

SAM #17: Another fanzine for Corflu

Steve Stiles, 8631 Lucerne Road, Randallstown,
Md. 21133. stevecartoon2001@gmail.com



"Ernest's first attempt at exploitation was a dismal flop."

"Perhaps your difficulty in doing fannish cartoons (ala FANAC) is one of coming up with good captions. If you have the caption to your cartoon already set in mind, it would probably be easier to take it from there in your drawing. I'd suggest some captions, but I wouldn't have any trufannish spirit in the selection." –Robert Lichtman, Sept. 17, 1959.

Fifty-five years later and that still remains a problem. (Sometimes I'm so unsure of some captions that I set them in a tiny point size, making them difficult to read!) Anyway, here's some captions for cartoons I never got around to drawing, let alone figuring out: you can finish off these cartoons *in your own minds!*

- 1.) Mermaid hiking in the Adirondacks.
- 2.) Vampire still has his baby fat.
- 3.) Alien sex and the G Spot problem.
- 4.) Alien sudoku.
- 5.) "You wouldn't think it would do that, would you?"
- 6.) Photoshopping reality.
- 7.) Robots with mustaches.
- 8.) Hell's favorite action figures.
- 9.) Twit tortures.
- 10.) "Hath not a Grnxnxx eyes?"

- 11.) A person with an ugly mind.
- 12.) It's an acquired taste.
- 13.) Aha! GOR novels!
- 14.) The man's a born salesman!
- 15.) When like minds collide.

Okay, go crazy, kids! (Bill Rotsler, we miss you!)

THE OLD ROCK N' ROLLER: So here I am, seventy one years old (I frequently tell myself that's a lie), and I'm still listening to and collecting pop and rock music. On December 4th, youngster Elaine's 66th birthday, we went to the former Baltimore Arena (now the "Royal Farms Arena" –*viva capitalism!*) to listen to The Black Keys, a blues rock duo I'm okay with, and St. Vincent (actually Annie Erin Clark), a singer and songwriter with whom I'm absolutely nuts about –I have all her albums, and from the moment I first heard "Now, Now," the first track on her first album, "Marry Me," I knew I was hearing something both unusual and impressive. Ms. Clark has a unique sense of delivery and pacing in her songs, a dreamlike quality that was, unfortunately, totally unsuited for the horses' stable acoustics that was the Royal Farms Arena.

Still, we had a good enough time: for forty-two bucks apiece we had damned well better have! We had made the acquaintance of a twenty-something couple going to and coming from the concert on the light rail, talking with them about rock concerts, and that was nice, but I couldn't help feeling sorry for them having to scrimp and save to hear their favorite performers: when I was their age (*OMG: "when I was their age!"*) I was able to hear top-flight groups like The Jefferson Airplane and The Who, artists like Ian Anderson and Arthur Brown, in good front row seats for \$7.50 at New York's Fillmore East (now the Emigrant Savings Bank).

What started me on R&R? The United States Army. Prior to my being drafted to defeat communism, I limited my musical purchases to albums by Charles Mingus, Roland Kirk, and Theolonius Monk. The Beatles, I thought, were just a happy exception to that crap that was rock and roll. But by the fall of 1965 I found myself stationed at Ft. Leonard Wood, in Missouri, working as an illustrator in a Quonset hut out in the woods, painting exciting hand grenade diagrams. It was there that I was forced to listen to my fellow GI artiste play *The Rolling Stones. Now!* album over and over and over again, particularly "Little Red Rooster": "*Dogs begin to bark and hounds begin to howl/Watch out strange cat people/Little Red Rooster's on the*

prowl/If you see my little red rooster/ Please drive him home.” Over and over and over again. At first I hated it. Then I disliked it. And then, by week three.... Well, you get the picture!

Of course, Jagger was doing a blues number, written by Willie Dixon and first recorded by Howlin’ Wolf, but it opened the door to the Stones, and then to the Doors. Other tunes turning me on in the barracks were “California Dreaming” by *The Mamas And The Papas*, “Do You Believe In Magic” by *The Lovin’ Spoonful*, and *The Byrds*’ “Eight Miles High,” which was *so* very appropriate for my time in the army!

Fast forward backwards to a few years ago when Elaine and I were at Maryland’s Merriweather Post Pavilion for performances by Neko Case, formerly of the *New Pornographers*, and Jim James’ group *My Morning Jacket*, another favorite of mine.

We had lawn seats and directly in front of me was a young guy going through incredible gyrations in time to the music, incredibly blocking our view of the stage which, from where we were sitting, was approximately postage stamp sized, so behind his back I mocked his movements, going through satirical geezer gyrations. It was fun, but old guys can be cruel since it’s pretty much all that’s left to us.

Perhaps the youth noticed this. At any rate, during a pause in numbers, he turned to me and said (and this is pretty much verbatim):

“Pardon me, sir, I hope you won’t take offence at this, but what’s a gentleman in your age category doing at an event like this?”

So I hit the whippersnapper with my walker, by cracky! I mean, is there some kind of cutoff date where I have to go off and play golf, join the Republican Party, and listen to Bing Crosby or Montovani? Show me where that’s been written in my contract, okay? (My pants *have* been rolled, though.)

SCIENCE FICTION REFERENCE ALERT:

To be honest, every evening this week I’ve been spending an hour listening to Bach and Vivaldi on my iPod while reading Bruce Sterling’s “*Schismatrix Plus.*” [This now qualifies as a s.f. fanzine.]

TIMEBINDING ALERT:

[From SAM #14, some time in 1968]: “SAM #1 was published in 1961, under inked and published on a school mimeograph machine, laboriously typed up on a 1910 Underwood, and cleverly stapled in the upper left hand corner. As for the material, all I can remember is a review of “*Bye Bye Birdie.*” I do recall that Marion Zimmer Bradley gave me a favorable review in Ted Pauls’ KIPPLE: “I read it on the bus, and laughed all the way to work.” This review gave me an incredible blast of egoboo, and gave me the necessary fannish fortitude to continue to where I am today; an ex-FAPA waiting lister.

“Gee, I’ll bet there’s going to be a lot on the police riots that took place in Chicago; what a strange week that was—I was doing a lot of drawing then, as well as reading Joyce Cary’s “*The Horse’s Mouth,*” and every once in a while I’d get up and turn on the tv, and, yep, heads, not to mention straights, were still being beaten and gassed, with Gene McCarthy visiting the wounded, and people being thrown through plate glass windows --and the police were being *provoked* by *outside agitators!*”

It’s December 2014 now as I write this, forty six years later, and things don’t seem all that different with what seems like a rampage of police violence, from Albuquerque, to Ferguson, to New York, with mainly black Americans getting killed over trivialities, and even family pets being regularly shot for the crime of being in their own backyards.

In today’s news, I read about an eight-year-old Native American girl getting tasered and a 76-year-old man getting tasered for an expired inspection sticker.

This is not, to me, the hallmark of a first-world democracy, nor do I think this is anything like what our country ought to be. The police force has **always** attracted bigots and the kind of guys who used to beat us up in the schoolyards and steal our lunch money—I think it’s been that way in every country and in every time period; attracting the types who like power over others. I don’t know if it’s gotten worse, or that it’s just more noticeable; police brutality caught on security cameras and cell phones and instantly reported on the internet. Maybe forcing cops to wear cameras will help. I certainly hope so, but I doubt it.

I grew up in a working class Manhattan neighborhood and my friends were mostly second-generation European immigrants; in other words mostly white, and *we* didn’t trust the police.

(Popular Kid Joke at the time: “What’s your father do for a livin’?” “Nuthin’; he’s a cop!”)

There was a kiddie teevee show when I was little boy in the 1950s, with somebody in a blue uniform with a badge acting as the host. Policeman Fred, I think his name was, and there was this little jingle that went something like this: “*Oh the policeman is your friend/He’ll help you to the end/Yes, the policeman is your friend!*” Lala-la-lala-la.

So when I, a wee tyke, got lost in the canyons of big Manhattan, I, blubbering away, went up to a policeman friend to ask for directions, and my buddy in blue said:

“Get the fuck away from me, you little bastard, before I kick your ass across the street!”

Up yours, Policeman Fred!

“Egoboo is the crack of fanzine fandom.” –Elinor Busby

Just did a tally of my fan art output from 2013-14: 124 cartoons and illustrations in circulation. Fifty-nine unpublished. Some of those were created years earlier and are just in limbo, so it’s not like I’ve been a churning turbine of high energy cartooning. For example, I see in an apa from 1976 that David Emerson mentioned that I did a cartoon of a chicken being kicked for an issue of RUNE. I don’t think it’s been published so I don’t know what that’s about; I never had anything against any chickens: maybe that’s how it got across that road.

Posted my fan art tally on the Baltimore Science Fiction Society Facebook page. I thought it might be of interest to the club since I’ve been regularly contributing cartoons to their club zine for over two years. It was deleted because the BSFS manager thought the post was “self-promotion.” When I asked why, he dropped me from the list. **D-OH!** Guess I should work on my being too uppity.

I was once on a panel on Taboos in Science Fiction. We went through sex, economics, religion in general and Islam in particular. It seems that there are very few few taboos in science fiction, with one exception: killing kittens. (Perhaps that’s why Peter Weston rejected my cartoon about boiling them.)

Currently reading S.J. Perelman’s “*Captain Future, Block That Kick!*” A lot of my science fiction and fantasy reading these days has been humorous; books by Rudy Rucker, Robert Rankin, James Morrow (who told me he likes my work, yay!), Jasper Fforde, Terry Pratchett, and Douglas Adams. Perhaps the silliest was Eric Idle’s “The Shroud Of The Thwacker,” especially memorable for this line: “*So then I built my time machine. It was easier than I thought.*”

(From SKIFFLE #4, 1974): “A few weeks ago I was reading John Brunner’s “*The Sheep Look Up,*” alternating my reading with “*Let History Judge,*” a documentation of Stalin’s paranoiac purges. After one night of particularly heavy reading, I fell asleep and dreamed that all the N.Y. Fanoclasts were arrested, rounded up, and flown to a concentration camp in Berkeley. After being separated from the rest of the club members, I discovered that that my new cellmates were none other than Greg and Jim Benford. Greg said that it was about time I got around to moving to California.”

Speaking of the New York Fanoclasts, I once created an Official Fanoclast t-shirt, nicely silkscreened by Perdita Boardman. It featured a William Rotsler illustration and the caption: “**HAVE TENDRILS, WILL TICKLE.**” (I didn’t, however, ever get around to creating the Fanoclast decoder ring.)

But I also came up with the **Official Fanoclast Theme Song**. I wrote it back when I was out to destroy the club. I was rummaging through some old unsorted papers of mine and just discovered it after all these many years. Here it is (*sounds note on kazoo*):

*“We don’t want your ghoddamned fanzines
We don’t get your Terry Carr
All we want is a solid con bid
With the ‘Clastcon we’ll go far!*”

*“We don’t want your ghoddamned mimeos
We can’t tell bond from manifold
All we need are some hucksters’ tables
And Charles Burbee really leaves us cold!*”

*“We can’t wait to host a Worldcon
Politicking brings us egoboo
Let’s go out and make our costumes
We’re the Fanoclasts, that’s who!”*



SUBWAY FUN:

How I miss New York! Not much, really, since the New York I miss (circa 1943 – 1975) no longer exists. I doubt, for example, if I could afford so much as a broom closet in my former neighborhood in Yorkville; well, maybe I could at that: one bedroom apartments there now average \$2,650. per month; perhaps a broom closet would only cost half my Social Security check. But the question is how the hell could I fit my drawing board into one?

New York subways were something. Nowadays you have to pay two bucks to see a rat on a rail but when I was a commuting worker thirty-five cents would get you all sorts of bargain rate entertainment; like vertical sex if you rode during crush hour –you didn't have to get personal to enjoy any intimate human contact, and nothing you could do would scare any horses (who never ride the BMT, IND, IRT, ETC, anyway).

There was the guy on the Canarsie Line who yodeled, switching from a low pitch chest register to a falsetto while he rotated his trouser snake in a counter clock motion for my entertainment. It certainly was mesmerizing. And then there was another fellow subway rider who furtively confided to me that on November 25, 1766, thirteen communists signed the Magna Charter in the American colonies, and that the present Communist government had set up a human flesh processing plant in Houston, Texas. Moreover, he said, our every move and conversation was being filmed and taped: the expression on his face when it gradually dawned on him that I might be one of ***THEM*** was priceless!

I remember when I was riding the Lexington Avenue

IRT from Grand Central to 86th street, reading a new cartoon book I had picked up; “*Uncle Shelby’s ABZ Book*,” by Playboy cartoonist Shel Silverstein. The book, like most of Silverstein’s work, was extremely funny:

“E IS ALSO FOR ERNIE. ERNIE IS THE GENIE WHO LIVES IN THE CEILING. ERNIE LOVES EGGS. TAKE A NICE FRESH EGG AND THROW IT AS HIGH AS YOU CAN AND YELL ‘CATCH ERNIE! CATCH THE EGG!’ AND ERNIE WILL REACH DOWN AND CATCH THE EGG.”

I began to chuckle then laugh out loud at the page on the dangers of drowning while potty training, or the one on how little elves live in our tv sets and can only be seen when the screen is smashed with a hammer. How I laughed!

Unbeknownst to me, however, was the Subway Preacher lurking down at the other end of our subway car, ranting at his uncomfortable but captive audience.

So there’s the situation; I’m at one end of the car, laughing my head off at a very funny book and there at the other end is this maniac ranting and raving (cue in theme music from *Jaws*).

About the time he began to shout **“Da booka da Bible; itsa translated into a t’ousand tongues-a!”** I was reading:

“P IS FOR PONY. THE PONY LIVES IN THE GAS TANK OF DADDY’S CAR. MAYBE THE PONY IS HUNGRY. PONYS LOVE SUGAR.”

At that point the Subway Preacher, seeing me laughing, thought I was laughing at him! He began shouting something about *scoffers going to hell*, while moving towards me. People seated on the left and right of me began bravely moving away from me.

Suddenly he was standing above me, waving his Bible in my face, shouting over and over **“Da booka da Bible; itsa translated into a t’ousand tongues-a!”**

This made me laugh all the harder! Long before we reached 86th street the subway car had emptied out, leaving only the two of us; Jesus and Satan.

(I guess one of the most unavoidable life lessons is having to deal with the disapproval of others. You’ll never be able to please *all* the people *all* the time, damn them!)

I suppose I’m lucky that he didn’t slap me upside my head with Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, knowing

that I was some kind of diseased pervert, but what does being translated into “a t’ousand tongues-a” prove, anyway? So are Mickey Mouse Comics, and I don’t even care for that establishment rodent.

Give me the fucking duck every time.

As sharp-eyed readers will realize, the cartoon on the first page utilized a Frank R. Paul alien—presumably a Martian-- which I craved to draw. Mind you, this is my homage, a tribute, and *not* a lowly and despicable swipe (I enlarged the ears, for example). Paul’s alien graced the back cover of the May 1939 *Fantastic Adventures*, the cover of the April 1940 *Superworld Comics*, and the cover of the Sept. 1965 issue of *Fantastic Stories*. The alien also appeared in *Quip*, Hugo Gernsback’s Christmas magazine (1949), and on page four of 1953’s *Science Fiction Plus*. The earliest known version of the Martian, according to Frank Wu’s Frank R. Paul Gallery, appeared in the Aug. 1924 issue of Gernsback’s *Science And Invention*.

I have now reinforced my claim that this is indeed a science fiction fanzine.

SOME TIME IN 2016, or perhaps later, I hope to have **THE RETURN OF HYPER COMICS**, an anthology of most of my underground comic strips, done and available in Kindle and/or print on demand format, thanks to the urging and advice of local mensch Michael Dobson. At a guess, it will run over a hundred pages in glorious black and white.

It’s hard to predict a finish date for this project. So far I’ve got forty pages done, which has involved scanning the original comic pages and then cleaning them up in Photoshop—a very tedious process. I’m also involved in another venture, one with a large page count and a decent pay rate, which takes precedent over the anthology. I’m under contractual obligation not to say much about it, but it deals with serious subject matter. It would be neat if both projects came to be published at roughly the same time; two major efforts of mine, one involving my cartooning and one involving an illustrative approach.

It would be perhaps my Last Hurrah in the comics field. Maybe comics fandom would actually finally recognize my existence. One can only dream.

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“Meat is for War, Vegetables are for Peace.”
—Calvin Demmon, 1971.

I RECENTLY DREAMED: That I had two bears for pets. This didn’t prove to be a very good arrangement, however, as one of them kept shaking me out of my tree.

My favorite dream, though, is the one I had many years ago where I found myself wandering around some strange abandoned mansion kind of deal that one would find in a grade-B horror movie. (This was an outstanding dream, not an enjoyable one.)

I didn’t know *how* I got there, or *where* I was going (just like Real Life, by George!), but I did know that that I was in extreme danger and that *something* was *after me!*

Continuing on in my wandering, I soon found that I wasn’t alone; there, alone in a room, sat a chubby jolly looking man sitting in an easy chair, drinking beer, smoking a cigar. He was wearing a coonskin cap and dressed in buckskins.

I wanted to scream. I warned him that we were in *great danger*, that we had to get away from there as soon as possible! He was amused. Scoffing, he waved me away. I continued on with my journey. I came to another room: it was filled waist high with human skulls.

They were all wearing coonskin caps!

(I drew up the above dream as a one-page comic strip for what is now probably a very rare publication: the “preview issue” of *Rallying Point*, a magazine edited and published by *Crawdaddy* editor and friend, the late Paul Williams. Issued in November 1973, in a limited number of copies, it featured material by Robert Silverberg, Wina Sturgeon, Terry Carr, and Raymond Mungo, among others. Unfortunately, it seems that Paul wasn’t able to get enough backing to launch *Rallying Point*.)

I WAS IN THE ARMY THEN:

So I accumulated a whole lot of material for seemingly endless fanzines articles having nothing to do with science fiction, or at least many handfuls of non-stfnal vignettes. And here’s some now:

In the spring of 1965 I had my first job, my first apartment, and my first lover. In the summer of 1965 I got shafted: when I was being processed through Uncle Sam’s induction center, one of my examiners, a wizened old German, going through my records, said “*I see you haf got goot grates in*

dese tests,” and then in a breathtaking non-segue: “Tell me, would you be villing to die for your country?”

“Hopefully, that won’t be necessary,” I ingeniously replied. (Okay, call me crazy.)

“Den you should be shot!” he replied coldly.

But it didn’t come to that, although it could’ve happened when I was stationed at Ft. Eustis, Virginia: rather than defending democracy in South Vietnam, I was pulling Charge of Quarter duty one night in the barracks office when a distraught middle-aged sergeant entered the room, sweating, teary-eyed, his uniform a mess, reeking of alcohol. He wanted to know where a certain private was. I checked the roster and saw that the private was out on a pass. Why do you want to see him? I asked.

“Because I’m gonna kill him,” he said, pulling out a .45 Colt Pistol. Weeping, waving the weapon around wildly, he explained that the kid had impregnated his underage daughter. After a while of this, he decided to go outside and wait for his future victim at the barracks front entrance.

I called the MPs. Who told me I had to call the Company Commander. Who told me I had to call the MPs. Meanwhile, the young private had returned, luckily through the back entrance. I hurriedly locked him in a supply closet with a heavily reinforced metal door.

Eventually the outraged father came back, still openly carrying the .45. At that point three very large MPs arrived: “Is this the guy?” one asked me. I said yes. “Okay, we’ve got to make a phone call,” he said.

And then all three of them left the room (which also had a phone), leaving me alone with the man with the gun that I had just fingered!

So when I was in the army I didn’t have to die for my country, but I could’ve died for a daughterfucker.

ANOTHER SEGUE: Getting back to black people and the police, one of my best friends at Ft. Eustis was an Afro-American named Preston. Preston had served as a helicopter mechanic in ‘Nam, and, having seen various atrocities performed there, was totally disgusted with the war. He was, in fact, pretty much of a pacifist, the type of guy who would walk around a caterpillar on the ground rather than chance stepping on it.

So it was quite a surprise, about a year after we got out of the army, on May 28, 1968, to open the New York Times to a page featuring a photo of Preston being led away in handcuffs under the headline “**Quick Arrests Called Vital in Terror-Plot Case**”:

“Six Negro youths charged with conspiring to kill white policemen in Harlem, thereby creating a climate of terror in

which riots would breed, were held in a total of \$102,000 bail when arraigned yesterday in Criminal Court.”

Preston never knew four of those youths; he was at the wrong place at the wrong time, going to have dinner with one his friends, and the friend’s mother, when the police pushed their way into the apartment as he was ringing the doorbell and arrested the two of them on the spot.

Many months and many thousands of dollars in legal fees later (Preston’s father having to sell off property and his brother having to drop out of college), on May 14, 1971, the headline in The Post read “**VINDICATED.**”

Turned out that the instigator of the Black Murder Plot was an undercover police officer, who was talking about The Revolution in a black nightclub with the future defendants and taping their “Right Ons!” (These were the days, you may recall, when even many of us Euro-American kids would talk wistfully about blowing up the Pentagon. “Right on!” Still seems like kind of an attractive idea....)

When William Kunsler, who had taken over pro bono when the defendants’ money had run out (along with their lawyer), got that officer’s tapes bought into court as evidence for the defense: the case was instantly dismissed.

It also turned out that four of those black youths in the “Terror Plot” had been taking photographs and badge numbers of officers being on the take from drug dealers!

Bada-boom!

