed his spaceship unobtrusively on the lawn of the governor's mansion. As was his custom, he entered the governor's office through the window. The three occupants of the office gasped in surprise.

"Who are you?" the governor stammered.

Captain Future held out his left hand. On his hand, he wore the Captain Future Secret Decoder Ring known to breakfast cereal eaters throughout the solar system. He then surveyed the office. Quentin Quale, Governor of Venus, sat at his desk. Joan Randall, distressed damsel of the spaceways, stood at one side. Seated across from the governor was Barton Snarkley, the inter-planetary fast food magnate. With his Snarkley's Super Sandwiches, he had carved out a greasy empire from the barbecues of Mercury to the frozen food section of Pluto. His new spicy crunchbird sandwiches were condemned by nutritionists everywhere. He had tried to appeal to animal rights activists by saying you didn't have to kill many crunchbirds to make an awful lot of

sandwiches. This was true, since crunchbirds were between 10 and 20 feet tall and could weigh several tons.

Just before Captain Future had entered, Joan Randall had been reporting on the worsening situation. The local hospital was already filled with the devolved victims, and discarded banana peels were making it dangerous for the staff to work. Barton Snarkley interrupted at this point to suggest that the time had come for panic. Only hysterical flight could save humans from a hairy end. Ever the optimist, Captain Future vowed to find a cure for this monstrous menace. Snarkley emitted a high-pitched giggle which caused every dog within half a mile to begin howling. Undeterred, Captain Future asked Joan Randall to take him to the hospital, so he could see the menace for himself.

On entering one of the closed atavism wards, Joan Randall explained that men turning into apes wasn't even the worst part of the devolutionary process. Some of them developed a morbid fascination with ice hockey, and a few of them had even become New York Mets fans. Suddenly, Captain Future's ultra sensitive hearing detected a menacing sound. The door behind them had just been locked. At the same instant, some of the apes became distracted from watching I Love Lucy re-runs and noticed their new visitors. A wave of angry snarling engulfed the ward. They really didn't like being interrupted while watching I Love Lucy re-runs. The monstrous beasts began advancing on Captain Future and Joan Randall. Saliva was dripping from their fangs, and their eyes glowed with bestial fury. There was only one chance left for Captain Future. He pulled a tube out of his utility belt and held it in front of the advancing creatures.

#### BURMA SHAVE!

The fury of the beastmen instantly changed to gibbering horror. They acked and they ooked as they fled in terror from the substance they knew meant an end for all hairy horrors. The principles of good grooming had triumphed once again.

After being released from the atavism ward, Captain Future consulted with the Brain on devising a cure for the atavistic menace. Captain Future knew that the pituitary gland was located somewhere in the human body, and it must do something-or-other. Since the casual reader probably didn't know what the pituitary gland did either, paralyzing the pituitary gland might cause atavistic devolution. The Brain crossed his eye-stalks in intellectual admiration. He would immediately start working on a cure which should be available within a matter of days.

Captain Future had another assignment for Otho. Aside from being an inflatable android, Otho was also the master of disguise. Captain Future told Otho to take the form of a Venusian native and find more information on the Space

Emperor. Governor Quale suspected there was unrest among the native population. The mortar round that had landed in the middle of his desk last week had made him suspicious.

In the meantime, Joan Randall had discovered a clue. Outside the atavism ward, she had discovered a matchbook from the Quantum Hole, one of the most notorious dives in all of Venusport. Since it was undoubtedly the Space Emperor who had locked them in the ward, this might be a clue to his whereabouts. Captain Future agreed with her reasoning and departed for the Quantum Hole immediately.

Captain Future knew the Quantum Hole was located on the Street of Loathsome Diseases in the slimiest part of Venusport. Just as a precaution, he decided to take Grag with him. On entering the Quantum Hole, he saw the bar was lined with grizzled spacers. They were all busily drinking xeno, the beverage preferred by nine out of ten space sots. At the end of the bar stood a menacing figure in a billowing black suit. It was a zoot suit with the drape shape and the reet pleat. Captain Future suspected he might be dealing with an illegal alien. The figure's head was covered by a helmet that revealed only two glaring eyes.

"Well, if it isn't Captain Future," the Space Emperor growled, "I've seen your TV spots."

Captain Future went into action instantly. He took a flying leap at the menacing figure. However, rather than colliding with the Space Emperor, he passed entirely through the Space Emperor and hit the bar with a resounding crash. The Space Emperor emitted a high-pitched giggle which shattered the mirror behind the bar and caused one spacer to exhale xeno through his nose. After that, the Space Emperor calmly floated through the nearest wall and disappeared.

After taking two aspirins, Captain Future considered the situation. From his vast scientific knowledge, he knew that if a person could transubstantiate their flim and flam emissions they could create a plot hole through solid matter. The Space Emperor must have discovered a way of doing just that.

Captain Future had a hunch. For some reason, he was becoming suspicious of Barton Snarkley and his fast food operation. He wanted to investigate one of Snarkley's Super Sandwich Shops, but he didn't want to be observed. So he borrowed a flier from Governor Quale and landed in the jungle near one of Snarkley's sites. Walking through the jungle, he observed Venusian dingbats ricocheting from tree to tree in their haphazard approximation of flight. Somewhere to his left, he heard trees being smashed into kindling by what could only be a flock of wandering crunchbirds. When he looked down, he saw a slithering glorp was trying to eat his left boot. Captain Future had never really been fond of jungles on backward planets. Or

any other stinkin' jungles for that matter.

Finally, he reached the clearing surrounding the sandwich shop. He stood motionless for several hours observing the operation. At change of shift, he watched the Venusian workers leave by the back door. As each of them left, they were handed automatic weapons and incendiary grenades. Nothing unusual about that on a backward planet. However, he also observed something much more sinister. Each worker was also given one of the Forbidden Chili Dogs of Mars. Captain Future knew that ancient Martian warriors had consumed these Chili Dogs to give themselves a maniacal bloodlust. The heartburn would do that to even the most peaceful people.

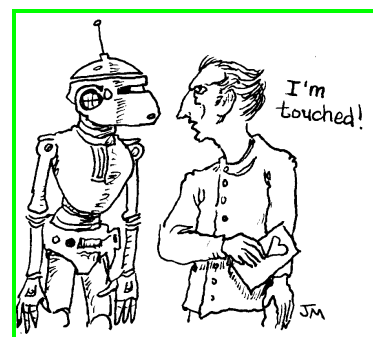
Returning from the sandwich shop, he told the Brain and Grag what he had observed. After listening to his account, the Brain announced some good news. He had discovered a cure for the devolutionary disability. It consisted of one part tabasco, one part clam juice, and one part xeno. One shot of the cure would turn Earthmen back into their normal form. The Brain had tried the substance on some of the corpses at the morgue, and it also revived them if they hadn't been dead for more than three days.

"And my valves don't clatter anymore either" Grag added quietly.

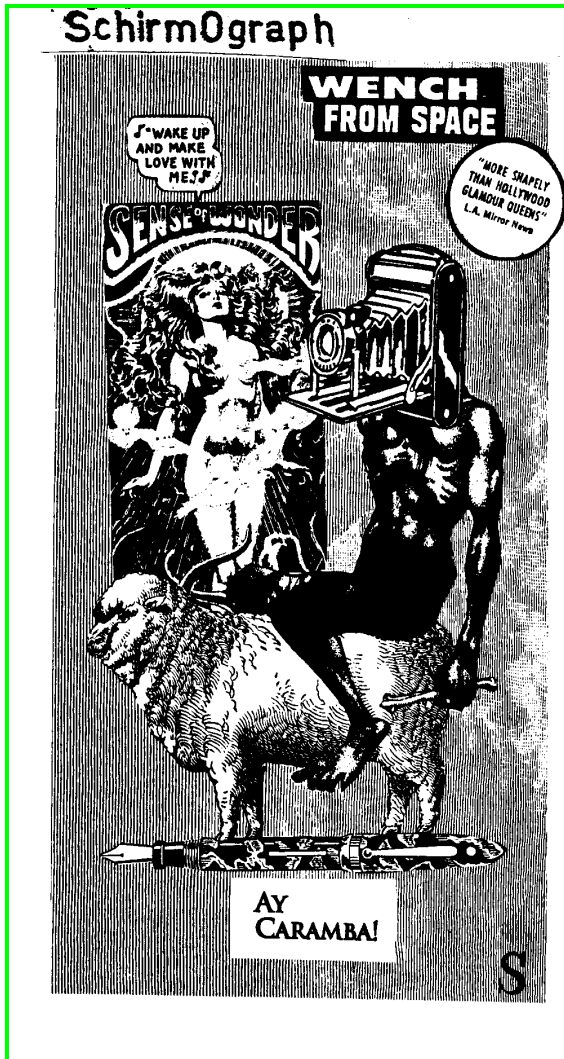
At that moment, a Venusian burst into their meeting. Captain Future immediately recognized it was Otho returned from his mission. Otho explained he had fallen in with two Venusian homeboys named Chuy and Lil Loco. Otho had accepted their offer to drive around in their Tchevyar and smoke ookookweed. Three days later, it had occurred to Otho he should probably ask about the Space Emperor. Chuy and Lil Loco knew of him as the Living Ancient One. As Lil Loco had put it, "Who else but an Ancient One would wear a zoot suit?"

The Ancient Ones were a long vanished Venusian civilization. Earth scientists believed the Ancient Ones had developed a high order of civilization with mutual funds, leveraged buy-outs, and deficit financing. Centuries ago, the Ancient Ones had been forced into chapter 29 bankruptcy which required the liquidation of the entire species.

Lil Loco had provided more information. As he put it, "There's going to be beeg doings out at Deadsville tonight. There's going to be displays of the latest Tchevyars, three live



## SchirmOgraph



bands, and for a finale the Living Ancient One is going to turn a beautiful Earthwoman into an atavistic horror for our entertainment. After that, we're all going to go crazy and keel all the Earthmen. We aren't going to keel all the Earthwomen. Chust the ugly ones."

There was no time to lose. The sun was setting, and tonight was the night the Space Emperor's vile plot would come to fruition. Deadsville was a ruined city of the Ancient Ones located twenty miles outside Venusport. The Futuremen rushed to their spaceship and were soon in flight towards Deadsville.

They landed just outside a clearing where ten thousand Venusians were wildly partying. Approaching the clearing, they could see the Space Emperor standing on a platform in front of the multitude. In front of the platform, there was a giant bubbling cauldron filled with an evil looking green substance.

"Wholly guacamole." Captain Future observed. That was it.

Guacamole was an essential ingredient of the spicy crunchbird sandwich. Space Emperor Snarkley had been using the guacamole to transmit the apish atavism. However, there was one more thing to be observed. Joan Randall was wrapped in a giant tortilla and suspended over the cauldron of molten goo. There was only one thing to do. The Futuremen advanced.

"Ah, you have arrived just in time to see Miss Randall dipped," the Space Emperor taunted.

In response, Captain Future pulled a small plastic object out of his utility belt.

"You're threatening me with a duck call?" the Space Emperor sneered.

Without a moment's hesitation, Captain Future let loose with a resounding honk. For several seconds, nothing happened. Then a distant rumbling began to grow. Soon, the very ground itself was shaking.

"CRUNCHBIRDS!!!" the Venusians screamed in unison. Within a matter of seconds, ten thousand Venusians had piled into one thousand Tchevycars and fled into the night. While the Futuremen continued to advance towards the Space Emperor, they began to harmonize. As they hit the correct harmonic, Captain Future's flim and flam emissions were transubstantiated, and he was able to enter the plot hole where the Space Emperor had been hiding. The Space Emperor was only barely able to slip out the other end of the plot hole before being grabbed by Captain Future. At that point, he was teetering at the edge of the platform. With a dreadful shriek, he plunged head first into the cauldron of molten guacamole. Now, it was only a minor matter to rescue Joan Randall. Of course, Captain Future was too much of a gentleman to remove the tortilla immediately.

While he hated to mention it, the Brain thought he should point out there was still a herd of stampeding crunchbirds converging on their location.

"Not to worry," Captain Future stated casually.

As the crunchbirds entered the clearing, they slowed their pace to a slow walk. They began sniffing the air suspiciously. Then with a chorus of wild squawking, they stampeded back in the opposite direction.

"Crunchbirds are violently allergic to guacamole," Captain Future observed.

In the aftermath of these events, Governor Quale took complete responsibility for defeating the Space Emperor and restoring peace on Venus. However, he did award the Futuremen a lifetime supply of guacamole. Soon, the Futuremen were on their way back to the Moon with only a couple of stops for barbershop quartet gigs.