

# CAPTAIN FLASHBACK

A fanzine for the 392nd distribution of the Turbo-Charged Party-Animal Amateur Press Association, from the joint membership of Andy Hooper and Carrie Root, residing at 11032 30<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE Seattle, WA 98125. E-mail Andy at fanmailaph@aol.com, and Carrie at carrieroot49@yahoo.com. This is a Drag Bunt Press Production, completed on 2/22/2019.

**CAPTAIN FLASHBACK** is devoted to old fanzines, monster movies, garage bands and other fascinating phenomena of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Issue #3 is a grab-bag of antique subjects, considering first the return of a family artifact that made a major impression on me in my childhood; and a pair of fan articles by Mae Strelkov (1917-2000) in the **I REMEMBER ENTROPY** Department. As the only known fanzine fan in Northwest Argentina, Mae brought a unique perspective to her activities. The two articles offered here were published in the middle 1980s, and reminded me of similar stories published by members of the Turbo-Apa in more recent decades.

But the label on the box indicated it had come from the Michigan hinterlands, telling me that it was a gift from my Uncle Tom Oakey. I have always enjoyed Tom's company when it was to be had, but between his career as a Michigan State Police officer, and his passion for hunting and other ways to spend time in the wilderness, it was a challenge to keep up with him. Tom inherited some genes shared with his great Uncle Arthur Oakey, and his cousin Washington Joseph Oakey, who was once trapped in a tree by a wounded moose for several hours. Arthur was a one-time high school principal who seems to have retreated to a cabin in the woods and spent the bulk of his last 20 years up in the forests around Rhinelander. The preserved skin and head of a fairly robust black bear decorated a wall or the back of a couch in my grandmother's house, courtesy of Tom's marksmanship. I was induced to pose nude on this pelt as an infant, which sadly failed

[Continued on Page 6]

## THE SWORD OF OAKEY: Memory and Metal

Not long after January 1<sup>st</sup>, I was busily typing in descriptions of old fanzines for auction when the doorbell rang in what seemed to be a particular urgent manner, as if someone were really leaning on the button, and making one ring run directly into another. I bounded up the stairs as fast as I could, to find a delivery driver half-concealed behind a long box balanced on the top step. I was mystified at first, and assumed it was something which my brother-in-law Gary had shipped to himself in care of us; he has a scheme to transit the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence this coming summer in some kind of roped-together craft made of kayaks, and has been sending us things like winch-drills and solar-powered scooters so that he can collect them on his way to Minnesota...from New Zealand.



My Grandfather Phil Oakey's dress saber

---

Issue #3, February, 2019

---

---

I look at the clock, I look at the blade, and I suddenly realize: I haven't peened my tang!

---

**Comments on Turbo-Apa #391:**

**Cover (Jeannie Bergman):** Once again, I'm just crogged at the quality of the art and imagery that people have been putting on the front and back of the APA in recent months. This made me think of both Maurice Sendak and H.R. Giger. Well done!

**AN WISCONZINE,** Greg Rihn: *Aquaman, Mortal Engines, Mary Poppins Returns.* This season's selection of genre films seemed a bit like the bottom of some barrel was being scraped; a decade ago, we made jokes about the possibility of a movie of *Aquaman*. *MPR* seemed like by far the most worthy effort of those three; it would be interesting to juxtapose its view of magic with *The Crimes of Grindlewald*.

Of all the events you reviewed or reacted to here, the one which really grabbed my imagination was the presentation on historic fashion by curator Rose Gamberger at the Wauwatosa Historical Society. I love to be there when musicologists and archivists get to talk about the things they find personally interesting, as opposed to what everyone sees in the public exhibits.

**MADISON FOURSQUARE #28,** Scott Custis & Jeanne Gomoll: : I was certainly impressed by your lists of movies and books enjoyed in 2018. As usual, you go to the movies about 8 times for every picture we actually see. I guess we have put more effort into following a number of challenging TV shows instead. As ever, you remind me of the late Bill Bowers, who would have found a two-page spread full of lists the very sublime height of the fanzine art.

I have not chosen to reply to your proposed change to the APA deadline yet, as I was hoping to see some response from Hope and Karl before I did so. A fanzine of some kind from them is always a signal event, and I thought it possible they might be moved to reply to you; we'll see.

Changing from a fixed deadline to a floating date 30 days after distribution would not, I think, bode well for our long term survival. The certain knowledge that the deadline, at least, is generally immutable, is the only thing upon which the members of the APA can genuinely depend; change the deadline every single time, and I think we will soon become extinct.

Would it be easier to contribute to Turbo if the apa were made available more quickly? Certainly, it would; but I also think there are many, many changes that could be made to make it easier to contribute to and receive the apa. Everyone should be allowed to submit their zines electronically, to be printed, at the creator's expense, at the Madison printing outlet of the OE's choice. Apas ought to be mailed to everyone the day after they are collated— it costs less than \$3.00, for Gosh sake. When we were all broke graduate students, making people bicycle over to my house to pick up the apa made sense, as we wanted to save money at all costs. But I think it would be worth a few bucks a month to have the apa delivered to my door, even if I still lived in Madison.

I assume you have a similar list of things regarding the apa that you would like to see modified, but unlike me, you actually live in Madison, and could receive submissions by hand if you took over the duties of the OE for a time (yes, Scott, again). A year ought to be plenty of time to establish some new practices, like public accounts, timely mailing, and yes, a more rigidly enforced deadlines. And I think you might have more time to recruit new and returning members, now that both of you are retired....

I'm philosophically resigned to having Hope and Karl run the apa, and I'm always going to be grateful to them for all the effort that this has required of them for what is rapidly approaching 20 years. But I would also eagerly support the ambition of another Madison resident to have a try at the job; even to the extent of personally reimbursing Hope and Karl for the cost of the new Turbo-Stapler.

**SONOVA QUARK**, Steven Vincent Johnson: I read your remarks on all the tedious calculation going into your orbital mechanics installation. I'm incapable of following the mathematics myself, but the idea still really excites me. It sounds rather like something an artist would create in one of Iain M. Banks' "Culture" novels. Of course, it also sounds like the first step toward something much more sophisticated – once you've fixed the object's position, it's other dimensions can be illustrated – atmospheric and geological forces, or even cooler, its magnetic field. You might not be interested in pasting that on top of your sublime orbits, but someone will.

**TAGALONG**, Darlene Coltrain: Kitties! I enjoyed the "nature documentary" set in your living room. Cat stories have always been a staple of the Turbo-Apa, but seldom in such a boldly colorful manner. Back when we started the apa, one would have had to tip in actual photographic prints to accomplish a similar impact, and we did just that sometimes. Heck, I sometimes pasted in baseball cards in my desperation to provide some kind of graphic variety.

Some Christmas trees are more durable than others – we got more than three weeks out of ours this year, having splurged on an artfully trimmed noble fir. It's leaning up against the picnic table outside my window as I type this, waiting for me to lop off the limbs and saw up the trunk. Most likely, we'll burn it on New Year's eve – last year's Christmas boughs have started the bonfire for the last several years running. You want some mystic solstice ritual? Step back or your mukluks will scorch.

**THINGS THAT BEGIN WITH H**, Jim Hudson and Diane Martin: 40 photographs fit on to a single sheet of paper, and they were all clear and colorful, with no sign of bleed-through. Such wonders we have lived to see!

Meanwhile, I've been thinking about what to send you to contribute to your rebuilding library. I think my reaction to these events would be similar to yours; I'm sure I would be reluctant to

really contemplate what had been lost, let alone worry about assuming responsibility for a similarly vulnerable and entirely new collection. At the same time, if people want to send me books, I'm not yet at a point where I would tell them to stop. I wondered if you might like to have a copy of **WARHOON 28**, the collection of Walt Willis' writing published by Richard Bergeron in the late 1970s? It's one of my favorite of all fan accomplishments, and I have inherited an "extra" copy from the late Randy Byers. I could auction it off, and probably make \$50 or \$100, but I think Randy would really like to think of it sitting in your newly unflooded library, alongside gifts from Pat Murphy, et al. And I'd make a contribution to TAFF or something in honor of the transfer of title. Watch the skies.

I appreciated your kind comments on my reprints, as well as your personal impressions of Ed Wood. As fuggheads go, Ed was not among the more malicious or toxic figures of his time; at the convention in question, people seem to have a somewhat lower opinion of Chairman Don Lundry than of fuggheads like Ed, however loud-mouthed. So many conventions of that period seem to be recalled with a sense of what might have been....

**Another Shot of Winter, With All the Fluff Falling Down**, Jim & Ruth Nichols: You expressed two things that jumped out at me, Ruth: Your wish that you had guest rooms and other space to allow family members to say with you during the holidays; and the observation that during the Christmas season, one is expected to be happy, regardless of one's larger situation. There were some flashes of real fun during the holidays, but most of them seemed to revolve around friends and activities that we would find pleasant at any time of year – playing board games, gathering for Chinese and Thai dinners, sitting around a campfire on our patio on a chilly evening. There is only the dimmest reflection of the lengthy orgy of gift-opening, carol-playing, bacon and cookie gobbling that characterized the

---

It is annoying, but hey, live and let learn.

---

---

“Socially, a journalist fits in somewhere between a whore and a bartender...”

---

**Comments on Turbo-Apa #391, concluded:**

yuletide of old. I like the fact that my Christmas is a little more austere now, and that those holidays of my youth glow so brightly by comparison.

My mother was terribly apologetic when she suggested we move to a nearby motel for our more or less annual Madison visits, but I thought it made it easier to stay in town for a full week when no one had to have us underfoot all the time. My Dad has always found it difficult to countenance the possibility that other people might still be interested in sleeping after he has arisen for the day, and the guest room in their house is directly above the garage, and his habitual post on the edge of the driveway. Not so much in the winter, obviously, but summertime visits often involved some sleep deprivation. The American archetype of family gathering seems to rely on someone maintaining a dwelling capable of absorbing multiple visitors, and I just don't that many people with the sort of room now.

**A ZINE OF ONE'S OWN**, Catie Pfiefer : I enjoyed all the happy Christmas tales, past and present. That original Nintendo console system was an instant classic, like the Bowie knife or the Model T Ford – how did we ever get along before it was invented? When my sister got one for her kids, they would play it continually until bed time, and then the adults would take over until they too fell unconscious.

So many of my favorite Christmas memories revolve around some form of cutting edge game. When I was 12 years old in 1974, we visited my grandparents in Florida, and stayed at a motel that had one of the original “Alien Space” coin-op video games next to the pool. I think I dumped at least \$15 in 197 quarters into that thing if not \$20 – what a weekend! A couple of years later, I asked my Mom for SPI's “War of the Ring,” a prodigious slab of cardboard and paper, a traditional hex-grid wargame of no interest whatsoever to anyone in the family other than me. Yet, as I sat alone in the basement laying out the maps on a pair of card tables, I

felt like my Mom just *had* to love me to have tracked down such an arcane gift. It had more of an impact on me than all the egg nog and Merry Christmas you old building and loan in the world.

**IT!**, Damon Knight: As “drunken one-shots” go, this is pretty exemplary stuff. I especially liked the poem that evoked the world of radio in the 1940s. Clearly, you have a talent worth watching, Mr. Knight.

**A TURBULENT APA-RITION**, F. J. Bergman: So, if no one had yet eagerly claimed the “William Atheling” books from you, I would point out that is just the kind of thing that does really well at Worldcon benefit auctions. I was lucky enough to acquire the copies formerly owned by Hugo-winning Torontonion Mike Glicksohn a few years ago, or I'd be eager to have them.

Enjoyed your verse, “Verdant.” One must certainly cheer for the notion that “openly speculative” poetry might find some acceptance in mainstream literature, but is that still a desirable evolution? Would you rather publish a poem in POETRY or in F&SF? Not that either is a bad thing, by any means, but I've no idea what my answer would be.

“Abjurations” were a major category of magic spells in *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*.

**COMING TO GRIPS #24**, Walter Freitag: As always, your philosophical excursions carry me along without my ever intending to follow you. Now you have me wondering about the fundamental nature of “enemies,” since there are apparently so many of them at large in the world. (And your Christmas Eve in the ER was indeed the contemporary archetype.) I think we suffer from a lot of semantic confusion between those who are simply our adversaries and those that are genuinely our enemies. It's very important – particularly within families – for people to be able to be adversaries without becoming enemies in the process. Parallels with contemporary politics are far too exhausting.

I think the fact that you have a developmentally affected twin brother is a fact worth sharing, and I don't really recall if Lisa has mentioned him before. It's one of those things where one immediately understands what a huge effect this must have had on your life, without having any real sense of what the experience is really like. I'm so glad he's amazing.

I enjoyed the fractal hearts, of course; this is how we prove computers are still cool. Your little bon mot, juxtaposing "Mom and "Alexa" makes me observe once more that we have been imagining and longing after "smart houses" for several generations; now that we're there, is it horrible or happy?

**LETTER FROM THE FARM**, Marilyn Holt (& Cliff Wind): The saga of the decline and death of Mr. Morose was appropriately bleak, but again, there is something ennobling about the way you observe and intervene in these cat stories. There is something Brechtian, something that reminds me of Steinbeck or Maxim Gorky in the saga of your feline tenants. One of the fundamental elements of the human experience is the way that we can watch so many different animal lives begin, thrive and die, seeing generations of fellow creatures come and go. No wonder we came up with the concept of God, right? It is so sad to think of how lonely the Yellow Kid must have been after two cat comrades departed in such quick succession, but one knows that someone new will always be willing to come up the lane in pursuit of the dream of unlimited barn mice. The characters always change, but they never really change.

Very sincere sympathy on the passing of Cliff's Dad. Very sorry that you lost them both in such a short time; but I know that his decline must have caused you terrible anxiety, and there is some blessing in having that resolved. Maybe you can tell us something MORE about him when you want to.

**ALPHABET OBSESSION**, Jae Leslie Adams: You look happy with sunshine on your face in these pictures from your Florida vacation. Something to think about. Many episodes of the

true crime series *The First 48* begin with someone being killed in Overtown.

You mention that you and your husband were both employed at the Parks Department when you met: My Great Uncle Bob met his wife Betty when she was a secretary and he was an engineer for Madison's Water Department. It was a bit of a scandal, as she was one of Roundy Coughlin's six gorgeous nieces, and surely she could have done better than a modest man like Bob Oakey, even if he was descended from a Madison pioneer. Betty seems to have generally shared this sentiment, but it did not prevent her from spending the rest of their lives together. The fact that they were both employees in the same city Department appears to have bothered absolutely no one.

Really found the writing about trying to adapt to your daughter-in-law's approach to her house, her kids and her holidays engrossing. And I would love to have you as my Grandma, Jae; I have a growing familiarity with the field, and think you are what the Scots would call a dab hand.

**FANDOMAIN TC #27**, Patrick Ijima-Washburn: Absolutely 100% behind your desire to get your Doctorate. My sister Elizabeth got hers and I honestly think it was even more transformative for her than marrying and having two children. She's now teaching at three different Universities in southern Wisconsin, leading entire Schools into rudimentary fluency with online and distanced learning, and lecturing legions of young people about the art that she loves. If she was not "Dr. Hooper," some of this might still be true, but surely not all of it.

You have been with us for quite a few years now, and your daughter has gone from being a toddler to a sophisticated seven-year-old. I'm curious how her tastes are evolving and what you guys share these days, so I hope she'll make an appearance in your columns again. So good to see you here in any event, however.



---

...but spiritually, he stands next to Galileo. He knows the world is round.

---

---

## A Key to Linos published in January in *Captain Flashback #2*:

Page 2: "I love NBA games! It's the only place you can get drunk on light beer and yell at millionaire giants"  
& Page 3: "I just wish I could get through one All-Star Game without crying."

Both taken from *The Cleveland Show* S2 Ep 13, "A Short Story and a Tall Tale."

Page 4: "A working definition might be misguided, unobjective science."

Superstition, as described by Dr. Norman Taylor (Peter Wyngarde), in *Burn, Witch, Burn!* (1962)

Page 6: "I remember my grandmother telling Karl Hess to go to hell, and she's been dead since 1996!"

Unknown college basketball coach on referee Karl Hess, as quoted by ESPN reporter Bomani Jones

Page 7: "I'm a twitchy little gene."

Line from a TV commercial for "23 and Me" a genetic profiling service.

Page 8: "An armistice? With the guys who drink blood wine?"

Enginner Jeff Reno (Tig Notaro) responds to galactic diplomacy, from "Brother," S. 2 Ep. 1. *Star Trek: Discovery*.

---

## The Sword of Oakey

[Continued from page 1]

to inspire me into service as a drum major or a career in the Grenadier Guards.

I had a strong suspicion as to what Tom might be sending me, but I was careful anyway – it might have been something made of antlers, or a fishing rod, or a decommissioned thud gun.

When I got the lid open, the entire interior was packed tight with two pieces of custom-fitted foam rubber, which had to be pulled out some distance before the contents could be confirmed. But I peeled one edge back to get a glimpse of the steel hilt and basket guard of an American officer's dress saber – the sword that my Grandfather Phil Oakey carried as a National Guard volunteer and R.O.T.C. cadet at the University of Wisconsin in the late 1920s.

When I was very, very young, my Grandfather was still an officer in the Air Force Reserve, and I have very vague memories of seeing him in that natty, soft blue uniform at least a few times. But I don't think I ever saw him wearing a sword then; the Air Force had a different and much simpler dress sword for formal occasions. The saber didn't have anything to do with the uniforms he wore on active duty with the Army during the war; as a military policeman, he would have carried a flashlight and probably a sidearm, but no sabers. What I have come to understand is that it probably came from his earliest period of military service, when he was both a volunteer soldier in the Wisconsin National Guard, and also a reserve officer candidate at the University of Wisconsin. There would have been many opportunities to parade in full dress as an ROTC cadet, but the Guard

marched on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, too. Either way, I can imagine him marching on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July in 1929 or 1930, and carrying the sword that is now sitting on a blue and white cloth in front of our dining room window.

I suspect Tom did quite a bit of work to clean up the blade and the scabbard, both of which are in really nice condition. When I drew the sword out of the scabbard, I was struck by how incredibly light it feels in my hand. There is some very handsome decorative engraving on the blade, but the plate left for space to engrave the owner's name was left blank. Tom didn't think his Dad ever told him where he might have purchased it, and I wonder now if it might have come to him from one of his uncles or cousins who served in the Guard during the Spanish-American and First World Wars. But I think it more likely he purchased it new – the scabbard has one good sized dimple from being pressed against something even harder, damage that I might have possibly inflicted myself as an overambitious toddler. I remember that it lived in a brass wire umbrella stand in the back room of my grandparent's home. It kept company with a few umbrellas and gnarled black walking stick or cane that might have belonged to my Grandfather's Dad Ben, or even his Grandfather Henry. But it might have also come from the Armbrechts or McMahons on my Grandmother's side, I just can't recall. It was always the saber that commanded my attention.

My Grandfather knew of my fascination for the saber; when I was in my early teens, he had promised to pass it on to me, but Tom had taken

charge of it after my Grandmother died, and I could hardly begrudge that; he was at least as fit a steward for it as me. But a few years into my research on the Oakey family, the rumor reached me that Tom “had something to send me,” and I assumed it was not a bearskin rug. So while I was not completely surprised to receive it, it was perhaps even more delightful for having anticipated it for about 35 years.

Tom eventually gave me a phone call to seek confirmation that his amazing package had arrived safely, so I was able to thank him personally, although I don’t know if I ever actually used those two words; so thank you, Tom, it is a really remarkable treasure. I told him that I was trying to put together some information on the Oakeys before they came to America, which will take us back to my Great-

Great-Great-Grandfather, and several steps beyond, and I hope to share that in the next few weeks. But with Phil Oakey very much on my mind, I have also started retyping a term paper which he wrote back in 1930, for his ROTC Cadet class. My Mom passed it on to me several years ago, and I’ve meant to make a copy of it ever since.

So, the next issue of **CAPTAIN FLASHBACK** will feature “The Vicksburg Campaign,” by Cadets Philip Oakey and Franklin Matthias. For a piece of history from the American Civil War, I think it moves along quite briskly, and should fit easily into my usual excessive page count. And after that, I might share some of the records that take my family back into the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, just like those celebrities who get their DNA illuminated on TV.

---

I think we should send all boys to Canada, rename it Manada and never go there.

---

## I REMEMBER ENTROPY DEPARTMENT

[**Mae Strelkov** (July 19<sup>th</sup>, 1917 – January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2000) was a unique figure in the annals of science fiction fandom, Her parents were British Christian missionaries, and Mae was born and spent her childhood in China. She married the Russian-born Vadim Strelkov and migrated with him to South America. They first lived in Chile, then moved to Buenos Aires, before purchasing a ranch in remote northwest Argentina, where she would spend the rest of her life.

Mae was an avid reader across several genre, and became active in science fiction fandom by writing letters of comment to professional and amateur publications. Her remote location became the source of her distinction, as no one else in fandom shared her perspective. She was known for boiling down the hooves of her own cows to make hectograph jelly, and used that method to produce art that was then adapted for publication in several fanzines. She was such a beloved figure that Susan Wood and Joan Bowers organized a special fund that brought her to the 1974 Worldcon in Washington DC, and a two-month tour of other locations in the United States.

She frequently wrote about the experiences that she and her family had in their home in rural Argentina, underlining things that were different but not so different from the rest of the world. Here is a very typical example of her work, created in collaboration with her son Tony, then a teen-ager, and originally published by Robert Runte and Michael Hall in **NEW CANADIAN FANDOM** #8 in 1985, but composed several years earlier:]

### **Part I: A Day in the Life of Villa Monte** By Mae and Tony Strelkov

The Palma Sola police force stood in a row looking serious and formal. The crowds celebrating the *Dia de la Bandera* milled around the *cancha*, with soft and careful laughter and low remarks as yet. Everything was as it should be for a great festival like this: the day when we “Honour The Flag” and remember the creator of our *Bandera*.

More and more cars were arriving. The *Intendente* of Palma Solo descended from an official limousine with his wife, his second and his second’s wife and a flock other local leading lights: and other national and provincial authorities.

---

**You must never underestimate the power of the eyebrow.**

---

All was well. The Solemn *Acta* began (it's a bit sorrowful but "firm" shall we put it?) was sung with appropriately slow and stately measures. The school children of local grammar school of San Rafael, some 300 meters or so from our house, stood in their perfectly straight rows blazing in the sun thanks to newly-starched white aprons and brand new white sneakers on every foot, tiny and big. The sneakers were all spanking new thanks to the fact that an enterprising *Busca* (salesman, or at times, "*buscador de productos*") had driven from hut to hut the very day before to supply the children's urgent need for clean new sneakers. (Most needed new sneakers by then, thanks to our precious Sylvia and Tony, who have fired the whole neighborhood with ambitions to be the "Greatest Football Team," the "Greatest Volleyball Team," the "Greatest Sports Personalities" of our whole Northwest, Among the sneakerless leading sportsmen was Tony, totally without a sneaker to his name. But he had on a newish pair also, lent to him by one of the boys on his team, who'd bought himself a still newer pair from the *busca*,

Bravely, firmly, the hymn went on and on, while the earnest, quavering voices, high and low, tried to put new vigor into it. (Our children likewise have sung the hymn their whole lives long since kindergarten days, and I always feel myself as a child back in Shanghai, hearing it sung. A very devoted Christian congregation of the 20s and 30s could have put no better fervor into the rendition.)

A comic distraction was provided by one little visiting tot shot away from his grandparents to study the blue-and-white circular *escarpelas* on the chests of the children in their rows, From one *escarpela* to the next he darted, while the children sang on, ignoring him.

The hymn at last ended, the *Directora* (a plump old lady) stood up to praise all and sundry for their collaboration in making this a great day for the school.

Meanwhile, from the top of our long, wide valley, descended the manager of a huge lumbering firm: "El Fuerte" we call that site, there up in those old, lonely heights beyond us to our south. He came with his fur-clad mother-in-law and his fur-clad wife though it was an unusually warm day. (Winter Solstice on the morrow.) As Sylvia and

Tony welcomed them and led them to the place of honor where all the ruling figures (and "leading spirits" like Sylvia and Tony) were arrayed in their grandeur. The newly arrived threesome whispered, "Why so many police?", a bit troubled by that display of the Arm of the Law. As the manager in question was a former army man, he imagined troubles must be brewing for this to be the case.

Sylvia and Tony laughingly reassured him that all was well. They had come to celebrate the great day with us.

The *Acta* over by then, a sudden turmoil occurred: the policemen (until then so impeccable in their dark blue uniforms and their shining guns) began stripping. Stripping and stripping, throwing their clothing and guns down in heaps.

What next? In shorts and white gym shirts they leaped to the playing fields, newly tidied the day before by the devoted contingents of schoolkids and teen agers and workers from the lumbering concerns on both sides of us.

*(Hereupon Tony takes over the story.)*

Well, mother dropped out, insisting that she can't write about sports, which don't greatly interest her and which she didn't even watch; she just wanted to be sure the events of the day would be recorded for posterity.

The first encounter was the soccer game between the police team and the local team. Unfortunately, in spite of the great interest that this game awoke, there were relatively few spectators, for, as the *Acta* had taken place about an hour behind schedule, the *asado* (barbecue) was already ready when the soccer game began. The local team won in spite of a fewer mistakes by the referee – the most remarkable was when he failed to see that the Chief of police made a goal with his hand instead of his foot, after knocking the ball out of the hands of the goal-keeper.

This ingratiating action on the referee's part was somewhat wasted, for our Chief of Police is a good sport and he happily admitted to us after the game that, as he couldn't reach the ball otherwise, he really had no choice there.

After lunch, the pattern of events diverged from the standard. Instead of everyone sitting around with the debris of the *asado*, drinking a bottle or

two of wine and chewing coca to “aid the digestion,” people began to move quickly over to take their places around the field where the game of pelota al cesta (a game similar to basketball) would take place. A team of girls from the high school of Palma Sola, brought by the police began filing out to face the local team captained by my sister Sylvia. It is always my fate to referee in these clashes, as one has to be very good at ignoring all the criticism of the public, and the complaints of the players whenever one fails to notice some fault of the opposite team.

The atmosphere was particularly tense as the game began. The local public cheered enthusiastically at every intervention of their two stars, my sister Sylvia, impassable in defence, and Vicky, a girl who never misses a shot in the attack. The visiting girls began to get desperate, while the line of cops vainly called encouragement and instruction to them, and one officer tried to replace me as referee, to no avail. Then, in the second half of the game, with the local team drawing far head in the score, one of the visiting girls fainted and had to be carried off the field. Immediately a big, musclebound cop tried to leap into the field, prepared to take her place. As the girls here are perfectly accustomed to play against men, they normally might have accepted, except that I knew this cop to be dangerously uncontrolled from the times I gave karate classes to the Police in Palma Sola so I refused point-blank. A moment later the girl was back and ready to continue the game. The final score was 20-4, a source of great bitterness to the locals, who like our games to be win by a bigger margin.

Then the police got their own back. In the volleyball game they beat us clearly. Of course, they play every day, so it had been our great ambition to surprise them. Unfortunately, we had counted on them becoming angered when they made some mistakes, and then we’d have taken advantage of their anger to get ahead. This strategy would have worked except for the chief of police, who kept the temper of his subjects and made the game cool off, every time they tried to heat it up. The referee in the game was a young fellow from Palma Sola, who looked to the chief of police before making each decision. But this was balanced by the scorekeeper, a very respected

landowner from here, who would certainly be above cheating, so nobody watched his numbers, and he often knocked off a couple of points against the cops, but to no avail.

The fiesta continued till dark with improvised teams of girls and boys forming to play volleyball, while the more traditional *criollas* went to the back to play *tabear*, a game that consists of throwing a knuckle-bone called the *taba*, in a certain way, and everyone bets on the throw.

Of course, *Tabeadas* are strictly prohibited by law, because of the knife-fights that might at times accompany the game. But what problem could there be with so many law enforcers on hand? Indeed, our jolly police chief proved to be quite unbeatable at throwing the bone, and made off with a tidy little sum.

Late in the night, as we prepared to go to bed, we heard the ambulance passing with siren blaring. Moments later it roared back toward Palma Sola. “Must have been a knife-fight nearby,” we concluded. Then, to our astonishment, we heard the ambulance maneuvering to turn around nearby again. There was much starting and stopping and sire-blaring, disrupting the quiet of the night. “What could be going on?” we wondered. At last the ambulance stopped at our home and the driver came towards us.

“Anyone need to go to the hospital?” he called.

“What?”

“I came to get a patient, but I can’t remember her name!” he answered sheepishly.

We discussed for some time who the mysterious sick person might be, but as the driver was tired of his house-to-house search, we all decided to call it a day, and the ambulance headed back to Palma Sola.

[Mae had a firmly colonial perspective toward her adopted country and the residents of her district; and her characterization of the jolly policemen was a fairly stark contrast to what was going on in more urban and populous regions of Argentina at the time. But now and then she made a few observations of the local political climate and the march of “progress,” as in this next memoir:]

---

**Stay humble. Always answer your phone – no matter who else is in the car.**

---

---

**The only two things you can truly depend on are gravity and greed.**

---

**Part II: Jujuy Worldcon?**

**Not Quite, But...**

**By Mae and Tony Strelkov**

Tony's Story follows: Though the title of this may seem pretentious, the circumstances aren't. Try to imagine a little rural town in the most rural province in Argentina. Its main street is the dirt road that is used mainly by the lumber trucks of *Celulosa Jujuy*. By the road is a little school with a small sports field, used mostly by lumber workers on Sundays, each player bringing his own bottle of wine.

To say that the normal atmosphere there on a normal Sunday is rough would be an understatement. But it's a long time since there's been a "normal" Sunday in that field, ever since the women started taking over a large part of the action with their unbeatable team of pelota al cesto, a game somewhat similar to basketball.

Some of the men, being sticklers for tradition, took an attitude of "Either these women go from here or we go." And have stopped coming, while others have begun to participate with great enthusiasm in this new game. An all-men's team lost against the girls 30-10 the other day.

Such was the excitement that this new game has stirred in the local community, we all began to feel that it was criminal that they don't have a ball to practice with (they only have an old one, lent!) and the right clothes and so on. After asking about prices in the sports shops of distant Jujuy, we decided it would be necessary to form a club to collect money for buying all the elements that would be needed.

The obvious solution we came up with was to make a party. As we gave donated wood to the prison of Jujuy, the Director has offered us their musicians for the party. The only hitch is that we, in turn, felt obliged to invite all the bosses of the prison. And they all readily

accepted. Next we had to get permission from the municipal authorities of Palma Sola, and, since the prison authorities are coming, they will also come. Then, we had to get permission from the police, so how could we not invite the Chief of Police! All told, what with paying the taxes and so on, we'll be spending the price of a few balls before the party even begins. And the men from the prison are all great eaters. Let us hope that a lot of people will come or else we will go bankrupt, instead of collecting money.

Comments now by Mae: "What else can I say, Ma?" asked Tony, having typed the above report at my demand. "It hasn't happened yet, so what can I add?"

"I can think of a **lot** more to say," said I, just a little grimly. I, the mother, have watched the nervousness and harried spirits of son Tony and daughter Sylvia for the past month already, all to "buy a little ball" for the local yokels who want to enjoy sports each weekend here! Well, it's going to be a ball this weekend, one way or another. We hope the yokels will not get totally soused as they often do. We hope they will behave, and impress all our swanky visitors invited from as far away as Jujuy, 200 kilometers away. No sleeping in ditches, amen! Let us pray... And nobody must need to go to the bathroom! Please, no. There's none where the party will be held, in a *tinglado* with a dirt floor, where dances in the past were held, too. (Zinc roof, open holes aloft for windows. When it rains, it blows in; when it floods, the mud stage in front is washed away!

Nonetheless, do not sneer. Sylvia and Tony have stirred up such excitement, people forget to chew their cud and listen agape. (The cud is a wad of coca leaves, in case you ask.) Local talent surfaces. The nurse who is in charge of a tumble-down tiny dispensary has drawn some remarkable pictures for raffling. (A marvelous little man is he. Dedicated? When it

floods he's in three places at once, helping everybody.)

Seeing the excitement, one feels all the bother is worth it, cheering the little community of *campesinos* (farmers) around us here, making them feel BIG. The shindig ahead will not match your Worldcons, certainly, but if we're in the red at the end of it, it won't be to the tune of several thousand dollars. (And no lawsuits, either. Poor darlings, you!) And it's all in a good cause, We're trying to wake people up, to develop self-respect and community pride; they should want a new dispensary erected, and other conveniences like clean water (piped in, not running through a muddy ditch we share with pigs, cows and people for kilometers from where it begins as a clear mountain stream.

Bless Sylvia and Tony; I hope their struggles work out; and this little hick community turns into a gracious country town in the end. But meanwhile, those helping our children "organize" (property owners like ourselves, several families) are being called the "*Perros Millionarios*" ("Millionaire Dogs") by the landless, who nonetheless have great herds of cows on other people's land when they can manage it, and all along the miles of roadway where the enormous lumber trucks rush, dodging cattle and vice versa, the whole way along. The cattle barons are sore at those who want to keep the Sports Club (just founded) humming. We should first join *them* to collect – and COLLECT – to put up at last a roof of a huge church they've been "building" for half a century. (All former shindigs had as their purpose to "collect" for the roof of the church. But each time they got something together, it melted away – "need elsewhere more urgently.)

Originally published in UNCLE DICK'S  
LITTLE THING #9, December, 1984

In the same issue, the following letter from Mae Strelkov was also published:

Your zine just came with the doleful story of conventions "in the red," though the gossip re marriages delighted Sylvia, who enjoyed all the details, (Hoping to marry her off soon if we can only convince her to be less Formidable in masculine company. *Machos* wilt in her presence, and before the blaze of her steady blue eyes. Thing is, she loves her independence, but will she love it as much 20 years hence? I'm all in favor of matches...even if doomed at times to break up! But she's such an Amazon. Right now rooting out all feminine members of local society to invade the formerly all-male football field, and play a sort of basketball game, cesto, which she's organized so well her team beats all the teams anywhere around, and their reputation dazzles and terrifies all would-be competition. Sylvia! What an organizer she is proving herself to be, and always was since infancy. Had me trotting, always, to "be a good mother," you know...)

As for "old Mae" tottering towards the 70s, it is gorgeous not to worry about looks. (I usually don't even wear a bridge anymore, to feel more at home among all the bridgeless yokels. We smile our toothless smiles together, happily!)

I'm enjoying things more than ever. The older one gets, the freer, don't you see? I can "kick the traces" and who cares? Who even sees that I did so, as I hobble carefully about our new future garden, dodging piles of rubble from the building constantly going on. (We ditched the usually absent builders, local fellows fonder of drink and recovering from binges than work, and Tony does the adding now of room after room, with Sylvia and Vadim's help. Once they reach the next wing – already planned – and add on a study for me, I promise to return to hectography in a proper fannish way!)



---

Only in the unnatural and unknown direction can we come to wisdom again.

---