

THE AMOR DE COSMOS PEOPLE'S MEMORIAL QUIET - REVOLUTIONARY

SUSANZINE



3

I am sitting at my dining-room table, in front of my room-mate's new electric typer. There's a large cup of coffee, a small silver goblet of chocolate mint liqueur, a file of letters and another of lettercarbons littering the table. "Yessongs" plays behind me, as I try to decide whether I like Pretentious Art Rock.

I'm writing a letter to my friends. It may be full of typos, since I've never used either this machine, or these strange dark-blue stencils on which you can barely see the white carbon. Typos or not, I hope my affection for you all comes through. I enjoy chatting to you.

No, this isn't FOOLSCAP. Or HITCHHIKE. This is THE AMOR DE COSMOS PEOPLE'S MEMORIAL QUIET-REVOLUTIONARY SUSANZINE #3, a fanzine that aims to do what FOOL and its ilk do: tell you all a little bit about where I am, physically and mentally, say hello, maybe provoke a few thoughts.

And, especially, say thank you.

Almost two weeks ago, you people out there gave me, Susan Wood, a Hugo award as Best Fanwriter of 1973. I still can't quite believe it happened; I still haven't stopped being delighted that it did.

AMOR #4, when/if I ever get it written, will contain my report on a convention that began on August 24 with a meeting of Sneezey Waters Fandom in the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, Ontario; and ended on September 6/7 at an exotic party in Greenwich Village.

Meanwhile, this is AMOR #3, Gobrin Press Publication #2, the special guilt-edged issue of my all--to-infrequent (watch that repeat key, Susan) lettersubstitute.. (I said to watch out for those repeat keys, didn't I? Now pay attention, fingers!)

It is Friday the thirteenth of September in Regina, Saskatchewan, up here in the north-central flatness of North America. The rain which greeted me when I flew back last Saturday night has finally ended; broken clouds fill the immense prairie sky, above trees already turning gold and brown after nights of frost. My clock radio has been waking me up to temperatures like 37° and the news that, no, the administration and the support staff of the University of Regina have not yet reached a contract settlement, and so "study sessions" (in which the secretaries, the cleaners, the cafeteria people and so on leave the teaching staff and students to cope without them. It's been chaotic, since final registration and the first week of classes have been going on simultaneously, with admin. people filling in and fubling up proceedings. If picket lines are set up-- possibly next Tuesday--- I'll simply stay home with the typewriter.. My apparently-conservative department chairman supports the general refusal of teachers and students to cross picket lines. There's a remarkable mood of solidarity forever, a welcome change from the internal tensions that were my introduction to the department, a year ago.)



Alright: one stencil done. A bit messy. If I were reviewing AMOR and happened to be in a receptive mood, I'd probably murmur something about its "informal charm." My aforementioned room-mate, Eli Cohen, peered at me on his way to put Rick Wakeman's "Journey to the Centre of the Earth"-- one of the world's more Arty and Pretentious albums--- on the stereo. He expressed surprise that I was just sitting down, with a typer I didn't know and stencils I didn't use, with no layout planned and no rough drafts composed, to Produce a Fanzine.. I explained that what I was doing was typing to my friends.....

OK, repeat key, do your stuff! (!!!! whee.....)

Yes, David Emerson, I DO talk in parentheses. Relax; I always go on until I reach the end, then stop.

Physically, I am where I was a year ago: in Regina, Saskatchewan, teaching Canadian Literature at the University of Regina. I may describe my apartment, Gobrin Heights, later; on the other hand, I may describe a new place, since this one, though lovely and luxurious, has a serious drawback: the landlord. I spent most of the worldcon worrying about the various illegal things he was trying to do to me; my lawyer leaned on him, and we've reached a stalemate until my lease expires at the end of October. I moved 5 times in just over a year, which, since I am basically a Rooted person (and since one of those moves was over 1600 miles, over an eight-month period) was a decidedly unpleasant experience. I don't like having my life in three locations at once! However, moving is now a habit; I'm rather good at it. Watch this space for a COA. The Department of English, University of Regina, Regina, Sask. S4S 0A2 is always safe. You can even send fanzines there; they already know I'm ... a little different.

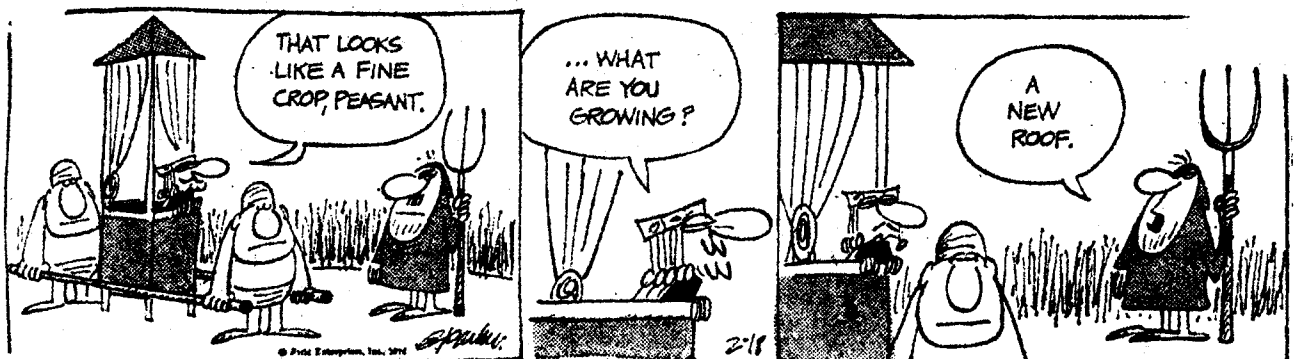
("Weird? We never do anything weird!" as the Avocado Pit once remarked.....)

((("Gobrin Heights" is not only a tribute to a work of literature I admire extravagantly, but an acknowledgement of the fact that Regina, Saskatchewan is Gethen/Winter. \*sigh\*))

((((WHY does this stencil keep wrinkling?)))

So: the writer, Ken Mitchell, whom I was replacing in the English Department for eight months came back, and proved to be a Fine Person. But the English Department decided, even in the face of budget cuts which cost us three people, that it still needed me around, for another year at least. And I decided I liked Regina: good people, clean air, the only drawback the major one of being 2,000 miles in any direction, at least, from the people I love.

Mentally, however, I'm... well, let's say I'm in Washington, D.C. It's 7 am on Monday September 2, and I haven't had any sleep for days.. I'm standing on the balcony of the



Minneapolis suite with a select group of Good People-- John Berry, I remember, and Michael Carlson I think, and Barry Smotroff and Mike Gorra. David Emerson is playing his autoharp, and I'm dancing barefoot to the music, trailing the sleeves of the dress I made to be a beautiful Hugoloser in.. The sky is pink and gold, the air cool, the trees and streets below quiet... golden light on the horizon, and, with the autoharp leading, we break into a chorus of "Here Comes the Sun." Suddenly, I'm part of that sunrise glow. I know that life can never be finer than this night just passed, this moment now. I know that whatever I want to be or do, I can make it possible.

And I know that I have friends; and that they cared enough about the words I wrote, sitting at a typewriter in Regina, Saskatchewan, to give them a Hugo. The award itself is beautiful; I've been getting all sorts of egoboo showing it off to the English Department, and, especially, the people from last year's sf class who've been dropping in to say "hi!" What the award means is more important. I've been communicating to you; these words have been setting up a link between your lives and mine.... It's a fine feeling.

I brought a little of that sunrise glow back. So far, it's survived rain, cold, Regina Flu, my landlord, and all the pressures of the first week of class. Thank you.

#### GUILTY GUILTY GUILTY:

Of course, I already had evidence that you-out-there were reading AMOR. The zine started as (and hopes to remain) a small, frequent letter-substitute, published to keep in touch with my friends. I'm working full-time as a university teacher. I love the job-- or as Joe Haldeman said to me at the worldcon, "I have lots of hobbies, it just happens I get paid for some of them." However, with three new classes last semester, and one-and-a-half this semester to prepare, I don't have much time for fanac. At times, I positively long for a job that would be over at 5 pm Friday.

Nevertheless, between marking essays, talking to students, getting my sf class through the seven levels of ~~AMOR~~ official administrative approval, ordering books (most of which seemed to go out of print three days after I gave the bookstore my order), drinking coffee and chatting to Rick-in-the-next-office, I published several of these letter-substitute thingies.

And got letters back.

Now I'm really proud that the words I send out bring an immediate chatty airmail from David Piper in England... two airmails from Paul Anderson in Australia... a three-page letter from my Minneapolis sibling Mike Wood... an EIGHT-PAGE letter from John Berry?! What's going on here? AMOR, instead of substituting for the letters I haven't written, is generating more mail...

From Ursula LeGuin, and Terry Carr (who warns me about my landlord); from Bruce Gillespie who complains he doesn't have time to write to anyone, and from my friend Debby Davis, isolated in the wilds of New Brunswick, who got, I think, a note from me on her Christmas card; from David Emerson, who calls AMOR "completely unloccable" on the back of a computer printout which states:

I AM NOT NOW, NEVER HAVE BEEN, AND NEVER WILL BE, A DOG PERSON --- LATENT OR OTHERWISE.

David goes on to say: "By condensing a long rap about Home, Roots, Growing Up, and the intrinsic eccentricity of the intelligensia (eg, fandom) into the single comment, "I'm more comfortable with normal people," you might have given some few (who obviously don't know me) the mistaken impression that I myself am straight, normal and dull. What a horrible fate!.... Oh, by the way, Asenath's ex-husband is not a ceramic frog. He's a

wax frog. My regards to the wheat."

My apologies to Mr. Emerson (I just report those fabulous fannish conversations!) Let me assure my readers that no-one who plays invisible electric guitar the way David does could possibly be thought "dull."

And I got a two-page letter from Harry Warner, Jr., with the welcome news that he'd finished the draft of the second ALL OUR YESTERDAYS, some 140,000 words; and letters and a plastic-covered chocolate doughnut from the amazing and charming Sheryl Birkhead; and a series of letters from Angus Taylor, containing suggestions for my sf class (assign an essay on "Apocalyptic visions in H.G. Wells and the Mothers of Invention," "Why LORD OF THE FLIES is a hard-core sf novel and why STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND is not".... "Make it up as you type, the way I did just now. They'll lap it up. Remember, to be academic, OBFUSCATE! Give "obscure glimpses into the obvious," as my father likes to say... people do this sort of obscure, hard-to-fathom game-playing mainly because it's fun!")

Angus also talked about his job at Toronto's Spaced Out Library, the sf collection: "At the library, we have made it up to 'C' in the cataloguing-- to John Christopher (Youd, Christopher Samuel, 1922- ) to be specific. I'm not sure what this endless intimacy with thousands of sf books and magazines is doing to my relationship with the genre (as we say.) Maybe I should be getting surfeited (is that the word?)-- fed up. I keep meaning to give up this sf nonsense entirely, but then on my lunch hour I wander into the nearest bookstore and (shudder) find myself standing in front of the sf rack. It's like heroin, I guess.

"As I was nonchalantly (chalantly?) cataloguing a book by Chambers, Robert William, 1865-1933, today I happened upon the enclosed poem, which I thought you might enjoy:

Where the slanting forest eaves,  
Shingled tight with greenest leaves,  
Sweep the scented meadow-sedge,  
Let us snoop along the edge;  
Let us pry in hidden nooks,  
Laden with our nature books,  
Scaring birds with happy cries,  
Chloroforming butterflies,  
Rooting up each woodland plant,  
Pinning beetle, fly, and ant,  
So we may identify  
What we've ruined, by-and-by.

"SOL is buying a \$250 limited-edition copy of BRAVE NEW WORLD, 1932, signed by Huxley.. (The name is Marvin Huxley, isn't it-- I'm sure that man on Bloor St. with the trench coat and dark glasses wouldn't have tried to put something over on me...)"

I got letters. Also, after my first "Clubhouse" column in AMAZING appeared, I got fanzines. (In case you wondered, the printers inadvertently dropped the second column, which means my reviews of last January's fmz are only now appearing. \*grnrsh\*) Through June, I kept a mail count: I got an average of 2.5 fanzines and 5.8 letters per day, not counting mundane mail like bills, magazines, and letters from my relations who, like the rest of you, are convinced I've run off to Argentina. (After seeing Mae Strelkov's photos, I think that might be an idea.)

Look, people, I enjoy your letters, and I try to read your fanzines. I appreciate the fact you're thinking of me. But I have an extremely demanding job. I have a busy life to live, here in the Real World.

I also have A Thesis.

My friends are as sick of my immense and boring dissertation on Canadian agrarian novels as I am. At times, I think the only thing keeping me going is the Alexis Gilliland cartoon I want to publish with the announcement that I'm finished at last.

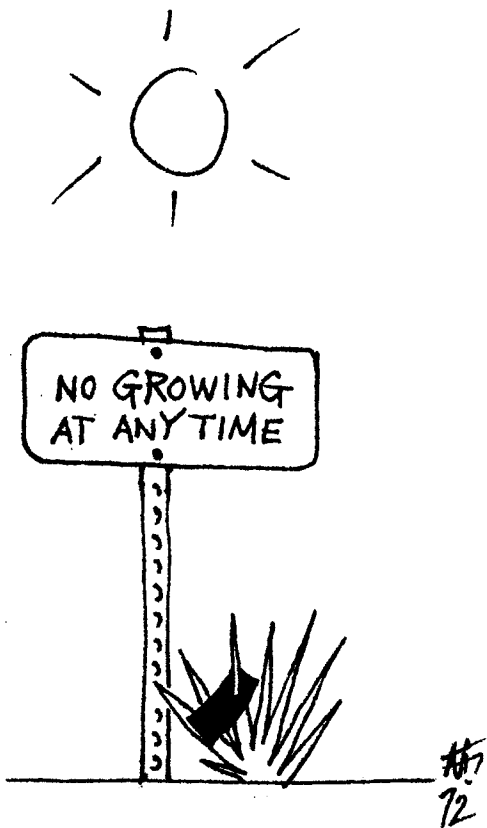
This summer, I basically threw out 2 years' work and 400 pages of draft, and started over. The thing is now written once. The final draft of the first half, some 150 pages, has been accepted by my advisor. I hope to have finished the complete manuscript by Christmas. This means total concentration. I'm flattered as all get-out that so many of you want articles from me, but please understand... I CAN'T. The work I'm doing is important to my career. It's also important in and of itself; I had ten days in the National Library in Ottawa, doing the best writing of my entire academic career, writing that, if it's ever done, will be a standard work in Canadian literary criticism for many years. I'm lucky; I've got work to do that I believe in and care about. But I have to get it done....

So how did I spend my summer? When we last left our heroine, she was leaving cold, leafless Regina for springtime in New York: two crammed-full three-ring circus weeks of seeing friends, seeing the Met (thank you, Freff) and the Botanical Gardens (thank you, Jon Singer) and the slums (about those dulcimer parts, David Miller) and the Cloisters (beautiful! thank you, Eli) and "Moonchildren," "Jumpers" "Candide" "Ulysses in Night-town" and "The Firebird." Enjoyed every minute, even of a flawed production of "Jumpers" (the theatrical and philosophical parts didn't mesh, and the woman playing Dotty couldn't act.) I fell in love with the Lincoln Center fountain as it danced for us; I spent hours in the FAO Schwartz toystore; I tried not to buy books; and, best of all, I was met as I stepped off the plane by Richard Labonte, looking healthy after a 3-month leave. I hope he writes up his adventures in the rain at Big Sur, descending the Grand Canyon, and climbing mountains.

I flew home to a pile of unanswered mail; moved; spent a long wet weekend sewing floor-length drapes and two weeks setting up my first real home.

Then summer came. I went out to the university every morning, sat in my gorgeous airconditioned office, read dull books all morning, and then took my body and my peanutbutter sandwiches over to the gym. We have a warm, not-overly-chlorinated pool, new and bright. The only disadvantage is that the pool manager pipes in the local muzak station over the pa system. Every day, I did lengths to the Carpenters, feeling like a trained seal-- not a bad feeling, really, considering how sleek and agile the average seal is. Then I took my sandwiches out to the lawn behind the pool.

Sun. Temperatures between 120 and 130 degrees warmer than they had been six months before. Grass, trees, the TransCanada Highway in the distance, then nothing between me and Winnipeg. The immense, blueblue prairie sky above. Peace. This summer was good for my soul.



# Guerilla Cows

A  
CAUTIONARY  
AGRARIAN  
TALE

BY

ELIZABETH  
BUCHAN  
KIMMERLY



In the isolated cottages and farms of Eastern Ontario, they huddle together tonight. The quiet countryside has been under a veil of fear-- terrorized by roving bands of wild guerrilla cows: the vanguard of the Barnyard Liberation Front.

The BLF is the political arm of a revolutionary movement which is growing rapidly in the swamps of the Ottawa Valley. A similar front, "Le mouvement des betes de Quebec libre," is believed to be organizing secretly in West Hull.

The bands of cows are rarely seen by non-residents. Cottagers in this peaceful tourist region have reported damage to ornamental plantings but have not seen the BLF in action. Train passengers have reported seeing up to twenty cows watching railway lines from swamps along the tracks. The bare grey trunks of drowned jackpine are perfect camouflage for the renegade Holsteins.

As yet, no trains have been attacked. "They just stand there looking," reports one unnerved conductor. "Sometimes they chew their cud. They don't seem to be armed, but just one cow on the tracks and we could have a disaster on our hands."

The conductor has asked to be transferred to another line.

Kamikaze tactics are rarely used by the cows, however. The elite "Chicken" corps, (which also includes turkeys, barn swallows, and supposedly a disaffected parakeet) has been known to attack small planes by flying into their propellers. Shock troops of highly-disciplined sheep, the so-called "Panzer-Kibee" are also rumoured to exist but no definite actions have been as yet attributed to them.

It is difficult to find out the true programme of the Barnyard Liberation Front.

Very few humans can speak Cow, and even fewer the Pigeon which is the lingua franca of the animals. It is believed however that the BLF's public programme for more grazing time and less uric acid in their diets, an end to inhumane feedlots and widespread subsidy of the production of soybeans is only a front for their real purpose: the worldwide victory of the menace of International Vegetarianism.

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Susan again: Vegetarianism is one of the things I could talk about: my happy hours with the Tassajara cookbook, and the recipe I evolved for a casserole I tasted in New York, called "Enter Bela Lugosi" or something odd like that. I could talk about the costs of setting up an apartment from scratch (have you any idea what a flour sifter costs, not to mention purple sheets?) I could talk about fandom, or Life. Or how I didn't see Joni Mitchell, because there was a blizzard and the highway north to Sasatoon was closed. Joni's on the stereo now, reminding me she was raised in Saskatchewan; now it's fall, all that stays is dyin', all that lives is gettin' out... I could tell you about being an Old Folkie, rediscovering music after six years away, running wild through the Greenwich Village Happy Tunes store (thank you, Barry Smotroff.)

But I want to get AMOR out. Eight pages, first-drafted onto stencil, hope they print ok, because either I do the zine now, to thank you all, or I'm silent for three months. I came home from the worldcon to 11 bills, book club statements and the like; 6 prozines and two academic journals; 19 fanzines, not counting the dozen or so from the con; a pile of birthday cards; 23 personal letters; and apa-45 and FAPA bundles. Just to keep me busy. I have a Hugo; I'm overwhelmed with fanac; maybe I should just vanish into FAPA and become a legend?

I'd miss you all. I'm happy-- with a little help from my friends. Thank you.

\* This has been THE AMOR DE COSMOS etc., produced by Susan Wood, 2920 Victoria Ave., Apt. 12, Regina, Sask. S4T 1K7 for her friends; for FAPA mailing 149; and for apa-45 mailing 41. It is Not Generally Available otherwise. Gobrin Press Publication #2 provided I put in an order to Gestetner next week. Cover: Cathryn Miller. Art: p. 6, Alexis Gilliland, a Good Person; p. 7, my charming groupie Freff. Regina: September 14, 1974

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